
**Portland Public Charter Schools:
An Assessment of Performance and Impacts**

A report by the District Performance Auditor
March 2009

**PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PORTLAND, OREGON**



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District Performance Auditor

Memorandum

To: Board of Education

From: Richard C. Tracy, District Performance Auditor

Date: March 18, 2009

Re: Performance Audit Report – *Portland Public Charter Schools: An Assessment of Performance and Impacts*

Attached is my audit report on the performance and impact of the seven Public Charter Schools sponsored by the Portland Public School District. This audit was performed in response to the 2008 Performance Audit Plan approved by the School Board.

I would like to thank the District management and staff for their assistance and cooperation in conducting this audit. Their suggestions and comments helped improve the quality and clarity of the final product.

I look forward to meeting with you at upcoming Board and committee meetings to more fully discuss the findings and recommendations. Thanks for your ongoing support of performance auditing.

cc:

Carole Smith

Zeke Smith

Jollee Patterson

Jenni Villano

Kristen Miles

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- Enrollment in PPS charters mirrors statewide growth
- Demographics at PPS charter schools generally differ from national and statewide charters and PPS public schools
- Instructional approaches at PPS charters vary significantly

PPS charter school performance

SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND INSTRUCTION

- Most charters meet goals for enrollment, grade levels, and teacher/student ratios
- Most charters have stable attendance and enrollment
- Charter teachers are less experienced, educated, and qualified than district teachers
- State instructional hour requirements are achieved
- Lack of timely financial reporting inhibits assessment of financial stability

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- Performance on state achievement tests is mixed
- Most charter school students have smaller average annual gains in Reading and Math achievement than PPS students
- Most charters meet federal Annual Yearly Progress standards
- Student achievement is difficult to fully assess due to unclear contracts and insufficient reporting

PPS charter school performance, *continued*

INNOVATION TRANSFER

Little evidence of innovation transfer or innovative measurement tools

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Charter parents, students, and teachers report high levels of satisfaction

Impact of PPS charter schools

Direct administrative costs are low

Special education impact is significant

PPS retained revenue sufficient to cover direct and indirect costs

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SUMMARY

In 1999, State legislation authorized the creation and operation of public charter schools in Oregon. Charter schools are separate legal entities that receive public funding but are free from many of the requirements of traditional public schools and are managed by separate governing boards. This is the first comprehensive assessment of the seven public charter schools that currently operate under contract with the Portland Public School district.

The objectives of this audit are to provide the Superintendent and the School Board with objective information on the performance of public charter schools in Portland and their financial and operational impact on the district. The following sections briefly describe the most significant observations and findings of my assessment.

Charter school enrollment has grown significantly over the past eight years. Student enrollment in public charter schools has increased steadily both statewide and in Portland since 2000-01. PPS charter school enrollment increased from 66 students in 2000-01 to 1,080 students in 2007-08. Statewide charter school enrollment experienced similar increases growing from 622 students to 11,592 students. As of 2007-08, charter school enrollment represents about 2.0 percent of total statewide enrollment and 2.3 percent of total enrollment in Portland.

Portland charter school students on average are less likely to be low-income, minority, or English language learners. Compared to Portland schools district-wide, Portland charter schools have fewer minority students (35% vs. 44%), fewer students that qualify for free or reduced lunch (35% vs. 45%), and fewer students that are classified as English-language learners (1% vs. 10%). Students with disabilities receiving special education are enrolled in Portland charters at about the same rate as district-wide schools (14%). Charter schools nationally have enrollments that are predominately low-income (52%) and minority (60%), and other charter schools in Oregon have more low income students but fewer minorities.

Success in improving student achievement is mixed. Four of the six Portland public charter schools rated met federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) standards. However, overall student academic achievement is mixed. Charter schools with only elementary grades generally perform as well or better than comparable schools on reading and math

achievement tests. However, reading and math scores for charter students at the middle and high school levels are generally below the average scores of comparable schools. Only three of seven charters meet or exceed statewide and district averages in writing and only one charter has achieved an increase in writing scores over time. In addition, most charter school students have smaller average annual gains in reading and math achievement than PPS students.

Portland charters have comparable attendance rates, teacher/student ratios, and class sizes. PPS charter schools have generally achieved goals related to enrollment, teacher/student ratio, and class sizes. Most charter schools have stable student populations as evidenced by attendance rates and late enrollee indexes that are comparable to district averages. Charter schools are also achieving the minimum amounts of annual hours of instruction required by state regulations.

Lack of timely financial reports inhibits assessment of charter school financial stability. Three of seven charter schools failed to submit annual audited financial reports as required by charter contracts. Consequently, it is not possible to fully assess the budget performance and financial position of all charter schools for the year ending June 30, 2008. Of the four schools submitting audited financial statements, three had positive ending fund balances and reasonably healthy balance sheets.

Little evidence of innovation transfer from charters to public schools. There is little evidence that PPS charter schools have developed innovative educational practices that have been transferred to other public schools in Portland. While some charter schools have implemented instructional practices and developed student achievement measurement tools that are often different than PPS schools, it is unclear that all the methods used by the charters are either innovative or can be transferred to other public schools.

Charter school parents, staff, and students highly satisfied. Parents, staff, and students that responded to the annual Oregon Department of Education surveys feel very positive about their charter school experience and are generally satisfied with the operations of their charter school. Ninety-six percent of parents feel the charter school met their initial expectations and 84% of teachers believe their charter has a bright future. Both charter parents and staff expressed dissatisfaction with facilities and limited financial resources.

Student academic achievement is difficult to fully assess due to lack of specific, measurable charter contract goals and insufficient annual reporting. PPS charter schools have a myriad of academic goals and expectations that are often not clearly defined, measurable, nor always reflected in charter contracts. Annual reports often provide too little information to assess student achievement. Neither the district nor charter schools

seem entirely sure of the academic goals they are accountable for nor the annual reporting requirements related to these goals. As a result, the accountability process for charter schools in Portland is less than optimal.

Possible adverse enrollment impact for some neighborhood schools. The enrollment of students in public charter schools has the potential to adversely impact neighborhood schools by reducing enrollment, staffing levels, and other resources. If charter school students attended their neighborhood school at the same rate as other children living in their neighborhood, an estimated 31 additional teachers could be assigned to PPS schools. While it is difficult to determine with certainty whether charter school students would attend their neighborhood school if the charter option was not available, it is likely that some schools with a high percentage of students residing in the attendance area but choosing to attend charter schools experience reduced academic support.

Opportunities for change. There are opportunities to improve PPS oversight of charter schools that could help improve charter school performance and increase accountability for student achievement. In brief, the district and charter schools should develop more defined and measurable student achievement goals, develop more uniform and standard annual performance reporting, and implement a more rigorous system of accountability.

In addition, in light of the mixed results in addressing various legislative intents and the growing impact of PPS charter schools, it may be appropriate to revisit elements of state charter school legislation to assess the continuing public policy goals of public charter schools and to identify opportunities to improve performance and reduce unintended affects.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past nine years, the number of public charter schools operating in Oregon has increased significantly, growing from 12 in 2000 to 88 in 2008. Authorized by state legislation in 1999, charter schools are separate legal entities that receive public funding but are free from many of the requirements of traditional public schools. This report is an assessment of the performance and impact of the seven charter schools currently operating under contract with the Portland Public School (PPS) district.

Major provisions of Oregon charter school legislation

Oregon Revised Statutes (Chapter 338) established provisions for the creation and operation of public charter schools in the state of Oregon. Passed in 1999, the intent of the legislation is to establish new types of schools offering innovative and flexible ways of educating children within the public school system. The legislation states that “it is the intent that public charter schools may serve as models and catalysts for the improvement of other public schools and the public school system”. Specifically, the goals of public charter schools are to:

1. Increase student learning and achievement
2. Increase choices for learning opportunities
3. Better meet individual student academic needs and interests
4. Build stronger working relationships among educators, parents, and other community members
5. Encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods
6. Provide opportunities in small learning environments for flexibility and innovation, which may be applied, if proven effective, to other public schools
7. Create professional opportunities for teachers
8. Establish different forms of accountability for schools
9. Create innovative measurement tools

To address these goals, the legislation establishes a number of provisions for the creation and operation of charter schools. Some of the most important provisions are as follows:

Creation and approval - A charter school must be approved by a sponsor, normally a local school district, and be established as a non-profit organization consistent with state and federal laws and regulations. A proposal from a charter school applicant should include the mission of the school, curriculum, teaching and measurement approaches, governance structure, enrollment expectations and target student population, and proposed budget and financial plan. The sponsoring district must review, approve, or deny a charter school application within a specified time frame. The legislation provides for appeals if the application is denied, including review and mediation by the State Board of Education and eventual sponsorship by the State Board of Education instead of the sponsoring district.

Terms and form of the charter agreement - Upon approval of a charter school proposal, the sponsoring district and the charter school develop a written legal contract (the charter) that contains the provisions of the proposal. The Charter is approved by the sponsor and the governing board of the charter school. The term of initial public school charters can be up to 5 years and may be renewed for additional terms upon review and approval by the sponsor. Renewals are based on whether the charter school has complied with state and federal laws and the provisions of the charter agreement, is meeting student performance goals agreements, and is fiscally stable. The sponsor may terminate the charter during the term of a charter based on several grounds including failure to meet charter terms, failure to correct violations of state or federal laws, and failure to maintain financial viability.

Oversight and administration - Charter schools must report annually to the sponsor and the State Board of Education on the performance of the school and its students. Charters are required to disclose in annual reports the information necessary to make a determination of compliance with charter provisions and state legislation. The sponsor must visit the charter school at least annually. Charters are also required to have an annual financial audit in accordance with state municipal audit laws and forward the audit report to the sponsor and the State Board.

Student admissions - All students who reside within a school district where a public charter school is located, and are of the age and grade level served by the charter, are eligible for enrollment in the charter. If capacity allows, students from outside the PPS district may enroll. Student enrollment is voluntary. If the number of student applications exceeds the capacity of the class, program, grade level, or building, the charter shall select students by lottery. However, preference may be given to students enrolled in the

prior year and to applicants who have siblings presently enrolled in the school. In accordance with state and federal laws, charters may not limit student admission based on ethnicity, national origin, race, religion, disability, gender, income level, or language proficiency. Charters also may not require students to participate in fund raising as a condition of admission.

Teacher qualifications - Charter school teachers must be licensed or registered to teach by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practice Commission. Charter school administrators also must be licensed or registered administrators. At least one-half of the total full time equivalent teachers and administrative staff at a charter school must be licensed by the Commission. Employees at charters must also participate in the Public Employees Retirement System. The charter school governing body controls the hiring and employment of charter school staff. Charter school employees may be members of a labor organization.

Funding - Students at a charter school are considered residents of the school district in which the charter school is located and are included in the determination of state school funding received by the district. The sponsoring school district and the charter school negotiate the amount of state school funding paid to the charter but it must be at least 80 percent of the district's general purpose grant per average daily membership (ADMw) for students enrolled in K - 8 and at least 95 percent of district's general purpose grant per average daily membership for students enrolled in grades 9 - 12. School districts are provided additional state resources to provide special education to students in the district, including students who attend charter school. In addition to raising private donations and grants, public charter schools may also apply to the State Department of Education for several grants and loans to help them establish and expand charter schools.

The legislation allows charter schools to run independently of the traditional public school system. Charter schools are able to design curricula, pursue teaching approaches, and hire teachers in a variety of ways. Charter schools are governed by a charter school board of directors and the daily operations of the school are not under the supervision or authority of the sponsoring district. However, while a number of state statutes and rules that apply to other public schools do not apply to charter schools, many rules and laws remain in force. Specifically, laws related to federal No Child Left Behind legislation, non-discrimination, special education services, public records and meetings, and health and safety continue to apply to charter schools. In addition, charter schools are required to participate in Oregon State Assessment Tests and have their results reported in a similar fashion to all other public schools. State laws related to minimum instructional hours, corporal punishment and discipline, and diploma requirements also continue to apply to charter schools.

Portland Public School charter school administration

The Portland Public School (PPS) Board of Directors has established policy to govern the implementation of state charter school legislation. Board Policy 6.70.010 contains a number of provisions including the goals for establishing PPS charter schools, application and approval criteria, and reporting, evaluation, and audit requirements. In addition to reinforcing various requirements of the state law, the PPS Board Policy on Charter Schools provides additional detail regarding the negotiation of the charter contract, use of Portland school space and transportation services, and the status of charter school employees.

To administer the provisions of the charter school legislation and policy, the district has established the position of Charter Schools Manager reporting to the Director of Alternative Education Options. The Charter Schools Manager is the central point of contact in the district for parties wishing to establish a charter school. The Manager coordinates the processes for review, approval, and denial of charter applications; development of charter contracts and performance goals; payment of monthly state school funds to charters; periodic renewals of existing charters; and general monitoring and review of charter school compliance with state laws and charter provisions. The Manager also responds to inquiries from parents, students, other districts, and the media. The Charter School Manager also works closely with the School Board Sub-Committee on Charter schools to help the Board review, approve, or deny charter applications, provide oversight of charter school performance, and to assist with charter renewal decisions.

Charter schools also receive district support and assistance from other PPS central administrative units. For example, PPS Research and Evaluation provides charters with information on statewide assessment requirements, the PPS Information Technology helps charter schools learn how to submit enrollment and other student information into the district central data system, and PPS Finance and Accounting provides charter schools with feedback on their accounting and business practices.

In addition to frequent contact with the Charter School Manager, charter schools receive direct services from PPS Special Education for those students with disabilities enrolled in charters needing special education services such as speech, physical therapy, or counseling. Under state law, the district retains the authority and responsibility for providing special education to all students residing in the district boundaries, including students enrolled at charter schools. Generally, PPS special education employees travel from school to school to provide these services but some special education teachers can be assigned to an individual school.

History of charter schools in the Portland Public School district

Since 1999, the Portland Public School district has approved nine charter schools to operate in the district. Of those nine, seven are currently in operation and two have closed. As shown in Figure 1 below, the Opal School located at the Portland Children’s Museum is the oldest continuing charter school operating for 8 years and the Portland Village School in Northeast Portland is the newest charter beginning its second year this school year. Two charters closed after one year of operation, McCoy Academy in 2002 and Garden Laboratory in 2005. Five charter schools have been renewed for another term of operation - Opal, Emerson, Portland Arthur Academy, Self Enhancement Inc. (SEI) Academy, and Trillium. Emerson, Leadership and Entrepreneurship Charter High School (LEP), and Portland Village are scheduled for renewal review this year. There is also one charter school operating in the PPS district that is sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education – the Southwest Charter School. Another State Board of Education sponsored school was approved this year and will begin operations in the 2009-10 school year. Appendix A provides a description and contact information for each of PPS’s seven charter schools.

The map on page 11 shows the location of PPS sponsored charter schools. As shown, three schools are located in the North and Northeast area, two are in the Southeast neighborhood, one is downtown, and one is in the Southwest.

Figure 1 History of charter schools sponsored by PPS

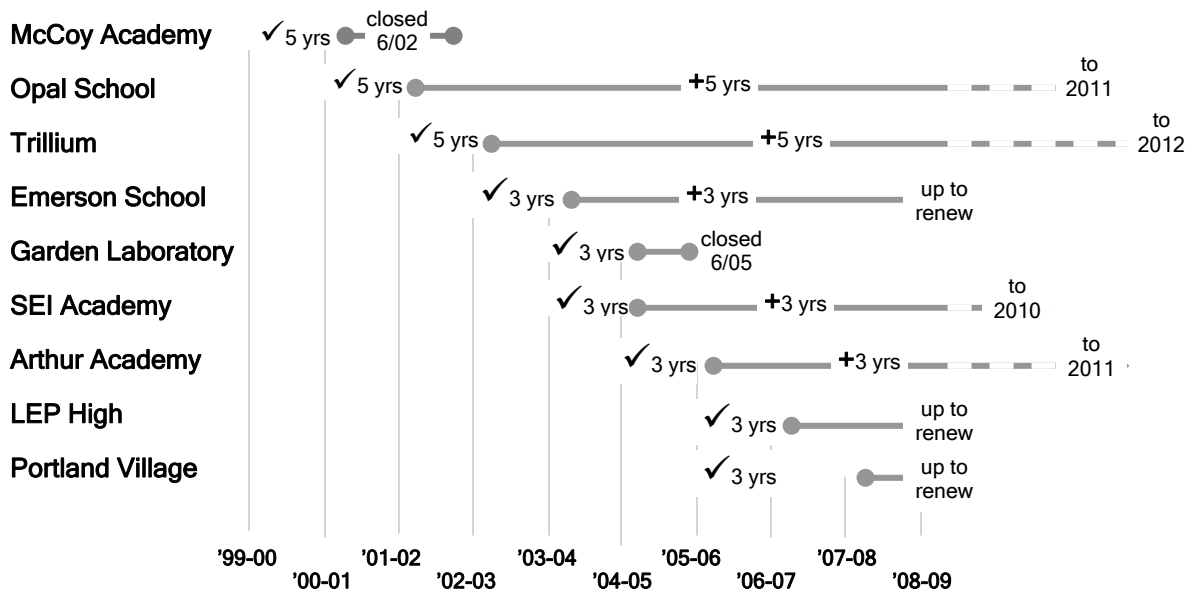
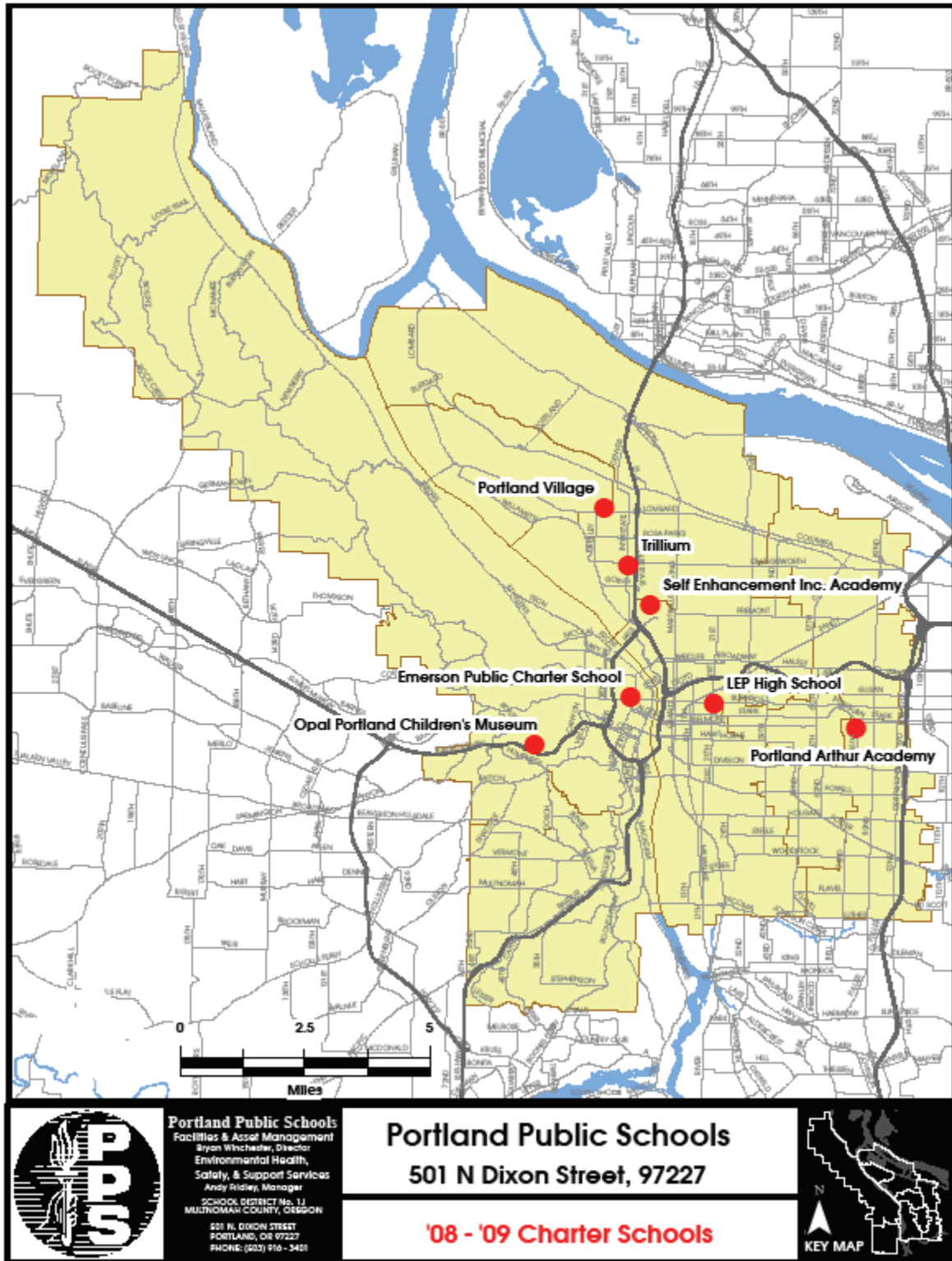


Figure 2 Map of PPS charter school locations



Charter schools in other states

Since Minnesota passed the first charter school legislation in 1991, over 40 states have passed similar legislation. According to the Center of Education Reform, there were over 3,500 charter schools serving over 1 million students in 2006. The states of Texas, Michigan, Arizona, Florida, and California alone are reported to have over 300,000 charter school students.

