



# Chartering in Georgia

# 2012-2013

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*An overview of the academic performance of Georgia's  
charter schools*

The Charter  
Schools Division  
Annual Report  
for 2012-2013

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 Charter Schools Division each year conducts an Annual Report process for charter schools and charter systems. The 2013 process was open from August 1 to October 1. Each charter school and charter system annual report requirement is satisfied by completing this process. The Department then compiles the schools' report data, adds in academic assessment data including local district and statewide academic comparisons, and prepares and conveys to the General Assembly the attached report on behalf of the State Board of Education. Additional reports using data submitted by the schools in their Annual Reports will be forthcoming in 2014.

During the 2012-2013 school year, Georgia had 310 charter schools directly serving 43 school districts with four charter schools serving statewide. Of these charter schools, 28 were identified as Reward Schools through the new College and Career Ready Performance Index accountability system. Eleven charter schools were recognized for their high performance, while 17 charter schools were recognized for their progress in increasing student achievement. In addition, several of Georgia's charter schools were recognized nationally for academic excellence and innovative practices. This report will highlight many of these accomplishments.

During 2012-2013, the addition of new charter systems continued to increase the number of students served within charter schools. Additionally, the State Board of Education and the Georgia Department of Education continued to enhance our focus on charter school accountability and transparency. The Georgia Department of Education also developed additional resources for local school districts to strengthen their authorizer practices. Finally, the Georgia Department of Education is providing local and district leaders with performance-based research data to assist in decision-making.

Please note that this annual report includes definitions in an Appendix. Additional information on individual charter school performance may be requested through the 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 and Charters  
Georgia Department of Education

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## Highlights from the 2012-2013 School Year

The 2012-2013 school year was a successful one for many of Georgia's charter schools, with several recognized locally and nationally for academic success and innovative practices. Highlights include:

1. Charter high schools earned six of the 10 highest SAT composite scores in the state.
  - Over 18 charter high schools exceeded the state average on SAT.
2. Student enrollment in charter schools increased by almost 75% from 2011-12 – from 130,492 to 225,259 in 2012-13
  - Charter system growth was responsible for much of the enrollment growth.
3. Charter schools outperformed non-charter schools in the aggregate on major state assessments.

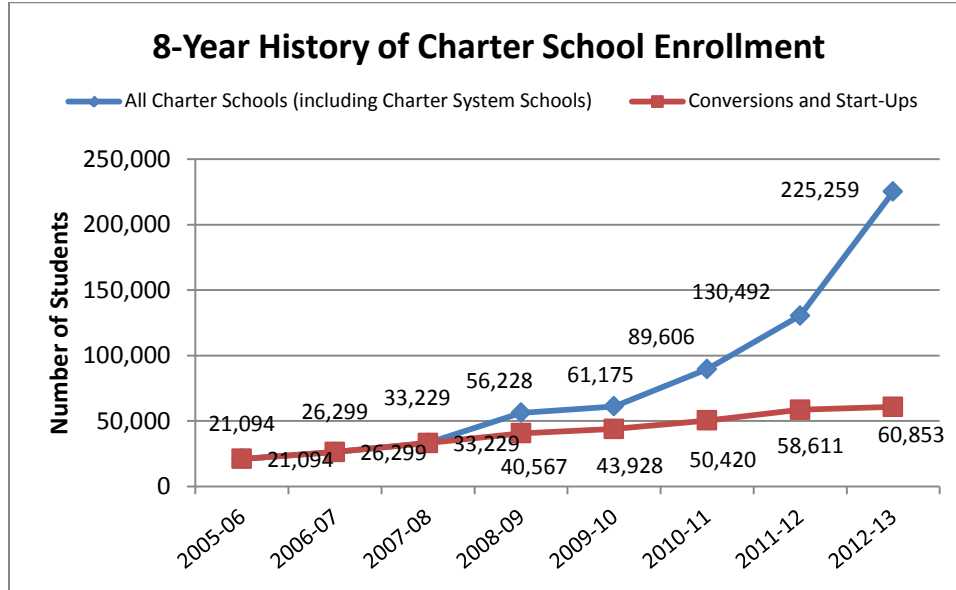
*Figure 1: 2012-2013 SAT Performance of Charter High Schools*

High School	Charter Type	SAT Performance	
		Composite Score	State Rank
Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science and Technology	Start-up	1917	2
Northview High School	System	1773	3
Walton High School	Conversion	1741	4
Johns Creek High School	System	1707	6
Milton High School	System	1697	7
Alpharetta High School	System	1672	10
Chattahoochee High School	System	1667	12
Roswell High School	System	1653	13
Chamblee Charter High School	Conversion	1619	19
Fulton Science Academy High School	Start-up	1563	34
Centennial High School	System	1560	38
Riverwood International Charter School	System	1557	39
Pepperell High School	System	1553	Top 15%
Armuchee High School	System	1550	Top 15%
North Springs High School	Conversion	1546	Top 15%
Decatur High School	System	1528	Top 15%
Cambridge High School	System	1525	Top 15%
Model High	System	1493	Top 25%
Morgan County Charter High School	Conversion	1484	Top 25%
Coosa High School	System	1461	Top 25%
Marietta High School	System	1456	Top 25%

## Characteristics: Charter Students and Charter Schools

During the 2012-2013 school year, 225,259 Georgia public school students were enrolled in a charter school. This represented a nearly 75% increase from the previous year and nearly 275% increase in the past three years. Much of the student enrollment growth is concentrated within the charter systems; however, student enrollment in conversion and start-up charter schools continues its annual trend upward – increasing more than 5% from the previous year.

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 2012-2013 school year, 48% of charter school students were enrolled in elementary school grades, 23% in middle school grades, and 29% in high school.

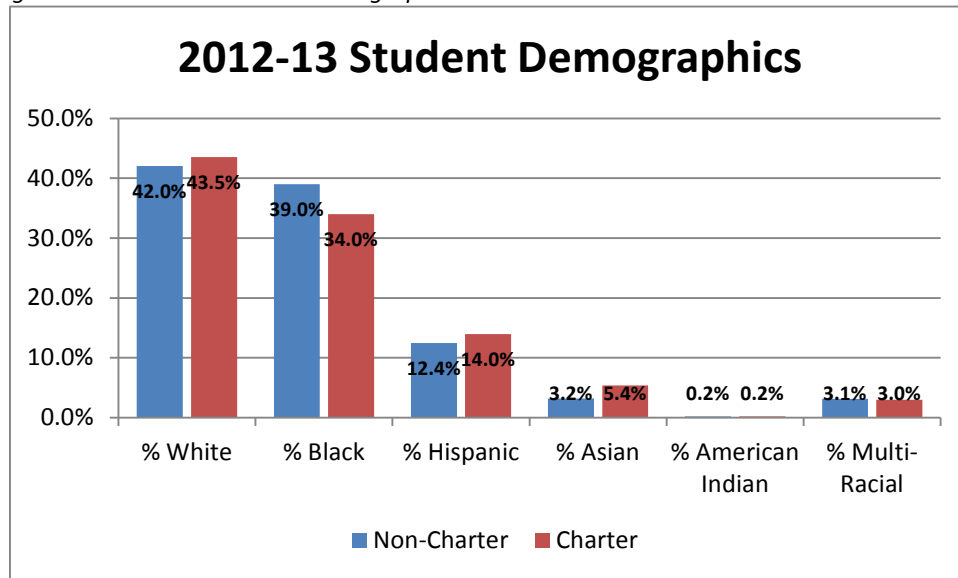
Figure 3: 2013 Charter School Student Enrollment by Grade Level

Grades Served	Georgia Charter Schools Enrollment		Non-Charter Schools Enrollment	
	Number of Students	% of Total Charter School Enrollment	Number of Students	% of Total Charter School Enrollment
Elementary Grades: K-5	108,449	48.3%	678,889	47.4%
Middle Grades: 6-8	52,678	23.0%	337,908	23.6%
High School Grades: 9-12	64,608	28.7%	415,946	29.0%
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>224,735</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>1,432,743</b>	<b>86.4%</b>

Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

The racial and ethnic composition of Georgia charter schools also mirrored that of the non-charter schools. However, charter schools as a whole (conversion, start-ups, and charter system schools) served a higher percent of Hispanic and White students and a lower percentage of Black students than non-charter schools.

