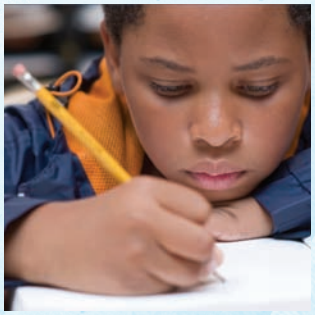
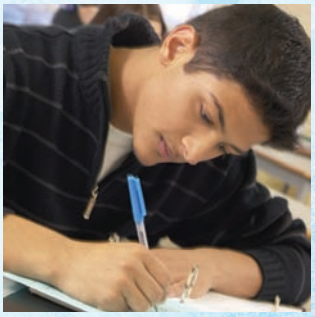
Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools:

A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools





FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options

FLORIDA'S

CHARTER

Schools

About This Report

Section 1002.33(23), Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Department of Education to prepare an annual statewide analysis of student achievement in charter schools versus the achievement of comparable students in traditional public schools. This report of charter school student performance fulfills the statutory requirement for the 2009-10 school year. The analysis examines the average performance of charter school students and traditional public school students using eight years of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading and math test scores, as well as the FCAT science test scores that were added to the school grading calculation in 2007-08. Only students who were enrolled in a charter school or a traditional public school for an entire school year are included in the analysis. Limiting the analysis to include only full-year students is consistent with the state's school accountability system for awarding school grades under the A+ Plan. In addition, the report compares charter and traditional public schools in terms of achievement gaps and student learning gains.

The analysis and production of this report was a coordinated effort between the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice and the Bureau of Evaluation and Reporting in the Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement. Additional information about charter schools and other school choice options is available on the Department's Web site at: www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

> **Section 1002.33(23)**, *Florida Statutes (23) ANALYSIS OF CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.--Upon receipt of the annual report required by paragraph (9)(l), the Department of Education shall provide to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives an analysis and comparison of the overall performance of charter school students, to include all students whose scores are counted as part of the statewide assessment program, versus comparable public school students in the district as determined by the statewide assessment program currently administered in the school district, and other assessments administered pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)*

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Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools

Charter schools are independent public schools created on the basis of an agreement between a group of school organizers and a sponsoring body. Florida's charter schools have been growing by near record numbers since the first five charter schools were opened in 1996. During the 2009-10 school year, 411 operated throughout the state in 43 school districts and at two state universities. While each charter school is unique in its educational approach, charter schools are generally classified as start-up schools, schools managed by educational management organizations, conversion public schools, or University charter lab schools. Each charter school has its own governing board that is responsible for setting policies and procedures. Charter schools have flexibility in providing expanded learning experiences to meet students' individual educational needs by using innovative learning methods. In return, they are held accountable for achieving results. Although provided more freedom than traditional public schools, charter schools are held accountable on multiple levels. The charter contract delineates expectations of the governing board and the sponsor regarding the school's academic and financial performance. As part of their contract, charter schools are held accountable for academic and financial results, embodied in the following three guiding principles:

- Meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities within the state's public school system;
- Promote enhanced academic success and financial efficiency by aligning responsibility with accountability; and
- Provide parents with sufficient information on whether or not the child gains at least a year's worth of learning for every year spent in the charter school.

Students Served by Florida Charter Schools

Charter schools provide parents with additional choices for selecting the most effective educational programs for their children and offer creative solutions for improving student achievement in Florida. The charter school movement in Florida began as an avenue to improve student learning, increase parental choice, influence the traditional public school system, and foster innovative instructional practices. Charter school enrollment has grown steadily over the last decade. As shown below, charter schools served over 138,000 students in the 2009-10 school year, which translates to more than 5% of Florida's total public school population.

2009-10 Charter School and Traditional School Student Populations

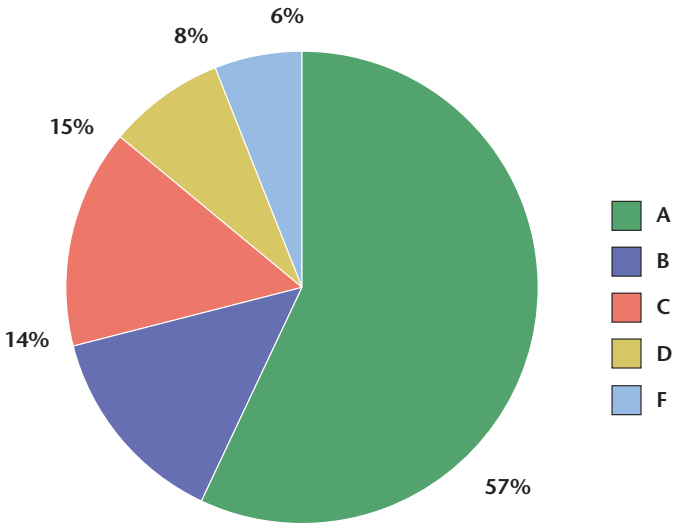
	Charter	Traditional
Student Membership	137,196	2,557,222
Gender		
Male	50%	52%
Female	50%	48%
Race		
White	39%	45%
African American	22%	23%
Hispanic	33%	26%
Asian	2%	3%
American Indian	1%	0%
Multi-Racial	3%	4%
English Language Program	10%	12%
Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	42%	53%
Exceptional Student Education	10%	14%

Grading Charter Schools

Like traditional public schools, charter schools are assigned a performance grade if they meet the eligibility criteria and are not an alternative school. Changes to the school grade calculations in 2002-03 resulted in an increased number of charter schools receiving performance grades. The percentage of charter schools receiving an "A" has increased from 42% in 2002-03 to a high of 63% in 2008-09 and 57% for the most current year.

YEAR	A	B	C	D	F
2002-03	42%	11%	18%	13%	16%
2003-04	38%	11%	24%	13%	14%
2004-05	36%	15%	22%	14%	12%
2005-06	50%	20%	21%	6%	3%
2006-07	48%	21%	19%	8%	5%
2007-08	52%	20%	19%	4%	5%
2008-09	63%	16%	12%	6%	3%
2009-10	57%	14%	15%	8%	6%

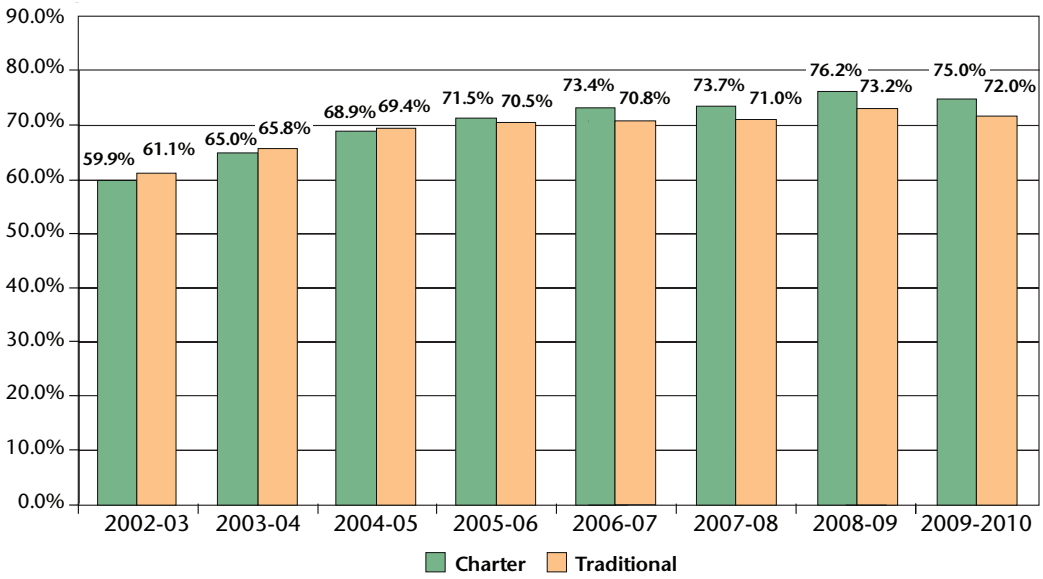
2010 Charter School Performance Grades



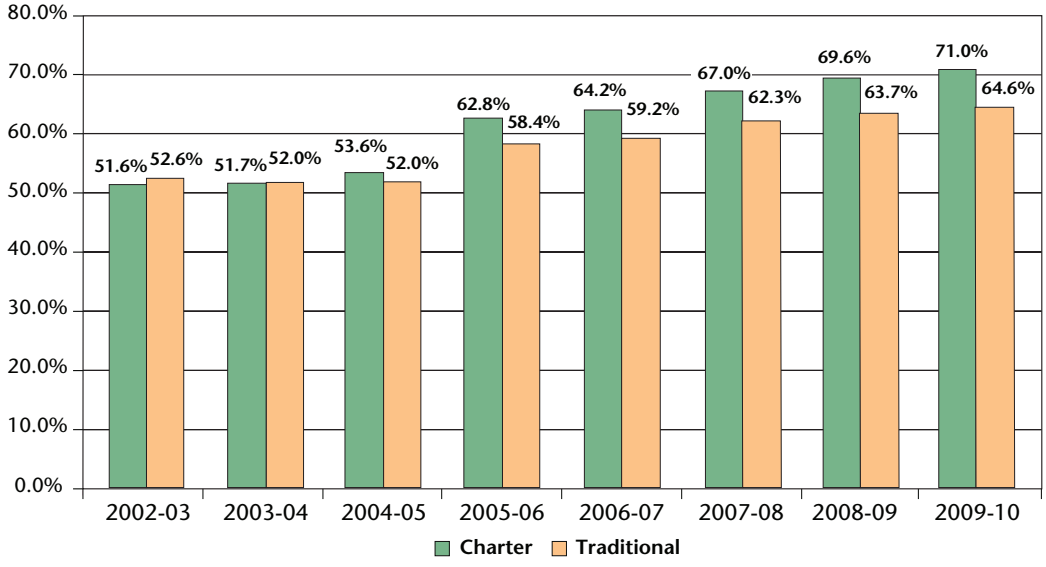
Reading

FCAT Reading
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools
2003-2010

Percent of Students Scoring at Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Elementary School Grades 3, 4, and 5
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2003 to 2010

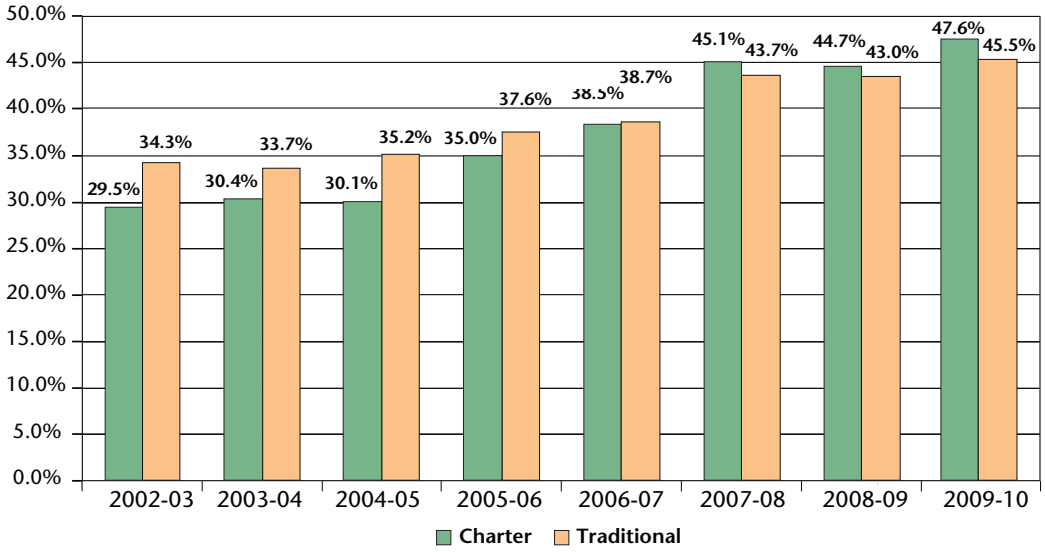


Percent of Students Scoring at Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Middle School Grades 6, 7, and 8
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2003 to 2010