Despite this growth and enthusiasm for charter schools, my research shows that the charter school movement continues to face significant opposition from many academics, policy makers, and education professionals. This opposition is based on a number of factors but is founded primarily on the belief that the promise and performance of charter schools is only weakly supported by evidence from research and analysis. Many believe that student achievement in charter schools does not significantly differ from student achievement in other public schools and charter schools are not held any more accountable than other public schools for student achievement.

My review of studies from various states reveals a very mixed assessment of the performance of charter schools. (See Appendix B for summary of literature reviewed.) For every example of an exemplary charter school, there was another example of failure. While some studies showed positive impacts on student achievement, others show mixed or negative results. However, I did identify some common themes from these studies that may help provide context for my analysis of the seven charter schools operating in the Portland Public School district. It should be noted that it is difficult to generalize about charter school performance nationwide or even within a single region because of the differences in state laws authorizing the charters and the unique operating and teaching approaches applied by each charter. Nevertheless, some of the consistent themes identified in research and analysis of charter schools are as follows:

- Little evidence to support transfer of innovation or learning from charters to public schools
- Parents are generally supportive and satisfied with the charter school experience
- Charters sometimes face sanctions for financial reasons but rarely face sanctions for non-performance in student achievement
- Transportation is a significant barrier to student choice to enroll in charter schools and may limit low-income participation in charters

- Many charter schools lack specific, measurable performance goals against which to measure and assess accomplishments
- Charter schools employ fewer certified teachers than other public schools but usually comply with certification requirements of state laws
- Charter schools generally have strong parental involvement and small supportive communities that may support student achievement

Audit objectives, scope, and methodology

This audit had four primary objectives:

- To evaluate PPS charter school historical trends in enrollment, demographics, grade levels, and other factors over the past nine years
- To determine the degree to which Portland public charter schools met performance goals and charter agreements
- To assess the impact of PPS charter schools on school district funding, administrative costs, and enrollment
- To identify opportunities to improve the oversight, management, and accountability of PPS charter schools

To address these objectives we collected charter school data from State of Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Adequate Yearly Progress reports and Report Cards, ODE charter surveys, PPS enrollment and achievement reports, and charter school files maintained at PPS. We reviewed charter school proposals, annual reports and plans, and evaluated PPS reports on charter school visits and compliance. We also reviewed and analyzed financial records of payments made to each charter school in 2007-08 and estimated costs associated with monitoring and overseeing charter schools and costs associated with providing special education to charter school students. To assess charter school financial stability, we reviewed annual financial statements and quarterly financial reports. To determine enrollment impacts, we obtained data on neighborhood residence areas of students attending charters and estimated potential capture rates. We interviewed PPS officials including the school board members, the charter school manager, special education staff, finance and IT employees, research and evaluation officials, state ODE charter school officials, and other PPS personnel with charter school involvement. We also visited each of the seven charter schools and interviewed the charter directors. We also collected and analyzed academic research, publications, and other studies of charter schools nationwide and in other states.

We limited the audit to an assessment of the performance and impact of the seven charter schools currently sponsored by the PPS. We did not evaluate charter schools located in the district that are sponsored by the state ODE or charter schools located in other school districts. We also did not perform a detailed on-site review of the operations and management systems at each charter school to determine the adequacy of financial and administrative controls, personnel management, or health and safety. We also did

not analyze the processes for charter application submittal, review, approval, denial and renewal, or the processes for appeal and review by the ODE. Finally, we did not evaluate the types and amounts of private funding received by charters or the funds obtained to plan and develop charters.

This audit was conducted in accordance with the 2008 Audit Plan approved by the Portland School Board. It was performed during the months of September, October, November, and December of 2008. I was assisted on this audit by an independent performance audit consultant, Kathryn Nichols.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for my findings and conclusions based on my audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

RESULTS

The sections that follow are organized in four major sections that relate to the audit objectives. Audit results include information on:

- Historical trends in charter school enrollment and demographics, and a description of charter school instructional approaches
- Charter school performance meeting charter agreements related to school operations, instruction, student achievement, innovation and parent satisfaction
- The potential impact of charter schools on district administrative costs, special education demands, neighborhood school enrollment, and district resources
- Opportunities to improve district oversight and accountability of charter schools.

Four appendices beginning on page 79 provide additional detail on each of the charter schools operating in Portland, a summary of literature and research on charter schools, data on annual gains in charter student achievement scores, and complete survey data on each of Portland's charter schools responding to the annual ODE survey.

**PPS charter schools:
Enrollment trends, demographic comparisons, and instructional approaches**

PPS charter school enrollment has steadily increased over the past eight years mirroring statewide and national growth in charter school enrollment. However, the demographics of charter school students in Portland differ somewhat from other charters in the state and nationwide. Portland charter students are less likely to be low-income, minority, or English-language learners. Compared to other students in the Portland district, PPS charter schools have lower percentages of minority students, English language learners, and students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Charter schools also have a lower proportion of talented and gifted students (TAG) but about the same proportion of special education students.

Enrollment in PPS charters mirrors statewide growth. Student enrollment in charter schools since 2000-01 has increased steadily statewide and in the Portland Public School district. As shown in the Figure 3 below, charter school enrollment is 2.2 percent of total statewide enrollment in 2007-08 and 2.3 percent of total student enrollment at PPS. Figure 4 shows that charter school enrollment at PPS has grown from 66 in 2000-01 to 1,080 in 2007-08.

Figure 3 Charter school enrollment trends: Statewide and PPS

	Statewide enrollment		PPS enrollment	
	TOTAL	CHARTERS	TOTAL	CHARTERS
2000-01	545,680	622 (0.1%)	53,096	66 (0.1%)
2001-02	551,679	1,009 (0.2%)	52,907	122 (0.2%)
2002-03	554,071	1,926 (0.3%)	51,612	194 (0.4%)
2003-04	551,410	3,662 (0.7%)	48,294	346 (0.7%)
2004-05	552,339	5,054 (0.9%)	47,603	451 (0.9%)
2005-06	559,254	6,952 (1.2%)	47,008	571 (1.2%)
2006-07	562,828	9,851 (1.8%)	46,375	824 (1.8%)
2007-08	566,067	11,592 (2.0%)	46,297	1,080 (2.3%)

Source: Oregon Department of Education

Figure 4 PPS Charter school enrollment trends (October 1, Fall enrollment)

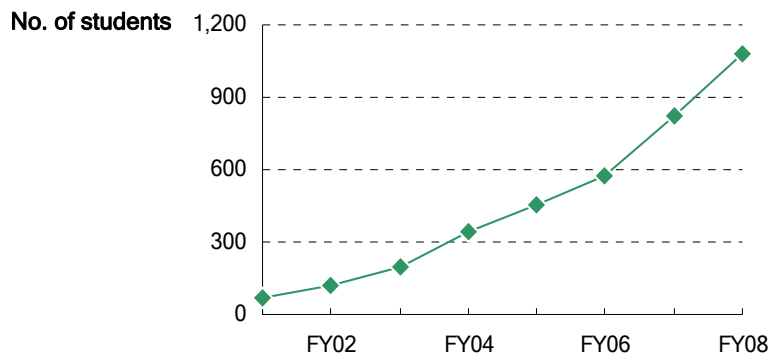
	'00-01	'01-02	'02-03	'03-04	'04-05	'05-06	'06-07	'07-08
Opal	•	25	42	50	71	81	75	76
Emerson	•	•	•	98	97	121	126	131
Arthur Academy	•	•	•	•	•	54	91	117
Portland Village	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	158
SEI Academy	•	•	•	•	49	92	134	137
LEP High	•	•	•	•	•	•	102	147
Trillium	•	•	152	198	199	223	296	314
TOTAL	66*	122*	194	346	416	571	824	1,080

* Includes enrollment in McCoy Academy that closed 6/02

Source: Oregon Department of Education

Enrollment in PPS public charter schools varies significantly. As shown in Figure 4, in 2007-08 Trillium School had the largest enrollment at 314 students which comprises almost one third of the PPS district charter school students. Opal School had the lowest enrollment at 76. Enrollment varies given the age of the school and the number of grades served. For example, Trillium serves grades K through 12 and has been in operation for six years, while Opal School serves only grades K-5 and has been in operation for 7 years but is at maximum capacity. Other newer schools like Portland Village School are currently K-5 but plan to expand to K-8 in the future. LEP High opened only two years ago and is marketing to fill all openings. As of the fall of 2008-09, only Opal School was at maximum capacity. Other schools had openings in certain grades and used a lottery to select applicants.

Figure 5 Growth in PPS charter school enrollment: 2000-01 to 2007-08



Demographics at PPS charter schools generally differ from national and statewide charters and PPS public schools. On average, PPS charter school students are less likely to be low-income, minority, or English language learners than the national average of students enrolled in charter schools. As shown in Figure 6 below, 52 percent of charter school students nationally are eligible for free/reduced lunch versus 35 percent in PPS charters; 12 percent are English language learners nationally compared to 1 percent in Portland; and 60 percent of students in charters are classified as minorities nationwide compared to 34 percent at PPS charter students. When compared to other Oregon charter school students, PPS charters enrolled fewer low income students (35 percent vs. 41 percent) and English language learners (1% vs. 12%) but more minority students (35% vs. 28%). The percent of PPS charter school students with special education needs is comparable to other Oregon charter schools and higher than the national average for charter school enrollments.

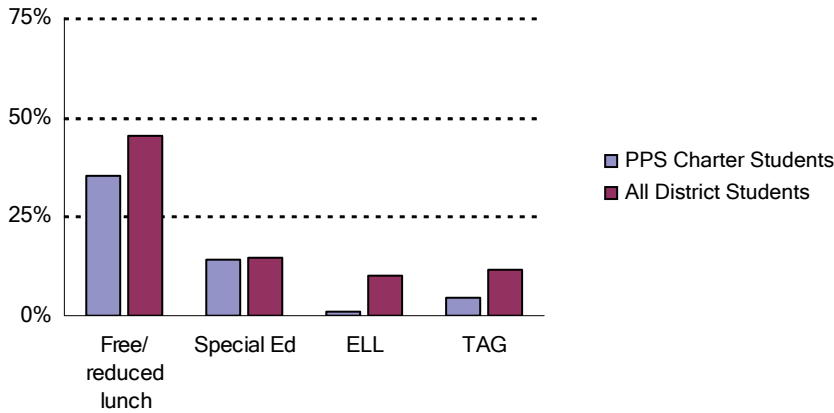
Figure 6 Demographic comparisons: PPS, Oregon, and US charter schools (2007-08)

	PPS	OREGON	NATIONAL
Charter students vs. public school enrollment	2%	2%	3%
Percent free/reduced lunch	35%	42%	52%
Percent Special Ed	14%	13%	11%
Percent English Language Learners (ELL)	1%	12%	12%
Percent Talented and Gifted (TAG)	5%	8%	<i>n.a.</i>
Percent minority	35%	28%	60%

Source: PPS Statistics from Fall Enrollment Reports produced by PPS Office of Data and Policy Analysis. Oregon statistics obtained from ODE. National statistics obtained from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

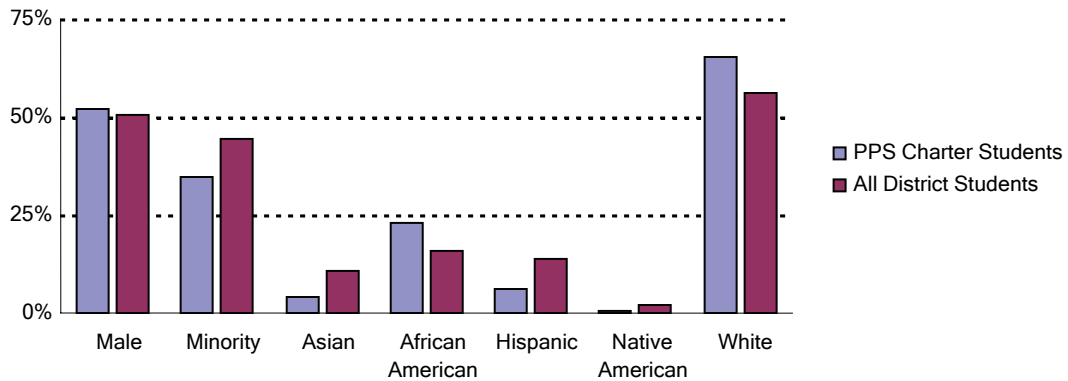
As shown in the following two graphs (Figure 7 and Figure 8), compared to Portland’s district-wide enrollment, PPS charter schools have on average a lower percent of low-income students, English language learners, and talented and gifted students. PPS charter schools also have a lower percent of minority students and a higher percent of white students compared to district-wide averages. However, charter schools have a higher percent of African-American students primarily due to the high number of African-American students enrolled at one school. Special education students are enrolled in charters at about the same rate as district-wide schools.

Figure 7 Comparison of students in PPS charters to all district students (2007-08)



Source: Fall Enrollment Reports from PPS Office of Data and Policy Analysis

Figure 8 PPS charter students vs. district students: Gender and ethnicity (2007-08)



Source: Fall Enrollment Reports from PPS Office of Data and Policy Analysis

The student demographic profiles at individual PPS charter schools vary significantly. As shown in the Figure 9 below, some of the most significant differences are:

- Three of four elementary charters (Opal, Emerson, and Portland Village School) enroll predominantly white students (76%, 80%, and 82%, respectively) and also have relatively low percentages of lower income students (20%, 18%, and 10%, respectively) identified by eligibility for free or reduced lunch.

- Portland Arthur Academy is the one charter school that comes closest to matching student demographics of the District as a whole.
- Trillium students are less likely to be low-income (29% versus 45%) and minority (18% versus 44%) than district students overall.
- Almost all of the students at SEI Academy are African-American (96%) and three-quarters (76%) of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch.
- The percentage of minority students attending LEP High exceeds the overall District percentage (49% versus 45%), as does the percentage of students that qualify for free/reduced lunch. LEP High also has a higher percent of TAG students (27%) and Hispanic students (16%) than any other charter.
- Both Trillium and Portland Arthur Academy enroll a disproportionately higher percent of male students.
- Generally, PPS charters enroll a comparable percentage of special education students as district schools but a much lower percentage of talented and gifted students.

Figure 9 PPS charter school demographic information (2007-08)

	Free/Reduced lunch	Special ed	ELL	TAG	Minority
Opal	20%	17%	0%	0%	24%
Emerson	18%	13%	0%	1%	20%
Arthur Academy	32%	13%	1%	0%	33%
Portland Village	10%	8%	0%	1%	18%
SEI Academy	76%	19%	0%	10%	99%
LEP High	63%	16%	7%	27%	49%
Trillium	29%	14%	0%	10%	18%
Total all PPS charters	35%	14%	1%	5%	35%
Total all District students	45%	15%	10%	12%	44%

	Male	Asian	African American	Hispanic	Native American	White
Opal	49%	4%	12%	5%	0%	76%
Emerson	43%	4%	12%	4%	0%	80%
Arthur Academy	59%	10%	15%	4%	2%	68%
Portland Village	56%	4%	7%	6%	1%	82%
SEI Academy	43%	1%	96%	2%	0%	1%
LEP High	49%	3%	26%	16%	1%	51%
Trillium	58%	3%	8%	5%	1%	83%
Total all PPS charters	52%	4%	23%	6%	1%	65%
Total all District students	51%	11%	16%	14%	2%	56%

Source: Fall Enrollment Reports produced by PPS Office of Data and Policy Analysis

Instructional approaches at PPS charter schools vary significantly. As shown in Figure 10 below, PPS charter schools provide a variety of grade level and instructional approach options. Four schools provide K-5 elementary education, one school provides grades 6-8 middle school instruction, and one charter provides a 9-12 high school program. Only one charter school provides a full range of grades from K through high school.

PPS charter schools also provide a variety of instructional approaches. For example, Opal applies Reggio Emilia early-childhood principles and experiential learning, Portland Village School uses Waldorf methods integrating arts into instruction, and Portland Arthur Academy uses Direct Instruction methods with strong emphasis on building reading and writing fluency. SEI Academy does not have a clearly identified instructional model. Charters also have various similarities - most use mixed-age classrooms and some type of project-based learning activity. PPS does not currently sponsor any charter offering Montessori or on-line instruction.

Figure 10 Charter school grade levels and instructional approaches (2008-09)

School Grades/level	Instructional Approach:	
	per ODE	per school website
Opal K-5/ Elementary	Inquiry-based Core Knowledge	Based on early childhood principles of Reggio Emilia with mixed-age classes. Child-centered, arts-focused, experiential learning.
Emerson K-5/ Elementary	Inquiry-based	Project-based learning with positive discipline and community service focus. Direct instruction in reading, writing and math. Mixed-age classes.
Arthur Academy K-5/ Elementary	Direct Instruction, Core Knowledge, Mastery Learning	Direct Instruction with strong focus on building reading fluency and literacy
Portland Village K-5/ Elementary	Whole Child Arts Integrated	Waldorf (whole child with emphasis on the arts and nature) with adaptations to support early literacy
SEI Academy 6-8/Middle	Individualized Instruction	Instruction model not clearly specified. Social services, mentoring, after-school programs, and enrichment to enhance academic achievement.
LEP High 9-11/High	Project-based Interdisciplinary	Project-based learning. Focus includes interdisciplinary integration, service learning, and leadership.
Trillium K-12/All	Contextual Learning	Mixed-age classes with focus on the arts, sustainability, service learning, democratic education, and community/global orientation.

PPS charter school performance

Overall, Portland charter schools have achieved many of their school operations and instructional goals but some charters are struggling to stay financially stable. In addition, student achievement performance is mixed and the transfer of innovation to public schools is limited. Parents and charter school staff express significant satisfaction with their charter school experience despite concerns about resources and facilities.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND INSTRUCTION

Most charters meet goals for enrollment, grade levels, and teacher/student ratios. PPS Charter schools have generally achieved goals related to student enrollment including the maximum/minimum number of planned enrollments, the number of grade levels offered, average class sizes, and student to staff ratios. As shown in the Figure 11 below, four schools with the longest tenure (Opal, Emerson, SEI Academy, and Trillium) are closest to maximum capacity and each uses a lottery system to enroll new students in grades that are not full. Arthur Academy has grown in each of the three years of operation. Portland Village is in its only second year of operation and plans to add a new grade in each of the next three years as existing students advance to the next level. LEP High added 11th grade in 2008-09 and plans to add 12th grade in 2009-10

LEP High is running considerably behind enrollment plans for two reasons. First, it is in its third year of operation and plans to add a 12th grade next year to its current 9-11 configuration. Second, LEP High has space limitations in its current facility. Without additional space or a new facility, it is unlikely that it will be able to enroll additional students to meet planned growth.

Most Charter schools have student to teacher ratios that are lower than initially planned in their charter proposals. Only Opal School and SEI Academy have slightly higher ratios than initially envisioned. Compared to the PPS district average, charter schools have a very comparable student to teacher ratio –14.8 students per teacher compared to a district average of 14.4.

Although the charters did not all establish firm goals for class size, six of seven charters have average class sizes that are lower than the district average. On average, charters have lower class sizes than the district average – 21.4 compared to 23.9.

