

# Georgia Charter Schools and Charter Systems

# 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

*An overview of Georgia's charter schools and charter systems*

The Georgia  
Department of  
Education's  
District Flexibility  
and Charter  
Schools Division  
2014 Annual  
Report



Georgia Department of Education

Georgia General Assembly  
State Capitol Building  
Atlanta, GA 30334

December 31, 2014

Dear Members of the Georgia General Assembly,

Georgia law requires all charter schools and charter systems to submit an annual report to the Department of Education each year and the State Board of Education to report to the General Assembly each year on the status of the charter school program [see *O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2067.1(c) and § 20-2-2070*]. To facilitate the meeting of these requirements, the Georgia Department of Education's District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division each summer conducts an Annual Report process for charter schools and charter systems. The Department then compiles the Annual Report data along with academic assessment data and prepares and conveys to the General Assembly this report on behalf of the State Board of Education.

Georgia now has 382 charter schools, including 87 start-up charter schools (three of which are statewide virtual schools), 30 conversion charter schools, and 265 charter system schools in 28 charter systems (see pages 15-18).

Georgia's charter schools on average have consistently outperformed non-charter schools on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) during the past three years (see page 24). Only start-up charter schools perform lower overall on the CCRPI than do other public schools. The CCRPI is the state-driven accountability system that replaced the federal government's No Child Left Behind system based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Charter schools also outperformed non-charters in the last year of the CRCT and EOCT administration (see pages 25-36). The CRCT (Criterion-Referenced Competency Test) and EOCT (End of Course Test) were retired after the 2013-2014 Summer Retest administration.

Finally, the State Board of Education adopted revised Charter School Rules and a new Charter Systems Rule to implement legislative changes from both the 2013 and 2014 sessions (see pages 37-39).

Please note that this annual report includes definitions in an Appendix. Additional information on individual charter school or charter system performance may be requested from the District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division of the Georgia Department of Education or through the annual Report Card published by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and hard work in helping to strengthen Georgia's public education system.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Erste  
Associate Superintendent for Policy, Charter Schools,  
District Flexibility, and Governmental Affairs

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent  
December 31, 2014 • Page 2 of 41

**Table of Contents**

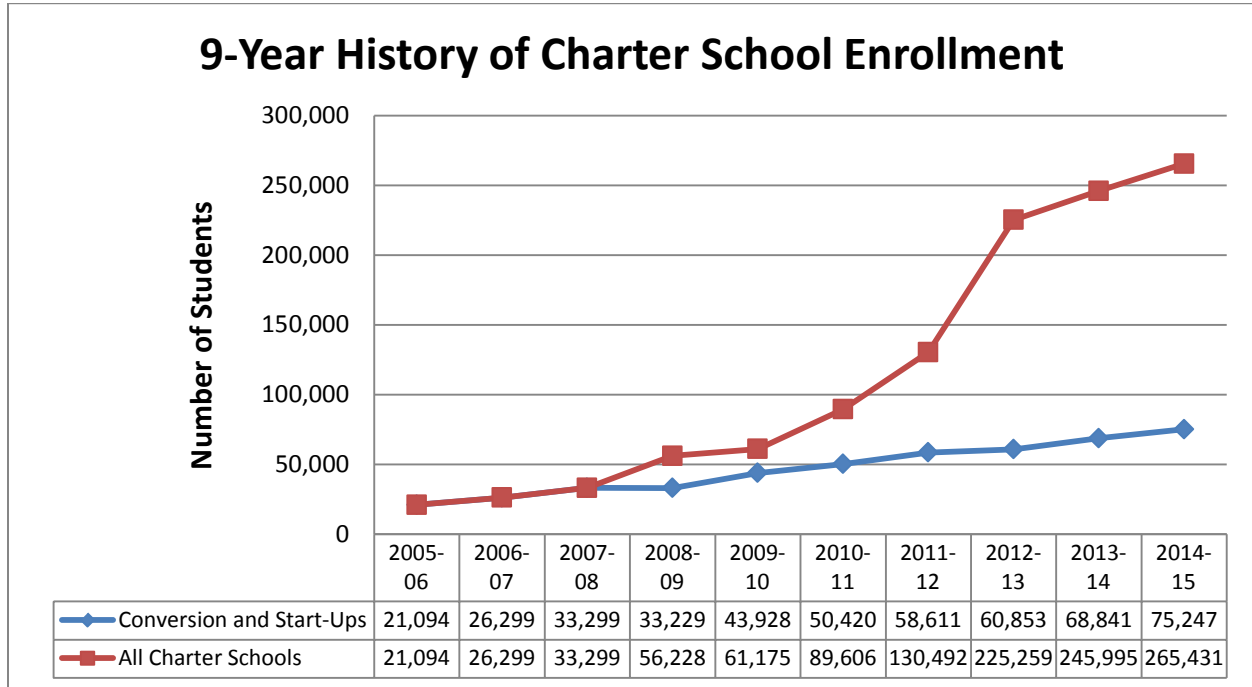
<b>Characteristics: Charter Students and Charter Schools</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Georgia Charters vs. Charters Nationally</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Charter Schools by the Numbers</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Charter School Locations in Georgia</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Charter Systems in Georgia</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Charter School Enrollment Trends</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Charter Schools and Accountability</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Charter Schools and Academic Performance</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Charter Schools and Charter Systems Rules and Guidelines</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>39</b>

## Characteristics: Charter Students and Charter Schools

### Charter School Enrollment

For the 2014-2015 school year, 265,431 (or 4.3% of) Georgia public school students are enrolled in a start-up or conversion charter school or a charter system school. This is 8% higher than in 2013-14 and more than double the number in 2011-12. Student enrollment in conversion and start-up charter schools continues is up 8% since 2013-14 and up 28% since 2011-12.

Figure 2: Charter School Student Enrollment Growth



Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

The distribution of students by grade within charter schools mirrored that of non-charter schools within the state. For the 2014-2015 school year, 49% of charter school students were enrolled in elementary school grades, 23% in middle school grades, and 29% in high school.

Figure 3: 2014-15 Charter School Student Enrollment by Grade Level

Grades Served	Georgia Charter Schools Enrollment		Non-Charter Schools Enrollment	
	Number of Students	% of Total Charter School Enrollment	Number of Students	% of Total Non-Charter School Enrollment
Elementary Grades: K-5	125,500	49%	679,486	47%
Middle Grades: 6-8	58,887	23%	334,187	23%
High School Grades: 9-12	74,413	29%	426,839	30%
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>258,800</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1,440,512</b>	<b>85%</b>

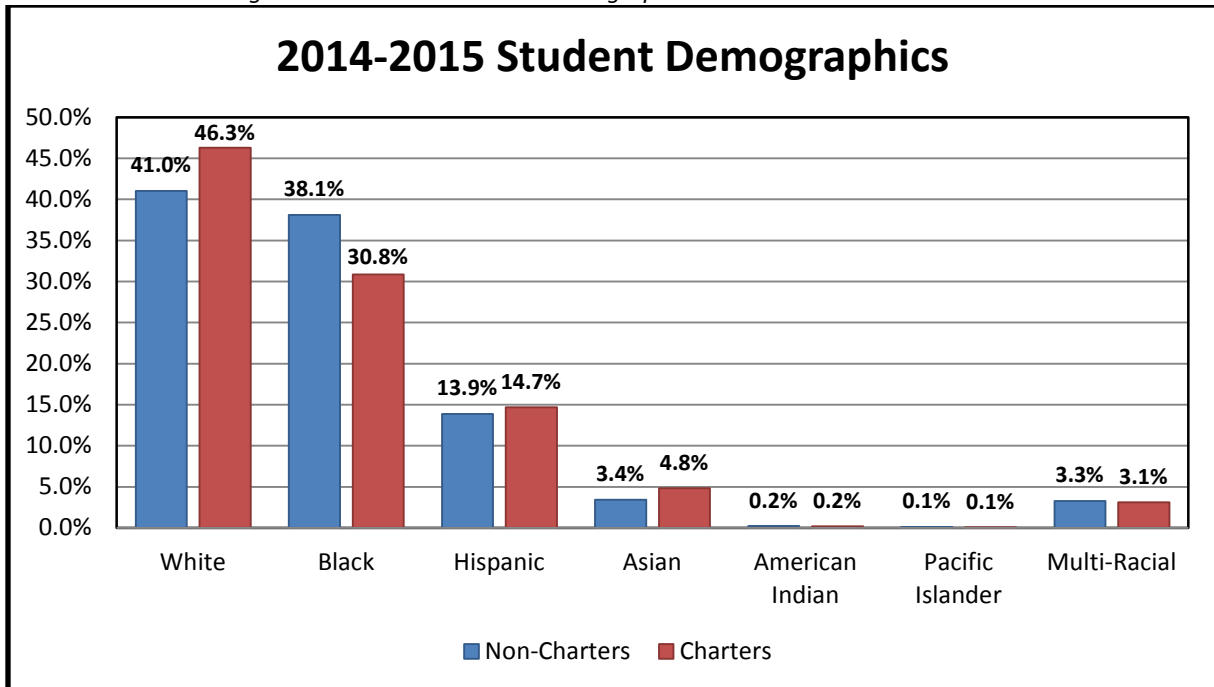
Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

**Charter School Demographics**

The racial and ethnic composition of Georgia charter schools also mirrored that of non-charter schools.

However, charter schools as a whole (conversion, start-ups, and charter system schools) serve a higher percent of Hispanic, White, and Asian students and a lower percentage of Black students than non-charter schools.

*Figure 4: 2014-2015 Student Demographics – Charter and Non-Charter*



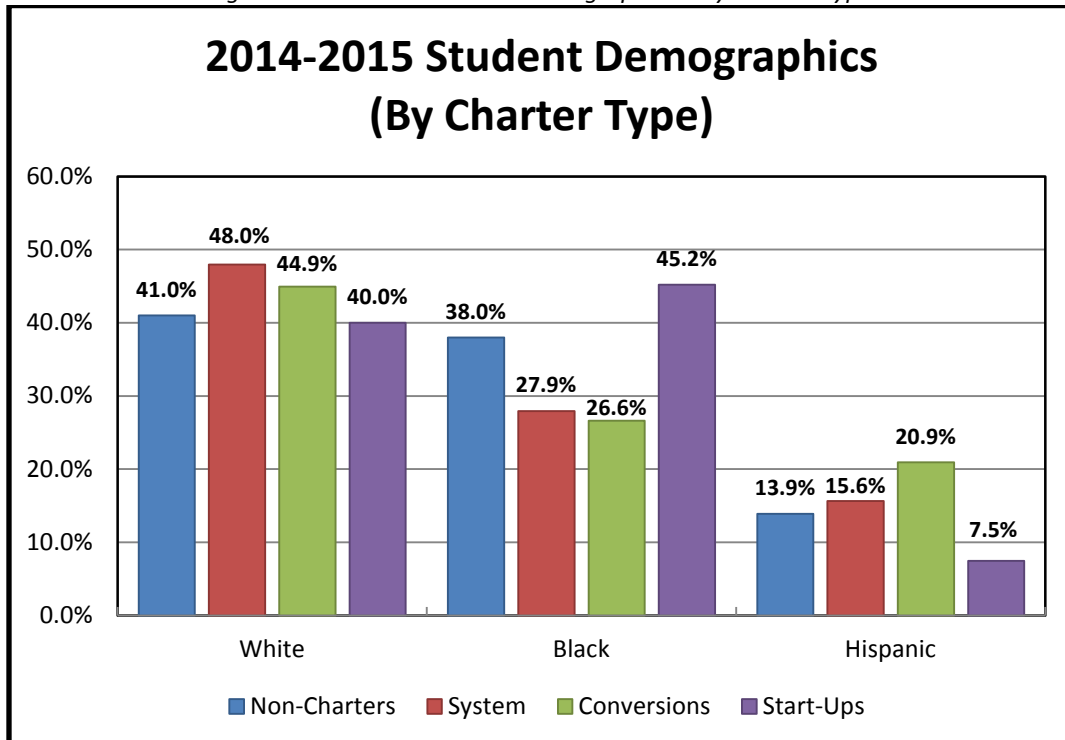
Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

**Charter School Demographics** *(continued)*

In addition, conversion charter schools and charter system schools serve a higher proportion of White students than do non-charters.

Start-up charter schools serve a significantly higher proportion of Black students (45.2%) than all other types of public schools, but serve the lowest proportion of Hispanic students (7.5%).