Reading

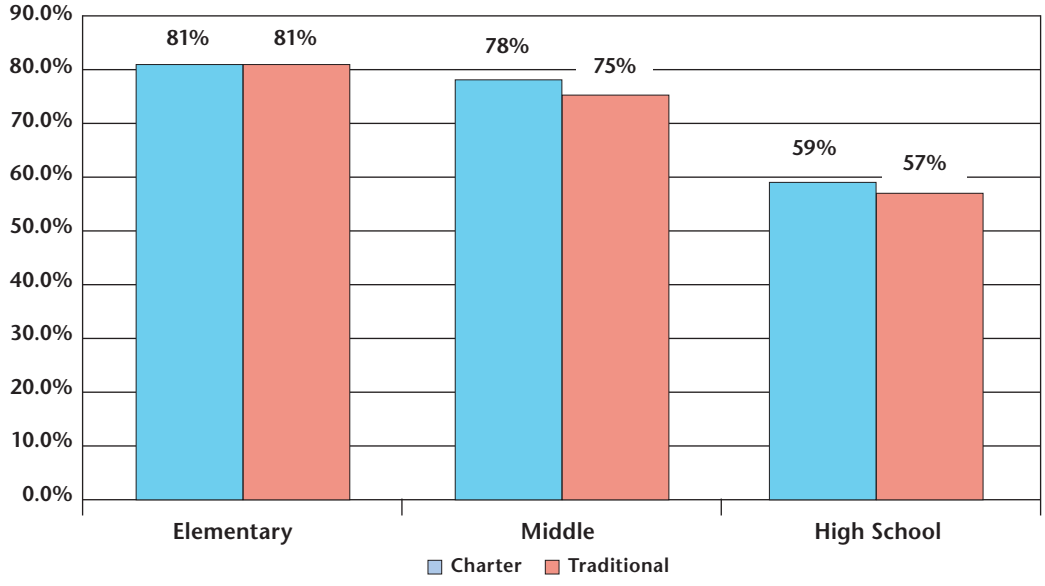
Percent of Students Scoring at Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
High School Grades 9 and 10
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2003 to 2010



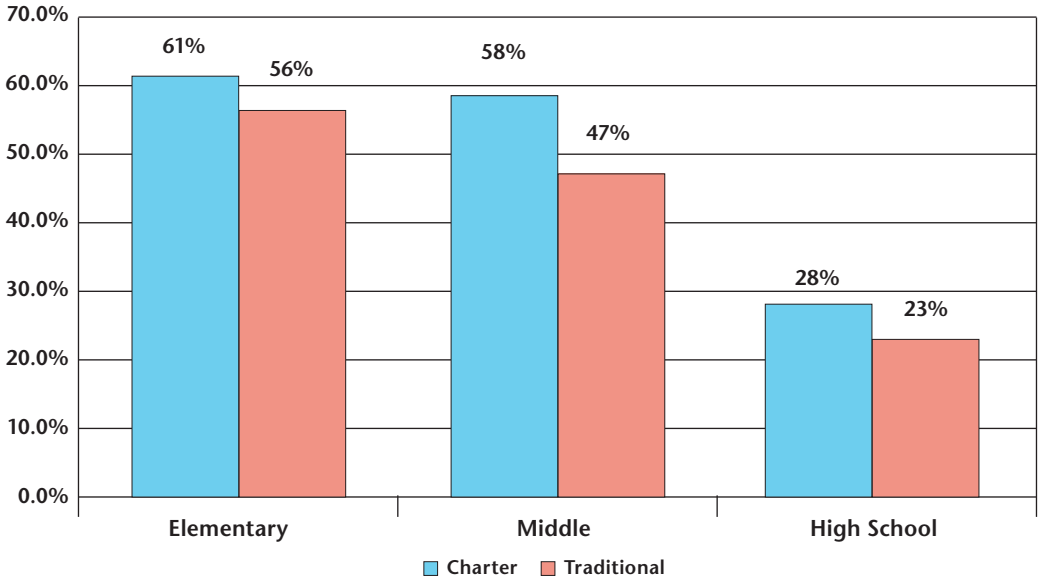
FCAT Reading
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

SUB-GROUP COMPARISONS 2010

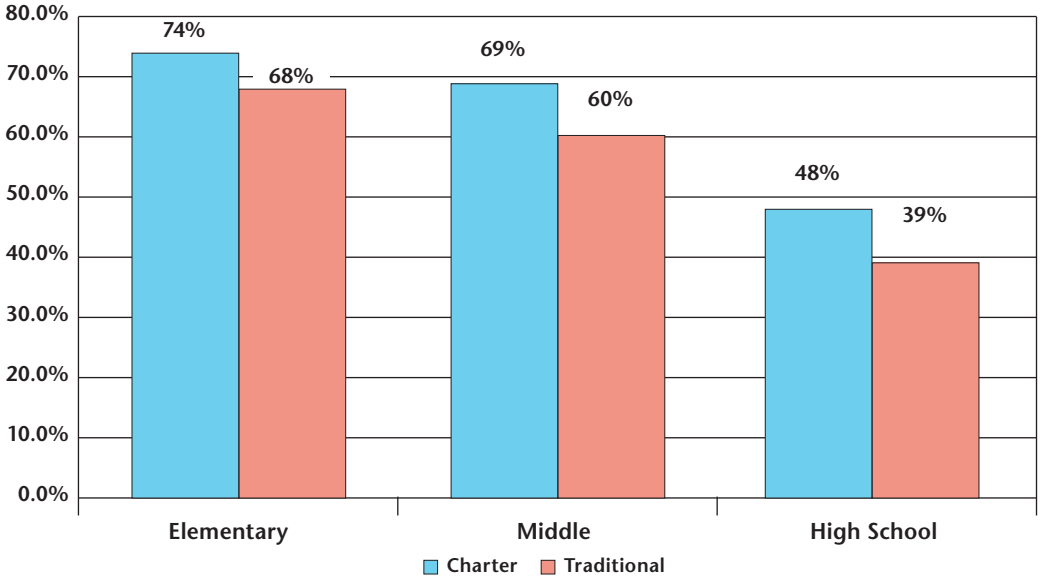
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students



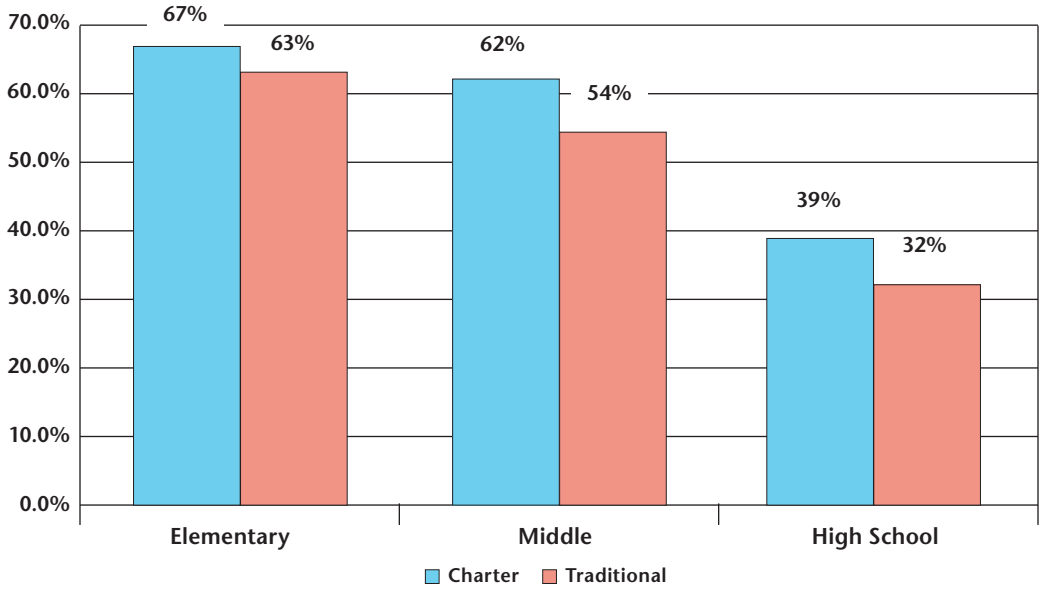
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students



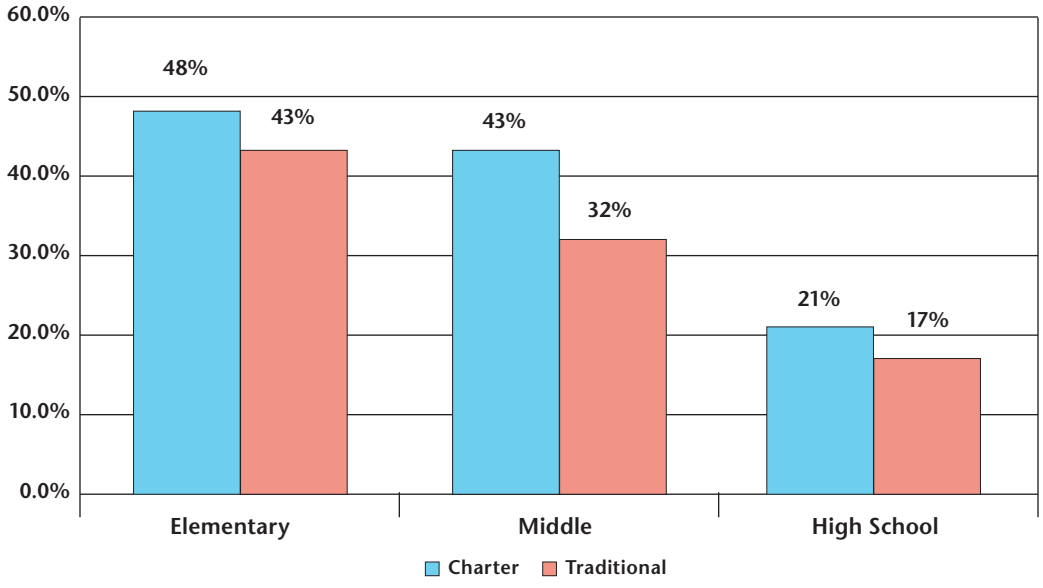
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students



Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)



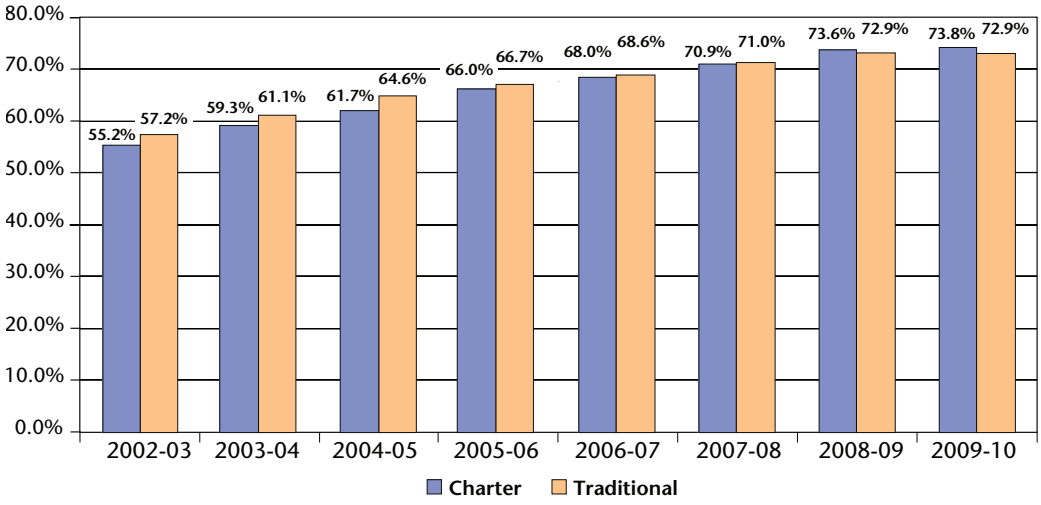
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Exceptional Education Students



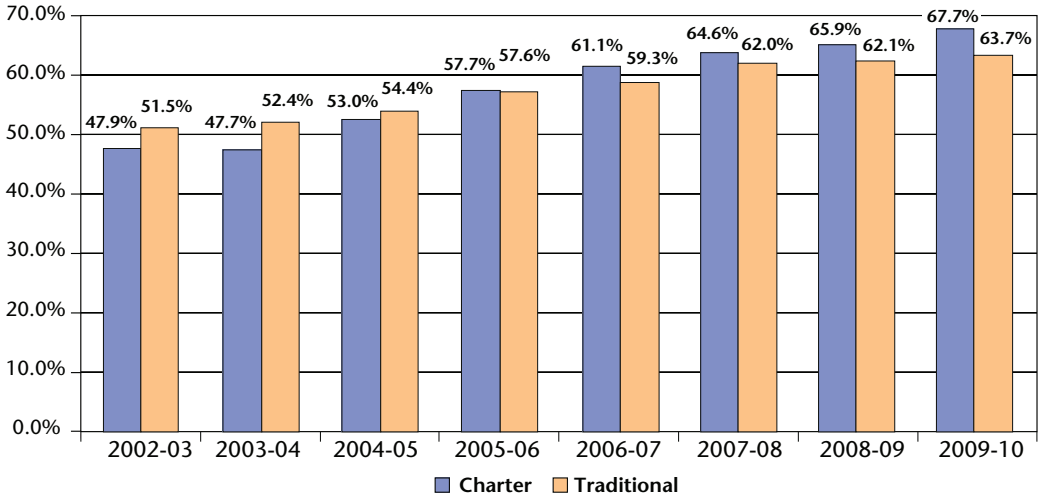
Math

FCAT Math
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools
2003-2010

Percent of Students Scoring at Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Elementary School Grades 3, 4, and 5
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2003 to 2010

