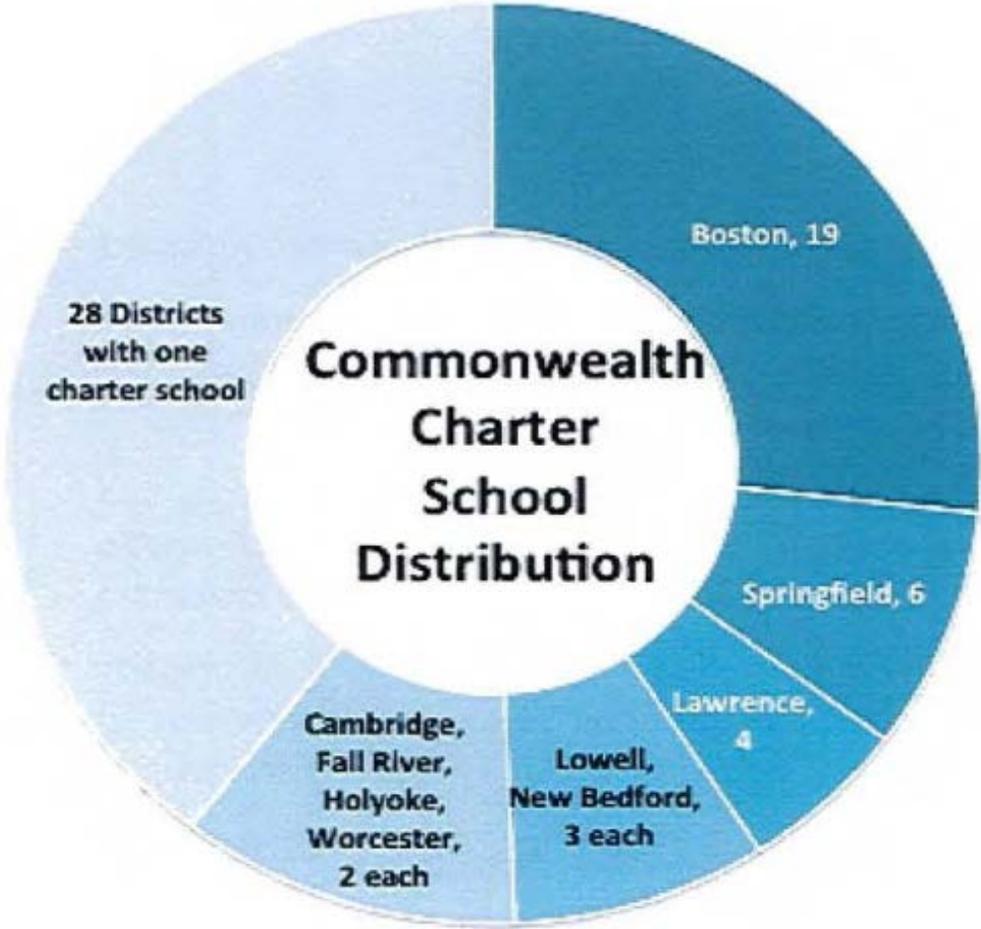


#TruthAboutCharters

Which districts are we talking about when we talk about charters?



Which districts are we talking about when we talk about charters?

Although charter schools have been established across the Commonwealth, these schools still serve less than 4% of the Massachusetts student population and are mostly located in Boston and other urban areas. Twenty-one Commonwealth charter schools and six Horace Mann charter schools account for 12.3% and 3.8%, respectively, of Boston's 61,910-student population.

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State Auditor Suzanne Bump

Shared innovation?

As a condition of charter renewal, charter schools are required to document that they have provided innovative programs, best practices, and models for replication in public schools to DESE and sending districts. DESE is required to facilitate dissemination of successful innovation programs of charter schools and provide technical assistance to other school districts in replicating such programs. However, documentation of the development, dissemination, and replication of innovative practices is limited.

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#TruthAboutCharters

Missing students: where did they go?

Enrollment Practices

Despite the intent of the Act to Close the Achievement Gap, not all charters are filling empty seats vacated by students. Nor are all of them at the student enrollment cap approved by BESE.



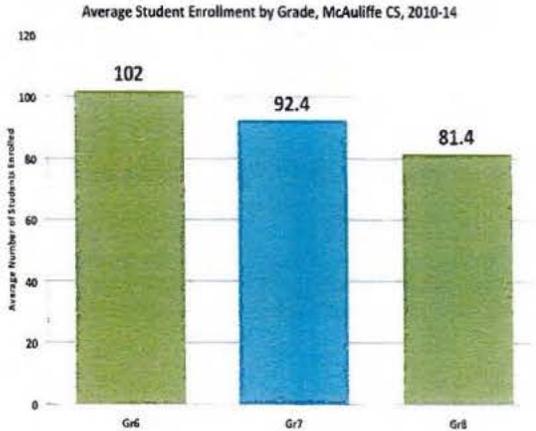
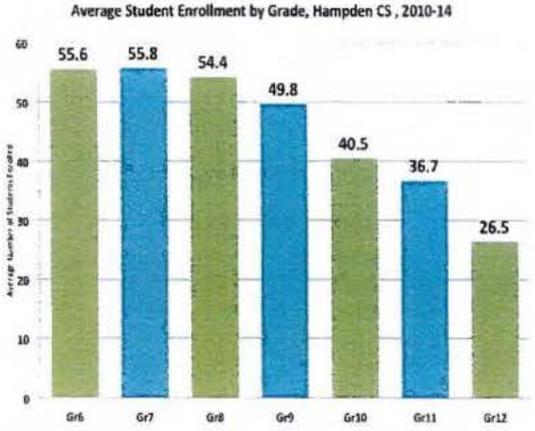
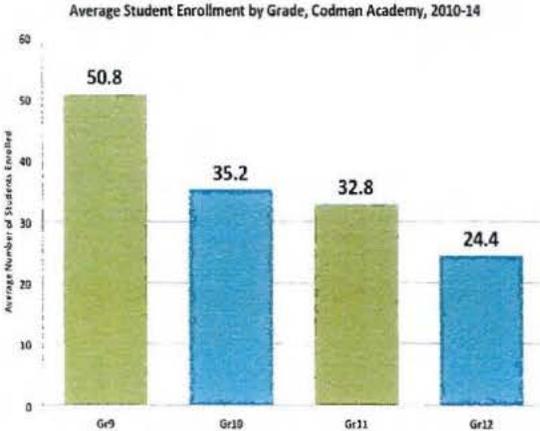
*Codman Academy, Boston
Enrollment Cap: 345
Average Enrollment: 142
Highest Enrollment: 153 in 2013-14*



