

Archived Information

Appendix A: Survey Data and Analysis Methods

Schools Survey

In order to reduce the burden of response on charter schools, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) cooperated with an ongoing study of charter schools being conducted by RPP International under contract to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. In the 1997–98 school year, RPP was in the third year of a multiyear national study of charter schools, collecting data from all charter schools then in existence. CRPE developed a number of questions about accountability approaches and practices, and these questions were incorporated into a larger survey being administered to all charter schools in existence in spring 1998. There were 373 charter schools in the universe of interest (i.e., charter schools in existence for at least one full academic year by spring 1998) and, of these, 294 (78.8 percent) responded. RPP gave the CRPE team access to all 3 years of data on these schools, thus providing extensive information on the initial experiences and growth of the vast majority of the charter schools that have survived the challenges of new laws, new regulations, and a new way of delivering public education. Information on the number of schools, school origin, grade levels, and authorizing agency for the schools in the RPP survey is provided in the table below.

Respondents to RPP Charter School Survey

	Number of schools	Average years of operation	Average enrollment	School origin			Grade levels				Charter agency		
				New	Public	Private	Elementary	Middle / jr high	High school	All grades	State	District	University
Total	294	2.9	296	175	67	38	139	64	47	30	117	91	42
Alaska	1	2.0	95	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Arizona	64	2.4	212	41	9	14	25	18	15	6	35	11	12
California	71	3.6	492	38	33	0	40	17	9	5	27	40	0
Colorado	30	3.2	222	26	3	1	14	10	1	5	4	22	0
Delaware	2	2.0	225	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
D.C.	1	2.0	95	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Florida	3	2.0	121	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	0
Georgia	8	2.4	706	0	8	0	6	1	1	0	7	1	0
Louisiana	3	2.0	83	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	0
Massachusetts	15	2.7	293	13	2	0	7	3	4	1	14	0	0
Michigan	53	2.5	204	34	5	14	31	7	7	8	5	6	29
Minnesota	15	3.9	136	12	2	1	7	3	1	4	10	4	0
New Mexico	4	4.0	968	0	4	0	1	1	2	0	3	1	0
Texas	14	1.9	253	7	0	7	3	6	0	0	13	0	1
Wisconsin	10	2.8	133	4	5	1	4	2	3	1	2	7	0

Authorizer Survey

CRPE contacted 54 chartering agencies in 6 states, interviewing all agencies in some states (where there was only 1 or a very few eligible chartering agencies) and a random sample of agencies in others. Responses were received from 53 of the agencies for a total response rate of 98 percent. These agencies together are responsible for a total of 513 charters in the 1998–99 school year with a range of 1 to 68 schools per agency with an average of 9.9 per agency. On average, state chartering agencies charter the largest number of schools (48), followed by colleges/universities (and average of 19.6) and, far behind, local school districts (4.4 schools per district, on average). The oldest had been in existence for 8 years at the time of the survey; the newest had been chartered in the 1998–99 school year.

Table 1

	Total	Local district	State	College	AZ	CA	CO	GA
Total agencies surveyed:	53	41	4	7	11	14	10	6
Year schools chartered:								
1992 and 1993	30	20	0	0	0	16	11	0
1994	120	22	35	63	20	10	5	8
1995	111	27	61	23	54	11	3	11
1996	99	27	47	25	38	9	8	16
1997	153	85	42	26	69	20	8	19
Total schools:	513	181	185	137	181	66	35	54
Range of charter schools per agency:	1-68	1-30	20-68	1-51	1-68	1-28	1-8	1-29
Average charter schools per agency:	9.9	4.4	48.3	19.6	16.5	4.7	3.5	9.0

The type of chartering agency (i.e., local district, state agency, or college/university) is more predictive of the operations of the agency than is the state in which the agency charters schools. Thus, if a state permits charters to be granted by a state agency, a local district and/or a college or university, the operations of the agencies will be more likely to resemble agencies of the same kind in another state more than they will agencies of a different type in the same state.

Survey Instrument



Special Study on Accountability
Issues Facing Charter Schools

OMB #1850-0748
Expires 9/30/99

Center on Reinventing Public Education
University of Washington

Survey of Charter Authorizing Authorities

As part of the Special Study on Accountability Issues Facing Charter Schools, we are asking you to complete this survey which asks about your agency and the charter schools with which you have worked. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with state agencies or individual charter schools. When we report data, we will do so in a grouped way so that no individual agency can be identified with its responses. You may respond by returning this form by e-mail, through the mail (using the enclosed pre-addressed postage-paid envelope) or over the telephone with the project Research Associate. A copy of the report will be sent to you at the completion of the study. We appreciate your cooperation!

Lawrence C. Pierce.

