



Charter Schools in Tennessee: An Overview

BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

Kevin Schaaf | Director

Division of Research and Analysis | February 18, 2020



BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL
HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY
EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE
THEY LIVE

WHOLE CHILD

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL
BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE
ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC
NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH
FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION
AND BE THE TOP STATE TO BECOME
AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND
LEADER

Agenda



- 1. Background and Landscape
- 2. Students Served
- 3. Performance
- 4. Overview of Charter Research



Charter School Landscape in TN

38,000 students served across Tennessee's
116 charter schools

- 116 active public charter schools
 - Metro 28
 - Hamilton 5
 - Shelby 55
 - Knox 1
 - ASD 24
 - SBE 3



Source*: School Directory (as of 2/5/2020)
<https://k-12.education.tn.gov/SDE/default.asp>

Scope of charter schools has widened from 2002 to the present

2002: cap on the number of charter schools; limited students who could attend a charter

2005: expanded to allow students zoned to a failing school or students who had failed to test proficient

2009: cap raised to 90 and allowed students eligible for free/reduced lunch

2011: cap removed and all students could attend

2014: the State Board became an authorizer

2019 Tennessee Public Charter School Commission.



[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/documents/JanTESS20200130_SBECommissionWebinarPPT_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/documents/JanTESS20200130_SBECommissionWebinarPPT_FINAL%20(1).pdf)

Current TN Charter School Law

- Must be not-for-profit entities
- Have ten-year charter terms
- Open to all students
- Cannot be converted from private schools
- Cannot be virtual or cyber-based
- Must participate in all state assessments
- Must have licensed teachers
- Under the LEA of their authorizer
- Subjected to the same performance accountability standards as traditional public schools
- Can receive waivers from certain laws, State Board rules, and State Board policies



[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/documents/JanTESS20200130_SBCommissionWebinarPPT_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/documents/JanTESS20200130_SBCommissionWebinarPPT_FINAL%20(1).pdf)

Facilities Funding

\$12 million allocated to the department's Charter School Facilities fund in Governor Lee's budget.

\$5.85 million distributed Oct. 18, 2019 to schools based on the number of students they serve

- Property purchases to relocate or establish a school,
- Fund general improvements to existing facilities,
- Assist with costs associated with purchasing/leasing underutilized or vacant property, or
- Support existing capital outlay projects.

In mid-November, competitive grant made available to all charter schools for remaining \$6 million



Key Takeaways



Students:

- 60 percent economically disadvantaged
- Over 90 percent students of color

Performance:

- Varies considerably at the school level
- From the highest to lowest value-added

Student attendance:

- Similar overall

Discipline:

- Fewer incidents; suspend at higher rates for violations

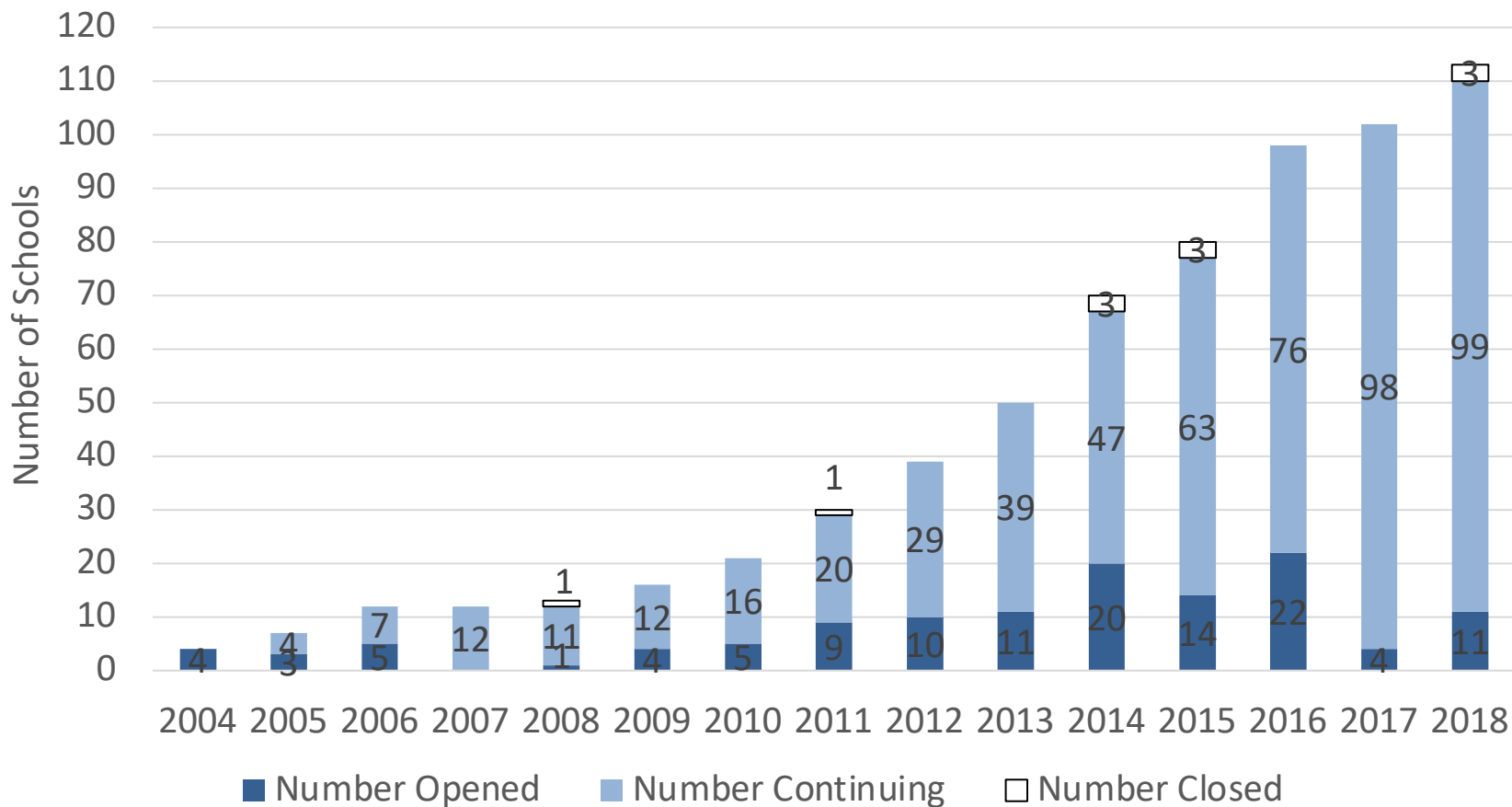
Research Overview:

