



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

The State of Rhode Island's Charter Public Schools

Rhode Island Department of Education

April 2014

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April 2014

Dear Friends of Education,

Thanks to our work together over many years to offer options for students and families and to accelerate all schools toward greatness, Rhode Island has developed a thriving culture of charter public schools. These schools of course have the responsibility of providing a high-quality education to their enrolled students, but they also share the responsibility of serving as “vanguards, laboratories, and an expression of the on-going and vital state interest in the improvement of education.” As our state laws on charter public schools specify, we expect these schools to “increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as educationally disadvantaged or at-risk.” (Rhode Island General Laws 16-77-3.1)

With these goals in mind, the R.I. Department of Education is pleased to publish “The State of Rhode Island’s Charter Schools, April 2014.” As this report makes clear, our 22 charter schools are public, independent, and accountable. These schools serve about 6,000 students, representing 4.2 percent of the total public-school enrollment in Rhode Island. Charter-school enrollment, which is strictly determined by lottery, includes higher percentages than the state as a whole of black students, Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners – though a slightly lower percentage (13 percent vs. 15 percent) of students with disabilities.

This report also shows that our charter public schools are generally performing well. Of the 16 charters with sufficient data for classification, 12 schools are classified as leading or commended. Of the 10 charters with enough data to measure student growth, 5 show growth that is significantly better than the state average.

There is still work we need to do to ensure that *all* of our charter public schools are examples of excellence, but there is no doubt that our charters serve a vital function, which we see each year when the schools receive approximately 11 applications for each opening. I hope that this report will help you understand how our charter public schools are helping us transform education in Rhode Island – for the benefit of all Rhode Island students.

Best,

Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner

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Introduction

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is pleased to release *The State of Rhode Island's Charter Public Schools*, a report providing data and descriptive information on charter public schools across the state. Charter public schools make up a growing segment of Rhode Island's public schools, and it is useful to view Rhode Island's charter sector across a variety of indicators as we continue to evaluate the role charters play in ensuring a quality education for all Rhode Island students.

To consider the current state of the charter sector in Rhode Island, it is helpful to consider its origins. In 1995, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a law permitting teachers and school district personnel to establish new public schools. The law provided these schools some flexibility from district policies, with the goal of empowering educators to develop new school designs and methods of instruction. Several years later, the state legislature amended the law, this time allowing for nonprofit organizations or Rhode Island colleges and universities to establish new public schools -- with the goal of encouraging innovation and improvement in student performance. In 2008, another amendment passed enabling "mayoral academies," a unique type of charter public school where mayors establish regional charter public schools, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes and strengthening communities.

Though Rhode Island's charters have unique qualities, they share characteristics common among charter public schools nationwide. Charter public schools are nonselective public schools of choice. They may devise curricula, choose instructional methods, develop budgets, select organizational partners, and implement missions that they deem best to meet the needs of students. The governing boards of charters are charged with overseeing academic, financial and organizational performance of schools, and are typically independent from the school committees that oversee traditional school districts. In exchange for this independence, each charter public school must measurably improve student performance, operate a sustainable organization, and act as a responsible steward of public funds, according to the terms of a charter.

This report seeks to provide a snapshot of charter public school enrollment, performance, and operations across Rhode Island using the most recent data available. It is intended for a broad audience, including parents, policymakers, legislators, non-profits, advocacy groups, media, and the general public.

Executive Summary

This report highlights several trends and points of information:

- As of October 2013, twenty-two (22) charter public schools were in operation in Rhode Island, serving 5,950 students.
- Charter public schools enroll students from throughout the state -- from 33 of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns. However, a large majority of charter students (78%) reside in the cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, or Woonsocket.
- Charter public schools enroll a higher percentage of students of color, students from low-income households, and students learning English, but a slightly lower percentage of students with disabilities (13% v. 15%), compared to all Rhode Island public schools.
- When compared against typical performance of Rhode Island public schools serving similar levels of disadvantaged students, all but one charter public school achieved typical or above typical average reading proficiency in 2013.
- In 2013, Latino students in charter public schools achieved higher average proficiency on the reading NECAP, and a lower percentage received the lowest score of "1", relative to all Latino students in Rhode Island enrolled in grades 4, 8 and 11. The same is true for African American students, except for grade 4 where proficiency rates were similar across all schools.
- When compared against typical performance of all RI schools serving similar levels of disadvantaged students, all but one charter public school achieved typical or above typical average math proficiency in grades 3-8 in 2013. In grade 11, four charter public schools achieved lower rates of proficiency than would be typical for schools with similar levels of disadvantaged students.
- In 2013, the percentage of students at or above proficiency in math was comparable for charters and statewide performance in grades 4 and 8, and slightly lower for charter public school students in grade 11. However, Latino and African American students in charter public schools outperformed the group's average statewide performance. In high school, the performance of white students enrolled in charter public schools was slightly lower than the statewide average for this demographic.
- Of the approximately \$769M in state funding that was direct aid to public schools in FY2013, about 7% was used to fund charter public schools. Of the approximately \$1.2B in local (municipal) funding that was direct aid to public schools in FY2013, about 2% was used to fund charter public schools.

Part One: Background

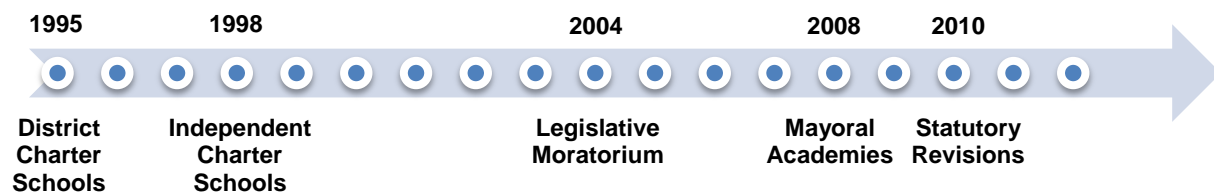
Legislative History

In 1995, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation allowing for the creation of charter public schools. Seven other states passed enabling charter legislation that year, continuing the momentum that began when Minnesota passed the nation's first charter public school law in 1991. The purpose of the Rhode Island law is to:

*"... provide an alternative within the public education system by offering opportunities for entities [...] to establish and maintain a high-performing public school program according to the terms of a charter."*¹

The first type of charter public school permitted in Rhode Island was the *district charter public school*. District charters may be established by existing public schools, public school personnel, or public school districts. The establishment of district charter public schools requires agreement from collective bargaining units if the charter public school wishes to have flexibility from existing contracts.

In 1998, Rhode Island's law was amended to provide for *independent charter public schools*. The amendment enabled colleges and universities within the state of Rhode Island, or nonprofit organizations, to establish new charter public schools. For a nonprofit organization to establish an independent charter public school, it must be Rhode Island-based and have existed for at least two years for reasons other than to operate a school.



A legislative moratorium was placed on charter public schools by the 2004 assembly, which lasted through 2008. In 2008, the legislature allowed the moratorium to sunset, and amended the law once more to allow for the establishment of *mayoral academies*. Mayoral academies are created by mayors or elected town administrators, and a mayor must serve as chairperson of the charter public school board. They enroll students from both urban and non-urban communities. Unlike the other two types of charters, mayoral academies may elect out of statutory requirements to pay prevailing wages and benefits, participate in the state teachers' retirement system, and provide teachers tenure.

The General Assembly revised the charter law again in 2010, separating out the three types of charter public schools into separate sections in Rhode Island law. The assembly also added language to ensure a focus on high achievement, and the cap on the number of charters was raised from 20 to 35. Subsequently, the Board of Education approved Regulations for RI Charter public schools, further clarifying the systems and processes under which charter public schools operate in the state.

What is a Charter Public School?

Charter public schools have been defined as, “independent public schools of choice, freed from rules but accountable for results.”ⁱⁱ They are *charter public schools* because a charter defines the responsibilities and expectations of each school – what it must do in order to remain in good standing and have the charter renewed at the end of its term.

Charter public schools are *public*.

Charters are authorized by the Rhode Island Board of Education, which is a board appointed by the Governor. Charter public schools must operate in public: all board meetings are open to the public, with agendas posted in advance in public places. Charter public school financial data are public, and must be reported to various state agencies including the Office of the Auditor General. Finally, like traditional public schools, charter public schools are free and open to all age-eligible students that reside in a charter public school's enrolling community.

Charter public schools are *independent*.

Each charter public school is governed by a board of directors, which is typically separate and independent from school committees that govern school districts. They are freed from *some* rules: school founders determine the mission, enrolling communities, curriculum, pedagogical strategies, assessment tools, staffing, facility, and have control over the budget. Some charters have flexibility around hiring and compensation of staff. However, charter public schools are not free from *all* rules. Charter public schools must comply with federal laws and regulations, including those relating to students with disabilities and English language learners. Charter public schools must comply with state laws and regulations as well: laws regarding the health and safety of students, minimum length of school year, and certification of staff; and RIDE regulations including accountability, reporting, and teacher evaluation.

Charter public schools are *accountable*.

In proposing a new charter public school, school founders make an explicit set of promises to students, families, and the state of Rhode Island about what the school will accomplish. Charter terms are a maximum of five years, and schools are expected to meet certain benchmarks in order to be eligible for charter renewal when the term is up. Schools that meet performance expectations and comply with all laws and regulations are likely to be recommended for renewal by the Commissioner to the Board of Education. Those missing targets or not in compliance risk a reduced charter term, or a recommendation of nonrenewal or closure.

Board of Education: Authorizing Roles and Responsibilities

State statute designates the Board of Education as the authorizer of charter public schools in Rhode Island.ⁱⁱⁱ Rhode Island is one of six states where the state department of education is the sole authorizer of charter public schools. The Board of Education is responsible for charter approvals, renewals, non-renewals, and revocation. RIDE manages a comprehensive system of charter accountability and monitoring, as well as guidance and support. The authorizer plays a fundamental role in maintaining and advancing the quality and accountability of the charter sector.

Part Two: Overview

Rhode Island's first charter public school opened in 1997. Each subsequent year, from 1998 through 2004, the Rhode Island Board of Regents (now Board of Education) approved between one and three new charter public schools except for 1999, when none were approved. Then, beginning in 2005, Rhode Island stopped approving new charters due to a legislative moratorium. The legislature allowed the moratorium to expire and in 2009 again began appropriating funds for new charter public schools.

In the fall of 2013, there were twenty-two (22) charter public schools operating in Rhode Island.