The Agency

1. Name of authorizing agency _____
2. Type of entity:
 - Local school board
 - Intermediate education board
 - County superintendent (if different from local school board)
 - State educational agency
 - Community college
 - Four-year college/university
 - Other (please specify) _____
3. When were you first authorized to grant school charters? _____

Month
Year
4. A. How many individual staff members are employed by this agency specifically to work with charter schools?
- B. Please indicate in the spaces below the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff who work with charter schools in either a support or a professional capacity:
 - (1) Support (administrative assistance, clerical, data entry, etc.) FTE
 - (2) Professional (supervision, financial or curriculum assistance, etc.) FTE

The Charter Application/Review Process

5. During your most recent charter application cycle, did you formally announce that your agency was accepting applications to operate charter schools?

- No Yes which of the following did you use? (Please check all that apply.)
- ads or stories we placed in local newspapers
 - announcements on radio or TV
 - newsletters for teacher unions, parent groups, etc.
 - other (Please describe)

6. Which of the following materials or services did you provide to potential charter applicants during your most recent charter application cycle? *(Please check all that apply)*

- Provided copies of State Charter law and regulations to applicants
- Provided additional materials/explanations about accountability issues
- Notified potential applicants of your agency priorities (things you will especially look for)
- Sponsored meetings of, or informational sessions for, charter school applicants
- Offered technical assistance to applicants during the application process
(Please describe below)
- Referred applicants to other forms of technical assistance during the application process
(Please describe individuals/agencies to which you refer applicants)

7. In the table below, please enter the approximate number of charter application packets or forms you have distributed each year since you have been a chartering agency, and the number of completed applications you received each year you have been in operation. *(Non-profit organizations/groups might include a consortium of home-schooling families or a community organization. A completed application or a single charter covering more than one site should be recorded as a single application.)*

School year (e.g., 1992-93)	Estimated # of applications distributed	Number of completed applications received from:				
		Existing public schools	Existing private schools	Non-profit organizations/groups	For-profit groups	Other new entities
1992-93						
1993-94						
1994-95						
1995-96						
1996-97						
1997-98						

8. Which of the following participated in either the review or selection of charter applications during your most recent cycle? Please check all that apply and then indicate whether the participation was in (1) reviewing the applications and/or (2) participating in the selection decision by voting, etc.

	<u>Review</u>	<u>Selection</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency staff.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Advisory board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Members of State Educational Agency..... <i>(if different from authorizing agency)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Public school administrator(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Local school board member(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Public school teacher(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Community leaders.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please describe below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. In reviewing charter applications during your most recent cycle, which of the following criteria did you use? (Please check all that apply and please provide examples of these materials, if available.)

- Formal review checklist or document covering one or more of the following:
 - goals/mission/purpose of proposed school
 - curriculum/program proposed to meet the goals
 - governance structure
 - management/financial structure
 - accountability methods proposed for assessing success of school
 - proposed school staff (*principal, others*)
 - other aspects of school (*please describe below*)

- Informal checklist of criteria influenced by state law and experience (*Could you describe these criteria on a separate sheet or provide materials?*)

- Informal, unwritten set of criteria based on state law and agency experience (*Could you describe these criteria on a separate sheet or provide materials?*)

- Sense of the overall quality of application as compared to competing applications

10. For each year of your agency's operation, how many applications for charter schools have you approved and how many have you rejected or deferred until a later cycle? For approved applications, please indicate (in parentheses) the number of approved applications that have actually opened as of this date.

School year (e.g., 1992-93)	Number deferred/rejected:		Number of applications approved and (opened):				
	Deferred	Rejected	Existing public schools	Existing private schools	Non-profit groups	For-profit groups	Other new entities
1992-93							
1993-94							
1994-95							
1995-96							
1996-97							
1997-98							

11. If you have rejected one or more charter applications since the inception of your chartering authority, please indicate the importance of each reason and the estimated number of applications that were rejected primarily because of this characteristic.

Reason for not approving	Often important	Sometimes important	Seldom important	# of rejected applications
Incomplete application (<i>not all requested information provided</i>).....	3	2	1	___
Inadequate planning	3	2	1	___
Inadequate financing	3	2	1	___
Lack of facility.....	3	2	1	___
Lack of community outreach process.....	3	2	1	___
Weak educational ideas	3	2	1	___
Lack of parent support.....	3	2	1	___
Opposition of local school board.....	3	2	1	___
Opposition of teachers in existing school.....	3	2	1	___
Opposition of teacher union.....	3	2	1	___
Duplicates existing charters.....	3	2	1	___
Lack of accountability system	3	2	1	___
Weak accountability system	3	2	1	___
Not responsive to authorizing agency priorities.....	3	2	1	___
Quality of proposal not as high as others received.....	3	2	1	___
Other significant reasons? (Please describe below)				

12. Does your state have a process by which rejected applicants can appeal for another review?

Yes(Please go to next question)

No(Please skip to Question #14)

13. How many of the applicants rejected by your agency since the inception of your chartering authority actually used the state appeal process? How many of these applicants were subsequently approved on appeal?