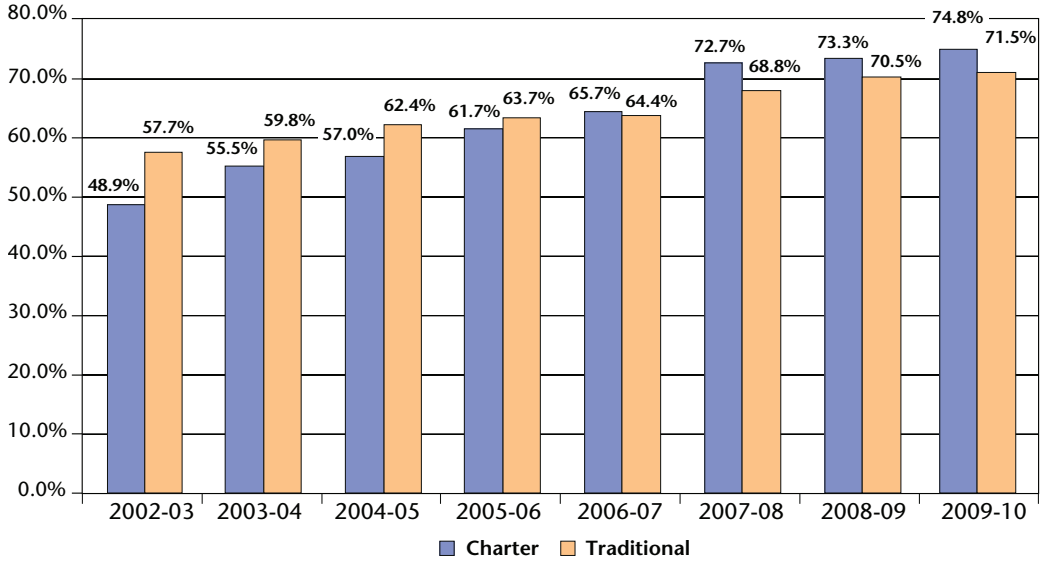


Percent of Students Scoring at Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Middle School Grades 6, 7, and 8
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2003 to 2010



Math

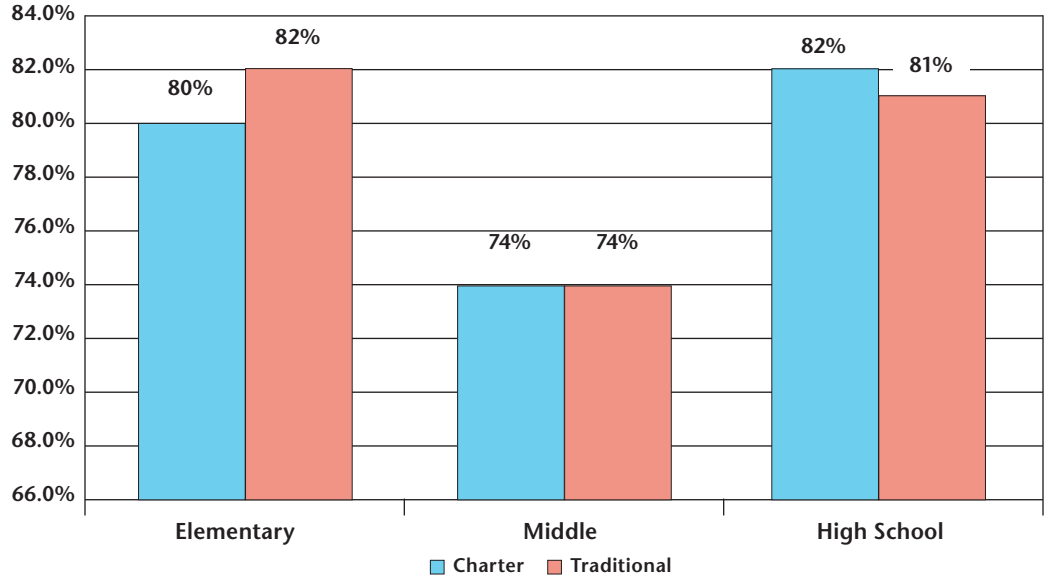
Percent of Students Scoring at Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
High School Grades 9 and 10
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2003 to 2010