*Figure 5: 2014-2015 Student Demographics – By Charter Type*



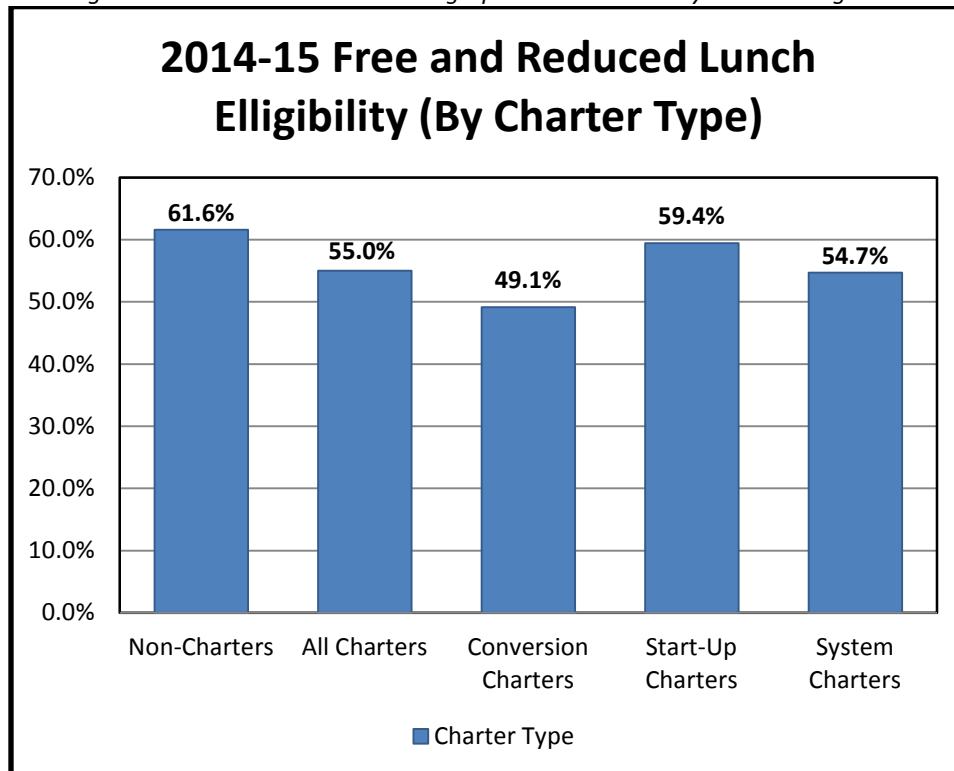
Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

**Charter School Demographics** *(continued)*

Georgia charter schools served a slightly lower percentage of economically disadvantaged students than non-charters – 55% of charter school students were eligible for free and reduced price meals compared to 62% of non-charter school students.

Start-up schools serve the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students (59%) and conversion charter schools served the least (49%).

*Figure 6: 2014-2015 Student Demographics – Economically Disadvantaged*



Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

**Charter School Support Services**

Georgia charter schools serve similar percentages of students as non-charters for both special needs and English language learner students.

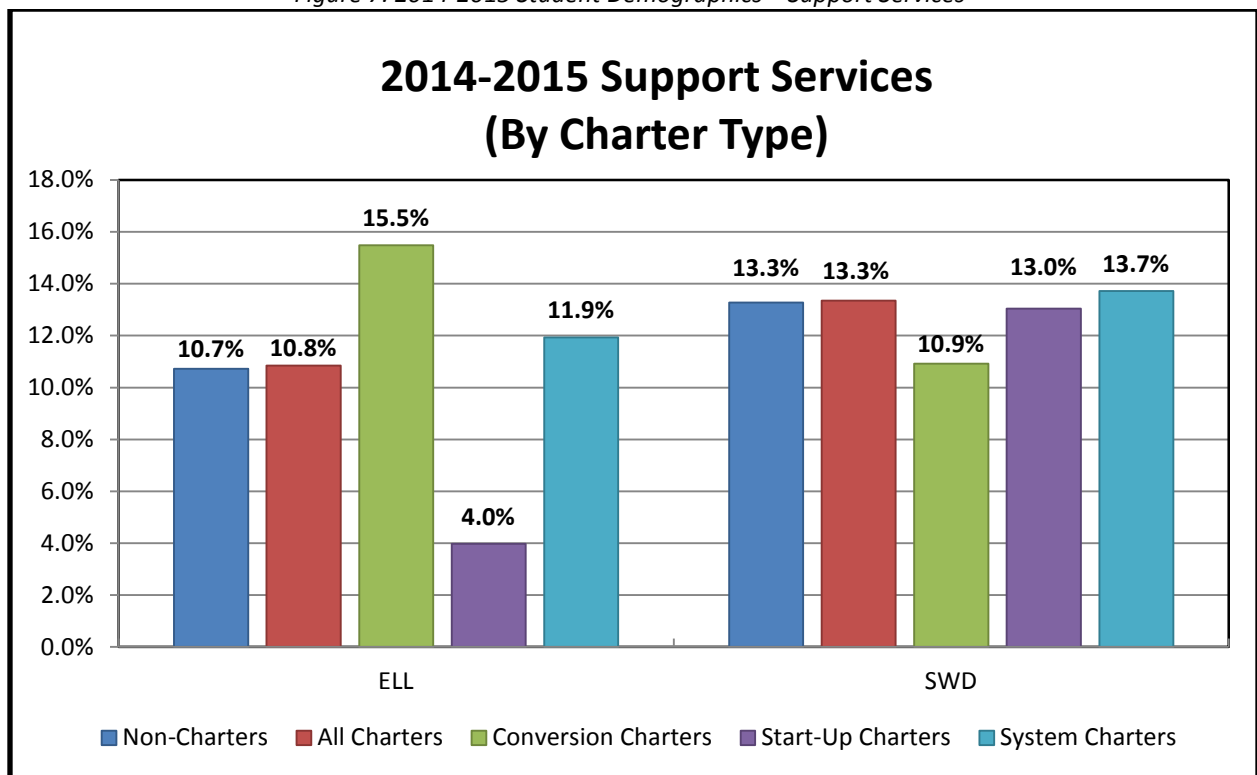
For students with disabilities, Georgia charter schools and non-charter schools both have 13.3% of their students receiving special education services.

Among charter schools, 14% of charter system school students, 11% of conversion school students, and 13% of start-up charter schools students received special education services.

Georgia charter schools also serve an approximately equal percentage (11%) of students needing language support.

Conversion charter schools have the largest percentage of ELL students at 16%, followed by system charters at 12%, and start-up charters are the lowest at only 4%.

Figure 7: 2014-2015 Student Demographics – Support Services



Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1



## Georgia Charters vs. Charters Nationally

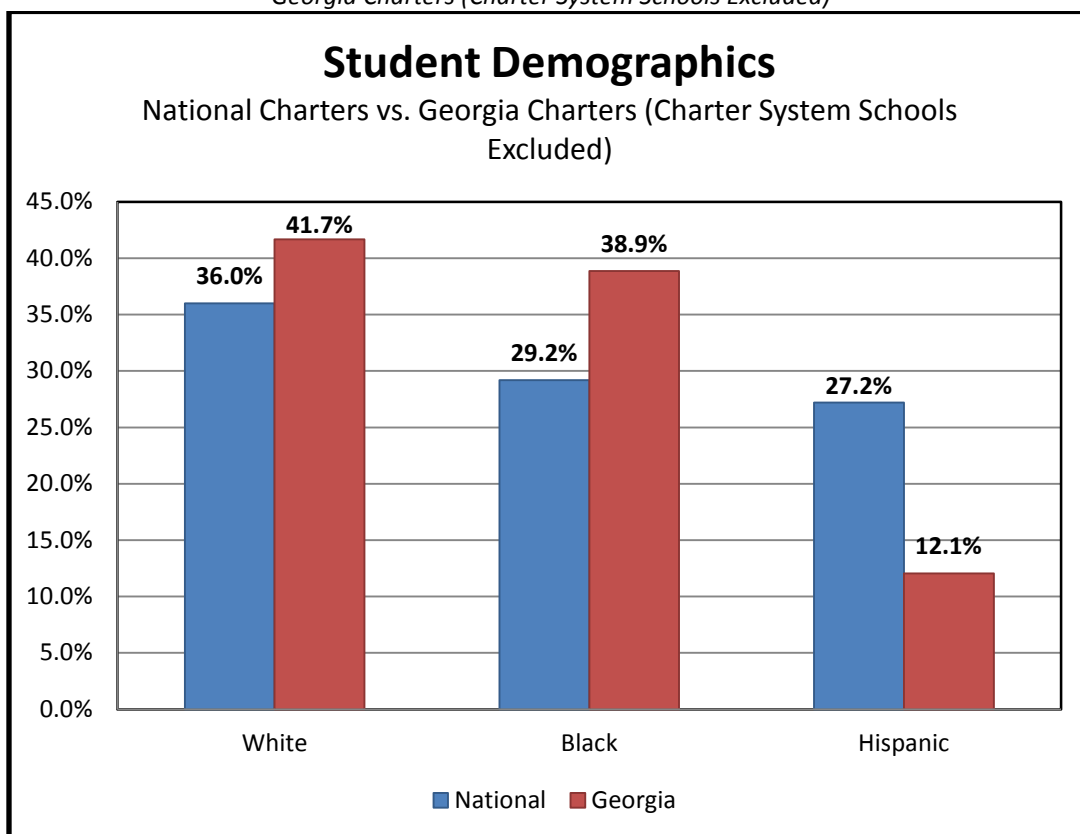
Charter school students nationally represent 4.6% of all public school students in the 2012-13 school year (the most recently available national data).<sup>1</sup> Using Georgia's most recent data, charter school students (with charter systems excluded for national comparability) in 2014-15 represented 4.3% of all students in the state – which is similar to the national distribution of charter school students.

Please note that including system charter school students increases this amount to 15.2% of the public school population in Georgia for the 2014-15 school year.<sup>2</sup>

### Charter School Demographics – National Comparison

Compared to charter schools nationally, Georgia charter schools (excluding charter system schools) serve a higher percentage of White (42% to 36% nationally) and Black (39% to 29% nationally) students – and a significantly lower percentage of Hispanic students (12% to 27% nationally).

Figure 8: 2014-2015 Student Demographics – National Charters vs. Georgia Charters (Charter System Schools Excluded)



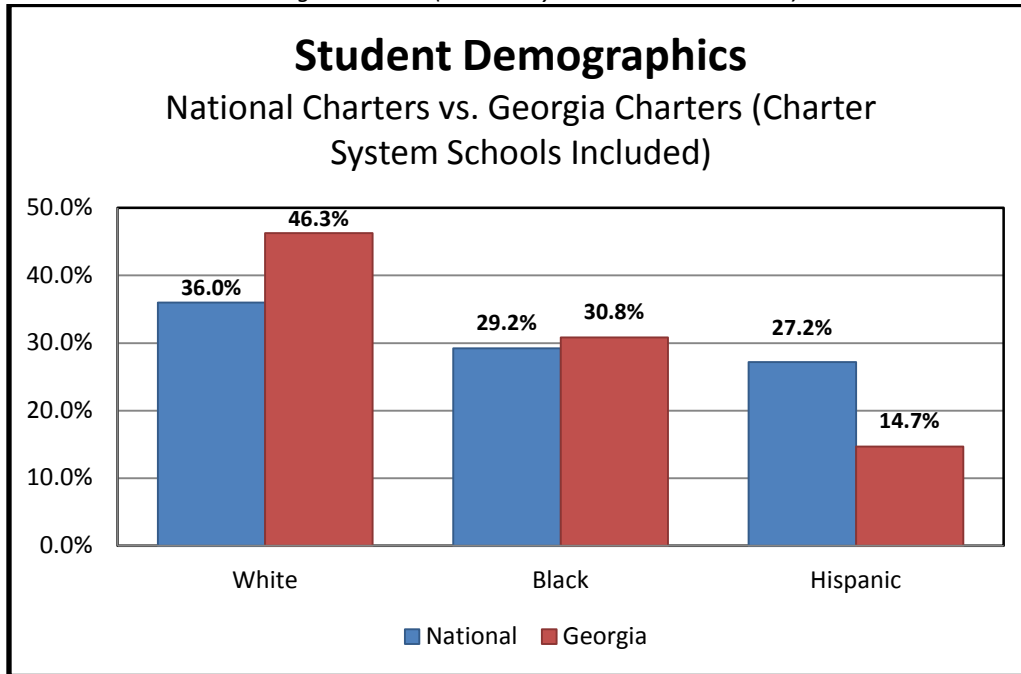
<sup>1</sup> The Public Charter Schools Dashboard, A Comprehensive Data Resource from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Accessed online via <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/schools/year/2014>.