- Mixed results; challenges in generalizing results

Students Served



Openings and Closings of Charter Schools over Time



TN has set a high bar for approval

Year	# New Applications: # Approved	# SBE Appeals: # Successful	# ASD Applications: # Approved
2002	8:4	3:0	--
2003	18:4	8:1	--
2004	14:7	2:1	--
2005	3:0	1:0	--
2006	5:2	1:0	--
2007	10:4	1:0	--
2008	12:6	1:1	--
2009	28:8	9:0	--
2010	23:11	6:2	--
2011	38:6	20:15	9:2
2012	15:5	5:1	10:8
2013	22:4	3:0	18:9
2014	26:17	6:0	7:1
2015	25:11	6:2	8:2
2016	17:8	1:1	--
2017	21:4	2:0	--
Total	285:101	74:23	52:22

Brief Notes on the History of Charter Authorization and Appeals

From 2002 – 2014...

the State Board received 60 new start appeals, and overturned the decision in 35% of appeals.

2014 - 2018

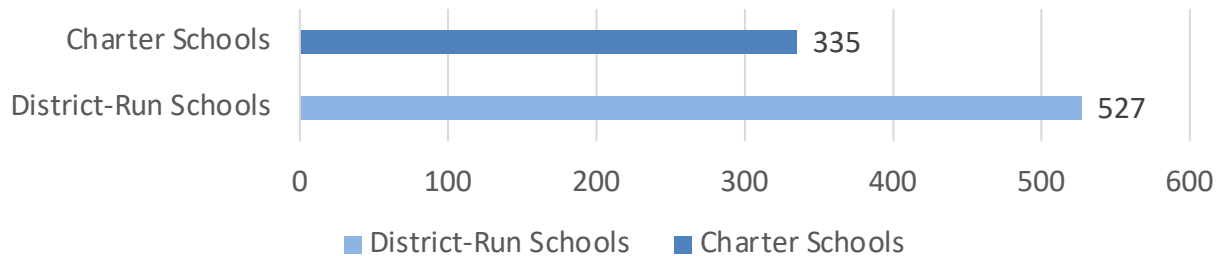
Received 27 new start appeals, and approved 5 applications (18%)



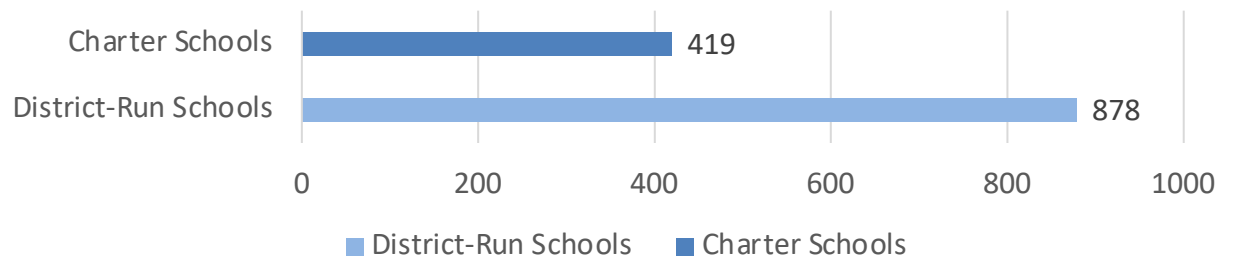
Charter schools are smaller than district-run schools



