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FOR THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

Annual Evaluation of Open-Enrollment Charter Schools

2012-13 School Year

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List of Acronyms Used in this Report

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
End-of-course (EOC)
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Foundation School Program (FSP)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRL)
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Limited English Proficient (LEP)
Mean standardized difference (MSD)
Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Senate Bill 2 (SB2)
State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)
Texas Education Code (TEC)

Executive Summary

Brief Background

Charter schools, publicly funded institutions designed to have greater flexibility to experiment with ways of educating students, were first created over 25 years ago, with the first charter school opening in Minnesota in 1991.¹ Charter schools now operate in 42 states and the District of Columbia, educating over 2.1 million students by 2011-12 (US Department of Education, 2014).

In Texas, charter schools were authorized in 1995 in an effort to improve student learning, increase options for students and families within the public school system, create professional opportunities that attract new teachers to the public school system, establish a new form of accountability for public schools, and encourage innovation in learning methods (Texas Education Code, §12.118). As of 2012-13, Texas educates 178,826 students in charter schools (approximately 3.5% of the public school student population) in 202 open-enrollment charter schools operating 552 charter school campuses across the state.

In response to evaluation requirements stated in Texas Education Code §12.118, this evaluation was designed to describe students attending the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses (within six charter schools), that began operations in 2012-13, to examine student performance, attendance and behavior, and to measure students' and parents' satisfaction with their school. In addition, this evaluation sought to describe how these charter schools spent funds, and examine changes that may have occurred among the population of students and parents in the districts from which these students withdrew in order to attend the charter school campuses (referred to as feeder schools for the remainder of this report).

Key Findings

Student Enrollment

A total of 2,871 students attended the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses that began operations in 2012-13. The majority of students (68%) were in elementary grades (Pre-kindergarten through Grade 5). Overall, 51% of students served by these nine charter campuses were black, non-Hispanic; 28% were Hispanic; and 16% were white. A small proportion of students were Limited English Proficient (LEP, 8%) or received special education services (4%), and approximately one-quarter were classified as at-risk (24%). A bit more than half were participating in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) program.

¹ Throughout this report, the term “charter school campus” will be used to refer to the campus-level entity that students attend and the term “charter school” will be used to refer to the local education agency to which the campuses belong. The United States Department of Education defines a local education agency as a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

The nine open-enrollment charter school campuses each served very different populations, and no individual campus necessarily represented the aggregate summary described above. Below are some examples of the ways in which the campus populations differed:

- Enrollment ranged from 80 students to 453 students by campus.
- Two campuses served predominantly Hispanic students; three campuses served predominantly black, non-Hispanic students; and one campus served predominantly white students. Two campuses served more heterogeneous populations.
- Three campuses had almost no LEP students; four campuses had small LEP populations (ranging from 2% to 12%); and two campuses had total LEP populations of 37% and 58%.
- Two campuses had 80% or more of students participating in the FRL program while campus had fewer than 16% of students participating.
- Three campuses had fewer than 10% of their students classified as at-risk while one school had three-quarters of their population identified as at-risk.

Student Outcomes

Students attending the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses that began operations in 2012-13 did not show meaningful differences in attendance rates from similar students in feeder schools. They did, however, exhibit differences on performance in reading and mathematics outcomes and on behavior.

- Students at charter school campuses performed significantly² lower on the reading and mathematics State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests compared to comparable students in feeder campuses, as measured by scale scores and in the percent of students meeting the satisfactory performance level (Level 2)³. Specifically, charter school campus students' scores in reading were 18 scale score points lower, on average, and 47 points lower in mathematics, on average, while 5% fewer charter school students met satisfactory performance levels in reading compared to comparable students in feeder campuses, and 17% fewer charter school students met satisfactory levels in mathematics, on average.
- Students at most charter school campuses were cited for behavioral infractions significantly less often than comparable students at feeder campuses, being disciplined at 67% the rate of students in the comparison group, on average.
- Austin Achieve Public School was an exception to both of these findings. Students at Austin Achieve outperformed comparison students in feeder campuses in reading, and mathematics (with the difference in mathematics reaching statistical significance – 29 points on the mathematics scale score and 8% more of their students meeting the satisfactory performance

² A comparison is considered statistically significant if a difference is large enough that it would only occur 5% of the time or less by random chance.

³ Satisfactory performance level was defined at the Phase-In 1 Standard.

level). They also were the only charter school campus in the population that demonstrated a significantly higher discipline-per-student rate compared to students in feeder campuses.

Student Perceptions

Six charter school campuses (of eight serving students in Grades 6 or above⁴) administered surveys to students on their impressions about their new campus. Across these campuses, students reported positive impacts of their new campus on their own attendance, grades and behaviors; reported that they like their campus; and that they were told they were doing well the same or more often than at their last campus. Most students graded their campus an A or B in most areas of questioning (e.g., how much they are learning, how safe they feel, how well teachers are teaching the material, etc.), and the majority of students gave the same or higher letter grade in those areas than in their prior campus. There was one exception to this pattern, with students from one campus reporting notably less satisfaction than students at the other campuses.

Approximately half of all students responding to the survey reported that they would be returning to the campus next year, while another 23% were unsure. Of those who said they would not be returning, most did not indicate why not, though some were graduating and some indicated the campus did not have the next grade level in which to enroll.

Operational Costs

Across the six charter schools that began operations in 2012-13 (at nine campuses), expenditures per student ranged from \$5,445 to \$11,551 per student, with an average of \$8,287 spent per student. Foundation School Program funds were the source of funding for between 72% and 92% of the charter schools' expenditures, with other expenditures accounted for by various funds across the schools, including Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funds, National School Breakfast and Lunch Program funds, Unrestricted Net Assets Class funds, Public Charter Schools funds, State Textbook funds, and local funds.

The six charter schools differed in the functional operations and services provided. For example, one school incurred transportation expenditures, while three had substantial food service programs. Facilities expenditures sometimes accounted for a large proportion of expenditures (24% for one school) or sometimes a small proportion of expenditures (3% for one school). Additionally, charter schools that were operating multiple campuses incurred different types and levels of costs compared to charter schools operating one campus only (such as instructional leadership costs).

Changes in Feeder Campuses

The opening of nine open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 did not have a measureable impact on the composition of students and staff at the campuses that the charter school students attended in 2011-12 (feeder campuses). With the withdrawal of students enrolling in the new charter school campuses, almost 85% of feeder campuses lost fewer than 1% of their student body, and 98% of

⁴ Only students in Grades 6 or above were included in the student survey due to the nature of the questions that required students be able to compare their current experiences to their experiences of up to two years ago.

feeder campuses lost fewer than 10% of their students. The overall composition of the student body at those campuses did not change, as measured by demographics or performance. There was no change to the composition of staff at any of the 679 feeder campuses, as measured by demographic characteristics or teacher experience and salary levels. Similarly, principals at feeder campuses who were aware of the new charter school campuses indicated little impact of the new charter campuses on how they ran their campus or interacted with parents.

Background and Project Context

The Charter School Movement

Over 25 years ago, American Federation of Teachers' President Albert Shanker articulated a vision for the creation of charter schools – publicly funded institutions that would be given greater flexibility to experiment with new ways of educating students (Kahlenberg, 2008).⁵ The first charter school opened in Minnesota in 1991, and over the last quarter century, charter school laws were established in 42 states and the District of Columbia. From 1999-00 to 2011-12, the percentage of public schools that were charters increased from 1.7% to 5.8%, growing from 1,500 to 5,700 schools and serving over 2.1 million students by 2011-12 (US Department of Education, 2014).

Charter school laws are intended to exempt the school from certain state or local rules and regulations, which in turn, results in giving the school greater flexibility and autonomy to meet the needs of its students. Charter schools still must meet the accountability standards stated in its charter, and are subject to periodic review and monitoring, the specifics of which vary from state to state.

Texas Charter School Legislation

In 1995, the Texas Legislature passed state law to authorize the creation of charter schools. This legislation stated public charter schools would be created in an effort to improve student learning, increase options for students and families within the public school system, create professional opportunities that attract new teachers to the public school system, establish a new form of accountability for public schools, and encourage innovation in learning methods (Texas Education Code (TEC), §12.118). There are four classes of charters: 1) home-rule school district charters (none of which currently operate); 2) campus or campus program charters; 3) open-enrollment charters; and 4) college or university charters. An open-enrollment charter (which are the majority of charters in Texas) may be granted to an institution of higher education, a governmental entity, or a non-profit corporation that has tax-exempt status (501(c)(3)).

Since 1995, Texas legislation capped the number of charters that could operate in Texas at 215. This cap did not limit the number of charter school *campuses* that can be operated by a charter holder (e.g., in 2013, 202 open-enrollment charter schools operated 552 campuses). During the first special session of the 83rd legislative session, Senate Bill 2 (SB2) passed, increasing the cap to 225 and allowing for an additional 15 charters each year until a total of 305 charters is reached by September 2019. The passage of SB2 was described by the executive director of the Texas Charter Schools Association as “a critical and

⁵ Throughout this report, the term “charter school campus” will be used to refer to the campus-level entity that students attend and the term “charter school” will be used to refer to the local education agency to which the campuses belong. The United States Department of Education defines a local education agency as a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

needed update to the Texas charter law and will allow effective charters to grow and serve more students.”⁶

Texas Charter Schools

The first open-enrollment charter schools opened in Texas in 1996. In 2012-13 a total of 178,826 students (approximately 3.5% of the public school student population) were served by 202 open-enrollment charter schools (across 552 charter school campuses in Texas).

The TEC §12.118 requires that TEA continue to monitor open-enrollment charter schools to measure the performance of students who attend, to assess parent and student satisfaction with their campuses, and to monitor how funding is being used to operate campuses. In addition, the TEC specifies an examination of the impact of opening the charter schools on the teachers, students, and parents at the campuses from which they came (referred to as feeder campuses for the remainder of this report). In January 2014, TEA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a firm to conduct this work specifically for the open-enrollment charter schools that began operations during the 2012-13 school year. The examination must include:

1. A description of the students who enrolled in those campuses during the 2012-13 school year;
2. An analysis of the impact of attending the charter school campus on students’ achievement, attendance and disciplinary behaviors;
3. An investigation of students’ and parents’ opinions about their new campus;
4. A description of the costs associated with operating the charter schools; and
5. An exploration of the impact of opening the campuses on parents, teachers and students in their prior school districts.

Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., in partnership with American Institutes for Research, responded to this RFP and was awarded the contract in February 2014. This report includes findings related to each of the areas of inquiry stated above for the six charter schools that began operations at nine charter school campuses during the 2012-13 school year.

⁶ <http://www.txcharterschools.org/media/press-releases/press-release.php?release=860>

Research Questions and Analytic Methods

Research Questions

Under each of the five objectives stated in the TEC, the research team operationalized specific research questions to guide the evaluation. These questions are articulated below.

Objective 1: Enrollment

- How many students attended each of the newly opened, open-enrollment charter school campuses, and in what grades?
- What were the characteristics of those students, as defined by ethnicity, status as Limited English Proficient (LEP), receiving special education services, participating in the free/reduced price lunch program, and status as at-risk?

Objective 2: Outcomes

- What outcomes were associated with students who attended newly-opened open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 related to student achievement, attendance, and disciplinary incidents?
- How do the students attending these new campuses compare on these measures to similar students attending the same prior campuses who did not transfer to the new charter school campus?

Objective 3: Perceived Impact

- What are parents' opinions of the impact of their student attending one of the new charter school campuses on their student's achievement, attendance, behavior, and course grades?
- What are students' opinions of the impact attending one of the new charter school campuses has had on their achievement, attendance, behavior, and course grades?

Objective 4: Cost of Operations

- What were the costs of operating newly opened open-enrollment charter schools in 2012-13, specifically related to instruction, administration, and transportation?

Objective 5: Changes in Feeder Schools

- To what extent did the opening of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 change the composition of the student body at feeder campuses?
- In what ways did the opening of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses impact parents of students at feeder campuses?

Analytic Methods

To answer questions related to each of these objectives, data were acquired from multiple sources. This included compilation of archival data on students, teachers/staff and expenditures, all of which were obtained from the agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) records for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. In addition, survey data were collected from students and parents at the newly operating open-enrollment charter school campuses, and from principals in traditional campuses at which these students were enrolled in the prior year.

To answer questions related to enrollment (Objective 1), the research team compiled student records for any student who ever attended one of the nine charter school campuses during the 2012-13 school year. These records included data on the students' grade level, race/ethnicity, and status as LEP, receiving special education services, participating in the state's Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) program, and classification as a student at risk of dropping out. Then, the composition of the student body at each charter school campus was examined using descriptive statistics.

To examine student outcomes (Objective 2), the research team conducted propensity score matching to identify a group of students who were comparable to the charter school students in measureable ways (e.g., on demographic characteristics and standardized test scores from 2011-12). Selection of these students was restricted to the campuses that enrolled the charter school students in 2011-12. Then, students from the newly operating open-enrollment charter schools were compared to students from the matched comparison group on their performance in 2012-13 on STAAR mathematics and reading/English language arts standardized tests, on their rates of attendance, and on their number of disciplinary incidents. More details about how the comparison group was selected, and on the models used to examine outcomes, can be found in Appendix A.

To answer questions related to student and parent satisfaction with their campuses (Objective 3), resulting data from closed-ended student survey questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. This included exploring frequencies of answer options both within schools and across the entire responding sample. For the two open-ended survey items posed to students, narrative responses were content coded using an iterative approach for identifying unique categories of response. Then, resulting codes were analyzed by examining the frequency of each theme. . An insufficient number of parents responded to the parent survey; therefore, these data were not analyzed. Additional information on the administration of both the parent and student surveys, and on response rates to each, can be found in Appendix B.

School operating expenditures were examined descriptively using PEIMS account codes for revenues (by funding source) and expenditures (by type and by function) for Objective 4. For these analyses, revenues and expenditures were examined at the charter school level (a total of six charter schools) while for all other research objectives, data were analyzed at the charter school campus level (a total of nine charter school campuses). This difference in approach was due to the nature of how financial data are captured and reported to the state.

Finally, for Objective 5, questions related to changes in the composition of the campuses that “lost” students to the new charter school campuses were addressed in two ways. First, the composition of the campus’ student body (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, special education status, at-risk status, LEP status, economically disadvantaged status, etc.), the campus’ overall achievement metrics (i.e., STAAR performance), and the composition of teaching staff (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, pay, tenure/experience) were compared from the year (2011-12) before the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses began operations to after they opened (in 2012-13). Second, principals of the feeder campuses were surveyed about their interactions with parents related to the opening of the charter school campuses during the last two years and about their own changes to leadership in response to the opening of the new charter school campuses. Survey data were analyzed descriptively across the entire responding principal sample (described in more detail in the findings section related to Objective 5). Additional information on the administration of the principal survey can be found in Appendix B.

Each of the following sections describes results of these analyses, organized by research objective.

Findings: Enrollment (Objective 1)

Research questions for examining enrollment included:

- How many students attended each of the newly opened, open-enrollment charter school campuses, and in what grades?
- What were the characteristics of those students, as defined by race/ethnicity status, LEP status, receiving special education services, participating in the FRL program, and status as at-risk?

Examination of the characteristics of the students who attended the six open-enrollment charter schools' nine campuses in 2012-13 provides some information about the demographic make-up of the students who were attracted to the campus, and sheds light on the types of students enrolled (e.g., grade ranges, race/ethnicity), and their possible academic and service-related needs (e.g., LEP, special education, etc.).

Enrollment

A total of 2,871 students attended the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses that began operations in 2012-13⁷. Enrollment numbers ranged from 80 students at Excellence in Leadership Academy to 453 students at Legacy – Mesquite Campus. Table 1 contains enrollment counts for each of the nine participating campuses, along with the grades served on that campus.

Across the nine campuses, there were various grade compositions. Three campuses were exclusively elementary schools, serving students only in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten through Grade 5 (one campus only served students through Grade 3). Four campuses served both elementary and middle school aged students (Grades K through 7 or 8), while one campus was a Grade 6 campus only (Austin Achieve) and one campus served Grades 6 through 12 only (Prime Prep Academy Dallas).

⁷ Enrollment and demographic data reported here are based on any student that attended one of these schools at any time during the 2012-13 school year.

Table 1. Total Enrollment and Grade Composition for Each Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Total Enrollment	Grades Served
Austin Achieve Public School	136	Grade 6
Excellence in Leadership Academy	80	Grades PK - 3
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	411	Grades K - 5
Legacy Preparatory	408	Grades K - 7
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	453	Grades K - 7
Legacy – Richardson Campus	210	Grades PK - 7
Prime Prep Academy	377	Grades K - 5
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	376	Grades 6 - 12
UME Preparatory Academy	420	Grades K - 8
Total	2,871	

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Enrollment counts by grade for each campus are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Grade Level Enrollment, 2012-13 by Charter School Campus

Charter School Campus Name	PK/K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Austin Achieve Public School							136						
Excellence in Leadership Academy	41	10	15	14									
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	72	83	65	82	59	50							
Legacy Preparatory	42	51	54	55	49	54	55	35					
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	83	49	56	45	60	54	71	35					
Legacy – Richardson Campus	39	23	24	27	24	27	26	20					
Prime Prep Academy	66	67	54	68	60	62							
Prime Prep - Dallas							68	76	55	63	65	28	21
UME Preparatory Academy	42	44	39	45	50	49	51	52	48				

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Race/Ethnicity

Demographic data was examined for the 2,871 students attending these nine charter school campuses during the 2012-13 school year. Race/ethnicity data were available for 2,747 (96%) of them. When examining ethnicity, it is important to note that students who were identified as Hispanic/Latino are categorized as Hispanic/Latino exclusively, regardless of whether any race categories were also selected.

All non-Hispanic students are categorized by race, with any student identified with more than one race being categorized as “two or more racial categories”.

Across the 2,747 students enrolled in the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses for whom ethnicity data were available, more than half (51%) were identified as black or African American, non-Hispanic; 28% as Hispanic/Latino; and 16% as white, non-Hispanic. The other race categories accounted for the remaining 5% of students.

Table 3 shows the distribution of students in each race/ethnicity category separately for each of the nine campuses. Several of the campuses tended to serve students from predominantly one race/ethnicity category: 100% of students at Excellence in Leadership Academy were Hispanic; and 95% of students at Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy and approximately 90% of students at both Prime Prep Academies were black, non-Hispanic. Sixty-eight percent of UME Preparatory’s student body was white, non-Hispanic. The three Legacy campuses were comprised of more heterogeneous student populations. Legacy – Richardson Campus was the only campus to enroll a sizeable proportion of Asian, non-Hispanic students (16%).

Table 3. Student Ethnicity by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Asian, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Other ¹	Two or more	White, non-Hispanic	Total
Austin Achieve Public School (n=135)	1.5%	11.9%	81.5%	0.7%	2.2%	2.2%	100%
Excellence in Leadership Academy (n=77)	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (n=398)	0.8%	94.5%	3.5%	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%	100%
Legacy Preparatory (n=395)	0.0%	31.9%	61.8%	0.0%	2.0%	4.3%	100%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus (n=433)	1.6%	27.3%	43.6%	0.9%	3.2%	23.3%	100%
Legacy – Richardson Campus (n=197)	16.2%	33.5%	25.9%	0.0%	4.1%	20.3%	100%
Prime Prep Academy (n=367)	0.0%	89.1%	7.6%	0.0%	2.2%	1.1%	100%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas (n=365)	0.0%	93.2%	3.0%	0.3%	0.3%	3.3%	100%
UME Preparatory Academy (n=380)	5.0%	9.5%	14.2%	0.0%	3.4%	67.9%	100%
Overall (n=2,747)	2.3%	51.1%	28.3%	0.2%	2.1%	15.9%	100%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

¹Due to small counts, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander categories were collapsed into an “other” category.

Limited English Proficiency

A student is identified as LEP based on an assessment by campus staff. Each year, LEP status can be re-examined and can be changed. In any given year, a student can be identified “not LEP”, “currently LEP”, or having “exited LEP” status for those in the first and second years of academic monitoring after exiting LEP status. It is important to note that once a student enters year three of having “exited LEP”, their LEP status is reported as “not-LEP”.

All 2,871 (100%) students from the nine charter school campuses had available data on their LEP status. The majority of students across all new open-enrollment charter school campuses were not-LEP in 2012-13 (92%), with only 7% currently LEP and 2% being categorized as in their first or second year of having exited LEP status (Table 4). There were wide ranges in these proportions across campuses, with Excellence in Leadership Academy (serving exclusively Hispanic students) having a 58% currently LEP population. Austin Achieve Public Schools also served a large proportion of currently LEP (37%) and exited LEP (25%) students.

Table 4. LEP Status by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Not LEP	Currently LEP	Exited LEP	Total
Austin Achieve Public School (n=136)	38.2%	36.8%	25.0%	100%
Excellence in Leadership Academy (n=80)	42.5%	57.5%	0.0%	100%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (n=411)	100%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Legacy Preparatory (n=453)	87.3%	12.3%	0.5%	100%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus (n=210)	93.2%	6.6%	0.2%	100%
Legacy – Richardson Campus (n=408)	92.4%	7.6%	0.0%	100%
Prime Prep Academy (n=377)	98.9%	0.3%	0.8%	100%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas (n=376)	100%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
UME Preparatory Academy (n=420)	97.4%	2.1%	0.5%	100%
Total (n=2,871)	91.5%	7.0%	1.5%	100%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Special Education Services

Federal law defines a child with a disability as having one or more of the following primary disabilities: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment including blindness, or multiple disabilities⁸. If a student is identified with one of these disabilities through the Admission Review and Dismissal committee at their campus, they are then eligible for special education and related services.