FCAT Math
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

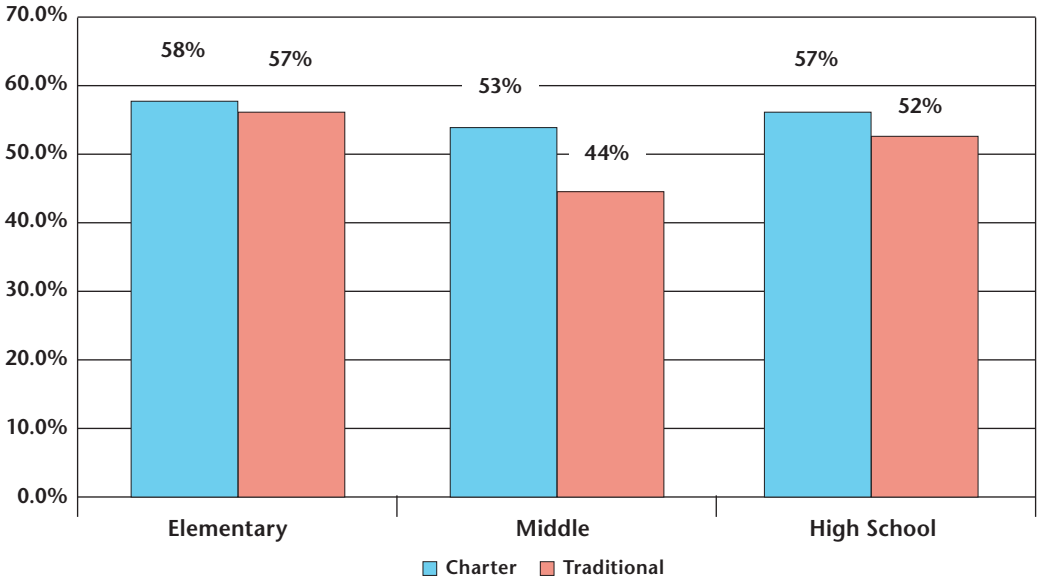
SUB-GROUP COMPARISONS 2010

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students

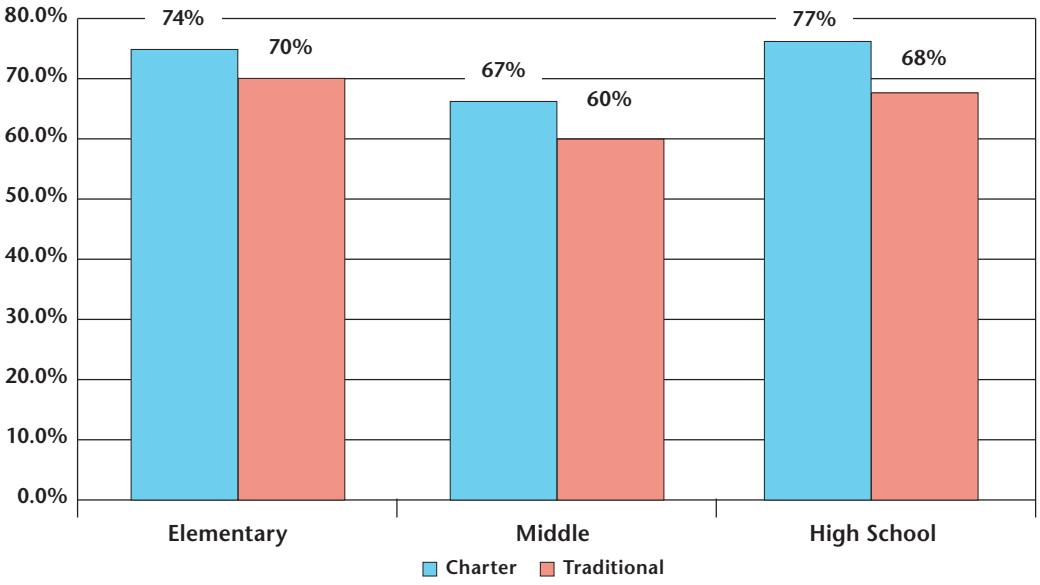


Math

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students

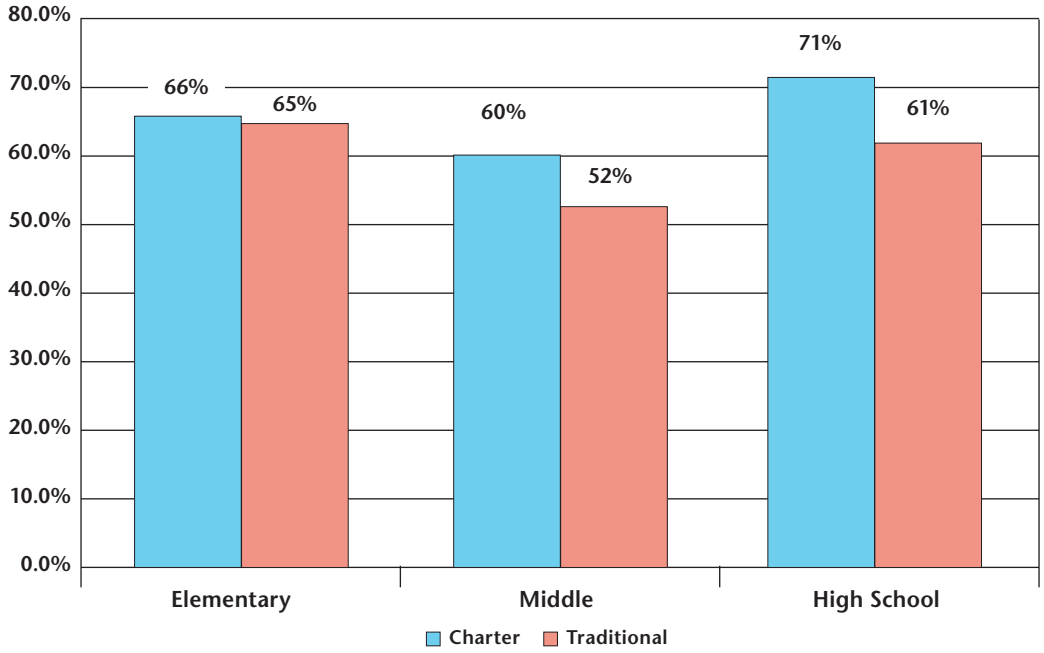


Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students

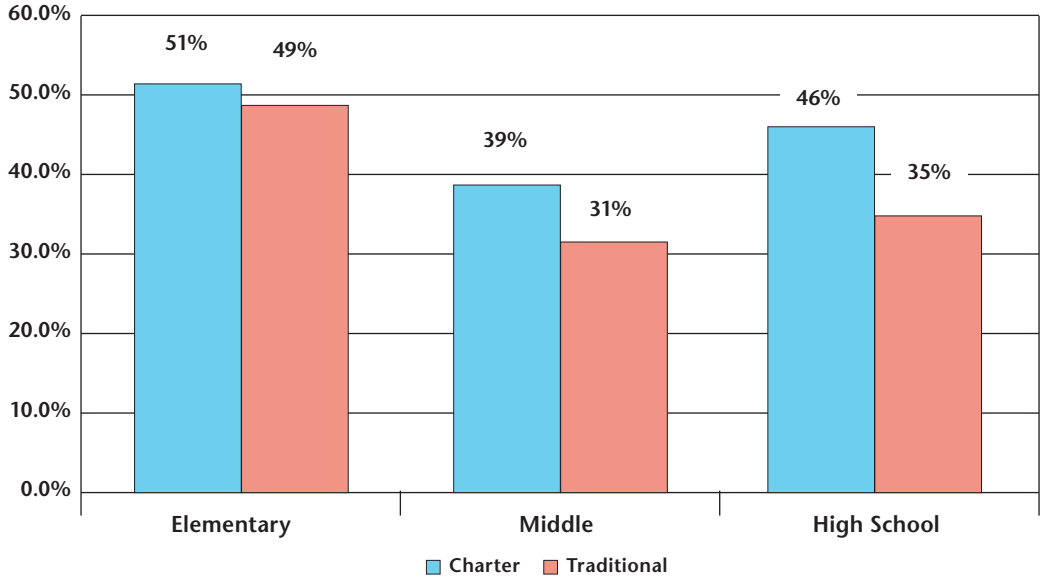


Math

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
FRL Students



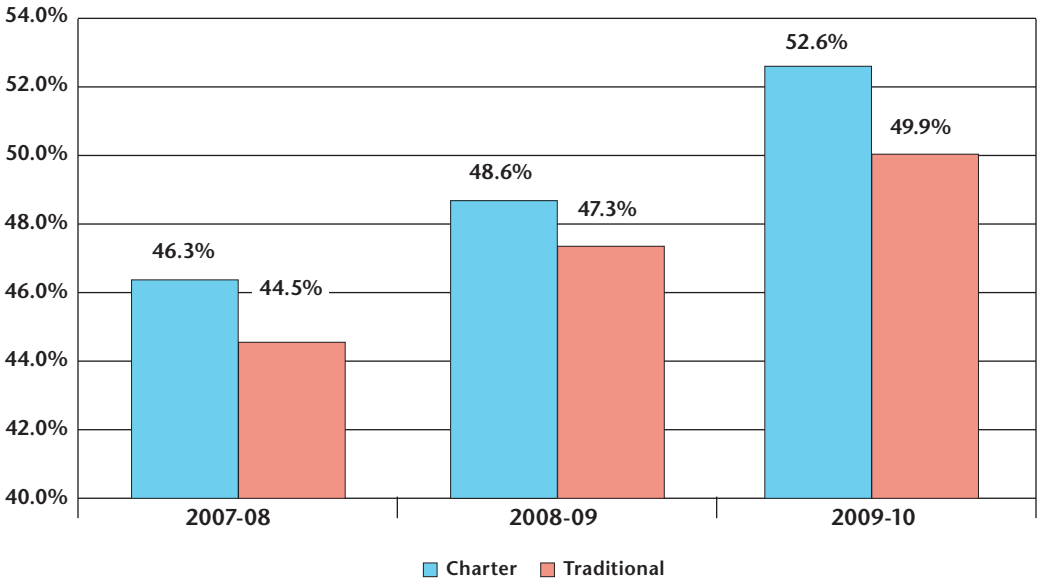
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Exceptional Education Students



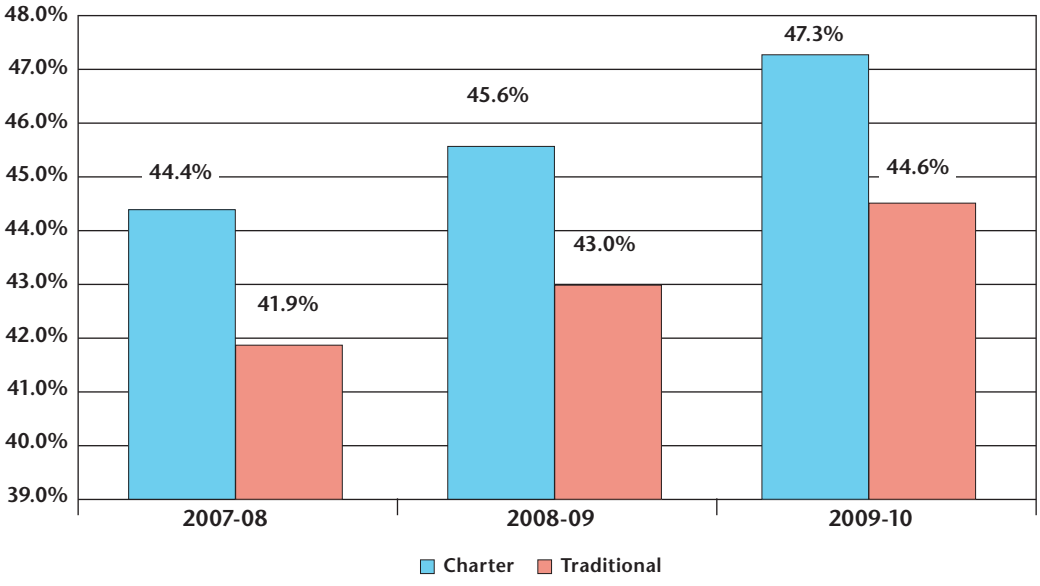
Science

FCAT Science
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools
2010

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
Elementary School Grades 3, 4, and 5
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2008 to 2010

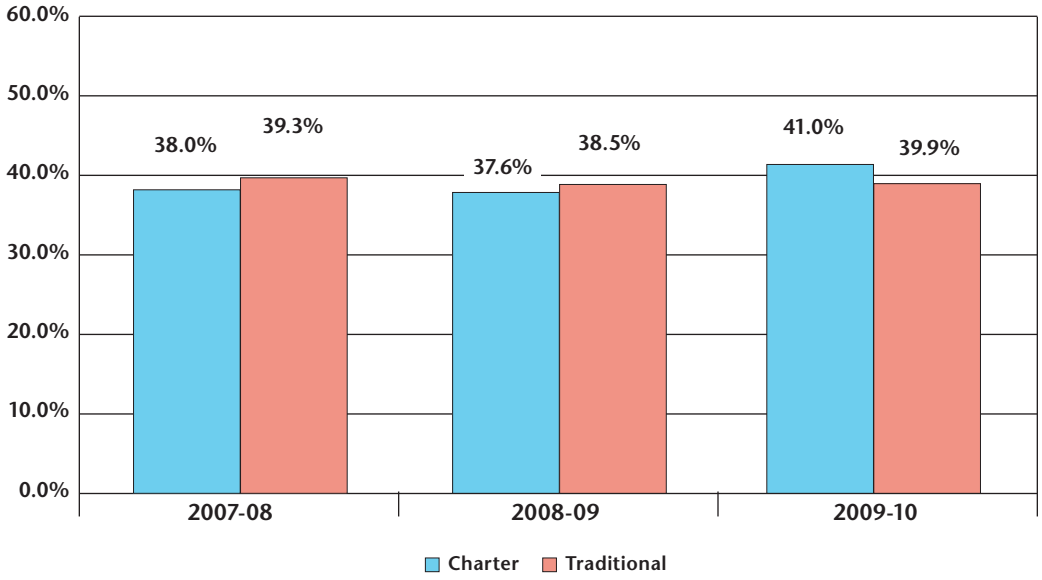


Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
Middle School Grades 6, 7, and 8
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2008 to 2010



Science

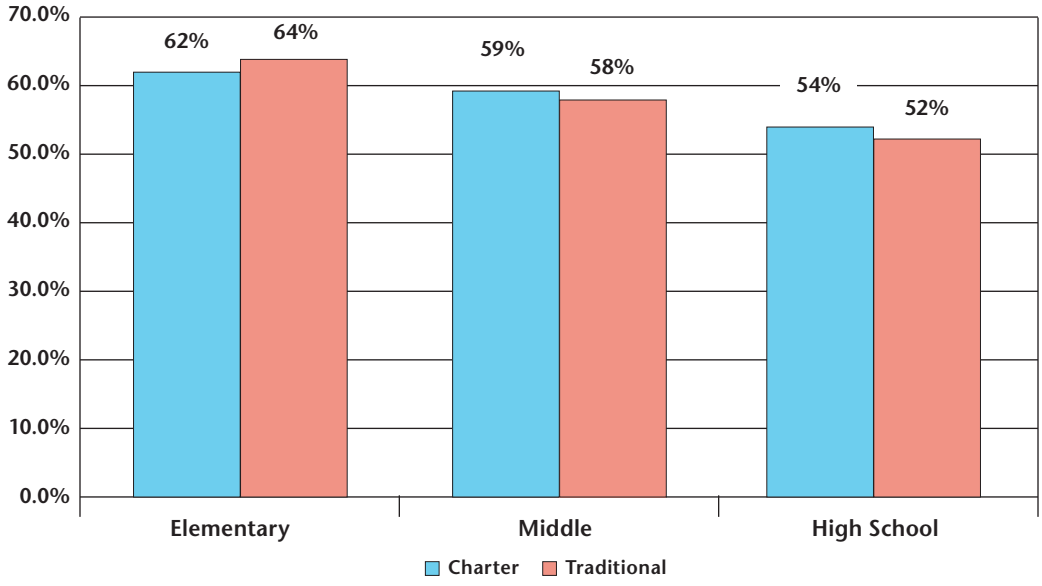
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
High School Grades 9, and 10
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2008 to 2010