Average Enrollment: Grade K-8

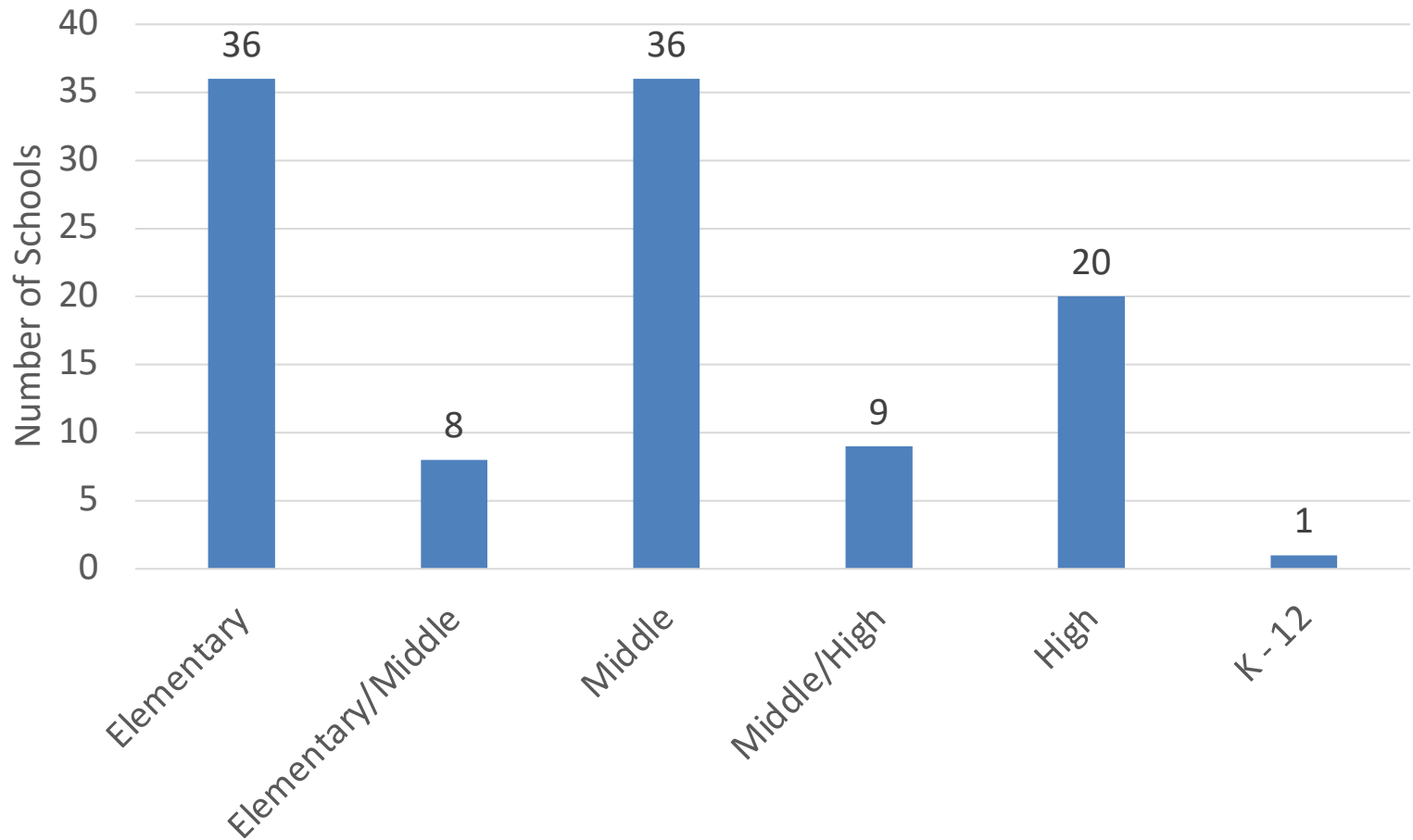


Average Enrollment: Grade 9-12



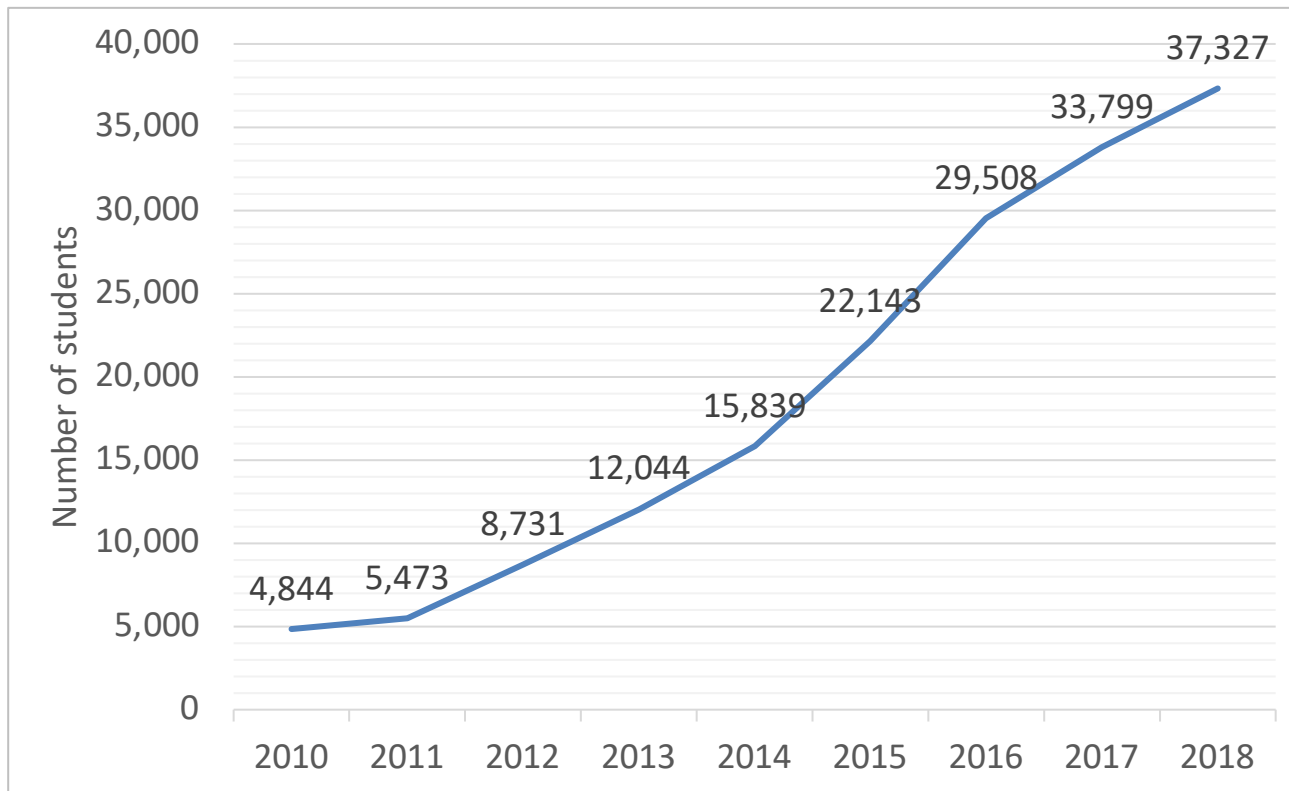
2017-2018

Grade Configurations of Charter Schools



2017-2018