Hampden CS of Science, Chicopee
Enrollment Cap: 560
Average Enrollment: 260
Highest Enrollment: 353 in 2013-14*

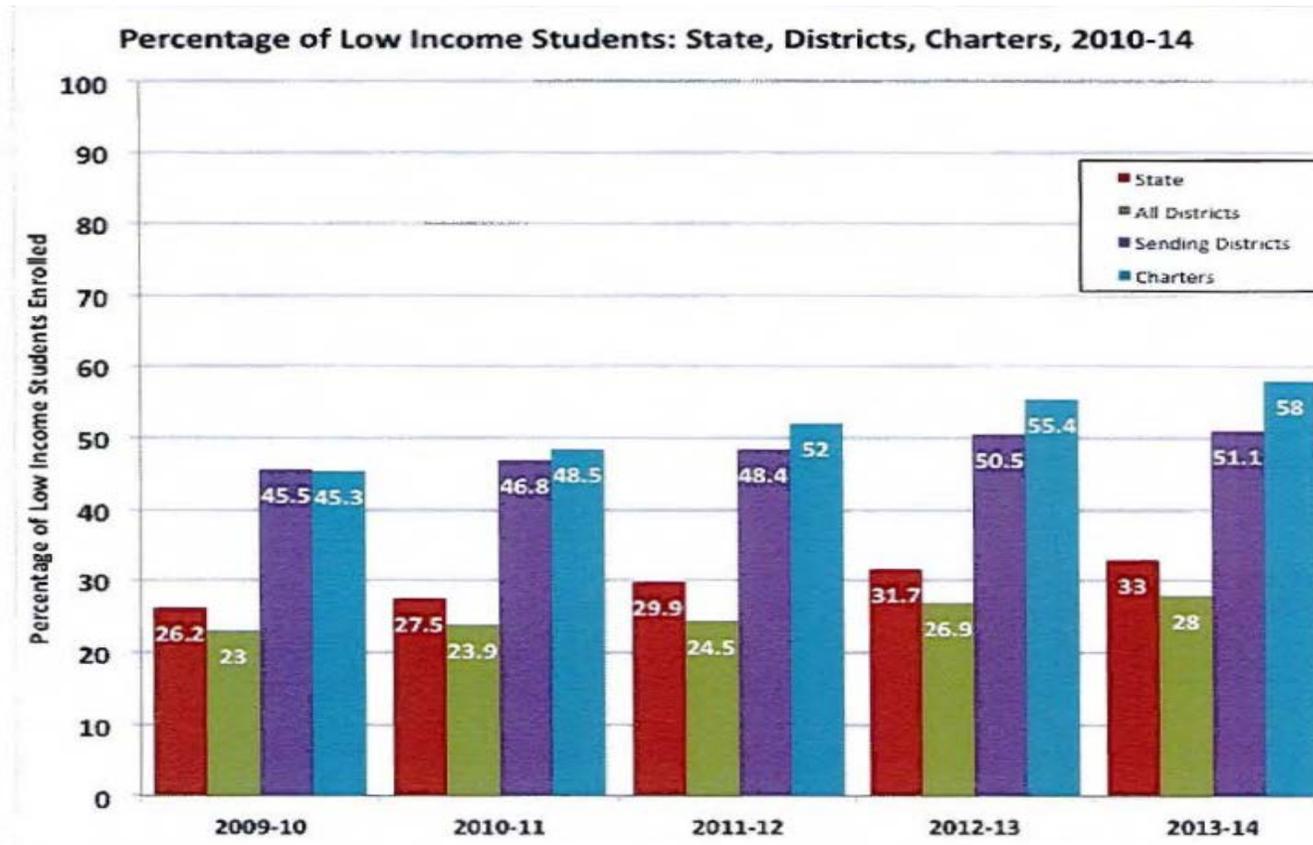


*McAuliffe CS, Framingham
Enrollment Cap: 396
Average Enrollment: 276
Highest Enrollment: 345 in 2013-14*