<sup>2</sup> Enrollment is based on the October 2014 (FTE 2014-1) count and can be accessed online from the Georgia Department of Education's website: [https://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte\\_pack\\_ethnicsex.entry\\_form](https://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_ethnicsex.entry_form).

**Charter School Demographics – National Comparison** *(continued)*

Compared to charter schools nationally, Georgia charter schools with charter system schools included serve a higher percentage of White (46% to 36% nationally) students, about the same percentage of Black students (32% to 29% nationally), and a significantly lower percentage of Hispanic students (15% to 27% nationally).

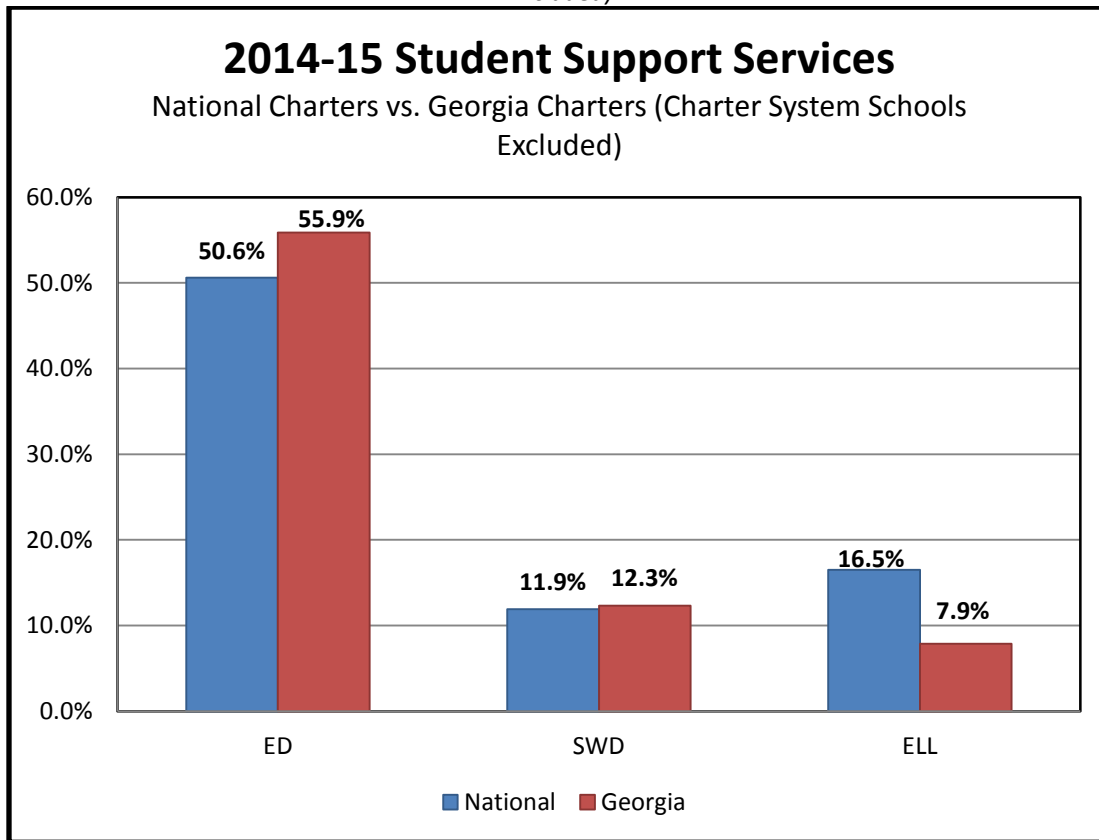
*Figure 9: 2014-2015 Student Demographics – National Charters vs. Georgia Charters (Charter System Schools Included)*



### Charter School Support Services – National Comparison

Compared to charter schools nationally, Georgia charter schools (excluding charter system schools) serve a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students (56% to 51% nationally), about the same percentage of students with disabilities (12%), and a significantly lower percentage of English language learners students (8% to 17% nationally).

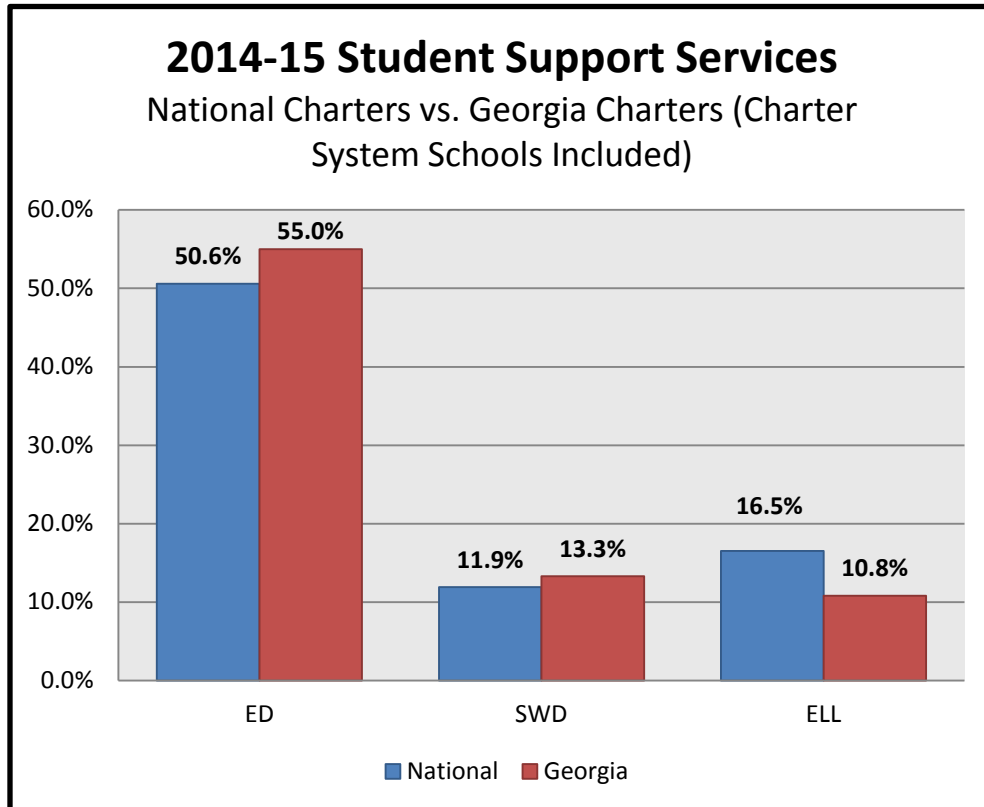
Figure 10: 2014-2015 Program Service Areas – National Charters vs. Georgia Charters (Charter System Schools Excluded)



**Charter School Support Services – National Comparison** *(continued)*

Compared to charter schools nationally, Georgia charter schools with charter system schools included serve a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students (55% to 51% nationally), about the same percentage of students with disabilities (13% to 12% nationally), and a lower percentage of English language learners students (11% to 17% nationally).

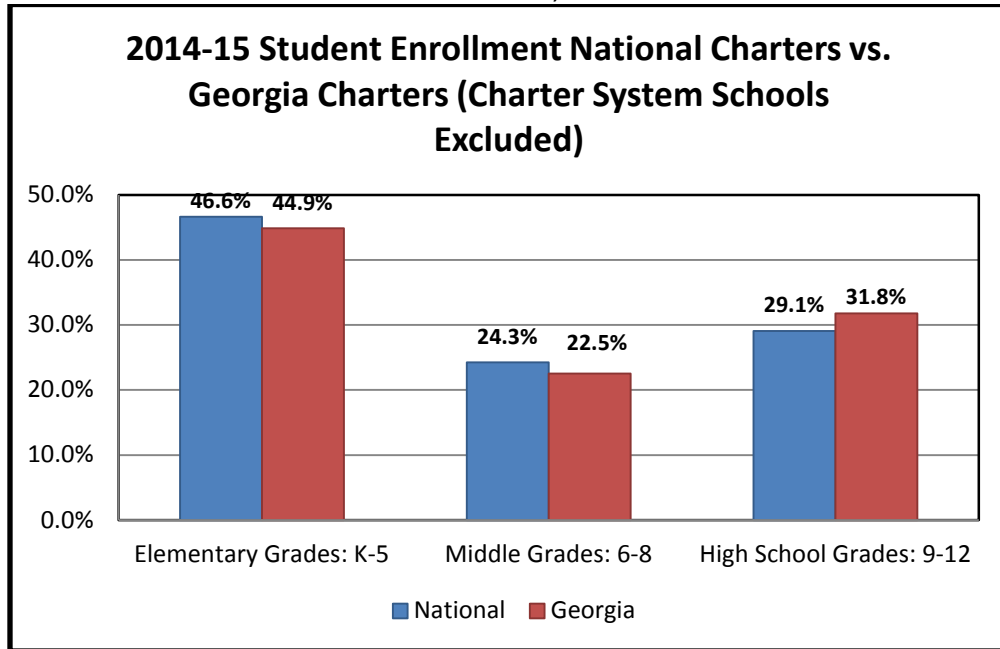
*Figure 11: 2014-2015 Program Service Areas – National Charters vs. Georgia Charters (Charter System Schools Included)*



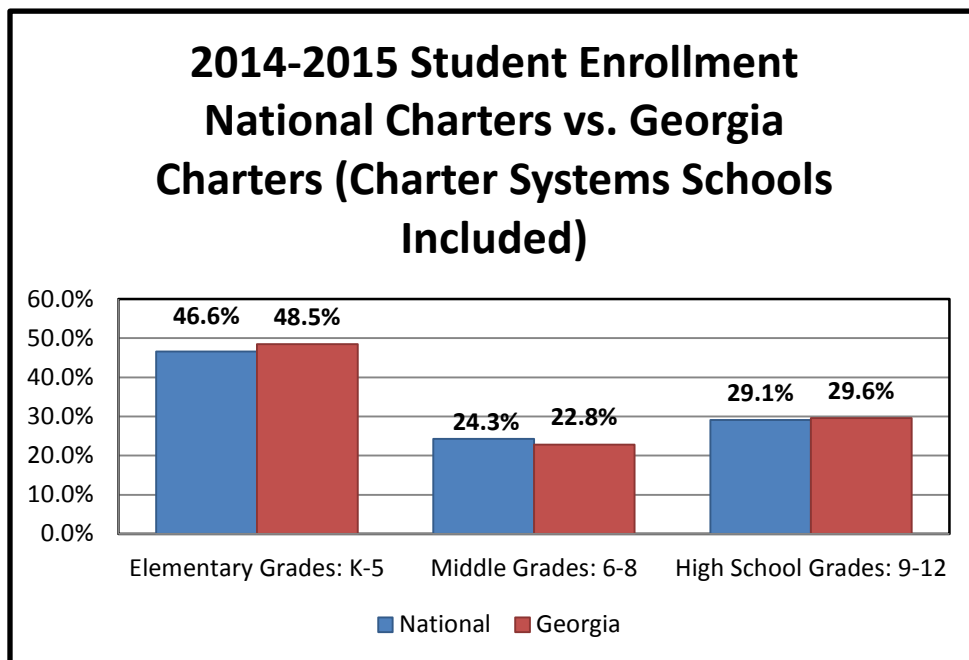
**Charter School Grade Structure – National Comparison**

Compared to charter schools nationally, Georgia charter schools (both excluding and including charter system schools) serve close to the same percentage of students in each grade level.