Charter School Enrollment over Time has Expanded



Charter Enrollments by District

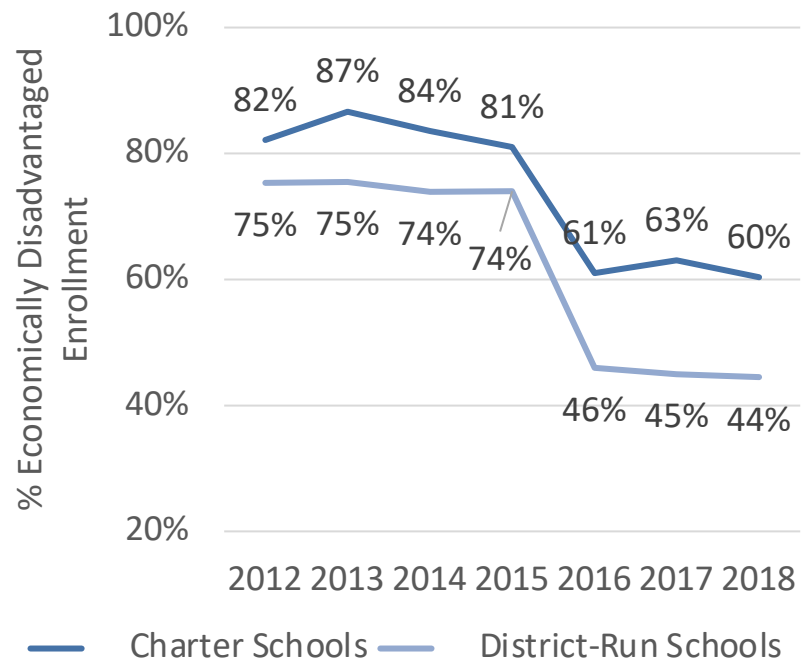
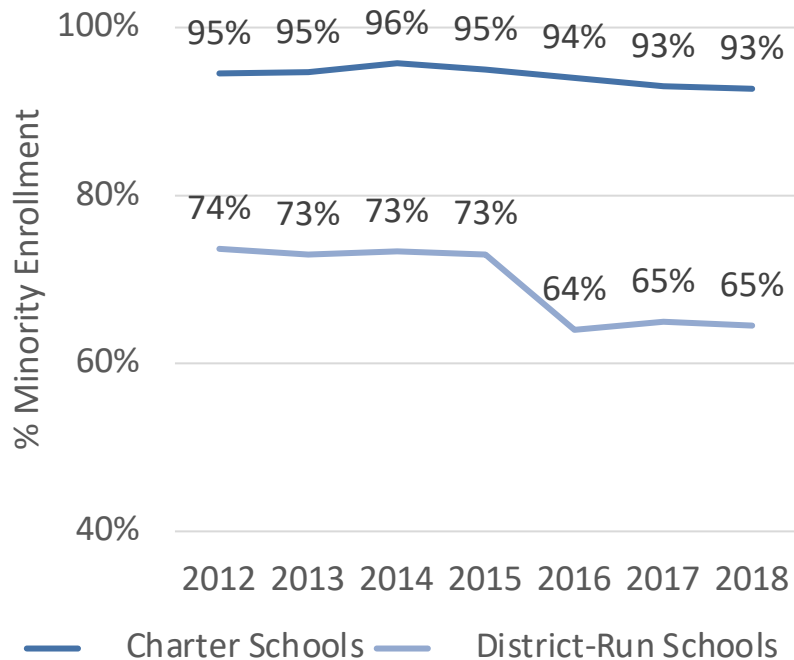
show Nashville approaching Shelby