A total of 2,747 students (96% of all students served by the new charter schools campuses) had data on their status as receiving special education services or not. Across all campuses, 4% of students were identified as receiving special education services. This percentage ranged from 2.7% (Prime Prep Academy) to 8.6% (Legacy – Richardson Campus). Seven of the nine campuses had 5% or fewer of their students identified as in need of special education services (see Table 5).

⁸ IDEA 2004, Part B

Table 5. Eligibility for Special Education Services by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Special Education
Austin Achieve Public School (n=135)	8.1%
Excellence in Leadership Academy (n=77)	3.9%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (n=398)	4.0%
Legacy Preparatory (n=433)	4.8%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus (n=197)	3.7%
Legacy – Richardson Campus (n=395)	8.6%
Prime Prep Academy (n=367)	2.7%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas (n=365)	5.2%
UME Preparatory Academy (n=380)	2.9%
Total (n=2,747)	4.4%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

National School Lunch Program

For students whose families earn less than a certain amount of income each year, parents may register their students for eligibility for the National School Lunch Program, referred to in Texas as the FRL program (e.g., a family of four may earn \$43,568 or less in a year for their children to be eligible)⁹. This demographic variable is often used as a proxy for examining the economic status of students, with those participating categorized as “economically disadvantaged”. It is important to note that determining students’ eligibility for the FRL program is optional and requires paperwork be completed and submitted. Thus, the percentage of students at any given campus who are identified as economically disadvantaged can be an under-representation of the true population of disadvantaged students.

Table 6. Eligibility for the Free/Reduced Price Lunch Program by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	FRL
Austin Achieve Public School (n=135)	92.6%
Excellence in Leadership Academy (n=77)	84.4%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (n=398)	57.3%
Legacy Preparatory (n=433)	66.8%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus (n=197)	57.7%
Legacy – Richardson Campus (n=395)	44.7%
Prime Prep Academy (n=367)	70.0%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas (n=365)	45.5%
UME Preparatory Academy (n=380)	15.8%
Total (n=2,747)	54.7%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Across the nine charter school campuses, 96% of students had data available on their status as participating in the FRL program. More than half of all students (55%) were identified as participating in the FRL program, with this percentage ranging from approximately 16% (at UME Preparatory Academy)

⁹ <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1990>

to 93% at Austin Achieve Public Schools (Table 6). After UME Preparatory, the next campus with the lowest proportion of students participating was 45%, and most campuses (six) had more than half of their student body participating.

At-Risk Status

The Texas at-risk indicator code identifies whether a student meets one of 13 possible state-defined criteria that make them at risk of dropping out. These criteria include some performance-based criteria (such as failing to meet satisfactory performance on particular assessments, being retained in grade), some behavior-based criteria (e.g., being expelled, being on parole) and some demographic criteria (e.g., is pregnant or a parent, is LEP, is homeless)¹⁰. If a student meets one or more of these criteria, they are categorized as at-risk.

Table 7 shows the percentage of students at each charter school campus who were categorized as at-risk during the 2012-13 school year. At-risk data were available for 96% of all students enrolled in the nine charter schools campuses. Across all nine campuses, 24% of enrolled students met the at-risk criteria, but the percentage of students across campuses ranged from a low of 2% at Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy to a high of 75% at Excellence in Leadership Academy. Five of the nine campuses had between 25% and 45% of their students categorized as at-risk.

Table 7. At-Risk Status by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	At-Risk
Austin Achieve Public School (n=135)	43.0%
Excellence in Leadership Academy (n=77)	75.3%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (n=398)	2.0%
Legacy Preparatory (n=433)	28.1%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus (n=197)	27.0%
Legacy – Richardson Campus (n=395)	9.6%
Prime Prep Academy (n=367)	26.4%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas (n=365)	42.2%
UME Preparatory Academy (n=380)	6.6%
Total (n=2,747)	23.6%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Observations

As can be seen by examining the characteristics of students enrolled at each charter campus, there were large differences across campuses in the types of students served.

- For example, while one campus served 80 young (PK – Grade 3) students, all of whom were Hispanic, 57% of whom were LEP and 75% of whom were at risk, another campus served over 300 middle and high school-aged students, over 90% of whom were black, not Hispanic, over 8% who

¹⁰ <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/weds/index.html?r110>

received special education services, and none of whom were LEP. Table 8 illustrates this variation, showing some of these characteristics side-by-side per campus.

Table 8. Characteristics of Students Served by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	LEP	Special Education	FRL	At-Risk
Austin Achieve Public School	36.8%	8.1%	92.6%	43.0%
Excellence in Leadership Academy	57.5%	3.9%	84.4%	75.3%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	0.0%	4.0%	57.3%	2.0%
Legacy Preparatory	12.3%	4.8%	66.8%	28.1%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	6.6%	3.7%	57.7%	27.0%
Legacy – Richardson Campus	7.6%	8.6%	44.7%	9.6%
Prime Prep Academy	0.3%	2.7%	70.0%	26.4%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	0.0%	5.2%	45.5%	42.2%
UME Preparatory Academy	2.1%	2.9%	15.8%	6.6%
Total	7.0%	4.4%	54.7%	23.6%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

- The wide variance in student demographics across campuses must be taken into consideration when examining and interpreting campus-level outcomes. These are examined next.

Findings: Outcomes (Objective 2)

Research questions for examining student outcomes included:

- What outcomes were associated with students who attended newly-opened open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 related to student achievement, attendance, and disciplinary incidents?
- How do the students attending these new campuses compare on these measures to similar students attending the same prior campuses who did not transfer to the new charter school campuses?

Analysis of achievement, attendance, and behavioral outcomes demonstrates the performance of students who attended the six open-enrollment charter schools' nine campuses that began operations in 2012-13. The outcomes analysis focused on students' scores on the 2012-13 STAAR Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics exams¹¹, their attendance rates during 2012-13, and their recorded number of disciplinary incidents. 2012-13 outcomes for students who attended the new charter school campuses were compared to 2012-13 outcomes for students who attended the same campuses in which the charter school students were enrolled during the 2011-12 academic year (feeder campuses).

Because there may be differences in the characteristics of students who chose to enroll (or whose parents chose to enroll them) in the new charter school campuses and those students who did not, a matched comparison group was created via propensity score matching (see Appendix A). The matching method accounted for students' 2011-12 academic achievement (STAAR scores) and students' demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, LEP status, economically disadvantaged status, at-risk status, etc.)¹². This matching method adjusts for differences that exist in student characteristics between students enrolled and not enrolled in the new charter school campuses, prior to the 2012-13 academic year. Separate comparison groups were selected for assessment and non-assessment (attendance and discipline) outcomes because assessments are given only in specific grades¹³, whereas attendance and discipline data are available at all grade levels.

Only two campuses had any students in any grade taking end-of-course (EOC) assessments, and each one had very low numbers of students taking each one (between seven and 50 students, see Appendix A). As such, analyses of students' academic performance were restricted to examination of performance on STAAR tests grades 4-8 in mathematics and reading/ELA. Only students in Grade 4 and above are included

¹¹ 2012-13 STAAR scores represent student performance in the first year that the charter campuses were open, and the first year students attended a new school. 2012-13 was also the academic year for which this evaluation was based.

¹² Students' feeder schools were matched within propensity score strata, not one-to-one, to utilize the maximum number of students (with similar characteristics to charter school students) in the comparison group. More details on the propensity score matching method employed are provided in Appendix A.

¹³ STAAR grade level assessments are given in Grades 3 – 8, and EOC assessments, which are subject-specific, are required for graduation from a Texas public high school.

in examination of assessment outcomes because their prior test scores are used in statistical modeling as an adjustment for differences in baseline achievement. Grade 3 students do not have prior test scores. Thus, the final analytic sample for examination of STAAR results included only students in Grades 4 through 8.

Table 9 shows the number of charter and comparison students in the final analytic samples for assessment and non-assessment outcomes. After the matching process, charter and comparison students had similar characteristics across all achievement, demographic, and school-level variables at baseline (see Appendix A).

Table 9. Sample Size by Outcome, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Grades Served	STAAR Assessment (Grades 4 - 8)	STAAR Assessment (Grades 4 - 8)	Attendance and Discipline (All Grades)	Attendance and Discipline (All Grades)
		<i>Comparison</i> *	Charter	Comparison	Charter
Austin Achieve Public School	Grade 6	2,479	114	2,889	124
Excellence in Leadership Academy	Grades PK - 3	NA	NA	7,495	54
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	Grades K - 5	6,764	88	31,141	311
Legacy Preparatory	Grades K - 7	21,197	276	49,766	577
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	Grades K - 7	26,396	289	56,957	586
Legacy – Richardson Campus	Grades PK - 7	17,562	84	37,924	183
Prime Prep Academy	Grades K - 5	10,436	99	38,939	336
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	Grades 6 - 12	25,133	192	89,080	377
UME Preparatory Academy	Grades K-8	21,873	114	44,870	226

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

*The comparison group is larger than the charter student group because the propensity score matching approach employed uses all potential comparison students that are similar demographically to charter school students. The outcome modeling incorporates student-level weights to account for any imbalance across the distribution of demographics within each group (see Appendix A) for more information.

Results are presented separately for each outcome type examined (student achievement, attendance, and discipline).

Student Achievement

To determine how students were performing academically after enrolling in the new charter school campuses, STAAR Reading/ELA and Mathematics scores for charter and feeder campus comparison students in Grades 4 – 8 were analyzed via regression analysis using propensity score methods which controls for student characteristics and achievement prior to 2012-13 (see Appendix A). The STAAR places scores from different grades onto the same scoring scale within subject. This property of the scale (i.e., vertical scaling) allows for students from different grades to be included in the same analysis¹⁴.

Table 10 shows results of analyses comparing STAAR Reading/ELA performance for charter school students to comparison students for each charter campus¹⁵. Charter school students at six of the eight charter campuses with students in Grades 4 through 8 demonstrated significantly lower performance on STAAR-Reading/ELA tests, ranging between 20 and 25 scale score points lower by campus¹⁶. This result means that students at charter school campuses had fewer answers correct on the reading test than students in the comparison group. This was not the case at Austin Achieve Public School, where charter school students demonstrated higher performance than matched comparison students in feeder campuses, but not significantly so. At UME Preparatory Academy, students had lower scores than comparison students in feeder campuses, but not significantly so. Overall, across students at all campuses, students attending charter school campuses had significantly lower scale scores compared to comparable students at the campuses from which they came (17.6 scale score points lower, on average).

These scale score differences translated into differences in the percent of students achieving the Phase-In 1 Level II (Satisfactory) and Final Level III (Advanced) standards. Five of the eight charter campuses had significantly lower percentages of students achieving at least Level II, and two of the eight had significantly lower percentages of students achieving Level III. Overall, across students at all campuses, the Level II standard was achieved by 4.7% fewer students, and the Level III standard was achieved by 6.0% fewer students at the nine charter school campuses compared to comparable students at the campuses from which they came.

¹⁴ Grade-level is accounted for during the propensity score matching process.

¹⁵ There are no reading effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

¹⁶ The word “significant” in this chapter refers to statistical significance. A comparison is considered statistically significant if a difference is large enough that it would only occur 5% of the time or less by random chance.

Table 10. Performance on Reading STAAR Scores, Grades 4-8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13[†]

Charter School Campus Name	Diff. from Comparison Students	Diff. from Comparison Students	Diff. from Comparison Students	Actual Performance	Actual Performance
	Score	Level II (Satisfactory)	Level III (Advanced)	Level II (Satisfactory)	Level III (Advanced)
Austin Achieve Public School	10.425	5.8%	-3.3%	66.7%	7.0%
Excellence in Leadership Academy	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-25.240**	-10.9%**	-4.7%	46.6%	3.4%
Legacy Preparatory	-22.103***	-5.1%**	-2.0%	56.2%	6.5%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-21.985***	-6.0%***	-3.5%**	59.2%	7.6%
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-20.842*	2.5%	-8.1%**	81.0%	17.9%
Prime Prep Academy	-21.632**	-7.5%*	-3.7%	44.4%	4.0%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-20.148***	-7.7%***	-2.8%	63.5%	5.7%
UME Preparatory Academy	-5.618	-3.6%	1.2%	79.8%	23.7%
All Schools	-17.625***	-4.7%***	-6.0%***	61.1%	8.6%

* Significant at 0.05, ** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

[†]Table Note: Examination of State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness performance includes first administration only, and regular English and Spanish versions only (i.e., not modified or alternate versions).

A similar pattern emerged when examining performance on the STAAR-Mathematics exams, with the differences being even larger than they were in reading. Students at seven of the eight charter campuses performed significantly lower in mathematics than comparable students at their former campuses (Table 11)¹⁷. On average, performance among students at charter school campuses was 31 to 63 scale score points lower than the comparison students attending the feeder campuses. Again, Austin Achieve Public School was an exception, with charter school students scoring significantly higher (an average of 29 scale score points) than comparison group students. Overall, across all students in all eight charter campuses, charter school students scored significantly lower than comparison students (47.3 scale score points lower, on average).

¹⁷ There are no reading effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

These scale score differences translated into differences in the percent of students achieving the Phase-in 1 Level II (Satisfactory) and Final Level III (Advanced) standards. Seven of the eight charter campuses had significantly lower percentages of students achieving at least Phase-in 1 Level II, and two of the eight had significantly lower percentages of students achieving Level III. Across all eight campuses, the Phase-in 1 Level II standard was achieved by 17.4% fewer students, and the Final Level III standard was achieved by 13.8% fewer students at the charter campuses compared to the comparison students attending the feeder campuses. These results form a consistent pattern such that most students in Grades 4 through 8 attending the new charter school campuses are underperforming their comparable peers in their prior campuses as measured by standardized tests in reading and mathematics, with one notable exception.

Table 11. Performance on Mathematics STAAR Scores, Grades 4-8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13[†]

Charter School Campus Name	Diff. from Comparison Students	Diff. from Comparison Students	Diff. from Comparison Students	Actual Performance	Actual Performance
	Score	Level II (Satisfactory)	Level III (Advanced)	Level II (Satisfactory)	Level III (Advanced)
Austin Achieve Public School	29.246***	7.7%*	1.1%	77.2%	12.3%
Excellence in Leadership Academy	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-37.237***	-14.9%***	-3.3%	34.1%	2.3%
Legacy Preparatory	-63.123***	-22.2%***	-5.2%***	34.8%	1.4%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-62.459***	-22.8%***	-6.0%***	38.4%	2.8%
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-31.719**	-8.7%**	-7.9%**	67.9%	15.5%
Prime Prep Academy	-51.197***	-21.9%***	-4.9%*	28.3%	3.0%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-48.902***	-19.2%***	-4.4%***	39.6%	0.0%
UME Preparatory Academy	-45.678***	-9.9%***	-8.1%***	67.5%	9.6%
All Schools	-47.372***	-17.4%***	-13.8%***	44.8%	4.4%

* Significant at 0.05, ** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

[†]Table Note: Examination of STAAR performance includes first administration only, and regular English and Spanish versions only (i.e., not modified or alternate versions).

Student Attendance

To determine if students at the new charter campuses were attending school more or less often than comparison students, the attendance rate (the percentage of days attended) of charter school students was compared to that of students in the matched comparison group (see Appendix A for details on transformation of data and appropriate analyses). Table 12 shows the results of the regression analyses. For two of the nine charter school campuses (Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy and UME

Preparatory Academy), charter school students exhibited significantly lower attendance rates than students in the matched comparison group (1.7 percentage points and 5.5 percentage points lower, respectively). The difference was not significant in either direction at any of the remaining seven campuses, indicating that student attendance at these campuses was not different from comparison group attendance. Across all campuses, charter school students exhibited significantly lower attendance rates, but the size of the difference was small (less than 1 percent), and the overall average effect was driven by the large difference at UME Preparatory Academy. In general, across all students attending all charter campuses, attendance was similar to what it would have been had they not enrolled in these charter campuses.

Table 12. Rate of Attendance, All Grades, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Difference from Comparison Students	Actual Attendance Rate
Austin Achieve Public School	0.6%	96.3%
Excellence in Leadership Academy	1.8%	97.3%
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-1.7%***	95.1%
Legacy Preparatory	0.0%	96.4%
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-0.3%	96.3%
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-0.2%	96.4%
Prime Prep Academy	0.1%	95.4%
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	0.7%	95.5%
UME Preparatory Academy	-5.5%***	90.8%
All Schools	-0.6%***	95.5%

*** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Student Behavior

To examine whether there were differences in student behavior between students attending the new charter school campuses and similar students from the campuses which they previously attended, the number of disciplinary incidents attributed to individual students was examined. Table 13 shows the results of the regression analysis for each of the nine charter campuses and also for all of the campuses combined. For five of the nine charter campuses (Legacy Preparatory, Legacy–Mesquite Campus, Prime Prep Academy, Prime Prep Academy Dallas, and UME Preparatory Academy), students attending the charter school campus had significantly fewer discipline incidents than students in the comparison group. However, for two campuses (Austin Achieve Public School and Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy), students were cited for behavior significantly more often than students in the matched comparison group. At Austin Achieve Public School, students were disciplined at a rate of 225% that of comparison students (meaning they were disciplined more than twice as often). Across all campuses, there was a significant difference in disciplinary incidents with students at charter school campuses being disciplined at 67% the

rate of students in the matched comparison group. This result implies that, on average, students at the new charter campuses were disciplined less often than comparison students¹⁸.

¹⁸ It is important to note that wide variation exists in behavior policies across districts in terms of how and when to code behavioral transgressions, and how to respond to them. The reader should interpret these results with caution as they compare the frequency of behavioral incidents among students attending different campuses across charter schools, students attending different charter schools, and students attending campuses across different traditional school districts (in which differences in policies may be even larger).

Table 13. Impact of Enrolling in a Charter School on Count of Disciplinary Incidents, All Grades, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Diff. from Comparison Students <i>Log Count</i>	Diff. from Comparison Students <i>Rate</i>	Avg. Number of Discipline Incidents per Student
Austin Achieve Public School	0.811***	225%***	0.82
Excellence in Leadership Academy	-0.843	43%	0.02
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	0.302**	135%**	0.25
Legacy Preparatory	-1.749***	17%***	0.07
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-1.174***	31%***	0.09
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-0.113	89%	0.09
Prime Prep Academy	-0.472***	62%***	0.15
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-0.832***	44%***	0.37
UME Preparatory Academy	-1.035***	36%***	0.08
All Schools	-0.401***	67%***	0.18

** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Observations

Looking across all outcomes, attendance outcomes showed the least differences between students attending the new charter school campuses and the comparison students attending the campuses from which those students came. Differences emerged when examining performance on STAAR and when examining student behavior. These included:

- Students attending the new charter school campuses tended to score lower on the STAAR Reading/ELA and Mathematics assessments than similar students attending the feeder campuses, with the differences in mathematics being greater than the differences in reading. However, there was one exception – Austin Achieve Public School, which saw charter school students outperforming the comparison group in both reading and mathematics (with the mathematics effect being statistically significant).
- This same campus was also the only campus in the charter school campus sample that demonstrated a significantly higher discipline rate per student compared to feeder campuses. All other charter school students had lower rates of disciplinary referrals that comparable students in the feeder campuses.

It is important to note that while there was a significant association between attending a charter school campus and demonstrating lower performance on average and lower rates of behavioral incidents, there are other, unmeasurable influences on student behaviors that may be related to these findings.

- For example, because these campuses were in their first year of operation, all students were attending a new campus with new teachers, new friendship groups, and new campus leadership, which may have impacts on student performance directly.

- In addition, students whose families enroll them in charter school campuses may be different from families that do not, and these differences are currently unmeasured and unavailable for statistical adjustment beyond those available demographic characteristics used as statistical controls.
- Finally, because these charter school campuses predominantly served students in younger grades and EOC exams were not taken by many students at these campuses in 2012-13, the only inferences that can be made related to academic performance is based on students in Grades 4 through 8.

These must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings reported herein. Next, student perceptions of their own experiences attending the new open-enrollment charter school campuses are examined.

Findings: Student Perceptions (Objective 3)

Research questions for examining the self-reported impact of attending one of the charter school campuses included:

- What are parents' opinions of the impact of their student attending one of the new charter school campuses on their student's achievement, attendance, behavior, and course grades?
- What are students' opinions of the impact attending one of the new charter school campuses has had on their achievement, attendance, behavior, and course grades?

To further examine the impact of attending one of the open-enrollment charter school campuses that began operations in 2012-13, current students in 2013-14 and parents of those students were asked to complete brief surveys asking how the students' attendance, course performance, and behavior compares to when they were at their previous campus, how much they like their current campus, and their opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of their current campus¹⁹.