*Figure 12: 2014-2015 Grade Level Enrollment – National Charters vs. Georgia Charters (Charter System Schools Excluded)*



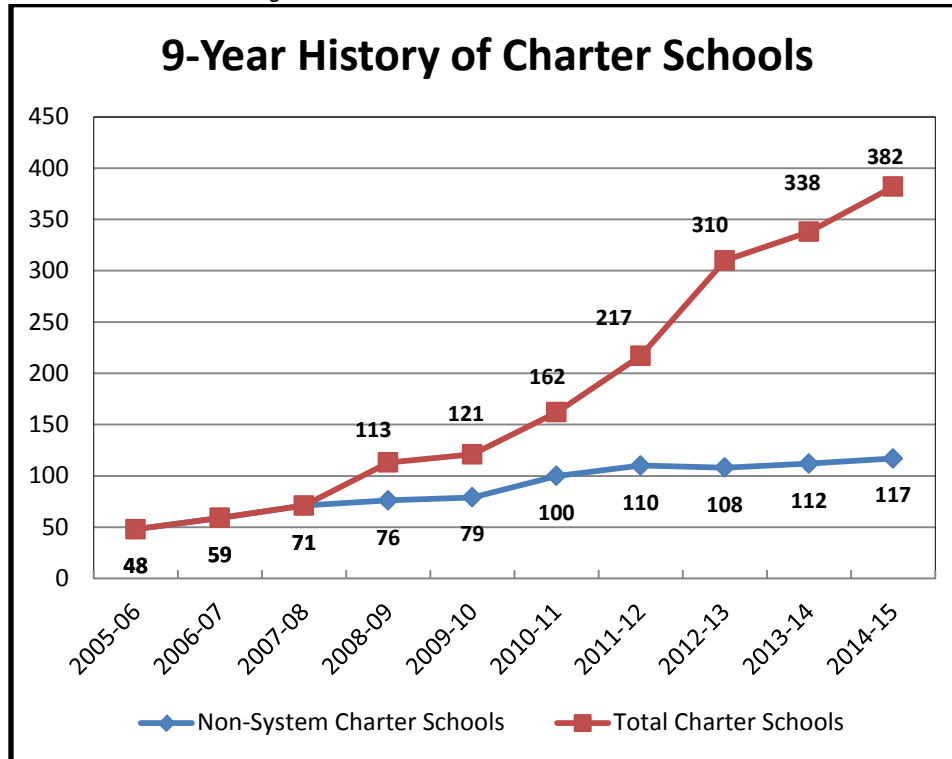
*Figure 13: 2014-2015 Grade Level Enrollment – National Charters vs. Georgia Charters (Charter Systems Schools Included)*



## Charter Schools by the Numbers

The growth of Georgia charter schools continued in the 2014-2015 school year. The total number of charter schools increased 13% from 338 to 382 schools – including system charter schools – between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Figure 14: Nine-Year Charter School Growth



With charter systems excluded, 5.2% of all schools in the state are charter schools. This puts Georgia ahead of the neighboring states of North Carolina (5%), South Carolina (5%), and Tennessee (4%).

Only Florida at 16% has a greater percentage of charter schools than Georgia.

Please note that Alabama is one of only 9 states that do not yet have a charter school law.

## Charter School Locations in Georgia

Charter schools are spread across Georgia reflecting the distribution of students throughout the state.

Approximately 60% of charter schools are in or near the Metro Atlanta area.

However, in 17 of Georgia’s school districts excluding charter systems – mostly outside of Metro Atlanta – more than 10% of the schools are charter schools.

*Figure 15: Percentage of Schools that are Charter Schools, 2014-15*

System Name	Non-System Charter School Counts	Total School Count	Percent Charter School
Greene County	2	5	40.0%
Hall County	10	33	30.3%
Calhoun County	1	4	25.0%
Lamar County	1	4	25.0%
Morgan County	1	4	25.0%
Berrien County	1	5	20.0%
Mitchell County	1	5	20.0%
Toombs County	1	5	20.0%
Atlanta Public Schools	19	103	18.4%
Baldwin County	1	6	16.7%
Coweta County	5	30	16.7%
Thomas County	1	6	16.7%
Grady County	1	7	14.3%
DeKalb County	19	135	14.1%
Bulloch County	2	16	12.5%
Laurens County	1	8	12.5%
Fulton County	12	104	11.5%
Clarke County	2	21	9.5%
Liberty County	1	12	8.3%
Effingham County	1	13	7.7%
Chatham County	4	54	7.4%
Clayton County	4	62	6.5%
Henry County	3	50	6.0%
Glynn County	1	17	5.9%
Douglas County	2	35	5.7%
Rockdale County	1	18	5.6%
Gwinnett County	7	132	5.3%
Bartow County	1	19	5.3%
Cherokee County	2	38	5.3%
Floyd County	1	19	5.3%
Troup County	1	19	5.3%
Newton County	1	22	4.5%
Whitfield County	1	22	4.5%
Dougherty County	1	23	4.3%
Carroll County	1	24	4.2%
Muscogee County	2	54	3.7%
Cobb County	4	111	3.6%
Houston County	1	37	2.7%
Bibb County	1	42	2.4%
Richmond County	1	57	1.8%





## **Virtual Charter School Student Distribution**

*Percentage of Students by County that are enrolled in an Online Charter School, 2014-15*

*[Map under revision]*

## Charter Systems in Georgia

Georgia now has 28 charter systems. This is up nine from 19 charter systems in 2013-14.

As shown in the map on page 190, there are more charter systems and IE2 systems in north Georgia than elsewhere.

However, as shown in the map on page 20, districts that have filed a letter of intent to become a charter system or an IE2 system are more broadly distributed across Georgia.

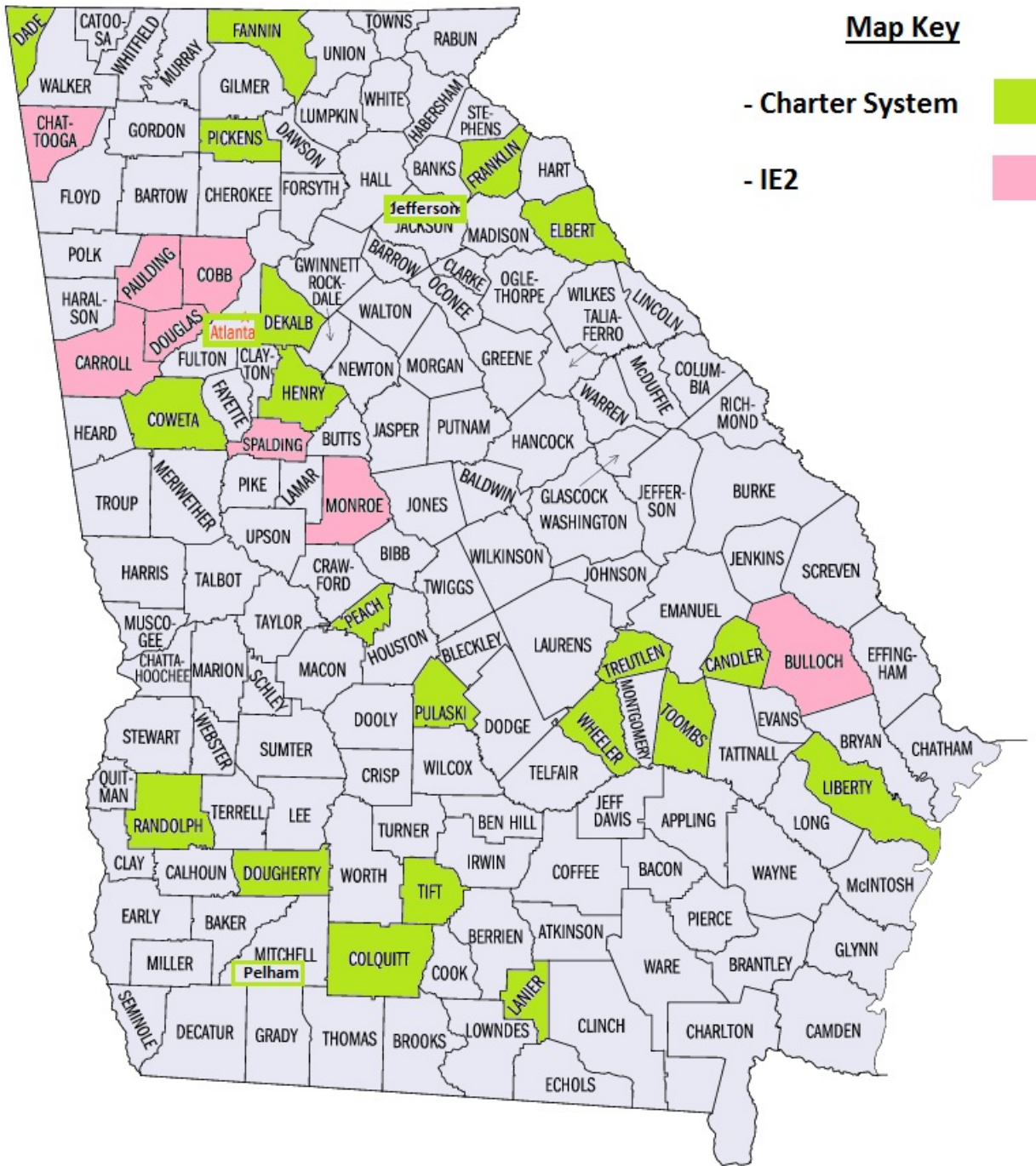
*Figure 16: List of Charter Systems (2014-15)*

#	Charter System	First Year as a Charter System
1	Banks County	2013
2	Barrow County Schools	2011
3	Calhoun City Schools	2011
4	Carrollton City Schools	2014
5	Cartersville City Schools	2010
6	Coffee County	2013
7	Commerce City Schools	2014
8	Dawson County Schools	2011
9	Decatur City Schools	2008
10	Dublin City Schools	2011
11	Floyd County Schools	2010
12	Fulton County Schools	2012
13	Gainesville City Schools	2008
14	Gilmer County Schools	2014
15	Glascok County Schools	2014
16	Gordon County Schools	2011
17	Haralson County	2013
18	Hart County Schools	2014
19	Lumpkin County School	2014
20	Madison County Schools	2012
21	Marietta City Schools	2008
22	Morgan County Schools	2011
23	Putnam County Schools	2010
24	Stephens County Schools	2014
25	Union County Schools	2014
26	Vidalia City Schools	2014
27	Warren County Schools	2008
28	White County Schools	2010



# Charter System and IE2 System Letters of Intent Filed

As of December, 2014



## Charter School Enrollment Trends

The range of student enrollment within Georgia charter schools varies widely, from Houston County Career Academy with 44 full-time students to Georgia Cyber Academy with 13,659 students. The average charter school enrolled 776 students.

Start-up charter schools averaged 747 students (or 552 when removing the Georgia Cyber Academy), conversion charter schools averaged 839 students (Walton High School in Cobb County was the largest with 2,674 students), and charter system schools averaged 781 students.

Figure 17: 2014-15 Number of Charter Schools by Student Enrollment

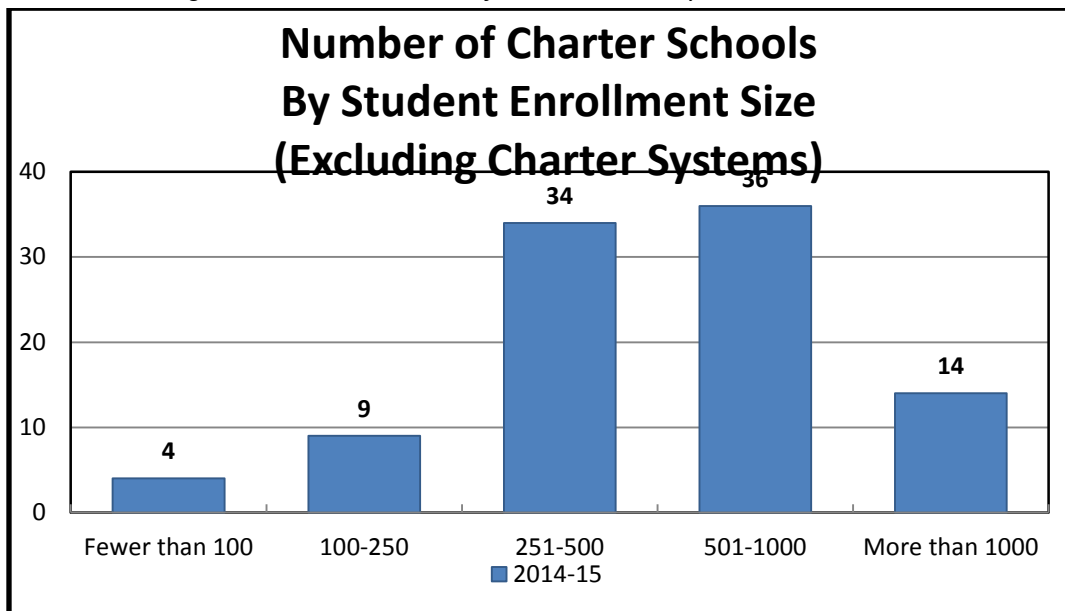
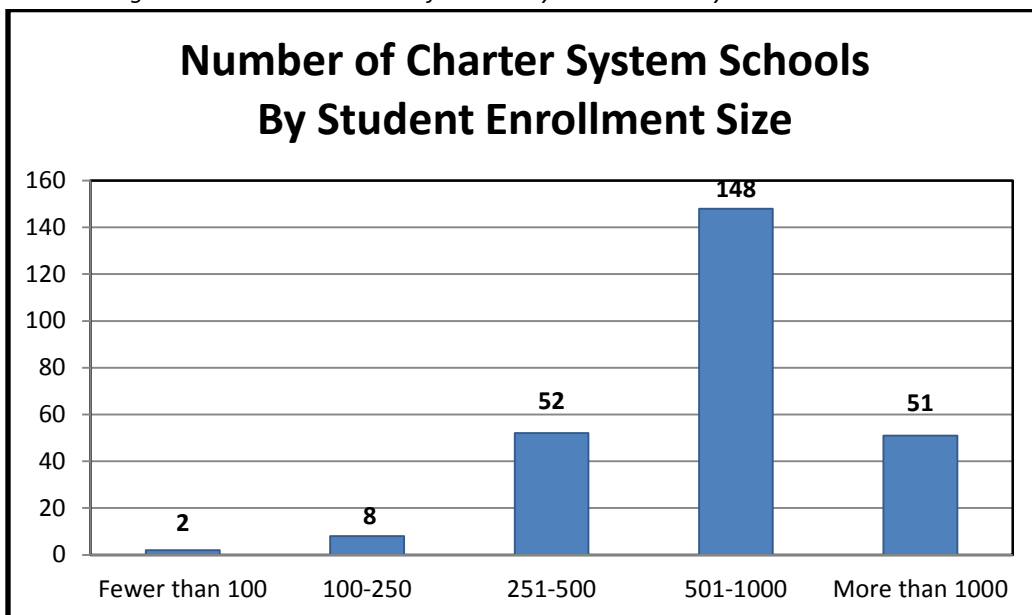