Figure 11 Charter school goals for enrollment, grade levels, and student teacher ratios (2007-08)

	Enrollment		Grade levels		Student teacher ratio		Average class size
	Max planned	Actual '07-08	Proposed	Actual '07-08	Planned	Actual* '07-08	
Opal	80	76	K-5	K-5	10:1	11:1	26.0
Emerson	132	131	K-5	K-5	22:1	18:1	20.7
Arthur Academy	160	117	K-5	K-4	14.5:1	15.4:1	22.5
Portland Village	396	158	K-8	K-4	22:1	13.4:1	23.2
SEI Academy	150	137	6-8	6-8	10:1	12.6:1	22.3
LEP High	408	147	9-12	9-10	20:1	15.5:1	22.7
Trillium	360	314	K-12	K-12	<i>unspecified</i>	16.3:1	18.4
Charter average						14.8:1	21.4
District average						14.4:1	23.9

Source: Auditor calculation using Charter school proposals, ODE Report Cards, and PPS 2007-08 School Profiles data

* Average daily membership compared to classroom full-time equivalents (teachers and educational assistants).

Most charters have stable attendance and enrollment. On average, charter schools have stable student populations as evidence by attendance rates, stable enrollments, and late enrollee ratios. Although not all charter schools are required to maintain a specific attendance rate, PPS charter school contracts require reporting of attendance rates and the federal No Child Left Behind legislation considers student attendance an important factor in assessing school performance.

As shown in Figure 12, all PPS charters but LEP High School met or exceeded district average attendance rates in 2007-08. SEI Academy's attendance rate in 2006-07 was lower than the district average but improved in the next year. While LEP High's attendance rate was well below the district average in 2007-08, it is more comparable to the average attendance rate for district high schools - 87 percent compared to 88.5 percent. LEP has indicated that it will improve attendance over three years to reach 94 percent by end of year 3.

Figure 12 Charter school and district attendance rates (2006-07 and 2007-08)

	Attendance		District comparison*
	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07
Opal	95%	94%	94%
Emerson	94%	95%	94%
Arthur Academy	94%	94%	94%
Portland Village	<i>n.a.</i>	93%	94%
SEI Academy	90%	94%	93%
LEP High	84%	87%	89%
Trillium	94%	95%	92%
All charter schools	92%	93%	
District totals	92%	93%	

Source: ODE report cards, PPS School Profiles and Enrollment Data

* Based on comparable school type identified as comparable by ODE

Charter school enrollment stability can also be measured using the District’s stability index and late enrollee ratio. The stability index is the percentage of students who were enrolled at the same school through most of the year compared to all students enrolled October 1. The late enrollee index shows the extent to which student enrollment was stable or complete by the beginning of the school year October 1.

As shown in Figure 13 below, on average, charter schools had a slightly lower stability index than the district average in 2006-07 and significantly higher late enrollee ratio. While four charters individually exceeded or nearly met the district average for comparable grade levels, LEP High and Trillium had stability indices that were much lower than comparable grade levels and late enrollee ratios that were significantly higher than comparable grade levels. A lower stability index and high late enrollee index may indicate student enrollment, admission, retention, and attendance problems. However, admission and enrollment at LEP may have been more difficult in 2006-07 because it was the first year of operation and enrollment and admissions at Trillium may have been affected by a move to a new facility that year.

Figure 13 Charter schools and district Stability Index and Late Enrollee ratio (2006-07)

	Late enrollee ratio	District comparison	Stability Index	District comparison
Opal	1.3%	8.3%	101.3%	92.7%
Emerson	7.1%	8.3%	91.3%	92.7%
Arthur Academy	2.2%	8.3%	96.7%	92.7%
Portland Village	<i>n.a.</i>	8.3%	<i>n.a.</i>	92.7%
SEI Academy	0.7%	7.1%	98.5%	93.5%
LEP High	27.5%	5.9%	72.5%	88.5%
Trillium	19.6%	7.9%	86.1%	91.2%
All charter schools	12.0%		89.8%	
District totals	7.9%		91.2%	

Source: ODE Report Cards and PPS School Profiles and Enrollment Data

PPS charter schools are also required by contract to report annually on their year-to-year retention rates. Contracts require each school to provide data on the number of students who have withdrawn from enrollment in the past year, the number of new students who have enrolled in each grade, and the number of students who have returned from the prior year. However, charter school retention is difficult to evaluate because only three charter schools have provided this data and the District does not collect data on retention rates at other district schools against which to compare charter school retention. If retention rate is considered an important metric, additional effort is needed to collect complete data, calculate a rate, and develop comparison target.

Charter school teachers are less experienced, educated, and qualified than district teachers. PPS charter school teachers have considerably less teaching experience than District teachers. As shown in Figure 14 below, PPS teachers average 14.2 years of teaching experience while charter teachers average 6.7 years of experience. Teachers at Opal and SEI Academy have the highest level of experience, 7.8 and 8.2 years respectively, and LEP High has the least experienced teachers at 3.9 years. The percent of teachers with Master’s degrees is also lower at charter schools (53%) than at other district public schools (66%). However, three PPS charter schools (Opal, Emerson, and Trillium) have a higher percent of teachers with Masters degrees than the district average. Only 5 percent of the teachers at Portland Arthur Academy have a Masters degree.

In addition, the percent of classes taught by teachers identified as Highly Qualified in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind legislation is lower in PPS charter schools than in other district schools - 75 percent of classes are taught by highly qualified teachers in charter schools versus 94 percent in district schools. However, PPS charter schools easily comply with state legislation that requires at least 50 percent of teachers and administrators at charter schools to be licensed by the Teacher Standards and Practice Commission (TSPC). As of the 2008-09 school year, 68 percent of PPS charter school teachers and administrators were licensed by the TSPC. Teachers at Opal and Emerson schools are 100 percent licensed compared to 57 percent at Trillium and 52 percent at Portland Village School.

Figure 14 Teacher qualifications: Charter schools compared to PPS district (2007-08)

	Average years experience	Masters degree	Classes taught by HQTs	Licensed teachers & administration *
Opal	7.8	100%	100%	100%
Emerson	6.3	69%	100%	100%
Arthur Academy	6.8	5%	100%	77%
Portland Village	6.7	35%	70%	52%
SEI Academy	8.2	34%	57%	67%
LEP High	3.9	51%	70%	67%
Trillium	6.9	70%	67%	57%
All charters	6.7	53%	75%	68 %
PPS District	14.2	66%	94%	<i>n.a.</i>

Source: Compiled from ODE Report Cards and District Charter School files

* 2008-09 data

State instructional hour requirements are achieved. PPS charter schools are achieving minimum amounts of annual hours of instruction in compliance with state regulations. As indicated in Figure 15 below, Opal, Emerson, Portland Village, Arthur Academy, SEI Academy, LEP High, and Trillium meet or exceed minimum requirements for each grade level represented at the school.

However, assessing compliance with instructional hour requirements requires significant effort to determine because each school provides the data in various formats and essential information on class schedules is not always available. A common template, annual school calendar, and daily class schedules would help improve reporting of instructional hours.

Figure 15 PPS charter school instructional hour compliance (2008-09)

	Grade	Hours of instruction	Statutory minimum	Compliance
Opal	K	444	405	yes
	1	858	810	yes
	2, 3	901	810	yes
	4, 5	904	900	yes
Emerson	K	812	405	yes
	1, 2, 3	828	810	yes
	4, 5	902	900	yes
Arthur Academy	K	?	405	?
	1, 2, 3	935	810	yes
	4, 5	935	900	yes
Portland Village	K	520	405	yes
	1, 2, 3	824	810	yes
	4	940	900	yes
	5	911	900	yes
SEI Academy	6,7,8	926	900	yes
LEP High	9,10,11,12	1062	990	yes
Trillium	K	425	405	yes
	1,2,3,4,5	893	810	yes
	6,7,8	1020	900	yes
	9,10,11,12	1020	990	yes

Lack of timely financial reporting inhibits assessment of charter school financial stability.

It was not possible to fully assess the financial stability of PPS charter schools because three of seven charters have not submitted audited financial statements for the 2007-08 school year. Although state legislation and each charter contract requires an audit to be performed in accordance with municipal audit law, Opal, LEP High, and Trillium had not submitted audited financial statement by February 25, 2009, eight months after the end of the school year and reporting period. Our analysis of charter school budget performance, financial position, and fiscal health is limited to Emerson, Portland Village, Arthur Academy, and SEI Academy. [Auditor note: LEP High provided audited financial statement to PPS on February 27, 2009.]

Based on an analysis of budget to actual financial statements shown in Figure 16, three of the four schools ended the 2007-08 school year with a surplus. Revenues exceeded expenditures for Emerson, Portland Village, and Arthur Academy. SEI ended the year with a deficit because actual revenues were 17 percent less than planned and actual expenditures were 10 percent more than planned, resulting in a year end deficit of over \$31,000. Emerson, Portland Village, and Arthur Academy had positive ending balances of \$159,000, \$148,000, and \$187,000, respectively.

All four charter schools failed to submit quarterly reports on time as required by charter contracts. Emerson had one late report, SEI and Arthur had two late reports, and Portland Village had three late reports. These quarterly financial reports allow periodic monitoring of revenue and expenditures each 3-month period to assess the degree to which financial plans for the year are occurring as desired and to ensure that deviations are identified early so that correction action can be taken. Timely quarterly reports are more important this current year due to reduced state revenues provided to school districts and their sponsored charter schools, and the resulting need to modify budgets in view of declining resources.

Total expenditures per enrolled student at charter schools in 2007-08 varied significantly. * Arthur Academy had the lowest expenditure per student at \$5,198, followed by Emerson at \$5,983 and Portland Village at \$6,297. SEI Academy had the highest expenditure per student of the four schools analyzed at \$7,431. Expenditures per student at SEI are higher primarily because they spend more per student on teacher and administrator salaries.

* Expenditures per student does not include PPS district spending on students with disabilities receiving special education services at the charter schools.

Our analysis of the 2007-08 audited financial statements from the four charters showed that each received an unqualified or “clean” opinion from their independent financial auditors. Although the auditors identified some deficiencies in the structure and operation of the charter school internal controls, no material weaknesses in internal controls were found at any of the four charters receiving a financial statement audit.

As shown in the table below, the financial position of Emerson, Portland Village, and Arthur Academy improved in 2007-08, showing increases in net assets of \$17,000, \$149,000, and \$152,000, respectively. However, SEI’s financial position deteriorated with a \$101,000 decline in net assets, ending the year with a net asset deficit of \$481 at June 30, 2008. The ability of the four charters to pay their bills as they come due can be determined by analyzing the “current ratio” (a measure of short-term liquidity) of each charter school. Emerson has current assets 4.3 times greater than their current liabilities, while Arthur Academy and Portland Village have current ratios of 3.4 and 2.27, respectively. While there is no generally accepted standard, some professional texts indicate that a minimally acceptable current ratio might be 2.0. SEI’s current ratio of 0.57 means that SEI had more liabilities than assets at June 30, 2008 year end.

Figure 16 Financial assessment of PPS charters (2007-08)

	Emerson	Arthur Academy	Portland Village	SEI
BUDGET ANALYSIS				
% variance from plan (+ or <->)				
Revenues	13%	<6%>	13%	<17%>
Expenditures	<7%>	<17%>	<16%>	10%
Annual budget surplus/deficit	surplus	surplus	surplus	deficit
Ending fund balance	\$158,620	\$186,939	\$147,818	<\$31,115>
Timely quarterly reports	no	no	no	no
Total expenditures per student	\$5,983	\$5,198	\$6,297	\$7,431
FINANCIAL STATEMENT ANALYSIS				
Clean financial statement audit opinion	yes	yes	yes	yes
Change in net assets (+ or <->)	\$16,748	\$151,998	\$148,662	<\$100,694>
Liquidity ratio (current ratio)	4.3	3.4	2.27	0.57
Leverage ratio	0.28	0.37	0.79	<i>n.a.</i>
Identified material weaknesses	none	none	none	none
Revenue from grants & contributions	16%	30%	41%	28%

Source: Audited financial statements, year ended June 30, 2008

Opal, LEP High, and Trillium had not submitted audited financial statements as of 2/25/09.

The degree to which an organization's assets are financed through borrowing or other long-term liabilities can be evaluated by determining a "leverage ratio". As shown in the table below, leverage ratios for Portland Village, Arthur Academy, and Emerson are .79, .37, and .28, respectively, meaning for every dollar of resources Portland Village has available for school services, it owes 79 cents. Similarly, for every dollar Arthur Academy has available for school services, it owes 37 cents and for every dollar Emerson has available for services in owes 28 cents. SEI's leverage ratio could not be determined because of their negative net asset position.

In order to support their school operations, each of the four charters relies on various contributions and grants in addition to their primary source of revenue, the state school funds. As shown, the percent of total revenue from contributions and grants ranges from a high of 41 percent at Portland Village to a low of 16 percent at Emerson. The ability to generate additional contributions and grants beyond the base state school funding helps the charter schools to establish and build new programs and to enhance on-going activities. However, an over-reliance on resources that may not be available on a continuing basis could result in services reductions in the future. The ability to reliably generate resources from outside resources is an important feature to enhance program offerings but close monitoring of the continuing availability of these resources is needed to ensure stable and ongoing operations.

Arthur Academy and SEI Academy have close connections to related parties that provide resources and support to their charter schools. Arthur Academy is one of six separate Arthur Academy charter schools operating in Oregon. Each charter receives management, administrative, and financial support from a separate management arm called the Arthur Academy - General Services. While we did not audit any of the records or operations of the other Arthur Academy entities, we believe a complete analysis of the financial stability and condition of Portland Arthur Academy would require additional information on these entities due to the close relationship of these organizations to Portland Arthur academy and their ability to provide both financial benefits to and financial burdens on Portland Arthur Academy.

In addition, SEI Academy receives administrative and financial support from a related party, Self Enhancement, Inc. Self Enhancement, Inc. reimburses SEI Academy for facilities and overhead charges and contributes operating support revenues to SEI Academy. Reimbursements and contributions to SEI Academy from Self Enhancement, Inc. amounted to \$330,000 for the year ended June 30, 2008, approximately 32 percent of their total expenditures. According to SEI's Management Discussion and Analysis accompanying their financial report for the year ended June 30, 2008, "any revenue shortfalls incurred by the School are covered by operating support from Self

Enhancement, Inc.”. As a result of SEI Academy’s close relationship to and reliance on Self Enhancement, Inc., a complete analysis of the financial stability and condition of the school would require additional financial information about the on-going financial condition of Self Enhancement, Inc.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Performance on state achievement tests is mixed. Figure 17 below shows the percentage of PPS charter school students that Meet or Exceed Oregon state standards on the statewide assessment tests in Reading, Math, and Writing for the 2007-08 school year. Charter school student achievement is compared to comparable schools statewide and to the PPS district average for comparable grades.

Figure 17 Percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards (2007-08)

% = performing more than 2% below district average or statewide comparable schools

	READING			MATH			WRITING		
		Compared to:			Compared to:			Compared to:	
		State	PPS		State	PPS		State	PPS
Opal	>95%	91%	83%	92%	88%	81%	77%	63%	51%
Emerson	92%	92%	83%	91%	90%	81%	40%	61%	51%
Arthur Academy	>95%	89%	86%	>95%	83%	81%	56%	53%	51%
Portland Village	92%	94%	86%	84%	90%	81%	29%	62%	51%
SEI Academy	52%	62%	77%	55%	65%	79%	52%	37%	53%
LEP High	55%	53%	66%	27%	40%	56%	32%	46%	62%
Trillium	76%	81%	78%	65%	78%	77%	35%	56%	55%

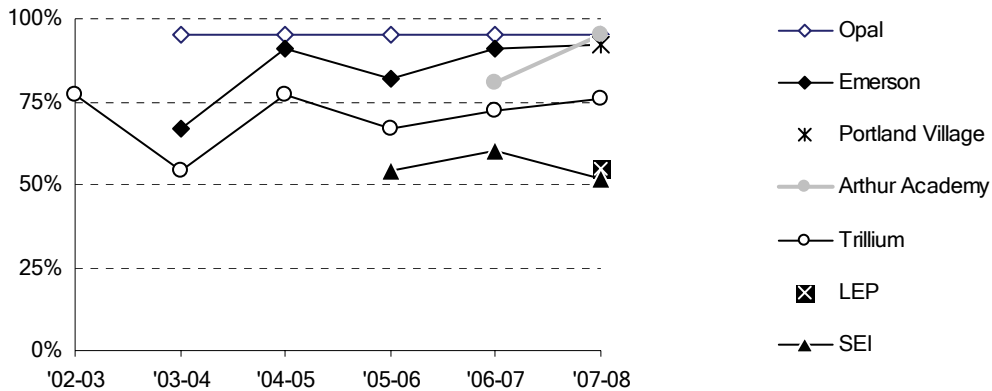
Source: ODE Report Cards. Statewide comparable schools with similar student populations of free/reduced lunch, mobility, attendance rates, and English language learners. PPS district wide average of schools with comparable grade levels.

READING: As shown in the figure above, charter schools with only elementary grades (Opal, Emerson, Arthur Academy, and Portland Village) generally outperform or at least perform as well as comparable statewide and district schools on Reading achievement tests. However, charter schools serving middle- and high-school students do less well than comparable statewide and district averages. For example, only 52 percent of students at SEI met standards in reading compared to 62 percent of students in comparable schools statewide and 77 percent of PPS district schools with comparable grades. LEP High students reading scores were slightly higher than comparable schools

statewide (55% vs. 53%) but significantly below district averages for high schools (55% vs. 66%). Trillium’s average reading scores fell short of both comparable schools and PPS district averages.

In some cases, charter schools have improved scores on Reading assessments overtime time as shown in the figure below. Specifically, Emerson and Arthur Academy have each seen improvements in Reading assessments. Opal School has maintained very high scores from its inception and 92 percent of Portland Village students exceed state standards in its first year of operation. Only SEI has seen a drop in Reading scores over a three year period and Trillium reading scores have remained relatively flat over six years. LEP High has only one year of assessment data.

Figure 18 Percent of students meeting or exceeding READING standards



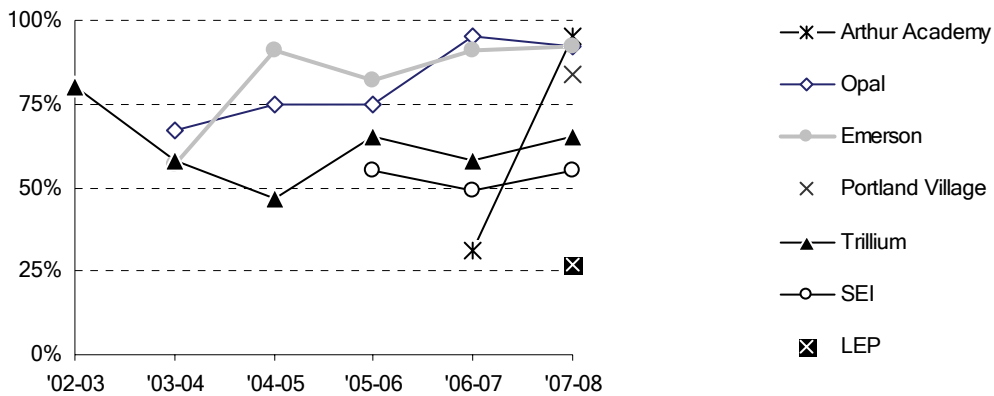
Source: State ODE Report Cards. NOTE: Data for 04-05 through 07-08 updated by ODE to reflect current performance standards, adopted in 06-07. Assessment data for 02-03 and 03-04 based on performance standards previously in effect.

MATH: As shown in Figure 17 on the prior page, charter school performance on state Math assessment tests generally parallel the Reading results - charters with elementary grades perform better than comparable schools, and charters with middle and high school grades perform worse than comparable schools. Although Portland Village achieved higher levels of success than PPS district elementary schools, it fell short of meeting Math standards when compared to other schools statewide with similar demographics. The percent of students meeting or exceeding Oregon Math standards at SEI Academy, LEP High, and Trillium was significantly lower than other schools with similar demographics

statewide and much lower than PPS district averages. In particular, only 27 percent of LEP students met state standards in Math. This compares to 56 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards in other PPS high schools and 40 percent of students attending schools statewide with comparable demographics.