FCAT Science
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

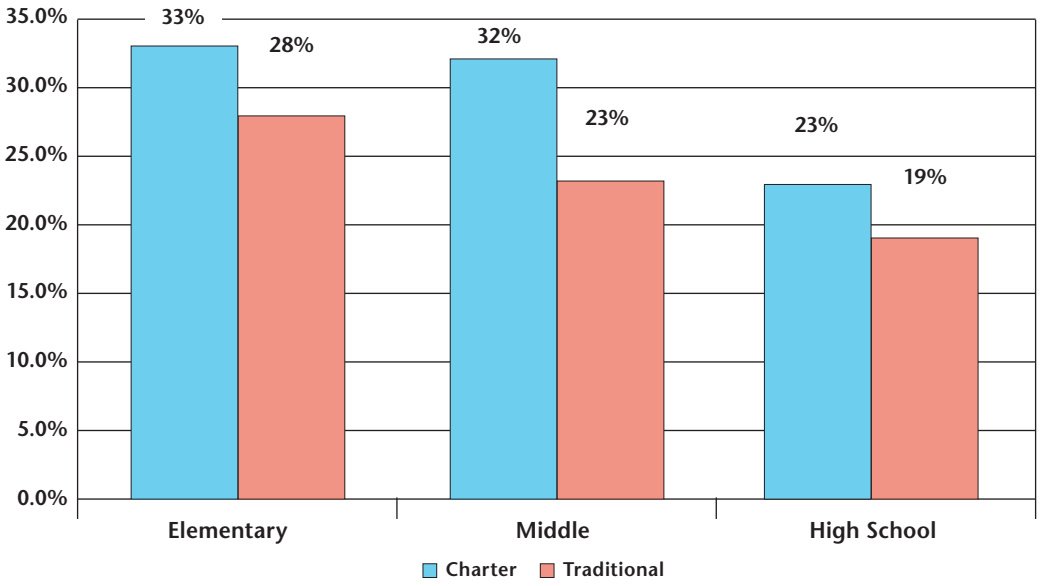
SUB-GROUP COMPARISONS 2010

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students

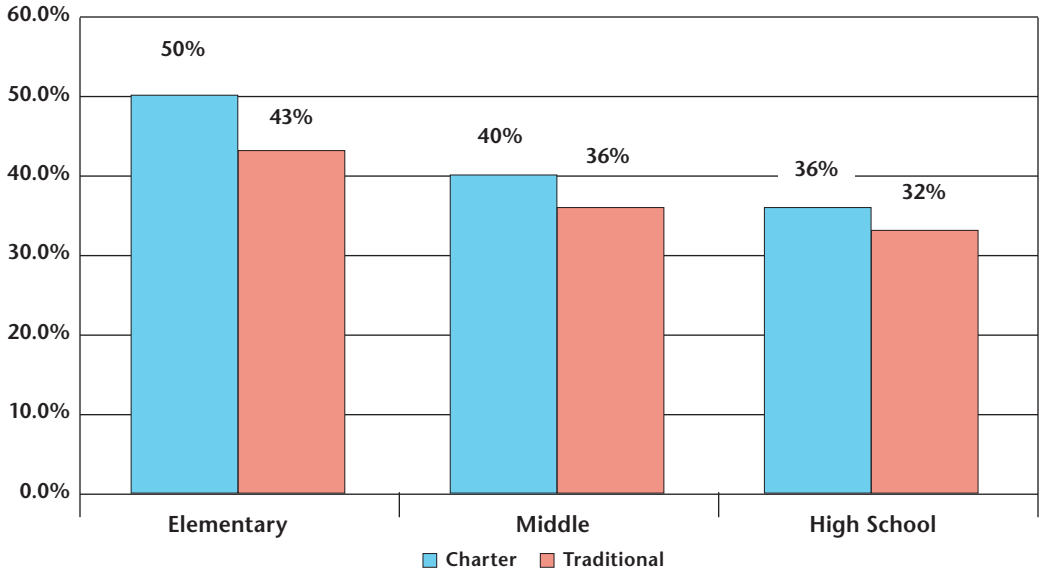


Science

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students



Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students



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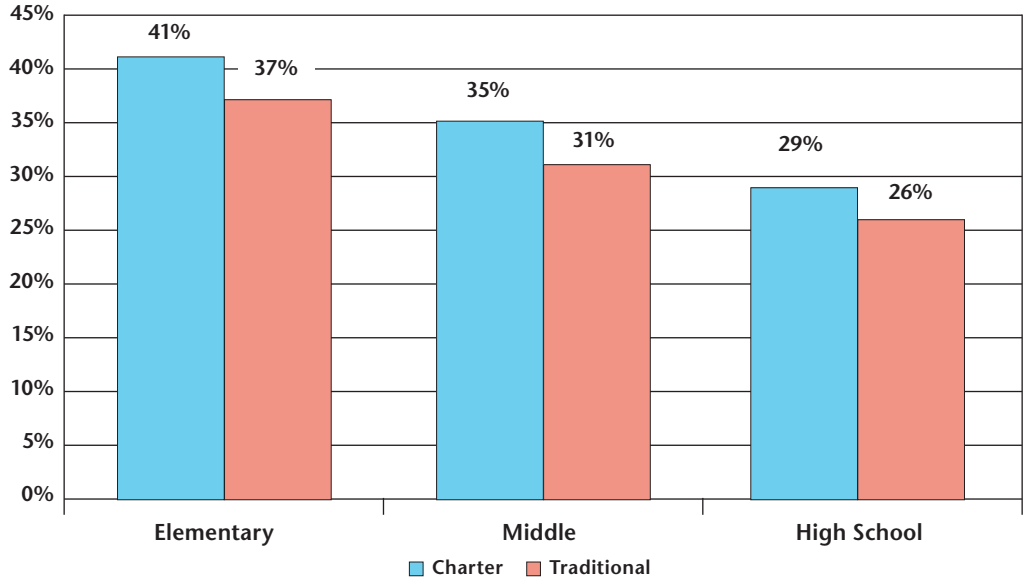
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
FRL Students



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Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
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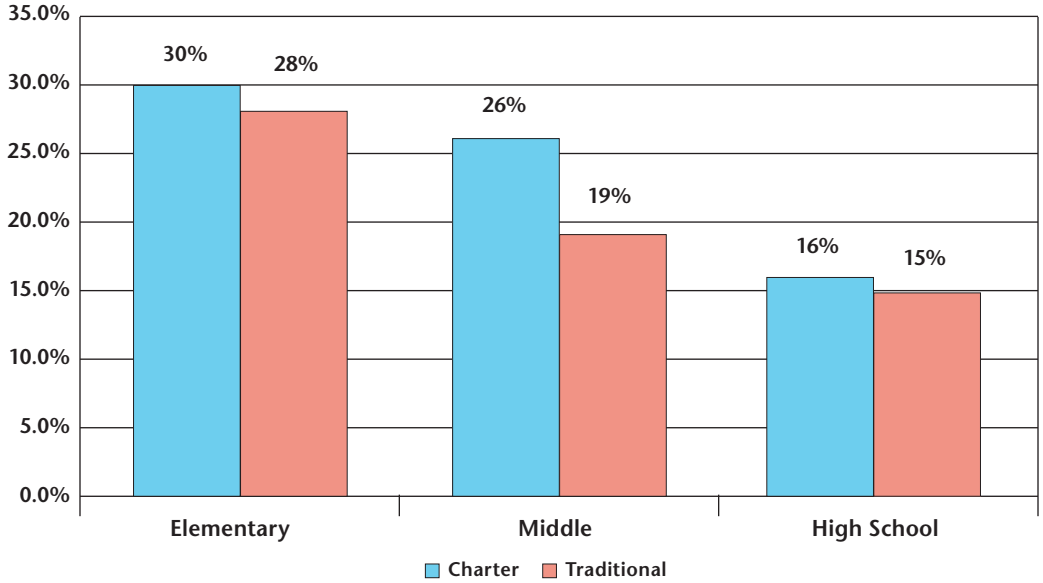
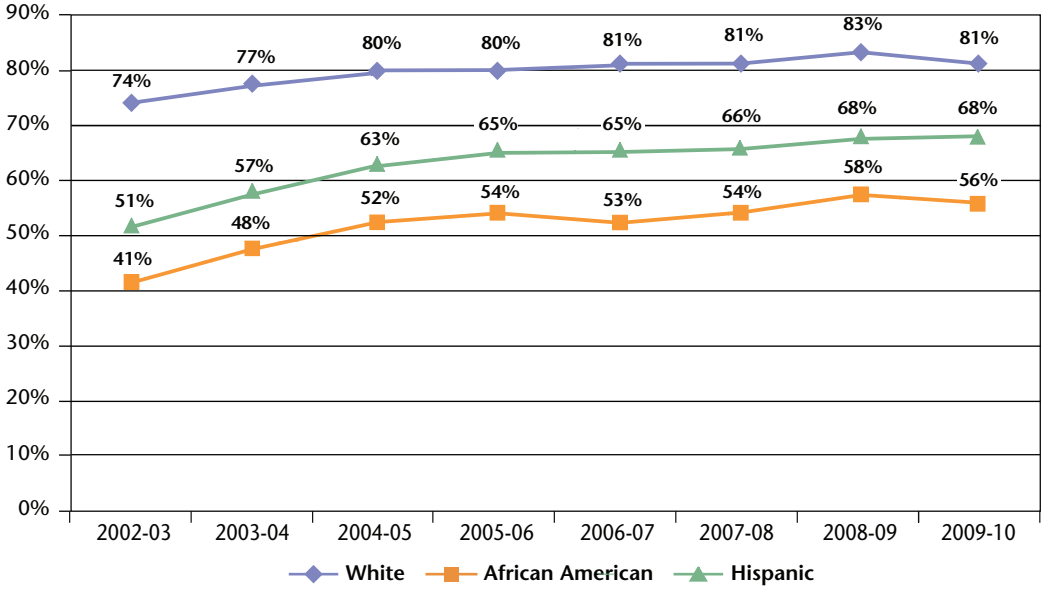


Reading

Closing the Achievement Gap in Reading Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools 2003-2010

Traditional Public Elementary Schools
FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 3, 4, and 5 by Race/Ethnicity



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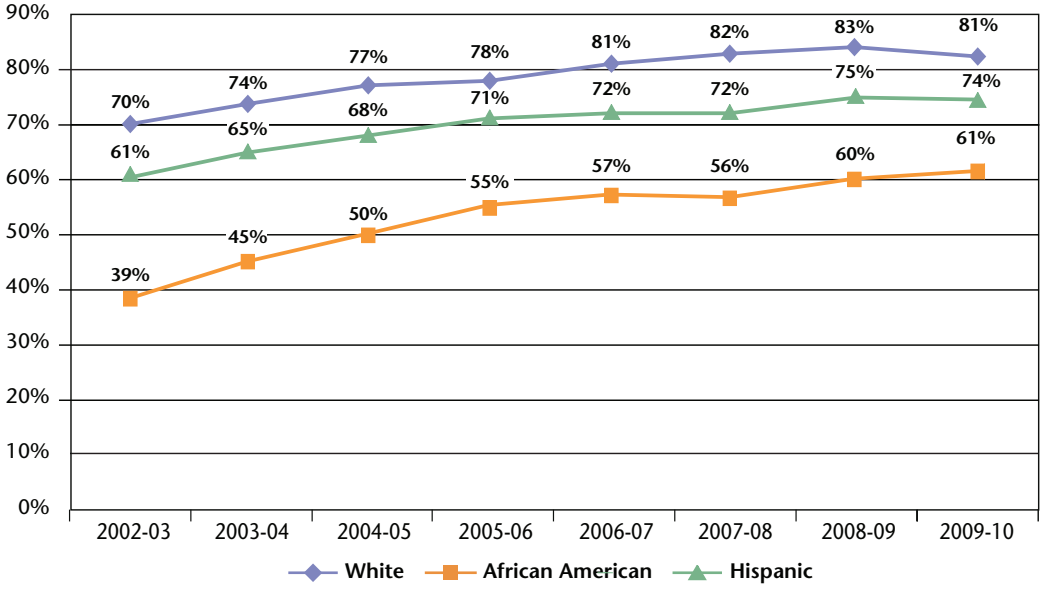
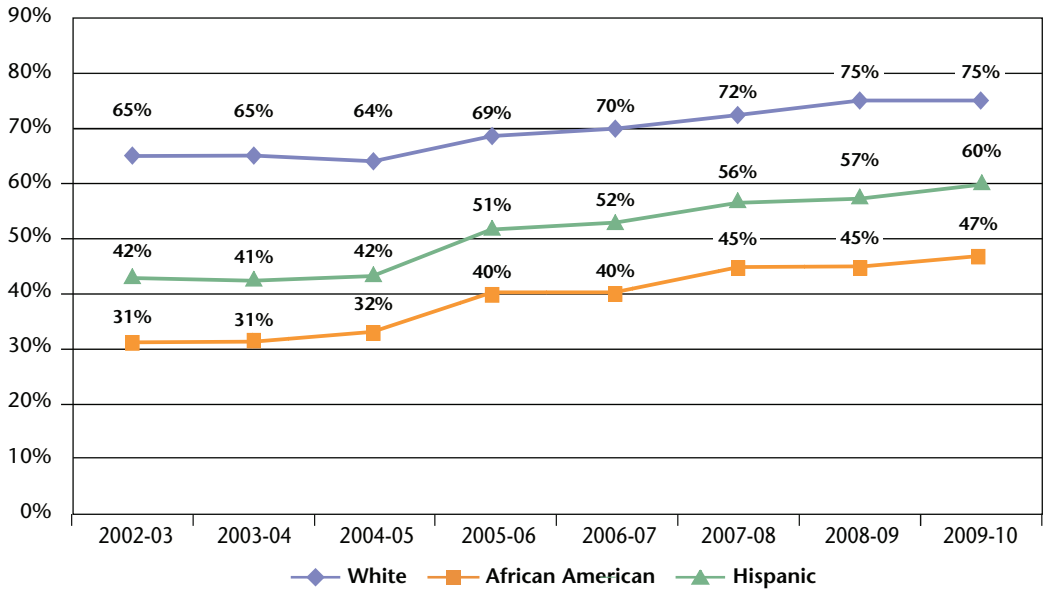


Reading

Traditional Public Middle Schools
FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 6, 7, and 8 by Race/Ethnicity



