

Charter schools in Durham

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What are charter schools?

Publicly funded schools run by private (nonprofit) organizations with a charter from the state

More **autonomy** than traditional public schools

Teachers, schedules, missions

Not governed by the local school board

Schools of **choice**

No children are assigned to them.

Lottery selection if oversubscribed

Part of a larger move toward school choice

In Durham : magnet schools, year round schools, lenient transfer policies.

History of charter schools

Nationally

Purposes: innovation, more autonomy, competition, more options for disadvantaged students

First charters in Minnesota in 1992

Now in 45 states plus DC – but legislation varies by state

North Carolina

Enabling legislation passed in 1996; first charters in 1997.

Republicans were pushing for vouchers – charters a compromise

Wib Gulley D from Durham – one of two backers in the NC senate

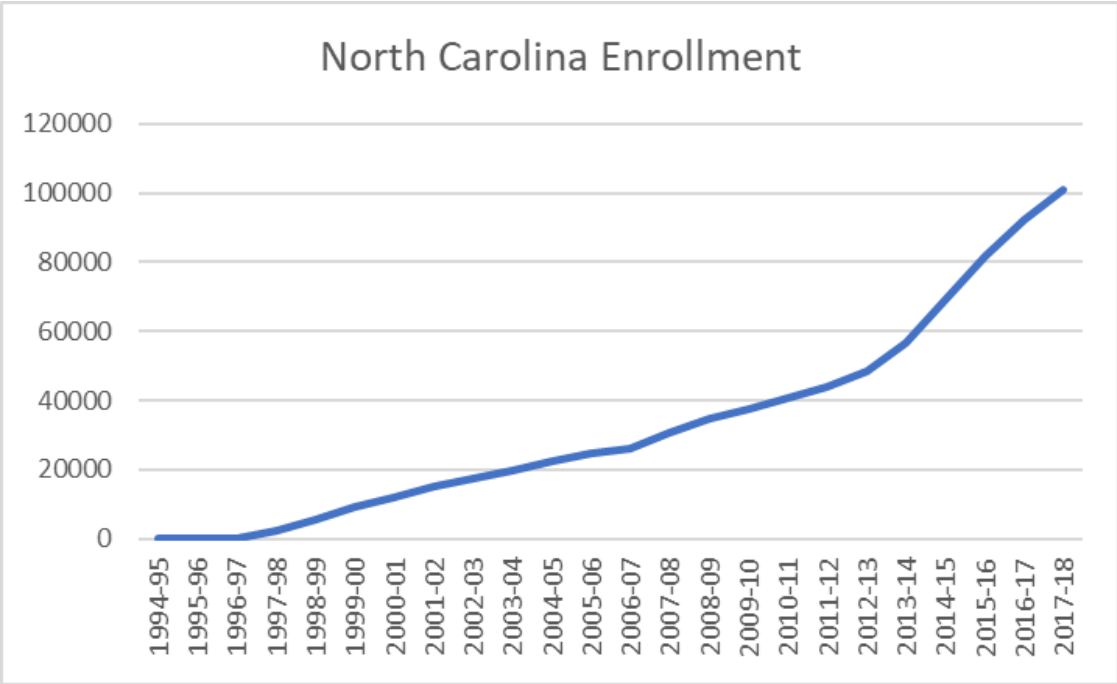
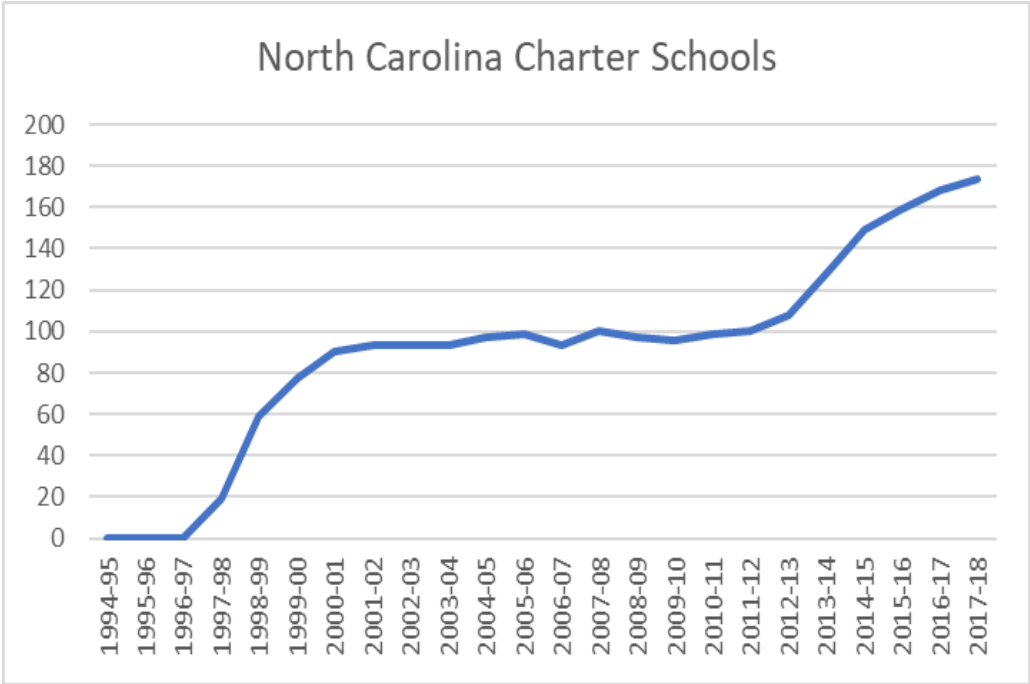
Cap of 100 schools (removed in 2011)