As shown below, three charters (Opal, Emerson, and Arthur Academy) have achieved significant improvements in Math assessment scores. The percent of students meeting or exceeding state standards increased by 25 points at Opal and 35 points at Emerson from their first year of operation, and over 64 points at Arthur Academy from their second year of operation. Conversely, SEI math scores have remained flat over a three year period and Trillium has experienced a 15 percentage point decline over a five year period.

Figure 19 Percent of charter students meeting or exceeding MATH standards

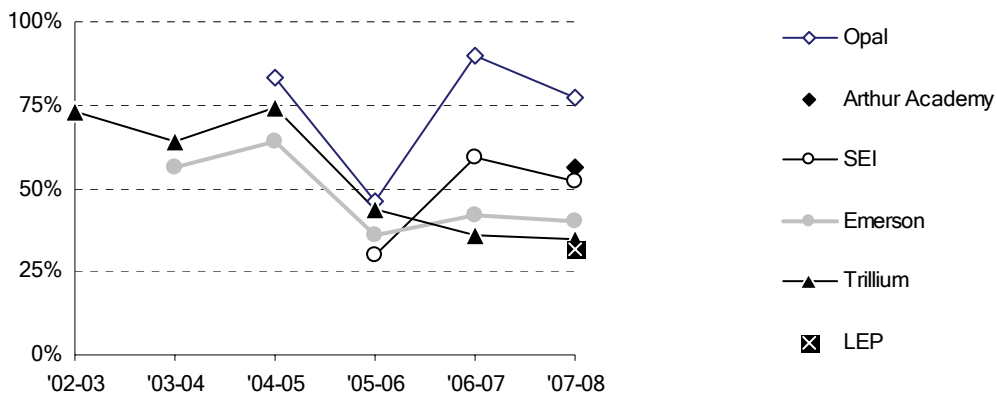


Source: State ODE Report Cards. NOTE: Data for 04-05 through 07-08 updated by ODE to reflect current performance standards, adopted in 06-07. Assessment data for 02-03 and 03-04 based on performance standards previously in effect.

WRITING: Charter school performance on state Writing assessment tests is much lower than in Reading and Math. Only three charters out of seven (Opal, Emerson and Arthur Academy) met the goals of their charter contract to meet or exceed PPS district writing scores. Only three charters had better than the average of comparable schools statewide. Some consideration could be given to LEP and Portland Village due to their relative newness and unfamiliarity with state writing assessments. However, Emerson and Trillium did not meet or exceed district writing scores but have been operating for many years and have been rewarded with contract renewals. Scores have declined since contract renewals with both of these charters.

Charter schools have had difficulty improving writing scores. As shown below, Writing assessment scores for three charters (Opal, Emerson, and Trillium) declined from their first year of operation. Only SEI had an increase in Writing scores over its three years of operation from 30 percent meeting or exceeding to 52 percent meeting or exceeding. Trillium has experienced the most significant decline in writing scores, dropping from 73 percent meeting or exceeding in 2002-03 to 35 percent meeting or exceeding in 2007-08, a 38 point decline.

Figure 20 Percent of charter students meeting or exceeding WRITING standards



Source: State ODE Report Cards

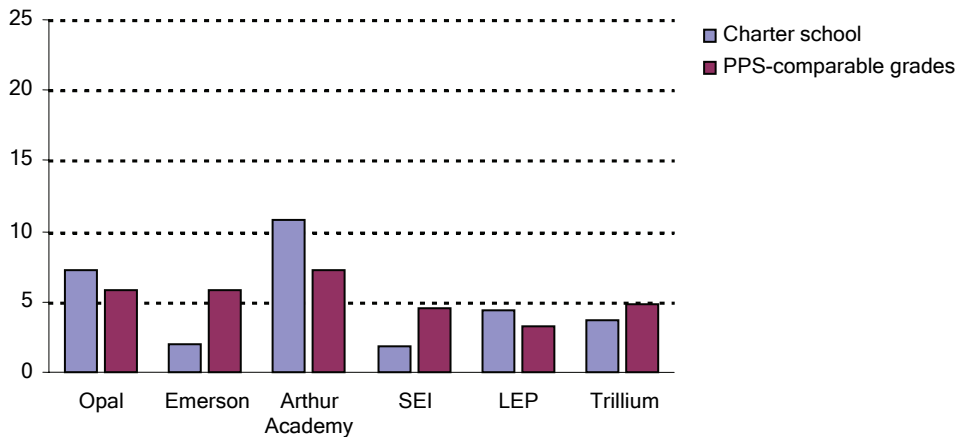
Most charter school students have smaller average annual gains* in Reading and Math achievement than PPS students. Graphs 21 and 22 illustrate the average student gain in achievement scores in Reading and Math from 2006-07 to 2007-08 at PPS charter schools and at PPS district schools. As shown, three charters had greater average gains in Reading than the PPS average and three charters had smaller gains than PPS average. (Portland Village is not included because it has only one year of testing experience.) In Math, only one charter school (Arthur Academy) out of six had larger average gains than PPS district gains.

* The PPS Office of Research and Evaluation produces a report on the amount of gain in achievement scores from one testing period to the next that is a useful indicator of individual student progress from one school year to the next. The Office calculates the change in test scores in each of the subject areas by grade level for students that have been enrolled in the same school for two consecutive years. While there is no established target or goal for expected gain, students will typically improve by 2-10 points. However, year-to-year gains are quite variable. Elementary gains are usually higher than in higher grades and low-achieving students tend to have higher gains than high achieving students.

Appendix C provides more specific detail on the number of students included in the gain analysis by grade level at each charter school and the average gain for all PPS students at that grade level. Of the 28 individual grades tested in charter schools, only 8 exceeded the district average gains for that grade level. Approximately 160 charter school students demonstrated greater achievement gains in Reading and Math than the average PPS grade gain but 505 charter school students showed lower gains than the average grade level gain at PPS district schools.

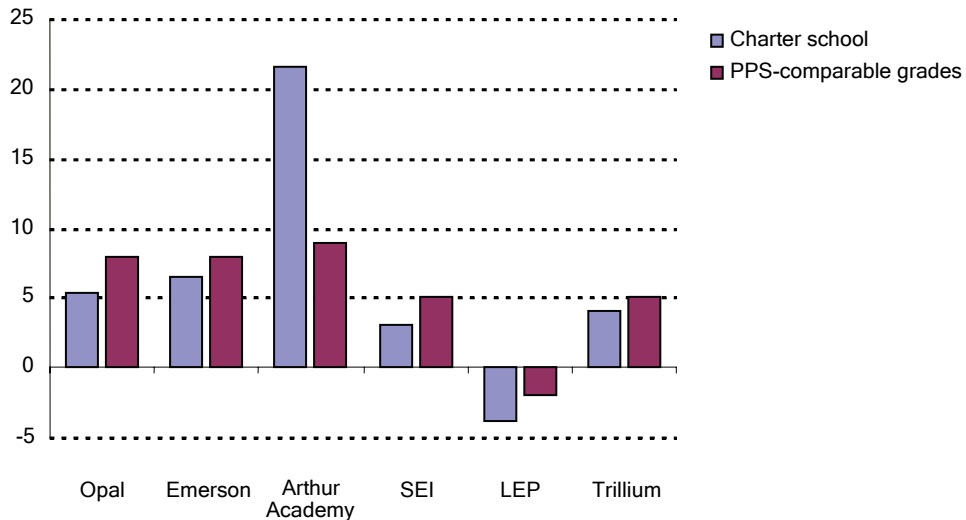
It should be noted that schools and students with high achievement scores will generally demonstrate a smaller gain than schools and students that have lower scores because the opportunity to improve high scores is smaller than the opportunity to improve low scores. Consequently, charter schools with higher percentages of students that meet or exceed state standards like Opal and Emerson may demonstrate lower gains on average than PPS district schools with lower average achievement scores. Also, one might expect that charters with lower average state achievement test scores would be able to demonstrate larger gains. This has not been the case for SEI Academy or Trillium.

Figure 21 One-year gains in state READING scores for charter schools vs. PPS charters: 2006-07 to 2007-08



Source: PPS Research and Evaluation

Figure 22 One-year gains in state MATH scores for charter schools vs. PPS charters: 2006-07 to 2007-08



Source: PPS Research and Evaluation

Most charters meeting federal Annual Yearly Progress standards. All public schools including charters are subject to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements that are established by federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. New schools are not given an AYP rating until their second year of operations. In order to make AYP, public schools must meet all the targets in five specific areas. Targets are established for these five areas each year. In addition, in order to make AYP, students in each of nine specific socio-economic and demographic subcategories must meet targets.*

For 2007-08, AYP requirements were:

- Participation in testing - at least 95 percent of all students in the school must participate in annual state achievement tests
- Achievement in math and reading - at least 60 percent must meet or exceed the statewide standards in reading, and at least 59 percent must meet or exceed the statewide standards in math

* Federal Annual Yearly Progress socio-economic and demographic categories include: economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, students with disabilities, and each primary race/ethnic groups.

- Graduation rates - High schools must graduate 68 percent of students
- Attendance rates - at least 92 percent of enrolled students must attend

As shown in Figure 23 below, two of the six PPS charters rated did not meet federal AYP requirements in 2007-08. LEP High School failed to meet the school attendance target (86 percent compared to the 92 percent target) and the math achievement target (only 49 percent met or exceeded state standard versus the 59 percent target). Trillium School failed to meet the graduation rate target – 63 percent graduated versus 68 percent target.

In 2007-08, 36 percent of all charter schools rated under No Child Left Behind in Oregon failed to meet AYP requirements. In 2007-08, 28 percent of all PPS schools that were rated (including charters) failed to meet AYP.

Figure 23 Charter school Annual Yearly Progress designation

	'01-02	'02-03	'03-04	'04-05	'05-06	'06-07	'07-08
Opal	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	MET	MET	MET	MET	MET
Emerson	▪	▪	<i>n.a.</i>	MET	MET	MET	MET
Arthur Academy	▪	▪	▪	▪	<i>n.a.</i>	NOT MET	MET
Portland Village	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	<i>n.a.</i> *
SEI Academy	▪	▪	▪	<i>n.a.</i>	MET	MET	MET
LEP High	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	<i>n.a.</i>	NOT MET
Trillium	▪	<i>n.a.</i>	NOT MET	NOT MET	MET	MET	NOT MET

Source: ODE's online AYP Reports: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx>

* Portland Village did not receive an AYP rating because it has not been in operation for two successive years.

Student achievement is difficult to fully assess due to unclear contracts and insufficient reporting. Our review of charter proposals, contracts, and annual reports revealed that it is difficult to assess the performance of charters against student achievement goals proposed in initial applications and in established contract agreements. Annual reporting requirements are not well understood by charter schools and the district is unclear about what charters should be accountable for. Annual accountability reports provide too little information in some cases and more information than necessary in others. While some charters provide sufficient information to assess accountability for student achievement, others provide limited or incomplete information. The myriad of student achievement goals and academic expectations for PPS charters results in a less than optimal system of accountability.

All charter contracts require charters to meet federal AYP standards including academic achievement in reading and mathematics. In addition, all charters but LEP High are required to meet district averages in Writing assessments. Beyond these standard requirements, however, each charter has proposed and reported on a variety of different school-specific performance goals. Some of these goals are referenced in charter contracts and some are not. While most early charter proposals and contracts reference the districts 7 Benchmarks for Charter Schools*, none of the current contracts reference these benchmarks and most schools have discontinued reporting on these benchmarks in annual reports. In addition, some charters continue to measure and report on goals proposed in initial applications but others have proposed new and different goals in annual plans and reports. It is not clear which goals are contract requirements and whether new goals supersede previous goals. Consequently, it appears that neither the district charter manager nor the charter schools seems entirely sure of the academic expectations and reporting requirements for which they are accountable.

The following sections discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each charter school contract and charter school reporting in assessing student learning and achievement.

- Seven Performance Benchmarks for Charter Schools are: 1. Meet AYP targets; 2. Meet or exceed State performance standards with targets for Fall to Spring gains; 3. Attendance rate meet or exceed prior year; 4. Meet AYP graduation target; 5. Meet AYP attendance target; 6. Meet or exceed PPS retention target; 7. Equal access to programs.

Opal

Opal's initial charter application did not include measurable student achievement goals and their current contract contains only one student achievement goal beyond the standard AYP requirements and district writing benchmark. Opal expects that 90 percent of third graders are expected to be at or above grade reading level by the end of third grade using the Developmental Reading Assessment. Opal has consistently met these goals. Because Opal has performed very well in many ways, the lack of additional performance goals in the charter agreement has not surfaced as an issue of concern. However, it would be difficult to hold the school accountable for other student achievement goals that are important but not identified in their charter.

Emerson

Emerson's initial charter application and charter contract reference the seven PPS Performance Benchmarks for Charter Schools. Although the 2006 contract renewal does not address or reference the Benchmarks, Emerson's accountability reports prior to 2007-08 provide very explicit and detailed data that address each of the benchmarks. Emerson's annual reports contain the most thorough and thoughtful analysis of achievement data of any charter. Based on these reports, all student achievement goals appear to be met with exception of standards related to meeting or exceeding district writing scores. Emerson's 2007-08 accountability report deemphasizes the benchmark data analyzed in previous reports but identifies improvement in writing scores as an ongoing goal and lists specific strategies for improving writing. Based on the current contract the specific student performance goals that Emerson expects to address is unclear.

Arthur Academy

Arthur Academy's initial application and charter contracts have identified school-specific student achievement goals related to meeting or exceeding state standards in reading and math, using the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), and demonstrating student test score improvement growth from fall to spring. Arthur Academy has also provided very detailed information in Annual Accountability Plans and Annual Reports to assess performance against their established student achievement goals. The Arthur Academy contract and annual reports provide sufficient goals and results to assess their accountability for student performance. The school met contracted goals and targets for student achievement in 2007-08.

Portland Village

Portland Village identifies five school-specific student achievement goals in their July 2005 charter application and each of the 7 Charter School Benchmarks discussed previously. However, the charter contract includes only 2 of 5 identified goals and their first annual report provides assessment data on one of the charter contract goals and one of the goals in the initial application. In addition, while the initial application indicates that K-2 students will meet or exceed DIBELS standards for reading fluency, this was not a contract requirement and no data was provided on DIBELS testing in the Annual Report or Improvement Plan. Although the school has met two of their established goals, a complete assessment of the degree to which Portland Village has met student achievement goals established in their charter application and in their charter contract is not possible with the current level of performance reporting.

SEI Academy

SEI Academy proposed four school-specific student achievement goals in their initial 2002 application but none of these goals were explicit in their first three-year charter contract from 2005 through 2007. The school's three-year contract renewal in March 2007 stated that their Annual Report and Improvement Plan shall include school goals and student achievement benchmarks, including reasonable and measurable targets for each goal. The October 2007 report and plan included three of the four goals identified in their initial application. However, it is difficult to analyze this information and hold SEI accountable for student achievement goals because their report is unclear, hard to understand, and based on federal AYP targets, not charter contract goals and targets. Using information obtained from ODE assessments and PPS gain reports, we conclude that SEI student achievement consistently falls below their stated targets in reading, math, and writing. In addition, the school has not provided any data to determine if they have met student growth and improvement goals measured by MAP assessments or quarterly progress in meeting Individual Success Plans.

LEP High

LEP High's charter application in 2005 references the PPS Charter School Benchmarks and an additional five school-specific goals for student performance. The five specific goals are also reflected in their first three-year charter contract through 2008-09 but the contract makes no reference to the Charter School Benchmarks. In addition, the charter contract includes two additional student achievement goals related to student presentations and to MAP assessments. While LEP contract goals are among the most detailed and comprehensive of any charter, their first accountability report in 2006-07 provided no specific data on the stated contract goals for student achievement. The

2007-08 report provides incomplete data to assess the school's accountability for student achievement. While three of the goals cannot be assessed because they relate to improvements after three years and five years, LEP did not achieve goals related to attendance and math scores, and no data was provided to assess achievement score gains based on MAP assessments, student retention, or "presentation of learning" goals.

Trillium

Trillium's initial charter application in 2001 did not include any school-specific student performance goals but their original contract incorporated the Charter Performance Benchmarks for the period through 2006-07. Trillium's current contract renewed in 2007 does not include any reference to the Charter School Benchmarks, or any other school-specific goals beyond AYP and writing goals that apply to all charters. Although no specific student performance goals have been developed, the charter contract states that Trillium will report on "student performance measures developed or selected in cooperation with the District that assist in establishing student achievement measures and benchmarks for other district schools". Based on our own research and analysis of 2007-08 data, Trillium failed to meet AYP targets related to graduation; did not meet or exceed district averages in reading, math, or writing; and did not match reading and math gains experienced by comparable PPS public schools.

INNOVATION TRANSFER

Little evidence of innovation transfer or innovative measurement tools. Based on our discussions with Charter school directors, most believe that the educational methods employed in their schools are effective and some have tried to disseminate this information to other educators in the public school systems. LEP High School made presentations at the Small School Conferences, Trillium received a 2-year dissemination grant from ODE, and Opal has a staff person dedicated to educating other teachers about the Reggio Emilio approach. Although innovation transfer is one of the central intents of Oregon state charter school legislation, there is little evidence that any innovation transfer from charters to other PPS public schools is occurring. This lack of innovation transfer in Portland is consistent with national studies of charter schools.

While some charters have developed student achievement measurement tools that are often different than those used in PPS public schools, it is unclear that all these tools are either innovative or can be transferred to other public schools that are not employing the specific educational approach used at the charter. Figure 24 below illustrates the various measurement tools used at individual PPS charters beyond the required Oregon state student assessment tests. LEP High and SEI Academy indicate that they have contracts with the Northwest Evaluation Association to use Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments on their students. However, LEP has discontinued MAP assessments due to cost and time constraints and SEI Academy has not provided any results of their MAP assessments to the district. We were unable to determine which student measurement techniques were used at Trillium. Opal, Emerson, and Portland Village have very specific rubrics used to measure student performance but they appear most useful to educators using their educational techniques.

Figure 24 Charter schools innovative measures

	Innovative measurement
Opal	Project rubrics, Developmental Reading Assessments
Emerson	Project rubrics aligned with standards
Arthur Academy	SAT (Stanford Achievement)
Portland Village	Waldorf-based "Main Lesson" rubrics
SEI Academy	MAP
LEP High	MAP (no longer using) and student presentations
Trillium	Team and narrative assessments, student portfolios

Source: Interviews with charter school directors

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Charter parents, students, and teachers report high levels of satisfaction. Parents, staff, and students that responded to the 2007-08 ODE survey feel positive about their charter school experience and are generally satisfied with their charter school. Sixty-one percent of students expressed more interest in their charter school work than in their previous school and 96 percent of parents feel the charter school met their initial expectations. In addition, about 84 percent of teachers believe that their charter school has a bright future. Many respondents expressed some dissatisfaction with physical facilities and financial resources, but the focus and delivery of the educational program were rated highly by both parents and teachers. While satisfaction levels were generally comparable from school to school, significantly higher levels of dissatisfaction were reported by parents and teachers at SEI Academy. Trillium has not responded to any of the ODE surveys of students, parents, and staff. The sections below highlight some of the most significant survey responses by parents, students, and teachers. More detail on all the survey questions and responses is presented in Appendix D.

Parent responses

As shown in Figure 25 below, PPS charter school parents are most satisfied with school staff and teachers, the educational program, and overall school climate. Parents are least satisfied with the school's physical facilities, extracurricular activities, and school resources, including the lack of computers and technology. Additional survey data portrayed in Appendix D shows that a high percentage of parents believe that their child is motivated to learn and the charter school provides quality instruction and supports innovative practices. Compared to the other charters, parents at SEI Academy are much more dissatisfied with progress toward meeting the school mission, administrative leadership, and the overall school climate. Parents at all charters indicated that the single most important reason for sending their child to a charter was good teachers and high quality instruction.