Charter Middle Schools
FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above
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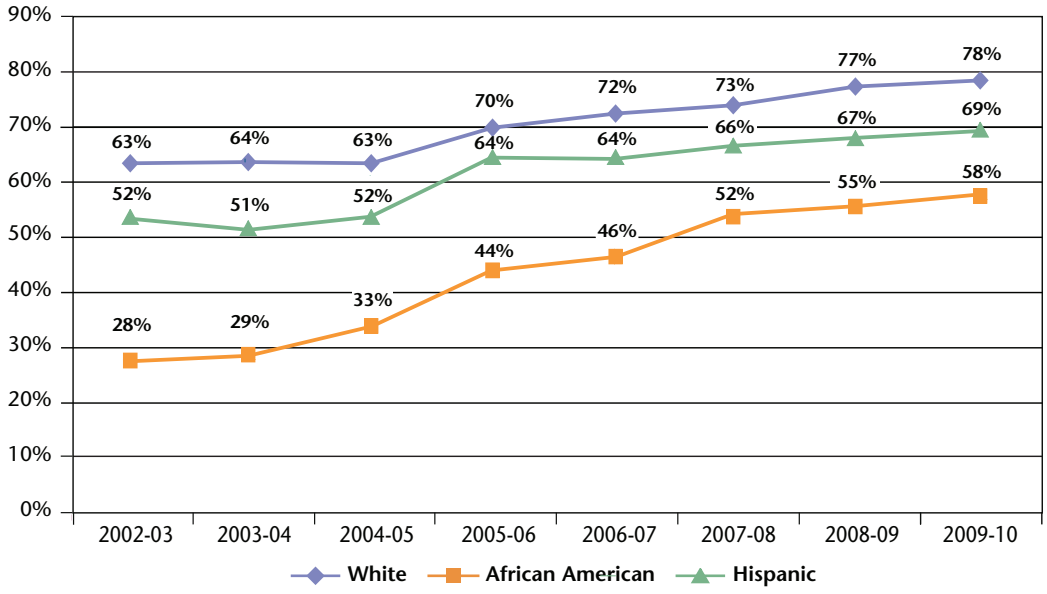
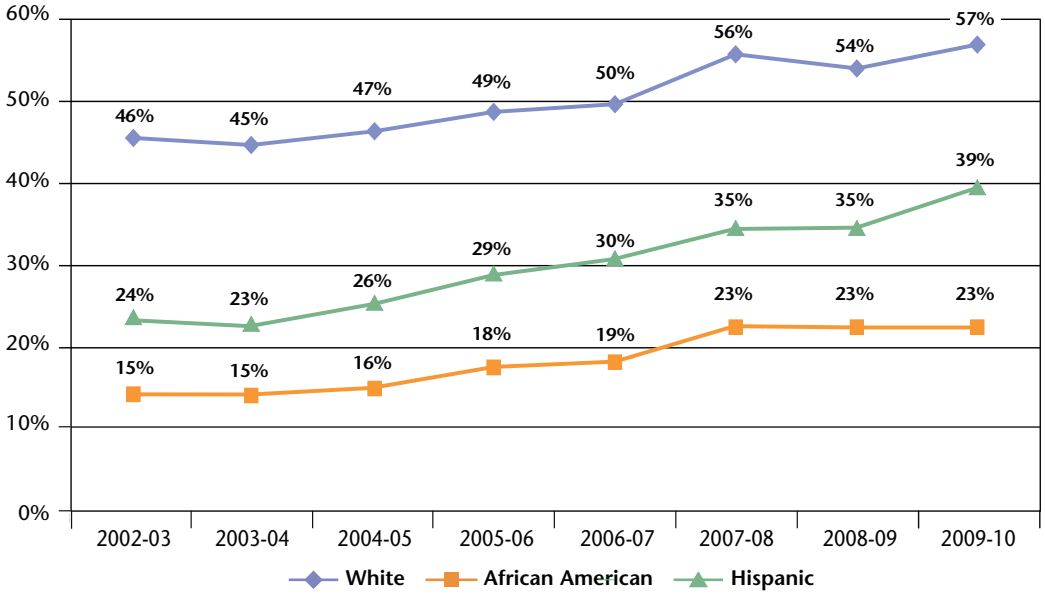
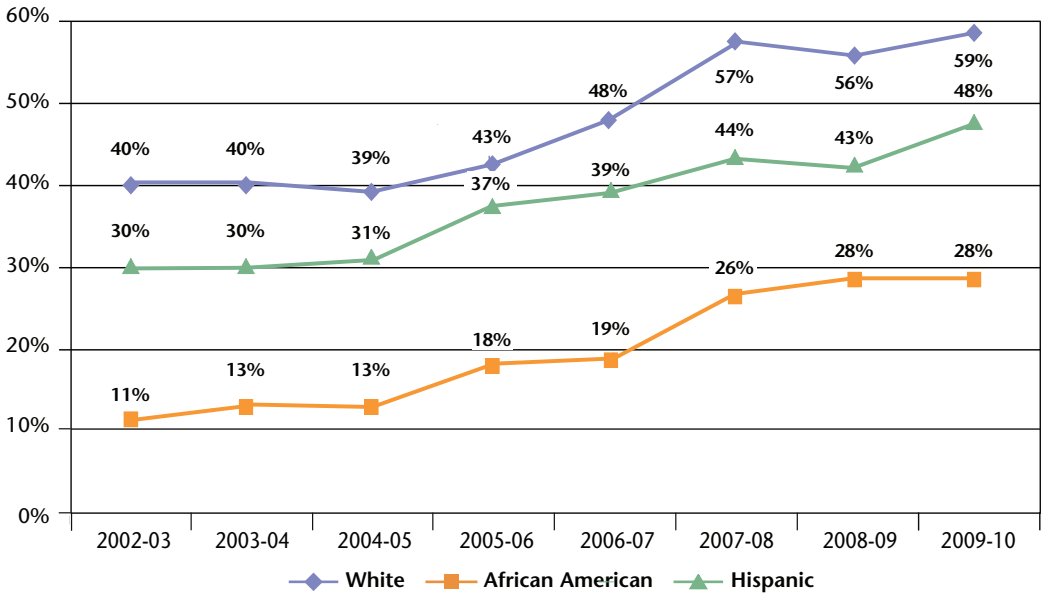


Reading

Traditional Public High Schools
FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 9 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity

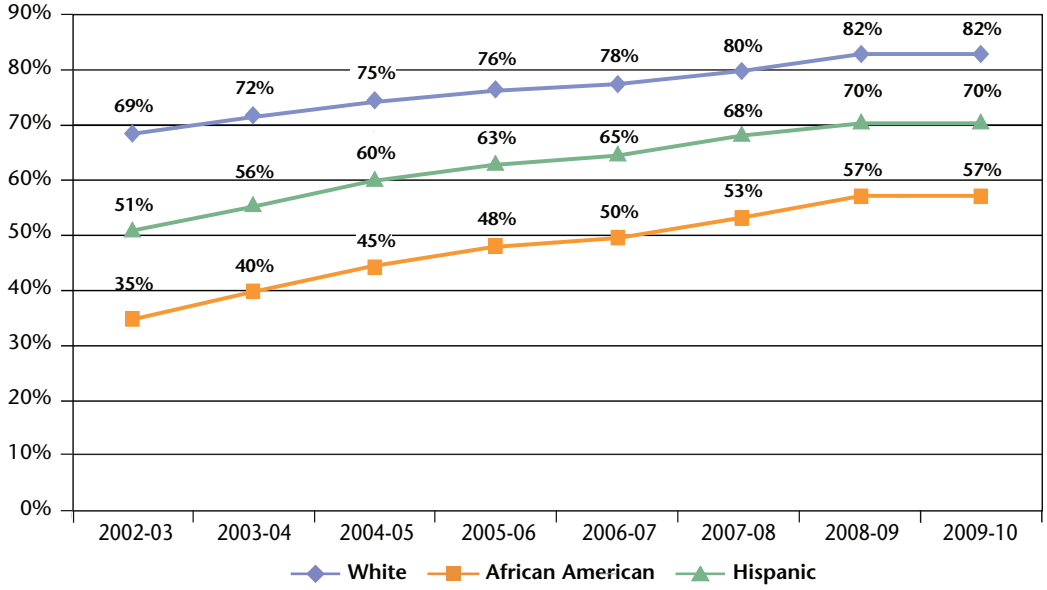


Charter High Schools
FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 9 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity



Closing the Achievement Gap in Math
Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools
2003-2010

Traditional Public Elementary Schools
FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 3, 4, and 5 by Race/Ethnicity



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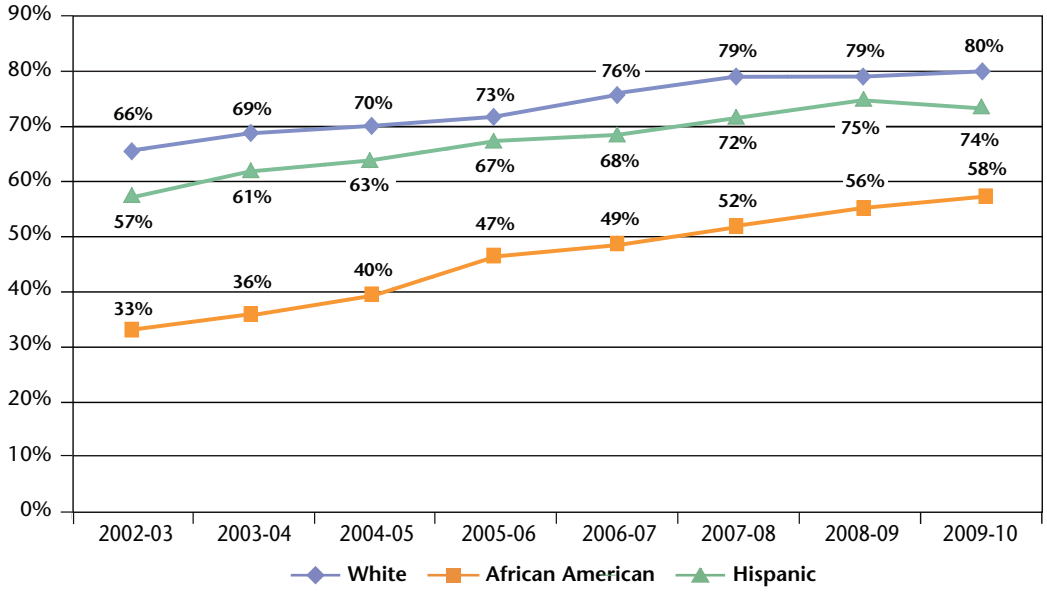
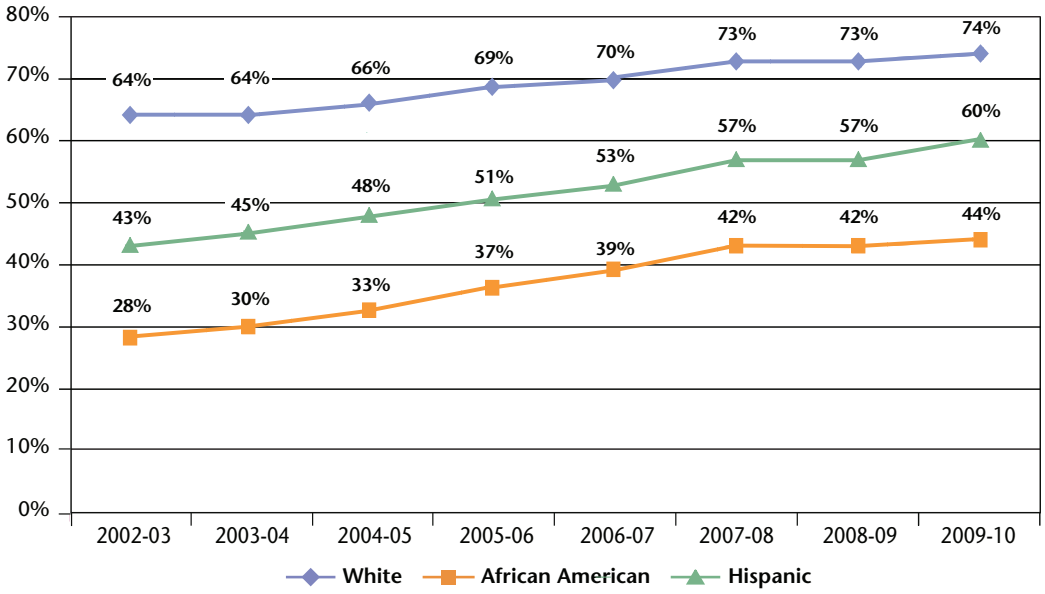


Traditional Public Middle Schools
FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 6, 7, and 8 by Race/Ethnicity



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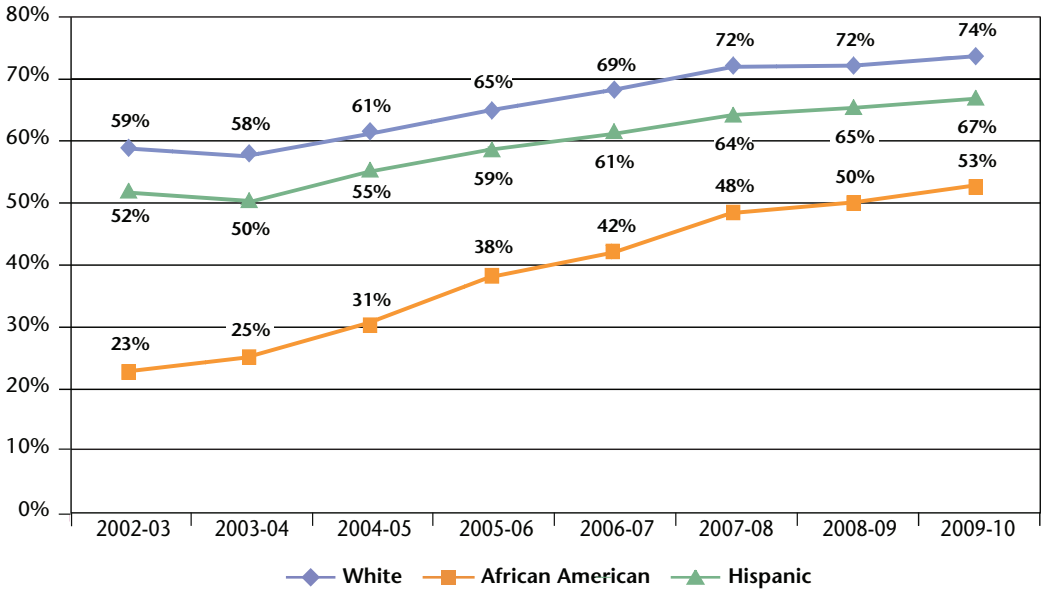