Figure 1. Number of Rhode Island charter public schools.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Schools Opened</i>	<i>Schools Closed</i>	<i>Schools Operating</i>
1996	0	0	0
1997	1	0	1
1998	1	0	2
1999	0	0	2
2000	2	0	4
2001	2	0	6
2002	3	0	9
2003	1	0	10
2004	1	0	11
2005	0	0	11
2006	0	0	11
2007	0	0	11
2008	0	0	11
2009	2	0	13
2010	3	0	16
2011	2	0	18
2012	0	0	18
2013	4	0	22

Grade Configuration

Rhode Island charter public schools serve students in kindergarten through grade twelve, with one charter public school currently participating in a pre-kindergarten pilot program. Across the sector, there is variety in the design of grade configurations. Eight schools utilize a typical high school configuration (grades 9-12), while only one school is configured as a typical middle school (grades 6-8). One school has opted to begin middle school at the fifth grade rather than sixth. One has elected to enroll students in seventh grade and carry through high school. Three have opted to enroll kindergarten through grade eight, while three others enroll from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Figure 2. Grade configuration of Rhode Island charter public schools, 2013

Grade Configuration	# of charter public schools
K-4	3
K-5	1
5-8	1
6-8	1
7-12	1
9-12	8
10-12	1
K-8	3
K-12	3
TOTAL	22

Some charter public schools have not yet enrolled the full grade configurations as represented here. New charters typically enroll a new grade each year until reaching their approved grade configuration. Some schools are limited by facility or other capacity constraints.

School Type

Rhode Island's charter public schools vary by type. Of the twenty-two charter public schools in operation, three are district charters, fifteen are independent charters, and four are mayoral academies. Only specific individuals or entities are permitted to establish charter public schools as described in the Legislative Overview of this report. Each type of charter public school has different operational parameters, especially in board composition and in human resources, hiring, and compensation.

Figure 3. Rhode Island charter public schools by type, 2013

Type of Charter	#	Additional Information
District charter	3	Two established by the district of Providence One established by the district of Cranston
Independent charter	15	Each established by a nonprofit organization
Mayoral academy	4	Three established by mayor of Cumberland One established by mayor of Providence
TOTAL	22	

Partnership Profiles

Rhode Island's charter public schools offer a wide range of programming, from dual language and arts integration programs to "middle college" programs and schools exploring how best to utilize technology and online curricular offerings. Still others focus intently on literacy and college preparation for disadvantaged or underserved students, while others offer experiential education or career preparation. A complete list of schools can be found in the Appendix to this report.

This report is not designed to highlight the unique features of each charter public school in Rhode Island. However, some schools have made significant progress in forging partnerships with other public schools and districts, with a primary goal of improving instruction for all students. With this purpose in mind, RIDE issued dissemination grants through the US Department of Education's Charter Schools Program (CSP). Recipients were required to have a robust plan for sharing successful practices and to have achieved strong student outcomes for several years. These three grantees and their practices of collaboration with other schools are profiled below.

Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy is a network of three charter public schools serving students in kindergarten to grade 8 from Central Falls, Cumberland, Lincoln and Pawtucket. In 2013, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, Kizirian Elementary School in Providence, and Central Falls High School began a collaborative project that uses video to document classroom practices and reflect upon instruction. Using an online resource called Smarter Cookie, teachers are able to capture video clips of lessons and then share and discuss portions of lessons with teachers in other schools. In addition to the collaborative video project, representatives of the three schools are attending professional development sessions together and visiting schools throughout the region, with the primary goal of observing and then implementing best classroom practices in their schools.

Highlander Charter School serves a statewide student population of students in pre-kindergarten through grade 9. In 2011, Highlander began a collaborative project with East Providence School District, and in particular Whiteknact Elementary School and Oldham Elementary School. The goal of the project was to boost reading performance across these schools. Highlander Charter School provided resources, support, trainings, and lesson plans to support the collaboration. An external evaluation of the project noted a significant increase in the alignment of classroom practices with the key elements of the project, and that reading performance improved steadily over a two-year period. Highlander is continuing its work through 2015 with three new elementary schools.

The Learning Community serves students in grades K-8 from Central Falls, Pawtucket and Providence. In partnership with the Central Falls School District, The Learning Community provided data analysis and professional development geared toward improving literacy for students across the district in grades K-2. According to an evaluative report of the program published by the Center for Collaborative Education, reading scores increased from 37% to 61% during the 4 years of the partnership. 41 educators from Central Falls School District worked with The Learning Community on the *Growing Readers Initiative*, the collaboration between the charter public school and the district.

Part Three: Students

As of October 2013, 5,950 students were enrolled in Rhode Island charter public schools, in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. Charter enrollment is highest in kindergarten and first grade, where charters serve just over five percent of the public school population. In all other grades, charters enroll from 3.5% to 4.8% of the state's public school students.

Figure 4: Enrollment in RI charter public schools by grade, October 2013.

<i>Grade</i>	<i># enrolled in charter public schools</i>	<i>% enrolled in charter public schools</i>	<i># enrolled in all RI public schools</i>
PreK	12	0.5%	2,242
K	558	5.3%	10,490
1	561	5.2%	10,823
2	464	4.3%	10,697
3	399	3.7%	10,676
4	404	3.7%	11,037
5	381	3.5%	10,751
6	392	3.6%	10,865
7	441	4.1%	10,864
8	419	4.1%	10,293
9	505	4.6%	10,912
10	545	4.8%	11,304
11	415	3.9%	10,651
12	454	4.4%	10,403
TOTAL	5950	4.2%	142,008

Choice and Demand

Charter public schools are schools of choice, meaning that any age-eligible student living within a school's enrolling communities may apply to enroll, regardless of ability, prior performance, or individual or family characteristic. If a charter public school receives more applicants than it has available seats, enrollment must be conducted randomly.

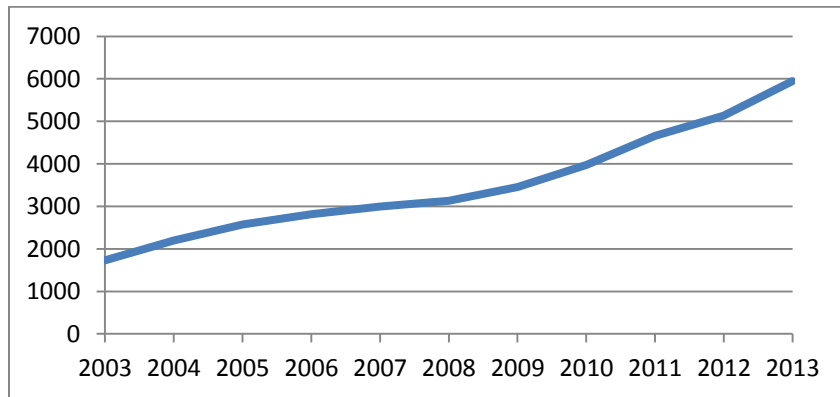
Far more students apply to charters each year than are able to attend. During enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year, 9,436 applications were received for 851 available seats – approximately eleven times more applications than available openings in Rhode Island's charter public schools.



Enrollment Over Time

The figure below indicates charter public school enrollment changes over a ten year period -- from the 2002-2003 school year to the 2012-2013 school year. In that ten year period, charter enrollment increased by approximately 4,200 students, or from 1,749 to 5,950. Over that same period, statewide enrollment in public schools declined by approximately 17,000 students, from 159,381 to 142,008.

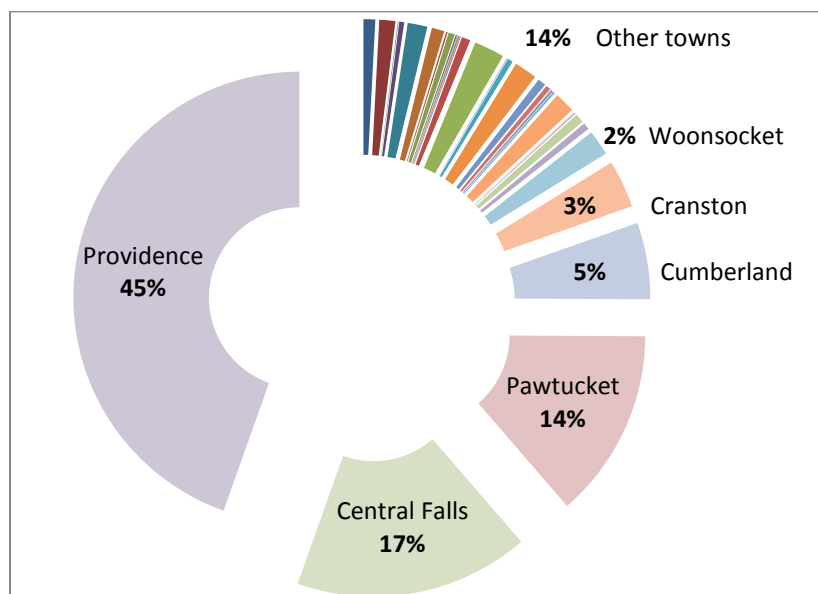
Figure 5. Enrollment in Rhode Island charter public schools, 2003 – 2013



Enrollment by City/Town

The 5,950 students currently attending charter public schools reside in 33 of Rhode Island's cities and towns. However, some communities enroll only a few students. 78% of students enrolled in charters live in Rhode Island's urban communities: 45% of charter students live in Providence, 17% live in Central Falls, 14% live in Pawtucket, and 2% live in Woonsocket. In addition, 5% live in Cumberland, 3% live in Cranston, and the remaining 14% live in other towns across the state.

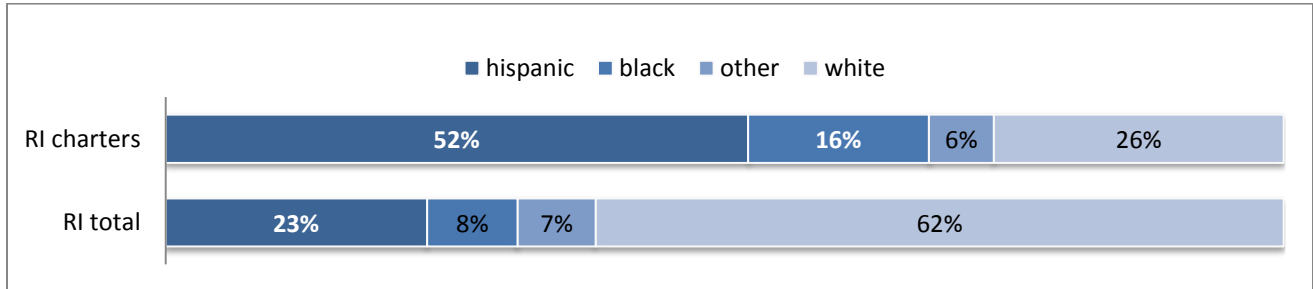
Figure 6. Residence of RI charter public school students, October 2013