Due to the nature of the student survey questions, and the need for students to be able to reflect on events that may have occurred up to two years prior, surveys were restricted to students in Grades 6 and above. Parent surveys were restricted to parents whose children were in Grade 1 or higher to ensure there *could be* a prior campus for their child with which to make comparisons. More details regarding survey development and the administration process are provided in Appendix B.

Parent Response Rates

Despite the research team's efforts to collect survey data from parents at all of the nine charter school campuses, only eight surveys were completed and submitted during the five week survey administration period. Given this low number of responses and the fact that some of the respondents submitted multiple surveys (separate responses for different children, which was encouraged), fewer than eight unique parents contributed data. Thus, these data were not analyzed or reported given concerns related to reliability and validity of the results, as well as concerns related to the anonymity of respondents.

Student Response Rates

One of the nine charter school campuses did not serve any students in Grades 6 or above, and therefore was not included in the student survey sample. Six of the remaining eight campuses administered the student survey and returned them to the research team. A total of 458 surveys were completed across these six campuses, with school-level totals ranging from 40 to 127, and response rates ranging from 18% to 97% (see Table 14). For the remainder of this section, campus names were randomly ordered and then masked to protect the anonymity of responding students.

¹⁹ Though the term "campus" continues to be used in this report, the term "school" was used on the actual survey, as it is the common and familiar term for students.

Table 14. Student Survey Response Rate by Charter School Campus, 2013-14

Charter School Campus Name	Response Rate
Charter School Campus A	32%
Charter School Campus B	94%
Charter School Campus C	97%
Charter School Campus D	85%
Charter School Campus E	18%
Charter School Campus F	89%
Charter School Campus G	0%
Charter School Campus H	0%
Total	38%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

The remainder of this section presents results only for the six school campuses (referred to hereafter as Campuses A through F) that returned student surveys.

Characteristics of Student Respondents

Table 15 shows the grade levels of students who returned completed surveys across all school campuses²⁰. A total of 31 respondents did not indicate their grade level. Thirty of these respondents were from one campus.

Table 15. Student Survey Responses by Grade Level, 2013-14

Grade Level	Total Number	Percent of Sample
Grade 6	187	41%
Grade 7	134	29%
Grade 8	89	19%
Grade 9	1	0%
Grade 10	6	1%
Grade 11	2	0%
Grade 12	8	2%
Unspecified	31	7%
Total	458	100%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Across all campuses, a larger proportion of survey respondents were female than male, ranging from 52% to 60% of the responding sample. Thirty-one students did not provide their gender. Students' self-reported race and ethnicity at each campus mostly reflected enrollment statistics reported under Objective 1, such that results for each campus are based on students from their campus who are representative of the population of that campus (with the caveat that the sample is restricted only to certain grade levels). Across the entire responding sample, 42% of students identified as Hispanic and 40%

²⁰ Grade level is based on student self-reports.

as black, non-Hispanic. Approximately 10% identified as white, non-Hispanic, while less than 5% identified as either two or more races, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or Asian, non-Hispanic (Table 16).

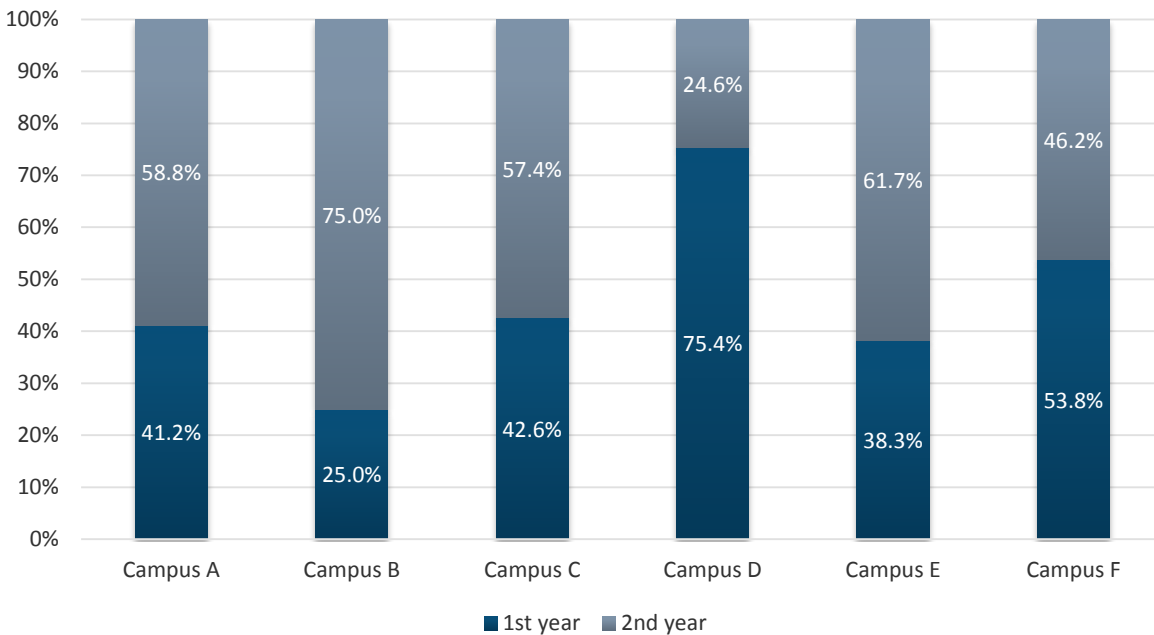
Table 16. Student Survey Respondents’ Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Sample
Hispanic	42.3%
Black, non-Hispanic	40.2%
White, non-Hispanic	9.5%
Two or more	3.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.6%
Asian, non-Hispanic	1.9%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Because the student survey was administered in 2013-14, the current school year could have been either the students’ first or second year at the campus, and students were almost equally distributed across those two possibilities. Overall, 52% of students reported that this was their second year at the current charter school campus, while 48% reported it was their first. This varied by campus, with as many as three-quarters of students reporting being in their first year at some campuses (these are likely campuses that added a new grade level in 2013-14); see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Percent of Responding Students Attending Current Campus for One or Two Years, 2013-14



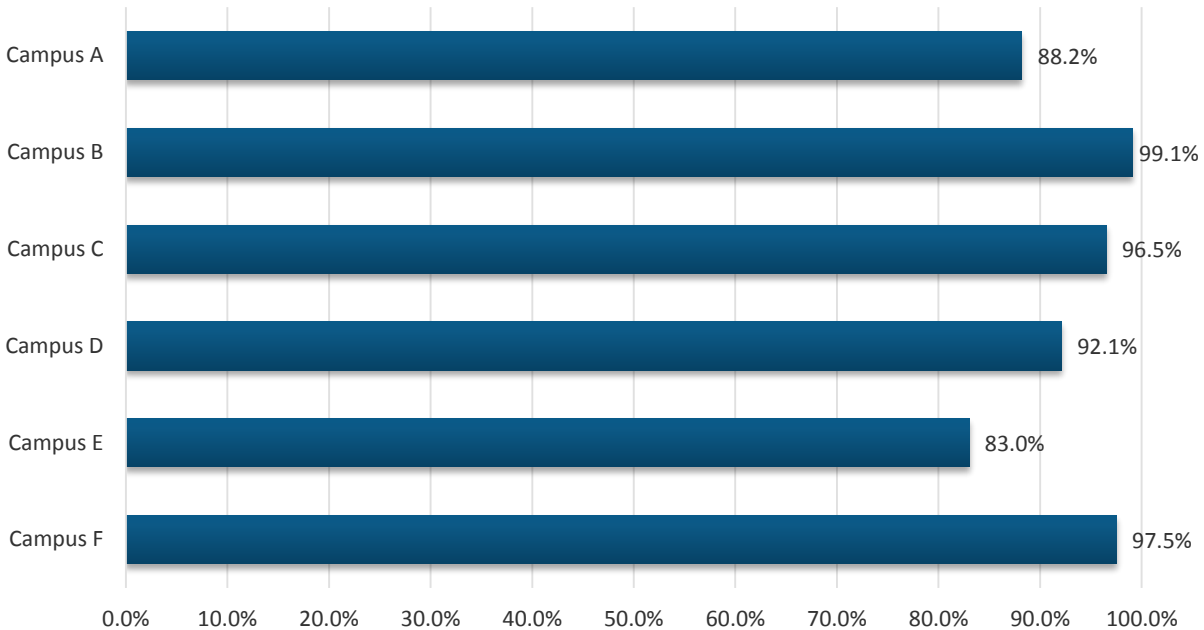
Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Perceptions and Opinions About School

Awareness of School Type

The majority of survey respondents (94%) were aware that their current campus was a charter school campus, though this varied somewhat, ranging from 83% to 99% (Figure 2). Most students responding to the survey reported that the last campus they attended was *not* a charter school campus (83%), and this was consistent across campuses ranging from 80% to 88%.

Figure 2. Percentage of Students' Awareness of School Type, by Charter School Campus, 2013-14



Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Student Experiences

To measure the extent to which students felt their own behaviors have changed since attending the new charter school campus, students responded to four questions asking them to compare their own experiences from their current campus to their prior campus. Questions included whether their grades are better or worse, whether they miss classes more or less often, whether they get into trouble more or less often and whether teachers and other adults tell them they are doing well more or less often. For all four questions, students also had the option to select “about the same as my last school.” In addition, when asked about missing classes and getting into trouble, students could also answer that the question was not applicable to them because they have never missed class or have never been in trouble at school.

Table 17 displays the percentage of students who answered each question reflecting that their current experiences were better, worse, or about the same, both overall and by campus. When reflecting on their grades, 44% of students overall reported that grades were better at their current campus, with another 41% reporting their grades were the same. Only 15% of students overall reported that grades were worse at their current campus. This pattern (where a large proportion of students reflected positively on their

grades at their new campus, held across five of the six campuses; however, one campus was an exception, with only 15% of students at Campus A reporting that their grades were better at their current campus, 53% reporting they were the same, and 24% reporting they were worse at their current campus.

When responding to the question about missing classes, approximately one-third of students overall reported that this question was not applicable because they did not ever miss class. Most other students (31%) responded that they missed classes less often at their current campus or about the same (23%).

When asked about their behavior, most students at most campuses reported either that they have never been in trouble at school (30% overall) or that they get into trouble less often now (35% overall). Two campuses had more than 20% of students reporting that they get into trouble more often at their current campus (Campuses A and D).

When asked how often they are told they are doing well by adults at their campus, half or more of student respondents at three campuses reported this happens more often now at their current campus (40% of all respondents). At two of the campuses, more than 30% of students reported they are told they are doing well less often (Campuses B and D).

Thus, based on students' self-reports, attending the newly opened charter school campus in 2012-13 had a mostly beneficial impact on students, particularly as measured by how students felt about their grades. A large proportion of students felt that the questions related to missing classes and getting into trouble did not pertain to them, but other students at *most* of the campuses reported the same or better behavior. Reports of worse attendance were mostly infrequent, while reports of getting into more trouble were more common on average, but reported by fewer than 20% of students at most campuses.

Table 17. Students' Self-reported Experiences at Current Campus Compared to Prior Campus, by Charter School Campus, 2013-14

	Overall	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus E	Campus F
Grades							
Better now	44.0%	15.0%	41.1%	43.4%	42.1%	59.6%	50.0%
About the same	41.1%	52.9%	42.9%	40.7%	43.7%	31.9%	35.0%
Worse now	14.9%	23.5%	16.1%	15.9%	14.3%	8.5%	15.0%
Missed Classes							
Less often now	30.9%	47.1%	34.5%	25.4%	23.2%	40.4%	42.5%
About the same	22.5%	5.9%	30.0%	25.4%	14.4%	25.5%	22.5%
More often now	9.9%	17.6%	5.5%	12.3%	8.8%	17.0%	7.5%
Not applicable	36.6%	29.4%	30.0%	36.8%	53.6%	17.0%	27.5%
Get into trouble							
Less often now	34.9%	41.2%	33.0%	40.0%	29.1%	31.9%	45.0%
About the same	15.7%	17.6%	25.0%	10.4%	13.4%	14.9%	12.5%
More often now	19.4%	23.5%	17.9%	18.3%	26.0%	8.5%	17.5%
Not applicable	29.9%	17.6%	24.1%	31.3%	31.5%	44.7%	25.0%

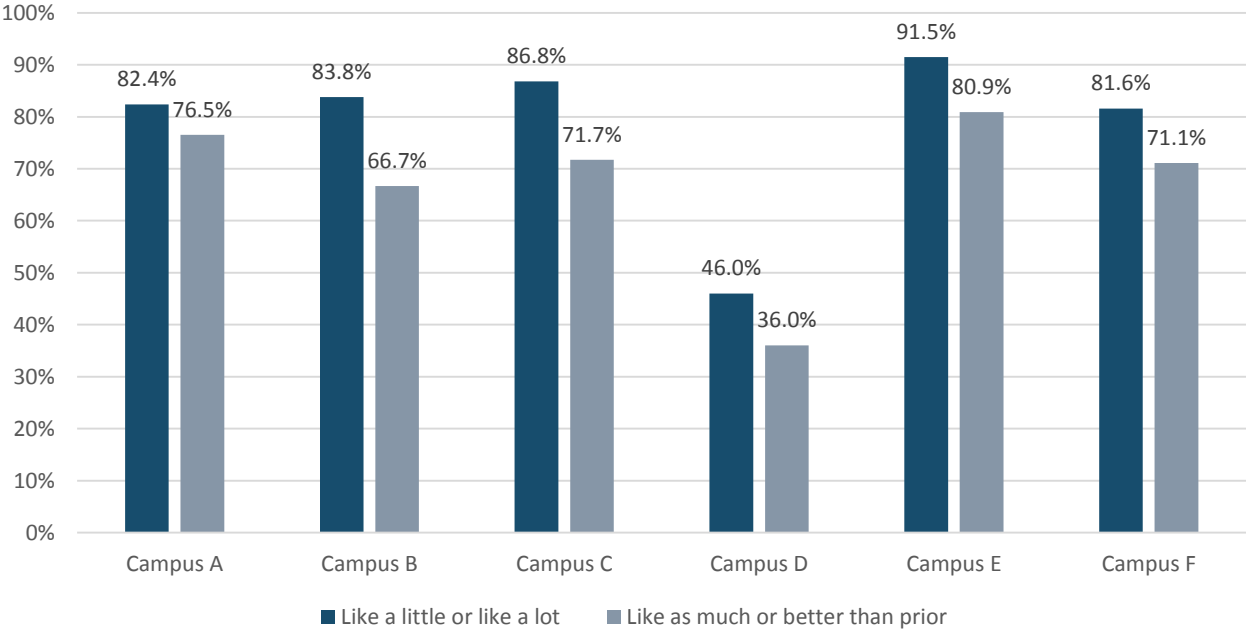
	Overall	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C	Campus D	Campus E	Campus F
Tell me I'm doing well							
More now	39.9%	58.8%	31.5%	34.8%	37.0%	63.8%	50.0%
About the same	33.7%	23.5%	37.8%	37.5%	31.5%	25.5%	32.5%
Less now	26.4%	17.6%	30.6%	27.7%	31.5%	10.6%	17.5%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Student Satisfaction

Students were also asked how much they like their current campus (with response options including “I don’t like it,” “I like it a little/it’s ok,” and “I like it a lot”), and also how much they like their campus compared to their last campus (response options included “I like this school less than my last school,” “I like this school about the same as my last school,” and “I like this school better than my last school.”) The majority of students had positive feelings about their current campus either way the question was posed. Overall, 75% of students reported liking their current campus (26% a lot and 48% a little/it’s ok), while 35% liked their current campus better than their prior campus, and another 27% liked them both equally. At each of the six campuses, a similar pattern emerged: a greater proportion of students reported liking their campus in general compared to those who reported liking it as much or better than their prior campus (Figure 3). While most responses were positive, one campus (Campus D) demonstrated lower ratings compared to all other campuses (46% liked their current campus a little or a lot and 36% liked it better than their prior campus).

Figure 3. Percent of Students Who Like Their Current Campus, and Who Like it More Than Their Prior Campus, by Charter School Campus 2013-14



Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Students further rated their prior campus and their current campus on several specific areas, grading each from A to F. This approach allows for an examination of rating level (what grade did students give their campus for the current year) as well as difference in rating from prior campus (whether students thought their current campus deserved a higher or lower grade than their prior campus). For this analysis, the proportion of students who gave the current campus the same grade or a higher grade than their prior campus was calculated.

Table 18 shows how students rated their campus in each area for 2012-13, and also what proportion of students rated their current campus either the same or higher than their last campus (remaining students rated their current campus lower than their prior campus). Overall, students were mostly positive across all areas. More than 70% of students overall gave ratings of A or B in the areas of how much their campus prepares them for what happens after they graduate (77%), how well teachers teach the material (74%), how much they are learning (74%), how much their teachers care about them (73%), and feelings of safety (71%). Extracurricular activities and electives were given lower grades in general, with 34% of students assigning a grade of D or F to elective classes and 22% in the area of extracurricular activities. While most students gave high grades in the area of computers and technology (52% overall assigned a grade of A), 75% of students at one campus (Campus D) assigned a grade of D or F.

Notably, most students (as measured both overall and by individual campuses) rated their current campus as the same or better than their prior campus. This was particularly true for how much they are learning, how safe they feel, how much teachers care, how much the campus is preparing them for life after high school, for which more than 70% of students overall graded their current campus the same or higher than their previous one.

Table 18. Student’s Grades for Current and Prior Campus, by Charter School Campus, 2013-14

Charter School Campus Name	A	B	C	D	F	% Rating Current School Same or Higher Than Prior School
How much you are learning.						
Campus A	53.8%	23.1%	23.1%	--	--	75.0%
Campus B	22.3%	50.9%	19.6%	3.6%	3.6%	64.3%
Campus C	36.7%	43.1%	8.3%	8.3%	3.7%	79.4%
Campus D	36.6%	29.3%	17.9%	8.1%	8.1%	64.5%
Campus E	37.0%	43.5%	10.9%	4.3%	4.3%	71.7%
Campus F	61.1%	22.2%	11.1%	5.6%	--	83.3%
Overall	34.4%	39.7%	15.0%	6.2%	4.8%	70.2%
The extracurricular activities that are offered.						
Campus A	38.5%	7.7%	46.2%	7.7%	--	41.7%
Campus B	31.8%	36.4%	16.4%	7.3%	8.2%	67.3%
Campus C	33.0%	24.1%	24.1%	9.8%	8.9%	67.0%
Campus D	37.0%	17.6%	13.4%	11.8%	20.2%	51.7%
Campus E	47.8%	21.7%	10.9%	13.0%	6.5%	67.4%

Charter School Campus Name	A	B	C	D	F	% Rating Current School Same or Higher Than Prior School
Campus F	16.7%	16.7%	38.9%	16.7%	11.1%	22.2%
Overall	34.9%	24.4%	18.9%	10.3%	11.5%	60.0%
How safe you feel at school.						
Campus A	46.2%	46.2%	7.7%	--	--	77.8%
Campus B	50.9%	30.0%	12.7%	1.8%	4.5%	79.8%
Campus C	49.5%	28.0%	6.5%	10.3%	5.6%	76.2%
Campus D	35.6%	19.5%	11.9%	13.6%	19.5%	60.2%
Campus E	28.3%	32.6%	30.4%	8.7%	6.5%	100%
Campus F	38.9%	44.4%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	76.2%
Overall	43.0%	27.9%	12.4%	7.5%	9.2%	72.0%
Elective classes.						
Campus A ²¹	--	--	--	--	--	--
Campus B	25.5%	34.5%	21.8%	7.3%	10.9%	59.3%
Campus C	31.5%	21.3%	17.6%	11.1%	18.5%	68.2%
Campus D	21.2%	12.7%	5.9%	8.5%	51.7%	44.8%
Campus E	17.4%	63.0%	8.7%	--	10.9%	73.9%
Campus F	23.5%	--	23.5%	5.9%	47.1%	41.2%
Overall	24.8%	26.5%	14.5%	7.8%	26.5%	58.5%
How much your teachers care about you.						
Campus A	15.4%	53.8%	15.4%	15.4%	--	83.3%
Campus B	49.1%	33.6%	10.9%	4.5%	1.8%	72.5%
Campus C	42.3%	30.8%	17.3%	3.8%	5.8%	74.8%
Campus D	38.8%	19.0%	12.9%	11.2%	18.1%	62.9%
Campus E	48.9%	37.8%	6.7%	4.4%	2.2%	77.8%
Campus F	72.2%	16.7%	5.6%	5.6%	--	72.2%
Overall	44.3%	29.1%	12.6%	6.7%	7.4%	71.2%
How well teachers are teaching the material.						
Campus A	23.1%	53.8%	15.4%	7.7%	--	75.0%
Campus B	33.0%	42.2%	14.7%	7.3%	2.8%	69.4%
Campus C	45.2%	33.7%	7.7%	6.7%	6.7%	74.3%
Campus D	32.8%	27.6%	9.5%	17.2%	12.9%	56.1%
Campus E	44.4%	42.2%	6.7%	4.4%	2.2%	79.1%
Campus F	61.1%	27.8%	11.1%	--	--	83.3%
Overall	38.3%	35.6%	10.4%	9.4%	6.4%	68.7%
How much your school prepares you for what happens after you graduate high school.						
Campus A	--	--	--	--	--	--

²¹ Fewer than ten students at this campus answered this question

Charter School Campus Name	A	B	C	D	F	% Rating Current School Same or Higher Than Prior School
Campus B	75.7%	16.2%	2.7%	1.8%	3.6%	81.7%
Campus C	62.3%	19.8%	6.6%	6.6%	4.7%	88.5%
Campus D	38.1%	27.1%	9.3%	11.0%	14.4%	66.7%
Campus E	67.4%	13.0%	8.7%	6.5%	4.3%	80.4%
Campus F	52.9%	35.3%	--	11.8%	--	76.5%
Overall	49.2%	28.0%	8.1%	7.8%	6.8%	78.6%
How much you use computers and technology in your classes.						
Campus A	53.8%	38.5%	7.7%	--	--	100%
Campus B	75.7%	16.2%	2.7%	1.8%	3.6%	91.9%
Campus C	78.7%	12.0%	1.9%	2.8%	4.6%	92.4%
Campus D	10.4%	4.3%	9.6%	6.1%	69.6%	23.0%
Campus E	26.7%	28.9%	35.6%	4.4%	4.4%	60.0%
Campus F	83.3%	11.1%	--	--	5.6%	83.3%
Overall	52.4%	13.7%	8.0%	3.4%	22.4%	69.1%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Compliments and Complaints

Students were also asked to describe what they like most about their campus and what one thing they would change about their campus. Respondents often wrote more than one compliment and/or more than one complaint. These responses were split so that each individual compliment or complaint could be coded.