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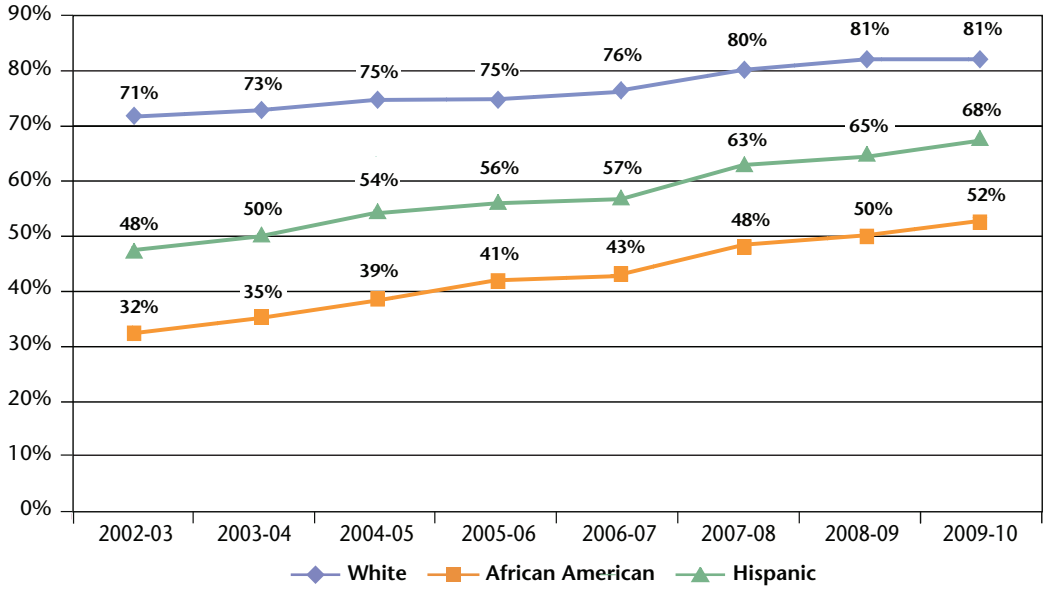

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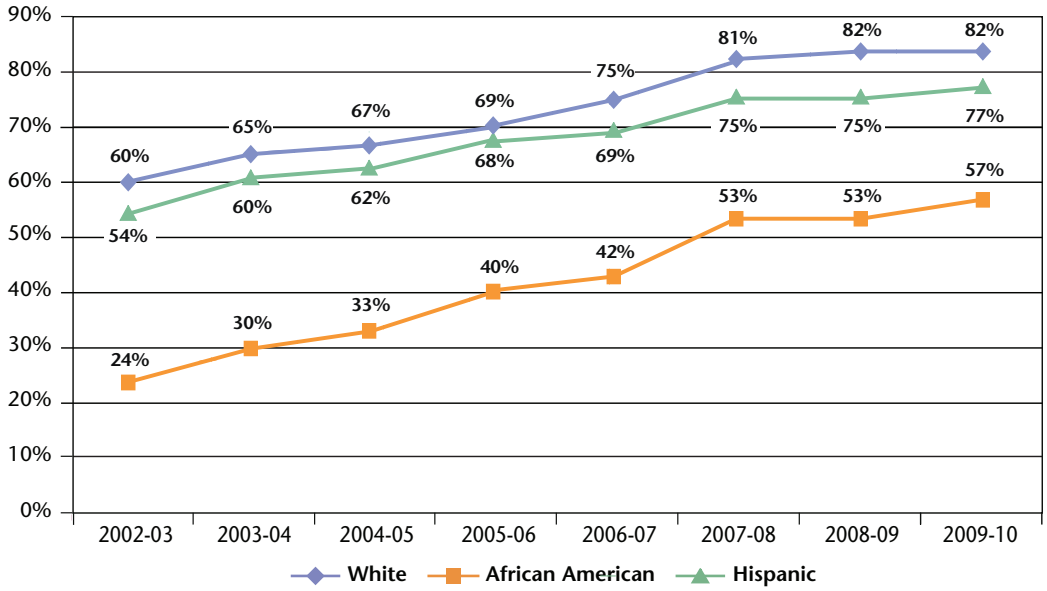
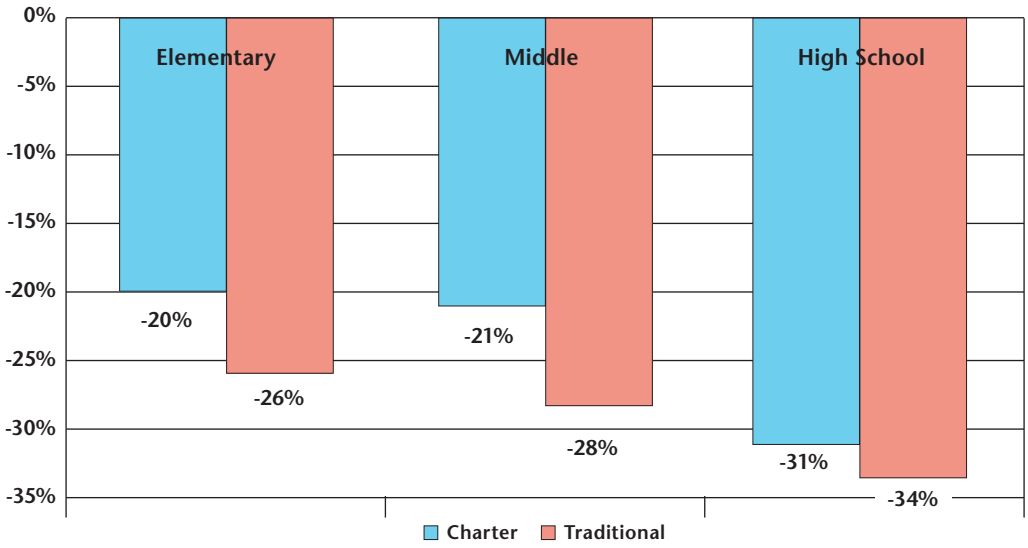
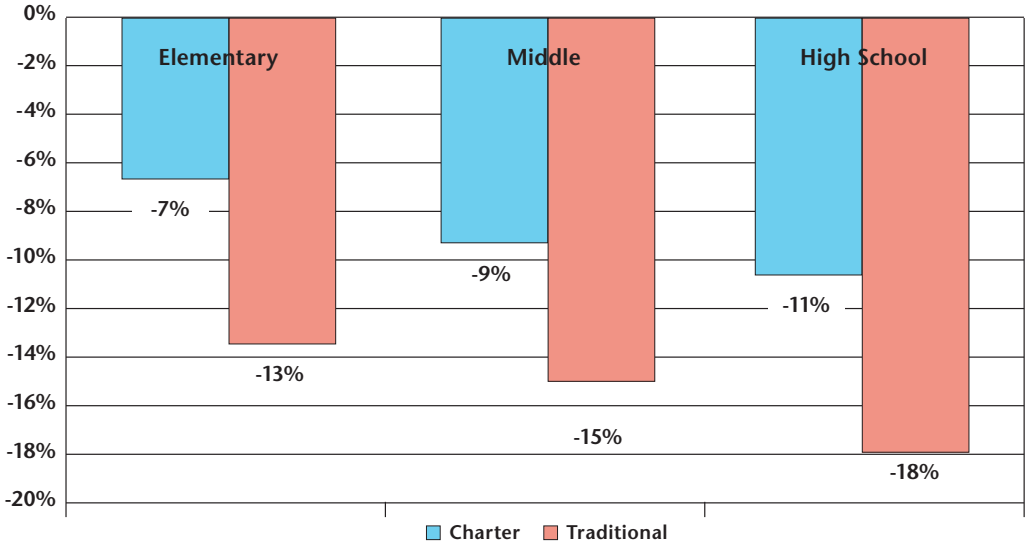


Achievement Gap Summary Data 2009-10 School Year

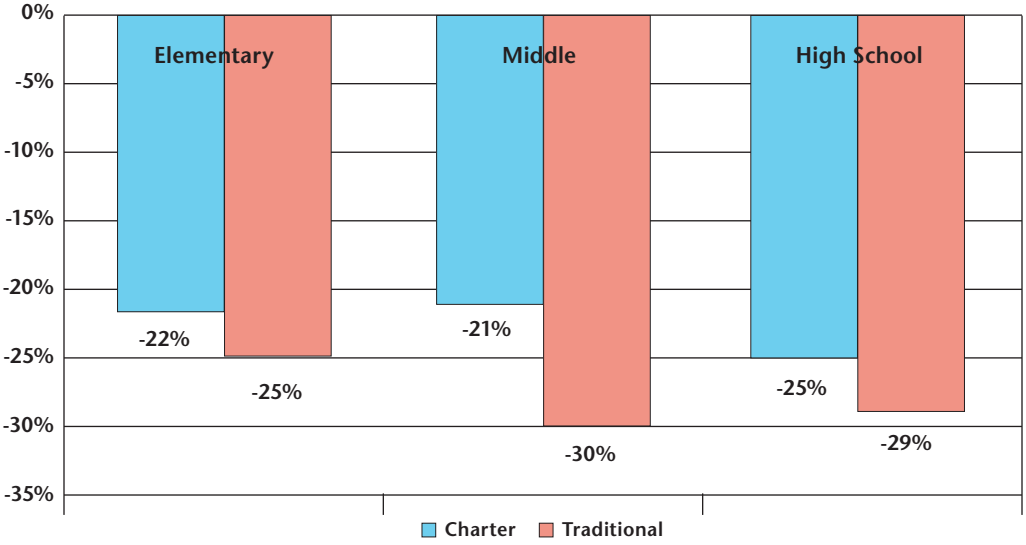
Achievement Gap in Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students and White Students



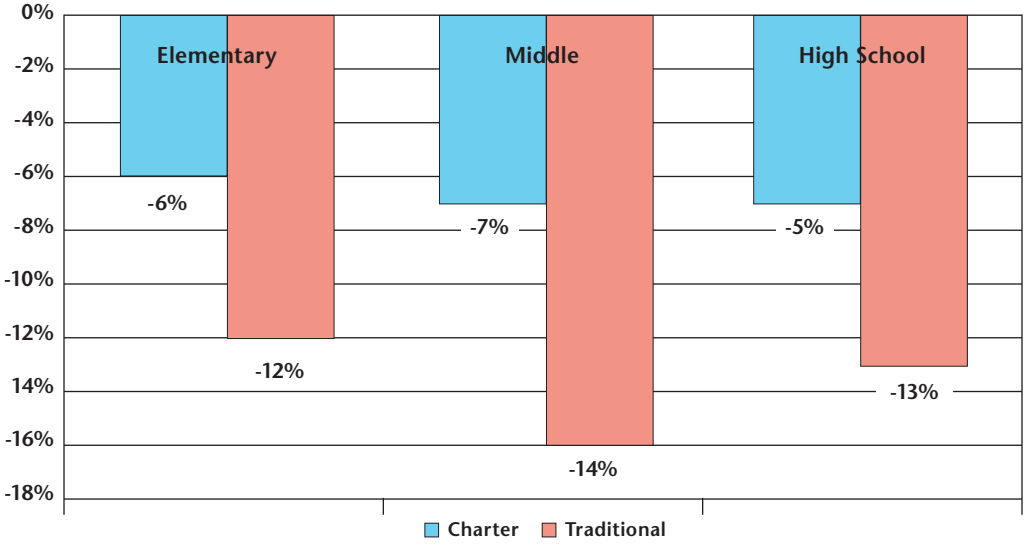
Achievement Gap in Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students and White Students