Figure 25 Charter school PARENTS satisfaction survey results: 2007-08
(2006-07 results used for Arthur Academy)

		PPS CHARTERS		STATEWIDE CHARTERS	
		Very satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Dissatisfied
Overall, has this Charter School met your initial expectation?	YES	96%		92%	
	NO	4%	(n=288)	8%	(n=2,292)
To what extent are you satisfied with:		Very satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Dissatisfied
Teachers and other school staff		69%	4%	61%	8%
Educational program		68%	4%	62%	7%
Overall school climate		68%	5%	58%	8%
Potential for parent involvement		63%	4%	64%	6%
Standards and expectations		62%	5%	56%	8%
My child's academic achievement		61%	7%	62%	9%
Progress toward meeting school's mission		60%	4%	53%	6%
Administrative leadership		52%	6%	52%	11%
Class sizes		50%	5%	54%	8%
School stability		41%	8%	39%	14%
Availability of computers & other technology		31%	21%	35%	22%
Extracurricular activities		26%	23%	29%	22%
School resources		22%	20%	29%	8%
Physical facilities		17%	31%	21%	25%

Source: ODE Charter School Survey

Staff responses

As shown in the Figure 26 below, 89% of PPS charter school staff responding to the ODE survey feel that the charter met or exceeded their initial expectations. Charter school staff are most satisfied with the school mission, teacher collegiality, school administrative leadership, and overall school climate. Staff are least satisfied with fringe benefits, salary levels, resources available for instruction, and school building and facility. Staff also indicated that the major reasons they are working for the charter are the opportunity to work with like-minded educators, the focus and delivery of the educational program, and the ability to participate in an educational reform effort. Once again, staff at SEI Academy had very different responses from other charter staff. SEI staff are most disappointed with student motivation and academic performance, and with the school governance.

Figure 26 Charter school STAFF satisfaction survey results: 2007-08
(2006-07 responses used for Opal)

	PPS CHARTERS		STATEWIDE CHARTERS	
	DID NOT MEET	PARTIALLY MET	MET	EXCEEDED
Overall, has this Charter School met your initial expectation?	0%	11%	39%	50%
	(n=44)		(n= 574)	
Level of satisfaction with the Charter School	Very satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Dissatisfied
School mission	71%	5%	50%	7%
Teacher collegiality	57%	2%	44%	9%
Administrative leadership of the school	48%	16%	45%	17%
Overall school climate	48%	7%	44%	11%
Relations with community	43%	2%	31%	12%
Student motivation	41%	23%	23%	20%
Professional development opportunities	37%	4%	25%	15%
Student's academic performance	34%	18%	24%	16%
Availability of computers and other technology	32%	18%	37%	19%
Evaluation of your performance	32%	18%	33%	8%
School governance	30%	16%	30%	15%
School building and facilities	30%	27%	22%	25%
Resources available for instruction	25%	23%	25%	18%
Salary level	18%	48%	21%	23%
Fringe benefits	7%	28%	18%	22%

Source: ODE Charter School Survey

Student responses

As shown in the Figure 27 below, 69 percent of students responding to the survey reported that they are doing well at school and most feel more interested in schoolwork than in their previous school. Forty-seven percent of the student respondents believe the charter school is doing a good job of preparing them for the future and 44 percent feel safe at school. A great majority of students agree that the teachers at the school know them by name. Students were less positive about whether students would work independently without a teacher present or whether students respect others and property. Students at only four charter school responded to the survey – Opal, Emerson, SEI Academy, and LEP High.

Figure 27 Charter school STUDENT satisfaction survey results: 2007-08

	PPS CHARTERS		STATEWIDE CHARTERS	
How are you doing in school?				
Excellent	28%		37%	
Good	41%		40%	
Average	23%		18%	
Not so well	7%		4%	
Very badly	1%		1%	
	(n=195)		(n=2,734)	
Compared to your last school, how interested are you in your schoolwork?				
More interested	61%		54%	
About the same	28%		36%	
Less interested	12%		9%	
How much do you agree or disagree with the following?				
	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly agree	Disagree
Teachers and administrators know me by name	64%	7%	54%	9%
There are school rules we must follow	50%	10%	42%	8%
This school is doing a good job preparing me for the future	47%	17%	41%	13%
My teacher is available to talk to me or help me when I need it	45%	12%	41%	12%
I feel safe at this school	44%	16%	42%	13%
Students at this school com from diverse backgrounds	42%	21%	22%	21%
Teachers seem happy	40%	16%	32%	16%
I am learning more here than at my last school	39%	22%	35%	18%
Students are from different ethnic groups	37%	21%	16%	30%
I have a computer available when I need one	36%	25%	33%	22%
Students feel important	34%	22%	25%	22%
I know the mission of my school	33%	25%	22%	27%
I get feedback on most or all of the assignments I turn in	29%	19%	27%	22%
I wish there were more classes to choose from	29%	29%	25%	35%
The school is clean and well maintained	27%	26%	29%	20%
Students have some power at our school	27%	27%	20%	26%
I feel as though my ideas are heard	25%	29%	18%	30%
Students take responsibility for their own learning	22%	23%	20%	25%
If the teacher left class, most students would continue to work	18%	42%	18%	36%
Students respect others and their property	17%	42%	17%	35%

Source: ODE Charter School Survey

Impact of PPS charter schools

The direct administrative costs of managing and overseeing charter school contracts are relatively low and are adequately covered by the retention of a share of state school funding provided for charter school operations. The district also absorbs various indirect costs associated with administering charter contracts, particularly Board time expended to review charter applications and charter renewals. In addition, while the district spends significant amounts to provide charter schools with special education services, these costs are largely addressed with additional state funding provided to school districts for special education services. Finally, while it is difficult to determine with certainty the impact of enrollment losses on neighborhood schools due to charters, it appears that some neighborhood schools may be adversely impacted.

Direct PPS administrative costs are low. The direct and identifiable PPS costs associated with administering and monitoring charter school contracts are relatively low. Based on my interviews with PPS staff and review of budget reports, expenditures directly related to charter school administration (excluding direct payments to charters) was \$75,382 in 2007-08. It is difficult to reliably identify or estimate indirect costs associated with administering charter schools because PPS administrative units do not track the amount of time spent on charter school support activities. With the exception of School Board members, PPS officials told me that charter school workload is relatively minor and no one was able to identify specific costs that could be avoided if charter schools did not exist. Most of the costs associated with administering charters could be considered “opportunity costs” - that is, staff could perform other potentially more important tasks and duties instead of charter school administration support. Figure 29 on page 55 summarizes the major administrative functions and units at PPS that are involved in charter school administrative and management.

The most significant direct administrative effort involves the Charter Schools Manager, associated clerical assistance, and materials and supplies. In 2007-08, salaries and benefits amounted to \$73,124 and supplies and materials amounted to \$2,257 for a program total of \$75,382. The major duties of the Charter Schools Manager and clerical support include review and analysis of charter school proposals, review and analysis of renewals, site reviews and ongoing school monitoring, and authorizing monthly payments of school fund resources to charters. The Charter School Manager told me that current resources are adequate to administer one or possibly two new applications each year but if additional applications are received and multiple charter renewals occur in one year she lacks sufficient time and resources to thoroughly analyze

the applications, assess renewals, and monitor the operations of charters. Additional resources would be needed to address additional workload demands.

The table below shows that workload of the PPS charter school unit varies from year to year depending on the number of applications received and renewals granted. As additional charters are opened, workload related to ongoing review, monitoring, and assessment of charters increases. Over the past ten years, the district has assigned four different staff to administer and oversee charter school contracts. According to these officials, the workload did not initially require full-time support but as charter applications and approvals increased, a full-time manager is now required.

Figure 28 Charter school applications, renewals, and annual reports: 1999-00 to 2008-09

	'99-00	'00-01	'01-02	'02-03	'03-04	'04-05	'05-06	'06-07	'07-08	'08-09
Applications:										
Received	*	*	*	*	*	4	7	3	4	1
Approved	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Renewals							2	2	1	3
Annual reports to review			1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source: Charter School manager

* Prior to '04-05, 11 applications in total were received

School Board members expend a high proportion of their total available time on charter school administration and oversight. In addition to periodic monthly board meetings that may include charter school topics on the agenda, three board members serve on the Charter Schools Subcommittee, one of five school board standing committees. The Subcommittee on Charter Schools meets approximately 10 to 13 times each year and spends hundreds of hours each year reviewing applications and renewals and monitoring charter school efforts. While the Board does not incur any personnel costs related to this work because they are elected volunteers, the amount of effort associated with charters appears significant. Because the board does not maintain time reports on the amount of time they each spend on district business, we could not determine the exact proportion of time they spend on charter schools. Some board members estimate that charter schools may require 10 to 20 percent of their time. Board workload is particularly high in years when the district receives more than one application to open a new charter. In view of the charter school enrollment and expenditures

compared to the total district, the amount of time the board spends on charter school administration may be disproportionate.

Figure 29 PPS charter school administrative tasks

PPS admin unit	Type of administrative support provided	Direct costs
Charter school program office	Application reviews, renewals, monitoring, school payments, public information	\$75,382
School Board	Review of charter applications and renewals, oversight duties	none
Budget and Finance	Charter budgeting, review of charter financial statements and quarterly reports, contract payments and accounting	none
Information Technology	Training and support on student information system - enrollment, demographics, transcripts	none
Research and Evaluation	Coordinates Oregon statewide assessment testing, training on assessment rules, special reports on school achievement	none
Data and Policy	Required state reporting on student enrollment and demographics. School profile information.	none
Procurement	Charter contract preparation	none
Legal	Review and approve charter contract form, general legal support to PPS	none
Risk Management	Advise and review on charter insurance	none

Source: Auditor interviews and PPS budget report

Special Education impact is significant. Charter schools require significant support for students with disabilities that are identified as needing special education services. Under state law, Oregon school districts retain responsibility for providing special education services to all public school students, whether they are attending public schools or public charter schools. Oregon school districts also receive additional state resources above base level amounts for those students enrolled in districts that require special education services. In 2008-09, approximately 171 students at PPS charter schools (14 percent of the total charter enrollment) have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and receive special education services from the district. As shown in the table below, estimated direct personnel and materials and services costs for special education charter school students in 2008-09 was \$933,363. This is comprised of \$671,368 for salaries, \$213,026 for benefits, and \$48,969 for materials and services. Approximately 8.97 full time equivalent employees provide services to charters. These estimated direct costs do not include a share of indirect costs associated with special education management such as supervision, finance and budgeting, legal, and other overhead functions.

Figure 30 Estimated PPS Special Education support to charter schools: (2008-09)

	Special ed students	Total FTE *	Est. salary expense	Est. fringe benefits	Materials & supplies **	TOTAL
Opal	16	1.78	\$92,450		\$5,286	\$97,736
Emerson	18	0.45	\$39,289		\$5,411	\$44,700
Arthur Academy	16	0.80	\$47,044		\$5,286	\$52,330
Portland Village	13	0.80	\$59,538		\$4,686	\$64,224
SEI Academy	29	1.00	\$89,707		\$7,704	\$97,411
LEP High	33	1.10	\$106,058		\$8,212	\$114,270
Trillium	46	2.78	\$214,686		\$12,386	\$227,072
TOTAL	171	8.97***	\$671,368***	\$213,026	\$48,969	\$933,363

Source: PPS Office of Teaching and Learning, Sr. Financial Analyst

* FTE comprised of 1.76 Para-Educators, .90 School Psychologists, 1.10 Speech Pathologists, 5.05 Learning Center teachers, 0.16 Occupational/Physical Therapists, and 0.26 Floater specialists

** Comprised of mileage, textbooks, materials, technology

*** Includes 0.26 FTE for floater staff cost of \$13,695.

PPS retained revenue sufficient to cover direct and indirect costs. As discussed in the Introduction, Oregon legislation permits school district sponsors to retain a portion of the state school fund grant provided for charter school operations. In Portland, the district retains 20 percent of the state school fund grant for students enrolled in K-8 and 5 percent of the charter school grant for students enrolled in 9-12 grades. In addition, as discussed previously, the district also receives additional amounts for students with identified special education needs, including those students who enroll in charter schools.

Figure 31 below summarizes actual payments made to charters in 2007-08 and a calculated amount that was retained by the district in accordance the appropriate percent allowed by state law. As shown, total payments to charter schools for 2007-08 school year operations was \$5,293,607. The estimated amount retained by the district was \$1,049,032.

Figure 31 Payments to charters in 2007-08 and calculated amount retained by district

	Total SSF *	TO CHARTER	RETAINED BY DISTRICT
Opal	\$429,541	\$343,633 (80%)	\$85,908 (20%)
Emerson	\$749,120	\$599,296 (80%)	\$149,824 (20%)
Arthur Academy	\$659,715	\$527,772 (80%)	\$131,943 (20%)
Portland Village	\$841,966	\$673,573 (80%)	\$168,393 (20%)
SEI Academy **	\$842,079	\$673,663 (80%)	\$168,416 (20%)
LEP High	\$918,643	\$872,711 (95%)	\$45,932 (5%)
Trillium K-8	\$1,356,911	\$1,085,529 (80%)	\$271,382 (20%)
Trillium 9-12	\$544,664	\$ 517,431 (95%)	\$27,233 (5%)
TOTAL	\$6,342,639	\$5,293,607	\$1,049,032

Source: PPS Charter School payment files and Vendor History payments records

* Amount based on the school weighted Average Daily Membership x daily charter school state funding rate x number of school days

** Source of SEI payments was Charter School Payment files

The amount retained by the district appears to be significantly more than the direct and indirect costs incurred by the district to administer the charter school program. The retained amounts are part of the general revenues of the district that are received from the state school fund and are budgeted within the general fund for school district programs and activities. While it would be possible to provide additional resources directly to charter schools or to charter school contract administration, additional allocations to charter schools would require budget reductions in other district programs.

Charter school enrollment may impact some neighborhood schools. The enrollment of students in public charter schools instead of their neighborhood school potentially lowers enrollment in their neighborhood school thereby reducing staffing, administrative support, and other resources available to that school. Declining enrollments in neighborhood elementary, middle, and high schools could also result in fewer academic and extracurricular options that may be available in a larger school and, ultimately, lead to school consolidation and closure.

In order to assess the enrollment impact of charter schools on neighborhood schools, I reviewed data on neighborhood attendance patterns provided by the PPS Data Policy and Analysis. Figure 32 below shows neighborhood attendance patterns as of October 2008. As shown, 1,246 students are currently attending charter schools, about 2.71 percent of total PPS enrollment. The number and percent of students living in a neighborhood school boundary but attending a charter school varies significantly from school to school. For example, no students residing in the Ainsworth elementary school attendance area attend a PPS public charter school, while 46 students from the Chief Joseph elementary school attendance area are enrolled in charters, 9 percent of the elementary school students residing in the Chief Joseph school attendance area.

It is difficult to determine with any certainty that students choosing to attend charter schools would have chosen to attend their neighborhood school if the charter option was not available. Some might choose to attend other PPS neighborhood schools or educational options, and others might attend private schools or home school. However, to assess the potential impact of charter school enrollment on neighborhood schools, I assumed that neighborhood schools might “capture” a similar percent of these students as the average overall capture rate of the existing PPS student population. For example, as of October 2008, 66 percent of PPS elementary students attended their neighborhood school, 76 percent of PPS middle school students attended their neighborhood school, and 60 percent of PPS high school students attended their neighborhood high school. Applying these three capture rates, the table below shows that an additional 708 students might have enrolled in PPS neighborhood schools if they did not have the option to attend a charter. Once again, this additional number of students could also be smaller because

some students may choose to attend private schools, move out of district, or home school.

Figure 32 Auditor estimate of potential additional students gained from charters that could attend their neighborhood schools (2008-09)

	Neighborhood school capture rate	Number of charter students *	Estimated number that could attend their neighborhood school
Elementary schools	66%	801	528
Middle schools	71%	27	19
High schools	60%	268	161
Total additional that could attend their PPS neighborhood school			708

Source: PPS Data Analysis - Report on School Registration and Residency October 2008

* Excludes students attending PPS charters from other districts.

If all 708 of these students attended their PPS neighborhood school, elementary and middle schools would gain approximately 24 teachers and high schools would gain approximately 7 teachers.* Depending on the size of the individual schools and the socio-economic makeup of the students, additional administrative staff, teaching staff, counselors, and special Title One funding may also be available to these neighborhood schools. The potential impact on individual schools would depend on the number of students residing in a particular neighborhood that attend charters. Neighborhood schools with a high percentage of students attending charters would potentially gain additional teachers and resources and neighborhood schools with few students attending charters would see little change in resources.

It is also important to note, that the resources available to individual neighborhood schools are affected as much or more by students that reside in the neighborhood but choose to attend other PPS neighborhood schools or other PPS programs or focus options. As shown in the Figure 33 below, 8,122 students attend schools in other neighborhoods and 5,486 attend PPS focus options like Native Montessori Program, daVinci Middle School, and the Metropolitan Learning Center. Students that choose these two options represent about 30% of the total PPS district enrollment and would have a

* Based on the staffing allocation formula for the 2008-09 school year: one teacher per 23.2 students at elementary, middle, and K-12 schools and one teacher per 22.7 students at high schools.

more significant impact on the staffing and other resources available to individual neighborhood schools than do charter schools. While state school funding remains with the PPS school district when neighborhood students attend schools in other neighborhoods or other PPS options, individual neighborhood schools with a high percentage of students choosing these options experience reduced staffing and fewer resources.

Figure 33 STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM TYPE

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA	Neighborhood PPS school	Focus / alternative program	Community-based alternatives	PPS special services school	Other neighborhood PPS	PPS charters	TOTAL	% attending Charter
Abernethy	282	98			58	13	451	3%
Ainsworth	327	13			6		346	0%
Alameda	550	53		1	49	16	669	2%
Arleta	323	77	2	5	97	10	514	2%
Astor	286	42		4	88	22	442	5%
Atkinson	216	37		1	46	6	306	2%
Beach	278	98	1	5	127	52	561	9%
Boise-Eliot	192	20	1	1	67	25	306	8%
Bridger	201	139	2	2	145	12	501	2%
Bridlemile	418	31		1	16	7	473	1%
Buckman	182	14		1	22	3	222	1%
Capitol Hill	268	27			49	5	349	1%
Chapman	427	34		1	21	23	506	5%
Chief Joseph	277	104		1	101	46	529	9%
Clarendon-Portsmouth	327	26	2		148	8	511	2%
Clark	668	88	2	5	181	8	952	1%
Creston	233	117		2	118	7	477	1%
Duniway	303	23			28	1	355	0%
Faubion	314	61		3	126	21	525	4%
Forest Park	510	25			9	1	545	0%
Glencoe	374	131			64	18	587	3%
Grout	290	98		11	95	13	507	3%
Hayhurst	197	29			59	3	288	1%
Hollyrood	464	121		1	205	28	819	3%
Humboldt	158	44	1		107	19	329	6%
Irvington	325	63		2	81	14	485	3%
James John	287	36		2	120	25	470	5%
Kelly	373	35		1	51	12	472	3%
King	191	46	1		113	24	375	6%

Figure 33 STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM TYPE

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA	<i>Neighborhood PPS school</i>	<i>Focus / alternative program</i>	<i>Community-based alternatives</i>	<i>PPS special services school</i>	<i>Other neighborhood PPS</i>	<i>PPS charters</i>	TOTAL	% attending Charter
Laurelhurst	424	53		4	64	15	560	3%
Lee	357	30			106	7	500	1%
Lent	443	19	1	3	71	7	544	1%
Lewis	221	31		1	74	1	328	0%
Llewellyn	318	66		2	56	7	449	2%
Maplewood	292	44		4	46	4	390	1%
Markham	342	41			118	6	507	1%
Marysville	387	46	2	1	133	10	579	2%
Ockley Green (6-8)	87	39	4	1	55	13	199	7%
Peninsula	244	28	4	2	101	27	406	7%
Rieke	287	43			33	7	370	2%
Rigler	431	38	1	3	193	23	689	3%
Rosa Parks	412	32		2	83	11	540	2%
Roseway Heights	315	72	1	2	75	19	484	4%
Sabin	223	63		3	161	24	474	5%
Scott	449	58		1	157	5	670	1%
Sitton	275	33			187	16	511	3%
Skyline	191	12			74	7	284	2%
Stephenson	251	11		1	6	5	274	2%
Sunnyside	252	49		1	40	8	350	2%
Vernon	289	89	5	7	283	54	727	7%
Vestal	389	95		1	140	12	637	2%
Whitman	312	18		1	67	1	399	0%
Woodlawn	376	124	1	7	285	56	849	7%
Woodmere	321	25		6	102	5	459	1%
Woodstock	200	21			104	9	334	3%
SUBTOTAL Elementary	17,329	2,910	31	103	5,211	801	26,835	3%

Figure 33 STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM TYPE

NEIGHBORHOOD AREA	Neighborhood PPS school	Focus / alternative program	Community-based alternatives	PPS special services school	Other neighborhood PPS	PPS charters	TOTAL	% attending Charter
Beaumont	165	64		3	35	2	269	1%
George	351	36	16	3	224	14	644	2%
Robert Gray	339	68		3	85	2	497	0%
Hosford	363	150	4	15	114	4	650	1%
Jackson	618	29	1	3	11	1	663	0%
Lane	367	35	16	6	161		565	0%
Mt. Tabor	228	90	1		48	1	368	0%
Sellwood	364	65		3	44	1	477	0%
West Sylvan	713	59	1	6	59	1	839	0%
SUBTOTAL Middle Schools	3,508	599	39	42	758	27	4,973	1%
Cleveland	1,085	93	100	46	68	20	1,412	1%
Franklin	696	114	100	21	204	16	1,151	1%
Grant	1,133	105	75	25	87	24	1,449	2%
Jefferson	391	421	236	40	368	62	1,518	4%
Lincoln	1,132	34	79	31	58	11	1,345	0%
Madison	660	306	138	31	287	71	1,493	5%
Marshall Campus	702	252	179	82	405	21	1,641	1%
Roosevelt Campus	657	262	193	33	168	31	1,344	2%
Wilson	1,336	52	97	31	38	12	1,566	1%
SUBTOTAL High Schools	7,792	1,639	1,197	340	1,683	268	12,919	2%
Out of District		338	15	29	470	150	1,002	15%
GRAND TOTAL	28,629	5,486	1,282	514	8,122	1,246	45,279	3%

Shaded if > average for school type

Opportunities for improved oversight, management, and accountability

Our review of PPS charter schools indicates that there are a number of opportunities to strengthen PPS oversight and administration of charter schools to help improve the performance of individual charters. We have also identified areas where review of charter school policy and legislation might be warranted. The following sections describe some opportunities for improvement in management, oversight, and accountability.