Across all students who responded, 531 responses were given for what they like most. The most common response category was related to instruction (e.g., the school’s academics, project-based learning, instructional strategies, specific classes), accounting for 21% of all comments. The next most common response was related to the use of computers and technology (16%) followed by compliments of specific teachers, principals or other staff (11%). Sports were also mentioned 11% of the time. Table 19 illustrates all categories of responses along with the frequency of each across the entire sample of responding students.

Table 19. What Students Like Most At Their Current Campus, 2013-14

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Related to instruction (e.g., learning, academics, classes)	113	21%
Use of/access to computers and other technology	87	16%
Liking expressed for teachers, staff, principal	61	11%
Having sports in school	60	11%
Miscellaneous	29	5%
Positive relationships with staff (e.g., respect, feeling cared for)	31	6%
Non-academic activities (e.g., field trips, field day)	29	5%

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Friends and other students at school	25	5%
Availability of electives	22	4%
Small classes, small school	20	4%
Safety (e.g., lack of fights, everyone gets along, lack of bullying)	15	3%
Gym/PE class	11	2%
Teacher and staff focus on future/prepare students for future	10	2%
The food	8	2%
Building size (bigger)	4	1%
Dress code/uniform requirement	2	0%
Everything	2	0%
Generally it is better	2	0%
Total	531	100%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Comments related to instruction were not the most common category of response at every charter school campus. Rather, comments related to instruction were the most common at three of the six campuses (second most common at two others and third most common at another). For the other three campuses, comments related to computers/technology were most common at two of the campuses while comments related to teachers and staff were most common at one (see Table 20).

Table 20. What Students Like Most, By School At Their Current Campus, by Charter School Campus, 2013-14

Charter School Campus	Most Common	Second Most Common	Third Most Common
Campus A	Learning/Academics (36.4%)	Teachers/Staff (27.3%)	*
Campus B	Computers/Technology (30.0%)	Learning/Academics (23.6%)	Teachers/Staff (7.9%)
Campus C	Computers/Technology (22.7%)	Learning/Academics (22.1%)	Non-academic Activities (9.2%)
Campus D	Teachers/Staff (21.1%)	Sports/Extracurricular (14.8%)	Learning/Academics (14.8%)
Campus E	Learning/Academics (36.4%)	Sports/Extracurricular (22.7%)	Miscellaneous (18.2%)
Campus F	Learning/Academics (21.6%)	Computers/Technology (18.9%)	Relationships with Staff (18.9%)

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

*Four categories of responses tied for third most frequent response for this campus, but each only had one response.

Students generated 561 responses for what they would like to change about their current campus. The most common response was related to the campus’ facilities: wanting a bigger campus, more classrooms, a stadium, building quality concerns, etc. (16% of all comments). Thirteen percent of comments were

related to the campus' dress code or requirement to wear uniforms, with another 13% of comments related to the campus' food. Table 21 displays all categories of responses to this question, along with their frequency.

Table 21. What Students Would Like to Change At Their Current Campus, 2013-14

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Facilities improvements	91	16%
Change dress code (e.g., no uniforms)	73	13%
Improve quality of lunch/food	72	13%
Related to quality of teachers (e.g., better teachers, how they teach)	65	12%
More/select own classes	59	11%
Miscellaneous	40	7%
A lot/everything about the school	26	5%
More access and use of computers/technology	22	4%
Related to sports (e.g., better athletics program, specific sports offerings)	20	4%
More extracurricular activities	16	3%
Better students (e.g., behavior, general)	14	2%
Less strict, less rules (e.g., cell phone policy, treat students like adults)	14	2%
Increased safety/less bullying	13	2%
More activities and field trips (different from extracurricular)	11	2%
Less of something (e.g., classes, sports)	7	1%
How students are treated by teachers/staff, more support	6	1%
Organization of the school (management related)	5	1%
Better location	4	1%
Better student discipline	3	1%
Total	561	100%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Again, the most common categories of response varied at the individual charter school campus level (see Table 22). At three of the six campuses, facilities improvements were the number one student complaint, accounting for as many as 31% of all comments. However, at one campus (Campus D), this concern was not even among the top three, and instead dress code complaints were most common followed by the quality of the food (a top three complaint at five of the six campuses). The quality of the teachers was a top three complaint at four of the six campuses.

Table 22. What Students Would Like to Change At Their Current Campus, by Charter School Campus

Charter School Campus	Most Common	Second Most Common	Third Most Common
Campus A	Quality of Food/Lunch (23.1%)	Increased Safety (15.4%) and Facilities Improvements (15.4%)	Increased Safety (15.4%) and Facilities Improvements (15.4%)
Campus B	Facilities Improvements (20.0%)	Quality of Teachers (15.0%)	Miscellaneous (12.5%)
Campus C	Facilities Improvements (30.6%)	Quality of Food/Lunch (19.4%)	More/Select Own Classes (9.0%)
Campus D	Dress Code (26.6%)	Quality of Food/Lunch (14.1%)	Quality of Teachers (12.6%)
Campus E	Facilities Improvements (29.8%)	Computers/Technology (17.5%)	Quality of Food/Lunch (10.5%) and Quality of Teachers (10.5%)
Campus F	More/Select Own Classes (24.4%)	Facilities Improvements (14.6%)	Quality of Teachers (12.2%)

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Thus, when given the opportunity to provide their number one compliment and their number one complaint, students split their responses between liking the educational environment (related to instruction, computers and technology, compliments of teachers, relationships with teachers, small classes, and focus on the future accounting for approximately 60% of all compliments) and liking of things more social in nature (sports, extracurriculars, friends, non-academic activities, gym, etc.) accounting for the remaining 40%. Complaints were more diverse, with five categories of response accounting for 65% of all responses, only one of which was particularly related to the educational environment (related to the quality of teachers).

Likelihood of Returning

Across all student respondents, approximately half indicated they would return to the same campus the following year (48%), while 23% were unsure. Of the 30% who said they would not return, 18 students said they would not return because they were graduating, and 7 reported that their current campus did not have the next grade level in which to enroll. The largest percentage of these respondents (108 students) selected the option “no because of another reason”.

Observations

Overall, students had positive reflections of their current campus.

- They mostly reported improved (or at least comparable) grades, attendance, and behavior and tended to like their current campus as much as, or better than, their last campus.

- Students tended to give their current campus high ratings across most areas of inquiry.
- A large proportion of students were able to convey that they appreciated their current campus' instructional quality, whether they were commenting on the teachers, the rigor of the instruction, the project-based learning, etc.

One campus was an exception to these overall findings, such that its students were less positive about the campus' impact on them, fewer students reported liking the campus, or liking it better than their prior campus, and this campus had a substantial proportion of students giving grades of D or F in various areas.

In the next section, analyses turn to examination of how the open-enrollment charter schools that opened in 2012-13 spent funds, and the ways in which those expenditures shed light on operational differences across schools.

Findings: Operational Costs (Objective 4)

The research question for examining the cost of operations was stated as:

- What were the costs of operating newly opened open-enrollment charter schools in 2012-13, specifically related to instruction, administration, and transportation?

This chapter examines how each of the six open-enrollment charter schools that opened in 2012-13 incurred costs using actual expenditure and enrollment data reported to TEA through the PEIMS system²². This analysis attempts to identify similarities and differences in operations across newly opened open-enrollment charter schools by examining costs as categorized by funding source, by type of expenditure, and by functional area. Within these categories, expenditures are examined at the aggregate level (in raw dollar values), on a per-student level, and on a percentage distribution basis. Because the charter schools vary in size, per-student and percentage distribution analyses were more relevant in comparing across charter schools. In the absence of detailed information direct from decision-makers at the charter schools themselves (as might be obtained through interviews and site visits as in a case study, for example), the analysis of expenditures is limited to what can be observed in the analysis of expenditure variances. There is no additional contextual information available about why they occurred.

Two of the charter schools, Legacy Preparatory Academy and Prime Preparatory Academy, had multiple campuses in 2012-13 (see Table 23), and expenditures coded at the campus level were combined with those charged at the charter school level. This is the most appropriate level for examining expenditures as it allows for comparability across charter schools.

Table 23. Charter Schools with Multiple Campuses Opening in 2012-13

Charter School	Campus Name
Legacy Preparatory Charter Academy	Legacy Preparatory Legacy – Mesquite Campus Legacy – Richardson Campus
Prime Prep Academy	Prime Prep Academy Prime Prep Academy Dallas

Unless otherwise specified, 2012-13 actual expenditures from all funding sources are included in the analysis.

Charter School Expenditure Summary

The six open-enrollment charter schools that opened one or more campuses in 2012-13 demonstrated wide ranges in both student enrollment and in spending. To compare spending across charter schools while taking into account the size of the student body, expenditure data was converted to an expenditure-per-student metric using PEIMS enrollment counts from 2012-13. Table 24 presents actual expenditures,

²² 2012-13 PEIMS expenditure data for campuses were released publicly in March 2014.

student enrollment, and expenditures-per-student for each school. As can be seen, UME Preparatory Academy had the lowest expenditures per student at \$5,445 while Fallbrook College Preparatory had the highest per student spending at \$11,551.

Table 24. Charter School Expenditures per Student, by Charter School, 2012-13

School Name	Total Expenditures	Total Student Enrollment	Expenditures Per-Student
Austin Achieve	\$1,210,426	118	\$10,258
Excellence in Leadership	\$681,536	59	\$11,551
Fallbrook College Preparatory	\$2,596,918	352	\$7,378
Legacy Prep (3 campuses)	\$7,200,988	820	\$8,782
Prime Prep (2 campuses)	\$5,228,013	577	\$9,061
UME Prep	\$1,835,069	337	\$5,445
Total	\$18,752,950	2,263	\$8,287

Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

One factor influencing variance in spending per student is the size of the enrollment of the charter school. Generally, charter schools and campuses with larger student enrollments will have lower expenditures per student because of the economies of scale – students can be added to classrooms without adding another teacher or administrator, and other fixed costs (e.g., facilities) can be spread over a larger number of students. And in fact, the two smallest charter schools opening in 2012-13, Excellence in Leadership and Austin Achieve, had the highest expenditures per student.

Several other factors help to explain the wide variation in per-student spending including:

- **Different funding sources and levels.** Thirteen different funding sources supported one or more of the six charter schools, but only three funds supported all charter schools. Differences in student needs (e.g., whether they receive special education services or are classified as economically disadvantaged) likely explain differences in per student funding among the common funding sources since these students are eligible for a higher level of funding.
- **Different approaches to school operations and services.** Expenditure data reveal differences in the way the charter schools operate, with respect to transportation, food services, and facilities, and the types of expenditures within these functions.
- **Organization.** Whether the charter school had multiple campuses or only one campus appears to have contributed to spending differences, as multi-campus charter schools were likely to incur more administration costs.

Each of these factors that contribute to variance in spending are further explored in the following sections.

Expenditures by Funding Source

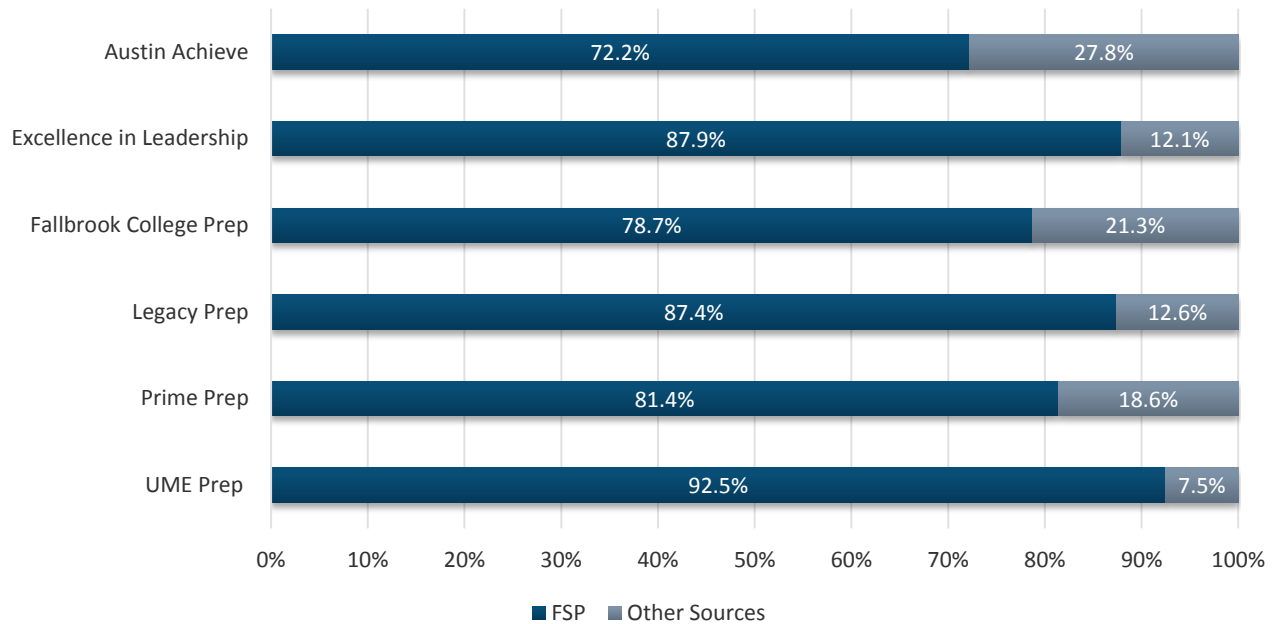
Examining expenditures by funding source serves to demonstrate something about the population served by the school and sheds light on how much money the school has available. All school districts in Texas receive a certain proportion of their funding from the Foundation School Program (FSP), which is the primary funding source for charter schools. The FSP is the state program administered by TEA that establishes the amount of state and local funding due to school districts and charter schools under Texas state law, and that provides the state share of this funding. Analysis of expenditures by funding source is important because not all charter schools receive the same types or levels of funding, and this has a direct bearing on the types and levels of expenditures incurred and on the approaches charter schools may use to allocate funding resources. For example, a charter school with special education students will receive more funding and incur higher expenditures than a charter school having the same total enrollment but no special education students.

Some but not all of the six charter schools received funding from additional federal and local sources including:

- Unrestricted Net Assets Class – additional funding obtained by the charter school through fundraising or other local activities. This classification must be used to account for those net assets the local governing board designates, and there is wide discretion in their use as provided by law.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I – supplemental federal funding for at-risk students.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part A – supplemental federal funding for students with disabilities.
- National School Breakfast and Lunch Program – federal reimbursement program for free or reduced-price meals for economically disadvantaged students.
- Public Charter Schools – federal project-based funding (Title V) for charter school planning, program design, implementation, assisting other schools, and/or to disseminate information about the charter school.
- State Textbook Fund – Funds awarded by the state (TEC Chapter 32) on a project basis to purchase technological software, equipment, or related training that contributes to student learning.
- Local funds – additional funding obtained by the charter school through fundraising or other local activities.

As can be seen in Figure 4, state appropriations (FSP and Other State Aid) were the source of funds for the vast majority of expenditures at each of the six charter schools (FSP funds ranged from 72% of total expenditures at Austin Achieve to 93% at UME Preparatory Academy). Other funding sources comprised only 8% (UME Preparatory) to 28% (Austin Achieve) of a charter schools' total expenditures. (Appendix C presents total expenditures in raw dollars for each funding source for each school.)

Figure 4. Percentage of Expenditures Supported by FSP Versus Other Funding Sources, by Charter School, 2012-13



Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Table 25 presents the distribution of charter school expenditures by fund source. Examining other funding sources in more detail, the National School Breakfast and Lunch program comprised approximately 7% of expenditures for three of the six charter schools, but was not a source of funding for the other three schools. This means that those schools are not seeking reimbursement from the federal program for any lunch program they have. Public Charter Schools funds was the only other source of funding that accounted for more than 5% of expenditures at four of the six charter schools.

Table 25. Expenditure Distribution by Fund, by Charter School, 2012-13

Fund	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep Academy	Total
Unrestricted Net Assets Class	11.9%	--	--	--	4.9%	0.7%	2.2%
ESEA Title I Pt A Basic Programs	5.0%	3.4%	3.3%	2.4%	3.2%	0.2%	2.7%
IDEA -- Part B Formula	1.7%	0.5%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%
IDEA -- Part B Preschool	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nat'l School Breakfast & Lunch	7.2%	6.8%	8.5%	--	--	--	1.9%
ESEA Title VI-Class Size Reduction	--	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.8%	0.1%	0.3%
Public Charter Schools	--	--	8.3%	6.8%	8.9%	4.7%	6.7%

Fund	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep Academy	Total
English Lang Acquisition/ Language Enhance	--	0.6%	--	--	--	--	--
State Textbook Fund	--	--	--	1.7%	--	0.7%	0.7%
FSP & Other State Aid-Charters Only	72.2%	87.9%	78.7%	87.4%	81.4%	92.5%	84.1%
State Temp Restrict Net Assets	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Campus Activity Net Asset Class	--	0.6%	--	0.6%	--	--	0.2%
Local Fund Temp Restrict Asset	2.1%	--	--	--	--	--	0.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Variations in charter school spending can also be examined by expenditures-per-student by funding source (see Table 26). FSP funding, which accounted for most of the charter schools' expenditures, varied substantially on a per student basis across the six charter schools, indicating differences in student needs and related funding eligibility described above. Excellence in Leadership spent the most per student in FSP funds (\$10,150), while UME Prep spent the least in FSP funds per student (\$5,035). Furthermore, each of the six charter schools received support from Title I funding for expenditures, but Title I expenditures varied from \$12 to \$511 per student. All charter schools received IDEA funding as well, with related expenditures ranging from \$54 to \$172 per student. The three charter schools that incurred expenditures reimbursed by the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program spent between \$629 to \$779 per student, and the four receiving state Public Charter Schools funding spent between \$254 and \$804 per student. All non-FSP sources combined supported 7.5% to 27.8% of total expenditures.

Table 26. Total Expenditures per Student by Fund, by Charter School, 2012-13

Fund	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep Academy
Unrestricted Net Assets Class	\$1,224	--	--	--	\$448	\$36
ESEA Title I Pt A Basic Programs	\$511	\$387	\$246	\$210	\$288	\$12
IDEA -- Part B Formula	\$172	\$54	\$73	\$89	\$78	\$67
IDEA -- Part B Preschool	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nat'l School Breakfast & Lunch	\$733	\$779	\$629	--	--	--
ESEA Title VI-Class Size Reduction	--	\$44	\$9	\$11	\$72	\$3
Public Charter Schools	--	--	\$615	\$595	\$804	\$254
English Lang Acquisition/ Language Enhance	--	\$70	--	--	--	--
State Textbook Fund	--	--	--	\$150	--	\$36
FSP and Other State Aid-Charters Only	\$7,406	\$10,150	\$5,805	\$7,676	\$7,373	\$5,035

Fund	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep Academy
State Temp Restrict Net Assets	--	--	--	--	--	--
Campus Activity Net Asset Class	--	\$67	--	\$50	--	\$2
Local Fund Temp Restrict Asset	\$212	--	--	--	--	--
Total	\$10,258	\$11,551	\$7,378	\$8,782	\$9,061	\$5,445

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Expenditures by Type

Some of the variance in spending across the charter schools is due to differences in the types of expenditures. Expenditure types, referred to as object codes in the PEIMS data standards, represent the content of the expenditure (the description of what is being spent), such as salaries, travel, textbooks, or professional services, and examining variation in expenditure types may shed light on different needs that schools have and also on choices they make in terms of how they run their schools.