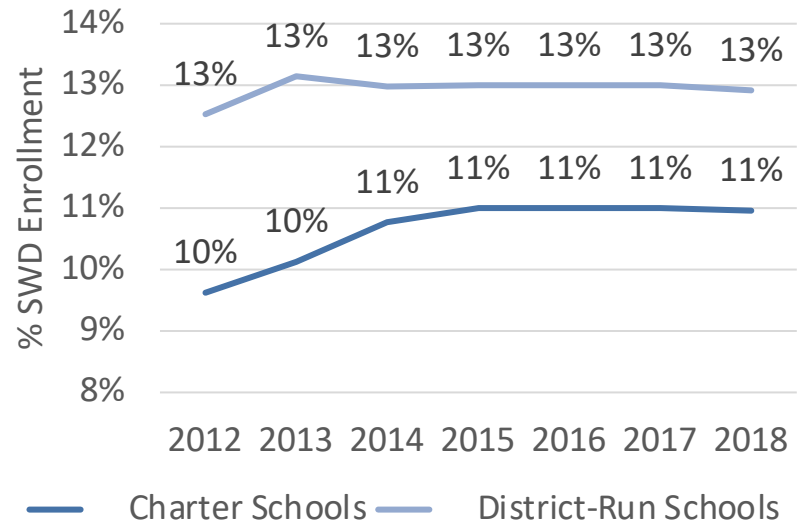
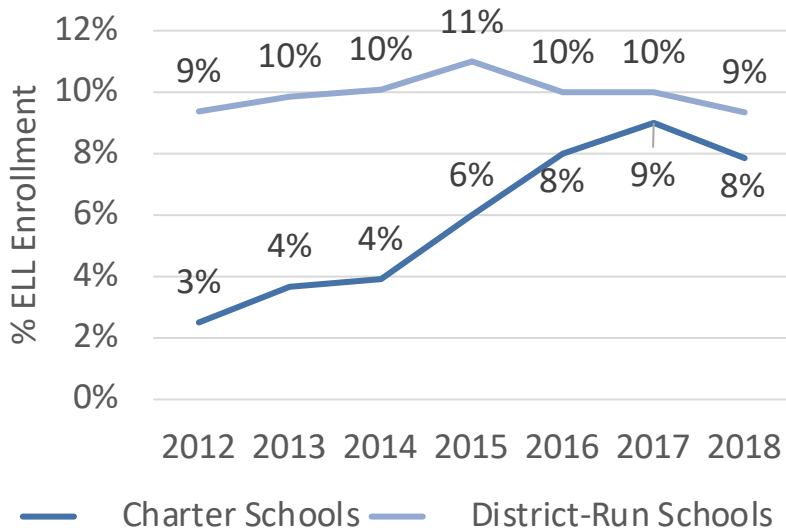
	Number of Charter Schools	Charter-only Enrollment	Total Enrollment	% Charter Enrollment
Hamilton County	4	1,134	43,830	2.6%
Metro Nashville Public Sch	29	11,409	82,424	13.8%
Shelby County	51	15,259	106,381	14.3%
Achievement School District	24	8,995	10,979	81.9%
Knox County	1	374	59,365	0.01%
TN State Board of Education	1	156	156	100%
Tennessee	110	37,327	975,222	3.8%

2017-2018

Charter schools serve larger proportions of disadvantaged students



Charter Schools serve lower proportions of students with disabilities (and ELs)



Student populations vary by district



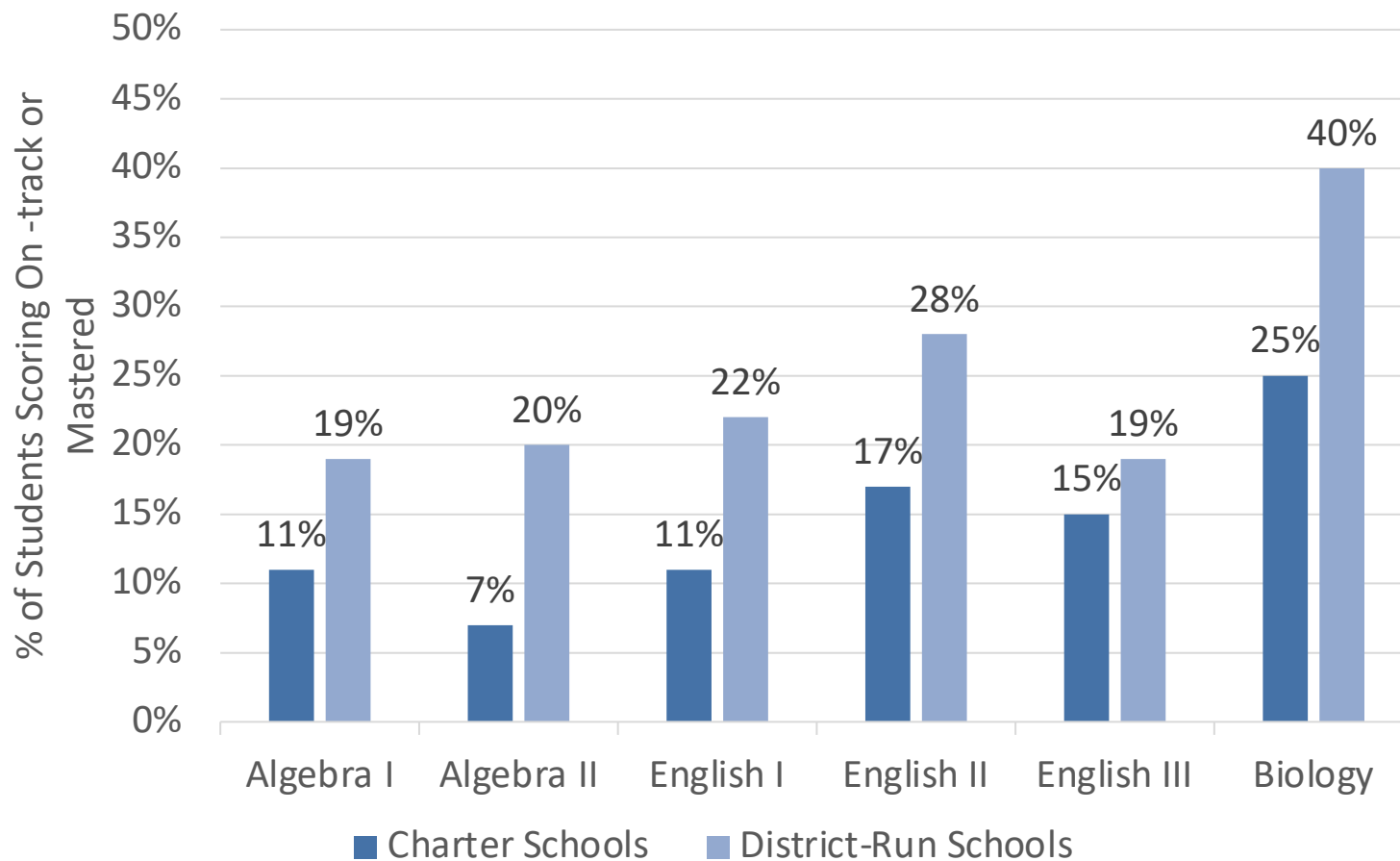
	Hamilton County		MNPS		Shelby County		ASD		Knox County	
	Charter Schools	District-Run Schools	Charter Schools	District-Run Schools	Charter Schools	District-Run Schools	Charter Schools	District-Run Schools	Charter Schools	District-Run Schools
% White	20%	54%	19%	31%	1%	8%	2%	2%	15%	71%
% Black	55%	30%	48%	41%	88%	75%	92%	96%	79%	16%
% Hispanic	24%	13%	32%	24%	10%	15%	6%	2%	6%	9%
% ED	34%	38%	52%	46%	61%	56%	73%	85%	59%	28%
% ELL	13%	6%	15%	17%	5%	8%	4%	~1%	4%	5%
% SWD	9%	13%	12%	13%	9%	12%	14%	11%	11%	14%

