

Successful Practices of Charter Schools

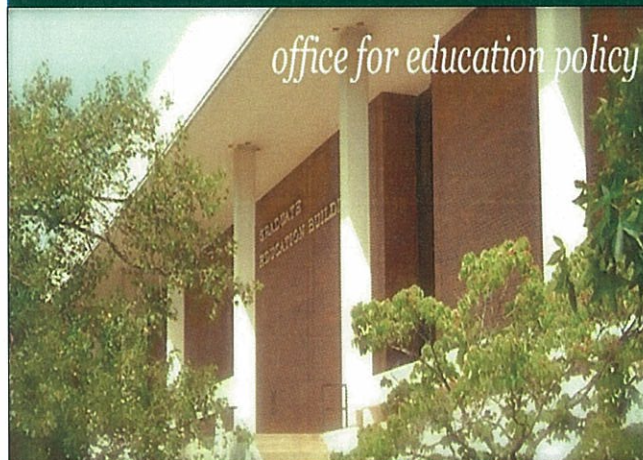
(Preliminary Findings)

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Joint House and Senate Education Committee

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- AR Education Reports
- Policy Briefs
- Report Cards
- Newsletters
- Data Resources

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Study Request: Interim Study Proposal 2013-002

A study was requested by Rep. Charles Armstrong that would consider best practices of public charter schools that:

- Improve student learning for all students;
- Increase learning opportunities for low-achieving students;
- Encourage innovative teaching methods;
- Create professional opportunities for teachers;
- Expand educational choice; and
- Increase parental engagement in and the responsibility for the education of their children.

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Outline & Research Questions

I. Arkansas Charter School Landscape

1. Where are charter schools located, and who do they serve?
2. Where do students have charter school choice in Arkansas?

II. How are charter schools unique?

1. What are the successful practices of charter schools in Arkansas?
2. What are the successful practices of charter schools around the nation?

III. What do we know about the performance of Arkansas' charter schools?

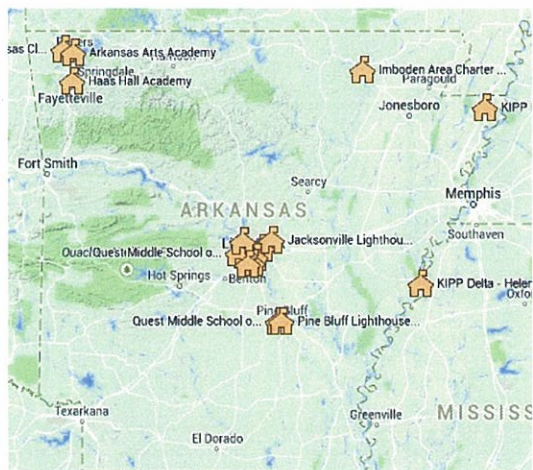
1. Are parents satisfied with Arkansas' charter schools?
2. How are Arkansas' charter schools impacting student achievement?

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I. Arkansas Charter School Landscape

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2014-15: Open-Enrollment Charter Schools



- 18 Open-Enrollment Charter Schools
- Majority in Central Arkansas
 - 10 in Pulaski County
 - 2 in Jefferson County

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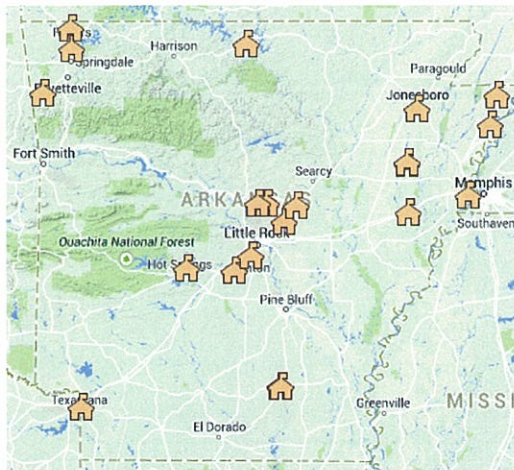
2014-15: Open-Enrollment Demographics

- Open-enrollment charter average:
 - 60% FRL (State: 62%)
 - 62% Minority (State: 37%)