There are six major expenditure categories tracked for all Texas public schools. The first four categories are considered operating expenditures in that they are expected to be annually recurring types of expenditures. The remaining two are non-operating expenditure types, included in total expenditures but not a component of operating expenditures. The six major expenditure type categories are:

1. Salaries and Benefits – includes salaried and hourly staff costs, substitute costs, health insurance, retirement benefits, applicable taxes, workers compensation, and other payroll related costs.
2. Contracted Services – includes all purchased services for legal, accounting, consulting, and contracted professional development. Also includes purchased services for building utilities, such as electricity and natural gas.
3. Supplies and Materials – includes instructional and non-instructional consumable supplies and materials, including paper, minor equipment, facilities maintenance parts and supplies, and food.
4. Other Operating – includes travel costs, professional dues, and other operating expenditures not otherwise classified in the above categories.
5. Debt Service – debt service relates to interest and principal payments on debt, generally related to school facilities costs.
6. Capital Outlay – represents investments in large equipment, vehicles, or other capital items not consumable in a 12-month period.

Appendix C presents charter school expenditures by major object category. Statewide for all public school districts including charter schools, approximately 63% of total expenditures (including debt service and capital outlay) relate to staffing costs.²³ Table 27 presents a percentage distribution of expenditures for each of the six charter schools by object. As can be seen, charter school salaries and benefits represented

²³ Academic Excellence Indicator System 2011-12 State Profile Report, Texas Education Agency.

between 56% and 68% of total expenditures, similar to the state average. The charter school with the lowest percentage of expenditures related to salaries and benefits, Prime Prep, had the highest percentage of contracted services (33%). The range in contracted services expenditures is primarily due to differences in facilities operating expenditures. Facilities use is discussed later in the *Expenditures by Function* section of this report. Of the three charter schools incurring debt service-related expenditures, only one (UME Prep at 4%) had debt service that was greater than 1% of total expenditures.

Supplies and materials expenditures ranged from 5% of total expenditures (Excellence in Leadership) to 15% (Austin Achieve). More than one-half of Austin Achieve’s supplies expenditures related to their food services operation, and almost one-third of supplies expenditures for Fallbrook College Prep (the second highest percentage above) were incurred for the same purpose. Excellence in Leadership (having the lowest percentage of supplies and materials above) did not incur any supplies expenditures for its food services operation, even though it had other types of expenditures supporting this operation. The remaining variance in supplies and materials expenditures relates primarily to differences in instructional supplies.

Table 27. Distribution of Expenditures by Expenditure Type (Object Code), by Charter School, 2012-13

Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Salaries and Benefits	56.3%	65.3%	68.1%	61.3%	56.0%	58.2%
Contracted Services	26.7%	26.0%	13.8%	25.7%	32.6%	23.4%
Supplies and Materials	15.3%	4.8%	12.8%	7.6%	9.3%	8.3%
Other Operating Costs	1.4%	3.9%	5.3%	4.4%	2.1%	5.8%
Debt Service	0.3%	--	0.0%	1.0%	--	4.3%
Capital Outlay	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Table 28 shows per-student expenditures by expenditure type. Substantial variances existed in salaries and benefits expenditures per student, ranging from \$3,166 for UME Prep to \$7,533 for Excellence in Leadership. UME Prep per-student spending on salaries and benefits was consistent with its substantially lower FSP-funded expenditures per student shown in the above section. Excellence in Leadership’s higher per student amount for salaries and benefits reflects its much lower student enrollment.

Table 28. Distribution of per-Student Expenditures by Expenditure Type (Object Code), by Charter School, 2012-13

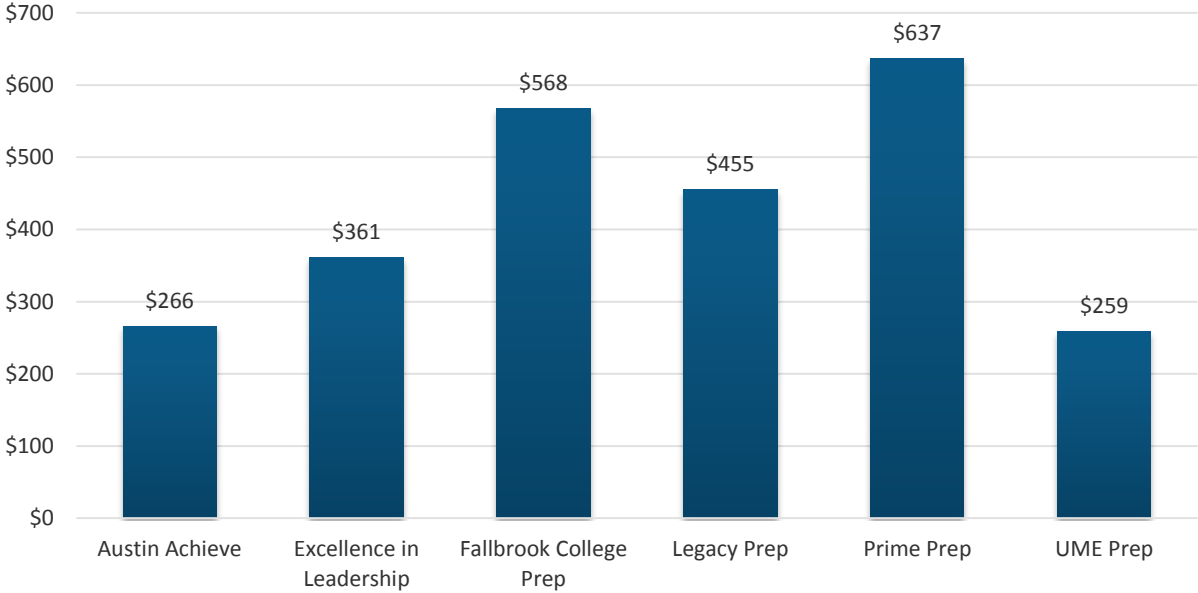
Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Salaries and Benefits	\$5,778	\$7,533	\$5,021	\$5,380	\$5,078	\$3,166

Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Contracted Services	\$2,744	\$3,007	\$1,021	\$2,258	\$2,949	\$1,276
Supplies and Materials	\$1,565	\$555	\$941	\$668	\$843	\$454
Other Operating Costs	\$147	\$456	\$393	\$386	\$190	\$317
Debt Service	\$23	-	\$2	\$90	-	\$233
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$10,258	\$11,551	\$7,378	\$8,782	\$9,061	\$5,445

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Figure 5 illustrates spending on supplies and materials at the per-student level. Although Austin Achieve proportionally spent the greatest amount of its expenditures in this category (15%) compared to all the other schools (between 5% and 13%), it had the second lowest per-student cost in this category (\$266 per student). Prime Prep had the highest per-student cost in this category (\$637), but only spent 9% of its total expenditures in this object code. The lack of alignment between proportional spending and per-student costs is driven in large part by student enrollment differences among the charter schools.

Figure 5. Supplies and Materials Expenditures per Student, by Charter School, 2012-13



Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

The variances across these analyses reflect different approaches and choices in operating a charter school using contracted versus in-house resources, using debt to finance investments versus spending other available charter school funds, and operating different services or functions. The following section examines in greater depth the functional and service differences across the charter schools.

Expenditures by Function

Functions represent the “purpose” of the expenditure, such as instruction, health services, administration, facilities, or transportation. Examining expenditures in this way can shed light on differences in how schools choose to operate. The PEIMS data standards prescribe function codes that Texas school districts use to track expenditures. The following line items represent the function codes applied by the charter schools, and demonstrates the types of purposes that are captured:

Instruction	Food Services
Curriculum & Staff Development	General Administration
Instructional Leadership	Facilities Maintenance & Operations
School Leadership	Security
Guidance Counseling & Evaluation	Technology
Health Services	Community Services
Transportation	Fundraising
Extracurricular Activities	

Instructional Leadership differs from school leadership in that school leadership relates to campus administrators such as principals and assistant principals. Instructional leadership relates to instructional administrators serving all campuses. Extracurricular activities may include sports, music, drama or other activity provided at the campus level. Appendix C presents charter school expenditures by function.

The proportion of a charter school’s expenditures by function varied substantially across the six schools examined, primarily because some of the schools did not incur any costs with respect to particular functions, while others did (Table 29). For example, some schools did not incur transportation costs, while others did not incur food service costs. Across all schools, instruction accounted for the largest proportion of expenditures, ranging from 44% at Austin Achieve to 61% at Fallbrook College Preparatory. Other functions that comprised a substantial portion of total expenditures across some or most schools were School Leadership, Plant Maintenance and Operations, and Food Services. Transportation accounted for 8% of expenditures at Austin Achieve but was not a source of expenditures at any of the other schools.

Table 29. Expenditures by Function, by Charter School, 2012-13

Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Instruction	43.9%	45.6%	60.5%	53.6%	45.1%	36.2%
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development	0.1%	0.6%	1.7%	5.4%	0.8%	0.1%
Instructional Leadership	0.0%	--	--	1.8%	2.8%	0.1%
School Leadership	19.1%	--	7.3%	12.2%	8.0%	9.2%
Guidance Counseling & Evaluation	0.1%	--	1.8%	1.1%	2.8%	0.1%
Health Services	--	0.1%	2.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.6%
Student Transportation	8.1%	--	--	--	--	--
Food Services	8.6%	6.7%	8.6%	0.4%	2.2%	1.7%
Co-curricular / Extracurricular	0.4%	0.6%	0.1%	0.7%	3.1%	2.8%
General Administration	6.2%	31.9%	12.5%	9.3%	5.6%	16.6%
Plant Maintenance and Operations	10.9%	12.9%	2.6%	11.5%	24.3%	19.8%
Security & Monitoring	--	1.6%	--	0.1%	1.1%	0.3%
Data Processing	0.2%	--	2.7%	1.8%	2.9%	3.4%
Community Services	1.3%	--	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	4.8%
Debt Service	--	--	--	1.0%	--	4.3%
Fundraising	1.1%	--	--	--	0.4%	--
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Expenditures by function can also be examined using the expenditure per student calculation (see Table 30). Looking at those functions commonly used, expenditures coded to instruction ranged from \$1,972 per student at UME Prep to \$5,273 per student at Excellence in Leadership. For all other schools, the per-student expenditure amount for instruction ranged from \$4,000 to \$4,700.

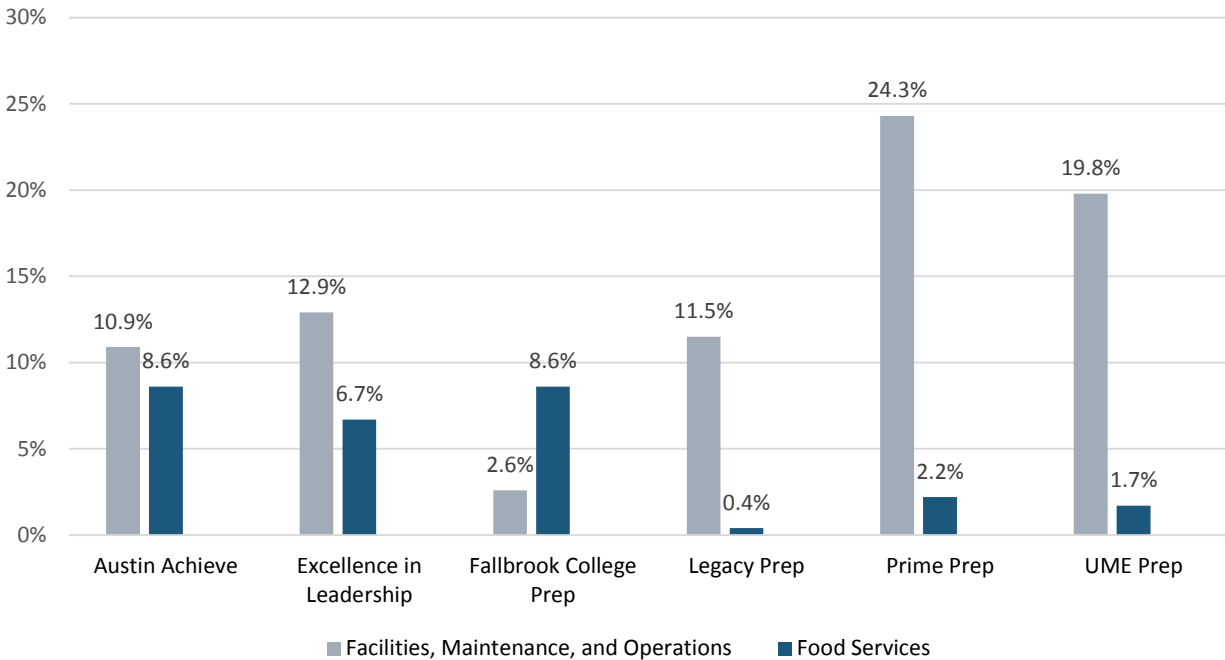
Table 30. Expenditures per Student by Function, by Charter School, 2012-13

Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Instruction	\$4,503	\$5,273	\$4,465	\$4,706	\$4,089	\$1,972
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development	\$6	\$67	\$123	\$477	\$73	\$6
Instructional Leadership	--	--	--	\$157	\$250	\$6
School Leadership	\$1,956	--	\$541	\$1,072	\$723	\$500
Guidance Counseling & Evaluation	\$13	--	\$136	\$98	\$251	\$3
Health Services	\$3	\$7	\$151	\$86	\$82	\$32
Student Transportation	\$834	--	--	--	--	--
Food Services	\$883	\$779	\$633	\$32	\$202	\$92
Co-curricular / Extracurricular	\$37	\$67	\$4	\$65	\$278	\$154
General Administration	\$640	\$3,689	\$924	\$819	\$506	\$902
Plant Maintenance and Operations	\$1,121	\$1,487	\$195	\$1,009	\$2,203	\$1,079
Security & Monitoring	--	\$183	\$2	\$9	\$98	\$18
Data Processing	\$16	--	\$203	\$161	\$259	\$188
Community Services	\$130	--	--	\$1	\$12	\$259
Debt Service	--	--	--	\$90	--	\$233
Fundraising	\$116	--	--	--	\$36	\$2
Totals	\$10,258	\$11,551	\$7,378	\$8,782	\$9,061	\$5,445

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Excellence in Leadership’s high per-student cost in instruction appears to be attributable in part to its substantially lower student enrollment and substantially higher FSP funding per student as noted earlier. More substantial variances among charter schools existed in other functions – primarily facilities maintenance, food services, and transportation. Figure 6 shows the percentage of charter school expenditures devoted to facilities maintenance and operations and to food services. As can be seen, in the facilities category, expenditures per school ranged from less than 3% at Fallbrook College Prep to more than 24% at Prime Prep. Food service expenditures were another area of spending that exhibited variance across the schools. Three of the six charters (Austin Achieve, Excellence in Leadership, and Fallbrook College Prep) had substantial food service operations and received federal reimbursements to support them. These three charter schools spent between 6.7% and 8.6% of their total expenditures on food services. The remaining three charter schools operated smaller food service operations, and none of these three received any federal reimbursement through the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program.

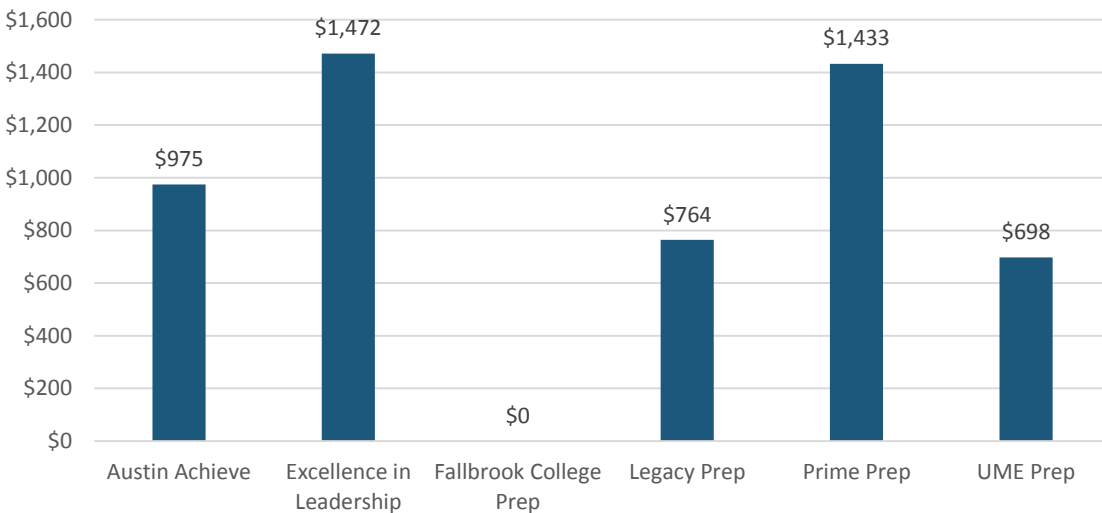
Figure 6. Percentage of Expenditures Incurred for Facilities Maintenance and Operations, by Charter School, 2012-13



Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Figure 7 shows expenditures per student for facilities contract maintenance and repair and rentals/operating leases combined. These two line items represented 69% of expenditures charged to the facilities maintenance function code for all charter schools combined. Per-student amounts at individual charter schools ranged from \$0 at Fallbrook College Prep to \$1,472 at Excellence in Leadership.

Figure 7. Expenditures per Student, Facilities Contract Maintenance and Repair and Rentals/ Operating Leases Combined, by Charter School, 2012-13

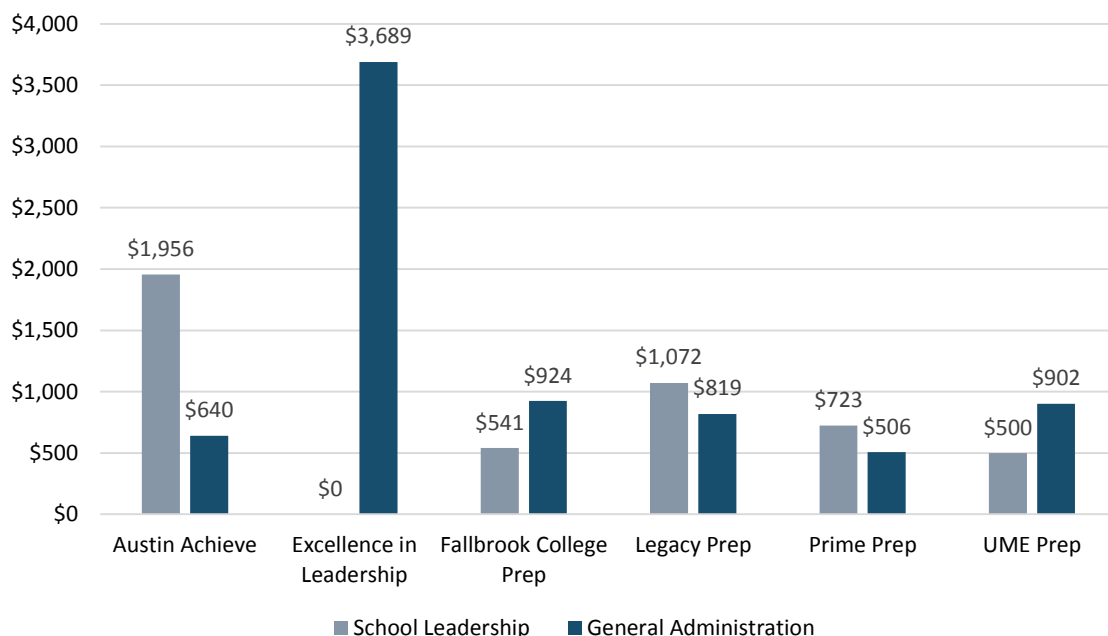


Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Only one charter school of six incurred transportation costs – Austin Achieve. This represented 8.1% of their actual expenditures in 2012-13, or \$834 per student. None of the other charter schools incurred transportation costs. This suggests that for the remaining schools parents were required to provide transportation. This is different from public school districts where transportation is generally provided, even though it is not required by state law.

Figure 8 shows expenditures per student incurred for School (campus) Leadership and General Administration. For School Leadership, expenditures per student ranged from \$0 at Excellence in Leadership to \$1,956 at Austin Achieve. For General Administration, expenditures per student were closer for five of the six charter schools (between \$506 and \$924) but for Excellence in Leadership the per-student expenditure for General Administration was \$3,689 (this school coded 32% of its expenditures to this function).

Figure 8. Expenditures per Student Incurred for School Leadership, by Charter School, 2012-13



Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

The per-student variances in school leadership expenditures reflects the large variation in student enrollment among the charter schools. Fallbrook College Prep and UME Prep, the two schools with the lowest per-student amounts, had the highest average campus enrollment among the six charter schools.

The extremely high level of expenditures incurred at Excellence in Leadership for General Administration appears to be due to two factors. First, this charter school’s enrollment is substantially smaller than the other charter schools, and these costs – such as an administrator’s salary – must be spread over a fewer number of students. The second factor is that Excellence in Leadership was the only charter school not incurring school leadership expenditures. The school instead charged these expenditures to general administration. This may reflect an inconsistency in how the account codes were applied.

Only the charter schools that had more than one campus (Legacy Prep and Prime Prep) showed substantial expenditures for instructional leadership, which are costs typically incurred at the district or charter school level and not at the campus level. Legacy Prep incurred \$157 per student and Prime Prep incurred \$250 per student.