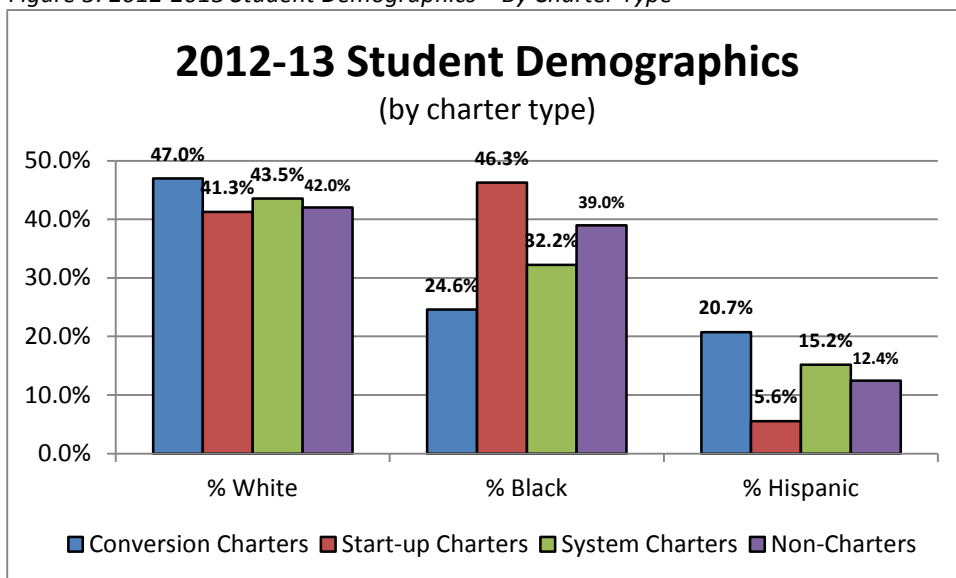
Figure 4: 2012-2013 Student Demographics – Charter and Non-Charter



Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

The advent of additional charter system and conversion schools has shifted the racial and ethnic composition of the Georgia charter schools – conversion charter schools serve a higher proportion of White students than non-charters. Start-up charter schools serve a higher proportion of Black students but serve the lowest proportion of Hispanic students than any other charter option and non-charter schools.

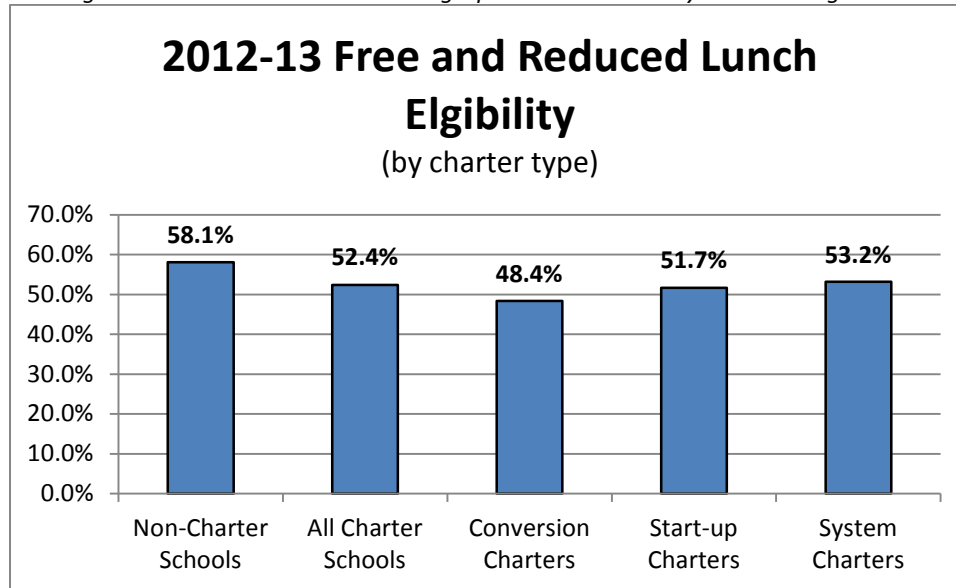
Figure 5: 2012-2013 Student Demographics – By Charter Type



Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

Services to economically disadvantaged students within Georgia charter schools also mirrored that of the state, although Georgia charter schools served a slightly lower percentage of economically disadvantaged students than non-charters – 52% of charter school students were eligible for free and reduced price meals compared to 58% of non-charter school students.

Figure 6: 2012-2013 Student Demographics – Economically Disadvantaged

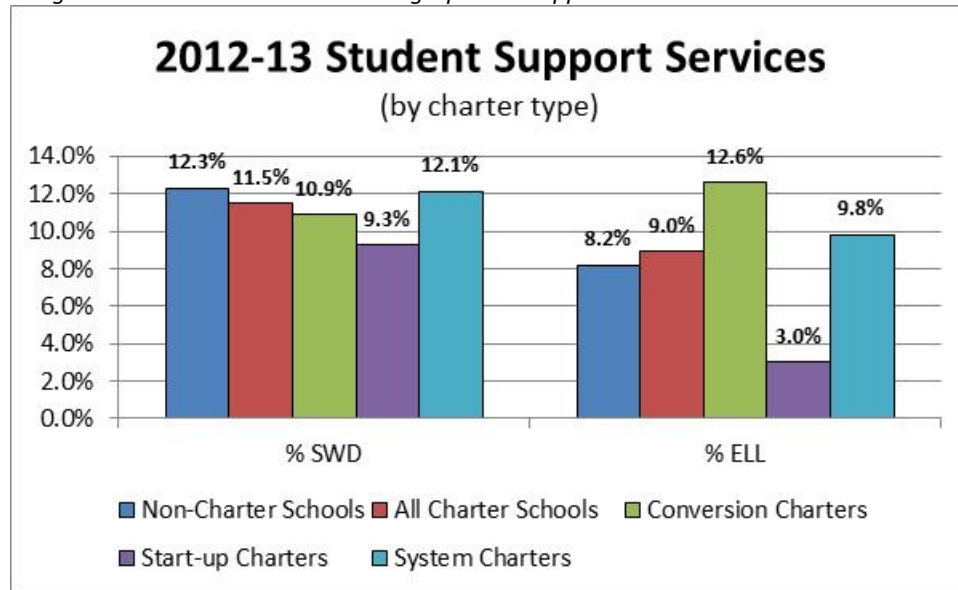


Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

In terms of student support services, Georgia charter schools serve similar percentages of students as non-charters for both special needs and second language populations. Students with disabilities were another program service area where Georgia charter schools are similar compared to non-charter schools – 11.5% to 12.3% respectively. Among charter schools, 12% of charter system school students, 11% of conversion school students, and 9% of start-up charter schools students received special education services.

While serving a slightly lower population of students with disabilities, Georgia charter schools served a higher percentage of students needing language support. In particular, 9% of Georgia charter school students received second language (ELL or English language learner) services compared to 8% for non-charter school students. Conversion charter schools possessed the largest percentage of ELL students at 13%, followed by system charters 10% and start-up charter 3%.

Figure 7: 2012-2013 Student Demographics – Support Services



Source: GaDOE Student FTE Collection Period 1

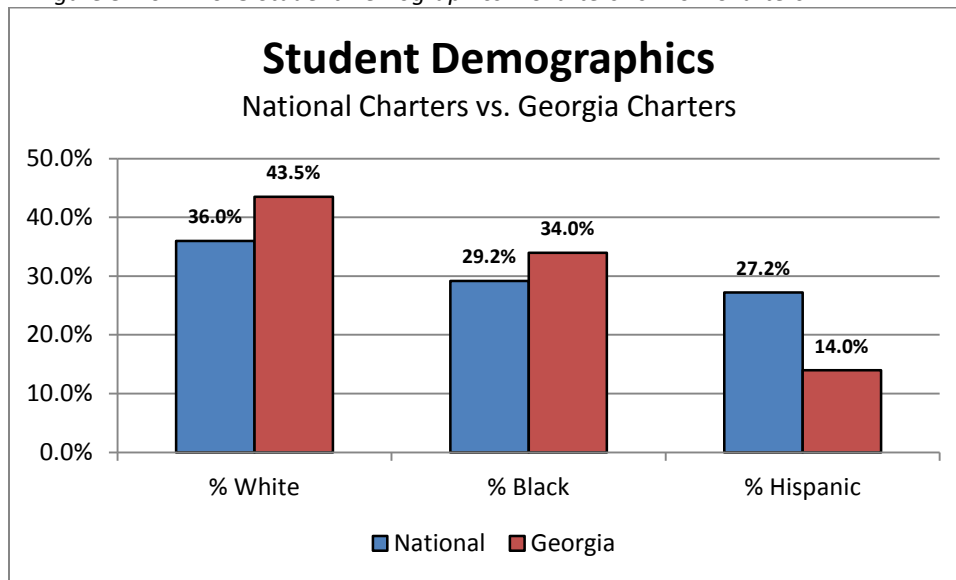


## Georgia Charters vs. Charters Nationally

Nationally, charter school students represent 4.6% of all public school students in the 2012-13 school year.<sup>1</sup> Georgia charter school students represent 13.6% of the public school population in Georgia – including all charter types.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, Georgia charter schools serve a slight higher percentage of Black students (34%) compared to charter schools nationally (29%). Georgia charter schools serve a higher percentage of White students (44% to 36% nationally) and only half as many Hispanic students (14% to 27% nationally) as do charter schools nationally.