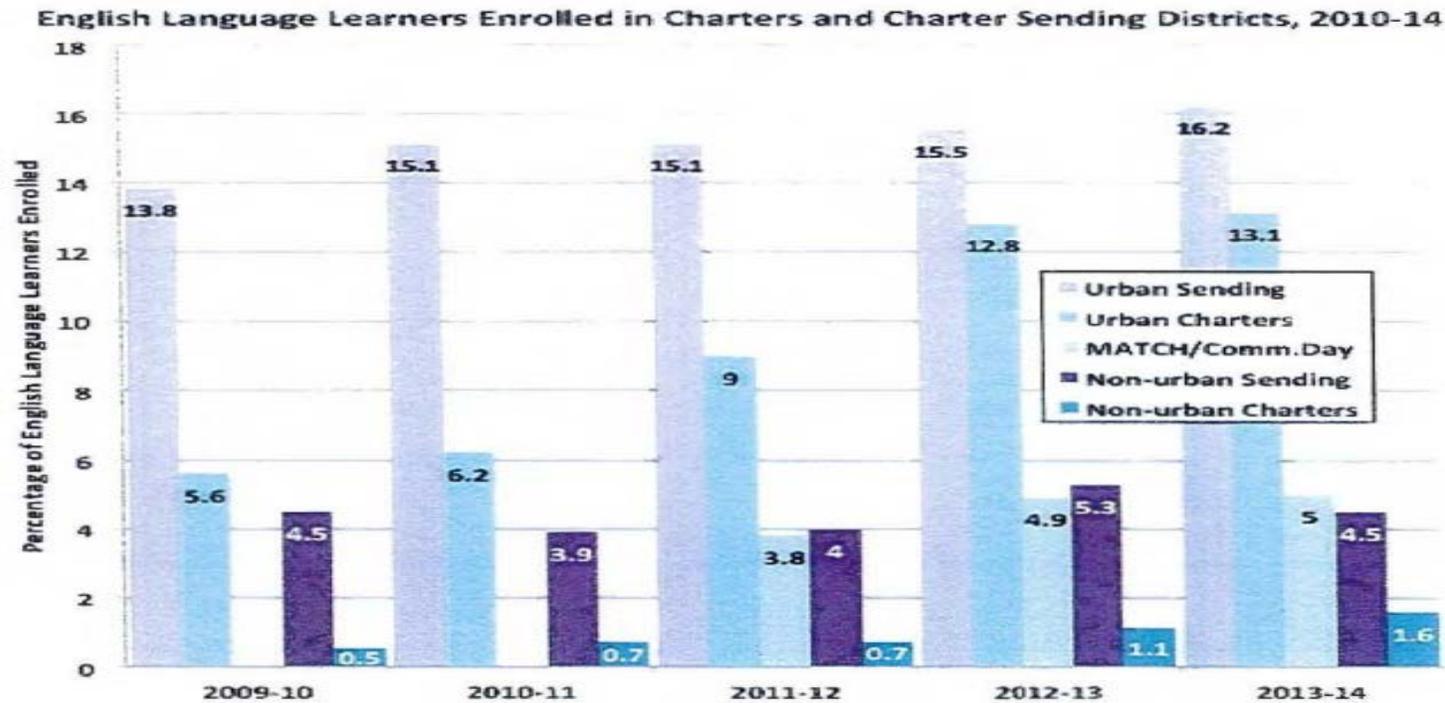


Success for all or just for some?

Charter schools celebrate their students' performance on MCAS, often stating that their schools "outperform" district schools. However, connections between outcomes on standardized tests and family income have consistently proven to be reliable.



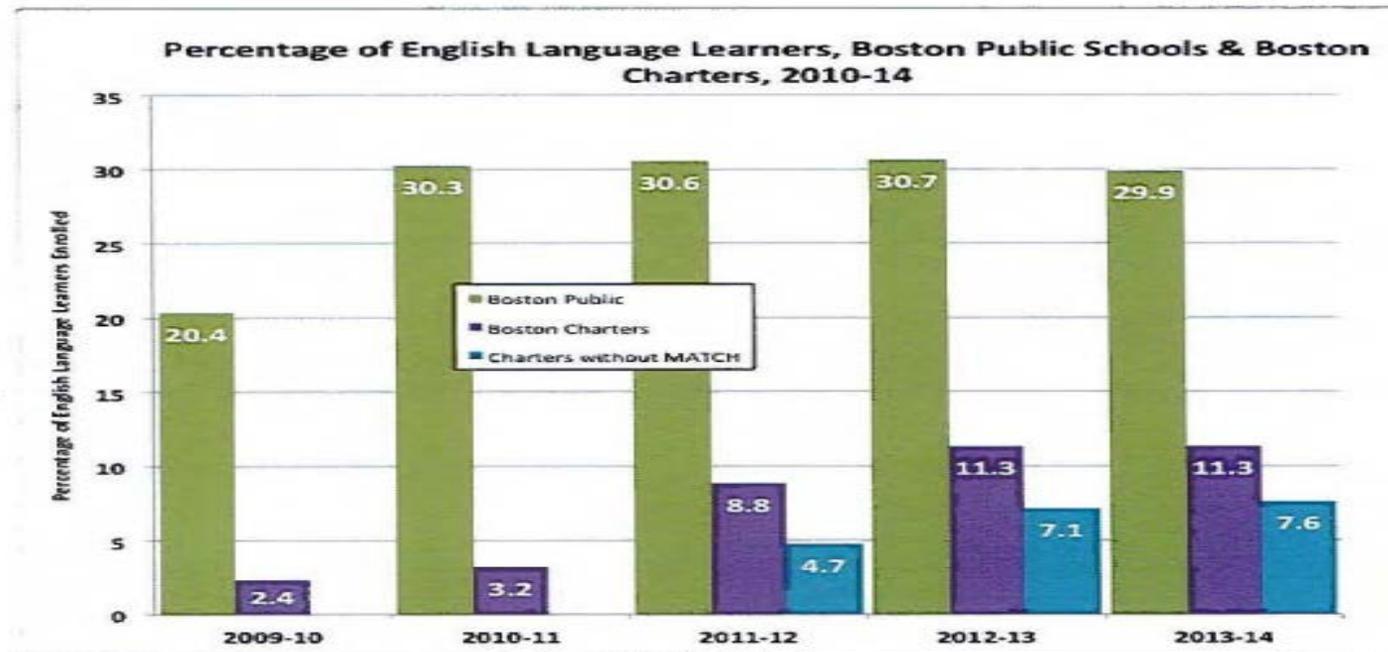
English Language Learners: still missing