	Year Opened	Grades Served	Enrollment	% White	% Minority	% FRL
State Average	-	-	-	63%	37%	62%
Academics Plus	2001	K-12	749	77%	23%	20%
Arkansas Arts Academy	2001	K-12	758	76%	24%	36%
Arkansas Virtual Academy	2007	K-10	1647	81%	19%	29%
Covenant Keepers Charter School	2008	6-8	157	0%	100%	91%
Estem Public Charter School	2007	K-12	1462	41%	59%	32%
Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock	2014	K-2	112	3%	97%	96%
Haas Hall Academy	2004	8-12	320	82%	18%	N/A
Imboden Charter School District	2002	K-8	64	97%	3%	78%
Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter	2009	K-11	913	33%	67%	65%
KIPP Delta Public Schools	2002	K-12 (Helena) 4-8 (Blytheville)	1324	6%	94%	90%
Lisa Academy	2004	K-12	1488	33%	67%	41%
Little Rock Preparatory Academy	2009	K-8	398	0%	100%	100%
Pine Bluff Lighthouse Academy	2010	K-7	293	0%	100%	91%
NWA Classical Academy (Responsive ED Solutions)	2013	K-9	522	64%	36%	17%
Premier High School of Little Rock (Responsive ED Solutions)	2013	9-12	130	14%	86%	72%
Quest Middle School of West Little Rock (Responsive ED Solutions)	2014	6-8	166	63%	37%	14%
Quest Middle School of Pine Bluff (Responsive ED Solutions)	2013	5-8	57	0%	100%	96%
SIA tech Little Rock Charter	2011	9-12	152	12%	88%	57%

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2014-15: District-Conversion Charter Schools



- 22 District-Conversion Charter Schools
- Spread across the state

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2014-15: District-Conversion Demographics

- District-conversion charter average:
 - 68% FRL (State: 62%)
 - 40% Minority (State: 37%)

	District	Year Opened	Grades Served	Enrollment	% White	% Minority	% FRL
State Average	-	-	-	-	63%	37%	62%
Academies of West Memphis	West Memphis SD	2014	10-12	1128	17%	83%	100%
Badger Academy	Beebe SD	2007	7-12	25	92%	8%	60%
Bauxite Miner Academy	Bauxite SD	2013	6-12	52	94%	6%	42%
Blytheville High School - New Tech School	Blytheville SD	2013	9-12	699	16%	84%	100%
Brunson New Vision Charter School	Warren SD	2013	4-5	265	50%	50%	74%
Cabot Academic Center for Excellence	Cabot SD	2004	7-12	218	91%	9%	42%
Cloverdale Aerospace Technology Conversion Charter Middle School	Little Rock SD	2010	6-8	583	3%	97%	92%
Cross County Elementary Technology Academy	Cross County SD	2012	K-6	331	90%	10%	75%
Cross County New Tech High School	Cross County SD	2011	7-12	285	86%	14%	72%
Eastside New Vision Charter School	Warren SD	2012	K-3	550	40%	60%	74%
Fountain Lake Middle School Cobra Digital Prep Academy	Fountain Lake SD	2014	5-8	422	88%	12%	56%
Lincoln High School New Tech	Lincoln Consolidated SD	2012	8-12	517	79%	21%	70%
Lincoln Middle Academy of Excellence	Forrest City SD	2010	5-6	374	13%	87%	100%
Mountain Home High School Career Academy	Mountain Home SD	2003	9-12	1226	93%	7%	49%
Osceola STEM Academy	Osceola SD	2012	5-8	390	15%	85%	100%
Pea Ridge Manufacturing and Business Academy	Pea Ridge SD	2014	11-12	87	89%	11%	51%
Rogers New Technology High School	Rogers SD	2013	9-11	385	61%	39%	49%
The Academies at Jonesboro High	Jonesboro SD	2013	10-12	1136	45%	55%	63%
Vilonia Academy of Service and Technology	Vilonia SD	2007	5-6	106	93%	7%	38%
Vilonia Academy of Technology	Vilonia SD	2004	2-4	77	95%	5%	45%
Warren Middle School	Warren SD	2014	6-8	374	49%	51%	72%
Washington Academy	Texarkana SD	2013	9-12	119	18%	82%	67%

Where do students have charter school choice in Arkansas?