Enrollment by Student Characteristic

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

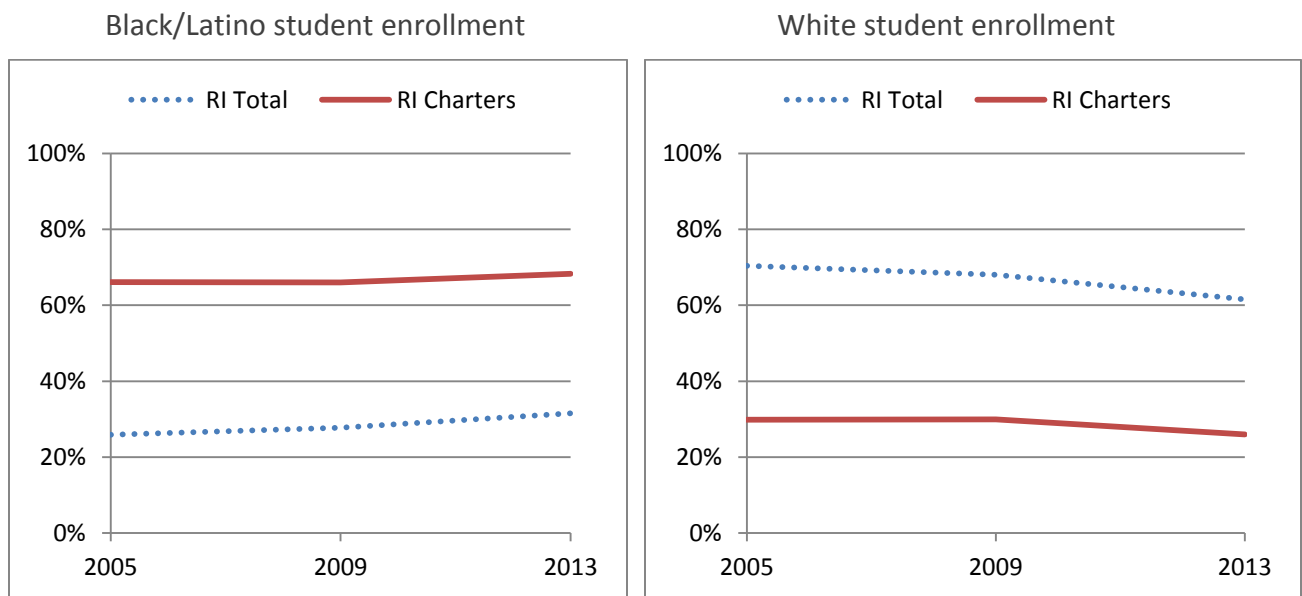
Figure 7. Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, October 2013



Charter public schools serve a higher percentage of black and Latino/Hispanic students, and fewer white students, compared to the state as a whole. In 2013, slightly more than half of Rhode Island's charter public school students were Hispanic/Latino, 16% were black, 26% white, and 6% another ethnicity or multiethnic. Across Rhode Island, 23% of students were Hispanic/Latino, 8% of students were black, 62% white, and 7% another ethnicity or multiethnic.

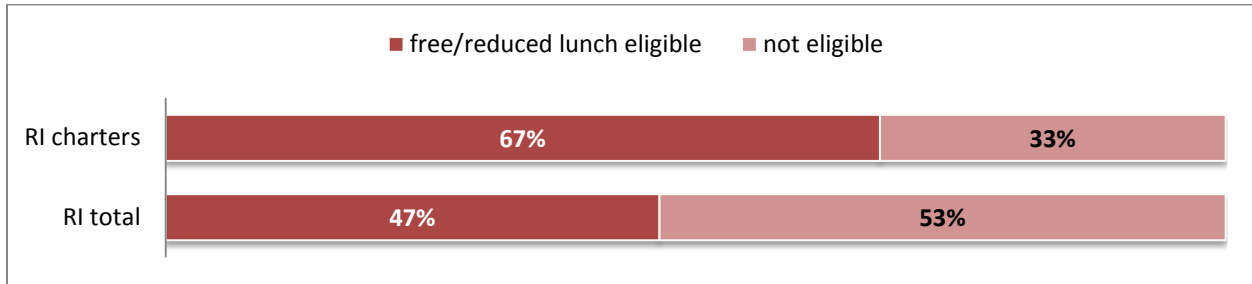
Over the last eight years, all Rhode Island public schools, including charters, have experienced increases in students who are black or Hispanic. The state has seen a decline in white students attending charter and other public schools.

Figure 8. Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2005 - 2013



Enrollment by Family Income

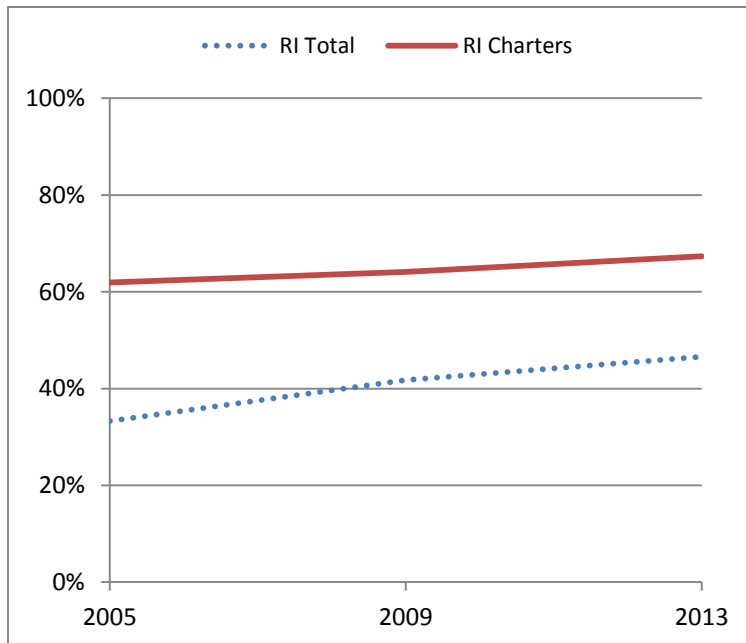
Figure 9. Enrollment by Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility, October 2013



In 2013, Rhode Island charter public schools enrolled a greater percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch – 67%, compared to 47% across the state. Free or reduced lunch eligibility is an indicator of lower family income.

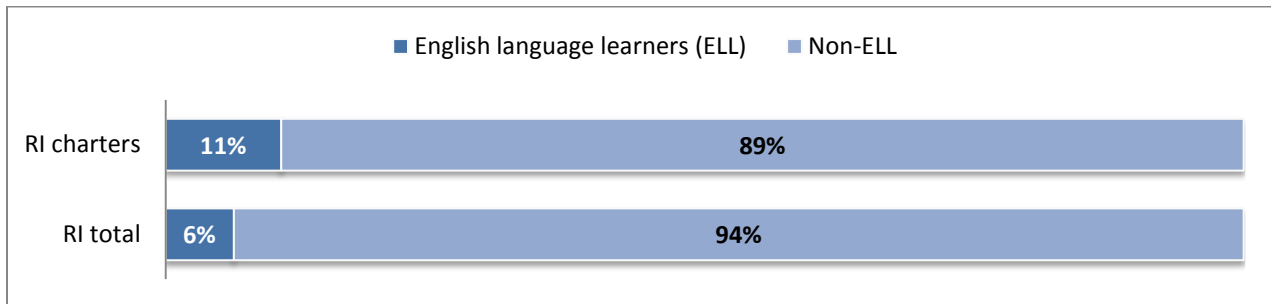
Over the last eight years, all of Rhode Island's public schools, including charter and other public schools, have experienced an increase in students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Figure 10. Enrollment of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, 2005 - 2013



Enrollment of English language learners

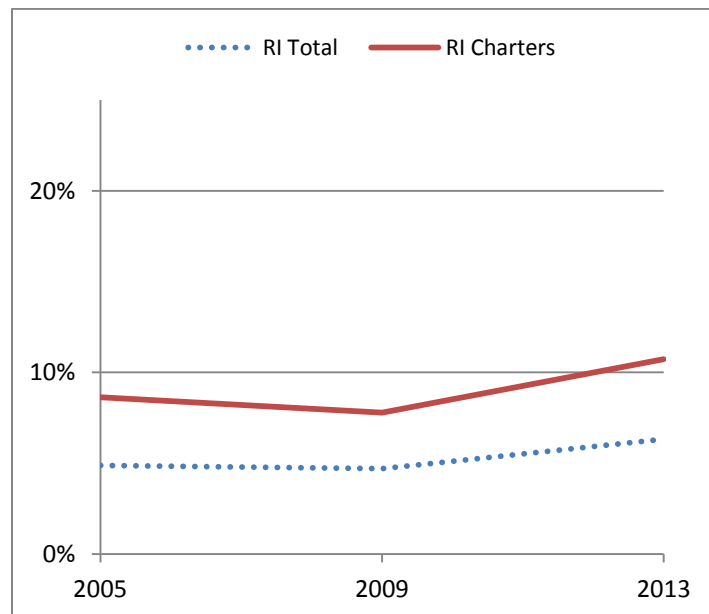
Figure 11. Enrollment of English language learners (ELLs), October 2013



Charter public schools are subject to the same federal statutory and regulatory requirements as traditional public schools regarding accessibility for English language learners (ELLs). The figure above describes the percentage of students designated as ELLs as of October 2013. 11% of charter public school students received English language services. Across the state, 6% were ELLs.

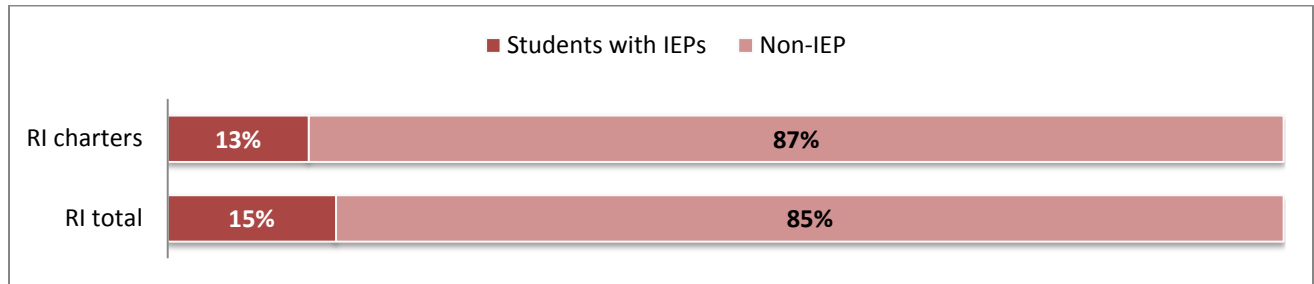
Between 2005 and 2009, the percentage of English language learners in charters declined, while the population of ELLs across the state remained constant. Over the past four years, however, the number of English language learners has increased in all public schools in Rhode Island, with a slightly sharper increase in charter public schools.