Figure 18: 2014-15 Number of Charter System Schools by Student Enrollment



## Charter Schools and Accountability

In previous years, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) served as federal accountability for all schools within the Georgia. In February 2012, Georgia was approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education for a flexibility waiver from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – commonly known as No Child Left Behind – as well as the Waiver of Requirements to Determine AYP.

Due to this flexibility, GaDOE implemented the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) as a state-driven replacement accountability system.

In place of the AYP determinations, and to satisfy federal accountability for the 2013-2014 school year, GaDOE calculated three lists of schools: 1) Priority Schools; 2) Focus Schools; and 3) Reward Schools.

**Priority Schools** are the lowest 5% of the Title I schools (78 schools), SIG (School Improvement Grant) schools, or high schools with a graduation rate of less than 60% for two consecutive years.

- No Georgia charter schools are designated as a Priority School.

**Focus Schools** are the 10% of Title I schools (156 schools) who have the largest within-school gap between subgroup performance on statewide assessments and graduation rate.

- Two charter schools are designated as Focus Schools for having the “gap within school gap”.

**Reward Schools** (234 schools) can be classified as:

Highest-Performing (among the 5% of Title I schools in the state that have the highest absolute performance over three years for the “all students” group on the statewide assessments that also made AYP for the “all students” group and all of its subgroups in 2011).

- Eleven Georgia charter schools were identified as Reward Schools for their high performance.

High-Progress (among the 10% of Title I schools in the state that are making the most progress in improving the performance of the “all students” group over three years on the statewide assessments).

- Twenty-five charter schools received a Reward School distinction for making substantial progress in their student achievement.

Georgia Department of Education

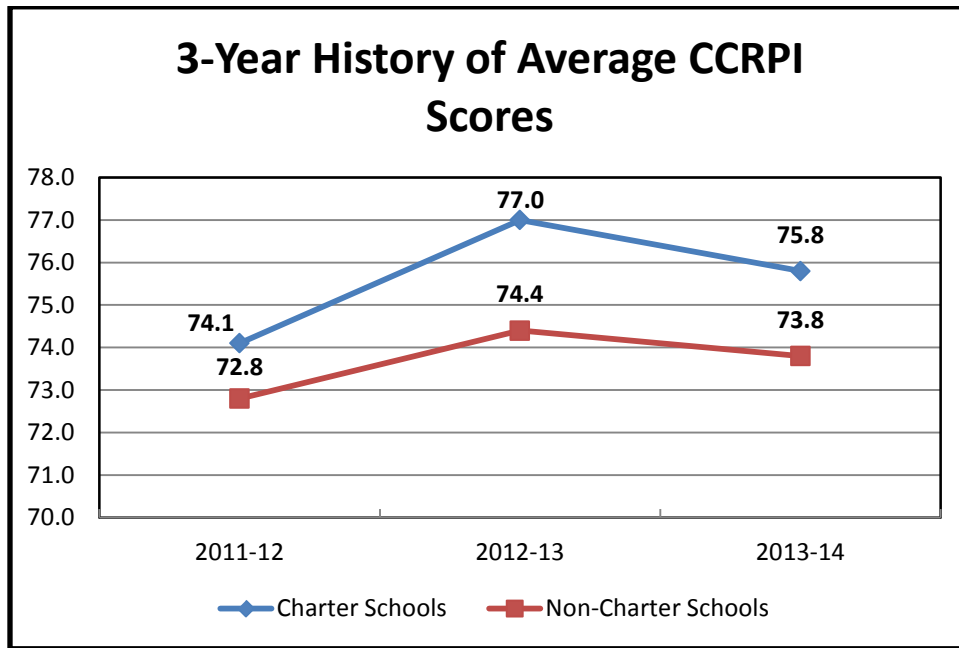
Figure 19: Charter Schools – Accountability Distinctions as of fall 2014

System Name	School Name	Charter Type	School Type
Coffee County	Ambrose Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
Coffee County	Westside Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
DeKalb County	DeKalb PATH Academy	Start-up	Reward-Highest Performing
Fulton County	Hembree Springs Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
Fulton County	KIPP South Fulton Academy	Start-up	Reward-Highest Performing
Madison County	Comer Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
Madison County	Ila Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
White County	Mount Yonah Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
Atlanta Public Schools	KIPP STRIVE Academy	Start-up	Reward-Highest Performing
Atlanta Public Schools	Charles R. Drew Charter School	Start-up	Reward-Highest Performing
Decatur City	Renfroe Middle School	System	Reward-Highest Performing
<b> </b>			
Barrow County	Apalachee High School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Barrow County	Holsenbeck Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Berrien County	Berrien Academy Performance Learning Center	Start-up	Reward-Highest Progress
Clayton County	Elite Scholars Academy	Start-up	Reward-Highest Progress
Clayton County	Unidos Dual Language Charter School	Start-up	Reward-Highest Progress
Coffee County	Broxton-Mary Hayes Elementary	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Coffee County	Coffee County High School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
DeKalb County	Leadership Preparatory Academy	Start-up	Reward-Highest Progress
Floyd County	McHenry Primary	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Fulton County	Heritage Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Fulton County	Oak Knoll Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Fulton County	Ison Springs Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Gordon County	Red Bud Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Haralson County	Haralson County High School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Muscogee County	Wynnton Arts Academy	Conversion	Reward-Highest Progress
Putnam County	Putnam County Middle School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Warren County	Warren County Middle School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Warren County	Freeman Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Atlanta Public Schools	KIPP Vision	Start-up	Reward-Highest Progress
Calhoun City	Calhoun High School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Dublin City	Dublin High School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Gainesville City	New Holland Core Knowledge Academy	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Gainesville City	Gainesville Exploration Academy	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Gainesville City	Fair Street International Baccalaureate World School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
Marietta City	Dunleith Elementary School	System	Reward-Highest Progress
<b> </b>			
Barrow County	Winder-Barrow High School	System	Focus
Fulton County	High Point Elementary School	System	Focus

### CCRPI Comparison

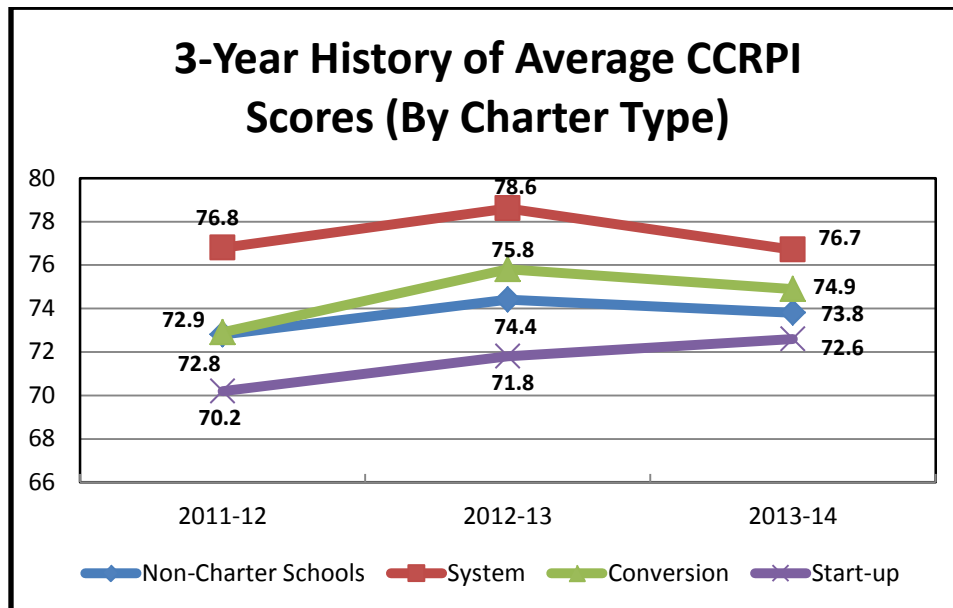
Overall, including charter systems, charter schools have done better than non-charters on CCRPI over the past three years. Please note that some CCRPI data for some school districts is incomplete and will be revised later when their data is completed.

Figure 20: Charter Schools –Charters vs. Non-Charterers, 3-Year CCRPI History



However, charter systems and conversion charter schools are ahead of non-charter schools on CCRPI, with start-up charters below non-charter schools on average.

Figure 21: Charter Schools –3-Year CCRPI History by Charter School Type





## Charter Schools and Academic Performance

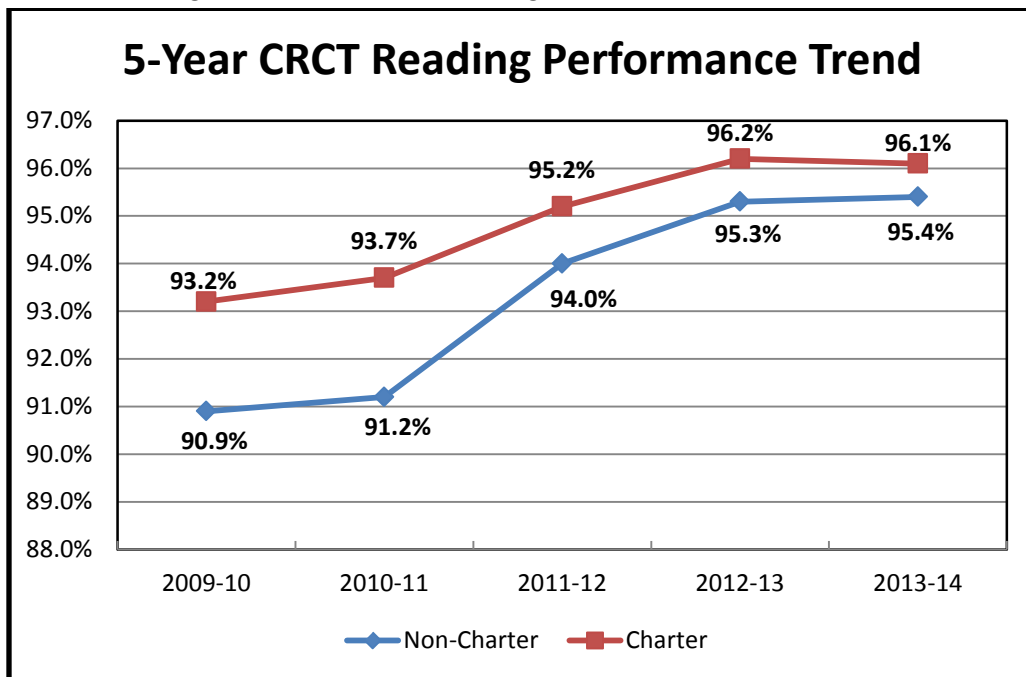
Charter schools continued to outperform non-charters in the last year of the CRCT (or Criterion-Referenced Competency Test) and EOCT (or End of Course Test) administration on both English Language Arts and Math. Please note that the CRCT and EOCT were retired after the 2013-2014 Summer Retest administration.