Variations in other functional expenditures per student are presented in Table 31. Certain schools spent considerably more per student than others in certain functions:

- Legacy Prep (Curriculum & Instruction Staff Development)
- Prime Prep (Extracurricular Activities and Guidance and Evaluation)
- Excellence in Leadership (Security)
- UME Prep (Community Services)
- Fallbrook College Prep (Health Services)

Wide ranges in technology spending were also observed, although the amounts spent per student were relatively small compared to overall expenditures per student.

Table 31. Expenditures-per-Student, Other Selected Functions, by Charter School, 2012-13

Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Curriculum & Instruction Staff Development	\$6	\$67	\$123	\$477	\$73	\$6
Guidance Counseling and Evaluation	\$13	--	\$136	\$98	\$251	\$3
Health Services	\$3	\$7	\$151	\$86	\$82	\$32
Extracurricular Activities	\$37	\$67	\$4	\$65	\$278	\$154
Security and Monitoring	--	\$183	\$2	\$9	\$98	\$18
Technology	\$16	--	\$203	\$161	\$259	\$188
Community Services	\$130	--	--	\$1	\$12	\$259

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency.

Observations

Examining expenditures at the six open-enrollment charter schools that began operations in 2012-13 revealed differences in charter school operations as defined by the categories that describe the ways in which their money was spent. Expenditures were incurred at different levels and for different purposes, likely reflecting the unique nature of the charter schools. Variances in charter school spending appear to be due to three major factors: differences in size, differences in funding, and differences in choices related to school operations and services (functions). Specifically:

- Total school expenditures (all funds) in 2012-13 for the six charter schools combined were \$18,752,950. Expenditures at individual charter schools ranged from \$681,536 (Excellence in Leadership Academy – one campus) to \$7,200,988 (Legacy Prep – three campuses).
- Expenditures per student in 2012-13 ranged from \$5,445 (UME Preparatory Academy) to \$11,551 (Excellence in Leadership). Excellence in Leadership had the lowest enrollment at 59 students.
- Funding differences were due to different funding sources as well as per student allocations. Only three funding sources (out of 13 collectively) were common across the six schools. Differences in per-student allocations from major state and federal funding sources can likely be explained through different student attributes that drive funding (e.g., economically disadvantaged, special education).
- The six charter schools differed in the functional operations and services provided. Only one school incurred transportation expenditures, and only three had substantial food service programs. Facilities expenditures ranged from approximately 3% to 24% of total expenditures across the six charter schools. Minor per student spending differences existed in other functional expenditures as well, including health services, security, extracurricular activities, and guidance and counseling services.
- Charter schools that had multiple campuses incurred different types and levels of costs (e.g., instructional leadership) than those that were individual campuses.
- The wide variation in use of certain expenditure codes suggests that the charter schools may not be applying the account codes in a consistent manner. Further, some schools charged certain expenditures at the campus level while others with multiple campuses charged them at the school level.

The final section of this report examines the extent to which opening of the nine open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 impacted the composition of staff and students in the schools those students had attended prior to 2012-13.

Findings: Changes in Feeder Schools (Objective 5)

Research questions for examining how opening the new charter school campuses impacted students, schools, and parents in the schools those students left behind included:

- To what extent did the opening of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 change the composition of the student body in feeder campuses?
- In what ways did the opening of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses impact parents of students in feeder campuses?

To examine the impact of opening nine new charter school campuses in 2012-13 on the feeder campuses and districts which contributed students, three different analyses were conducted. First, student data (PEIMS demographic data and students' STAAR records) were compared from 2011-12 (the year before the new open-enrollment charter school campuses opened) to 2012-13 (the first year of the new open-enrollment charter schools campus' operations). Second, staffing data (demographic and salary information) were similarly compared. While archival data are available for both students and teachers, which address the first aspects of this research objective, no archival data exists for examining "impact on parents" in those schools and campuses, as is required by TEC §12.118. To approximate a measure in response to this requirement, a survey was administered to principals from feeder campuses to ask their perception of how opening the charter school campuses impacted parents of students at their campus. Data from this survey were analyzed as the third component of this research objective.

Changes in Student Demographics and Achievement

To examine changes in the demographics of the feeder campuses, the prior year school (in 2011-12) was identified for each of the students attending one of the newly opened open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13. The students attending the new open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 came from a total of 679 feeder campuses. On average, three students per feeder campus attended one of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses, but one student was the most common number (i.e., the mode) contributed by campuses. Although the maximum number of students contributed by a campus was 82, the vast majority of campuses lost only a few students. Eighty-four percent of campuses lost less than 1% of their students, and only 13 campuses lost more than 5% of their students (see Table 32). Seven of the 13 campuses with more than 5% of students leaving for the charter school campuses had fewer than ten enrolled students in 2011-12.

Table 32. Number of Campuses by the Percentage of Students Contributed, 2012-13

Percentage of Students Leaving to Attend New Open-Enrollment Charter	Number of Schools	Percent
Fewer than 1% of students	572	84.2%
1% to 4.9% of students	94	13.8%
5% to 9.9% of students	4	0.6%
10% to 29.9% of students	4	0.6%
30% or more of students	5	0.7%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

The demographic composition of campuses that contributed fewer than 10% of their students to the new charters (more than 98% of the campuses) did not change substantially between 2011-12 and 2012-13 (see Appendix D for tables containing all demographic data for both years). However, for the nine campuses contributing more than 10% of their students, there were some changes in demographics from one year to the next. It is important to note that these campuses were small in size to begin with, so when the total number of students decreased by 10% to 30%, subgroup population shifts were more noticeable. Some of the changes, included:

- Campuses contributing between 10% and 30% of their students (four campuses) to the new open-enrollment charter school campuses had:
 - Fewer at-risk students in 2012-13 (35%) as compared to 2011-12 (56%).
 - Fewer Hispanic students in 2012-13 (24%) as compared to 2011-12 (51%).
 - Fewer economically disadvantaged students in 2012-13 (49%) as compared to 2011-12 (74%).
 - More African American students in 2012-13 (39%) as compared to 2011-12 (26%).
- Campuses contributing more than 30% of their students (five campuses) to the new open-enrollment charter school campuses had:
 - More at-risk students in 2012-13 (50%) as compared to 2011-12 (34%).
 - More African American students in 2012-13 (47%) as compared to 2011-12 (38%).
 - More LEP students in 2012-13 (11%) as compared to 2011-12 (5%).
 - Fewer white students in 2012-13 (40%) as compared to 2011-12 (57%).

Thus, while the vast majority of campuses lost only a small number of students (and did not change demographically), a small handful of campuses that lost a larger percentage of students did indeed see a number of changes demographically. But, it is important to keep in mind that the campuses that lost a larger percentage of students tended to have very small enrollments, thus the number of students that left was very small.

Student achievement on the STAAR Reading/ELA and Mathematics assessments for Grades 3 through 8 did not change substantially at the campuses that contributed students to the new charter school campuses. In the nine campuses that contributed 10% or more of their student population, the number

of students in Grades 3 through 8 taking STAAR assessments at those campuses was extremely small (e.g., across the nine campuses, there were 16 Grade 6 students in 2011-12 and 21 Grade 6 students in 2012-13 with STAAR data). Such small numbers of students in each grade can lead to changes in scores from one year to the next driven by the performance of just one student. Thus, given the fact that 98% of feeder campuses lost fewer than 10% of their student body, and among those schools there were no substantial changes in student achievement, results are shown in Table 33 for all students in all feeder campuses together.

Table 33. Feeder Campus STAAR Reading/ELA Performance by Grade, 2011-12 and 2012-13

Grade	Mean Scale Score 2011-12	Mean Scale Score 2012-13	Met Level II 2011-12	Met Level II 2012-13	Met Level III 2011-12	Met Level III 2012-13
Reading/ELA						
3 rd grade	1403.0	1406.5	71.0%	74.2%	17.2%	17.1%
4 th grade	1496.2	1490.9	72.0%	67.7%	15.5%	17.2%
5 th grade	1533.5	1536.8	74.3%	74.2%	14.5%	17.1%
6 th grade	1584.8	1578.2	74.1%	68.8%	15.3%	17.3%
7 th grade	1629.8	1624.8	74.8%	75.9%	14.8%	12.3%
8 th grade	1653.8	1649.8	76.8%	79.0%	13.5%	12.4%
Overall	1529.1	1529.7	73.4%	72.6%	15.4%	16.1%
Mathematics						
3 rd grade	1437.1	1446.7	62.4%	64.0%	11.7%	13.1%
4 th grade	1518.0	1521.9	63.2%	64.7%	11.4%	13.9%
5 th grade	1569.9	1572.9	73.2%	70.3%	16.2%	18.3%
6 th grade	1614.3	1602.8	76.3%	70.4%	18.0%	15.0%
7 th grade	1616.9	1617.2	66.8%	69.8%	9.2%	7.8%
8 th grade	1645.6	1641.4	70.3%	72.1%	5.0%	2.5%
Overall	1550.7	1554.3	68.2%	68.0%	12.5%	13.0%

Source: STAAR Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Changes to Staff

The demographic composition of staff at campuses which contributed students to the charter school campuses was examined in the year prior to (2011-12) and the year the new charter campuses opened (2012-13). Table 34 displays the demographic characteristics of teaching staff in feeder campuses in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. Similar to the results for students, the composition of staff at the feeder campuses (regardless of the percentage of students lost to the new open-enrollment charter school campuses) did not change in any substantial or meaningful way from one year to the next.

Table 34. Feeder Campus Staff Characteristics, 2011-12 and 2012-13

Teacher Subgroup	2011-12	2012-13
Gender		
Males	21.4%	21.3%
Females	78.6%	78.7%
Ethnicity		
African American	16.9%	17.1%
American Indian	5.4%	5.3%
Asian	2.4%	2.5%
White	77.8%	77.5%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.3%
Hispanic / Latino	23.0%	23.2%
Employment Type		
School or district employee	86.7%	86.1%
Contracted instructional staff	13.3%	13.9%
Highest Degree		
No Bachelor's or higher	12.0%	12.6%
Bachelor's	65.3%	64.6%
Master's	22.0%	22.1%
Doctorate	0.7%	0.7%

Note: Staff is limited to educational aides, substitute teachers, and teachers.

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

The experience and compensation levels for teachers also did not change in a meaningful way in the feeder campuses after the opening of the new charter school campuses (see Table 35). Mean levels of teacher tenure (the total number of years a teacher has held a position within the district), years of experience (the total number of years a teacher has held a position with any district), and base pay were all comparable. However, for campuses that lost more than 30% of students to one of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses, the average years of experience of teachers increased from 7.2 to 9.4 from 2011-12 and 2012-13, although the number of teachers at these campuses was small (see Appendix D). In general, the analysis of staffing data indicated that there were no major shifts in staff characteristics at the feeder campuses after the opening of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses.

Table 35. Feeder Campus Average Teacher Experience and Salary, 2011-12 and 2012-13

Characteristic	2011-12	2012-13
Years Tenure	7.0	6.9
Years Experience	9.8	9.6
Base pay	\$45,769.60	\$45,973.70
Total pay	\$46,807.90	\$47,058.40

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Principal Perceptions of Impact on Parents

As described earlier, principals of schools which had students enroll in the new charter school campuses in 2012-13 were administered a survey about the parents in their district as a means for addressing how opening of the charter school campuses affected parents in the feeder campuses and districts (see Appendix B for more information on survey development and administration). Analysis of responses was limited to principals who indicated that they had been in their position for more than two years (to enable them to contrast their experience with parents before and after the opening of the new charter school campuses in 2012-13). Of the 130 principals who responded (a total response rate of 23% was obtained), 86 had been in their position for more than two years.

Fifty-three of 86 principals (62%) responded that they were aware that one of the nine open-enrollment charter campuses had opened during the 2012-13 school year. Of those 53 principals, 33 principals (62 %) indicated that they had lost students to one of the newly-opened charter school campuses (though in fact they all had). When asked about changes in parental involvement at their campus after the charter school campuses opened, only one principal indicated that parental involvement had decreased since the charter school campuses opened. It is indeterminate, however, whether this decline in parental involvement is due to the opening of the charter school campuses or other, unrelated, factors. The remainder of the principals indicated that there had been no change in parental involvement.

Principals who were aware of the new charter school campuses were asked if they (or another administrator at the campus) had been approached by parents about the new charter school campuses. Table 36 shows the responses of 53 principals to four questions about the content of those conversations. In general, only 20% to 30% of principals indicated that parents had approached them about any of the four topics.

Table 36. Conversations with Parents at their Campus, 2013-14

Over the past two years... have any parents of students in your school approached you or another administrator at your school:	No	Yes	I don't know
With general questions about the new charter school in your area?	66.0%	30.2%	3.8%
With questions about the educational approach or philosophy of the new charter school in your area?	73.6%	26.4%	0.0%
Asking about things your school might do differently compared to what one of the new charter schools is doing?	75.5%	22.6%	1.9%
To discuss withdrawing their students from your school to enroll them in the new charter school?	73.6%	26.4%	0.0%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Principal Survey

Responding principals were asked for their opinions across a number of topics related to charter school campuses, and how their beliefs have changed since the opening of the new charter school campuses. Of the 52 principals who responded to these items, approximately 30% indicated that they were concerned about losing students to surrounding charter school campuses. On the other hand, very few principals indicated that they have changed their expectations for staff, their instructional approaches, parental

engagement activities, communication with parents, or how they hold teachers accountable (see Table 37).

Table 37. School Principal Survey Responses on the Impact of New Charter School Campuses, 2013-14

Provide your opinions in general, not only based on the new charter schools.	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree
I am concerned about losing students to surrounding charter schools.	69.2%	30.8%
I have changed the expectations I have for my staff due to the opening of public charter schools.	84.6%	15.3%
I have recommended instructional approaches or other pedagogical changes as a result of the opening of public charter schools.	90.4%	9.6%
I have recommended changes to how we engage with parents as a result of the opening of public charter schools.	80.8%	19.2%
I have tried to communicate more with parents as a result of the opening of public charter schools.	82.7%	17.3%
I hold teachers more accountable for the performance of their students because of public charter schools.	82.7%	17.3%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Principal Survey

It is important to note that this method of obtaining principal input as a mechanism for measuring change in parents in feeder campuses has several limitations. For instance, there are ways in which parents may have been impacted which principals would not know about. Further, principals are under no obligation to respond to the survey, and many have not been in their position for a sufficient number of years to be able to answer the questions. Future evaluations may consider different methods for attempting to address this evaluation goal under Objective 5.

Observations

In general, the analyses found little indication that the opening of the new open-enrollment charter school campuses in 2012-13 had much of an impact on most of the campuses which contributed students.

- The vast majority of campuses contributed only a few students (most campuses lost only a single student to a new charter campus), and their demographics and achievement were largely unchanged in aggregate.
- Looking at staffing, there were no substantial changes that appear to have taken place in terms of the demographics, experience, or compensation of the staff in the campuses that contributed students to the new charter school campuses.
- Principals at feeder campuses who were aware of the new charter school campuses tended to indicate little impact of the new charter school campuses on how they ran their campus or interacted with parents (beyond answering questions that parents may have about the new charter school campus and how to enroll their students).

Discussion of Findings

The six open-enrollment charter schools that began operations at nine campuses in 2012-13 served very different populations of students. All but one campus demonstrated significantly lower scores and rates of satisfactory performance on STAAR Reading/ELA and Mathematics, while most campuses had significantly lower rates of student disciplinary infractions. One campus (Austin Achieve Public Schools) stood out from the others as demonstrating significantly higher performance on reading and mathematics standardized tests while also having significantly higher rates of student disciplinary infractions.

It is important to note when interpreting these results that while performance on reading and mathematics tests are standardized across charter school campuses and public school district campuses, tracking and coding of behavioral outcomes is not. Thus, it is unknown whether Austin Achieve Public Schools had a lower threshold for determining what disciplinary events would be entered into administrative databases (and thus reported through PEIMS), a lower threshold for actually intervening with student misbehavior, a higher set of behavioral expectations for students, or a combination of the above (or other explanations for such findings). In other words, given the lack of standardization across campuses in how behavior is managed and how events are tracked, this evaluation is unable to determine whether students at Austin Achieve Public Schools actually demonstrated worse behavior than students at other campuses, or if these findings reflect that staff at Austin Achieve Public Schools were more likely to intervene when students misbehaved compared to other campuses, or if the campus' threshold for determining that intervention was necessary was substantially lower than at other campuses.

Overall, students attending the charter school campuses reported liking their school, and reflected positively on their own behavior, grades, and attendance at their new campus. Approximately half indicated that they plan to return for the 2014-15 school year. While most students demonstrated neutral or positive feelings towards their campus, students from one campus reported more negative opinions. This campus had a smaller proportion of students who reported liking their campus and had larger proportions of students who assigned grades of D or F to various aspects of the campus. Across all students, the most frequent compliment was that the students like something about the campus' educational environment, and often times this was specifically related to learning and instruction.

Feeder campuses that lost students to the new charters were mostly unaffected by the opening of the charter school campuses, as measured by changes in the demographics of students, the composition of teaching staff, and by principal reports of changes in interactions with parents. The vast majority of the over 600 schools that fed students into the charter school campus lost fewer than 1% of their students. Among the nine campuses that lost more than 10% (four campuses) or 30% (five campuses) of their student body to the new charter campuses, the demographic composition of the student body did change. The demographic composition of staff, however, mostly did not change.

There was wide variability in how the charter schools spent school funds, reflecting differences in the needs of the students (e.g., the proportion receiving special education services or classified as LEP), the

environments of the schools (e.g., requiring student transportation, operating lunch programs), and whether the school is operating multiple campuses or not.

Limitations

The current evaluation was limited in its scope in that it only included an examination of student outcomes from the 2012-13 school year, which was the first year the campuses operated and the first year that students attended the campus. Thus, results for student performance may be confounded with other contextual factors that impact students when they attend a campus that opened for the first time, or that impact students whenever they switch to a different campus (whether it is new or not), such as changing friend groups, having new teachers, learning new rules, etc.

Analyses of outcomes were further limited by focusing exclusively on STAAR tests since many of the campuses did not have any (or a sufficient number of) students enrolled in higher grades to enable an analysis of performance on the EOC exams. Thus, results on student performance are only informative about those students who are in grades where STAAR is administered, and performance of students who take EOC exams was not considered.

Another limitation to the current evaluation was that it lacks any input from parents, as an insufficient number of parents completed the parent survey. The principal survey has its own set of limitations, namely that it is a coarse measure of impact on parents of students in feeder campuses. Finally, all survey data collected is misaligned with the outcome year of evaluation (2012-13) given that it was administered in 2013-14, and thus reflects student and principal perceptions in the *second* year of the charter school campus' operations.

Future Evaluations

Future evaluations may consider following the same students for a longer period of time at these campuses, or expanding the evaluation to include campuses that began operations prior to the year of the evaluation. Such an expansion would enable a more thorough examination of the impact of opening these campuses on student outcomes. Given the recent change in legislation to increase the total number of charter school campuses in operation in Texas, such an examination of student performance at these campuses would prove valuable.

In addition, future evaluations that begin earlier in the school year (this one began late into the 2013-14 school year) can work to further engage participating campus' parents to increase parent response rates to the parent survey, or otherwise attempt to obtain parent input (e.g., through parent focus groups at a subset of the nine campuses). Similarly, examination of the impact of opening charter school campuses on the parents of students in feeder campuses may be better understood through focus groups with parents or principals of feeder campuses, possibly selecting purposefully from the feeder campuses sample to represent both campuses that did not lose many students as well as campuses that did lose many students.

Similarly, to learn more about what operational decisions or strategies underlie variances in actual spending, future evaluations might include site visits to charter campuses and interviews with staff in the

finance departments to learn more about how accounting codes are utilized, how financial decisions are made, and what contextual details account for some of the differences in variances observed.

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Appendix A: Student Outcomes: Technical Detail

This appendix describes the methods used for the analysis of student outcomes. In particular, methods for creating the comparison groups via propensity score matching, and the regression models used in the analysis are discussed in detail. This analysis involved making inferences about how the outcomes for students attending open-enrollment charter school campuses that began operations in 2012-13 differed from the outcomes for the students, had they not enrolled in the start-up charter school campus (i.e., had they remained at the campus they were previously enrolled in or another non newly-opened charter school campus). We implemented a propensity score stratification approach using marginal mean weighting to balance for pre-treatment differences between the treatment and comparison groups (Hong & Hong, 2009). Statistical models also included the logit propensity score and pretreatment measures of the outcome to control for within strata differences and residual bias (Schafer & Kang, 2008). The method for selecting the comparison group, along with the approach to modeling the impact of these charter school campuses on students is described in the following sections.

Selection of the Comparison Group

Because students who selected into the new charter school campuses may differ demographically from students who did not enroll in these campuses, it was necessary to create comparison groups that accounted for pre-existing differences. To do so, feeder campuses were identified – these were all 679 campuses from which the 2012-13 charter school campus students were enrolled during the 2011-12 school year. Comparison group students were drawn from the group of students who were enrolled in feeder campuses during the 2011-12 school year, but did not attend one of the new charter campuses. Limiting the analytic sample in this way ensures that comparison students were geographically local and thus similar in a variety of ways (Cook, Shadish, & Wong, 2008). Separate comparison groups were selected for assessment (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, STAAR) and non-assessment outcomes (attendance and discipline) because assessments are given only in specific grades²⁴, whereas attendance and discipline data are available at all grade levels²⁵.