2017-2018

Performance



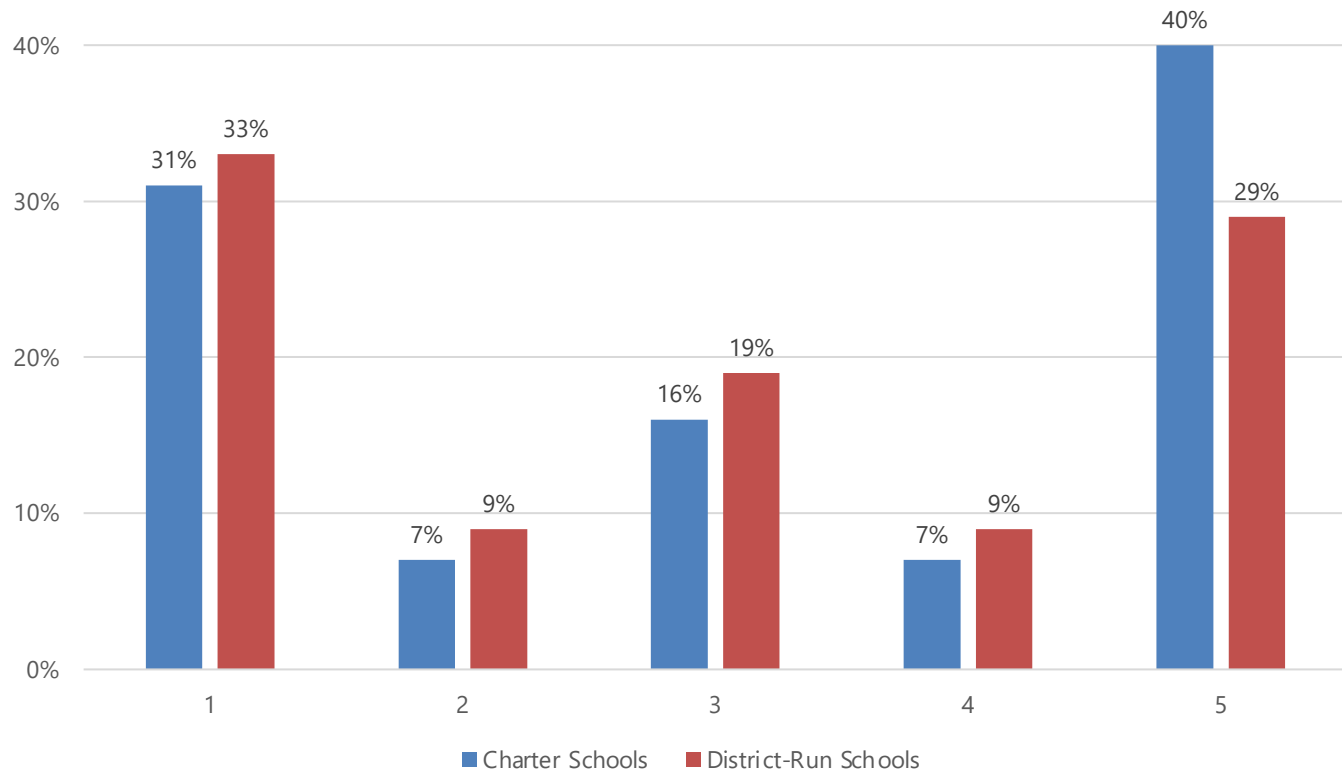
Charter school performance is, on average, lower than district-run schools



