

Archived Information

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Goal: To support the creation of a large number of high-quality charter schools and to evaluate their effects.	Funding History (\$ in millions)			
	Fiscal Year	Appropriation	Fiscal Year	Appropriation
	1985	\$0	2000	\$145
	1990	\$0	2001	\$190
Legislation: Title X, Part C, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 8061-8067).	1995	\$6	2002 (Requested)	\$200

Program Description

The purpose of the Public Charter Schools Program is to increase national understanding of the charter schools model by providing financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools and by evaluating the effects of such schools on school effectiveness and student achievement.

The PCSP is a discretionary grant program, administered in the Office of School Improvement Programs in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to state education agencies (SEAs) in states with charter school laws. An SEA receiving these funds must conduct a subsequent competition and award sub-grants to eligible applicants within the state. If an eligible SEA elects not to apply for these funds, or applies and is not successful, an eligible applicant from that state may apply directly to the Department. An eligible applicant receiving a grant or sub-grant may use the funds for planning and design of the educational program and for initial implementation of the charter school. The program currently provides grants to 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, which in turn are providing sub-grants to more than 1,000 charter schools (including both schools that are now operating and those that are approved but still in the planning stage). The average size of a charter school grant to a SEA is \$5 million.

The Department is conducting a wide range of national activities designed to increase public understanding of the charter school option, disseminate models and materials to assist in the development of charter schools with high-quality educational programs and strong accountability systems, and provide technical assistance to charter schools. These efforts are focusing on the following areas: sharing of lessons learned; cross-fertilization to non-charter schools; business management for educators; assessment and accountability; building of bridges to strengthen the entire education system; aggressive outreach to organizations and constituencies; achievement of equity; and development of leadership. Specific projects include a Web site to provide information on charter schools, workshops for potential charter schools, a guidebook for charter school developers, and model materials for chartering authorities to provide guidance on ways to ensure that only the highest-quality applicants receive charters.

Program Performance

OBJECTIVE 1: ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LARGE NUMBER OF HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT ARE FREE FROM STATE OR LOCAL RULES THAT INHIBIT FLEXIBLE OPERATION, ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ENABLING STUDENTS TO REACH CHALLENGING STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, AND ARE OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS.

Indicator 1.1 State legislation: By 2000, 40 states will have charter school legislation.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Number of states with charter school legislation (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)</i>		<p>Status: No change.</p> <p>Explanation: Positive even with no change between 1998 and 1999. Several States will be considering legislation this year.</p>	<p>Source: State Educational Agencies (SEA); state legislatures <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> Summer 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Data supplied by SEAs and state legislatures. Data validated by ED staff and corroborated by information from other sources.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: There is variation in the definition of state charter school legislation.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1994-95:	12			
1995-96:	19			
1996-97:	27			
1997-98:	31			
1998-99:	38			
1999-00:	38			Continuous Improvement
2000-01:	38			42
2001-02:				42
2002-03:		42		
Indicator 1.2 Charter operations: By 2002, there will be at least 3,000 charter schools in operation around the Nation.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Number of charter schools in operation</i>		<p>Status: Positive movement toward 2002 target.</p> <p>Explanation: There has been a positive trend toward meeting this objective. The number of charter schools in operation has dramatically increased from 100 in 1994 to 2,110 in 2000.</p>	<p>Source: State legislatures, SEAs. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> Summer 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Data verified by the U.S. Dept. of Education data quality attestation process and ED Standards for Evaluating Program Performance Indicators.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Differences in the definition of charter schools (i.e., some states count multiple sites as single charters, while others count them as multiple charters) cause variability in the counts SEAs. There is sometimes disagreement about numbers of charter schools in operation among the agencies that do the counting.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1994-95:	100			
1995-96:	255			
1996-97:	428			
1997-98:	790			
1998-99:	1,100			
1999-00:	1,700			2,060
2000-01:	2,110			2,667
2001-02:				3,000
2002-03:		3,000		