Figure 12. Enrollment of English Language Learners (ELLs), 2005 – 2013



Enrollment of Students with Disabilities

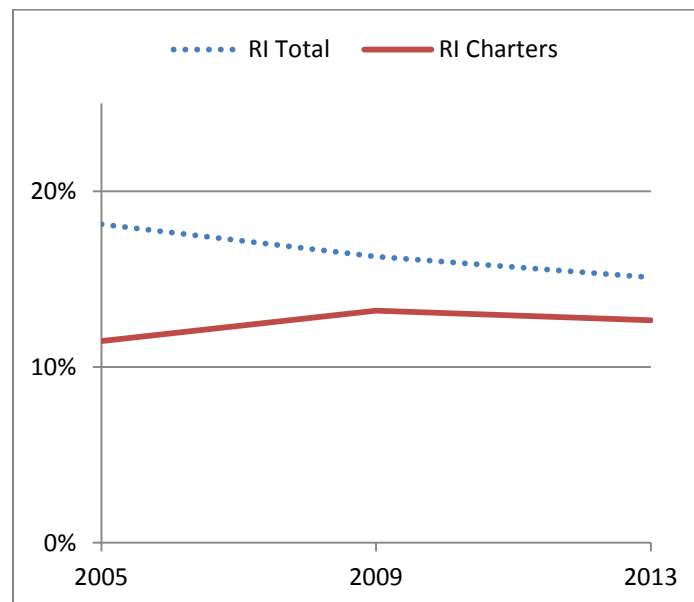
Figure 13. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities, October 2013



As with English language learners, charter public schools are subject to federal and state laws and policies regarding students with disabilities (here identified as students with individualized education plans, or IEPs). In fall of 2013, Rhode Island charters enrolled and served a slightly lower percentage of students with disabilities than the state average - 13% in charters, compared to 15% across the state.

As the figure below demonstrates, over the last eight years, enrollment of students with disabilities in charter public schools has remained relatively consistent, while declining statewide.

Figure 14. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities, 2005 – 2013



Part Four: Academic Performance

The following section describes academic performance of the charter public school sector in Rhode Island. Some figures indicate performance of individual charter public schools, while others describe average results across all charters and all Rhode Island public schools.

Data analysis was performed by the Rhode Island Department of Education in February and March of 2014. Academic performance data is available through the school and district report cards and other resources available on the Rhode Island Department of Education website.^{iv}

School Classifications

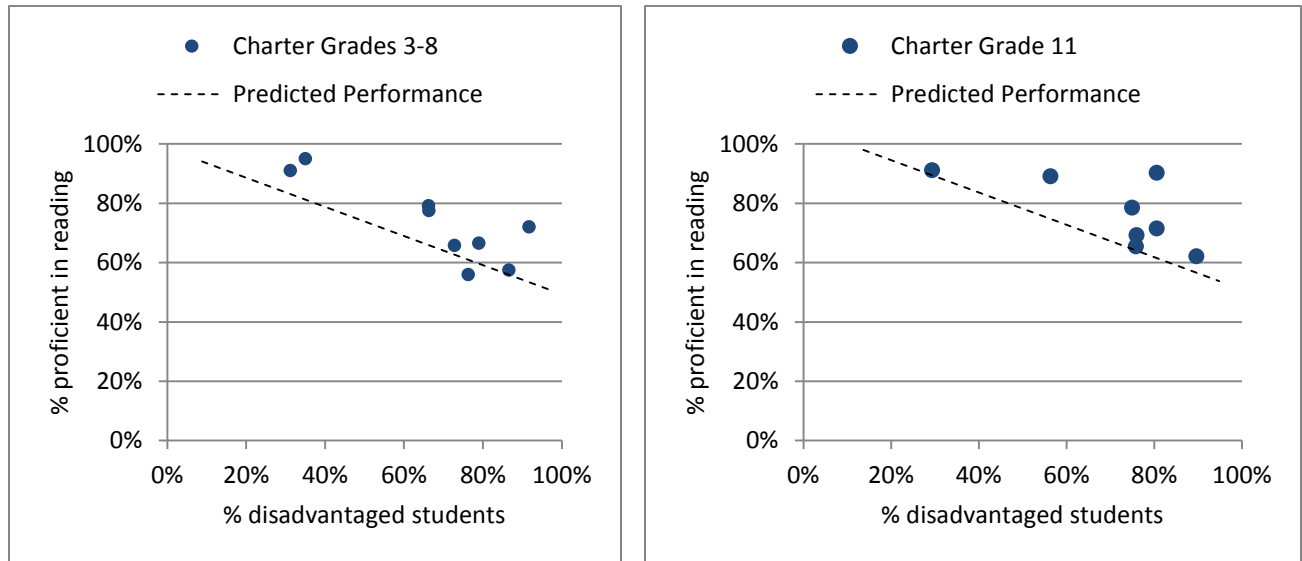
Like all public schools, charter public schools are subject to the state's school classification system, which began in its current form in 2011. Schools that are ranked Typical to Commended are deemed to be in line with or exceeding state expectations for performance and growth. Schools that are classified as Warning, Focus, or Priority are required to implement interventions toward improvement. In 2013, sixteen charter public schools had enough data to be classified: four were ranked *commended*, eight were *leading*, three were *typical*, one was ranked *warning*, and one was ranked *focus*.

Figure 15. Charter Public School Classifications, 2013

Classification	# of charter public schools
Commended (<i>highest classification</i>)	4
Leading	8
Typical	3
Warning	1
Focus	1
Priority (<i>lowest classification</i>)	0

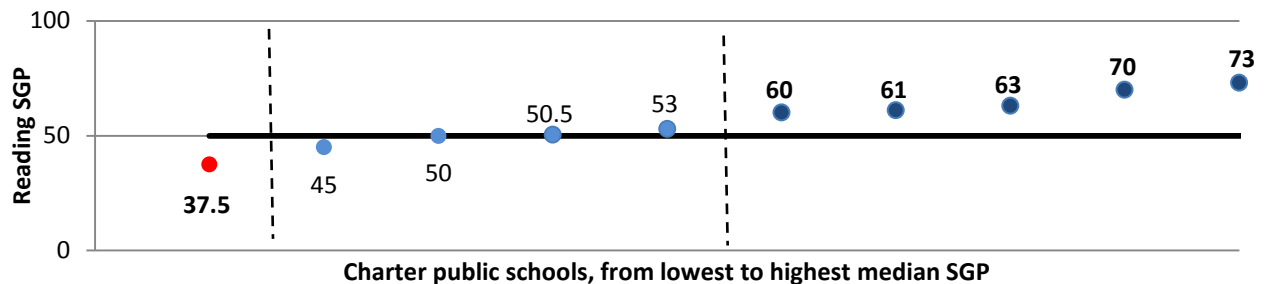
Performance in Reading

Figure 16. NECAP Reading Performance in Charter Public Schools, 2013



Nine charter public schools had state assessment data available for grades 3-8 in 2013;^v eight for grade 11. Each is represented as a point in the figure above. The vertical axis represents the percentage of students proficient in reading; on the horizontal axis, the percentage of disadvantaged students in a school.^{vi} The dotted line indicates typical reading performance for a RI public school, based on statewide performance and given its number of disadvantaged students. All but one charter public school scored at or above typical performance in reading.

Figure 17. Median Student Growth Percentiles for Charter Public Schools in Reading, 2012



A student growth percentile (SGP) is a measure of an individual student's performance from one year to the next, relative to other students that had similar starting points. This figure represents the median student growth percentiles for ten charter public schools.^{vii} Each point represents an individual charter public school's 2012 median SGP in reading. The state median is the 50th percentile (the dark line). Schools scoring above the 50th percentile are supporting students to grow at a faster rate than schools below the 50th percentile.

Five charter public schools had a median SGP at 60 or above in reading. Growth at these schools is significantly higher than growth statewide. Four charter public schools had a median SGP between 40 and 60, within the average range for schools in the state. One charter public school had a median SGP that is lower than 40, which signifies lower growth than other schools in the state.

Reading Proficiency by Student Characteristic

The six charts beginning on the next page describe reading proficiency rates in charter public schools relative to the state as a whole. All NECAP data is “teaching year” data from the October 2013 assessment. Here is a brief explanation of what follows:

- There are three figures describing the reading proficiency of students in grades 4, 8 and 11 by **race/ethnicity**, including:
 - Hispanic/Latino students
 - black students
 - white students
 - other students (not included)^{viii}

- There are three figures describing the reading proficiency of students in grades 4, 8 and 11 by **student characteristic**, including:
 - English language learners, or ELL (eleventh grade not included)^{ix}
 - students with disabilities, or IEP
 - students eligible for free or reduced lunch, or FRL

Please note that some percentages may add up greater than 100 due to rounding.

Each figure shows the percentage of students scoring a 1, 2, 3, or 4 on the 2013 NECAP examination. Students scoring 3s and 4s are considered “proficient.”

<i>Score</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Color on Charts</i>
4	Proficient with Distinction	Dark Blue
3	Proficient	Light Blue
2	Partially Proficient	Light Red
1	Substantially below Proficient	Dark Red