Note that level of need of ELLs is not captured by state data collection.

#TruthAboutCharters

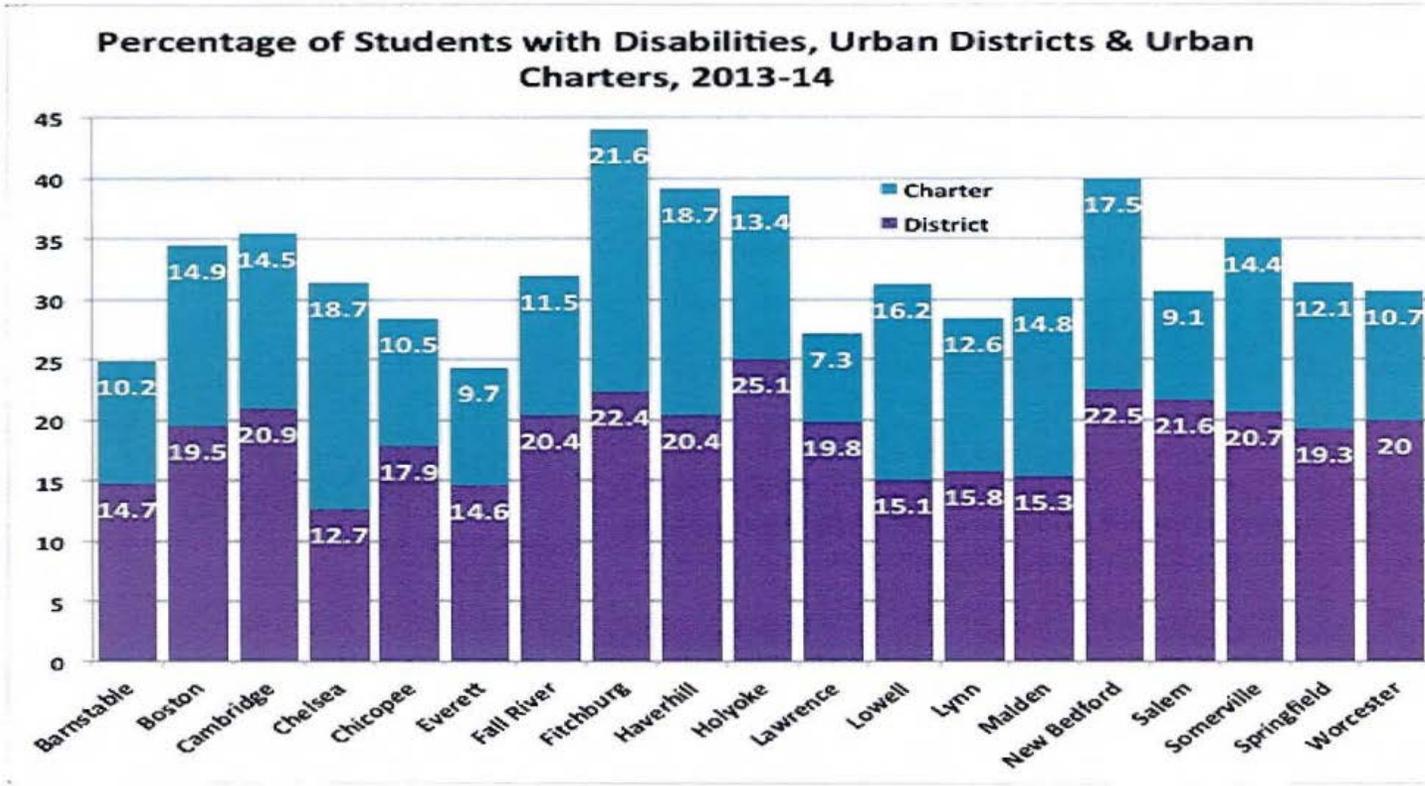
An important note about ELL students in Boston charter schools: most are in one school



Over the last four years of this study, about 30 percent of the students attending the Boston Public Schools are English language learners, about 17,000 students per year.