IMPROVED PPS OVERSIGHT AND ADMINISTRATION

The PPS district through the efforts of the Charter School Manager and the Board Subcommittee on Charter schools has developed and carried-out a number of processes to monitor and oversee contracts with PPS charter schools. The major efforts include: 1.) Annual Onsite Reviews of charter school compliance, performance, and financial stability, 2.) Review of Annual Accountability Reports and Improvement Plans submitted by each charter school, and 3.) Ongoing monitoring of charter contract deliverables including operational and financial reporting, insurance reviews, and adopted school calendars and class schedules.

The PPS charter school staff have also recently improved routines to monitor and track charter compliance in providing annual deliverables to the district. In addition, the district conducted and completed the Annual Onsite Reviews at each charter for the first time with district staff in the spring and summer of 2008.

We believe that there may be several opportunities to continue to strengthen how PPS monitors and oversees charter school contracts in the district. Specifically, we believe improvements are possible in following categories: Clearer and more measurable performance expectations, more standardized and concise performance reporting, and more rigorous efforts to hold charters accountable for performance.

More defined and measurable performance expectations. Charter schools should have a common set of core student achievement goals and targets that are clearly defined and contained in each charter contract. In addition, charter schools should also have school-specific academic goals and targets that relate to the unique school environment and students of the charter. These common and specific goals and targets should be reviewed periodically and the charter contract updated when changes and revisions are necessary. The Charter School Benchmarks should be reviewed to determine if they

remain relevant and useful for accountability reporting. Several of the Benchmarks appear duplicative and overly dependent on federal AYP indicators.

Student achievement goals and targets should be measurable using data from state assessments and other accepted assessment methods. Charter schools may wish to use other academic assessment methods that are more suitable to their unique educational approach and curriculum but methods should be clearly identified and defined in the contract.

To supplement quantitative information on academic achievement, each charter contract should include a requirement to participate in the annual ODE surveys of charter school parents, staff, and students. Not all PPS charters participate in the survey so it is difficult to compare and track results over time. Gathering and analyzing data on perceptions of school quality would provide a qualitative dimension to charter school performance assessment and accountability.

More standardized performance reporting. The Charter School Manager could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of annual reporting by charter schools. Current requirements for the Annual Report and Improvement Plan need clarification and streamlining to ensure all contracted student achievement goals and targets are addressed and that charter schools fully understand reporting requirements. A standard format for reporting of core and common goals and targets could help ease the preparation by schools and simplify review by the Charter School Manager. The wide variety and format of current reporting by charters makes it difficult to review and determine if contracted goals are addressed.

In addition, a common format for the elements of the Annual Report and Improvement Plan would also ensure that charters address the most critical aspects of their contract deliverables and provide complete and timely information for review and assessment. An on-line or web-based template would assist charters in preparing and submitting annual reports and plans. It might also be helpful to provide standard models for deliverables such as instructional hour documentation, school calendars, annual budgets, school policies and procedures, and insurance requirements.

More rigorous accountability for performance. State legislation creating public charter schools in Oregon provides that school sponsors may not renew or may terminate public charters if schools fail to meet charter terms and student performance requirements. Non-renewal and termination are also allowable if charter schools fail to maintain fiscal stability and fail to correct non-compliance with applicable state and federal laws. While these sanctions should not be taken without thorough review and notification of performance concerns and sufficient opportunities to demonstrate improvement, these remedies are

available to sponsoring districts to correct significant non-performance by charter schools. In return for public funding and operating independence, public charter schools agree to meet the terms of charter agreements related to student performance, fiscal stability, and compliance with laws.

PPS lacks a clearly defined process to identify, monitor, and correct charter school performance concerns overtime. While the annual review process was conducted for the first time by PPS staff this past school year, documentation of ongoing performance concerns in prior years is not maintained and it is difficult to identify consistent lack of performance by charter schools without significant effort. In addition, short of non-renewal or termination, there is no established mechanism at PPS or in state law for corrective action to improve charter school compliance and performance. As result, the district may miss opportunities to aid or assist struggling charter schools and charter schools may not be held adequately accountable for performance. The lack of a rigorous approach to accountability is also common nationally as evidenced by studies indicating that charter schools are rarely held accountable for non-performance in student achievement.

The development of a more rigorous process to review the performance of school charters will require time and effort that may not be available with existing PPS charter school staffing and administrative support. One-time assistance from internal school analysts or outside consultants should be considered.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE REFINEMENTS

Based on the results of my review of public charter schools sponsored by PPS, it appears that some goals of Oregon's charter school legislation may not be achieved as initially intended. Specifically, the transfer of innovation from charter schools to public schools has been limited, student achievement increases have been inconsistent, and the development of different forms of accountability has been lacking. However, other goals of the legislation may have been more fully addressed including increased choices for learning opportunities, strong relationships between educators and charter school parents, and new professional opportunities for teachers.

In addition, PPS has experienced increasing workload over the past eight years associated with review of new applications from charters, on-going monitoring and oversight of a growing number of charters, and additional work to review and approve charter renewals. Board members on the Sub Committee on Charter Schools spend a disproportionate amount of time on charter school business and the Charter School manager is challenged to manage an increased workload without additional resources.

Finally, for some neighborhood schools, charter school enrollments may affect the number of teachers and resources available to provide educational programs. While it is difficult to reach firm conclusions about the adverse impact of charter schools on some neighborhood schools, it is clearly possible that enrollment losses due to charter schools could reduce the level of public resources available to schools in some neighborhoods in the PPS district.

As a result of these conditions, it may be an appropriate time to review elements of state charter school legislation and policy to address the following questions:

- Has charter school legislative intent been addressed? If not, what are the continuing policy goals of public charter schools?
- Is the current structure and process for the review, approval, or denial of charter schools still appropriate in view of the growing workload and disproportionate time required of board members?
- Are changes needed in legislation to promote and encourage more diverse charter school enrollment patterns?
- Does the district adequately address parent needs for educational options within the current public school organizational structure?
- How can charters truly become laboratories for innovative ideas and techniques that can be applied in other schools?
- What is needed to hold charters more accountable for student academic performance?

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve the administration of charter school contracts by the Portland Public School district and to strengthen the accountability and performance of PPS charter schools, I recommend that the Portland Public School district take the following actions:

- 1. Develop more specific and measurable goals for charter school performance.** In coordination and collaboration with each charter school, the district should help each school identify a core set of operational and academic goals that will be incorporated into charter school contracts. The goals should be specific, measurable, and time-bound with the primary focus on improving student achievement. The district and charter schools should consider developing a common set of student achievement goals that all charters share and a school-specific set of goals that relate to the unique programs and objectives of each charter school program. The district should also consider obtaining technical advice from PPS Research and Evaluation to aid development of measurable student achievement goals. As charter school operational and academic goals change over time, modifications to charter contracts should be made.
- 2. Design and implement improved methods for monitoring charter school performance in achieving operational and academic goals.** In collaboration with the charter schools, the district should develop a more standard format for annual charter school reports and accountability plans that centers on reporting progress toward meeting defined operational and academic goals. A standard on-line format would help charter schools include all pertinent information more efficiently and help district staff review performance more effectively. In addition to including progress toward school performance goals, the revised annual report format might also include specific information on financial performance, student enrollment and attendance trends, compliance with contract requirements, and measurable progress on school improvement plans.

In addition to an improved and streamlined annual report format, the district should consider developing standard templates for various charter school deliverables including school calendars, instructional hours, budgets, and

quarterly financial reports. Standard formats will help charter schools understand reporting requirements more uniformly, improve timeliness of delivery, and speed monitoring by the district.

- 3. Develop and implement a more rigorous accountability system for monitoring and assessing charter school performance.** The district should develop specific methods and procedures for ensuring more complete compliance with charter school contracts that will result in better performance monitoring and more timely improvement of performance problems. Elements of a progressive accountability system could include informal discussions and reminders, technical advice and assistance to address financial or performance concerns, periodic visits to the charter school, written notice of non-compliance with contract provisions, public hearings or meetings to discuss performance or compliance issues, and monetary incentives. Improved accountability provisions should be incorporated when negotiating charter contracts during initial approval or renewal, or, with approval and collaboration from the charter school, during current charter school terms.

- 4. Encourage the State Department of Education to review elements of the charter school legislation.** Based on the findings of this limited review of PPS charters, it is possible that some goals of the state charter school legislation may not be fully realized as initially envisioned. A more comprehensive assessment of charters throughout the state would be helpful to clarify the ongoing policy goals of public charter schools and to adjust elements of the legislation that may have unintended or undesired affects. The district should consider requesting a more complete assessment of statewide charter school performance and impacts. Specific topics that may warrant review include:
 - options for reducing the financial impact on local neighborhood schools,
 - methods for encouraging and promoting more diverse enrollment patterns,
 - provisions to increase charter school accountability for operational and academic performance,
 - actions that will encourage charter schools to more fully demonstrate innovations that have widespread application, and
 - administrative changes to help reduce the growing workload and financial impact of charter school growth.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Carole Smith
Superintendent

March 11, 2009

Dick Tracy, Performance Auditor
Portland Board of Education
501 N. Dixon St.
Portland, Oregon 97227

Dear Mr. Tracy,

Thank you for your work reviewing the performance and impact of the seven schools operating under charter agreements with Portland Public Schools. As you have found, it is very difficult to pin down both the charter schools' direct impact on achievement of students attending these schools and their impact on other PPS schools' enrollment and resources.

We find the data you compiled intriguing, and offer our own thoughts about the audit results below. We also very much appreciate the recommendations contained in the audit, and at the end of this response include our commitment to follow through, particularly in building strong partnerships with charter schools and improving our tracking and accountability for those schools – and those students.

RESULTS

Demographic Trends

We have long known that charter schools overall draw students that are significantly more white and significantly less likely to come from low income households than the district's general population of students. But it is difficult to lump all seven charters together.

This school year, the two PPS charters with the highest share of students from low-income families, LEP and SEI, have two-thirds of their enrollment – 237 students – eligible for free and reduced price meals. The rest of the charters have fewer than a quarter eligible.

At those same two schools, LEP and SEI, more than 70 percent of the enrollment is students of color. Only one-in-five students from the other five charters combined are students of color.

CHARTER SCHOOL	Total Enrollment	White students		Students of color		Students eligible for F/R meals	
Emerson	129	105	81%	23	18%	21	16%
Opal	75	58	77%	16	21%	15	20%
Portland village	209	160	77%	39	19%	37	18%
Trillium *	337	211	63%	64	19%	88	26%
Arthur *	137	72	53%	44	32%	42	31%
Subtotal	887	606	68%	186	21%	203	23%
LEP	217	103	48%	113	52%	113	52%
SEI	142	1	1%	141	99%	124	87%
Subtotal	359	104	29%	254	71%	237	66%

All data from PPS Enrollment Profiles for 2008-09, posted on PPS Web site.

* Left race and ethnicity unspecified for many students (Trillium 18% and Arthur Academy 15%).

Because of the clearly divergent demographics of the students they serve, it is important to distinguish among the various charters when assessing their impact and their performance. Also important to note: None of the charters enrolls more than about 1 percent English Language Learners – one-tenth the rate of other PPS schools.

Impact on PPS Schools

On average, charter school students are significantly whiter and better off than the average PPS student, and it is difficult to project how much local neighborhood schools would see enrollment grow if charters were not an option. Generally your estimate that more than 700 students would otherwise attend their neighborhood school seems a reasonable attempt to quantify the impact on the neighborhood schools where the students live. If not for charters, some of those students might attend alternative schools (district or community based) or might choose to transfer to PPS focus option schools, other PPS neighborhood schools. The impact on those enrollments is even more difficult to assess.

We know that the schools that lose the most students to charters are those neighborhood schools serving the most students of color and from low-income households. According to your audit, seven PPS elementary or K-8 schools lose more than 7 percent of neighborhood PPS students to charters.

	School Enrollment		% of resident students enrolled in charter
	Students of color	F/R eligible students	
Beach	70	62	9
Boise-Eliot	83	82	8
Chief Joseph	41	51	9
Ockley Green	78	73	7
Peninsula	72	78	7
Vernon	84	86	7
Woodlawn	84	77	7
Average PPS charter school	35	35	NA

The charter schools leave those neighborhood schools with higher concentrations of poverty and students of color. We also know from our own review of the school choice lottery that students whose families take advantage of choice – whether to apply to another PPS-operated school or a charter -- tend to be higher-achieving, and the parents more involved in their education, as advocates, monitoring schoolwork and volunteering in classes. Charter schools are one of the choices that drain those involved parents from some of our schools – certainly a less quantifiable outcome.

Student Achievement

Unfortunately, a student’s income level and ethnicity often shows a high correlation with their achievement. PPS, like other school districts nationally, faces stubborn achievement gaps between white students and students of color and between those from more affluent families and those from low-income households. When reviewing student achievement data, for example, the audit appropriately compares charter schools with other Oregon schools of similar demographics. However, the audit’s comparisons of each charter with the average PPS school of similar grade ranges is not as instructive.

One would expect the schools with significantly higher percentages of white students, and lower shares of students of color, to perform better than the average school – and according to the audit, they generally do (Trillium is an exception). On the flip side, comparing the LEP and SEI performance to the district average might paint a more negative picture of their student achievement than completely warranted; they fare far worse in comparisons against all PPS schools than against the state schools with similar demographics.

Without a valid PPS comparison, it is difficult to judge charters on both the percentages of students meeting state assessment benchmarks, and the average gain by students in a year on those same tests.

Charter School Budget

Over the years, the work of managing the charter school program has grown. PPS has tried to manage with a skeletal staff – one program manager, with limited clerical assistance. Those are the expenses the audit notes as “direct” costs.

This year, however, we have increased the staffing slightly, and we are finding that the load transferred to other district personnel has grown considerably. Our general counsel estimates that she spends 100 hours a year on charter school issues. Cliff Brush, former charter school manager and now a project manager for the Superintendent, is spending several hours a week this winter trouble-shooting for the charter school program. Budget and finance staff are now visiting one of our charter schools monthly to review its financial accounts. And our management staff – our education options director, chief financial officer, my chief of staff and myself – have all spent many hours on charter school issues recently. You also note the involvement of our staff from the School Board office, research and evaluation, data and policy, procurement, risk management, and information technology. These may be indirect costs, but they definitely represent many thousands of dollars of support and resources that are diverted from other schools.

With our current rate of applications and the challenges of managing and supporting our existing charter schools, PPS may find it more efficient to add staff directly to our charter school program to meet the burden.

A Need for Accountability

Your audit makes clear that PPS has not held charter schools accountable for transparent and responsive management. For example:

- Several schools haven't submitted required financial audits.
- Two schools failed to report the ethnic or racial identity of more than 15 percent of their students (federal law next year will require such reporting for every single child).
- Several schools do not consistently report student achievement data.
- Several charter schools failed to conduct the staff, parent or student surveys the Oregon Department of Education provides.

Oregon's law offers charter schools considerable freedom from regulations; in exchange, charter schools are to be held accountable for student achievement results and innovation that can be replicated in other schools. Some PPS charter schools are demonstrating strong academic and financial accountability; others less so. Such accountability requirements should be consistently included in all PPS charter contracts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Portland Public Schools will act upon each of the audit recommendations.

1. Develop more specific and measurable goals for charter school performance.

PPS Systems Performance and Planning Department, including staff from Research & Evaluation and Data & Analysis, will work with the charter school program staff to ensure that this becomes a priority, and that PPS works in partnership with charter school leaders to develop student achievement goals. A pilot of this process occurred when Research & Evaluation staff participated during the renewal of the Portland Arthur Academy contract. (This would begin immediately with any renewal contracts that are entered into. By June 30, charter school staff will meet with R & E to determine a set of standard, measurable goals for all charters.)

2. Design and implement improved methods for monitoring charter school performance in achieving operational and academic goals.

Standard on-line formats and common templates for regular reports and deliverables could benefit both the district and charter schools in streamlining paperwork and making reporting more transparent, accessible and convenient. We will explore the possibilities; mutual accountability and greater efficiency could result. (By August 1st, templates can be developed and distributed for certain deliverables. An on-line system will take longer, and would involve the Information Technology Department.)

3. Develop and implement a more rigorous accountability system for monitoring and assessing charter school performance.

Currently, PPS's primary accountability enforcement tool is to terminate a charter. This is a blunt instrument that would be tremendously disruptive to students, families, and school staff. The audit recommends a "progressive accountability system" with interim steps as performance measure arise. PPS should formalize such a system. One option would be a system modeled on the processes and remedies used if the State Superintendent of Public Instruction finds a district to be non-standard. (This will involve contract amendments for all schools, and could be done by June 30.)

4. Encourage the State Department of Education to review elements of the charter school legislation. (This has already begun and will be ongoing.)

We will encourage the Oregon Board of Education and the Oregon Legislature to undertake that review of the legislation and the statewide impact of charter schools, with a focus on these areas:

Holding charters accountable. PPS would find it helpful if the state defined intermediate accountability measures – short of revoking a charter – that allow districts to help a charter school back on track without disrupting students' education.

Defining "adverse impact." The state charter law sets criteria for evaluating charter school applications, including "adverse impact" on the local school district. However, as noted by a member of the Oregon Board of Education, the state has not defined "impact," and has left that interpretation to local districts – adding unnecessary complexity and debate to the charter school process.

Promoting and encouraging more diverse charter school enrollment patterns. The state might allow charter schools to consider family income levels in their enrollment (perhaps through a weighted lottery or reserved slots) to encourage greater socio-economic diversity. As you also note, Arthur Academy and Trillium's enrollments are heavily male (59 and 58 percent, respectively), while SEI enrolls 57 percent female students. It might also be worth exploring with the state the possibility of considering gender balance in charter enrollment.

Collaboration among districts on reporting requirements. The audit suggests that PPS develop standard templates for important charter school reports – for example, for quarterly financial reports, school calendars, budgets and instructional hours. This is an excellent idea that could also be extended to other school districts in the state, which also face growing charter school enrollment and workloads. In addition, some charter operators run schools in multiple districts, so common templates would be a boon to them, as well.