Number of your rejections appealed?

Number who subsequently received charters based on appeal from your agency?

Monitoring/Reviewing Charter Operations

14. Do you provide written accountability standards for charters in addition to whatever standards are provided in the charter school legislation and/or state education agency rulings?

Yes (Please attach a copy of these guidelines to your response) No

15. Once a charter has been funded, what oversight method(s) do you use?
(Please check all that apply below.)

Visit just prior to charter opening to assure that it is doing what it said it would do

Conduct scheduled visits to school (How many times per year?)

Conduct unscheduled, drop-in visits to school (How many times per year?)

Require annual financial audit

Require written progress reports (How many per year?)

Other (please specify) _____

16. Are you aware of any other agencies (local, state or federal) that have conducted compliance reviews or audits of the schools you have chartered?

Yes (Please go to next question) No (Please skip to Question #18)

17. Please describe the agencies involved, the audits or reviews they conducted, and what reports/actions resulted from these reviews.

18. Which of the following types of accountability data do you require your charter schools to collect and which do they provide to you? (Check all that apply.)

	<u>Collects</u>	<u>Provides to authorizing agency</u>
Parent satisfaction surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff satisfaction surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portfolios of student work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School attendance data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School completion records (dropout rate, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<u>Collects</u>	<u>Provides to authorizing agency</u>
Standardized achievement test data (What tests are used for what grades, including tests when admitted to school? Please list below: _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (Please describe below:)

19. Do you have formal warning and/or probation systems in place for your charter schools?

Yes

No

20. Have you ever conducted an investigation of a charter school since you were authorized to grant charters?

Yes (Please continue with the questions below)

No (Please skip to Question 22)

21. When you have had to conduct an investigation of a charter school, what situation(s) triggered that investigation? For each situation listed, please indicate the number of schools involved in an investigation triggered primarily by the situation and then indicate how the situation was resolved.

	# of schools involved	Resolution (# of schools where:)		
		<u>No action needed</u>	<u>Changes requested & made</u>	<u>Charter revoked</u>
Complaints received from parents.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Declining enrollment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial irregularities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low test scores.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disciplinary incidents.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaints from teachers, others.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaints from teacher unions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure to comply with terms of the charter.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (_____) ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Renewing Charters

22. How often must the schools your agency has chartered apply for renewal?

- Every three years On demand
 Every five years Other *(Please specify.)*

23. Have you developed a formal charter **renewal** process that is distinct from the monitoring process described in the previous section?

- Yes *(Please continue with the questions below)* No *(Please skip to Question 28)*

24. Which of the following are parts of the charter renewal process? *(Please check all that apply.)*

- Final, summary report from school
 Strategic plan for future of school
 Financial audit
 Formal record of school progress toward goals
 Summary site visit
 Completion of renewal application form
 Other *(Please describe.)*

25. What elements of school performance are most important to your agency as you consider renewal of a charter? Please rank each of the possible performance measures listed below in terms of its importance to you in considering school renewal, with the most important area given a "1," the second a "2" and so forth. Please add any additional measures you use to decide on renewal.

Rank

- Academic achievement
 Student disciplinary incidents
 School attendance rates
 Ability of school to maintain student enrollment
 Parent satisfaction levels
 Teacher turnover rates
 Financial stability/financial record keeping

26. Have you failed to renew one or more charter agreements?

- Yes (Please continue with the questions below)
- No (Please skip to Question 28)

27. What were the most important reasons for failing to renew these charters? (For each potential reason listed, please indicate the number of schools involved and indicate how the situation was resolved: that is, whether the decision was appealed, whether the non-renewal decision was upheld or whether it was withdrawn and the charter renewed.)

	# of schools involved	Resolution (# of schools where:)		
		Decision appealed	Decision upheld	Decision withdrawn; charter renewed
Complaints received from parents.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Declining enrollment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial irregularities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low test scores.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disciplinary incidents.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaints from teachers, others.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaints from teacher unions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure to comply with terms of charter.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please describe below).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. Have you made changes in your accountability policies or procedures because of your experience monitoring and reviewing charter school performance?

- Yes (Please describe below)
- No

29. Based on your experience to date, what accountability procedures, regulations or processes would you suggest for charter schools in your state in the future?

30. Finally, are you sending us any supporting materials in a separate mailing?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your assistance!