Figure 8: 2012-2013 Student Demographics – Charters vs. Non-Charters

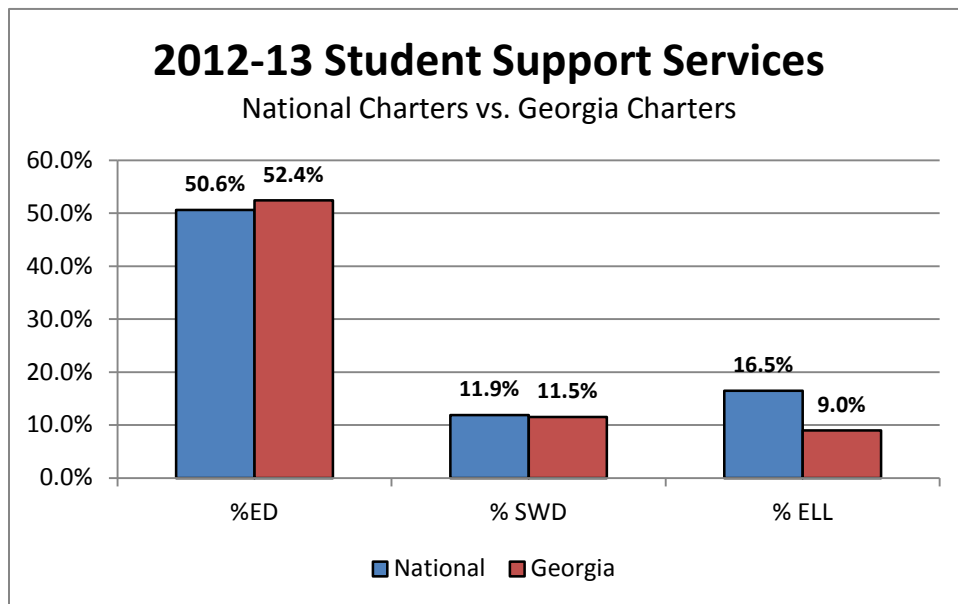


<sup>1</sup> The Public Charter Schools Dashboard, A Comprehensive Data Resource from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Accessed online via <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/schools/year/2013>.

<sup>2</sup> Enrollment is based on the October 2013 (FTE 2013-1) count and can be accessed online from the Georgia Department of Education’s website [http://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte\\_pack\\_ethnicsex.entry\\_form](http://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_ethnicsex.entry_form).

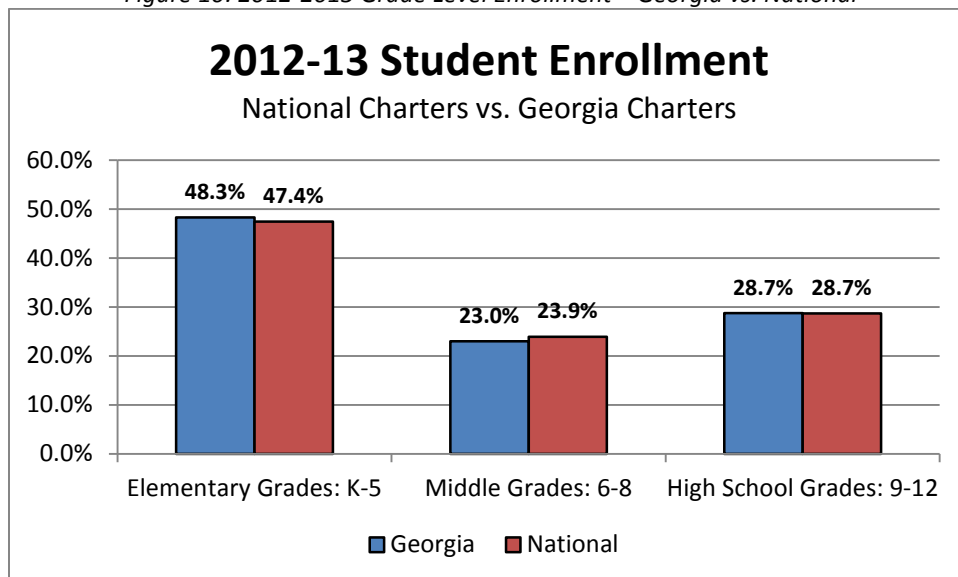
Georgia charter schools serve a slightly higher percent of economically disadvantaged students than do charter schools nationally, but continue to serve a lower percentage of students needing language support. In prior years, Georgia charter schools have served an even lower proportion of the students needing language support (6.1% in 2011-12); however, the recent additions of charter systems and new start-up charter schools has increased the number of students supported with ELL services in Georgia's charter schools to 9% in 2012-13.

Figure 9: 2012-2013 Program Service Areas – Georgia vs. National



The distribution of the students in charter schools across grade levels are similar for both charter schools in Georgia and nationally.

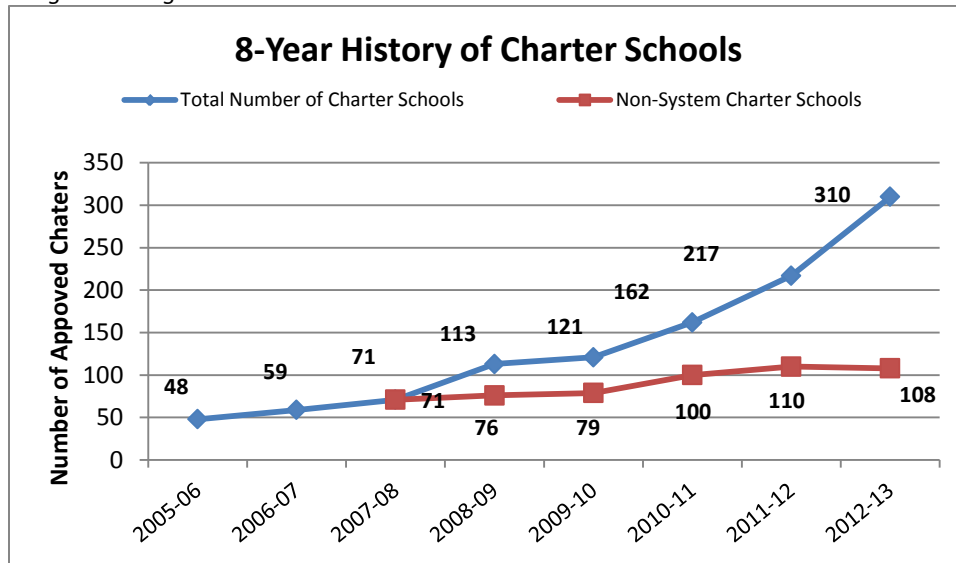
Figure 10: 2012-2013 Grade Level Enrollment – Georgia vs. National



## Charter Schools by the Numbers

The growth of Georgia charter schools continued in the 2012-2013 school year. The total number of charter schools increased 43% from 217 to 310 schools – including system charter schools.

Figure 11: Eight-Year Charter School Growth



Charters in 2012-13 comprised 13.7% of all schools in Georgia, higher than the national average of 5.8%. Georgia’s percentage of charter schools is more than twice that of the neighboring states of North Carolina (4.0%), South Carolina (4.0%), and Tennessee (2.3%). Florida represented the only geographic neighbor with a higher percentage of charter schools at 14.5%. Georgia’s remaining neighbor, Alabama, is one of ten states that did not have a charter law in 2012-13.

## Charter School Locations in Georgia

The proliferation of charter schools across Georgia continued within the 2012-2013 school year. Consistent with prior years, approximately 60% of charter schools are clustered around the Metro Atlanta area. However, in nine school districts (excluding charter systems) more than 8% of the schools serving students are under a charter contract.