CONCLUSION

As the audit makes clear, the track record of PPS charter schools – and of the district's success in managing and partnering with those schools – is a mixed bag. Portland Public Schools has chartered nine schools. Two have closed. Some are struggling to find solid ground, either academically or financially. Most have dedicated families, staff and

students. A couple have demonstrated consistent and strong student achievement. After 10 years, we have far more experience knowing what it takes to make schools successful -- and that is what we want for every PPS charter and every PPS charter school student.

For its part, Portland Public Schools has not seized on the potential of charter schools. As we move forward, we are striving for greater collaboration with our charters – not adopting only a compliance relationship, but one where there is also an exchange of ideas, the transmission of innovative techniques and opportunity for professional development of our own teaching staff. We hope to build partnerships to develop and test new ways of measuring student achievement. And we intend to seize the opportunity the charter school law provides to work with outside organizations to develop ideas and sponsor charters with unique educational models that benefit students in ways that no current PPS school can match. We will start a conversation first with organizations representing communities of color, who are definitely under-represented in current charter school enrollment, and often under-served in many of our regular PPS schools.

After 10 years, it is time for a deep and thoughtful assessment of charter schools – in theory and in practice. Thank you for your work in auditing this area, and in your provocative findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carole Smith

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Charter school profiles



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education Options Programs

Education Options Home

Public Charter Schools

Charter Schools

Community-Based Programs

District-Operated Programs

Summer Scholars

Teen Parent Services

Other Programs

Reasons for Eligibility

Portland Arthur Academy

K-5 (K-2 in 2005-06)

Portland Arthur Academy is an academically-focused elementary charter school that seeks to accelerate achievement and learning for all of our students. We achieve daily success for every child through a highly organized incremental program. The skills taught are sequenced to maximize student success and minimize points of confusion. Using a highly researched direct instruction program gives our teachers the best tools possible to clearly communicate our academic message. This entails the students mastering their tasks daily before moving on to the next skill. Through our positive structured expectations, we create a safe, thriving learning environment for all students.

7507 SE Yamhill St.
Portland, OR 97215
Phone: (503) 257-3936
Fax: (503) 257-3929
e-mail: arthurac@appleisp.net

For applications or additional information please contact Arthur Academy at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.arthuracademy.org.

Emerson Public Charter School

K-5

Located in the heart of the NW Park Blocks, parents play a key role in the school community, and families come from all quadrants of the city, creating a school culture that integrates, honors, and celebrates individual and community diversity. The integrated curriculum is developed to continually build on students' previous learning and experiences in a strong supportive community. Real-world problem solving, purposeful field studies, and student interest are combined with direct instruction in reading, writing, and math to create a strong and comprehensive curriculum.

105 NW Park
Portland, OR 97209
Phone: (503) 525-6124
Fax: (503) 223-4875
e-mail: info@emersonschool.org

For applications or additional information please contact The Emerson School at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.emersonschool.org.

**Leadership and Entrepreneurship Public Charter High School
9-11, growing to 9-12**

The Leadership and Entrepreneurship High School focuses on engaging students in their learning experience and making school an exciting place to learn. Through the study of leadership and entrepreneurship, students develop a strong sense of self efficacy, social responsibility and an entrepreneurial spirit. The school design also provides a rigorous college prep curriculum. Teachers use project-based, interdisciplinary learning and students gain real world experiences through internships and service learning with businesses and community organizations. Students graduate surpassing normal diploma requirements to meet college entrance requirements. Because of a strong relationship with local universities, students also graduate from this high school with college credits. To make sure that all students achieve high levels of success, the school has an extended day (8:40AM-4:00PM) and an extended year (190 school days in 12 months) with large amounts of academic support in the form of daily advisory and tutoring periods. Lastly, in the small school environment, students feel cared for, connected, and supported at school. This school's goal is to provide students with the skills for success in college, career, and life in the 21st century.

2044 E. Burnside
Portland, OR 97214
Phone: (503) 254-2537
Fax: (503) 236-6783
Contact: Lorna Fast Buffalo Horse
e-mail: <mailto:lorna.fbh@lephigh.org>

For applications or additional information please contact LEP Public Charter High School at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.lephigh.org.

**Opal Charter School of the Portland Children's Museum
Pre-K-5**

Opal School holds the belief that the purpose of education is to provide opportunities for all children to participate fully in creating and shaping their own lives, and to contribute to the quality of life around them. We support children to develop their own voice by providing access to the many forms of communication found in the languages of the arts and sciences including clay, painting, drawing, writing, poetry, dramatic arts, natural materials, wire, light and shadow, robotics, dance, music, and more. Our instructional approaches are shaped and influenced by the work of early childhood educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy, research in the neurosciences, and the constructivist research and practices of educators in the U.S. and beyond.

4015 SW Canyon Road
Portland OR 97221
Phone: (503) 471-9902
Fax: (503) 223-6600
Contact: Suzanna Lindeman
e-mail: slindeman@portlandcm.org

For applications or additional information please contact Opal Charter School at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.portlandcm.org.

**The Portland Village Public Charter School
K-5, Growing to K-8**

At the Portland Village School, we teach to the whole child. We like to say we teach to the "head, heart, and hands"--nurturing students' intellectual, physical, and emotional growth. Our core academic material is enlivened by music and singing, art, drama, second language, life skills and handwork. This comprehensive curriculum prepares students to meet the challenges of school and of life as productive and integrated human beings. The Portland Village School is PPS's newest public charter school, opening in September 2007. We are pleased to offer Portland's diverse range of children and families this proven, holistic educational alternative.

7654 N. Delaware Avenue
Portland OR 97217
Phone: (503) 445-0056 / Fax: (503) 445-0058
e-mail: info@portlandvillageschool.org

For applications or additional information please contact Portland Village at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.portlandvillageschool.org.

**Self Enhancement Inc. Academy Public Charter School
6-8 (6 & 7 in 2005-06)**

The SEI Academy is a grades 6-8 public charter school dedicated to helping all students realize their full academic and personal potential. It is our goal for SEI graduates to be well prepared for high school and college by achieving high academic standards. It is also our goal to prepare students to be successful young people who will lead healthy lives and who will make worthwhile contributions to their communities.

3920 N Kerby
Portland, OR 97227
Phone: (503) 249-1721 X327 / Fax: (503) 249-1955
contact: Linda Harris / email: lindah@selfenhancement.org

For applications or additional information please contact SEI Academy at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.selfenhancement.org.

**Trillium Public Charter School
K-12**

Trillium's goal is to educate the whole child with an integrated curriculum that instills a desire for lifelong learning. Our curriculum includes community, urban, and global studies. Trillium emphasizes independent, project-based learning within a small class and a small school environment. As part of our commitment to building a true community of learners, Trillium employs mixed-age classes building courses around interests and abilities rather than age or grade level. We honor different learning styles and use democratic processes to help students grow fully as human beings and contribute to and enhance the world.

5420 N Interstate Ave.
Portland, OR 97217
Phone: (503) 285-3833 / Fax: (503) 249-0348
e-mail: info@trilliumcharterschool.org

For applications or additional information please contact Trillium Charter School at the numbers/addresses listed above, or on the web at www.trilliumcharterschool.org.

Appendix B. Summary of Literature Review

K-12 Education: Reviewing the Research on Charter School Performance. School District Performance Audit Report, Legislative Division of Post-Audit. State of Kansas, May 2007.

Beyond the Rhetoric of School Reform: A Study of Ten California School Districts. Amy Stuart Wells, et. al. UCLA Charter School Study, 1998.

Strengthening Pennsylvania's Charter School Reform: Findings from the Statewide Evaluation and Discussion of Relevant Policy Issues. Gary Miron, et. al. The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University, October 2002.

Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program. Policy and Program Studies Service. U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, 2004.

Charter Schools. Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota, June 2008.

Apples to Apples: An Evaluation of Charter Schools Serving General Student Populations. Jay P. Greene, et. al. Education Working Paper, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, July 2003.

An Evaluation of Connecticut Charter Schools and the Charter School Initiative. Gary Miron and Jerry Horn. The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University, September 2002.

Profiles of High-Performing Texas Open-Enrollment Charter Schools. Texas Center for Educational Research, 2001.

Where Charter School Policy Fails: The Problem of Accountability and Equity. Amy Stuart Wells, editor. Columbia University, 2000.

Charter Schools: Hope or Hype . Jack Buckley and Mark Schneider. Princeton University Press, 2007.

School Choice and the Future of American Democracy. Scott Franklin Abernathy. University of Michigan, 2005.

Failed Promises: Assessing Charter Schools in the Twin Cities. Institute on Race and Poverty, November, 2008.

Public Charter Schools in Oregon 1999-2005. Oregon Department of Education, Salem, Oregon.

Oregon Charter Schools 2006-2007, 2007-2008 Evaluation Reports. Oregon Department of Education, Salem, Oregon, December 2007, 2008.

Appendix C. Summary of Student Achievement Gains: 2006-07 to 2007-08

Source: PPS Office of Research and Evaluation. Charter averages within 2 points of District averages were considered comparable and are highlighted.

Opal	Charter Annual Gains		PPS	difference
	No. of students	Mean gain '06-7 to '07-8		
Reading				
4 th	11	9.5	7.3	+2.2
5 th	10	4.9	4.3	+0.6
Average all grades		7.3		
Math				
4 th	12	7.3	8.9	-1.6
5 th	11	3.2	6.8	-3.6
Average all grades		5.3		

Overall, OPAL students meet or exceed average PPS annual gains in reading. Lower than average gains in math for 5th graders were the result of lack of progress for a few students who scored/were very high the previous year.

Emerson	Charter Annual Gains		PPS	difference
	No. of students	Mean gain '06-7 to '07-8		
Reading				
4 th	21	4	7.3	-3.3
5 th	13	-1.1	4.3	-5.4
Average all grades		2.1		
Math				
4 th	22	7.6	8.9	-1.3
5 th	14	4.9	6.8	-1.9
Average all grades		6.6		

Emerson students meet or exceed PPS averages in both reading and math, after controlling for the fact that a disproportionately high % of their students exceed state standards.

LEP High	Charter Annual Gains		PPS	difference
	No. of students	Mean gain '06-7 to '07-8		
Reading - 10 th	28	4.4	3.2	+1.2
Math - 10 th	28	-3.8	-2.0	-1.8

LEP students meet PPS average gains for 10th graders in both reading and math

Arthur Academy	Charter Annual Gains		PPS	difference
	No. of students	Mean gain '06-7 to '07-8		
Reading - 4 th	14	10.8	7.3	+3.5
Math - 4 th	14	21.5	8.9	+12.6

Portland Arthur's students showed significantly higher than average gains in reading and math, compared to PPS District students across most benchmark categories.

	Charter Annual Gains			
	No. of students	Mean gain '06-7 to '07-8	PPS	difference
SEI Academy				
Reading				
6 th	41	5.4	6.4	-1.0
7 th	41	3.6	6.7	-3.1
8 th	42	-3.2	0.3	-3.5
Average all grades		1.9		
Math				
6 th	41	2.6	5.3	-2.7
7 th	41	6.8	6.6	+0.2
8 th	42	-0.1	2.9	-3.0
Average all grades		3.1		

SEI students matched PPS average gains in reading their first year (6th - 7th grade), but achieved lower than average gains in the subsequent two years because of weak gains by students who met or exceeded State standards. Similar patterns were exhibited for math.

	Charter Annual Gains			
	No. of students	Mean gain '06-7 to '07-8	PPS	difference
Trillium				
Reading				
4 th	18	4.2	7.3	-3.1
5 th	25	4.4	4.3	+0.1
6 th	25	3.9	6.4	-2.5
7 th	25	4.6	6.7	-2.1
8 th	17	0.9	0.3	+0.6
Average all grades		3.8		
Math				
4 th	18	4.8	8.9	-4.1
5 th	25	5.6	6.8	-1.2
6 th	23	3.7	5.3	-1.6
7 th	26	4.9	6.6	-1.7
8 th	17	0.1	2.9	-2.8
Average all grades		4.0		

Trillium's results are mixed. In some grades, students matched District gains in reading or math. In the grades where average gains were less than District averages, lower achieving students generally made strong gains while gains for higher achievers were flatter than District peers.

Appendix D. Charter school surveys: staff, parents and students: 2007-08

(Due to low responses at Opal and Arthur Academy 2006-07 responses were used.)

STAFF SURVEY**REASON FOR WORKING AT THIS CHARTER SCHOOL:**

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
Opportunity to work with like-minded educators					
VERY IMPORTANT	100%	67%	82%	86%	100%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		33%	18%	14%	
NOT IMPORTANT					
Delivery of educational program					
VERY IMPORTANT	100%	78%	73%	86%	100%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		22%	27%	14%	
NOT IMPORTANT					
Focus of educational program					
VERY IMPORTANT	100%	78%	45%	86%	100%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		22%	55%	14%	
NOT IMPORTANT					
Participating in an educational reform effort					
VERY IMPORTANT	90%	56%	73%	57%	100%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	10%	23%	27%	43%	
NOT IMPORTANT		11%			
Opportunities presented by school leaders					
VERY IMPORTANT	100%	22%	64%	71%	43%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		56%	36%	29%	43%
NOT IMPORTANT		22%			14%
Safety and school climate					
VERY IMPORTANT	70%	22%	55%	100%	57%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	30%	56%	36%		43%
NOT IMPORTANT		22%	9%		
High emphasis on academics					
VERY IMPORTANT	50%	33%	100%	71%	29%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	41%	67%		15%	14%
NOT IMPORTANT	9%			14%	57%
Size of school					
VERY IMPORTANT	20%	78%	64%	86%	29%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	80%	11%	27%		42%
NOT IMPORTANT		11%	9%	14%	29%
Class size					
VERY IMPORTANT	50%	78%	27%	86%	43%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	40%	22%	64%	14%	57%
NOT IMPORTANT	10%		9%		

STAFF survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
Parents are committed					
VERY IMPORTANT	70%	33%		71%	71%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	30%	56%	82%	29%	29%
NOT IMPORTANT		11%	18%		
Career enhancement					
VERY IMPORTANT	40%	11%	9%	29%	29%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	30%	56%	91%	14%	42%
NOT IMPORTANT	30%	33%		57%	29%
Convenient location					
VERY IMPORTANT		33%	9%	43%	14%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	30%	34%	46%	28%	43%
NOT IMPORTANT	70%	33%	45%	29%	43%
Difficulty finding other positions					
VERY IMPORTANT			18%		
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	100%	33%	9%	100%	14%
NOT IMPORTANT		67%	73%		86%

OVERALL, HAS THIS CHARTER SCHOOL MET YOUR INITIAL EXPECTATION?

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
DID NOT MEET					
PARTIALLY MET			9%	43%	14%
MET	40%	44%	18%	57%	43%
EXCEEDED	60%	56%	73%		43%
	(n=10)	(9)	(11)	(7)	(7)

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE CHARTER SCHOOL:

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
School mission					
VERY SATISFIED	100%	67%	73%	29%	71%
SATISFIED		33%	27%	42%	29%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED				29%	
Teacher collegiality					
VERY SATISFIED	80%	56%	64%		71%
SATISFIED	20%	44%	36%	86%	29%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED				14%	

STAFF survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
Administrative leadership of the school					
VERY SATISFIED	60%	33%	91%	29%	0%
SATISFIED	40%	23%	9%	42%	86%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED		44%		29%	14%
Overall school climate					
VERY SATISFIED	80%	44%	45%	14%	43%
SATISFIED	20%	56%	46%	57%	57%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED			9%	29%	
Relations with community					
VERY SATISFIED	60%	44%	27%	43%	43%
SATISFIED	40%	56%	64%	57%	57%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED			9%		
Student motivation					
VERY SATISFIED	90%	44%	9%		57%
SATISFIED	10%	56%	55%	14%	43%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED			36%	86%	
Professional development opportunities					
VERY SATISFIED	50%	56%	18%	29%	29%
SATISFIED	50%	44%	73%	57%	71%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED			9%	14%	
Student's academic performance					
VERY SATISFIED	80%	44%			43%
SATISFIED	20%	56%	73%	29%	57%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED			27%	71%	
Availability of computers and other technology					
VERY SATISFIED			64%	43%	57%
SATISFIED	60%	67%	27%	57%	43%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	40%	33%	9%		
Evaluation of your performance					
VERY SATISFIED	20%	22%	36%	57%	29%
SATISFIED	70%	34%	37%	43%	71%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	10%	44%	27%		
School governance					
VERY SATISFIED	30%	22%	55%	29%	
SATISFIED	70%	45%	36%	28%	100%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED		33%	9%	43%	

STAFF survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
School building and facilities					
VERY SATISFIED	40%		55%	29%	14%
SATISFIED	60%	33%	45%	42%	29%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED		67%		29%	57%
Resources available for instruction					
VERY SATISFIED	20%	33%	36%		29%
SATISFIED	60%	67%	37%	71%	28%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	20%		27%	29%	43%
Salary level					
VERY SATISFIED		11%	36%	43%	
SATISFIED	50%	22%	46%	43%	
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	50%	67%	18%	14%	100%
Fringe benefits					
VERY SATISFIED				43%	
SATISFIED	40%	87%	73%	57%	71%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	60%	13%	27%		29%

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
CHARTER SCHOOL STATEMENTS:					
This school has a bright future					
STRONGLY AGREE	90%	89%	82%	71%	86%
AGREE	10%	11%	18%	15%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				14%	
This school reflects a community atmosphere					
STRONGLY AGREE	100%	78%	91%	43%	86%
AGREE		22%	9%	57%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE					
The school has high standards and expectations					
STRONGLY AGREE	100%	78%	55%	29%	86%
AGREE		22%	45%	42%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				29%	
There is commitment to the mission of the school					
STRONGLY AGREE	90%	78%	64%	29%	86%
AGREE	10%	22%	36%	71%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE					
Students feel safe at this school					
STRONGLY AGREE	60%	78%	73%	43%	86%
AGREE	40%	22%	18%	43%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE			9%	14%	

STAFF survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
The quality of instruction is high					
STRONGLY AGREE	89%	89%	64%		86%
AGREE	11%	11%	36%	100%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE					
Teachers are autonomous and creative in their classes					
STRONGLY AGREE	70%	56%	73%	57%	71%
AGREE	30%	44%	27%	29%	29%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				14%	
Teachers are challenged to be effective					
STRONGLY AGREE	100%	44%	64%	29%	57%
AGREE		56%	36%	57%	29%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				14%	14%
School meets needs that would not be addressed at local schools					
STRONGLY AGREE	80%	33%	82%	29%	71%
AGREE	20%	67%	18%	57%	29%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				14%	
Teachers and school leadership are accountable					
STRONGLY AGREE	80%	67%	27%	29%	67%
AGREE	20%	33%	73%	71%	33%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE					
Teachers are able to influence the school's direction					
STRONGLY AGREE	60%	67%	73%	29%	17%
AGREE	40%	3%	27%	42%	69%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				29%	14%
This school has been well received by the community					
STRONGLY AGREE	70%	67%	10%	43%	86%
AGREE	30%	33%	81%	57%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE			9%		
It is important for our school to be held accountable to performance goals					
STRONGLY AGREE	30%	67%	55%	57%	57%
AGREE	70%	33%	36%	43%	43%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE			9%		
Staff reflects on and evaluates school success annually					
STRONGLY AGREE	60%	56%	55%	29%	29%
AGREE	40%	44%	45%	57%	57%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE				14%	14%
I am satisfied with the educational program					
STRONGLY AGREE	80%	56%	18%		86%
AGREE	20%	44%	73%	72%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE			9%	28%	

