

## 2011 Program Report Card: Public Charter Schools (Connecticut State Department of Education)

*Quality of Life Result:* All Connecticut youth have a successful transition to adulthood, assume a contributing role in a world-class workforce, and become productive members of their community and society at large.

*Contribution to Result:* The *eighteen* Public Charter Schools (PCSs) are among the public school choice options that are raising the educational attainment level of participating students throughout the state through high-quality, racially/economically integrated education. These schools provide educational choices that contribute to a more highly educated workforce and may reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. PCSs maximize the opportunity for each student to achieve his or her highest potential by offering challenging, relevant and rigorous curriculum and instruction. In addition, these schools provide a creative and flexible environment that values each student's unique abilities, talents, interests and learning styles. Greater student learning and engagement in school lead directly to a more prosperous adulthood with greater contributions to the economy and society.

*Actual SFY 10 Total Program Expenditures:* \$72,466,227; *State Funding:* \$54,141,886; *Federal Funding:* \$6,260,612; *Other Funding:* \$12,063,729

*Estimated SFY 11 Total Program Expenditures:* \$80,966,22; *State Funding:* \$64,141,886; *Federal Funding:* \$4,760,612; *Other Funding:* \$12,063,729

*Partners:* Institutions of higher education, business and industry, nonprofit organizations, educational researchers and parents.

**Performance Measure 1:** Percentage of students at or above goal in mathematics and reading in Grades 3-8.

Percent at/above Goal CMT

Charter School	Math		Reading	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Ach. 1st, Hfd	55.4	64.2	31.3	36.4
Amistad Acad.	63.4	75.0	56.8	58.7
Ach. 1st, Bpt	48.0	66.5	27.7	43.0
Elm City Prep	67.9	72.8	48.7	56.0
Highville	52.1	54.8	42.7	47.4
Integrated Day	54.6	54.4	63.7	64.8
ISAAC	29.9	34.9	52.0	61.8
Jumoke Acad.	50.9	61.3	49.1	52.3
New Beginnings	39.8	49.8	31.7	48.0
Odyssey Comm.	46.5	50.6	54.4	61.1
Park City Prep	37.8	46.2	43.1	48.2
Side By Side	34.9	41.3	43.7	52.9
The Bridge Acad.	32.6	39.6	32.3	56.5
Trailblazers	25.7	22.6	23.0	26.6
<b>State</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>67.6</b>

**Story behind the baseline:** While proficiency is typically used in federal accountability provisions, the Connecticut State Department of Education

(CSDE) has identified goal as the desired standard for academic achievement. While the standard of goal is measured here, progress at all five levels of achievement (below basic, basic, proficient, goal, advanced) are monitored by CSDE. PCSs are improving in the percentage of students at or above goal for both reading and mathematics. While PCSs have lagged behind statewide averages, they have demonstrated increases of several percentage points in the percent of students at or above goal in both reading and math. Comparatively, the students statewide demonstrate a more modest increase of approximately two percentage points. Such greater improvements are noteworthy given that the majority of PCS students reside in the state's priority school districts which serve academically high-risk students.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** CSDE is entering its second year of a site visitation process as part of holding PCSs to a greater degree of accountability through higher standards for their operation. These site visitations yield specific recommendations for charter school improvement in major operational areas (governance, curriculum, financial, compliance with laws, student assessment, etc.). As the schools are required to submit progress reports to the CSDE, this acts as a monitoring tool and enables CSDE to broker technical assistance where or if needed. As 2009 was a baseline year, CSDE will analyze multi-year trends in the performance of PCSs with respect to

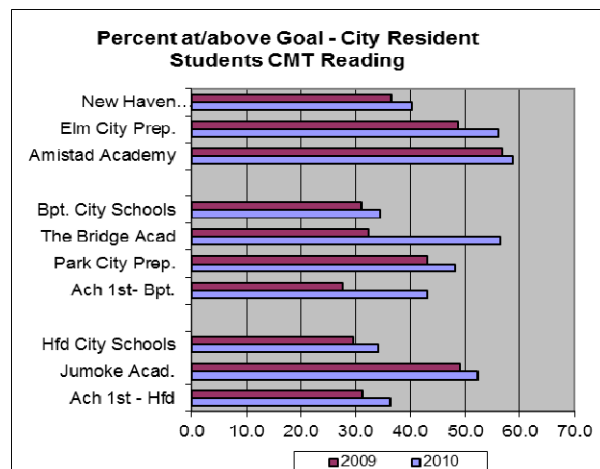
their counterparts in city schools, and among PCSs across the state. Within available resources, CSDE would ideally commission or conduct formal qualitative and quantitative program evaluations to measure a range of program quality indicators and to find qualitative reasons for higher achievement in PCSs.