Figure 18. NECAP Proficiency in Reading by Race/Ethnicity, Grade 4, 2013

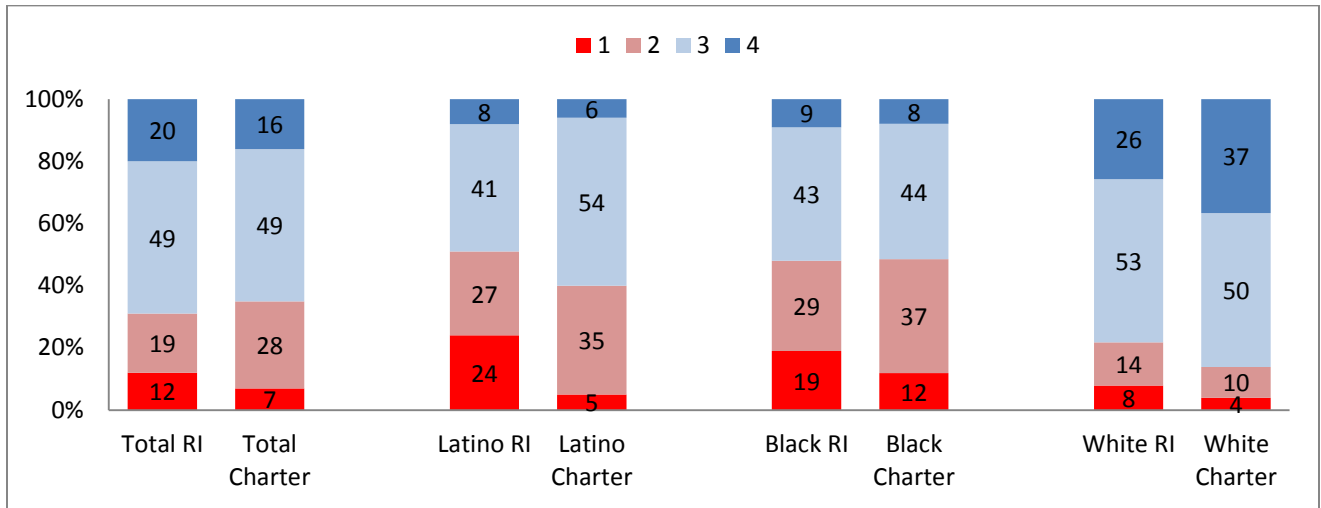


Figure 19. NECAP Proficiency in Reading by Race/Ethnicity, Grade 8, 2013

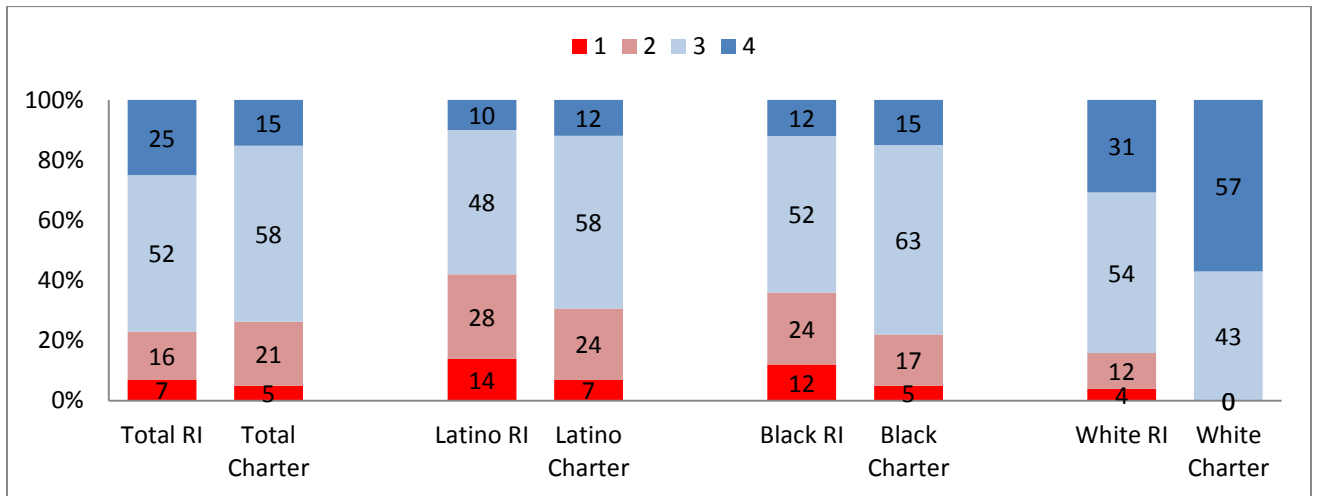


Figure 20. NECAP Proficiency in Reading by Race/Ethnicity, Grade 11, 2013

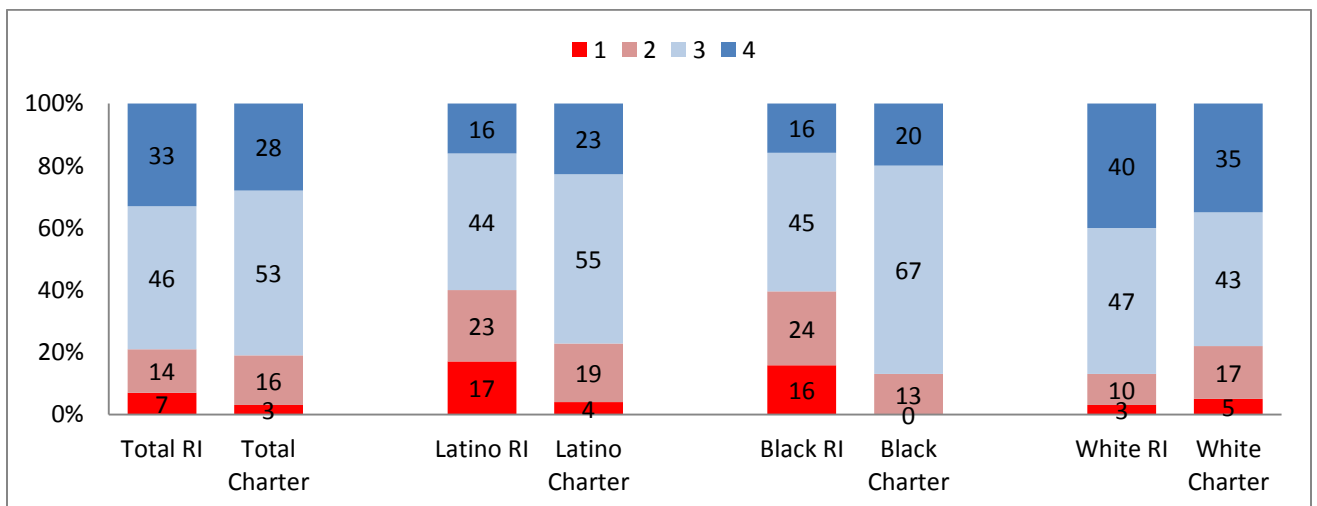


Figure 21. NECAP Proficiency in Reading by Characteristic, Grade 4, 2013

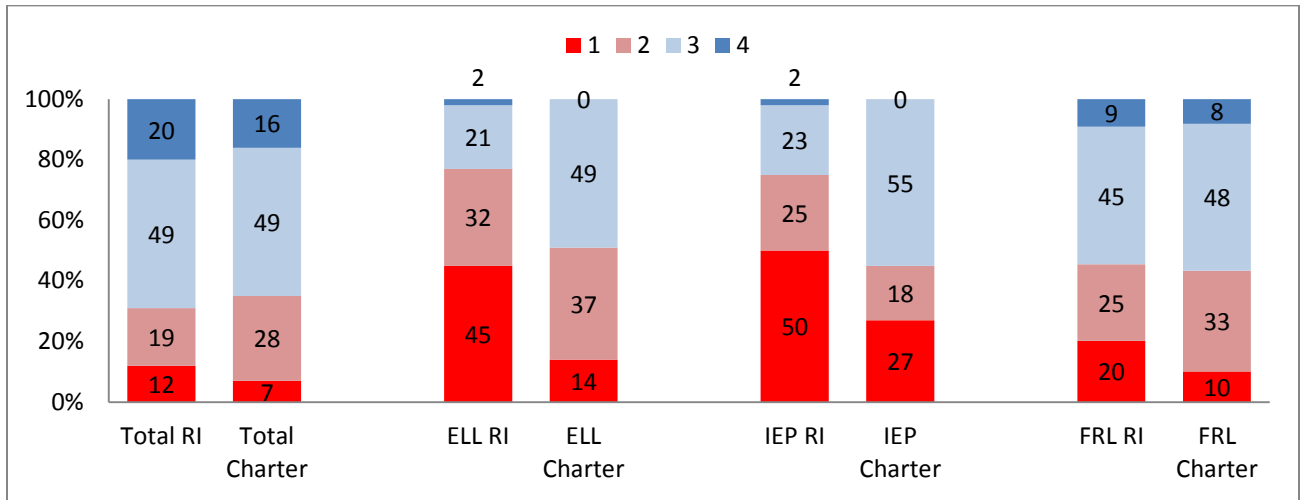


Figure 22. NECAP Proficiency in Reading by Characteristic, Grade 8, 2013

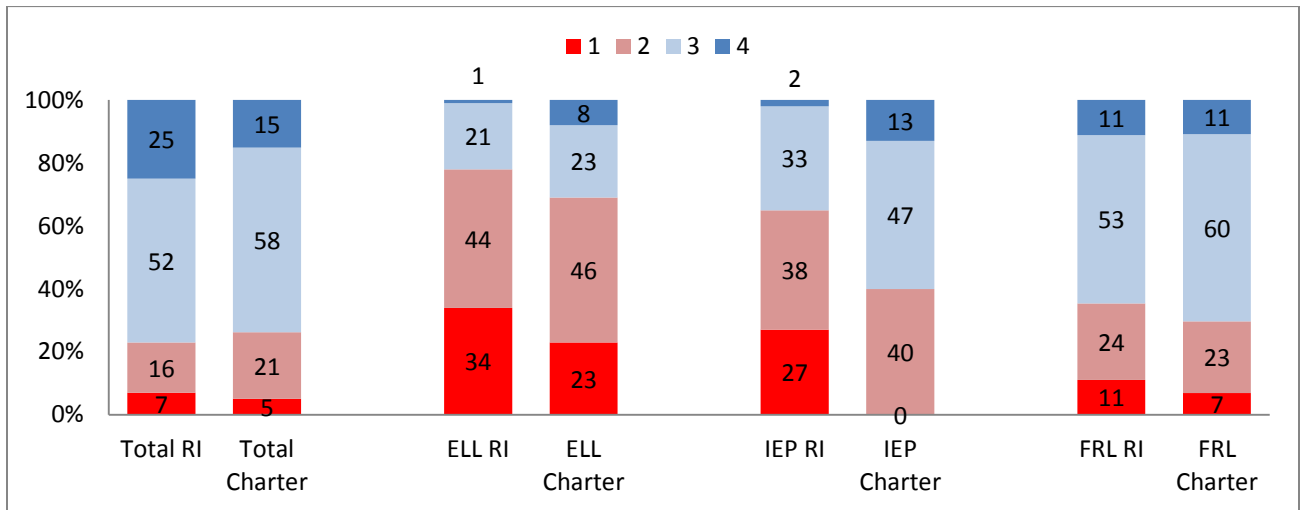
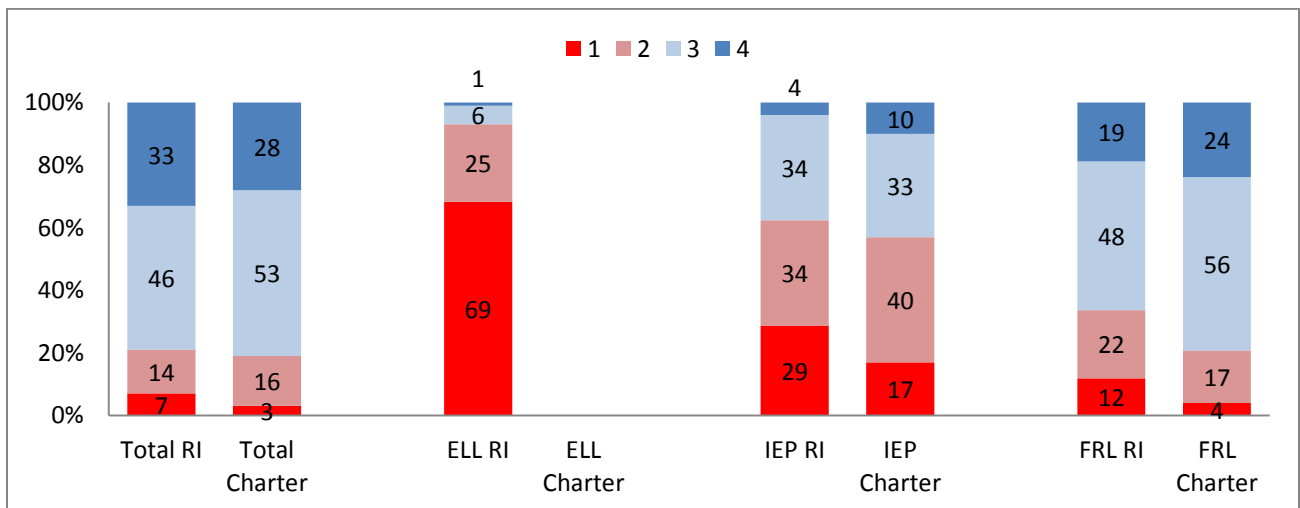
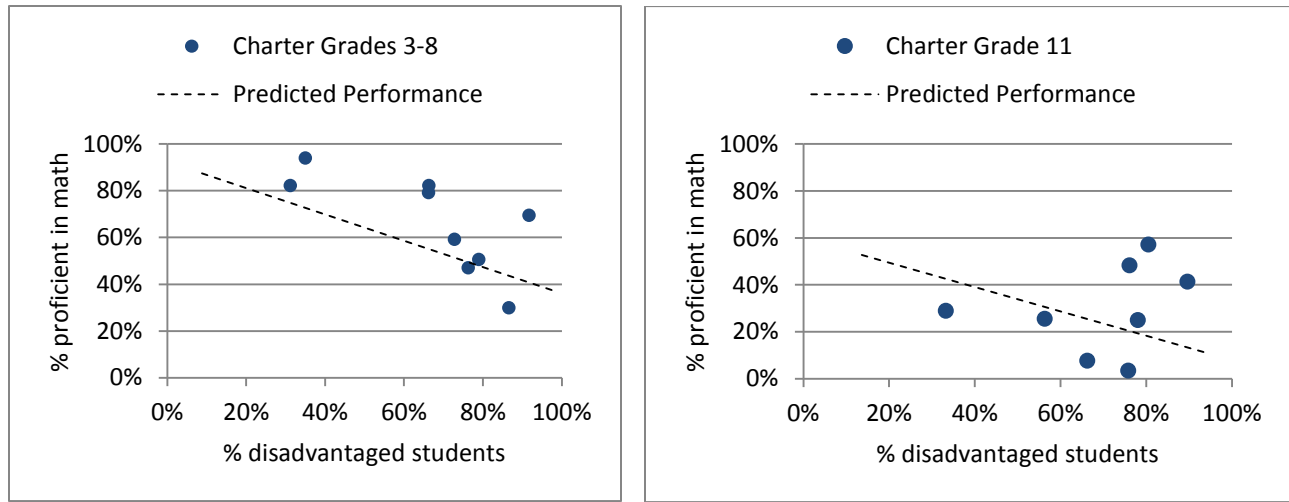