STAFF survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
There is good communication between staff and parents					
STRONGLY AGREE	60%	44%	45%		86%
AGREE	40%	56%	46%	86%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE			9%	14%	
Parents are involved in instruction and activities					
STRONGLY AGREE	80%	33%			86%
AGREE	20%	67%	73%	57%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE			27%	43%	
Teachers and Charter Board work collaboratively					
STRONGLY AGREE	40%	44%	18%	29%	14%
AGREE	60%	45%	64%	42%	86%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		11%	18%	29%	
Parents can influence instruction and activities					
STRONGLY AGREE	60%	11%	9%		50%
AGREE	30%	78%	73%	86%	50%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	10%	11%	18%	14%	
Teachers have many non-instructional duties					
STRONGLY AGREE	10%	38%	55%	14%	
AGREE	40%	24%			57%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	50%	38%	45%	86%	43%
The students are diverse					
STRONGLY AGREE			91%		
AGREE	100%	67%	9%	29%	57%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		33%		71%	43%
Lack of student discipline hinders teaching and learning					
STRONGLY AGREE	10%		18%	29%	
AGREE	20%		9%	14%	29%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	70%	100%	73%	57%	71%
Support services are available					
STRONGLY AGREE			18%	43%	
AGREE	50%	11%	64%	29%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	50%	89%	18%	28%	86%
The school has sufficient financial resources					
STRONGLY AGREE	10%			14%	
AGREE	20%	22%	36%	57%	14%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	70%	78%	64%	29%	86%
Teachers are disenchanting					
STRONGLY AGREE	10%				
AGREE		11%		42%	
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	90%	89%	100%	58%	100%

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
Class sizes are too large to meet individual needs					
STRONGLY AGREE			9%		
AGREE			9%	14%	
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	100%	100%	82%	86%	100%
Teachers are insecure about their future					
STRONGLY AGREE					
AGREE		11%	27%	42%	
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	100%	89%	73%	58%	100%
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL'S EFFORT TO FULFILL ITS MISSION STATEMENT?					
NOT ADDRESSED					
PARTIALLY MEETING			27%	40%	
MEETING	30%	22%	55%	60%	86%
EXCEEDING	70%	78%	18%		14%
	(n=10)	(9)	(11)	(5)	(7)
Technical assistance needed in the following areas:					
Improving facilities	20%	67%		43%	57%
School finance and budgeting	30%	33%	36%	14%	29%
Alignment of curriculum with state standards		11%	9%	57%	14%
Governance and leadership		33%		43%	
Community relations	10%	22%	18%	14%	
Charter renewal			18%	14%	14%
Regulatory issues		11%		29%	
Program evaluation		11%		29%	
Personnel issues		22%		14%	
Accreditation			18%		
Professional development during this school year:					
Weekly staff meetings	100%	89%	91%	71%	86%
Workshops on instructional delivery methods	70%	67%	55%	57%	57%
Curriculum workshops	60%	89%	45%	14%	71%
Staff retreat	80%	44%	73%		57%
Support for training during summer	60%	56%	18%	29%	71%
State Charter School Conferences	10%	22%	45%		14%
Standards alignment	10%		9%	29%	29%
University and community college classes	10%	22%	9%	14%	
National Charter School Conferences	10%		9%		14%
No opportunities provided				14%	29%

STAFF survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village
Who does your evaluation?					
Teacher		44%			14%
Administrator	100%	44%	83%	100%	71%
Charter School Board		11%	17%		14%
How often is evaluation done?					
3 to 6 months		11%	36%	43%	14%
Annually	60%	78%	45%	43%	57%
Has not occurred	40%	11%	18%	14%	29%
Which processes are included in your evaluation?					
Classroom observations	70%	56%	73%	57%	43%
Goal setting	40%	89%	64%	43%	71%
Student performance	40%		36%	0%	14%
Self-reflection	80%	78%	64%	14%	71%
Feedback from students	30%		45%	29%	
Feedback from parents	50%			14%	
Feedback from peers	40%	22%	9%	14%	
Written report is provided		100%	64%	43%	43%
Professional development is tied to evaluation			18%	0%	14%
Improvement process is continuous	80%	33%		57%	29%

PARENTS SURVEY

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village	Arthur Academy
What is the longest time you have had a child or children enrolled?						
LESS THAN 1 YEAR	18%	29%	62%	42%	98%	38%
1-2 YEARS	6%	22%	38%	33%	2%	63%
3-4 YEARS	47%	41%		25%		
MORE THAN 4 YEARS	29%	9%				
	(n=34)	(105)	(13)	(12)	(84)	(40)
Distance from school?						
LESS THAN ½ MILE	6%		8%	8%	11%	5%
½ TO 1 MILE	6%	5%		17%	13%	13%
1 TO 3 MILES	6%	29%	23%	8%	24%	45%
3 TO 5 MILES	32%	34%	31%	33%	23%	25%
OVER 5 MILES	50%	32%	38%	33%	30%	13%
	(n=34)	(105)	(13)	(12)	(84)	(40)
Do you know the school's mission?						
YES	97%	98%	92%	83%	100%	88%
NO	3%	2%	8%	17%		12%
	(n=31)	(93)	(12)	(12)	(78)	(25)
What kind of school did your child attend last year?						
REGULAR PUBLIC	6%	11%	25%	42%	36%	41%
THIS CHARTER	79%	68%	42%	58%		8%
PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL		2%	17%		29%	
ANOTHER CHARTER		1%			7%	15%
DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL	3%	3%	17%		5%	10%
HOME SCHOOL					20%	23%
PRESCHOOL	12%	14%			1%	
ALTERNATIVE		1%			2%	3%
	(n=34)	(105)	(12)	(12)	(84)	(39)
REASONS FOR SENDING MY CHILD TO THIS CHARTER SCHOOL:						
Good teachers and high quality instruction						
VERY IMPORTANT	97%	96%	100%	83%	92%	74%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	3%	4%		17%	8%	21%
NOT IMPORTANT						5%
Prefer emphasis and educational philosophy						
VERY IMPORTANT	94%	94%	100%	73%	96%	35%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	4%	6%		18%	4%	63%
NOT IMPORTANT	2%			9%		2%

PARENTS survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village	Arthur Academy
Unique opportunities for my child						
VERY IMPORTANT	88%	90%	92%	100%	92%	40%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	12%	8%	8%		8%	58%
NOT IMPORTANT		2%				2%
Focus of educational delivery						
VERY IMPORTANT	74%	85%	91%	83%	88%	38%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	26%	11%	9%	17%	10%	60%
NOT IMPORTANT		4%			2%	2%
Educational program emphasis						
VERY IMPORTANT	76%	82%	82%	75%	74%	48%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	24%	16%	18%	25%	21%	52%
NOT IMPORTANT		2%			5%	
Academic reputation and high standards						
VERY IMPORTANT	68%	78%	82%	92%	57%	68%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	32%	20%	18%	8%	38%	32%
NOT IMPORTANT		2%			5%	
School safety and climate						
VERY IMPORTANT	65%	64%	55%	92%	71%	68%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	33%	34%	45%	8%	27%	30%
NOT IMPORTANT	2%	2%			2%	2%
Small class sizes						
VERY IMPORTANT	76%	82%	82%	75%	58%	21%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	24%	16%	18%	25%	41%	71%
NOT IMPORTANT		2%			1%	8%
Interested in being involved with educational reform effort						
VERY IMPORTANT	56%	61%	58%	75%	67%	7%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	38%	30%	34%	25%	27%	68%
NOT IMPORTANT	6%	9%	8%		6%	25%
Unhappy with the curriculum at previous school						
VERY IMPORTANT	30%	22%	36%	18%	34%	18%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	27%	17%	9%	27%	21%	31%
NOT IMPORTANT	43%	61%	55%	55%	45%	51%
Unhappy with the instruction at previous school						
VERY IMPORTANT	38%	19%	30%	18%	26%	26%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	21%	21%	10%	27%	19%	23%
NOT IMPORTANT	41%	60%	60%	55%	55%	51%

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village	Arthur Academy
My child wanted to attend this school						
VERY IMPORTANT	24%	21%	58%	50%	20%	13%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	50%	48%	42%	42%	48%	25%
NOT IMPORTANT	26%	31%		8%	32%	62%
Convenient location						
VERY IMPORTANT	3%	16%	0%	42%	19%	10%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	47%	55%	75%	25%	44%	67%
NOT IMPORTANT	50%	29%	25%	33%	37%	23%
My child's special needs not met at previous school						
VERY IMPORTANT	19%	11%	36%	25%	8%	21%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	10%	22%	37%	42%	25%	41%
NOT IMPORTANT	71%	67%	27%	33%	67%	38%
This school has good physical facilities						
VERY IMPORTANT	38%	9%	27%	50%	5%	10%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	36%	50%	46%	33%	58%	82%
NOT IMPORTANT	26%	41%	27%	17%	37%	8%
My child was performing poorly at previous school						
VERY IMPORTANT	7%	12%	33%	18%	8%	28%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	3%	7%	9%	9%	19%	23%
NOT IMPORTANT	90%	81%	58%	73%	73%	49%
OVERALL, HAS THIS CHARTER SCHOOL MET YOUR INITIAL EXPECTATION?						
YES	94%	99%	91%	75%	96%	100%
NO	6%	1%	9%	25%	4%	
	(n=34)	(105)	(11)	(12)	(84)	(40)
TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH:						
Teachers and other school staff						
VERY SATISFIED	65%	86%	82%	50%	67%	31%
SATISFIED	26%	11%	9%	33%	30%	67%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	9%	3%	9%	17%	3%	2%
Educational program						
VERY SATISFIED	59%	86%	70%	42%	65%	45%
SATISFIED	32%	12%	20%	42%	31%	55%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	9%	2%	10%	16%	4%	

PARENTS survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village	Arthur Academy
Overall school climate						
VERY SATISFIED	71%	77%	36%	58%	72%	43%
SATISFIED	26%	20%	46%	17%	23%	57%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	3%	3%	18%	25%	5%	
Potential for parent involvement						
VERY SATISFIED	45%	74%	55%	58%	80%	15%
SATISFIED	39%	25%	45%	25%	19%	83%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	16%	1%		17%	1%	2%
Standards and expectations						
VERY SATISFIED	53%	76%	55%	60%	60%	41%
SATISFIED	35%	22%	45%	30%	32%	59%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	12%	2%		10%	8%	
My child's academic achievement						
VERY SATISFIED	53%	70%	55%	50%	69%	36%
SATISFIED	32%	26%	36%	42%	20%	64%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	15%	4%	9%	8%	11%	0%
Progress toward meeting school's mission						
VERY SATISFIED	53%	76%	45%	45%	68%	13%
SATISFIED	41%	22%	55%	28%	26%	87%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	6%	2%		27%	6%	
Administrative leadership						
VERY SATISFIED	39%	69%	73%	50%	43%	28%
SATISFIED	48%	29%	18%	25%	49%	70%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	13%	2%	9%	25%	8%	2%
Class sizes						
VERY SATISFIED	38%	70%	45%	42%	43%	26%
SATISFIED	62%	29%	46%	58%	44%	74%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED		1%	9%	0%	13%	
School stability						
VERY SATISFIED	44%	49%	18%	50%	37%	30%
SATISFIED	50%	45%	64%	25%	53%	70%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	6%	6%	18%	25%	10%	
Availability of computers and other technology						
VERY SATISFIED	21%	13%	60%	67%	56%	13%
SATISFIED	52%	50%	40%	33%	33%	79%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	27%	37%			11%	8%

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village	Arthur Academy
Extracurricular activities						
VERY SATISFIED	15%	28%	9%	75%	31%	13%
SATISFIED	32%	45%	46%	25%	55%	85%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	53%	27%	45%		14%	2%
School resources						
VERY SATISFIED	29%	17%	45%	75%	12%	28%
SATISFIED	47%	57%	46%	25%	63%	70%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	24%	26%	9%		25%	2%
Physical facilities						
VERY SATISFIED	44%	3%	27%	67%	10%	28%
SATISFIED	41%	53%	46%	25%	52%	70%
DISSATISFIED/VERY DISSATISFIED	15%	44%	27%	8%	38%	2%
EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE WITH THESE STATEMENTS ABOUT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL:						
My child is motivated to learn						
STRONGLY AGREE	71%	80%	55%	75%	80%	34%
AGREE	24%	18%	36%	25%	18%	61%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	5%	2%	9%		2%	5%
The quality of instruction is high						
STRONGLY AGREE	62%	84%	82%	33%	71%	33%
AGREE	38%	15%	9%	50%	28%	64%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		1%	9%	17%	1%	3%
The school is supporting innovative practice						
STRONGLY AGREE	79%	79%	70%	42%	76%	13%
AGREE	18%	20%	30%	50%	23%	87%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	3%	1%		8%	1%	
My child receives sufficient individual attention						
STRONGLY AGREE	65%	69%	64%	42%	58%	26%
AGREE	35%	26%	27%	33%	35%	74%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	3%	5%	9%	25%	7%	
The school is meeting my child's needs						
STRONGLY AGREE	56%	73%	64%	25%	57%	28%
AGREE	26%	21%	27%	58%	38%	72%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	18%	6%	9%	17%	5%	
There is good communication between school and home						
STRONGLY AGREE	35%	64%	55%	33%	53%	12%
AGREE	53%	31%	36%	33%	41%	83%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	12%	5%	9%	34%	6%	5%

PARENTS survey results

	Opal	Emerson	LEP	SEI	Portland Village	Arthur Academy
Teachers and school leadership are accountable for student achievement						
STRONGLY AGREE	27%	59%	36%	33%	48%	18%
AGREE	52%	39%	64%	50%	44%	82%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	21%	2%		17%	8%	0%
Parents have the ability to influence the direction of the school						
STRONGLY AGREE	26%	32%	27%	33%	56%	9%
AGREE	47%	64%	73%	25%	38%	86%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	27%	4%		42%	6%	5%
The students are diverse						
STRONGLY AGREE	35%	38%	82%	25%	17%	12%
AGREE	29%	46%	18%	41%	52%	85%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	36%	16%		34%	31%	3%
Support services are available						
STRONGLY AGREE	15%	11%	36%	50%	15%	5%
AGREE	45%	44%	56%	42%	39%	82%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	40%	45%	18%	8%	46%	13%
Involvement (may select more than one):						
PLANNING/FOUNDERS		1%		8%	10%	8%
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER	50%	15%	8%	25%	19%	10%
BOARD MEMBER		4%	58%		5%	
NONE	3%	20%		50%	8%	65%
VOLUNTEER WITH SCHOOL	88%	79%	33%	42%	90%	20%
	(n=48)	(125)	(12)	(15)	(111)	(41)
How many hours per month do you volunteer at this school?						
0 TO 3 HOURS	44%	63%	90%	80%	48%	81%
4 TO 8 HOURS	32%	27%		20%	34%	19%
9 TO 12 HOURS	9%	6%			11%	
13 TO 16 HOURS	15%	1%	10%		2%	
17 HOURS OR MORE		3%			5%	
	(n=34)	(101)	(10)	(10)	(82)	(31)

STUDENTS SURVEY

	Opal	Emerson	SEI	LEP
Type of school attended last year?				
REGULAR PUBLIC		13%	65%	56%
THIS CHARTER	100%	80%	30%	28%
PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL		2%	5%	3%
ANOTHER CHARTER		5%		3%
DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL				
HOME SCHOOL				2%
PRESCHOOL				3%
ALTERNATIVE				3%
	(n=8)	(55)	(43)	(89)
WHY DID YOU AND YOUR FAMILY CHOOSE THIS SCHOOL?				
My parents thought it would be better for me				
VERY IMPORTANT	88%	35%	64%	67%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		48%	32%	27%
NOT IMPORTANT	13%	17%	4%	6%
Comfortable and safe place				
VERY IMPORTANT	100%	58%	60%	43%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		27%	28%	43%
NOT IMPORTANT		15%	12%	14%
Small size and small class sizes				
VERY IMPORTANT	75%	18%	40%	57%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	25%	33%	34%	35%
NOT IMPORTANT		49%	26%	8%
Interesting classes				
VERY IMPORTANT	88%	33%	23%	53%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	12%	45%	49%	37%
NOT IMPORTANT		22%	28%	10%
Heard that teachers were better				
VERY IMPORTANT	63%	31%	26%	46%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		34%	53%	31%
NOT IMPORTANT	38%	35%	21%	23%

STUDENTS survey results

	Opal	Emerson	SEI	LEP
Teachers at my last school did not help me enough				
VERY IMPORTANT	14%	26%	30%	39%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	15%	14%	37%	36%
NOT IMPORTANT	71%	60%	33%	25%
Computers and other equipment				
VERY IMPORTANT		2%	40%	31%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	12%	16%	36%	43%
NOT IMPORTANT	88%	82%	24%	26%
I was not doing well at my last school				
VERY IMPORTANT	13%	13%	21%	29%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		22%	17%	33%
NOT IMPORTANT	88%	65%	62%	38%
Good location				
VERY IMPORTANT		15%	26%	16%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	50%	47%	43%	50%
NOT IMPORTANT	50%	38%	31%	34%
My friends were attending this school				
VERY IMPORTANT		9%	9%	16%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		26%	28%	35%
NOT IMPORTANT	100%	65%	63%	49%
How are you doing in school?				
EXCELLENT	87%	36%	31%	16%
GOOD	13%	34%	62%	39%
AVERAGE		21%	7%	33%
NOT SO WELL		9%		9%
VERY BADLY				2%
	(n=8)	(56)	(42)	(85)
Compared to your last school, how interested are you in your schoolwork now?				
MORE INTERESTED	100%	56%	49%	65%
ABOUT THE SAME		30%	39%	24%
LESS INTERESTED		14%	12%	11%
	(n=6)	(43)	(41)	(84)

	Opal	Emerson	SEI	LEP
HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING?				
Teachers and administrators know me by name				
STRONGLY AGREE	75%	55%	52%	75%
AGREE	25%	38%	36%	20%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		7%	12%	5%
There are school rules we must follow				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	57%	62%	39%
AGREE	37%	38%	31%	45%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		5%	7%	16%
This school is doing a good job preparing me for the future				
STRONGLY AGREE	57%	48%	33%	51%
AGREE	43%	38%	38%	35%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		14%	29%	14%
My teacher is available to talk to me or help me when I need it				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	45%	33%	49%
AGREE	37%	39%	49%	43%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		16%	18%	8%
I feel safe at this school				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	48%	45%	39%
AGREE	37%	38%	29%	48%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		14%	26%	13%
Students at this school com from diverse backgrounds				
STRONGLY AGREE	25%	50%	22%	48%
AGREE	37%	37%	29%	41%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	38%	13%	49%	11%
Teachers seem happy				
STRONGLY AGREE	38%	51%	14%	45%
AGREE	62%	36%	45%	47%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		13%	41%	8%
I am learning more here than at my last school				
STRONGLY AGREE	67%	40%	32%	39%
AGREE	33%	40%	37%	40%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		20%	31%	21%

STUDENTS survey results

	Opal	Emerson	SEI	LEP
Students are from different ethnic groups				
STRONGLY AGREE	25%	46%	12%	44%
AGREE	62%	43%	31%	45%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	13%	11%	57%	11%
I have a computer available when I need one				
STRONGLY AGREE	14%	16%	40%	49%
AGREE	43%	44%	40%	34%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	43%	40%	20%	17%
Students feel important				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	41%	28%	30%
AGREE	37%	38%	35%	52%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		21%	37%	18%
I know the mission of my school				
STRONGLY AGREE	25%	12%	34%	47%
AGREE	62%	36%	44%	43%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	13%	52%	22%	10%
I get feedback on most or all of the assignments I turn in				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	39%	19%	25%
AGREE	37%	41%	56%	57%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		20%	25%	18%
I wish there were more classes to choose from				
STRONGLY AGREE		18%	36%	34%
AGREE	43%	40%	36%	47%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	57%	42%	28%	19%
The school is clean and well maintained				
STRONGLY AGREE	50%	33%	33%	19%
AGREE	50%	37%	47%	52%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		30%	20%	29%
Students have some power at our school				
STRONGLY AGREE	38%	24%	15%	33%
AGREE	49%	49%	37%	48%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	13%	27%	48%	19%
I feel as though my ideas are heard				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	24%	17%	26%
AGREE	37%	56%	32%	48%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		20%	51%	26%

	Opal	Emerson	SEI	LEP
Students take responsibility for their own learning				
STRONGLY AGREE	38%	25%	29%	15%
AGREE	62%	58%	40%	60%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		17%	31%	25%
If the teacher left the class, most students would continue to work				
STRONGLY AGREE	63%	21%	12%	14%
AGREE	12%	41%	21%	51%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE	25%	38%	67%	35%
Students respect others and their property				
STRONGLY AGREE	75%	16%	9%	16%
AGREE	25%	45%	36%	43%
DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE		39%	55%	41%

STUDENTS survey results