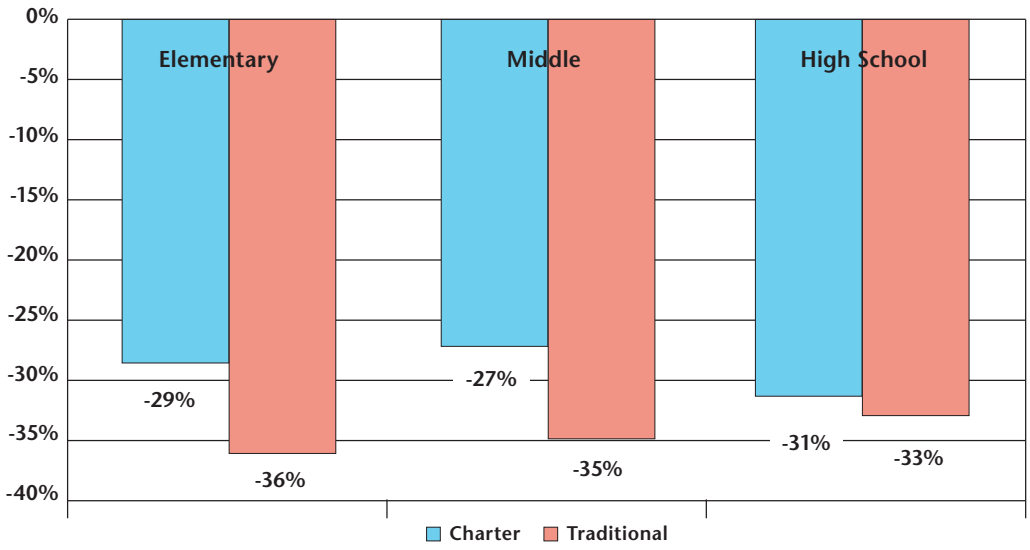
Achievement Gap in Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students and White Students



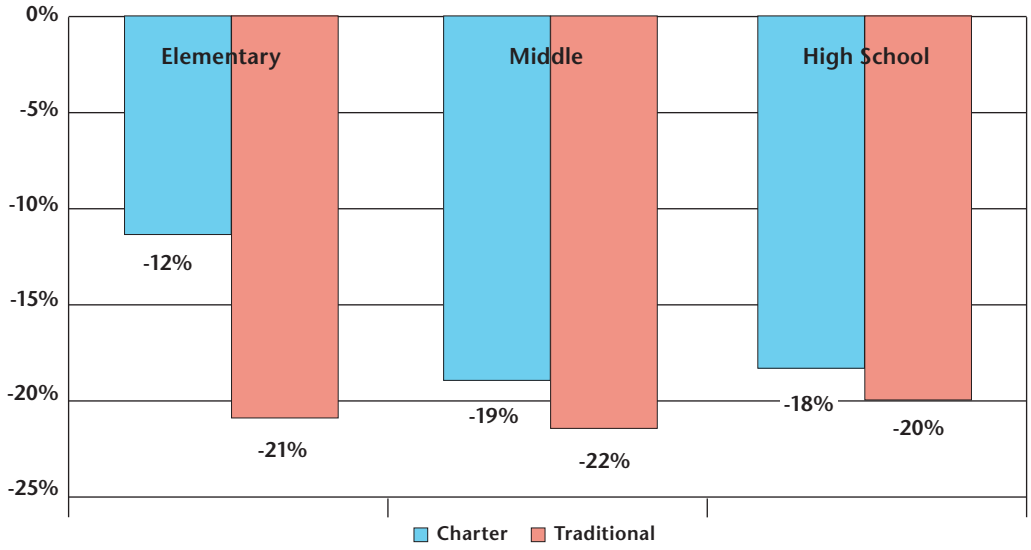
Achievement Gap in Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students and White Students



Achievement Gap in Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students and White Students

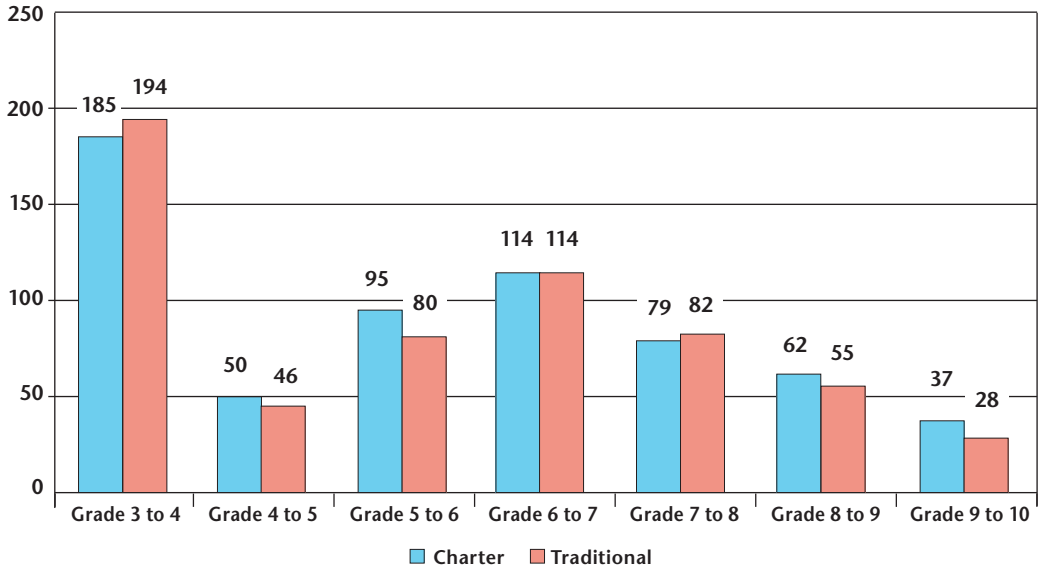


Achievement Gap in Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students and White Students

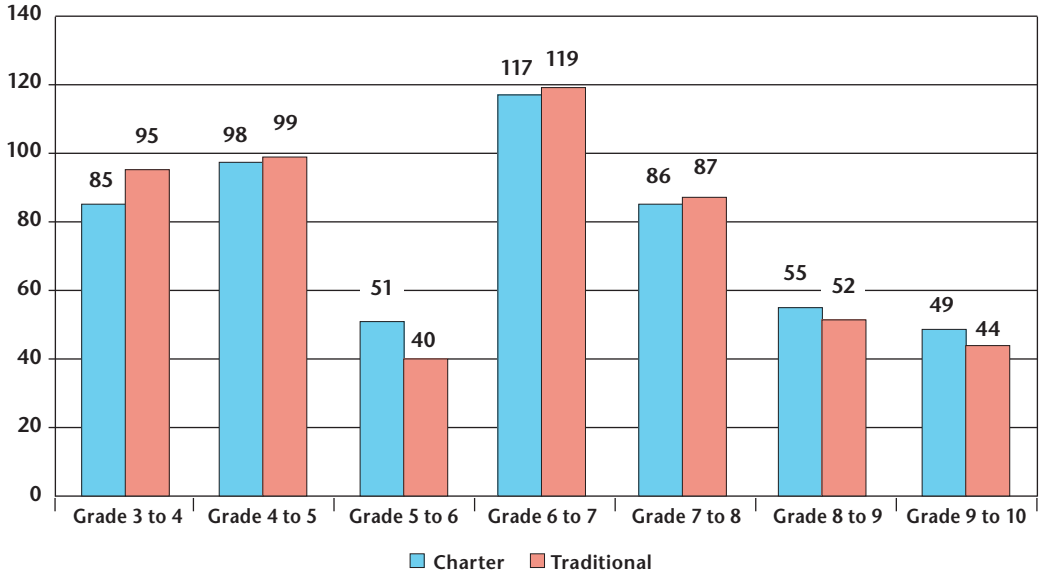


Developmental Scale Scores Learning Gains Comparison 2009-2010 School Year

DSS Gains Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools



DSS Gains Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools



Key Achievement Findings

The ultimate proof of success for any charter school is the achievement of its students. If students are not learning at or above the levels at which they were learning when they enrolled in a charter school, then the primary mission of the charter school has not been accomplished. The analysis of 2009-10 student achievement data demonstrates that charter schools offer parents and policy makers a viable option for improving education in the state.

The data contained in this report is derived from student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), and is designed to allow a comparative analysis of the academic achievement of students attending charter schools versus students attending traditional public schools. The report contains data spanning eight years of FCAT results. Using data from the 2009-2010 school year the report makes 95 comparisons covering three measurements: FCAT proficiency percentages, achievement gaps, and learning gains. Each of these measurement areas are further broken down to offer a more nuanced view of student achievement.

The FCAT proficiency percentages are used to measure both overall rates of proficiency by grade groupings, as well as comparisons of subgroup performance. This section of the report contains 63 separate comparisons of student achievement. Charter school students outperformed traditional public school students in 58 of the 63 comparisons, with one tie.

The achievement gap section of the report contains both longitudinal and current data that is used to analyze the gap between white students and African American students and white students and Hispanic students, in reading, math, and science. This section of the report includes 18 separate comparisons of current achievement gaps. The achievement gap was lower for charter school students in 18 of the 18 comparisons.

The learning gains section of the report contains data on the FCAT Developmental Scale Scores. The data includes 14 comparisons of the learning gains made by charter school students and traditional public school students. Charter school students had higher average learning gains in 7 of the 14 comparisons, with one tie.

Data

DATA 2009-2010					
		Charter		Traditional	
Total # of Students with FCAT results	Reading	74,936		1,391,612	
	Math	74,868		1,390,094	
Total % Proficient					
	Reading	%	Total Students	%	Total Students
	Elem	75.0	22,526	72.0	385,551
	Mid	71.0	23,558	64.6	332,532
	High	47.6	5,581	45.5	155,123
	Math				
	Elem	73.8	22,179	72.9	390,668
	Mid	67.7	22,453	63.7	327,753
	High	74.8	8,710	71.5	242,677
	Science				
	Elem	52.6	5,068	49.9	87,694
	Mid	47.3	4,508	44.6	75,660
	High	41.0	1,956	39.9	61,867
Total % Proficient by Race					
	Reading - White				
	Elem	81.1	10,232	81.3	191,499
	Mid	78.0	10,447	74.6	176,197
	High	58.5	2,383	57.2	94,153
	Math - White				
	Elem	80.1	10,099	81.7	192,414
	Mid	73.9	9,896	73.8	174,409
	High	82.0	3,337	81.1	132,973
	Science - White				
	Elem	61.9	2,591	63.8	50,194
	Mid	58.5	2,259	57.7	45,737
	High	54.3	1,002	52.0	39,019
	Reading - African Am.				
	Elem	60.7	3,359	55.7	67,187
	Mid	57.5	3,547	46.7	52,669
	High	27.8	675	23.3	72,327
	Math - African Am.				
	Elem	58.1	3,219	56.6	68,262
	Mid	53.2	3,281	44.1	49,688
	High	57.4	1,373	51.7	37,195
	Science - African Am.				
	Elem	33.0	548	27.7	10,747
	Mid	31.8	562	22.6	8,245
	High	22.6	230	19.2	6,363
	Reading - Hispanic				
	Elem	74.4	7,402	68.3	98,285
	Mid	69.0	8,187	59.8	79,582
	High	47.6	2,236	39.3	32,978
	Math - Hispanic				
	Elem	73.7	7,343	70.3	101,192
	Mid	67.2	7,976	59.7	79,565
	High	76.5	3,571	67.5	56,258
	Science - Hispanic				
	Elem	49.8	1,583	42.6	20,036
	Mid	40.3	1,378	36.3	15,893
	High	36.2	604	31.5	11,937

Data

		Charter		Traditional	
Total % Proficient by Free and Reduced Lunch					
	Reading				
	Elem	66.5	9,236	62.9	203,588
	Mid	62.4	9,741	53.6	154,636
	High	39.1	2,042	31.5	50,815
	Math				
	Elem	65.7	9,143	64.5	208,547
	Mid	60.0	9,353	52.3	150,625
	High	70.6	3,663	60.5	96,853
	Science				
	Elem	40.8	1,768	37.0	38,397
	Mid	35.1	1,519	30.7	28,080
	High	28.9	532	26.3	17,809
Total % Proficient by ESE					
	Reading				
	Elem	48.1	1,416	43.3	33,354
	Mid	43.4	1,146	32.3	20,894
	High	21.1	191	16.7	6,029
	Math				
	Elem	50.9	1,496	49.4	37,990
	Mid	38.5	1,016	30.6	19,790
	High	46.4	418	34.9	12,486
	Science				
	Elem	29.5	276	27.8	6,934
	Mid	25.6	187	18.7	3,879
	High	15.9	56	14.9	2,196
Total % Proficient by ELL					
	Reading				
	Elem	43.0	625	43.0	19,444
	Mid	28.8	325	20.2	4,977
	High	8.8	40	7.2	1,156
	Math				
	Elem	48.7	713	50.7	23,006
	Mid	33.4	377	26.8	6,643
	High	33.4	201	32.9	5240
	Science				
	Elem	16.8	60	13.4	1,515
	Mid	11.5	37	5.7	446
	High	5.6	9	5.1	363

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November 2010

SCHOOL CHOICE
Florida Department of Education

FLORIDA'S CHARTER Schools