*Figure 12: Percent of Schools under Charter Contract*

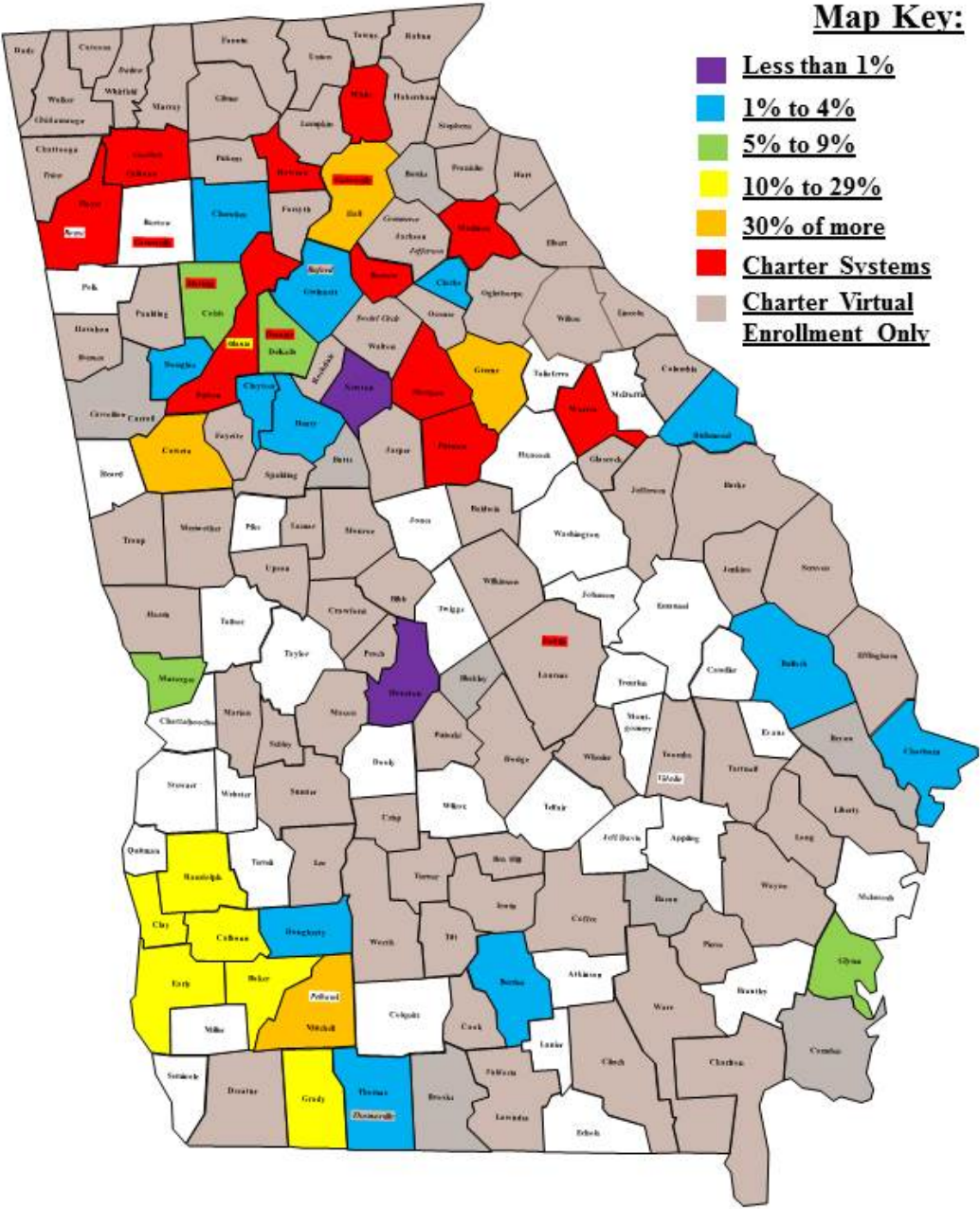
System Name	Total Non System Charters	Total School Count	Percent Charter School
Greene County	2	5	40.0%
Hall County	11	33	33.3%
Early County	1	4	25.0%
Berrien County	1	5	20.0%
Mitchell County	1	5	20.0%
Thomas County	1	6	16.7%
Atlanta Public Schools	15	103	14.6%
Grady County	1	7	14.3%
DeKalb County	15	134	11.2%
Coweta County	2	30	6.7%
Bulloch County	1	16	6.3%
Glynn County	1	17	5.9%
Chatham County	3	52	5.8%
Muscogee County	3	55	5.5%
Clayton County	3	62	4.8%
Clarke County	1	21	4.8%
Cobb County	5	112	4.5%
Newton County	1	23	4.3%
Dougherty County	1	27	3.7%
Gwinnett County	4	132	3.0%
Douglas County	1	35	2.9%
Houston County	1	37	2.7%
Cherokee County	1	39	2.6%
Richmond County	1	57	1.8%

*Note: Excludes the 14 charter systems in operation during 2012-2013.*

While charter schools are clustered within the Atlanta metro area, charter schools are distributed across the state (see below), including in southwest Georgia (Thomas County, Mitchell County, and Berrien County), southeast Georgia (Glynn County), northwest Georgia (Whitfield County, Gordon County, Calhoun City, and Floyd County), and northeast Georgia (White County).

Figure 13: Graphical Map of Charter School Enrollment Density

# 2012-13 Percent of Students Enrolled in Charter Schools



## Charter School Enrollment Trends

The range of student enrollment within Georgia charter schools varied widely, from Houston County Career Academy with 66 full-time students (although 450 additional students attend for at least one class) to Odyssey School/ Georgia Cyber Academy with 12,192 students. The average charter school enrolled 777 students. Start-up charter schools averaged 628 students (or 431 when removing the Odyssey Charter School), conversion charter schools averaged 860 students (Walton High School in Cobb County was the largest with 2,636 students), and charter system schools averaged 810 students.

Figure 14: Number of Charter Schools by Student Enrollment

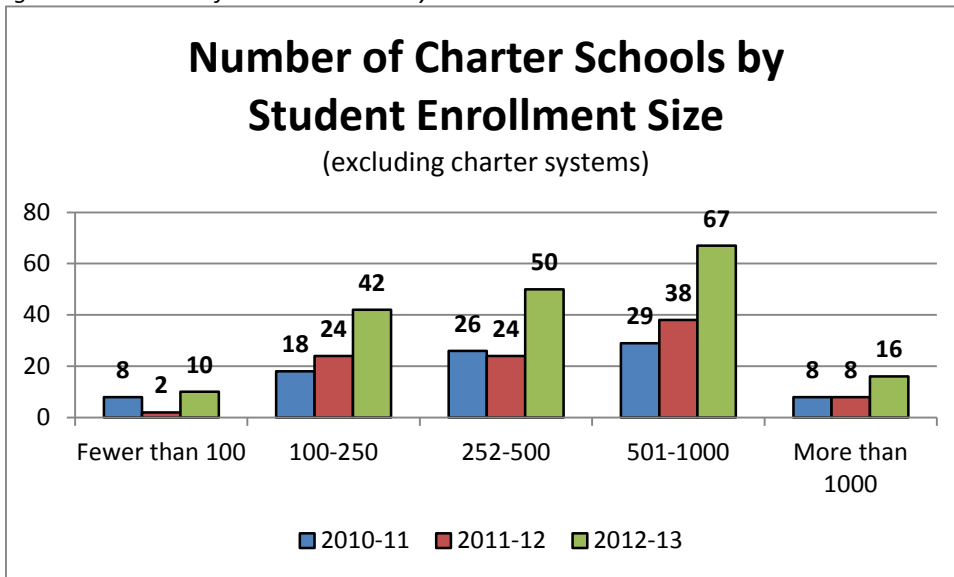
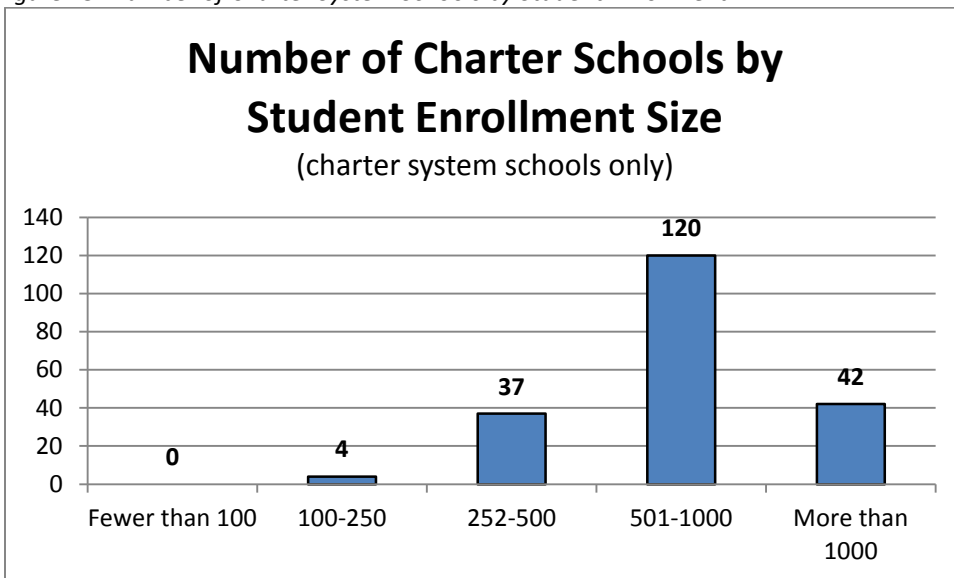


Figure 15: Number of Charter System Schools by Student Enrollment



## 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. Results from the CCRPI will not be available until after this report is published; however, school-based distinctions that have been released are presented below.