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System has replaced the CRCT and EOCT beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

### Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance

Georgia charter schools have outperformed non-charter schools on the CRCT reading assessment for each of the past five years.

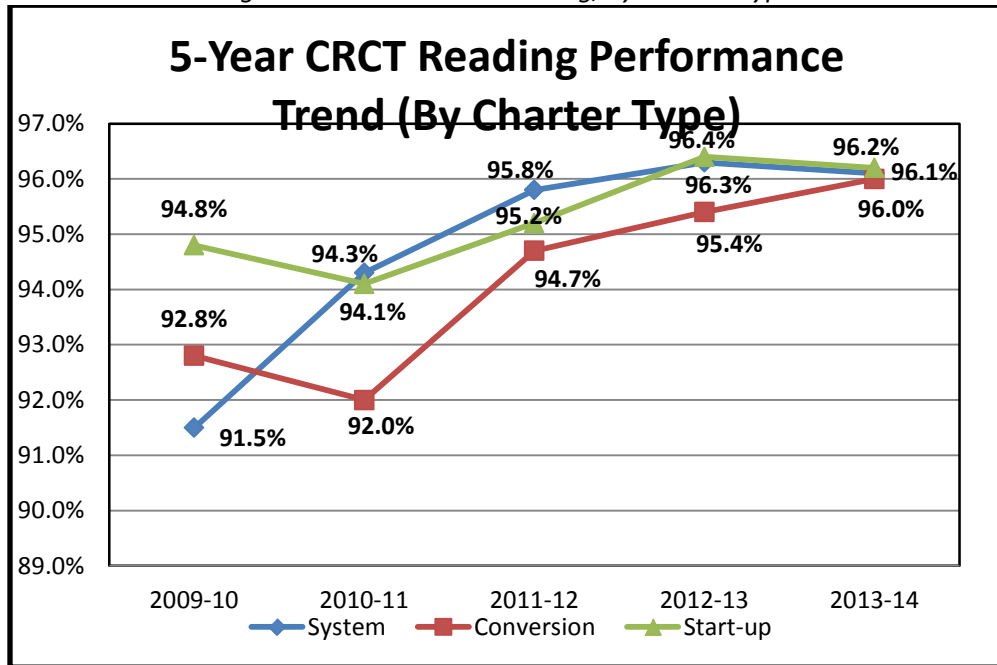
Figure 22: 5-Year CRCT Reading – Charters vs. Non-Charters



### Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance *(continued)*

Over the past five years all charter school types have experienced growth in the percent of students passing the CRCT Reading assessment, though charter system and start-up schools levelled off last year.

Figure 23: 5-Year CRCT Reading, by Charter Type



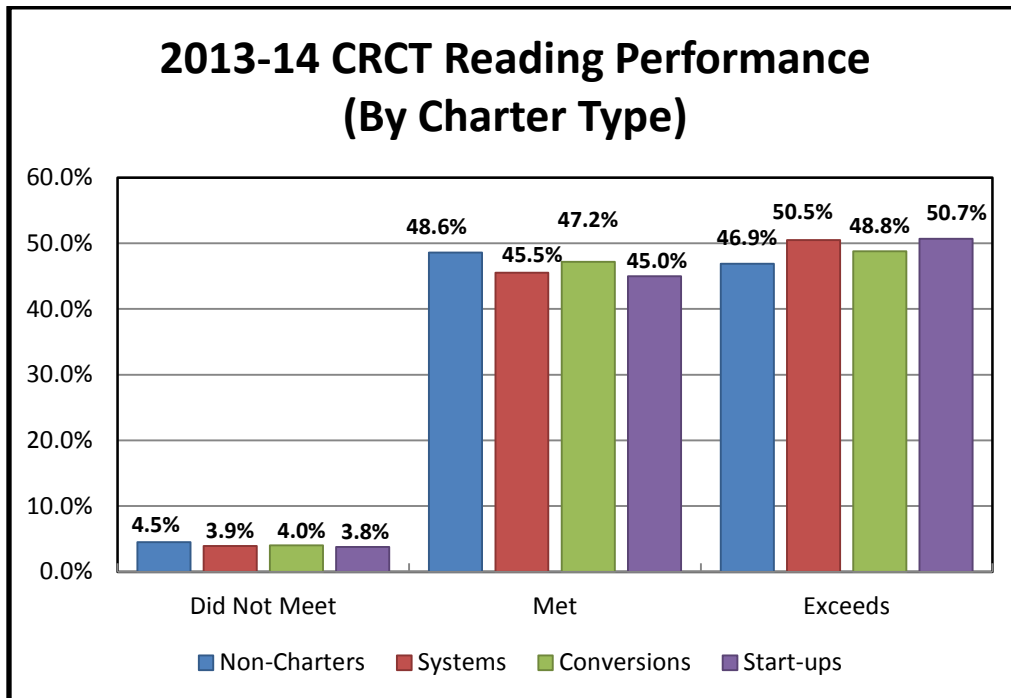
## Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance *(continued)*

The 2013-14 CRCT Reading assessment illustrates similarities amongst charter schools and non-charter schools.

System charter schools and start-up charter schools demonstrated the highest percentage of students exceeding the reading standard.

All charter schools outperformed non-charter schools on the percent of students exceeding the standard.

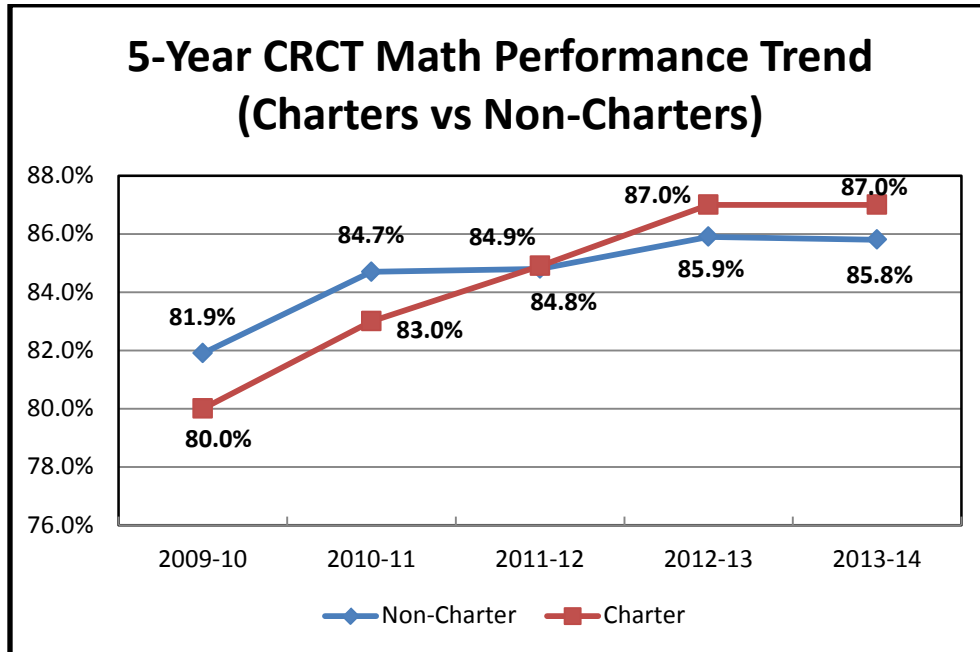
Figure 24: 2013 CRCT Reading Performance, by performance levels



## Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance *(continued)*

In the 2013-14 school year, charter schools again outperformed non-charter schools on the CRCT Math test – though growth for both charter schools and non-charter schools was flat between 2012-13 and 2013-14.

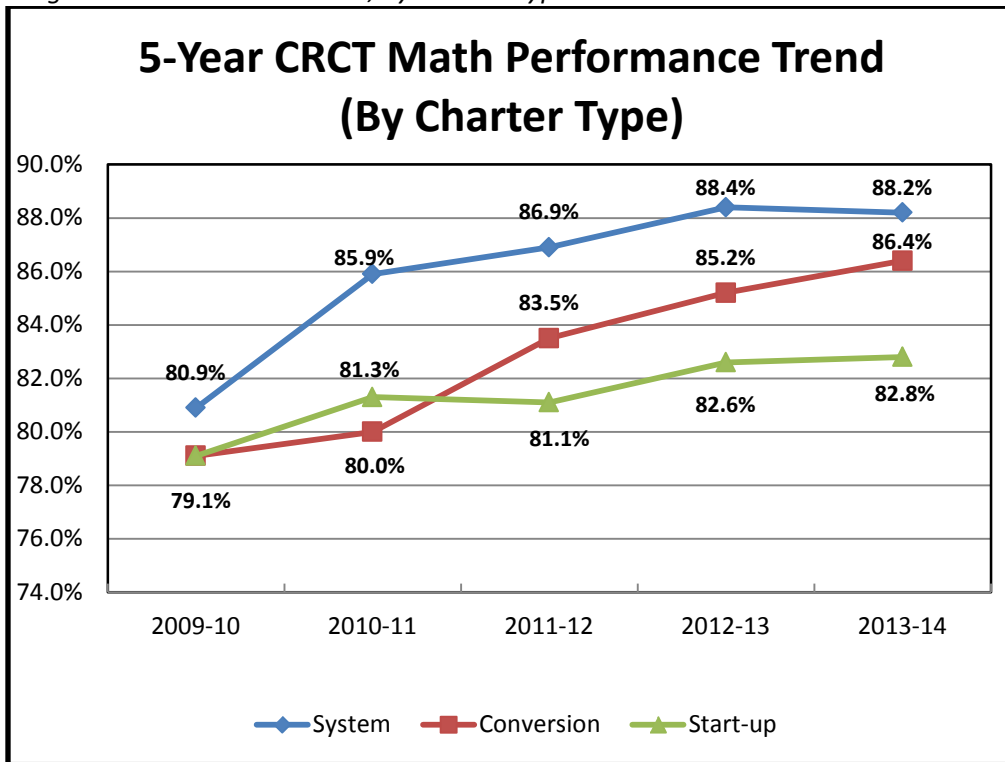
Figure 25: 5-Year CRCT Math – Charters vs. Non-Charter



### Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance *(continued)*

Amongst charter schools in the 2013-14 school year, conversion charter schools experienced an increase in the percent of students passing the CRCT math assessment while start-ups increased only slightly and system charter schools decreased slightly.

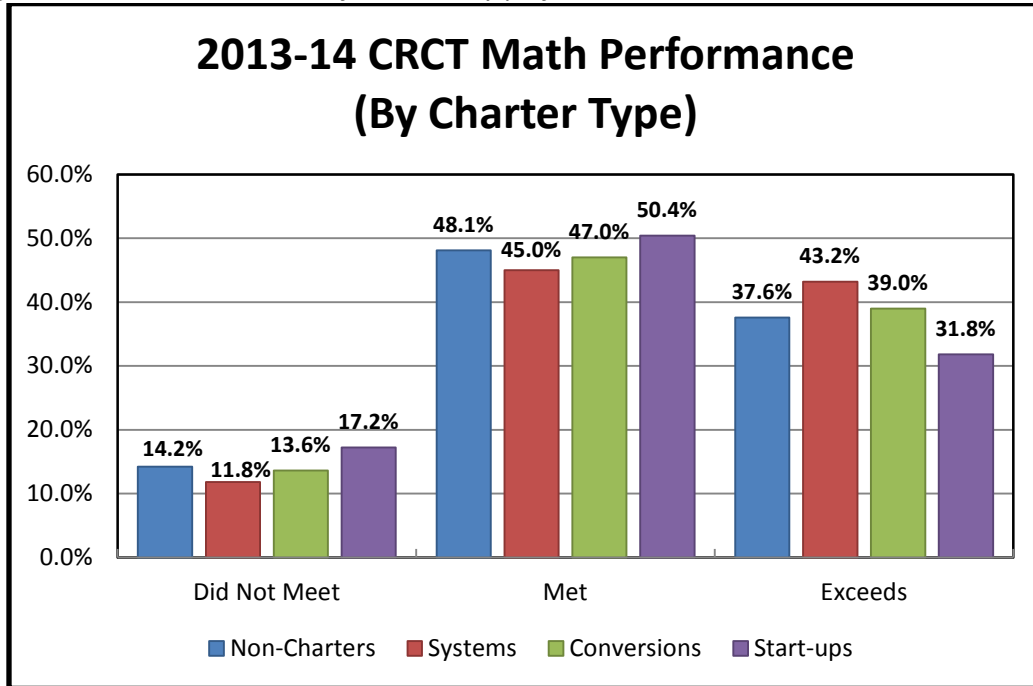
Figure 26: 5-Year CRCT Math, by Charter Type



## Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance *(continued)*

For the 2013-14 school year, system charter schools outperformed all other public schools on the percent of students exceeding the standards on the CRCT math assessment .