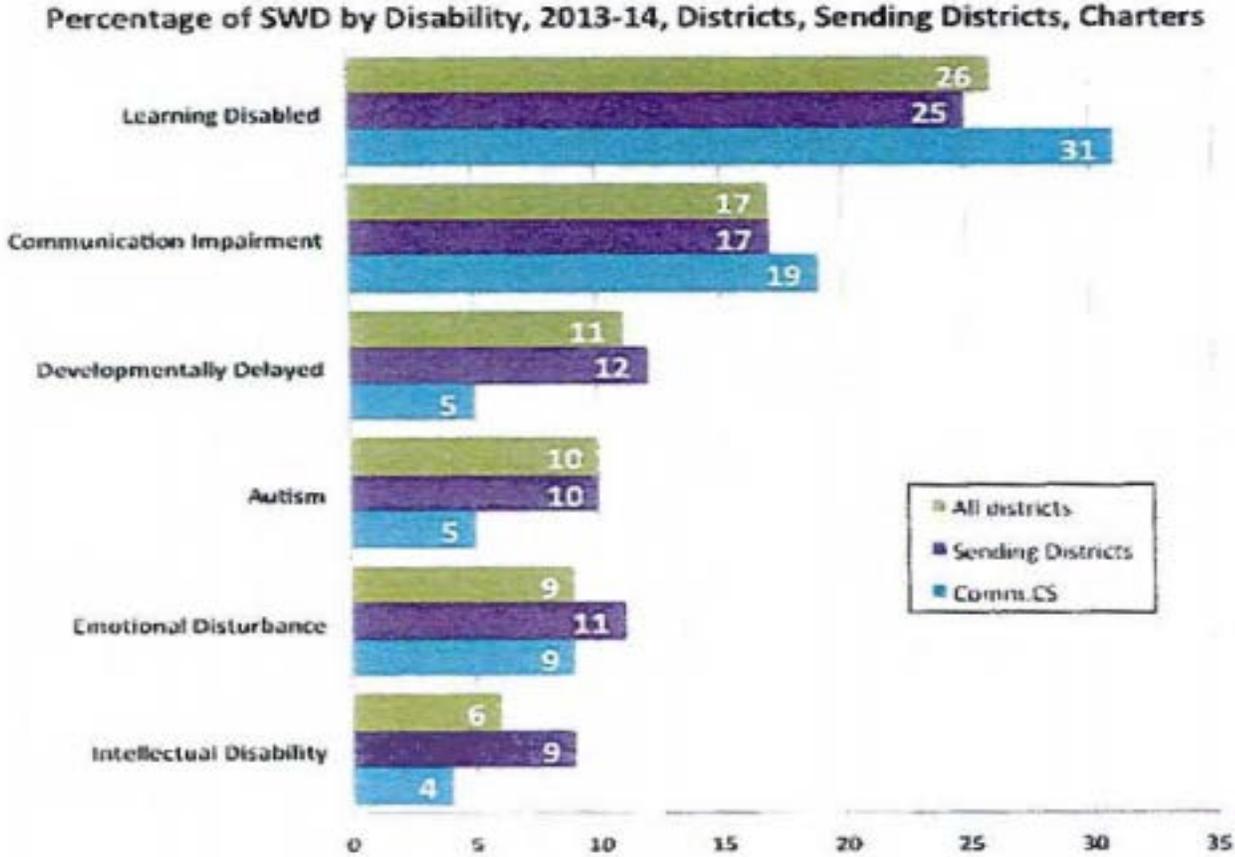
Since 2011-12, 1900 ELLs have attended Boston charter schools. Of these, about 800, or 40%, attended MATCH Community Day charter schools. The other 60% of ELLs attended one of the remaining 18 charter schools in Boston.