In place of the AYP determinations, and to satisfy federal accountability for the 2012-2013 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.

- Eighteen (18) charter schools are designated as Focus Schools for having the “gap within school gap” – however, for 10 of these schools, this gap existed prior to the schools becoming a charter school.

**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).

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

Figure 16: Charter Schools – Accountability Distinctions

<b>System Name</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Charter Type</b>	<b>Reward School Type</b>
Atlanta Public Schools	Charles R. Drew Charter School	Start-up	Highest Performing
Decatur City	Renfroe Middle School	System	Highest Performing
DeKalb County	DeKalb PATH Academy Charter School	Start-up	Highest Performing
Fulton County	KIPP South Fulton Academy School	Start-up	Highest Performing
Fulton County	River Eves Elementary School	System	Highest Performing
Gordon County	Fairmount Elementary School	System	Highest Performing
Madison County	Comer Elementary School	System	Highest Performing
Madison County	Ila Elementary School	System	Highest Performing
Morgan County	Morgan County Elementary School	System	Highest Performing
White County	Mount Yonah Elementary School	System	Highest Performing
White County	White Co. Intermediate	System	Highest Performing
<b>High Progress</b>			
Atlanta Public Schools	Charles R. Drew Charter School	Start-up	High Progress
Atlanta Public Schools	KIPP Strive Academy	Start-up	High Progress
Barrow County	Apalachee High School	System	High Progress
Calhoun City	Calhoun High School	System	High Progress
CCAT	Charter Conservatory for Liberal Arts and Technology	Start-up	High Progress
Clayton County	Elite Scholars Academy School	Start-up	High Progress
Floyd County	Cave Spring Elementary School	System	High Progress
Floyd County	McHenry Primary	System	High Progress
Fulton County	Hapeville Charter Middle School	Start-up	High Progress
Fulton County	McNair Middle School	System	High Progress
Gainesville City	Gainesville Exploration Academy	System	High Progress
Gainesville City	New Holland Core Knowledge Academy	System	High Progress
Gordon County	Sonoraville East Middle School	System	High Progress
Muscogee County	Wynnton Elementary School	Conversion	High Progress
Putnam County	Putnam County Middle School	System	High Progress
Richmond County	Jenkins-White Elementary Charter School	Conversion	High Progress
Warren County	Warren County Middle School	System	High Progress



Figure 16: Charter Schools – Accountability Distinctions

<b>SYSTEM NAME</b>	<b>SCHOOL NAME</b>	<b>Charter Type</b>	<b>School Type</b>
Barrow County	Winder-Barrow High School	System	Focus
DeKalb County	Gateway to College Academy	Start-up	Focus
Dublin City	Dublin Middle School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Bear Creek Middle School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Creekside High School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	High Point Elementary School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Jackson Elementary School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Randolph Elementary School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Renaissance Middle School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Ridgeview Charter School	Conversion	Focus
Fulton County *	S. L. Lewis Elementary School	System	Focus
Fulton County *	Sandy Springs Middle School	Conversion	Focus
Fulton County *	Tri-Cities High School	System	Focus
Gainesville City	Gainesville Middle School	System	Focus
Hall County	Lanier Career Academy	Start-up	Focus
Intergovernmental	Mountain Education Center School	Start-up	Focus
Marietta City	Marietta High School	System	Focus
Marietta City	Marietta Middle School	System	Focus

Note: \* indicates focus school status was achieved prior to gaining charter school status

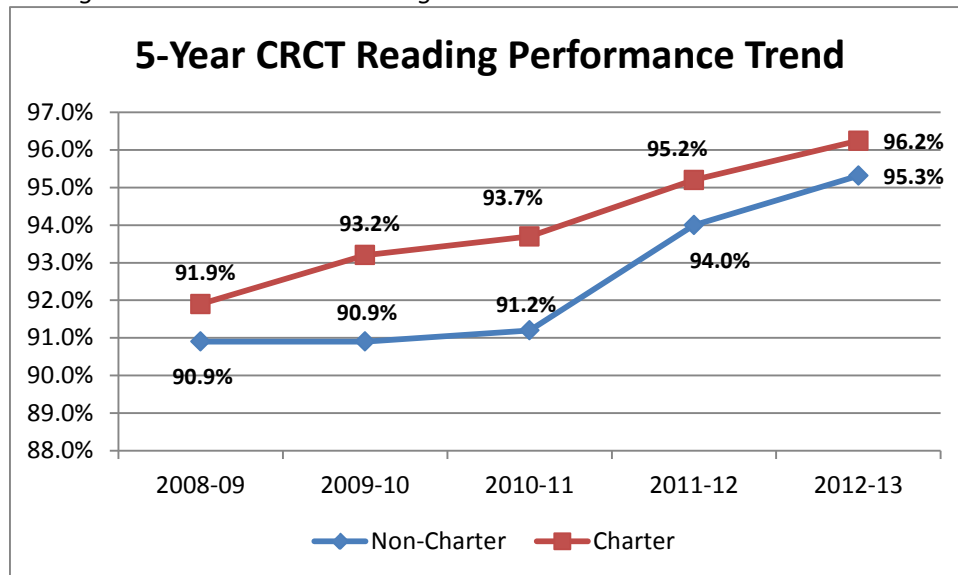
## Charter Schools and Academic Performance

The following section summarizes the academic performance of Georgia charter schools on key statewide assessments for elementary, middle, and high schools.

### Elementary and Middle School CRCT Test Performance

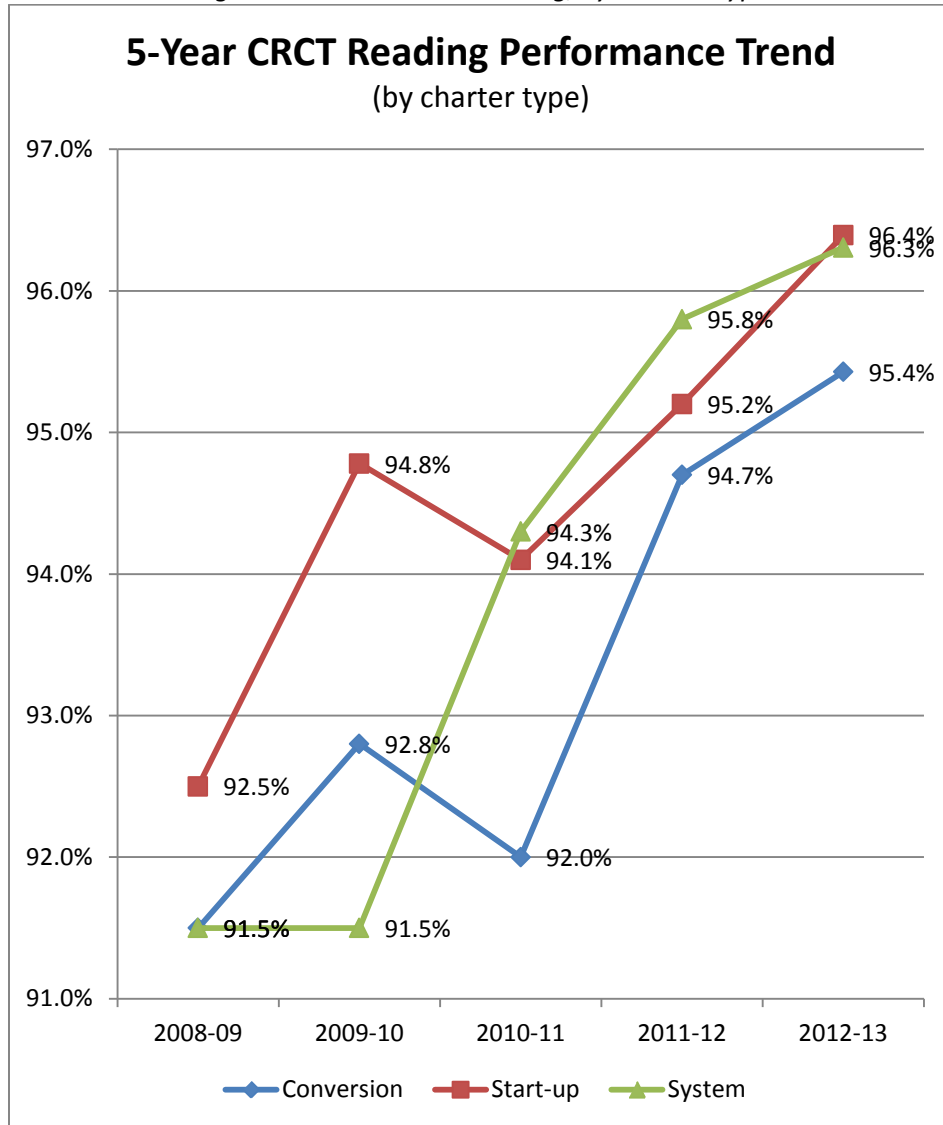
Georgia charter schools have outperformed non-charter schools on the CRCT reading assessment for each of the past five years.