The general approach to selecting the comparison group was propensity score matching (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983). Pretreatment group differences (i.e., differences in 2011-12 achievement, demographics, attendance, behavior, and aggregate 2011-12 school demographics) were balanced through a propensity score stratification and marginal mean weighting approach. The logit propensity score and pre-treatment measure of the outcome were included in the final statistical model to control for within strata differences and residual bias. This approach differs from a one-to-one matching of students in the treatment and comparison group. Instead, the whole population of students eligible for inclusion in the comparison

²⁴ STAAR grade level assessments are given in Grades 3 – 8 and end-of-course (EOC) assessments, which are subject-specific, are required for graduation from a Texas public high school.

²⁵ Separate comparison groups were drawn for each campus, and for assessment outcomes they were drawn for each subject area for each campus.

group was considered for inclusion in the statistical model of impact. The general algorithm for this approach is as follows:

1. Fit a propensity score model using observable demographics, prior achievement, prior attendance and behavioral data, and school covariates to predict enrollment in a new charter school.
2. Limit the sample to students in the region of propensity score overlap (across treatment and comparison samples).
3. Divide students into five strata by propensity score. This step classifies students into five groups with similar propensity scores.
4. Calculate strata weights to account for the distribution of treatment and comparison students within each stratum. This step upweights and downweights comparison group students within each strata (e.g., if relatively few comparison students exist in a strata with many treatment students, those students would be weighted more heavily in the analysis than students in a strata with many comparison students, but relatively few treatment students).
5. Check for balance between the treatment and comparison groups by examining the mean standardized difference.
6. If any variables show imbalance, repeat step one (by modifying the propensity score model) through five until balance is achieved.

The strata specific weights calculated in step 4 were calculated such that the weight for all treatment cases (students attending the charter campus) were set to 1, and the weight for comparison cases was based on the following equation:

$$w_{ij} = \frac{N_c \times \frac{n_{Tj}}{N_T}}{n_{Ci}}$$

where w_{ij} is the weight for student i in strata j , N_c is the number of total comparison students (across all strata), n_{Tj} is the number of treatment cases in strata j , N_T is the number of total treatment students (across all strata), and n_{Ci} is the number of comparison cases in strata j . The end result of this weighting is that comparison cases in strata with fewer treatment cases are weighted less than comparison cases in strata with more treatment cases. This weighting scheme ensures that comparison cases which are similar to only a small number of treatment cases do not count too heavily in the analysis of outcomes.

Separate comparison groups were selected for STAAR score models and the attendance/behavior models. Because STAAR grade-level tests are administered only in Grades 3 through 8, and attendance and discipline data was available at all grade levels, the sample of students with prior and current year outcome data is very different for the two sets of outcomes. Therefore, separate comparison groups were generated; both to maintain the integrity of the comparison group for each outcome, but also to include as many students as possible in the comparison for the attendance and discipline outcomes.

Covariates Included in the Matching Algorithm

The propensity score models were fit using a large number of student covariates including achievement, attendance, behavior, demographics, and aggregate school demographics from the 2011-12 school year. A complete list of covariates is included below.

- STAAR Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) scale score
- STAAR Mathematics scale score
- Race/Ethnicity Indicator Variables
 - American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black/African American
 - Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Hispanic/Latino
- Special Education Indicator
- Migrant Indicator
- At-Risk Indicator
- Immigrant Indicator
- Number of Discipline Incidents
- Attendance Rate
- Grade Level Indicators
- Gender
- Economically Disadvantaged Status
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Status
- Limited English Proficient (LEP) Status
- Title I Status
- Prior School Aggregate Covariates
 - Percent American Indian/Alaskan Native Students
 - Percent Asian Students
 - Percent Black/African American Students
 - Percent White/Students
 - Percent Hispanic/Latino Students
 - Percent Migrant Students
 - Percent At Risk Students
 - Percent Immigrant Students
 - Percent Special Education Students
 - Percent LEP Students
 - Percent Economically Disadvantaged Students

Separate propensity score models were fit for each of the nine charter campuses, and for the two sets of outcomes (test scores and attendance/discipline), resulting in 17 different matching processes²⁶. Covariate balance was checked for all variables listed above. To examine balance, the weighted mean standardized difference (MSD) between treatment and comparison cases (using the strata weights described above) was calculated for all variables. Industry standards suggest that covariate balance has been achieved if all covariates have MSD less than 0.2 standard deviations. Across all models, the MSD was well below this threshold for all covariates, indicating no meaningful differences in the composition of the comparison and treatment groups existed for any of the comparisons in this report.

Statistical Impact Model

After creating matched comparison groups, propensity scores (and associated strata), and cases weights for comparison cases, regression models were fit separately for each outcome for each charter campus. The outcomes examined were STAAR Reading/ELA and Mathematics scale scores (as well as indicators of whether or not a student achieved Level II and Level III status on those assessments), attendance rate²⁷, and the number of discipline incidents²⁸. The regression models were fit using data combined across grades (Grades 4 – 8 for STAAR outcomes, and all grade-levels for attendance and discipline).

The general form of the statistical model was as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TX_i + \beta_2 Pretest_i + \beta_3 LPS_i + \sum \beta_{s+3} L_{(s+3)i} + \varepsilon_i$$

where TX_i is a binary variable indicating if the student attended the charter school, $Pretest_i$ is the prior year measure of the outcome variable (e.g., STAAR 2011-12 score), LPS_i is the logit propensity score, and $L_{(s+3)i}$ represent the propensity score strata. The coefficient β_i represents the treatment effect for the particular sample of students. This type of model is considered doubly-robust in that it includes both the propensity score and the pre-measure of the outcome variable.

Separate outcome models were fit for each charter school and outcome, with overall impact estimates calculated by aggregating through information weights. To calculate pooled estimates, the following approach was used:

Weights for each campus' results were calculated by using the inverse variance (1 divided by the squared standard error of the effect). The following equation shows how a weight is calculated for each campus c . The weights are calculated such that the sum of the w_c across all campuses equals 1.

²⁶ Matching was not done for STAAR outcomes for the Excellence in Leadership Academy as this campus had only students in Grades K – 3, and therefore no students with prior STAAR scores to be used for matching.

²⁷ Attendance rate was modeled using an arcsine transformation to account for the non-continuous nature of the variable (which ranged from 0 to 100). To ease interpretability, the attendance rate was also modeled with a linear model (with no transformation). Results did not differ across the two approaches.

²⁸ The number of discipline incidents was modeled using Poisson regression (which is applied to outcome data that is in the form of counts which are close to 0).

$$w_c = \frac{\sigma_c^{-2}}{\sum_c \sigma_c^{-2}}$$

In the above equation, σ_c^{-2} is the inverse variance association with the effect for campus c . Using these weights, the pooled effect δ_p is then calculated as follows:

$$\delta_p = \sum_c w_c \delta_c$$

With the pooled standard error calculated as below:

$$\sigma_p = \sqrt{\sum_c w_c^2 \sigma_c^2}$$

End-of-Course Assessments

Few campuses had students taking EOC assessments, and those that did had very low numbers of students taking each one (see Table A.1). As such, analyses of students' academic performance were restricted to examination of performance on Grades 4 – 8 STAAR tests.

Table A1. End of Course Assessment Average Performance at Charter School Campuses, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Grade	Average Scale Score	Std. Dev.	N
Algebra I				
UME Preparatory Academy	8	4027.3	362.9	16
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	8	3953.3	173.0	7
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	9	3467.6	266.7	40
Algebra II				
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	10	3770.0	249.0	8
Geometry				
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	9	3693.2	264.1	12
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	10	3548.2	270.4	42
English I Reading				
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	9	1867.0	219.5	49
English II Reading				
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	10	1959.7	246.6	50

Source: State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Statistical Results

The following tables present results from regression analyses described above. The tables limit results to the treatment effect, to present results in a more digestible format.

Table A2. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: STAAR Reading/ELA Scores, Grades 4-8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	10.425	7.464	1.397	0.163
Excellence in Leadership Academy ²⁹	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-25.240	7.972	-3.166	0.002**
Legacy Preparatory	-22.103	4.809	-4.596	0.000***
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-21.985	4.708	-4.670	0.000***
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-20.842	9.022	-2.310	0.021*
Prime Prep Academy	-21.632	7.320	-2.955	0.003**
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-20.148	5.289	-3.810	0.000***
UME Preparatory Academy	-5.618	7.538	-0.745	0.456
All Campuses	-17.625	2.201	-8.006	0.000***

* Significant at 0.05, ** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Table A3. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: STAAR Reading/ELA Percent Meeting Level II Standard, Grades 4 – 8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	5.838%	3.517	1.660	0.097
Excellence in Leadership Academy ³⁰	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-10.924%	4.071	-2.683	0.007**
Legacy Preparatory	-5.105%	1.807	-2.825	0.005**
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-6.045%	1.791	-3.375	0.001***
Legacy – Richardson Campus	2.541%	3.211	0.791	0.429
Prime Prep Academy	-7.479%	3.627	-2.062	0.039*
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-7.695%	2.289	-3.362	0.001***
UME Preparatory Academy	-3.574%	2.669	-1.339	0.181
All Campuses	-4.692%	0.890	-5.273	0.000***

* Significant at 0.05, ** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

²⁹ There are no reading effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

³⁰ There are no reading effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

Table A4. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: STAAR Reading/ELA Percent Meeting Level III Standard, Grades 4 – 8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	-3.252%	2.409	-1.350	0.177
Excellence in Leadership Academy ³¹	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-4.700%	2.732	-1.720	0.085
Legacy Preparatory	-1.996%	1.141	-1.749	0.080
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-3.484%	1.229	-2.836	0.005**
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-8.137%	3.187	-2.553	0.011*
Prime Prep Academy	-3.660%	2.172	-1.685	0.092
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-2.848%	1.584	-1.799	0.072
UME Preparatory Academy	1.227%	2.853	0.430	0.667
All Campuses	-6.009%	1.268	-4.737	0.000***

** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Table A5. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: STAAR Mathematics Scores, Grades 4-8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	29.246	8.613	3.395	0.001***
Excellence in Leadership Academy ³²	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-37.237	8.798	-4.233	0.000***
Legacy Preparatory	-63.123	5.039	-12.528	0.000***
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-62.459	4.966	-12.577	0.000***
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-31.719	10.008	-3.169	0.002**
Prime Prep Academy	-51.197	8.093	-6.326	0.000***
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-48.902	5.259	-9.299	0.000***
UME Preparatory Academy	-45.678	8.083	-5.651	0.000***
All Campuses	-47.372	2.337	-20.268	0.000***

** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

³¹ There are no reading effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

³² There are no mathematics effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

Table A6. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: STAAR Mathematics Percent Meeting Level II Standard, Grades 4 – 8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	7.701%	3.536	2.178	0.030*
Excellence in Leadership Academy ³³	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-14.923%	4.289	-3.479	0.001***
Legacy Preparatory	-22.190%	1.819	-12.200	0.000***
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-22.812%	1.799	-12.678	0.000***
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-8.680%	3.293	-2.636	0.008**
Prime Prep Academy	-21.941%	3.649	-6.013	0.000***
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-19.236%	2.466	-7.801	0.000***
UME Preparatory Academy	-9.879%	2.999	-3.294	0.001***
All Campuses	-17.383%	0.917	-18.951	0.000***

* Significant at 0.05, ** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Table A7. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: STAAR Mathematics Percent Meeting Level III Standard, Grades 4 – 8, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	1.134%	2.460	0.461	0.645
Excellence in Leadership Academy ³⁴	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-3.329%	2.374	-1.402	0.161
Legacy Preparatory	-5.221%	1.062	-4.918	0.000***
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-6.035%	1.145	-5.272	0.000***
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-7.887%	3.043	-2.592	0.010**
Prime Prep Academy	-4.896%	2.050	-2.388	0.017*
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-4.373%	1.143	-3.827	0.000***
UME Preparatory Academy	-8.058%	2.384	-3.379	0.001***
All Campuses	-13.818%	1.524	-9.067	0.000***

* Significant at 0.05, ** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness Assessment Data, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

³³ There are no mathematics effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

³⁴ There are no mathematics effect estimates for Excellence in Leadership Academy as only Grade 3 students took the STAAR assessment, and none had prior achievement scores.

Table A8. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: Attendance Rate, All Grades, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Effect	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	0.639%	0.665	0.961	0.337
Excellence in Leadership Academy	1.756%	0.939	1.871	0.061
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	-1.717%	0.340	-5.055	0.000***
Legacy Preparatory	-0.006%	0.269	-0.021	0.983
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-0.286%	0.260	-1.097	0.272
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-0.236%	0.439	-0.537	0.591
Prime Prep Academy	0.146%	0.442	0.330	0.742
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	0.670%	0.544	1.233	0.218
UME Preparatory Academy	-5.530%	0.484	-11.435	0.000***
All Campuses	-0.600%	0.100	-4.911	0.000***

*** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Table A9. Difference between Charter and Comparison Students: Number of Discipline Incidents, All Grades, by Charter School Campus, 2012-13

Charter School Campus Name	Log Count	Rate	Std. Error	T-Value	Sig.
Austin Achieve Public School	0.811	225%	0.105	7.737	0.000***
Excellence in Leadership Academy	-0.843	43%	1.002	-0.841	0.400
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy	0.302	135%	0.115	2.624	0.009**
Legacy Preparatory	-1.749	17%	0.158	-11.040	0.000***
Legacy – Mesquite Campus	-1.174	31%	0.140	-8.370	0.000***
Legacy – Richardson Campus	-0.113	89%	0.243	-0.463	0.643
Prime Prep Academy	-0.472	62%	0.140	-3.380	0.001***
Prime Prep Academy Dallas	-0.832	44%	0.085	-9.833	0.000***
UME Preparatory Academy	-1.035	36%	0.243	-4.263	0.000***
All Campuses	-0.401	67%	0.046	-8.803	0.000***

** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Appendix B: Survey Administration

Survey Development and Administration

Three surveys were developed for this evaluation: 1) a student survey, 2) a parent survey, and 3) a survey for principals of feeder schools that “lost” students to one of the open-enrollment charter school campuses that opened in 2012-13. The student and parent surveys were designed in parallel to ensure that the same constructs were measured. These surveys are described together. The principal survey is described separately.

Student and Parent Surveys

The research team developed a short student survey and a short parent survey both designed to measure the extent to which students felt they were impacted by attending their charter school campus. To measure the extent to which their attendance, grades, and behavior were impacted, questions were intentionally worded such that students were comparing their own outcomes (and parents their student’s outcomes) in their current campus *relative to* outcomes at their prior campus. Given the cognitive complexity of these types of questions, and the fact that surveys were administered during the 2013-14 school year (when some students could be in their second year at the new school), student surveys were restricted to students in Grades 6 and above. Parent surveys were restricted to parents whose children were in at least Grade 1 or higher so there could have been a prior school with which to make comparisons.

Both student and parent surveys included questions about how long the student attended the prior campus, their awareness as to the fact that their campus was a charter school campus, and questions asking them to compare their current campus to their last campus on grades, number of classes missed, frequency of behavioral issues (i.e., “getting into trouble”), and frequency of being told they are doing well. They were also asked how much they like their current campus, and whether they like it more or less than the last campus they (or their student) attended. In addition, a series of questions asked students and parents to grade their school on a scale of A through F in several different areas (e.g., how much they are learning, their campus’ extracurricular activities, campus safety, etc.). Two open-ended items were included to learn more about students’ and parents’ favorite thing about their new campus and what could be improved. Some demographic questions were also included (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, and grade level). A full copy of the student and parent surveys are included at the end of this Appendix.

Once both instruments were finalized and approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the research team conducted outreach to each of the nine charter school campuses. All nine were asked to participate in the parent survey, but only eight had students in Grades 6 and above to be included in the student survey.

For the parent survey, parents were offered an incentive to complete the survey: any parent submitting complete responses could opt-in to a drawing for one of three \$100 amazon.com gift cards. To advertise this incentive and announce the survey effort in general, the research team developed materials for schools to disseminate, including:

- Content for an email for the schools to send to parents.
- Flyers to advertise the survey effort for posting at campuses and sending home with students.
- A script to be used for automated phone systems to call parents and inform them of the survey opportunity.

All eight campuses with students in Grade 6 and above received a shipment of scantron surveys (a sufficient number for all eligible students to participate) along with instructions for administration. Surveys were to be administered in an anonymous fashion: no identifying information was collected, and campuses were provided with manila envelopes for students to return completed surveys confidentially. Shipments also contained parent consent forms, which campuses were instructed to send home at least one week in advance of administration. Campuses were informed that the campus with the highest student response rate would receive a \$250 gift card to help fund a staff appreciation event.

The research team contacted all nine charter school campuses at the end of April 2014 with information and materials to administer the student and parent surveys by the end of May. The parent survey was available using a [public web page](#) until mid-June. All hard-copy scantron surveys had to be returned to the research team by June 6. Pre-paid shipping labels were provided to each campus for return of surveys.

Feeder Campus Principal Survey

The survey targeting feeder campus principals was designed as a measure to capture ways in which parents of students in feeder campuses in the neighborhoods where the charter school campuses opened may be impacted by the new charter school campuses. The survey instrument posed questions to principals about whether any parents of students in their campus had approached them with questions related to the new charter school campuses, or about instructional approaches or educational philosophies since the opening of the new schools in their area (any principal who was in their current position for less than two years was branched out of the survey). They were also asked to describe any ways in which they observed parent involvement to have changed since the 2012-13 school year and to answer a set of questions related to their opinions about how charter school campuses impact their own school operations in general. The complete principal survey instrument is at the end of this Appendix.

Once the instrument was finalized and approved by TEA, the research team identified all students who attended one of the new open-enrollment charter schools in 2012-13 and traced them back to their campus of attendance in 2011-12. Given the nature of the questions in the principal survey, only principals of feeder campuses that were traditional campuses were included in the survey sample. Email addresses for the principal of each of these campuses were downloaded from TEA's AskTED database and compared to the name of the principal and the district superintendent to identify obvious errors that could be corrected. Over one-third of principal email addresses were obviously incorrect, and the research team was able to find alternate email addresses for 27%.

On April 23, 2014, survey invitations were emailed to a total of 562 traditional school principals. Three reminder emails were sent to non-respondents over the course of the subsequent month. The survey window officially closed on May 29, 2014.

Responding Samples

Student Survey

Six of the eight campuses administered the student survey and returned completed surveys to the research team. A total of 458 surveys were completed across six campuses, with school-level totals ranging from 40 to 127, and response rates ranging from 18% to 97% (see Table B.1).

Table B1. Response Rate by Charter School Campus, 2013-14

Charter School Campus Name	Response Rate
Charter School Campus A	32%
Charter School Campus B	94%
Charter School Campus C	97%
Charter School Campus D	85%
Charter School Campus E	18%
Charter School Campus F	89%
Charter School Campus G	0%
Charter School Campus H	0%

Source: Annual Charter Evaluation 2013-14 Student Survey.

Parent Survey

A total of eight surveys were completed and submitted during the five week period. Given this low numbers of responses and the fact that some of the respondents submitted multiple surveys for multiple students (such that fewer than eight parents completed surveys), the data were not analyzed or reported.

Principal Survey

A total of 130 surveys were completed and submitted (23%) during the five week period. Of the 130 principals who responded, 86 had been in their position for more than two years.

Parent Survey

SURVEY PURPOSE

We need your help! The State of Texas wants to know more about why parents like you choose charter schools for their children. Because you have a child who goes to a charter school that opened in the last two years, the state's education agency (Texas Education Agency) wants to hear from you about:

- How the school you chose is the same or different from the last school your child went to, and
- The things you like or don't like about the charter school your child current goes to.

SURVEY LENGTH

This survey should take about 15 minutes to answer all questions. The team at Gibson Consulting Group is collecting this data on TEA's behalf.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your answers will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law – no one will know what you answered except for the research team collecting the data in Austin, TX. Please feel free and comfortable to be honest when answering questions. There are no "right" answers and there are no "wrong" answers – you should just answer based on how you feel.

SURVEY RESULTS

Results from this survey will only be reported for groups of people (for example, all parents with children in grades kindergarten through 5th). Individual responses will never be shared. Honesty is important because your answers will help the state make important decisions about education.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS YOUR CHOICE

Answering this survey is voluntary. You only have to take the survey if you want to. You can skip questions you don't want to answer and you can stop taking the survey if you don't want to take it. But we hope that you will finish it because your answers will be very helpful to the state of Texas.

You can choose to be entered into a drawing for one of three \$100 amazon.com gift cards. Only parents of students in nine newly opened charter schools in Texas are getting this opportunity!