Students with disabilities: still missing



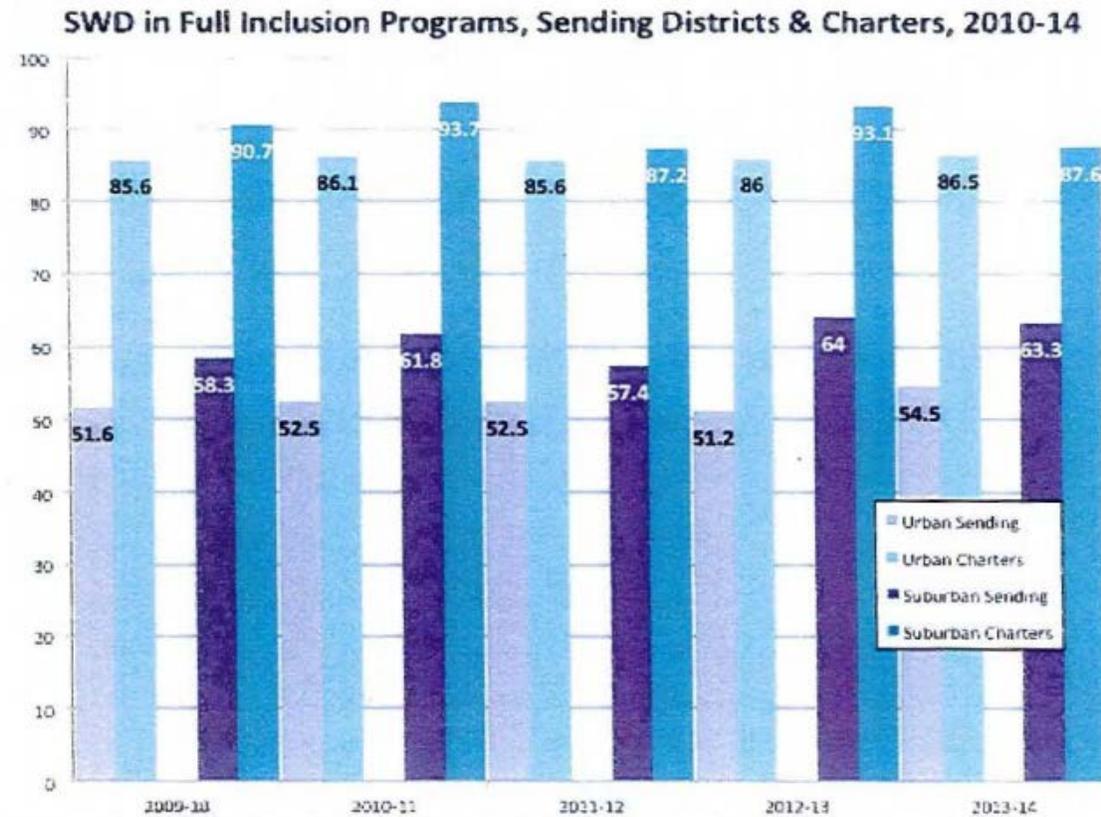
#TruthAboutCharters

Not all kids with special education needs are the same...but you won't find them all in charter schools



#TruthAboutCharters

Not all kids with special education needs are the same...but you won't find them all in charter schools



Given that charter schools provide more than 85% of their SWD with special education services in the regular education classroom through Full Inclusion programs, an assumption can be made that charters have few SWD with moderate to severe special needs or SWD who must have services provided through Partial Inclusion or Substantially Separate Services.

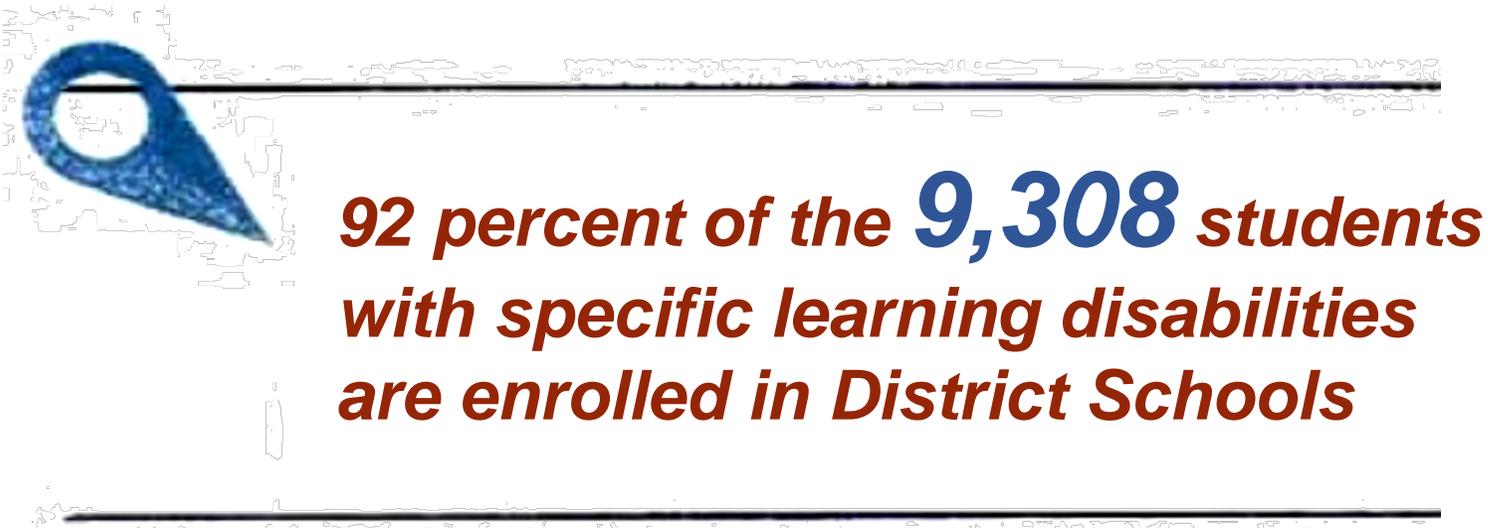
#TruthAboutCharters

Not all kids with special education needs are the same...but you won't find them all in charter schools

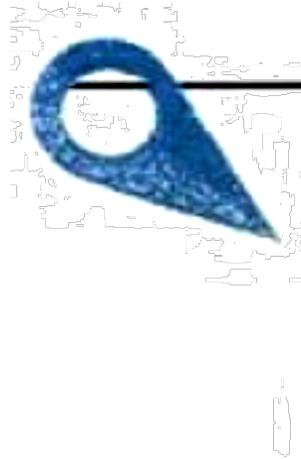


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Not all kids with special education needs are the same...but you won't find them all in charter schools