Figure 23. NECAP Proficiency in Reading by Characteristic, Grade 11, 2013



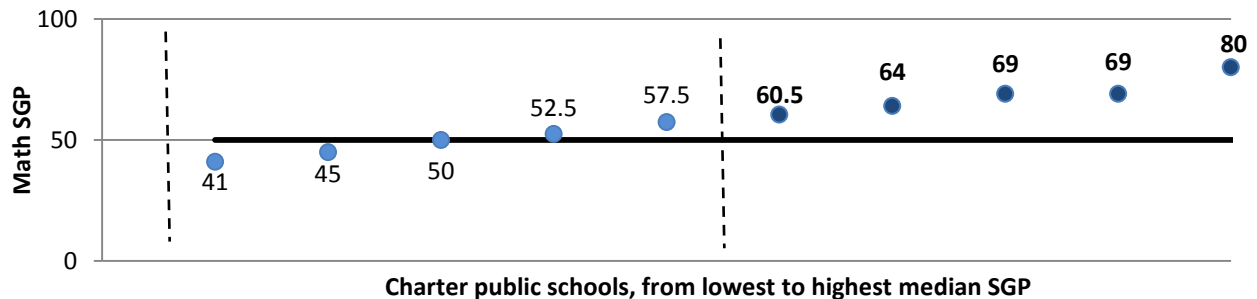
Performance in Math

Figure 24. NECAP Math Performance in Charter Public Schools, 2013



As with reading, nine charter public schools had state assessment data available for grades 3-8 in 2013, and eight schools for grade 11. Each of those charter public schools is represented as a point in the figure above. The vertical axis represents the percentage of students proficient in math; on the horizontal axis, the percentage of disadvantaged students in a given school. The dotted line indicates typical math performance for a school in Rhode Island, based on statewide performance and given the level of disadvantaged students enrolled. Twelve charter public schools performed at or above typical performance; five performed below.

Figure 25. Median Student Growth Percentiles for Charter Public Schools in Math, 2012



A student growth percentile (SGP) is a measure of an individual student's performance from one year to the next, relative to other students that had similar starting points. This figure represents the median student growth percentiles for ten charter public schools.^x Each point in the figure represents an individual charter public school's 2012 median SGP in math. The state median is the 50th percentile (the dark line). Schools scoring above the 50th percentile are supporting students to grow at a faster rate than schools below the 50th percentile.

Five charter public schools had a median SGP at 60 or above, which is significantly higher than growth statewide. Five charter public schools had a median SGP between 40 and 60, which is within the average range for schools in the state. No charter public schools had a median SGP lower than 40.

Math Proficiency by Student Characteristic

The six charts beginning on the next page describe 2013 math proficiency in charter public schools relative to the state as a whole. All NECAP data is “teaching year” data from the October 2013 assessment. Here is a brief explanation of what follows:

- There are three figures describing the math proficiency of students in grades 4, 8 and 11 by **race/ethnicity**, including:
 - Hispanic/Latino students
 - black students
 - white students
 - other students (not included)^{xi}
- There are three figures describing the math proficiency of students in grades 4, 8 and 11 by **student characteristic**, including:
 - English language learners, or ELL (eleventh grade not included)^{xii}
 - students with disabilities, or IEP
 - students eligible for free or reduced lunch, or FRL

Please note that some percentages may add up greater than 100 due to rounding.

Each figure shows the percentage of students scoring a 1, 2, 3, or 4 on the 2013 NECAP examination. Students scoring 3s and 4s are considered “proficient.”

<i>Score</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Color on Charts</i>
4	Proficient with Distinction (highest)	Dark Blue
3	Proficient	Light Blue
2	Partially Proficient	Light Red
1	Substantially below Proficient (lowest)	Dark Red