Students On Track or Mastered Varies by District

	Hamilton County		MNPS		Shelby County		ASD		Knox County	
	Charter Schools	District-Run	Charter Schools	District-Run	Charter Schools	District-Run	Charter Schools	District-Run	Charter Schools	District-Run
TNReady										
Reading	22%	34%	30%	26%	16%	23%	8%	6%	21%	38%
Math	17%	36%	35%	23%	16%	24%	10%	7%	19%	38%
EOC Exams										
Algebra I	13%	22%	35%	**	8%	11%	**	**	N/A	28%
Algebra II	23%	20%	16%	**	5%	13%	**	**	N/A	33%
English I	24%	24%	19%	18%	8%	15%	**	**	N/A	33%
English II	33%	30%	28%	22%	15%	18%	**	5%	N/A	43%
English III	33%	22%	17%	12%	15%	16%	10%	**	N/A	30%
Biology I	**	42%	31%	31%	28%	32%	6%	**	N/A	60%

TVAAS scores show wide variance in charter school growth



2017-18

School attendance looks similar across sectors

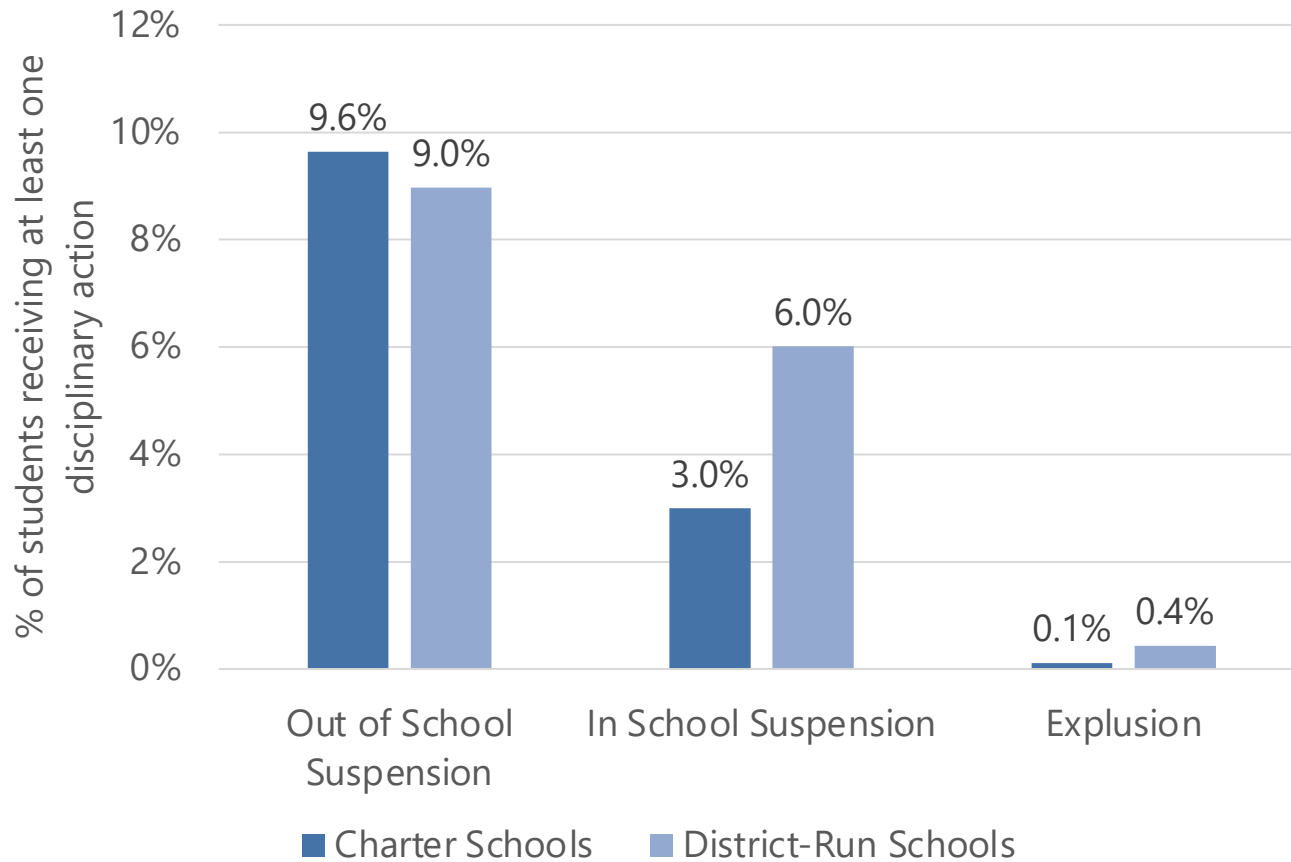


High Schools

	Chronic Absenteeism	Graduation
Charter Schools	15.1%	84%
District-Run Schools	15.7%	82%

2017-2018

Discipline rates vary across sectors



2017-2018

Performance across schools varies widely



School	Composite TVAAS	% On Track or Mastered		
		Reading	Math	Science
Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence	1	10%	5%	13%
Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy	5	24%	26%	57%

KA @ the Crossings	1	15%	9%	34%
KIPP Academy Nashville	5	33%	50%	70%
Valor Flagship Academy	5	66%	75%	92%

Memphis Business Academy Middle	1	13%	14%	37%
Memphis Rise Academy	5	22%	48%	76%
Power Center Academy Middle	5	26%	21%	72%