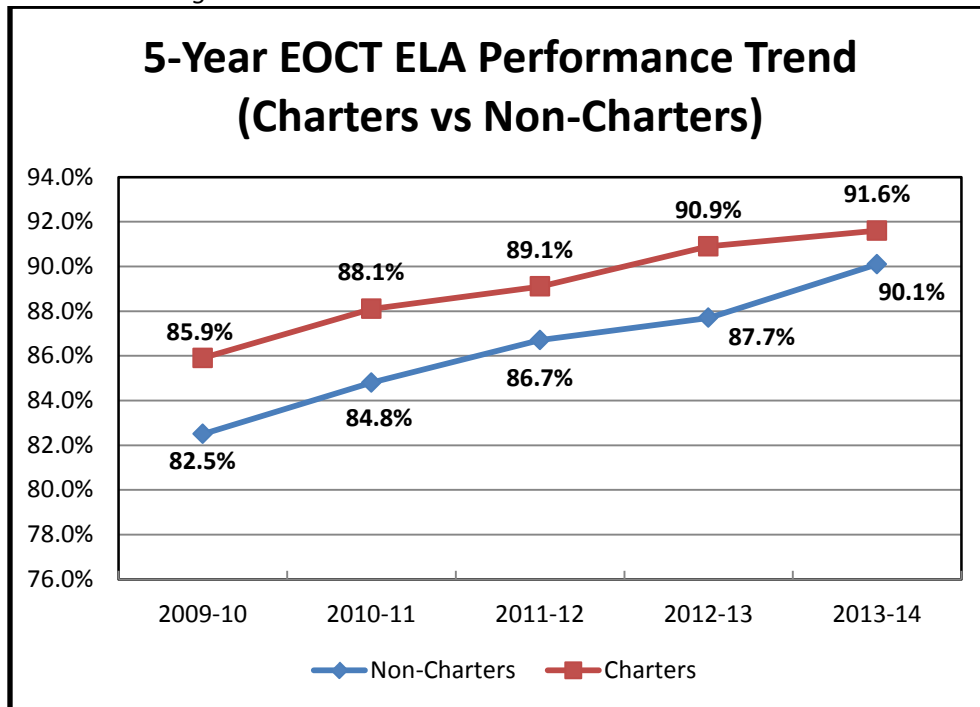
Figure 27: 2013 CRCT Math Performance, by performance levels



## High School End of Course Test Performance

Over the past five years, Georgia charter schools have outperformed non-charter schools on the ELA End-of-Course tests (EOCTs). Charter schools have increased their passing percentage from 85.9% in 2009-10 to 91.6% in 2013-14. Traditional schools have increased their passing percent from 84.8% to 90.1% during the same time period.

Figure 28: 5-Year EOCT ELA – Charters vs. Non-Charters

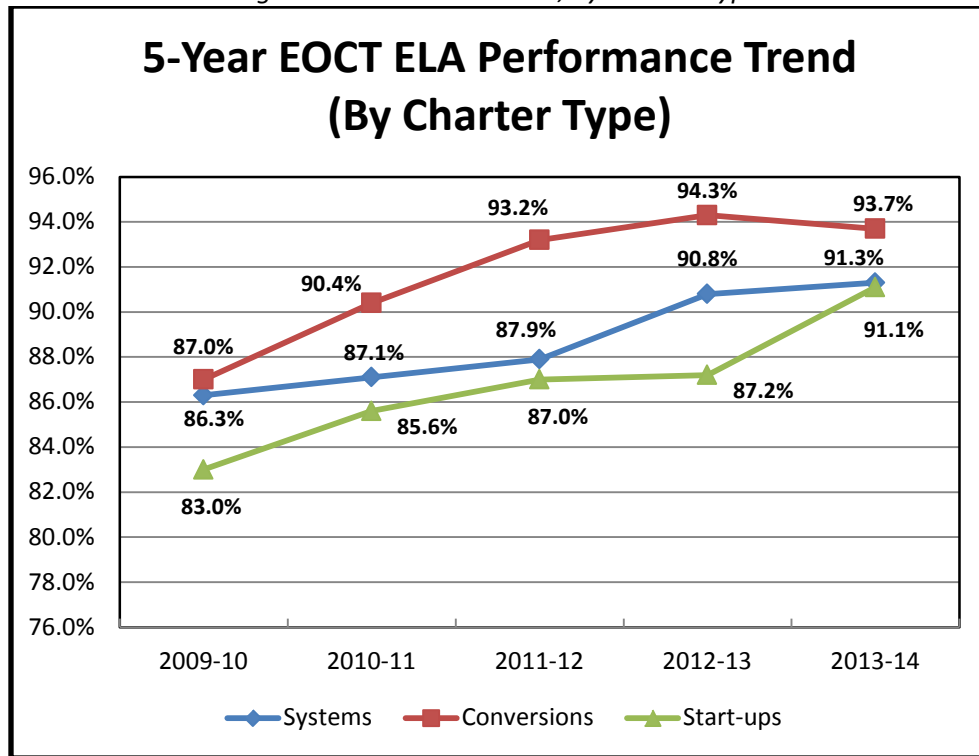


## High School End of Course Test Performance (continued)

Conversion charter high schools have outperformed both start-up and conversion charters on the ELA EOCT in each of the past five years.

Conversion charter schools made a significant increase in their passing percent on the ELA EOCT in the past year, jumping from 87.2% in 2012-13 to 91.1% in 2013-14.

Figure 29: 5-Year EOCT ELA, by Charter Type



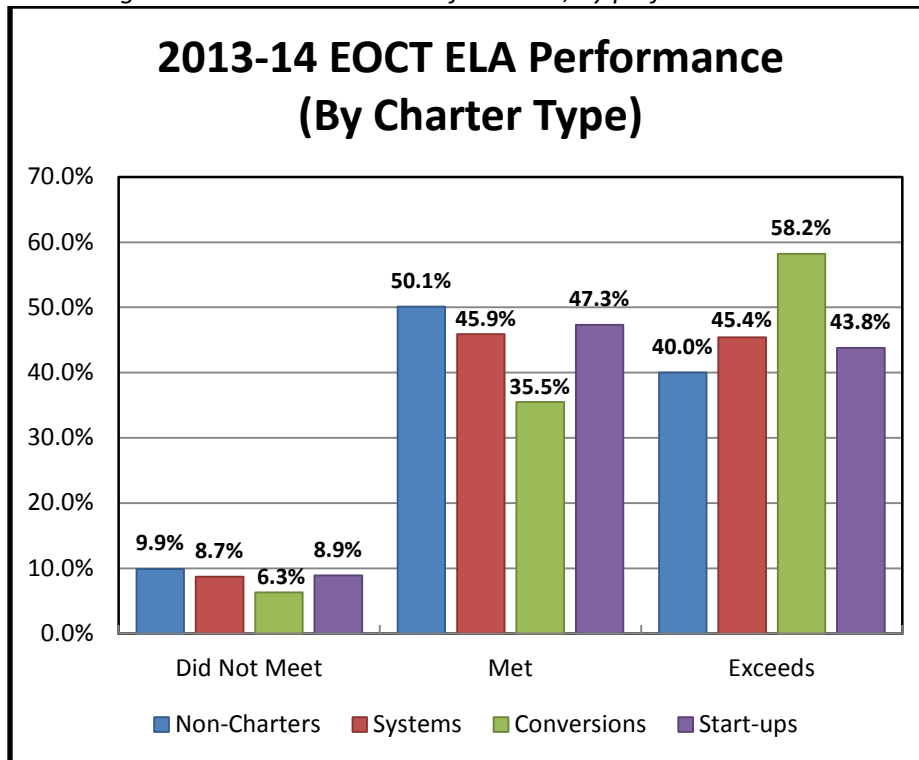


## High School End of Course Test Performance *(continued)*

Conversion charter high schools had a significantly higher percentage of students exceeding the ELA standard than all other public schools at 58.2%.

All charter school types had a higher percentage of students exceeding the ELA standard than non-charters.

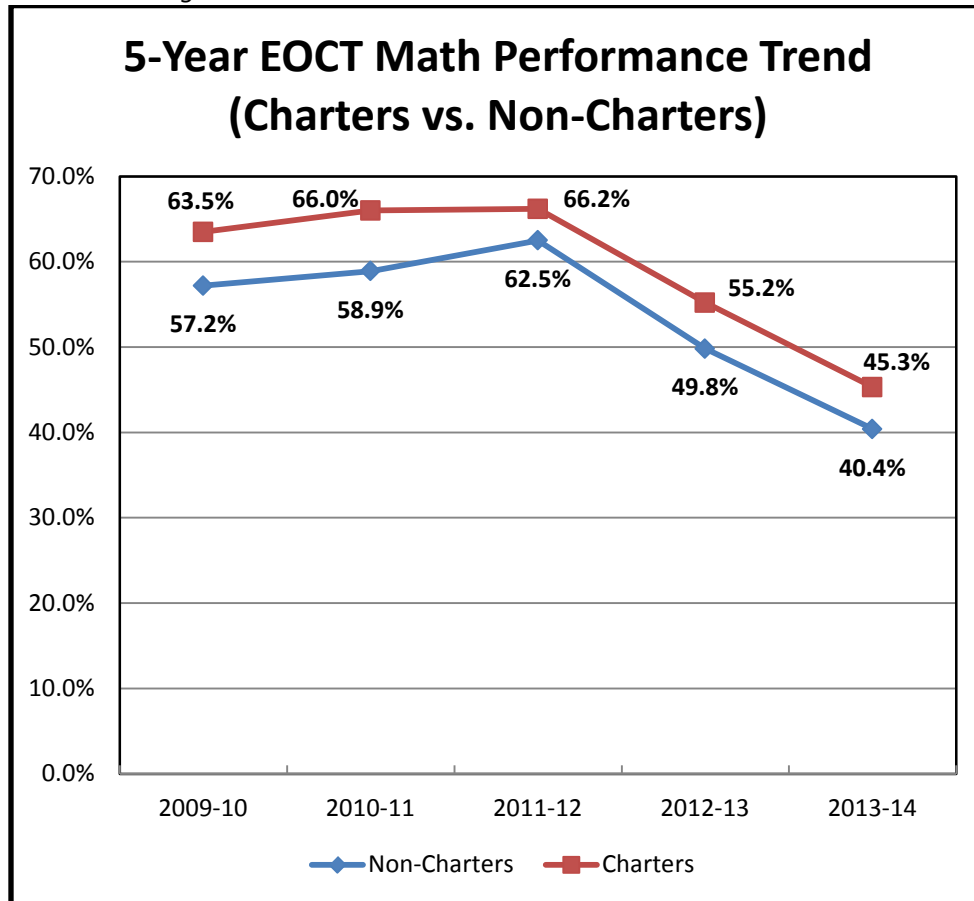
Figure 30: 2013 EOCT ELA Performance, by performance levels



## High School End of Course Test Performance *(continued)*

Georgia charter schools have outperformed non-charter schools on the EOCT Math assessment for each of the past five years.