**Data Development Agenda:** The following measures, as well as others, will be considered when revising the PCS RBA Report Card for the following years:

The CSDE will revisit utilizing out of school suspension data as a proxy for a performance measure regarding school climate. The CSDE has determined it best to wait until the data are available reflecting the newly passed legislation that requires school districts to use out of school suspension only when a student has been seriously disruptive of the educational process.

In addition, the CSDE will revisit utilizing graduation rates as a performance measure. The CSDE has determined it necessary to wait until the new data for graduation rates are populated at the district and school levels.

**Performance Measure 2:** Percentage of Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport resident students at or above goal in reading in both PCSs and the city's public schools (non Charters).



Note: These data reflect students in tested grades only (Grades 3-8). Resident students from these three cities are chosen as they are the only urban areas with at least two PCSs serving significant numbers of city students from which to base valid comparisons.

**Story behind the baseline:** Since PCSs overwhelmingly serve poor and minority students, the most valid way to base comparisons is by comparing "like-students" with similar academic risk factors of urban communities. In this case, the performance of city resident students who opted for PCSs were compared to those who remained in the city public school systems. City resident students who attend PCSs outperform students in the city public schools in reading and mathematics (not shown), and have increased percentage at/or above goal at a greater rate between 2009 and 2010 in both subject areas.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** CSDE will use the site visitation process as outlined in Performance Measure 1, as the proposed actions to turn the curve.

**Performance Measure 3:** Attendance rates of city resident students attending charter schools and city resident students attending public schools.

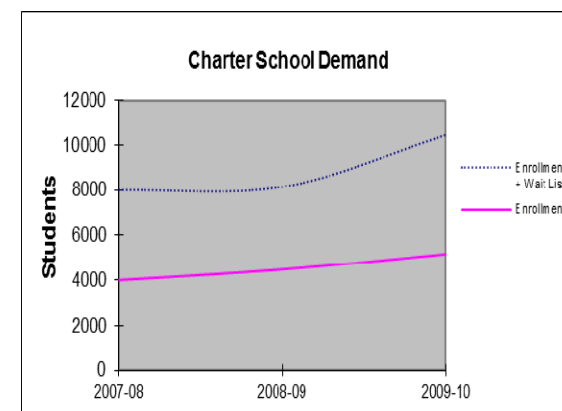
Attendance Rate of City Resident Students

	Public Schools		Charter Schools	
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2008-2009	2009-2010
Bridgeport	91.1	92.2	94.2	94.3
Hartford	89.6	89.5	96.2	96.2
New Haven	90.5	90.9	94.2	96.2

**Story behind the baseline:** PCSs typically expect that smaller class sizes and personalized instruction will ensure that students will stay engaged in their education. Attendance rates reflect the average percentage of days students attend school. As PCSs overwhelmingly serve students who would normally attend inner city public schools that typically lag behind statewide averages, PCS city resident students attend school at a higher rate than students in the city public schools, and compare favorably with the wealthiest districts in Connecticut.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** The CSDE will identify PCSs that excel in student attendance and retention and identify specific successful strategies used to keep students in school, such as building positive relationships within the school community, including families. CSDE will then work closely with PCSs that have lower attendance rates in employing identified successful strategies. CSDE will engage staff or school leaders from successful PCSs in the trainings. The same strategies may be brought to scale by offering opportunities for sharing student attendance strategies with the urban public city schools.

**Performance Measure 4:** Total PCS enrollment and the number of students on PCS wait lists.



**Story behind the baseline:** Student and family demand for PCSs is an outcome measure that reflects the quality and appeal of PCSs compared to traditional public schools. A legislative cap on the number of PCS students within schools and/or grade levels has stunted growth of the program in recent years. While enrollment has grown from 4000 to 5170 between 2007-08 and 2009-10, an increase of 29%, the number of students on wait lists has increased 42% between 2007-08 and 2009-10. The number of students on wait lists in 2009-10 exceeded the number enrolled in 2009-10 by 116 students. Essentially, charter school enrollment would double if there were enough space and state subsidy to accommodate all on the wait list as of 2010. The cap on enrollment per grade has been lifted in 2010 legislation. However, the rate of future expansion is unclear based on financial concerns of the State.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** The CSDE must continue to facilitate dialogue between constituencies/partners (both governmental and non-governmental, as prescribed in Statute) contributing to the increasing demand for PCSs and the elected and appointed officials having the financial programmatic authority over these schools. The CSDE is currently undergoing a Request for Proposal process for new schools contingent on State appropriation.