Looking for potentially exemplary charter schools



School	District	Grades	Enrollment	Ach./4	TVAAS 2019	Notes
Aurora Collegiate	Shelby	K-5	325	3.9	5	Reward School
Capstone Ed	ASD	P-5/6-8	246/590	2.7/1	5/5	Priority Exit
Ch. Charter Sch. of Exc.	Hamilton	K-5	413	3	5	Reward School
KIPP Nashville	MNPS	K-8	350/263/28 5	3/3/NA	5/5/5	Reward School
RePublic Schools	MNPS	5-8 / 5-8	430/290	2.8/2.2	5/5	Computer sci. focus

2018-2019

A Brief and Incomplete Overview of Research on the Effects of Charter Schools



Challenges with estimating charter school effects



Lottery Studies – Selection bias

- Can valid inferences be drawn from the set of schools that are oversubscribed?
- If preferences are based on school quality, it follows that charter schools with wait lists are the best schools
 - Results offer limited insight into the performance of undersubscribed schools

Zimmer, R. & Engberg, J. (2014). Can broad inferences be drawn from lottery analyses of school choice programs? An exploration of appropriate sensitivity analyses. Vanderbilt University. <https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/faculty/zimmer-lottery-paper.pdf>

Unmeasured differences between groups may impact findings



Charter and traditional public school students
(and their families) may differ in...

- Motivation
- Transportation
- Information
- Engagement
- Persistence (Grit)

Research methods can do a better or worse job of
accounting for those differences

See, for example: Sattin-Bajaj, C. (2014) Two Roads Diverged: Exploring Variation in Students' School Choice Experiences by Socioeconomic Status, Parental Nativity, and Ethnicity, *Journal of School Choice*, 8:3, 410-445, DOI: [10.1080/15582159.2014.942174](https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2014.942174)

Charter performance varies



There is about as much variation in quality within charter school sector as there is within the traditional public school sector.

- Variation by type of charter authorizer
 - Zimmer, R., Gill, B., Attridge, J., & Obenauf, K. (2014). Charter school authorizers and student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 9(1), 59-85.
- Variation by student population served
 - Gleason, P., Clark, M., Tuttle, C. C., & Dwoyer, E. (2010). The Evaluation of Charter School Impacts: Final Report. NCEE 2010-4029. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104029/pdf/20104030.pdf>
- Variation by type of charter management organization
 - Zimmer, R., Kho, A., Henry, G., & Viano, S. (2015). Evaluation of the effect of Tennessee's Achievement School District on student test scores. Nashville: Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation and Development. https://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wpln/files/201512/ASD_Impact_Policy_Brief_Final_12.8.15.pdf

Research on Memphis charter schools (Stanford)



Reading:

- Similar to the state average in 2014-15 and 2016-17.
- Outperformed TPS in reading in 2016-17.

Math:

- Similar to the state average in 2014-15 and 2016-17.
- Significantly weaker math gains in 2014-15 compared to TPS

Outcomes differed by charter type as well



Memphis Charter Management Organization (CMO)

- Similar to the state average in reading
- Underperform the state in math

Independent charter schools in Memphis

- Stronger than the state average in reading
- Similar to the state average in math

Students in CMO charter schools lag behind students in independent charter schools in reading.

A 2018 meta-analysis found mostly positive impacts relative to traditional public schools...

- Gains in math in most grade groupings.
- No significant differences for reading
- Positive influences of charter schools on educational attainment and behavioral outcomes
 - Tiny research base on other outcomes
- Estimated charter effects highly variable
 - Variations in quality both at charter schools and comparison schools
- Limited set of schools, locations, & years studied
 - Samples are small for certain areas.

Betts, J. R., & Tang, Y. E. (2016). A meta-analysis of the literature on the effect of charter schools on student achievement. *Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED566972.pdf>

The latest synthesis suggests 3 main takeaways...



- Oversubscribed charters are more effective with respect to student achievement than their counterpart TPSs
- Majority of charter schools are not superior, and some are inferior, to their counterpart TPSs
- More consistent positive impacts for charters have been found when alternative outcomes such as educational attainment and labor and health outcomes have been explored

Zimmer, R., Buddin, R., Ausmus Smith, S., Duffy, D. (2019). Nearly three decades into the charter school movement, what has research told us about charter schools?. (EdWorkingPaper: 19-156).

<https://www.edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai19-156.pdf>

...and 1 important caution:

- Students switch to charter schools with higher percentages of racially alike students compared to the schools from which they were transferring – Indianapolis (Stein, 2015)
- Charter schools are more racially isolating than public schools - Nationwide (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2016)
- Black students move to charter schools that are more segregated – Pennsylvania (Kotok et al, 2017)
- Movement of white switchers to charters increases racial segregation between schools – North Carolina
 - Ladd & Turaeva, (2020)

<https://caldercenter.org/sites/default/files/CALDER%20WP%20196-0618-1.pdf>

Next Steps: scaling successful models



Boston, MA: replicate effective charters at new locations

- Replications: gains on par with parent campuses
- Possible Mechanism: standardized practices allow for replication
 - Reduce returns to teacher experience
(Teachers' effectiveness grows faster)
 - Compress distribution of teacher effectiveness
(Smaller range of teacher effectiveness)

Cohodes, S.R., Setren, E., & Walters, C.R. (2019). Can Successful Schools Replicate? Scaling Up Boston's Charter School Sector (EdWorkingPaper No.19-61). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <http://edworkingpapers.com/ai19-61>

QUESTIONS?

Thank you – Kevin Schaaf
Kevin.Schaaf@tn.gov