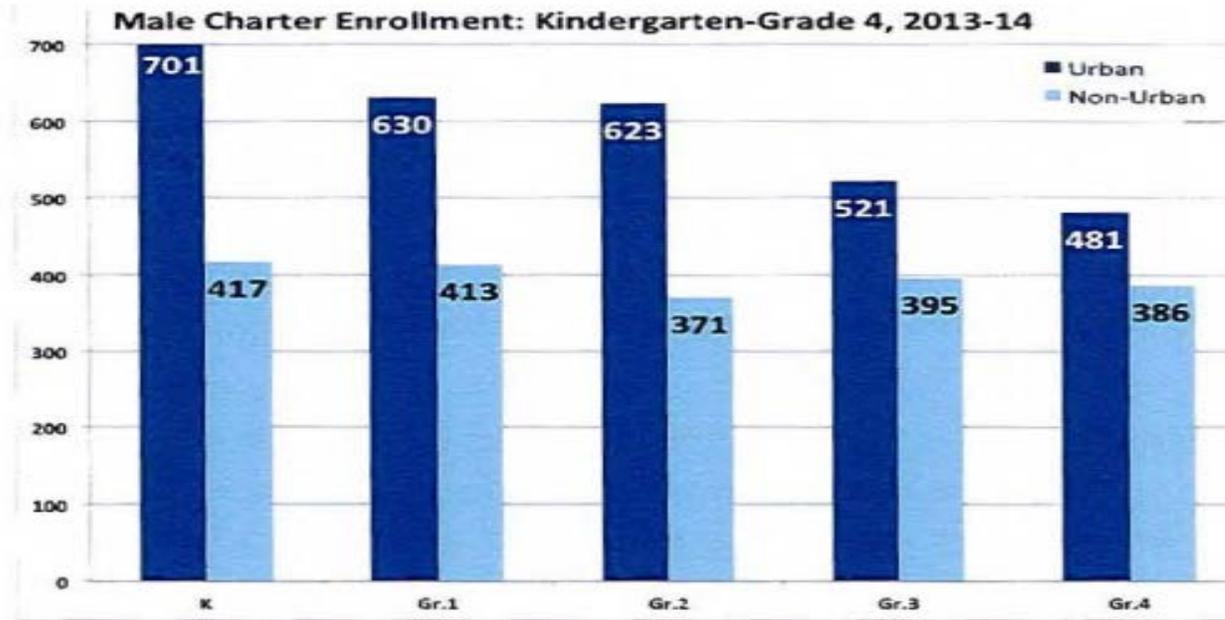
***96 percent of the 4,221
emotionally impaired students
are enrolled in District Schools***

Not serving the same students

Based on the data maintained by DESE, it appears that comparable academic and demographic profiles have not yet been attained for much of the charter school system.

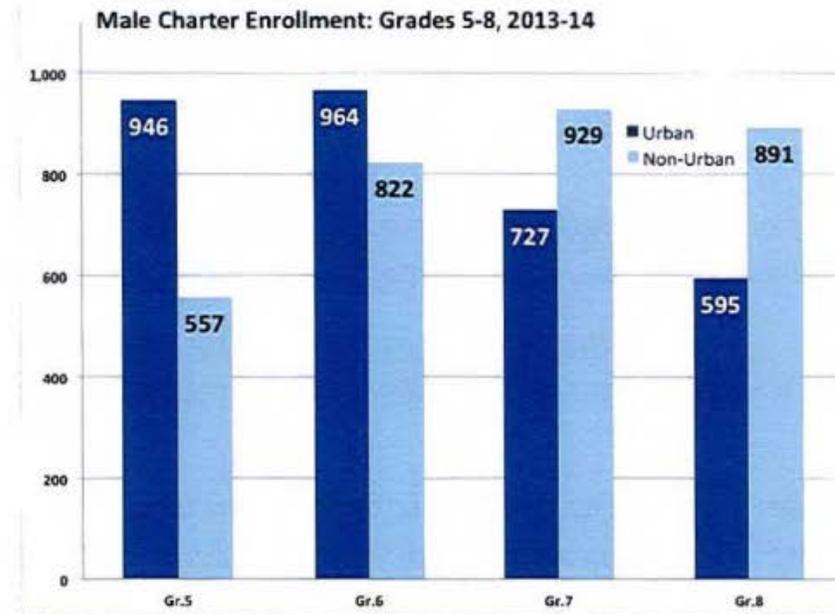
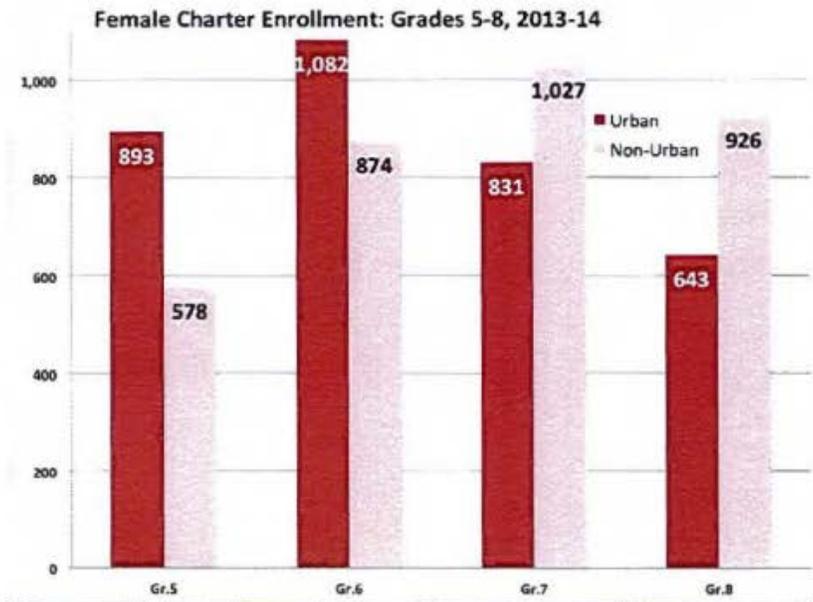
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Where are the boys?