- To determine an approximate number of students who have choice, we examined the “feeder” districts of open-enrollment charter schools.
 - Excluded Arkansas Virtual Academy
- In the 2012-13 school year, students attended open-enrollment charter schools from 20 traditional school districts.
 - **1.7%** of state’s students exercised choice through open-enrollment charter schools (Fewer than 10,000 students)
 - **27.6%** of state’s students attended “feeder” districts of open-enrollment charter schools
 - Of those, 40% are in Pulaski County

II. How are charter schools unique?

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What are the successful practices of Arkansas' Charter Schools?

- a. What waivers do charters claim?
- b. Do charters pursue different curricular methods?
- c. What types of targeted programs do charters offer their students?
- d. Do charter school teachers have expanded leadership opportunities?
- e. How do charters involve parents?

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What are the successful practices of Arkansas' Charter Schools?

- **Methods:**
 - Surveys to charter school teachers and leaders
 - Focus groups with charter school teachers and leaders
 - Analyzed application materials
 - Arkansas Department of Education performed a 'Best of Promising Practices' analysis
 - <http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/charter-schools/best-or-promising-practices>

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What waivers do charter schools claim?

- **Teacher licensure (82% claim waivers on applications)**
 - Ability to hire non-traditional teachers, particularly business professionals
 - Ability to hire community professionals to teach courses such as music or art
- **Teacher obligations**
 - Planning time requirements (61% claim waivers) and duty time requirements (57% claim waivers)
 - Smaller staff leads to more duties
 - Teachers spend lunch with students as a time to build relationships.
- **School day and calendar (46% claim waivers)**
 - Early release or late-start days to give teachers common planning time
 - Longer school year

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Do charter schools pursue different curricular methods?

- **Charter schools often center school on unique focus**
 - E.g. Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy, Arkansas Arts Academy
- **Specific curriculums**
 - Academics Plus cited Math Investigations
 - eStem cited Singapore Math
- **Innovative practices**
 - Majority of teachers in charter schools responded that they were more likely to employ innovative teaching strategies than in traditional public school
 - Teachers expressed more autonomy to seek extra opportunities and resources to enhance curriculum

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What types of targeted programs do charters offer their students?

- **College and career preparation programs**
 - Counseling and mentoring programs with low staff-student ratios; shifted personnel responsibilities to prioritize
 - E.g. KIPP-Delta: KIPP Through College Director
 - E.g. LISA Academy mentoring programs
 - Support college-going testing
 - All students take the ACT; offer preparation programs
 - “College going cultures” in all classes
 - E.g. At Haas Hall, students work on resumes in ELA classes
 - College visits
 - In-state and out-of-state

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What types of targeted programs do charters offer their students?

- **Specialized academic support programs**
 - Students received specialized tutoring, determined by data
 - E.g. Covenant Keepers has tutoring period during the day
 - E.g. LISA-Academy after-school tutoring mandatory for lower-performing students, with classroom teachers and based on data
- **Whole Child Initiatives**
 - Programs that develop students character
 - E.g. LISA Academy – character development workshops and lessons
 - E.g. Little Rock Prep – developed “Graduate Attributes” that school instills in students
 - Extra-curricular activities and extra emphasis on field trips in many schools
 - E.g. Arkansas Arts Academy partnership with Crystal Bridges Museum

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Do charter school teachers have expanded leadership opportunities?

- **Teachers at charters were likely to express having a voice in the school.**
 - Access to principals and administrators
- **Teachers felt investment in success of entire school.**
 - Often, teachers have many responsibilities within the school.
 - Partly a function of additional programming
 - E.g. Academic extra-curricular activities
- **64% of teachers stated that their charter school is more likely to allow them to hold a leadership position than a traditional public school**

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How do charter schools involve parents?

- **Parental involvement is the nature of schools of choice.**
 - Many parents are actively involved, because they sought out and actively applied to the school.
- **Offer additional programming to reach out to parents**
 - College and career preparation
 - E.g. KIPP-Delta and LISA-Academy parent nights
 - Involve parents in field trips and extra-curricular activities

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What are successful practices of charter schools around the nation?