Indicator 1.3 The percentage of charter schools reporting that the lack of start-up funds is a major obstacle to implementation will decrease.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of first-year charter schools reporting start-up funding as a major obstacle to implementation</i>		<p>Status: No 2000 data, but progress toward target is likely.</p> <p>Explanation: Because funding to the Public Charter Schools Program has increased, the trend shown by earlier data is expected to continue.</p>	<p>Source: National Evaluation of the Public Charter School Program (2001, 2002). <i>Frequency:</i> Periodically. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> Second-year report of the National Evaluation, December 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Internal review procedures of an experienced data collection agency.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: There are continuity problems as a result of data collection under multiple studies. In fact, the survey that is responsible for school-level data in 1999–2000, the Schools and Staffing Survey, did not capture this data. Therefore, there will be no data for this indicator until December 2001. After the National Evaluation is completed in 2002, it will be difficult to collect this data.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1996:	59%			
1997:	55%			
1998:	51%			
1999:	39%			Continuing decrease
2000:	Data Available 12/01			Continuing decrease
2001:				30%
2002:				30%

OBJECTIVE 2: IDENTIFY, EVALUATE, AND DISSEMINATE THE EFFECTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS.

Indicator 2.1 Equity—impact of charters on educational opportunity: Nationally, students in charter schools will have similar demographic characteristics as students in all public schools.					
Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress		Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of students, out of total student enrollment, for each demographic characteristic for both charter schools and all public schools in states with charter schools that year</i>			Status: <u>Percent Minority</u> : Unable to judge.		Source: Schools and Staffing Survey (1999); Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program (2001, and 2002). <i>Frequency:</i> Periodically. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2001. Validation Procedure: Internal review procedures of an experienced data collection agency. Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: The number of charter schools, students in charters, and states with charter schools increase each year.
<i>Percent Minority</i>			<u>Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility</u> : Unable to judge.		
Year	Actual Performance		Performance Targets		
	Charter	All Public*	Charter	All Public*	
1997:	48.2%	41.3%			
1998:	51.8%	41%			
1999:	No Data Available		Continuous closing of gap		
2000:	Data Available 12/01		45%	41% (est'd.)	
2001:			Continuous closing of gap		
2002:			Continuous closing of gap		
<i>Free or Reduced-price Lunch Eligibility</i>			<u>Students with Disabilities</u> : Unable to judge.		
Year	Actual Performance		Performance Targets		
	Charter	All Public*	Charter	All Public	
1997:	36.7%	37.6%			
1998:	38.7%	37.3%			
1999:	No Data Available		Continuous closing of gap		
2000:	Data Available 12/01		37.3%	37.3% (est'd.)	
2001:			Continuous closing of gap		
2002:			Continuous closing of gap		
<i>Students With Disabilities</i>			Explanation: The target is to have the percentage of charter school students (with one of the three characteristics) similar to that of students in all public schools. It is difficult to judge whether this target will be met, because the percentage of minority students in charter schools, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and students with disabilities is variable and seems to be affected by the growth of charter schools within states.		
1997:	8.3%	11.2%			
1998:	8.4%	11.3%			
1999:	No Data Available		Continuous closing of gap		
2000:	Data Available 12/01		10%	11.3% (est'd.)	
2001:			Continuous closing of gap		
2002:			Continuous closing of gap		
* Note: Because data collection for all public schools lags behind data collection for charter schools, comparison data for all public schools are for a school year 1 to 3 years prior to the year for charter schools. There is also wide variation between states in charter and all public schools, as well as variation and potential concentration of students in individual charter schools.					

Indicator 2.2 Impact on student performance: Increasing numbers of charter schools will show improved student outcomes.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets	<p>Status: Unable to judge.</p> <p>Explanation: The first national-level study on student achievement in charter schools will be released in 2001.</p>	<p>Source: National Study of Charter Schools (2000) <i>Frequency:</i> Periodically. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2000. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2001.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: N/A.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: 2001 data is for only 45 schools. At this point there is no universal source for this data.</p>
1997	No Data Available			
1998	No Data Available			
1999:	No Data Available	No specific target set		
2000:	Data Available 12/01	Continuing increase		
2001:		Continuing increase		
2002:		Continuous increase		