Figure 26. NECAP Proficiency in Math by Race/Ethnicity, Grade 4, 2013

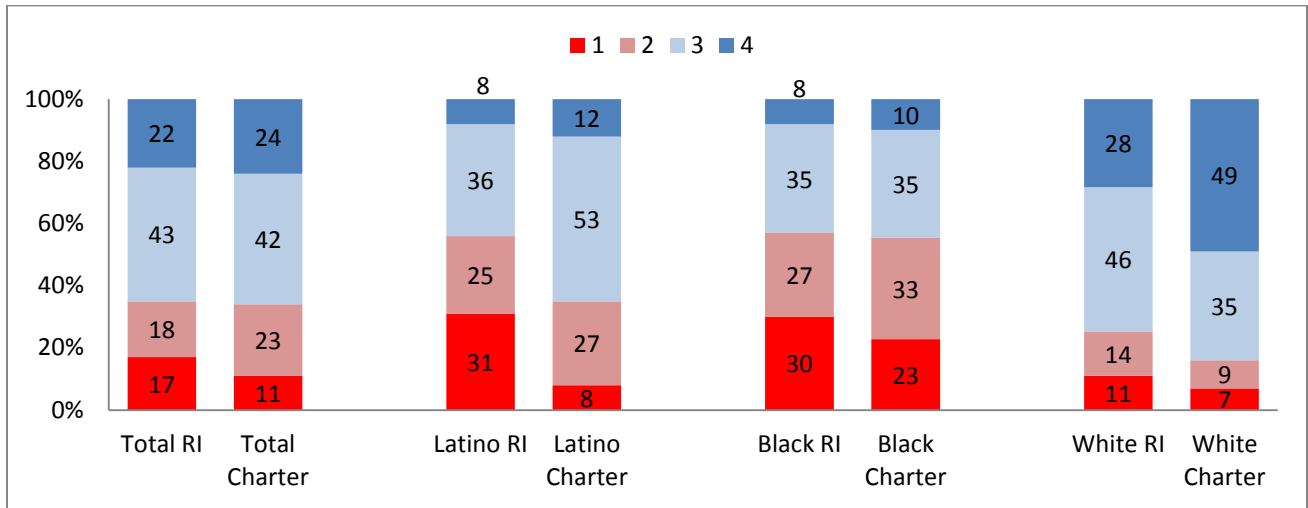


Figure 27. NECAP Proficiency in Math by Race/Ethnicity, Grade 8, 2013

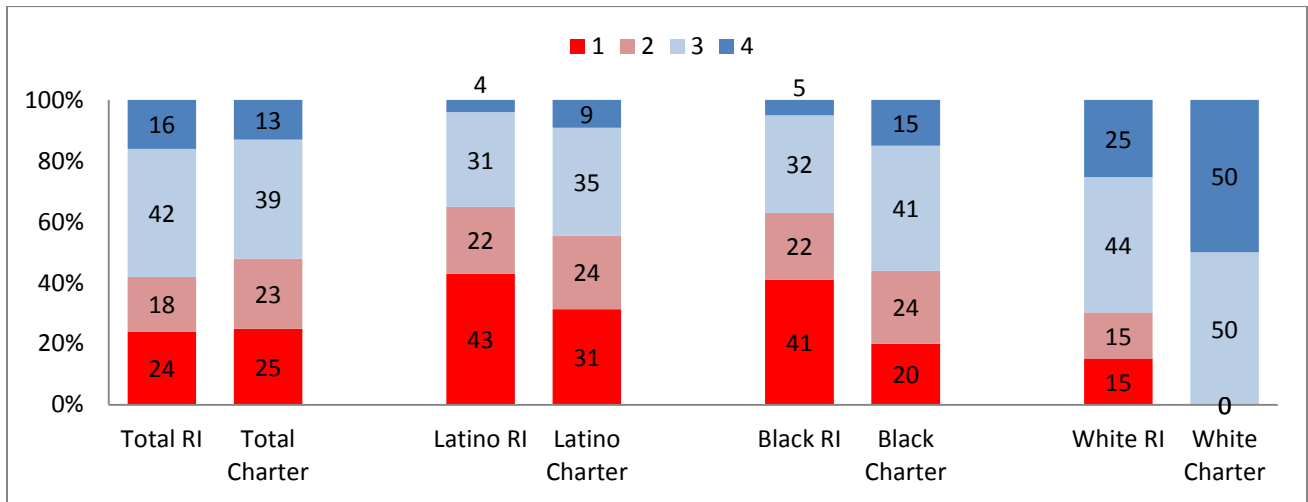


Figure 28. NECAP Proficiency in Math by Race/Ethnicity, Grade 11, 2013

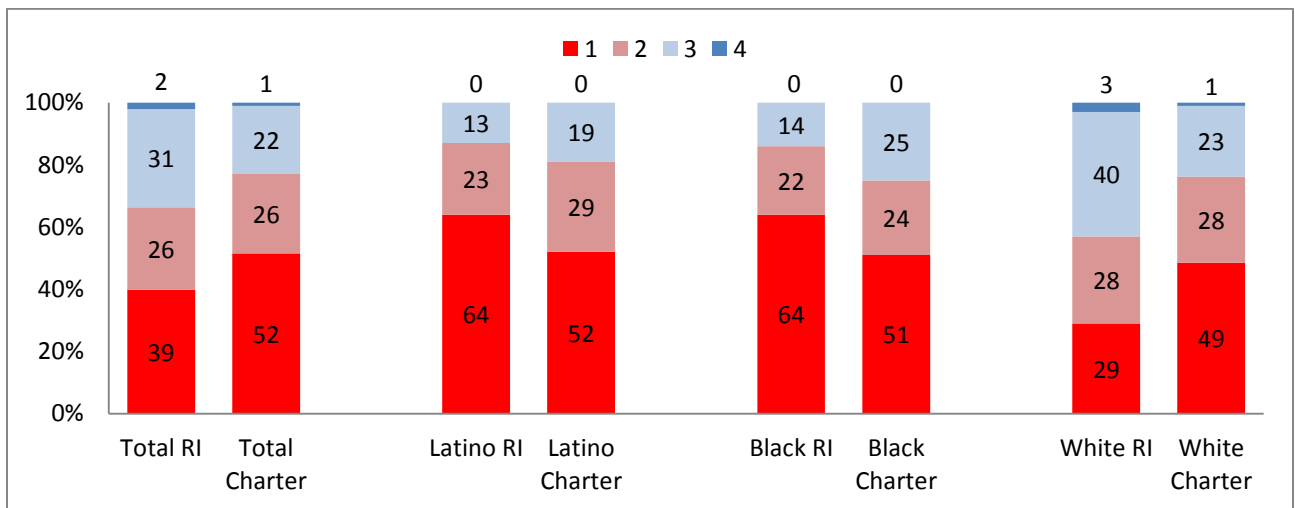


Figure 29. NECAP Proficiency in Math by Characteristic, Grade 4, 2013

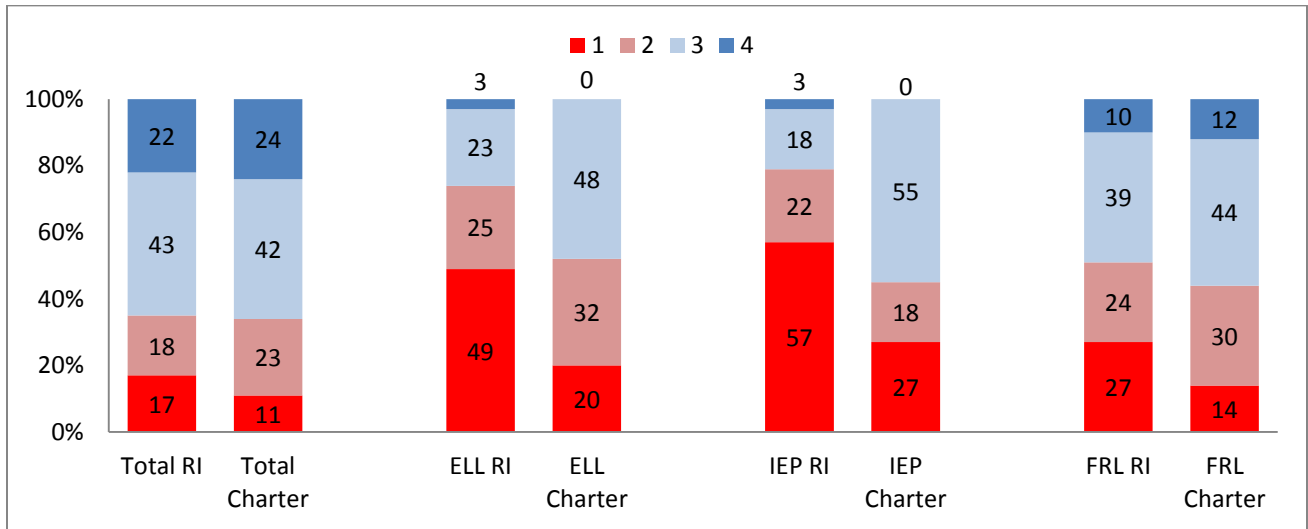


Figure 30. NECAP Proficiency in Math by Characteristic, Grade 8, 2013

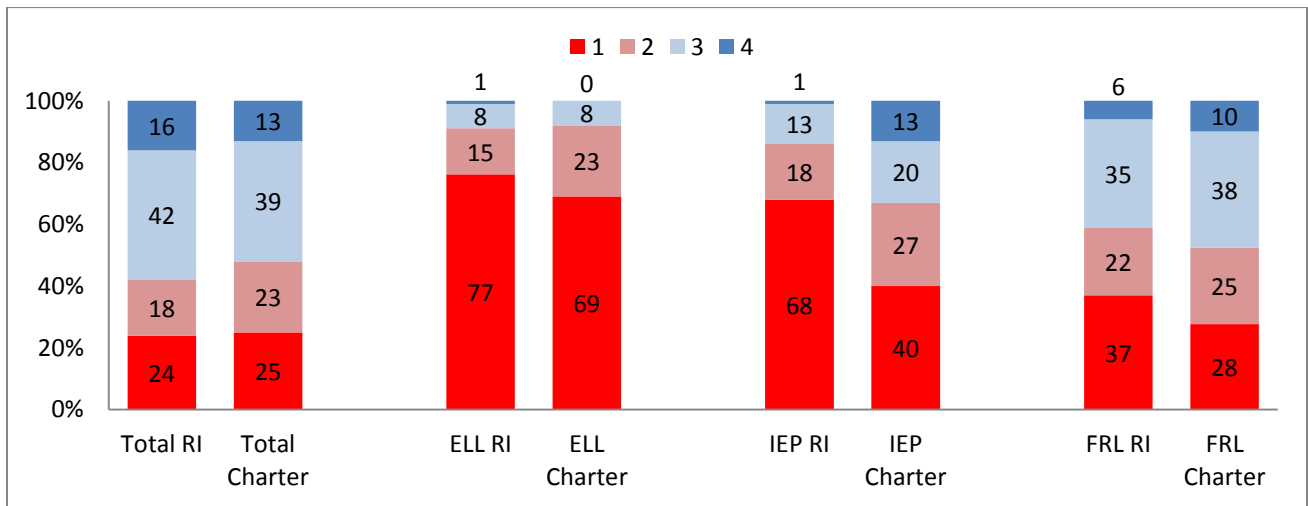
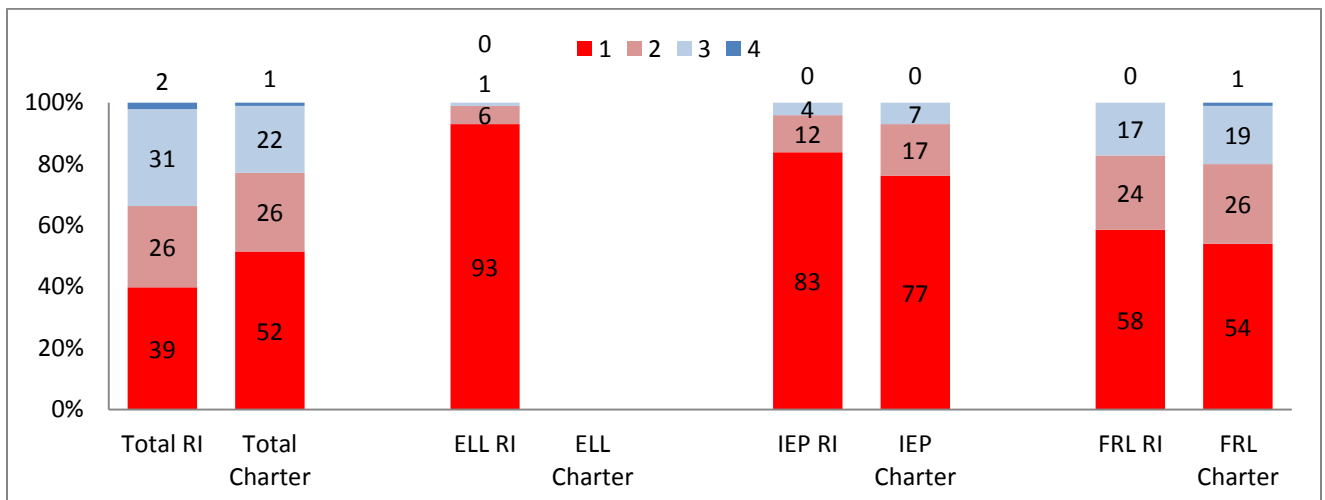


Figure 31. NECAP Proficiency in Math by Characteristic, Grade 11, 2013



Attendance

The table below represents attendance rates in charter public schools and the state as a whole. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of students attending each day over the number of students enrolled in each school.

Figure 32. Attendance rates, 2012-2013

	Elementary grades	Middle Grades	High school grades
Charter public schools	97%	97%	92%
RI	95%	92%	94%

In charter public schools, attendance rates are slightly higher in the elementary and middle grades compared to all RI public schools, and slightly lower in the high school grades.

Suspensions

This table represents suspension rates in charter public schools and the state as a whole. The rates are reported as the average number of suspensions per 100 students attending each school.^{xiii}

Figure 33. Average number of suspensions per 100 students, 2012-2013

	Elementary grades	Middle Grades	High school grades
Charter public schools	7.5	12.5	33.7
RI	6.5	36.4	40.8

Students in charter elementary schools are suspended at a slightly higher rate than all elementary schools in the state. However, suspensions of middle school students are lower in charter public schools than statewide. Students in charter high schools are also suspended at a lower rate than in high schools across the state.

Mission-Specific Achievements

At present, each charter public school's academic performance is largely evaluated by its progress and success in core academic subjects of reading, math, and where appropriate, writing and science. Though each charter public school has a unique mission, RIDE is not yet reporting on the mission-specific achievements of charters.

RIDE is developing a plan to change this. Charter public schools are encouraged to innovate, and thus are well-positioned to expand our idea of what our public schools can offer students. They can and should demonstrate what is possible in public education.

Establishing these mission specific goals, and tracking progress toward meeting them, is an essential way the Department of Education can highlight the successes of charter public schools, and at the same time ensure they are fulfilling the overall intent of charter law -- to create schools that are "vanguards, laboratories, and an expression of the ongoing and vital state interest in the improvement of education."^{xiv} It is RIDE's intent to demonstrate what charter public schools are doing, how they are doing it, and why.