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Summary of the literature

- Twenty-three quantitative studies have examined the key indicators, or correlates, of charter school effectiveness
- Collectively, they have generated 32 statistically significant findings

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Summary of the literature

Indicator	Research Studies
Charter school age	(7) Hanushek, 2007; Zimmer et al., 2008; Kelly & Loveless, 2012; Buddin & Zimmer, 2005; Bifulco & Ladd, 2006; Hanushek et al., 2007; Cremata et al., 2013
Extended learning time (includes extended day, extended time on task, extended school year)	(5) Angrist et al., 2011; Gleason, 2014; Hoxby et al., 2009; Macey et al., 2009; Musher et al., 2005
Teachers' focus on student achievement; high expectations for students	(3) Berends et al., 2010; Dobbie & Fryer, 2011; Gleason, 2014
Grades served: elementary or middle	(3) Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2009; Angrist et al., 2013; Zimmer et al., 2009
Governance structure (includes education management organizations, charter management organizations, start-up, or conversion charter)	(2) Hoxby & Rockoff, 2005; Zimmer & Buddin, 2005
Authorizer type	(2) Witte et al., 2007; Zimmer et al., 2014
School Size	(2) Berends et al., 2010, Gleason et al., 2010
Grouping students by ability in mathematics and science	Gleason et al., 2010
Attendance rate	Gleason et al., 2010
Degree of instructional innovation	Berends et al., 2010
Level of instructional coherence	Macey et al., 2009
Quality of principal leadership	Macey et al., 2009
Teacher-parent-student relationships	Macey et al., 2009
Parent involvement	Zimmer & Buddin, 2007
Percentage of teachers alternatively licensed	Zimmer & Buddin, 2007

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III. What do we know about the performance of Arkansas' charter schools regarding parent motivations, satisfaction and student achievement?

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Parents motivation for choosing and satisfaction with Arkansas' charter schools

- Administered a survey in Spring 2014 to parents in charter schools
- Response rates
 - Open-enrollment charter schools: 16% (1,453 parents in 15 schools)
 - District-conversion charter schools: 10% (431 parents in 11 schools)
- Limitations
 - No counterfactual
 - Possible non-response bias

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Why do parents choose an open-enrollment charter school?

- Top four reasons:
 - Quality of previous school/teacher was unacceptable (27.6%)
 - Previous school did not meet child's needs (24.8%)
 - Convenience (22.5%)
 - Safety (19.3%)

Stated Reason to Attend Charter School	% of Respondents
Quality of previous school/ teachers was unacceptable	27.6%
Previous school did not meet child's needs	24.8%
School was in a convenient location	22.5%
Concerned about safety at previous school	19.3%
This is my child's first school	17.6%
Coursework was too easy at previous school	15.9%
Wanted all children to be in the same school	15.5%
Child was not comfortable at previous school	12.1%
Previous school was too expensive	5.3%
Next grade level not offered at previous school	4.5%
Moved away	3.6%
Previous school closed	1.3%
Coursework was too difficult at previous school	0.6%
Suspension or expulsion	0.6%
Child was asked not to return	0.4%

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Parent Survey: Open-Enrollment Charter Advantages

	% Satisfied or very satisfied	% Better than previous school
What is taught in the school	92%	70%
Amount your child has learned	91%	71%
Communication about academics	86%	57%
Teacher's performance	91%	63%

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Parent Survey: Open-Enrollment Charters are Similar to TPS

	% Satisfied or very satisfied	% Better than previous school
Opportunities for parental involvement	89%	50%
School's desire for parental involvement	88%	53%
Discipline in the school	82%	54%
Principal performance	82%	51%
Student engagement with school	87%	54%

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Parent Survey: Open-Enrollment Charter Disadvantages

	% Satisfied or very satisfied	% Better than previous school
Extracurricular activities offered	69%	37%
Transportation	74%	24%
School facilities (Library, gym, textbooks)	66%	30%

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How are Arkansas' charter schools impacting student performance?

- Two future analyses
 - 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 school years
 - Benchmark math and literacy exams
- Lottery Study
 - Random-assignment evaluation of oversubscribed charter schools
- "Virtual Twin" Study
 - Compare students in charter schools to similar students in "feeder" traditional public schools

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Issues with lottery data

- Not all oversubscribed charters are giving us lottery data
- Some of the lottery data are unclear

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Future Reports

- More in-depth analysis of successful practices in Arkansas and nationally
- Academic impacts from 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 school years

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**Thank you for allowing us to present today.
We look forward to sharing future results with you.**

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