Figure 31: 5-Year EOCT Math – Charters vs. Non-Charterers

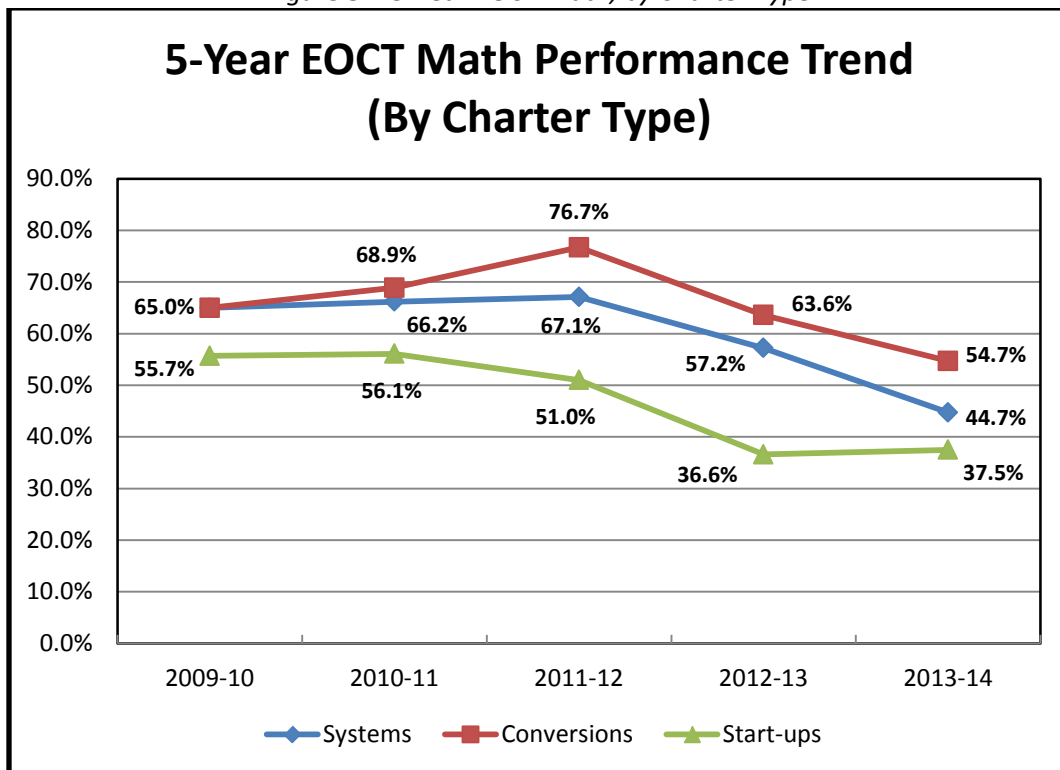


## High School End of Course Test Performance *(continued)*

Conversion charter high schools and charter system high schools outperform start-up charter high schools during each of the past four years

Start-up charter high schools were the only public schools that improved their performance on the Math EOCT in the past year, up from 36.6% to 37.5% in 2013-14.

Figure 32: 5-Year EOCT Math, by Charter Type



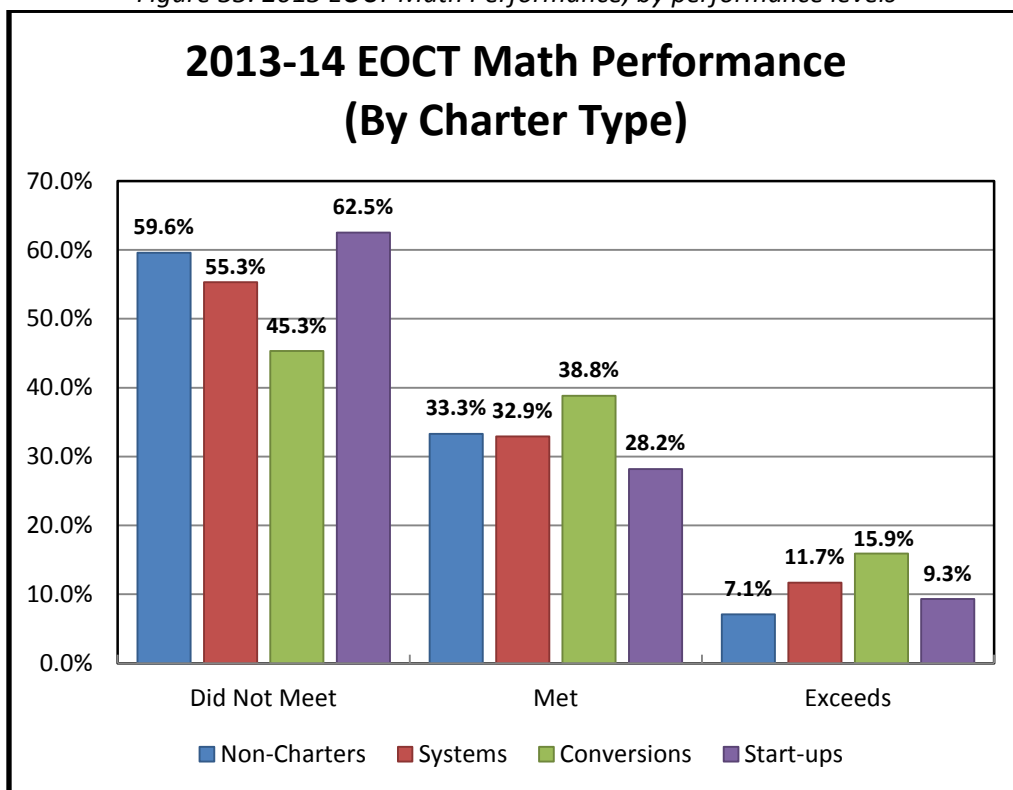
## High School End of Course Test Performance *(continued)*

For the 2013-2014 school year, each of the three charter high school types yielded a higher percentage students *exceeding* the EOCT Math standard than non-charter high schools.

Conversion charter high schools has the highest percentage of students *exceeding* the EOCT Math standard (15.9%).

Start-up charter high schools had the highest percentage of their students *not meeting* the math standard (62.5%).

Figure 33: 2013 EOCT Math Performance, by performance levels



## **New and Revised Charter School and Charter System Rules**

The State Board of Education in November 2014 adopted revised Charter School Rules and a new Charter Systems Rule to implement legislative changes from both the 2013 and 2014 sessions and by provide stakeholders with additional clarity regarding the charter schools petition process and authorizer roles and responsibilities. The new Charter Systems Rule also provides instructions on charter system petition submission, charter system petition review procedures, charter system petition requirements, charter system accountability requirements, and the role of the Charter Advisory Committee.

### **160-4-9-.04 CHARTER SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SYSTEMS DEFINITIONS**

The revised rule removes outdated definitions included previously and provides additional definitions to provide further clarification and alignment with other SBOE Rules.

- Removed Definitions
  - Governing Council
  - School level governance
- Added Definitions
  - Charter cluster
  - Charter holder
  - Founding board
  - Georgia Nonprofit
  - Local School Governance (charter systems)
  - Local School Governing Team (formerly “governing council”)
  - Public Interest
  - Substantial autonomy (Conversion Charter Schools)
  - Substantially detrimental
- Clarified Definitions
  - Charter- Clarified that a charter is a contract between an authorizer and a Georgia Nonprofit.
  - Charter petitioner- clarifies that a petitioner submits or initiates a petition for a charter but is not necessarily a party to the charter contract.
  - Faculty and instructional staff- individuals who have instructional responsibilities as opposed to “all personnel.”

### **160-4-9-.05 CHARTER SCHOOLS PETITION PROCESS**

The revised rule includes the following changes and/or additions:

- Based on changes in state law since last rules were adopted, specified that local boards of education now have 90 days to approve or deny a petition.
- Added requirement that if local board of education denies a petition, citing that approval is not in the public interest, that such local board of education is required to provide a written explanation of why approval is not in the public interest.

## Georgia Department of Education

- Added language from law that indicates that SBOE or CAC (Charter Advisory Committee) may mediate between a local board of education and a charter petitioner, when a local board of education denies a petition.
- Added detail to the Petition Process guidelines section:
  - The old document simply stated that the Department would make recommendations to the SBOE for approval and denial and state the reasons for such recommendations.
  - The new document provides added detail on what happens prior to that recommendation (e.g., sufficiency review, interview, etc.)
  - The new document also adds a separate section on the review procedures of new and renewal charters granted by the Commission.
- Streamlines the charter petition requirements section to align with the Department's new streamlined petition.
- Omits instructions related to Commission charter school petitions as well as instructions related to Charter System petitions, as both are contained in their own rule.

### **160-4-9-.06 CHARTER AUTHORIZERS, FINANCING, MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE TRAINING**

The revised rule includes the following changes and/or additions:

- Adds language to indicate that the SBOE shall review and may overrule the approval or renewal of a state charter school by the Commission within 60 days of such decision.
- Adds language to clarify that if a charter school is terminated, the charter school, and not the SBOE or the local school system, is responsible for all outstanding debts of that school.
- Adds language from law to clarify that the governing team of a system charter school may petition to become a conversion charter school, not subject to the terms of the system charter.
- Clarifies that the SBOE may terminate a charter without a hearing if the other parties waive their right to a hearing.
- Clarifies that upon termination, assets purchased using state or federal grant funds shall revert to the Department, and shall not be used to satisfy liabilities.
- Based on changes in state law, adds a Governing Board Training section.

### **160-4-9-.07 CHARTER SYSTEMS**

The proposed new rule includes the following changes and/or additions:

- Clarifies Letters of Intent timelines and requirements.
- Provides minimum requirements for Public Hearings held in accordance with O.C.G.A. §20-2-2063.2.

Georgia Department of Education

- Clarifies the charter system petition review process, including the role of the Charter Advisory Committee in such review process.
- Clarifies the SBOE waiver process for any district that submits a charter system Letter of Intent but does not receive an executed charter system contract by July 1, 2015.
- Clarifies petition requirements, including requirements for renewal.
- Enumerates charter system accountability requirements including student performance, fiscal health, school culture, maximization of school level governance, annual training and the submission of an annual report.
- Clarifies the role of the Charter Advisory Committee with regard to charter system policy, charter system petition review, obligation to make recommendations on charter system applications to the SBOE and ability to contract with consultants.

## Appendix

### Charter Types

1. Conversion Charter School: A charter school that existed as a local public school prior to becoming a charter school. To apply as a conversion, a majority of the faculty and instructional staff members and a majority of parents or guardians of students enrolled in the petitioning school must vote by secret ballot to apply for a charter.
2. Start-Up Charter School: A charter school created by a petition brought forth by private individuals, private organizations, or a state or local public entity.
  - a. Locally Approved Start-Up: A charter school operating under the terms of a charter between the charter petitioner, the local district, and the State Board of Education.
  - b. State Charter School: A charter school created as an independent school that operates under terms of a charter between the charter petitioner and the State Charter Schools Commission. Petitioners apply to become a State Charter School if their petition was denied by a local board of education or if they will draw students from five or more counties.
3. Charter System: A local school district that operates under a charter between the district as the charter petitioner and the State Board of Education.

Conversions, start-ups, and charter system schools are under the management and control of their local board and their charters are three-party contracts between the State Board of Education, the local board and the charter school's governing board.

State Charter Schools manage themselves and are treated as LEAs (local education agencies) and their charters are two-party contracts between the State Charter Schools Commission and the charter school's governing board.

### Testing History

In 2000, Georgia instituted the first year of the state assessment, the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), for grades four, six, and eight. Spring 2002 and 2004 marked the first operational administrations in all grades, which included English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Reading in grades 1 through 8. Science and Social Studies are covered in grades 3 through 8.

### Academic Data

Data on academic performance was extracted from the GaDOE data warehouse. Please note that the 2013-14 school year assessment (CRCT and EOCT) and CCRPI data utilized in the derivation of the various results presented is incomplete for some schools and school districts. Once a more finalized version of the aforementioned data is release, an addendum will be released in the form of an attachment for this report.



### **Acronyms**

Throughout the report, a number of acronyms appear. Among these are: AYP or Adequate Yearly Progress; CCRPI or the College and Career Ready Performance Index; CRCT or Criterion Reference Competency Test; EOCT or End of Course Test; GHSGT or Georgia High School Graduation Test; GaDOE or Georgia Department of Education; LEA or Local Educational Agency; SBOE or State Board of Education.

### **Acknowledgements**

A special thank you from the Charter Schools Division to the following individuals and teams for their contributions to this report:

#### State Board of Education Charter Schools Committee

Mr. Brian Burdette, Chair  
Mr. Kenneth Mason, Vice Chair  
Mr. Scott Johnson  
Ms. Lisa Kinnemore  
Mr. Kevin Boyd

#### Georgia Department of Education

Dr. Garry McGiboney, Deputy Superintendent, External Affairs  
Mr. Danny Ayoubi, Education Statistics Analyst – Policy Division

### **District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division**

#### Contact Information

Georgia Department of Education  
2053 Twin Towers East  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Dr. SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-5040  
(404) 657-0515  
(404) 657-6978 (Fax)

#### Staff

Mr. Louis Erste, Associate Superintendent for Policy and Charters,  
District Flexibility, and Governmental Affairs  
Ms. Morgan Felts, Program Manager  
Ms. Niya Kennedy, Attorney  
Ms. Jacqueline Clarke Dodd, Executive Assistant