In both urban and non-urban charters, female enrollment loss is less than that for males. While relatively flat at non-urban charters, the urban female grade 4 enrollment is 76 percent of the K enrollment: An enrollment loss of 24 percent. However, one out of every three male students leave urban charters: An enrollment loss of 34 percent.

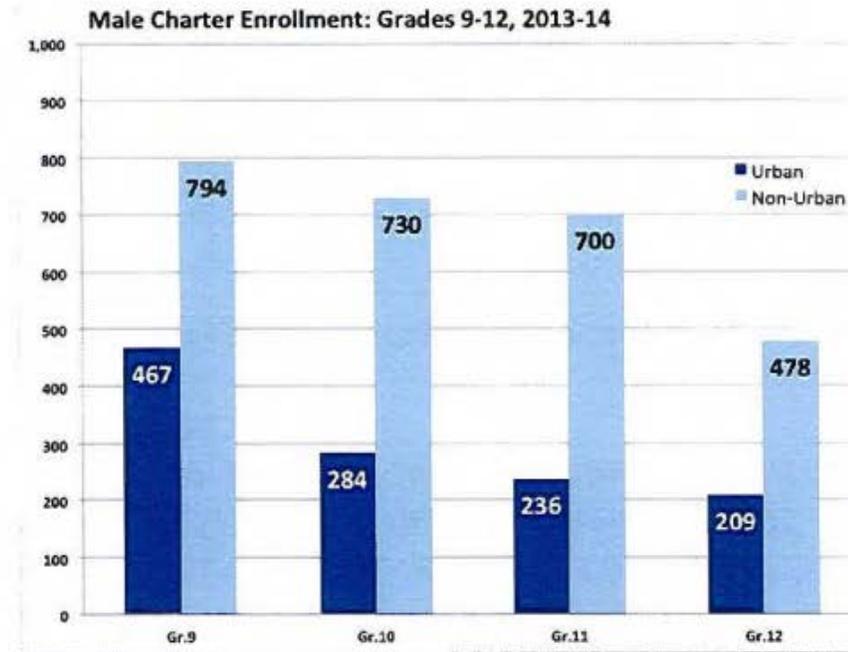
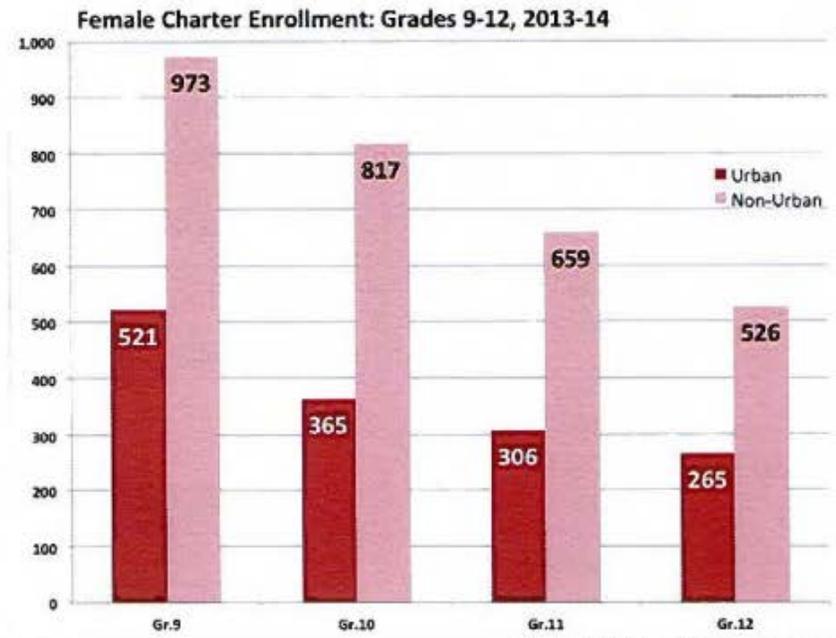
Disappearing middle school students



Charter Middle Schools may begin in either Grade 5 or Grade 6. Grade 5 is included for completeness but Grade 6 numbers are used as they are attributable to more schools.

- *For every ten females enrolled in grade 6 in an urban charter school, slightly more than four are gone by grade 8: An enrollment loss of 41 percent.*
- *For every ten males in grade 6 in an urban charter, slightly fewer than four are gone by grade 8: An enrollment loss of 38 percent.*

Vanishing high school students



- Female enrollment loss from grade 9 to grade 12 is 49 percent and male enrollment loss is 52 percent. For every ten students enrolled in an urban charter in grade 9, five have left by grade 12, with four leaving between grades 9 and 10.
- In non-urban charters, female enrollment loss is 46 percent and male enrollment loss is 40 percent. For every ten students enrolled in grade 9, more than four leave by grade 12 with an average decline in enrollment of about 20 percent each year.

Inconsistency in renewal

During our audit period, DESE was inconsistent in its decisions regarding whether to impose conditions for some school charter renewals. DESE renewed the charters for three Commonwealth charter schools without imposing renewal conditions, though the schools had not adequately documented academic program success in accordance with plans they were required to follow to demonstrate academic success. In contrast, DESE imposed renewal conditions on two other schools that met a similar or higher percentage of their academic program success measures.

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Inconsistency in renewal

We do not question BESE and DESE's combined authority to grant or renew charters; however, we do believe that they should be consistent when exercising this authority as it relates to the imposition of conditions.

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