Figure 17: 5-Year CRCT Reading – Charters vs. Non-Charter



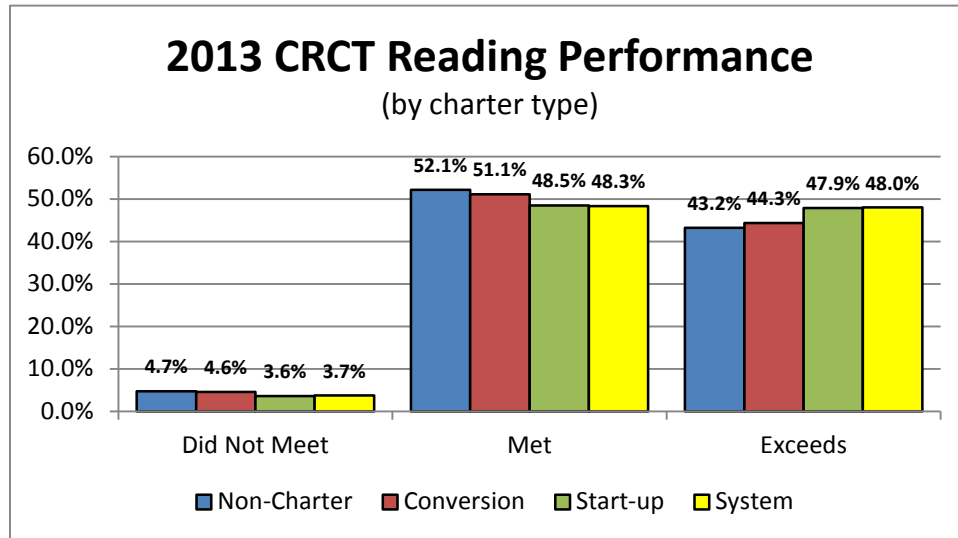
Over the past five years all charter school types have experienced growth in the percent of students passing the CRCT Reading assessment. However, charter system schools have experienced the largest growth in the percent of students passing the CRCT reading assessment, increasing their passing percent by 4.8%, compared to an increase by conversion and start-up charter schools of 3.9% during the past five years.

Figure 18: 5-Year CRCT Reading, by Charter Type



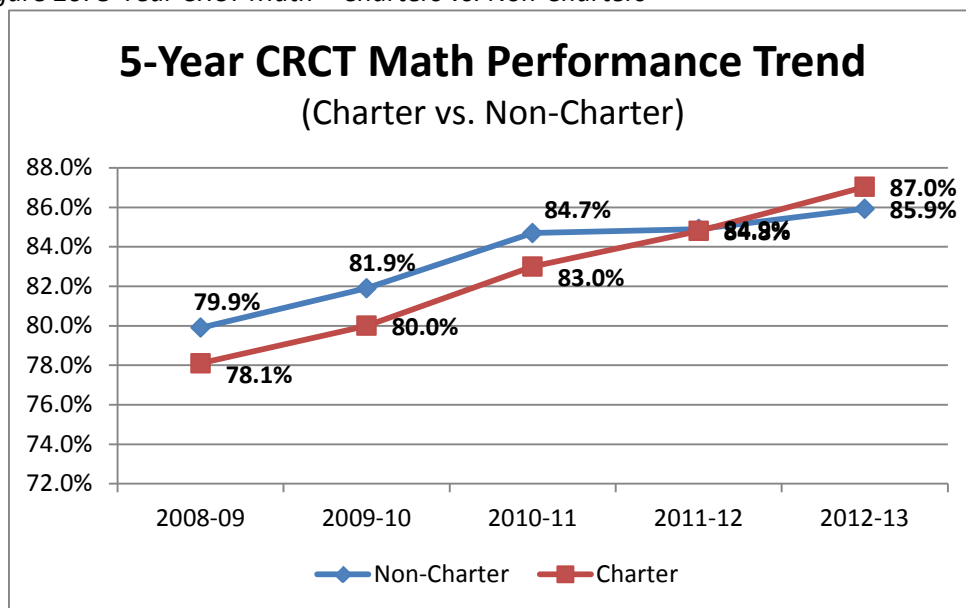
The 2013 CRCT Reading assessment illustrates similarities amongst charter schools and non-charter schools. System charters and start-up charter schools demonstrated the highest percentage of students exceeding the reading standard. All charter schools outperformed non-charter schools on the percent of students exceeding the standard.

Figure 19: 2013 CRCT Reading Performance, by performance levels



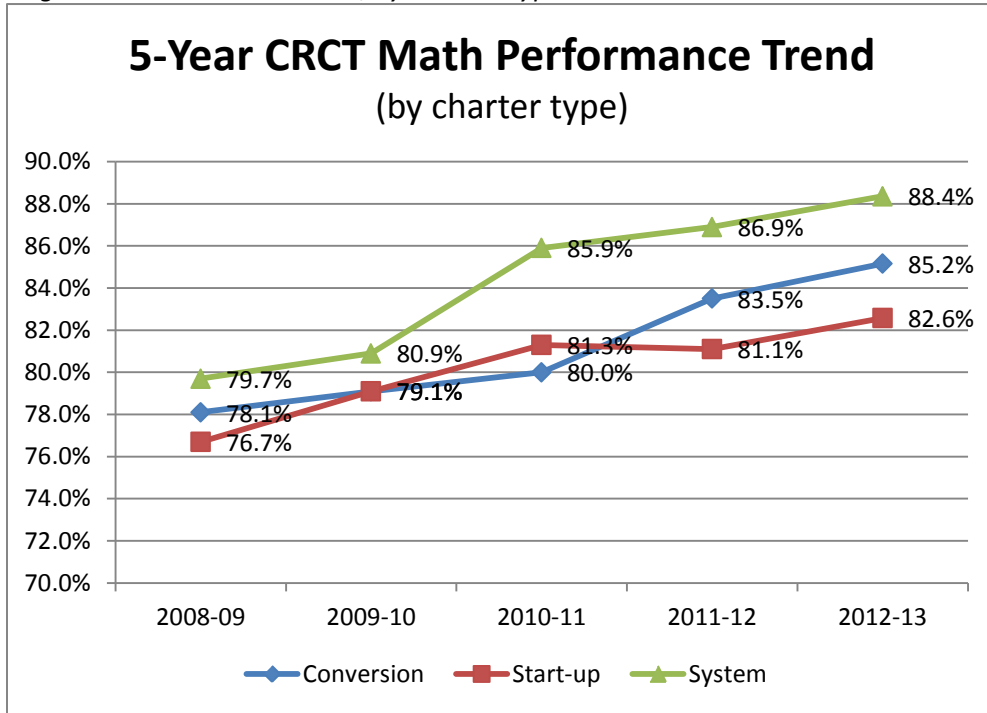
In 2013, charter schools outperformed non-charter schools on the CRCT Math test for the first time during the past five years. Charter schools have demonstrated consistent growth over the past five years, while growth for non-charter schools has remained relatively flat since 2010-11.

Figure 20: 5-Year CRCT Math – Charters vs. Non-Charters



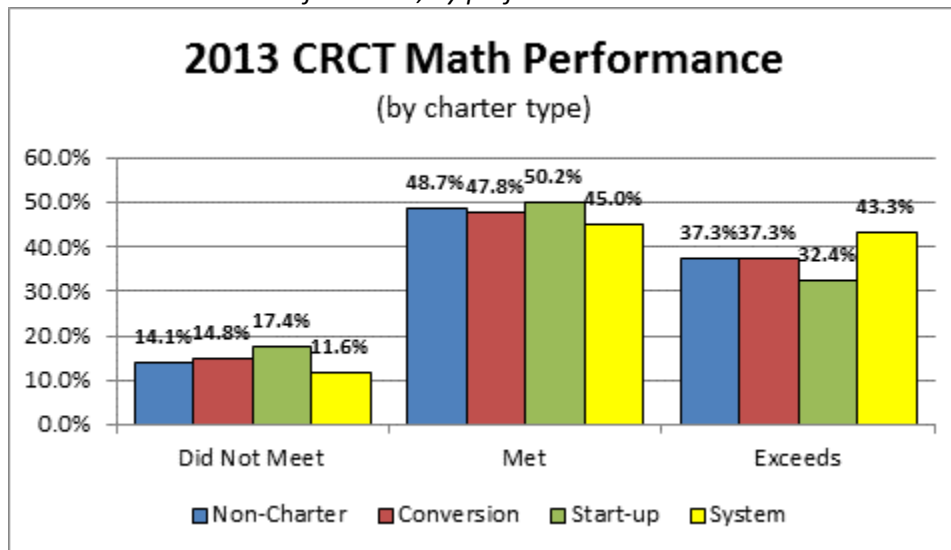
Amongst charter schools, start-up charters regained the loss between 2010-11 and 2011-12 and are again on an upward trend in the percent of students passing the CRCT Math assessment. Charter system schools have consistently outperformed both conversions and start-ups in each of the past five years.