Part Five: Finances

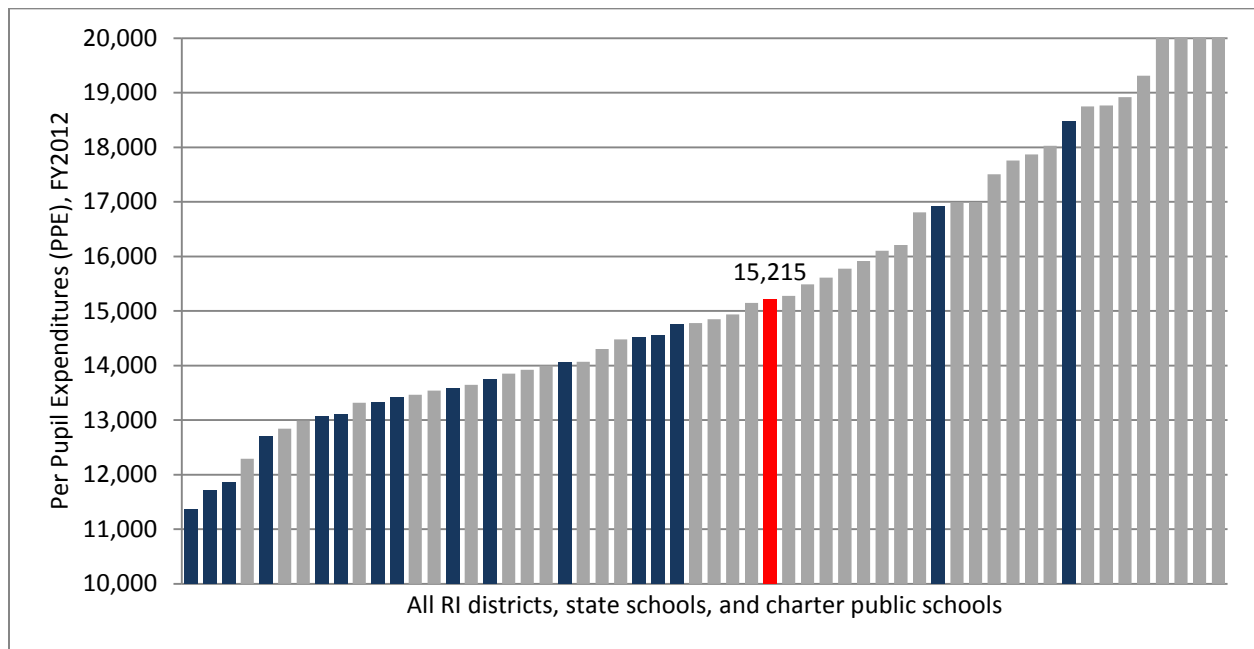
Rhode Island’s charter public schools are funded like all public schools – through the state’s funding formula. The formula was approved by the legislature in 2010 and implemented in the 2012 fiscal year. Per the policy, the state provides a share of each student’s funding, which is based on a community’s ability to fund education and household income levels. The policy also provides for a local or municipal share, based on the amount each local community commits to its public schools.

Per pupil expenditures

The table below describes the per- pupil expenditures (PPE) of all school districts, state schools, and charter public schools in Rhode Island. The dark blue columns indicate each individual charter public school’s PPE for fiscal year 2012. The gray columns indicate districts or state schools. The red column is the state average PPE.

According to the most recent data available, all but two of the state’s charter public schools spent below the state’s average PPE in FY2012.

Figure 34. Per pupil expenditures for all RI public schools, FY2012.

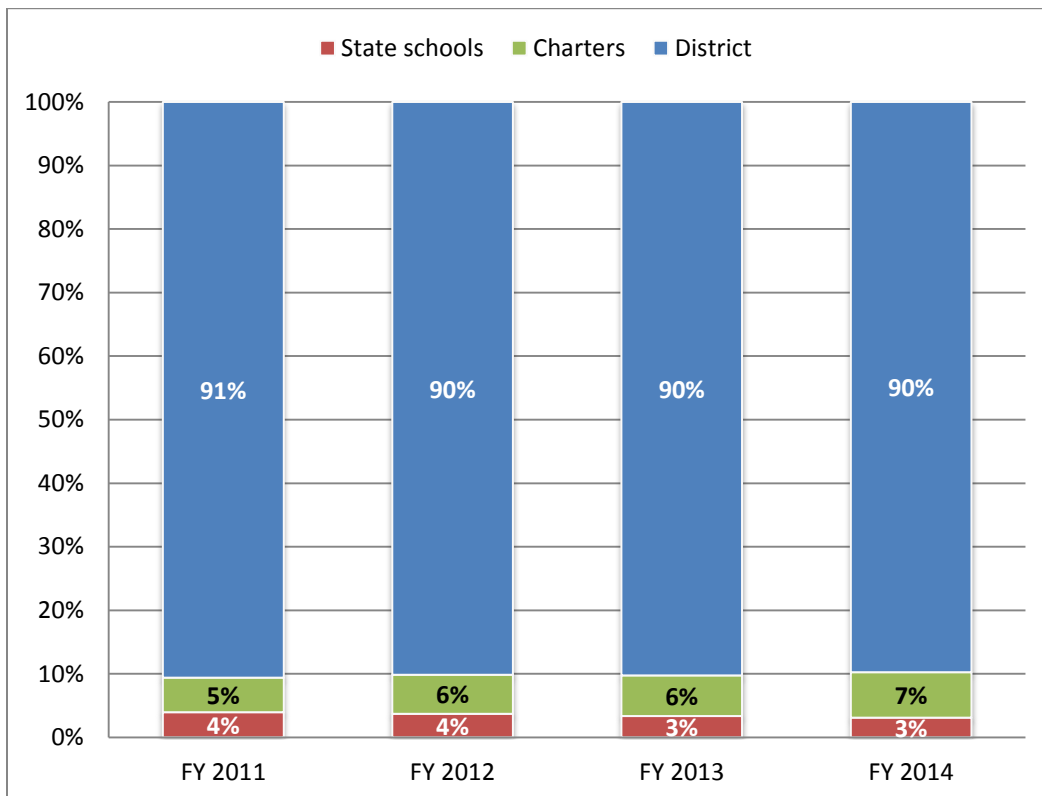


Source: Summary table produced by RIDE, based on FY2012 Uniform Chart of Accounts data. Title: “FY2012 Per Pupil Expenditures – Sorted by Equalized Net Per Pupil.” Available at ride.ri.gov.

State Aid

During fiscal year 2014, the direct state aid allocation to all public schools was \$769.7M. Of those funds, 90% went to school districts, 3% went to state schools like the William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical School and the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, and 7% went to charter public schools. The figure below indicates the proportionality of funding to charter and other schools relative to total state education aid, beginning in FY2011 and through FY2014.

Figure 35. Direct state aid to all public schools, FY11 to FY14



Source: RIDE Office of Finance. Accessed March 2014.

Figure 36. Direct state aid to all public schools, FY11 to FY14

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Aid to Districts	\$614,833,851	\$636,916,109	\$667,471,632	\$690,342,878
Aid to State Schools	\$26,951,102	\$26,326,495	\$25,029,795	\$24,173,800
Aid to Charters	\$37,007,177	\$43,204,583	\$47,082,800	\$55,148,059
Total Direct Aid	\$678,792,130	\$706,447,187	\$739,584,227	\$769,664,737
% aid to charters	5%	6%	6%	7%

Source: RIDE Office of Finance. Accessed March 2014.

Local Aid

All public schools, including charter public schools, receive local (municipal) aid. The table below indicates the local aid amounts to charter public schools for FY2013. For the purposes of this table, “urban” communities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket. All remaining communities are categorized as nonurban.

Each community spends different amounts on education. The table below indicates the number of students enrolled in charters, and then the lowest local per pupil expenditure by a community and the highest local per pupil expenditure by a community within each category. Charter students receive a share that corresponds to the specific community where they live.

In FY2013, charter public schools received about \$22.5M in local aid, or about 1.9% of municipal aid to all public schools.

Figure 37. Local aid to charter public schools, FY2013

	<i># of students enrolled in charter public schools</i>	<i>Lowest local expenditure (per pupil)</i>	<i>Highest local expenditure (per pupil)</i>	<i>Total local aid to charter public schools</i>
Urban	3,918	\$ 1,783	\$ 6,220	\$ 11,407,266
Nonurban	1,319	\$ 6,137	\$ 13,567	\$ 11,077,685
		Total local aid to charter public schools		\$ 22,484,951
		Total municipal aid to public schools		\$ 1,194,298,669
			charter %	1.9 %

Source: RIDE Office of Finance. Accessed March 2014.

Other Funding

Charter public schools are eligible to receive federal funds, including Title program funds, IDEA, and Medicaid. In addition to public formula-driven funds, like traditional public schools and school districts, charter public schools may seek some level of additional funding to support academic programs and operational improvements through grants, awards, loans, or donations. In particular, charter public schools have sought to raise additional funds to pay for school facilities. Unlike district public schools, which typically operate in buildings owned by municipalities and controlled by school districts, charter public schools must pay to lease or purchase space. Without additional funding, these costs are paid by operating funds, which may result in decreased spending on instructional programming and other programs that benefit students.

Information regarding funding for all public schools and districts, including charter public schools, is collected by the state's Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) and reported annually.^{xv}

Endnotes

ⁱ Rhode Island General Law [16-77-3.1](#)

ⁱⁱ Finn, Chester A.; Manno, Bruno V.; Vanourek, Gregg. (2000). *Charter public schools in Action: Renewing Public Education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rhode Island General Law [16-77-5.1\(b\)](#)

^{iv} School and district report cards:

<http://ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/Accountability/SchoolDistrictReportCards.aspx>

^v This report presents NECAP “teaching year” data only, which is data attributed to students in attendance in a given school during the school year prior to the year the test was given.

^{vi} For the purposes of this section, “disadvantaged students” are students receiving free or reduced lunch, students with disabilities, or English language learners.

^{vii} Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) can only be calculated for those charter public schools that had students with more than one consecutive year of NECAP data. Additional information on the Rhode Island Growth Model:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/InstructionalResources/TheRhodeIslandGrowthModel.aspx>

^{viii} There are too few students in other categories to calculate charter public school proficiency rates specific to these groups.

^{ix} * There are too few English language learners in charter public schools in Grade 11 to calculate an average proficiency rate.

^x Median Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) can only be calculated for those charter public schools that had students with more than one consecutive year of NECAP data. Additional information on the Rhode Island Growth Model:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/InstructionalResources/TheRhodeIslandGrowthModel.aspx>

^{xi} There are too few students in other categories to calculate charter public school proficiency rates specific to these groups.

^{xii} There are too few English language learners in charter public schools in Grade 11 to calculate an average proficiency rate.

^{xiii} For schools serving multiple grade configurations (e.g. K-12), a school-wide average across all grades was used. Data limitations prevent further representations of suspension data by grade level or grade configuration.

^{xiv} Rhode Island General Law [16-77-3.1](#)

^{xv} Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) information:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/RIEducationData/UniformChartofAccounts.aspx>.