1. How many children do you have attending this school?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3 or more

Choose one of your children to answer this survey about. Then, if you want to, come back to this website and complete the survey again for another one of your children. [Answer this question only if answer to Q#1 is 2 OR 3 or more]

2. What grade is your child in?
 - a. Pre-K or Kindergarten (This survey is not applicable to you. Thank you for trying to participate).
 - b. 1st grade
 - c. 2nd grade
 - d. 3rd grade
 - e. 4th grade
 - f. 5th grade
 - g. 6th grade
 - h. 7th grade
 - i. 8th grade
 - j. 9th grade
 - k. 10th grade
 - l. 11th grade
 - m. 12th grade
3. How many years has your child gone to this school?
 - a. This is the first year my child went to this school
 - b. This is the second year my child went to this school
4. Think back to the last school your child went to. Was it a charter school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know or don't remember

Think about the differences between your child's last school and the school your child goes to now when you answer these questions. Remember, your responses are confidential and will not be connected to your child in any way:

5. Your child's grades in this current school are:
 - a. Worse than in their last school
 - b. About the same as in their last school
 - c. Better than in their last school
6. Your child misses classes in the school he/she goes to now:
 - a. Less often than in their last school
 - b. About the same as in their last school
 - c. More often than in their last school
 - d. Not applicable - my child did not miss classes in either school
7. Teachers and other adults give your child positive feedback in this school:
 - a. Less often than in their last school
 - b. About the same as in their last school

- c. More often than in their last school
- 8. Your child gets into trouble at this school:
 - a. Less often than in their last school
 - b. About the same as in their last school
 - c. More often than in their last school
 - d. Not applicable - my child has never gotten into trouble
- 9. How much do you like your child's current school?
 - a. I don't like it
 - b. I like it a little/it's ok
 - c. I like it a lot
- 10. Compared to your child's last school, how much do you like the school your child goes to now:
 - a. I like this school less than the last school
 - b. I like this school about the same as the last school
 - c. I like this school better than the last school
- 11. How involved are you in your child's school community compared to your child's last school?
 - a. I am less involved in this school's community
 - b. I am involved to the same degree as I was at the last school
 - c. I am more involved in this school's community

Grade your child's last school from A to F in each of the following areas:

12. Last School	A	B	C	D	F
How much your child is learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The extra-curricular activities that are offered (for example, sports, drama, things your child can do after school)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How safe your child feels at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electives (classes your child can choose to take)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much your child's teachers care about your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well teachers are teaching the material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much school is preparing your child for what happens after high school graduation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much your child uses computers and technology in class work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Grade your child's current school from A to F in each of the following areas:

13. Current School	A	B	C	D	F
How much your child is learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The extra-curricular activities that are offered (for example, sports, drama, things your child can do after school)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How safe your child feels at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Electives (classes your child can choose to take)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much your child's teachers care about your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well teachers are teaching the material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much school is preparing your child for what happens after high school graduation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much your child uses computers and technology in class work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. What do you like most about your child's school?
15. What would you change about your child's school?
16. Do you think you'll send your child to this school next year?
- I don't know yet
 - Yes
 - No because this school doesn't have the next grade
 - No because he/she is graduating
 - No because of another reason (explain reason)
17. Are you:
- Male
 - Female
18. Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- Yes
 - No
19. What is your race? (mark all that apply – if you are unsure leave this blank)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian or Pacific Islander
 - Black or African American
 - White
20. Which school does your child attend?
- Austin Achieve Public School
 - Excellence in Leadership Academy
 - Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy
 - Legacy Preparatory (Dallas)
 - Legacy Preparatory (Mesquite Campus)
 - Legacy Preparatory (Plano Campus)
 - Prime Prep Academy (Fort Worth)
 - Prime Prep Academy (Dallas)
 - UME Preparatory Academy
21. If you would like to be entered into a drawing for one of three \$100 amazon.com gift cards, enter a valid email address below. Only winners will be contacted. All other email addresses will be destroyed once winners have claimed their gifts.

Principal Survey

Thank you for helping us with these questions about parents in your district. Please note:

- This voluntary survey should take 5 minutes to complete.
- Your responses are confidential to the extent permitted by law. No individuals will be identified in reporting. Only aggregate results will be shared.

Click “Next” to participate in the survey

1. Are you currently Principal or Assistant Principal of your school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What is your role? [answer this question only if answer to q#1 is no]
 - a. Teacher
 - b. Office staff
 - c. Counselor
 - d. Director
 - e. Other (specify)
3. How long have you been in your current role in this particular school?
 - a. Fewer than 2 years
 - b. 2 to 4 years
 - c. 4 to 6 years
 - d. 7 or more years

Branching Instructions

IF ANSWER TO (QUESTION# 1 is (Yes OR No)) THEN GO TO QUESTION# 4

IF QUESTION# 1 is not answered THEN GO TO QUESTION# 4

TEA is identifying traditional public schools across the state that had students in 2011-12 who switched to one of nine charter schools that opened in 2012-13. Your school is one of approximately 600 in the state that fit this description.

The nine charter schools that opened in 2012-13 were:

- ***Prime Prep Academy: Dallas Prime Prep and Prime Prep Academy***
- ***UME Preparatory Academy (Dallas)***
- ***Legacy Preparatory (Dallas)***
- ***Legacy Preparatory: Mesquite Campus***
- ***Legacy Preparatory: Plano Campus***
- ***Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (Houston)***
- ***Austin Achieve Public School***
- ***Excellence in Leadership Academy (Mission)***

4. Were you aware that any of these charter schools opened in 2012-13?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Branching Instructions

IF ANSWER TO (QUESTION# 4 is (Yes)) THEN GO TO QUESTION# 5

IF ANSWER TO (QUESTION# 4 is (No)) THEN STOP, YOU HAVE FINISHED THIS SURVEY.

IF QUESTION# 4 is not answered THEN GO TO QUESTION# 5

5. Are you aware that students who were once in your school have de-enrolled and enrolled in one of these new charter schools?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Over the past two years since these new charter schools have been open, have any parents of students in your school approached you or another administrator at your school:

Answer yes or no for each:	Yes	No	I don't know
With general questions about the new charter school in your area?	0	0	0
With questions about the educational approach or philosophy of the new charter school in your area?	0	0	0
Asking about things your school might do differently compared to what one of the new charter schools is doing?	0	0	0
To discuss de-enrolling their students from your school to enroll them in the new charter school?	0	0	0

Follow the branching rules in the sequence given below. Jump to the Question as specified in the branching rule if all the conditions specified in the rule are satisfied. Rule 1: IF ANSWER TO (Question# 6(a) is (Yes)OR Question# 6(b) is (Yes)OR Question# 6(c) is (Yes)OR Question# 6(d) is (Yes)) THEN GO TO Question# 7 Rule 2: IF ANSWER TO (Question# 6(a) is (NoORI don't know)AND Question# 6(b) is (NoORI don't know)AND Question# 6(c) is (NoORI don't know)AND Question# 6(d) is (NoORI don't know)) THEN

7. Tell us a little more about the conversation(s) you had with parents about the new charter school(s). What did the parent(s) come to you about, and what was your response?
8. Please describe any other ways in which the opening of the new charter school(s) in your area impacted the parents of students in your school?
9. Has the level of parent involvement at your school changed in any way since the new charter schools opened?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
10. Tell us how so. [Answer this question only if answer to Q#9 is Yes]

For these last questions, provide your opinions in general, not only based on the new charter schools that opened.

11. Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am concerned about losing students to surrounding charter schools.	0	0	0	0
I have changed the expectations I have for my staff due to the opening of public charter schools	0	0	0	0
I have recommended instructional approaches or other pedagogical changes as a result of the opening of public charter schools	0	0	0	0
I have recommended changes to how we engage with parents as a result of the opening of public charter schools	0	0	0	0
I have tried to communicate more with parents as a result of the opening of public charter schools	0	0	0	0
I hold teachers more accountable for the performance of their students because of public charter schools	0	0	0	0

Student Survey

Charter School Student Survey

We need your help! The State of Texas wants to know more about students like you who go to charter schools. The state's education agency wants to hear from you about:

- How the school you go to now is the same or different from the last school you went to, and
- What you like or don't like about your current school.

This survey should take about 15-20 minutes to answer all questions.

Please be honest when answering questions. There are no right or wrong answers – you should just answer based on how you feel. Your answers are anonymous – you can be honest because no one at your school or your home will know what you answered.

Your parent(s)/guardian(s) know you are taking this survey but they will not see your answers. Your teachers will not see your answers and your friends will not see your answers. Honesty is important because your answers will help the state make important decisions about education.

Answering this survey is voluntary. You only have to take the survey if you want to. You can skip questions you don't want to answer and you can stop taking the survey if you don't want to finish it. But we hope that you will finish it because your opinions matter!

I understand that this survey is voluntary and I am choosing to take it: (check if yes)

Part I

1. Before taking this survey, did you know that the school you go to is a charter school?
 - Yes
 - No
2. How many years have you gone to this school?
 - This is my first year
 - This is my second year
3. Think back to the last school you went to. Was it a charter school?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
4. Approximately how many years did you go to your last school?
 - 1 year
 - 2 years
 - 3 years
 - 4 years
 - 5 years
 - 6 years
 - 7 years

- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- 11 years
- I don't know

Part II

Think about the differences between your last school and the school you go to now when you answer these questions:

5. My grades in the school I go to now are: (pick one)
 - worse than in my last school
 - about the same as in my last school
 - better than in my last school
6. I've missed classes in the school I go to now: (pick one)
 - less often than in my last school
 - about the same as in my last school
 - more often than in my last school
 - does not apply to me – I have never missed classes
7. Teachers and other adults at my school tell me I am doing well: (pick one)
 - less often than in my last school
 - about the same as in my last school
 - more often than in my last school
8. I get into trouble: (pick one)
 - less often than in my last school
 - about the same as in my last school
 - more often than in my last school
 - does not apply to me – I have never been in trouble at school

Part III

9. How much do you like the school you go to now?
 - I don't like it
 - I like it a little/it's ok
 - I like it a lot
10. Compared to your last school, how much do you like the school you go to now:
 - I like this school less than my last school
 - I like this school about the same as my last school
 - I like this school better than my last school
11. Grade your last school and the school you go to now from A to F in each of the following areas:

	Your Last School	This School
a. How much you are learning	A B C D E F	A B C D E F
b. The extra-curricular activities that are offered (for example, sports, band, clubs, things you do after school)	A B C D E F	A B C D E F
c. How safe you feel at school	A B C D E F	A B C D E F

	Your Last School	This School
d. Elective classes (classes you choose to take)	A B C D E F	A B C D E F
e. How much your teachers care about you	A B C D E F	A B C D E F
f. How well teachers are teaching the material	A B C D E F	A B C D E F
g. How much your school prepares you for what happens after you graduate high school	A B C D E F	A B C D E F
h. How much you use computers and technology in your classes	A B C D E F	A B C D E F

12. What do you like most about your school?

13. What would you change about your school?

14. Do you think you'll go to this school next year?

- Yes
- No because I'm graduating
- No because this school doesn't have the next grade level
- No because of another reason (explain other reason_____)
- I'm not sure

Part IV

15. Are you:

- Male
- Female

16. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

- Yes
- No

17. What is your race? (mark all that apply – if you are unsure, leave this blank)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White

18. What grade are you in?

- 6th
- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th

Thank you!

Appendix C: Expenditure Analysis

Table C1. Total Expenditures by Fund, by Charter School, 2012-13

Fund	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Preparatory Academy
Unrestricted Net Assets Class	\$144,397	--	--	--	\$258,406	\$12,179
ESEA Title I Pt A Basic Programs	\$60,293	\$22,853	\$86,583	\$171,875	\$165,971	\$4,064
IDEA -- Part B Formula	\$20,352	\$3,182	\$25,822	\$72,985	\$44,718	\$22,552
IDEA -- Part B Preschool	--	--	--	\$346	--	--
Nat'l School Breakfast & Lunch	\$86,518	\$45,973	\$221,563	--	--	--
ESEA Title VI-Class Size Reduction	--	\$2,582	\$3,134	\$9,380	\$41,256	\$1,000
Public Charter Schools	--		\$216,381	\$487,903	\$463,652	\$85,656
English Lang Acquisition/ Language Enhance	--	\$4,110	--	--	--	--
State Textbook Fund	--	--	--	\$123,336	--	\$11,986
FSP & Other St Aid-Charter Only	\$873,866	\$598,866	\$2,043,435	\$6,294,164	\$4,254,010	\$1,696,856
State Temp Restrict Net Assets	--	--	--	\$29	--	\$29
Campus Activity Net Asset Class	--	\$3,970	--	\$40,970	--	\$747
Local Fund Temp Restrict Asset	\$25,000	--	--	--	--	--
Total	\$1,210,426	\$681,536	\$2,596,918	\$7,200,988	\$5,228,013	\$1,835,069

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency

Table C2. Total Expenditures by Object, by Charter School, 2012-13

Fund	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Preparatory Academy
Payroll Costs	\$681,847	\$444,458	\$1,767,324	\$4,411,448	\$2,930,218	\$1,066,984
Professional and Contracted Services	\$323,752	\$177,431	\$359,275	\$1,851,408	\$1,701,692	\$429,882
Supplies and Materials	\$184,702	\$32,743	\$331,361	\$547,669	\$486,413	\$153,004
Other Operating Costs	\$17,374	\$26,904	\$138,236	\$316,367	\$109,690	\$106,705
Debt	\$2,751	-	\$722	\$74,096	-	\$78,494
Total	\$1,210,426	\$681,536	\$2,596,918	\$7,200,988	\$5,228,013	\$1,835,069

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency

Table C3. Total Expenditures by Function, by Charter School, 2012-13

Function	Austin Achieve	Excellence in Leadership	Fallbrook College Prep	Legacy Prep	Prime Prep	UME Prep
Instruction	\$531,322	\$311,103	\$1,571,748	\$3,858,913	\$2,359,382	\$664,566
Curriculum & Instructional Staff Development	\$735	\$3,927	\$43,449	\$390,795	\$42,000	\$2,068
Instructional Leadership	--	--	--	\$128,495	\$144,152	\$2,073
School Leadership	\$230,767	--	\$190,260	\$879,106	\$416,928	\$168,466
Guidance Counseling & Evaluation	\$1,548	--	\$47,785	\$80,600	\$144,818	\$990
Health Services	\$377	\$400	\$53,044	\$70,831	\$47,167	\$10,949
Student Transportation	\$98,395	--	--	--	--	--
Food Services	\$104,165	\$45,973	\$222,987	\$25,986	\$116,629	\$30,905
Co-curricular / Extracurricular	\$4,357	\$3,970	\$1,400	\$53,243	\$160,639	\$51,742
General Administration	\$75,560	\$217,641	\$325,419	\$671,601	\$291,949	\$304,108
Plant Maintenance and Operations	\$132,303	\$87,711	\$68,706	\$827,191	\$1,271,223	\$363,471
Security & Monitoring	--	\$10,811	\$764	\$7,338	\$56,465	\$5,967
Data Processing	\$1,908	--	\$71,356	\$132,338	\$149,212	\$63,279
Community Services	\$15,300	--	--	\$455	\$6,729	\$87,271
Debt Service	--	--	--	\$74,096	--	\$78,494
Fundraising	\$13,689	--	--	--	\$20,720	\$720
Totals	1,210,426	\$681,536	\$2,596,918	\$7,200,988	\$5,228,013	\$1,835,069

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013-14, Texas Education Agency

Appendix D: Changes in Feeder Schools

Table D1. Student Demographics in Feeder Campus by Percent of Contributed Students (2011-12 and 2012-13)

Student Subgroup	Fewer than 1% (572 Schools) 2011-12	Fewer than 1% (572 Schools) 2012-13	1 to 4.9% (94 Schools) 2011-12	1 to 4.9% (94 Schools) 2012-13	5 to 9.9% (4 Schools) 2011-12	5 to 9.9% (4 Schools) 2012-13	10 to 29.9% (4 Schools) 2011-12	10 to 29.9% (4 Schools) 2012-13	More than 30% (5 Schools) 2011-12	More than 30% (5 Schools) 2012-13
Immigrant	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Migrant	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
At-risk	45.9%	46.6%	48.0%	50.9%	35.5%	42.2%	55.8%	35.1%	34.2%	50.0%
Gifted	6.8%	7.9%	5.1%	6.0%	2.2%	2.7%	2.3%	6.8%	0.0%	9.1%
Special Education	8.2%	8.9%	6.9%	8.1%	8.3%	8.7%	18.6%	9.5%	8.5%	9.1%
Males	49.6%	50.5%	49.2%	50.4%	49.9%	51.3%	60.5%	48.6%	45.7%	48.9%
Females	47.4%	48.3%	47.5%	48.6%	49.5%	48.4%	34.9%	48.6%	53.8%	47.7%
African American	27.0%	27.6%	38.7%	39.0%	48.9%	45.3%	25.6%	39.2%	38.2%	46.6%
American Indian	20.6%	21.1%	23.3%	24.2%	27.4%	30.4%	20.9%	6.8%	5.5%	11.4%
Asian	5.0%	5.2%	3.0%	3.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.0%	5.4%	0.0%	1.1%
White	47.4%	47.9%	33.6%	34.5%	23.9%	24.6%	48.8%	48.6%	56.8%	39.8%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic / Latino	44.1%	45.8%	46.7%	48.7%	44.1%	48.4%	51.2%	24.3%	21.6%	22.7%
Not LEP	73.7%	73.2%	65.6%	63.7%	87.0%	82.4%	88.4%	97.3%	94.0%	85.2%
LEP - Current	23.2%	23.4%	32.5%	34.2%	10.7%	15.0%	11.6%	2.7%	4.5%	11.4%
LEP - Exited	3.2%	3.4%	1.9%	2.1%	2.4%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	3.4%
Not Economically Disadvantaged	33.3%	32.9%	18.1%	17.3%	13.7%	11.8%	20.9%	48.6%	44.2%	37.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	63.7%	65.9%	78.6%	81.7%	85.7%	87.9%	74.4%	48.6%	55.3%	59.1%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Table D2. Teacher Demographics in Feeder Campus by Percent of Contributed Students (2011-12 and 2012-13)

Teacher Subgroup	Fewer than 1% (572 Schools) 2011-12	Fewer than 1% (572 Schools) 2012-13	1 to 4.9% (94 Schools) 2011-12	1 to 4.9% (94 Schools) 2012-13	5 to 9.9% (4 Schools) 2011-12	5 to 9.9% (4 Schools) 2012-13	10 to 29.9% (4 Schools) 2011-12	10 to 29.9% (4 Schools) 2012-13	More than 30% (5 Schools) 2011-12	More than 30% (5 Schools) 2012-13
Males	18.8%	18.9%	15.9%	14.9%	13.6%	12.1%	22.0%	20.0%	21.5%	23.1%
Females	81.2%	81.1%	84.1%	85.1%	86.4%	87.9%	78.0%	80.0%	78.5%	76.9%
African American	21.8%	22.1%	33.1%	33.9%	52.5%	57.6%	15.4%	10.5%	50.8%	47.7%
American Indian	6.6%	6.3%	7.9%	7.7%	5.1%	0.0%	4.9%	1.9%	3.1%	4.6%
Asian	2.1%	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	3.4%	6.1%	0.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White	72.4%	72.1%	60.0%	59.2%	39.0%	36.4%	83.7%	89.5%	50.8%	53.8%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic / Latino	20.2%	20.5%	25.7%	25.4%	8.5%	4.5%	9.8%	5.7%	6.2%	4.6%
School or district employee	85.9%	85.7%	85.2%	83.9%	86.4%	75.8%	80.5%	86.7%	86.2%	92.3%
Contracted instructional staff	14.1%	14.3%	14.8%	16.1%	13.6%	24.2%	19.5%	13.3%	13.8%	7.7%
No Bachelor's or higher	12.9%	13.2%	14.3%	16.1%	11.9%	19.7%	18.7%	12.4%	15.4%	10.8%
Bachelor's	64.2%	63.7%	61.2%	59.3%	72.9%	65.2%	65.0%	67.6%	43.1%	43.1%
Master's	22.3%	22.5%	23.9%	24.1%	15.3%	15.2%	16.3%	20.0%	40.0%	41.5%
Doctorate	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	4.6%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.

Table D3. Feeder Campus Average Teacher Experience and Salary by Percent of Contributed Students, 2011-12 and 2012-13

Teacher Subgroup	Fewer than 1% (572 Schools) 2011-12	Fewer than 1% (572 Schools) 2012-13	1 to 4.9% (94 Schools) 2011-12	1 to 4.9% (94 Schools) 2012-13	5 to 9.9% (4 Schools) 2011-12	5 to 9.9% (4 Schools) 2012-13	10 to 29.9% (4 Schools) 2011-12	10 to 29.9% (4 Schools) 2012-13	More than 30% (5 Schools) 2011-12	More than 30% (5 Schools) 2012-13
Years Tenure	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.4	1.1	0.9	6.4	6.8	3.6	3.5
Years Experience	9.1	9	8.2	8.4	2.8	2.4	9.9	10.8	7.2	9.4
Base Pay	\$45,287.00	\$45,526.10	\$45,064.30	\$44,837.50	\$38,270.40	\$36,265.50	\$43,274.20	\$45,111.70	\$43,461.50	\$45,055.80
Total Pay	\$46,123.70	\$46,462.70	\$45,578.10	\$45,622.40	\$38,270.40	\$36,265.50	\$44,511.60	\$46,455.60	\$43,607.70	\$45,209.70

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2011-12 and 2012-13, Texas Education Agency.