Figure 21: 5-Year CRCT Math, by Charter Type



For the 2013 CRCT Math assessments, only system charter schools outperformed non-charter schools on the percent of students exceeding the standards – although conversion charter schools matched the non-charter performance.

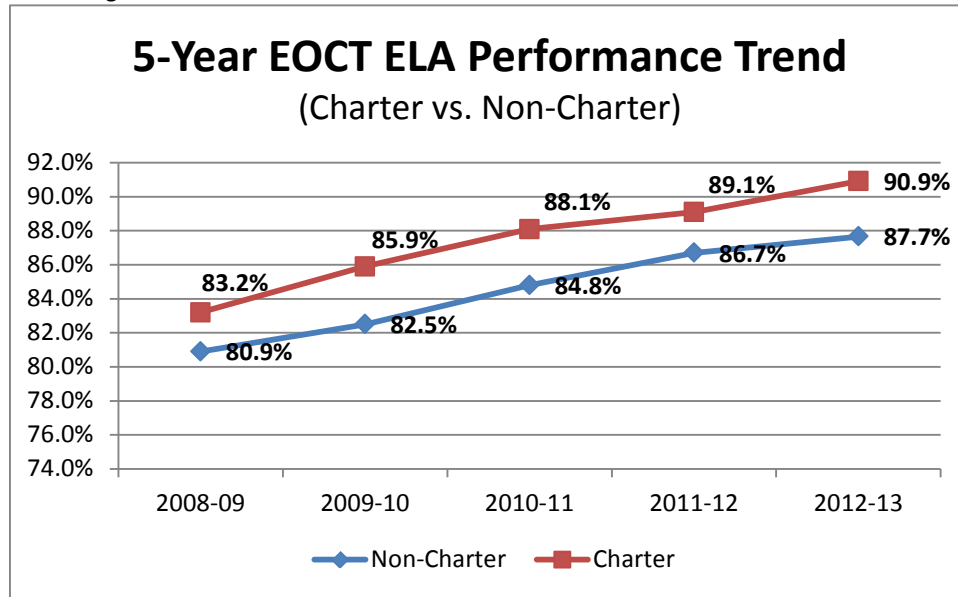
Figure 22: 2013 CRCT Math Performance, by performance levels



## High School End of Course Test Performance

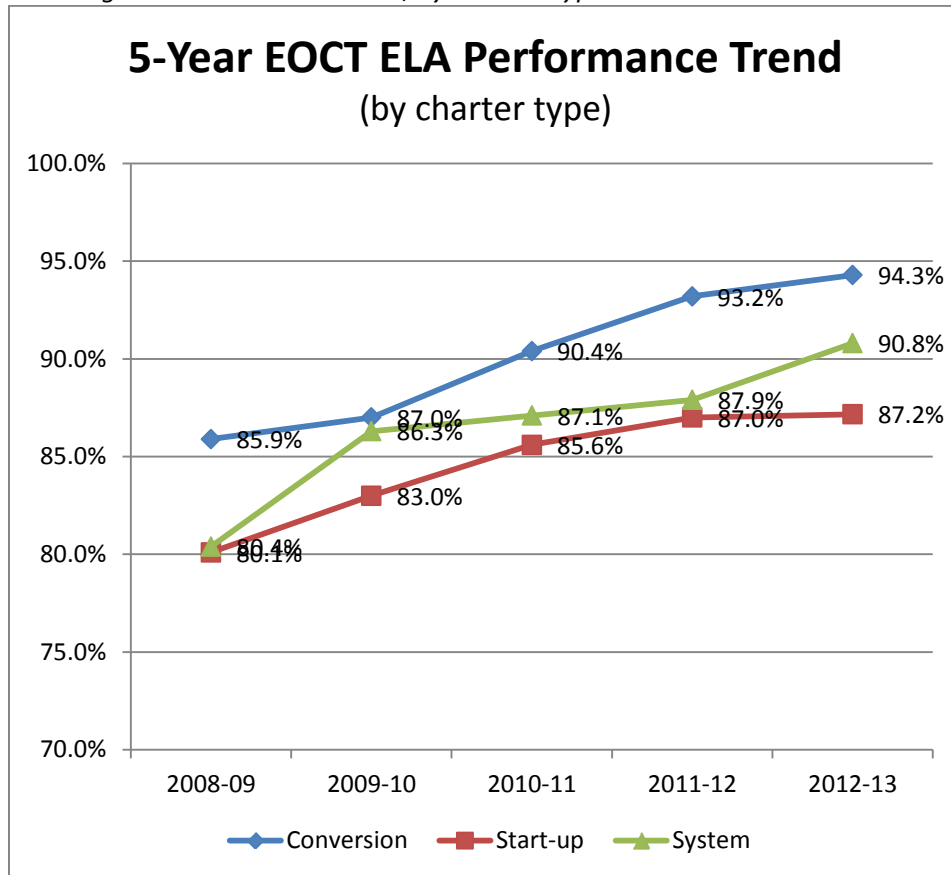
Over the past five years, Georgia charter schools have outperformed non-charter schools on the ELA End-of-Course tests (EOCTs). Charter schools have increased their passing percentage from 83.2% in 2009 to 90.9% in 2013. Traditional schools have increased their passing percent from 80.9% to 87.7% during the same time period.

Figure 23: 5-Year EOCT ELA – Charters vs. Non-Charter



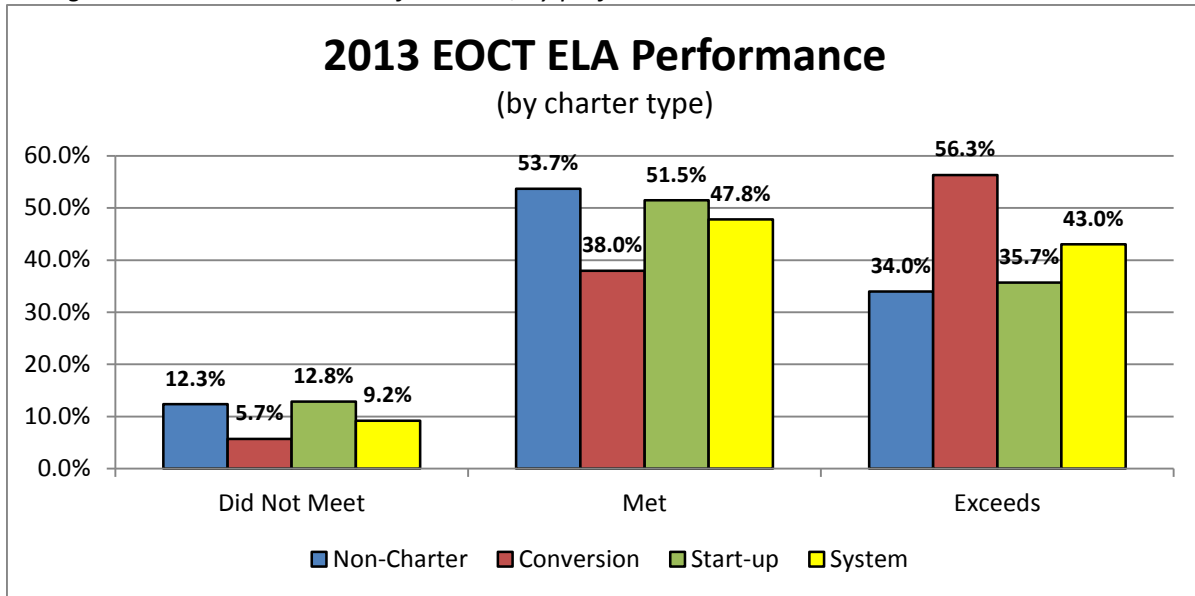
Conversion charter high schools have outperformed both start-up and conversion charters on the ELA EOCT in each of the past five years. However, both start-ups and conversions have made significant increases in their passing percent on the ELA EOCT over the past five years. Start-up charter high schools experienced only a slight increase in performance in 2013.

Figure 24: 5-Year EOCT ELA, by Charter Type



Conversion charter high schools had a significantly higher percentage of students exceeding the ELA standard. Start-up charter schools were comparable to non-charter schools in the rate of students not meeting the standard during the 2013 testing period.

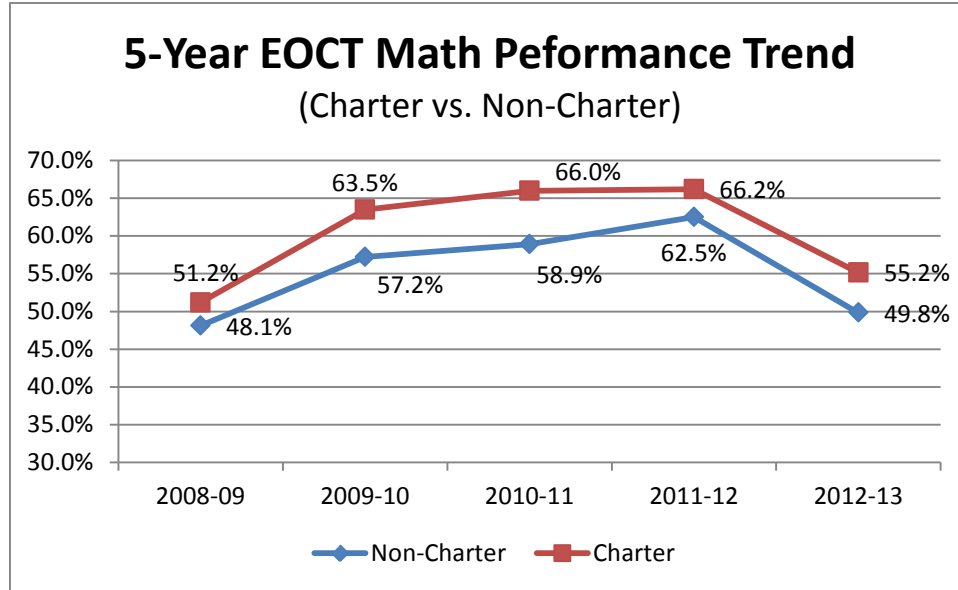
Figure 25: 2013 EOCT ELA Performance, by performance levels





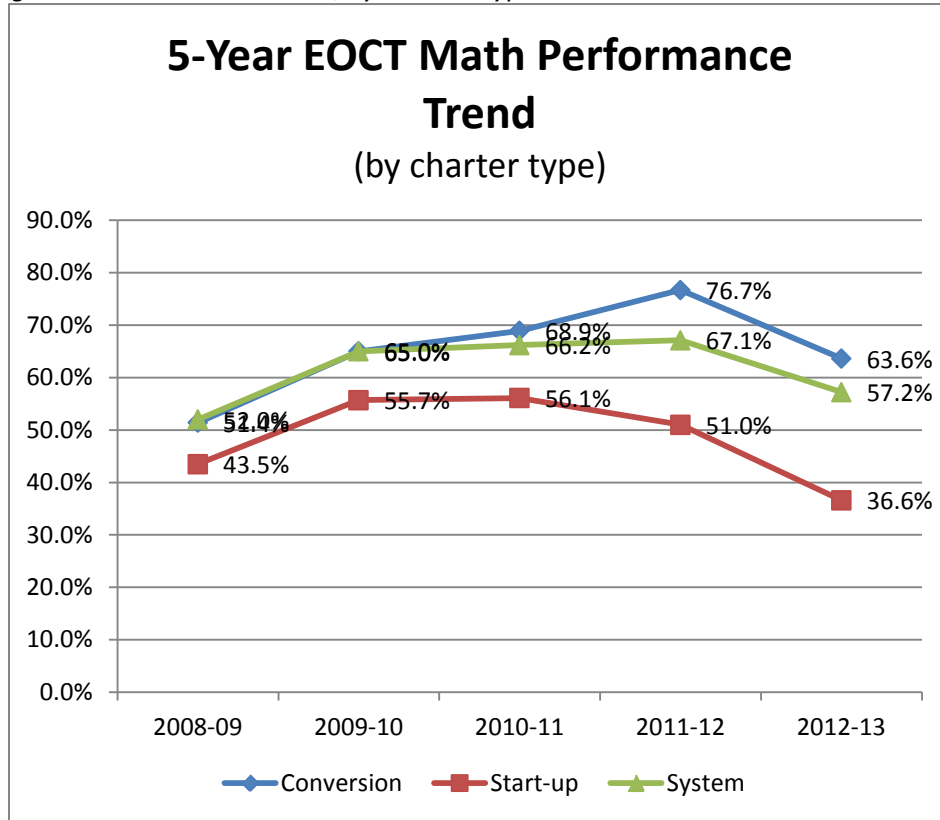
Georgia charter schools have also outperformed non-charter schools on the EOCT Math assessment for each of the past five years. The performance gap between charters and non-charters has widened from 3.7% in 2012 to 5.4% in 2013.

Figure 26: 5-Year EOCT Math – Charters vs. Non-Charters



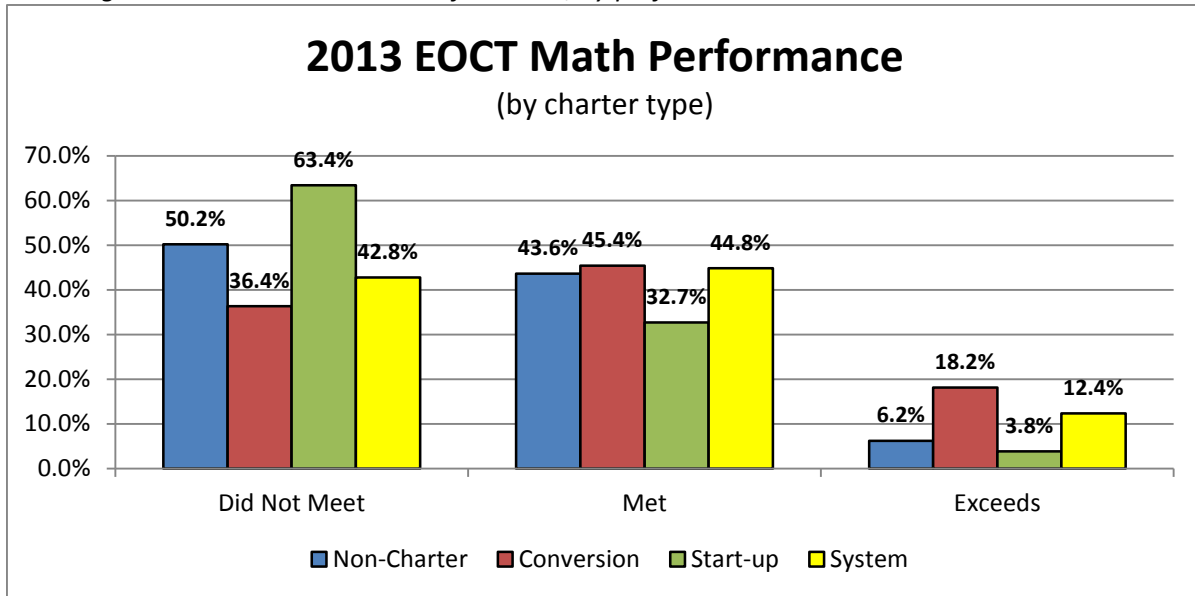
Performance on the EOCT Math assessment by charter school type illustrates a similar pattern as ELA performance. Both charter system and conversion schools outperform start-up charter high schools, with conversion high schools outperforming charter system high schools during the past three years.

Figure 27: 5-Year EOCT Math, by Charter Type



For the 2012-2013 school year, conversion charter high schools again demonstrated the highest percentage of students *exceeding* the EOCT Math standard (18%), while start-up charter high schools had greater than 63% of their students *not meeting* the math standard.

Figure 28: 2013 EOCT Math Performance, by performance levels



## 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. In past reports, academic performance data from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement annual Report Card was used. However, at the time of initial production of this report, the Report Card had not yet been finalized. Once that data is completed and published an update will be produce and attached to this report to ensure accuracy and transparency.

Once that data become available on Georgia's public schools, readers will be able compare the charter school's achievement level to the local district and the state as well as to compare the charter school's rate of improvement to the local district and state. Further disaggregated data can be found for each charter school on the Governor's Office of Student Achievement website ([www.gaosa.org](http://www.gaosa.org)).

## **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; GHS GT or Georgia High School Graduation Test; GaDOE or Georgia Department of Education; LEA or Local Educational Agency; SBOE or State Board of Education.

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