Charters initially expected to serve same racial mix of students as the district (modified in 2011)

Single authorizer – State Board of Education. No input from the local school district

Funding – both state and local funds follow students to the charter school they choose

North Carolina charters



Charters and Durham

Durham – a popular location for charters

- Generous local funding

- Concerns about low quality public schools for Blacks

- Perception among Whites of low quality public schools

Currently

- 14 charter schools

- about 15 percent of students

Growth in Durham

(after 2004)

| Year | Number of charters |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 2004-2006 | 8 |
| 2007 | 7 |
| 2008 | 8 |
| 2009-2011 | 7 |
| 2012 | 8 |
| 2013 | 9 |
| 2014 | 10 |
| 2015 | 11 |
| 2016-2019 | 13 |
| 2020-2021 | 14 |

Durham charters in 2021

Maureen Joy Charter

Healthy Start Academy

Carter Community Charter

Kestrel Heights School

Research Triangle Charter

Central Park School For Children

Voyager Academy

Global Scholars Academy

Research Triangle High School

The Institute for the Development of You

Reaching All Minds Academy

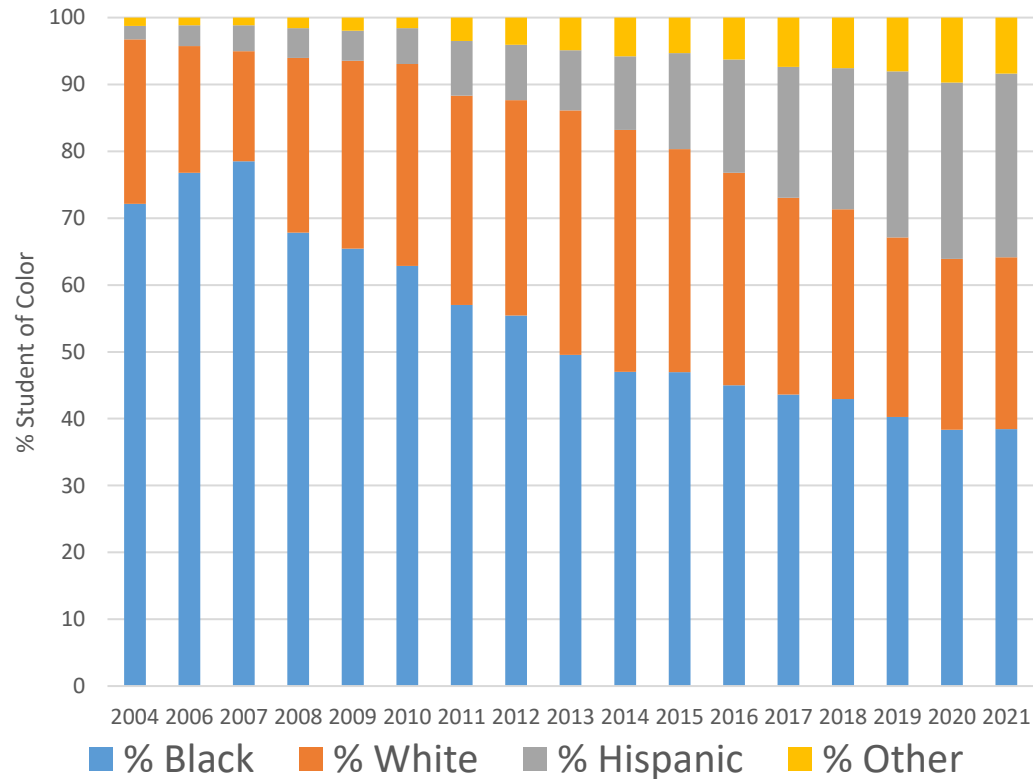
Excelsior Classical Academy

KIPP Durham College Preparatory

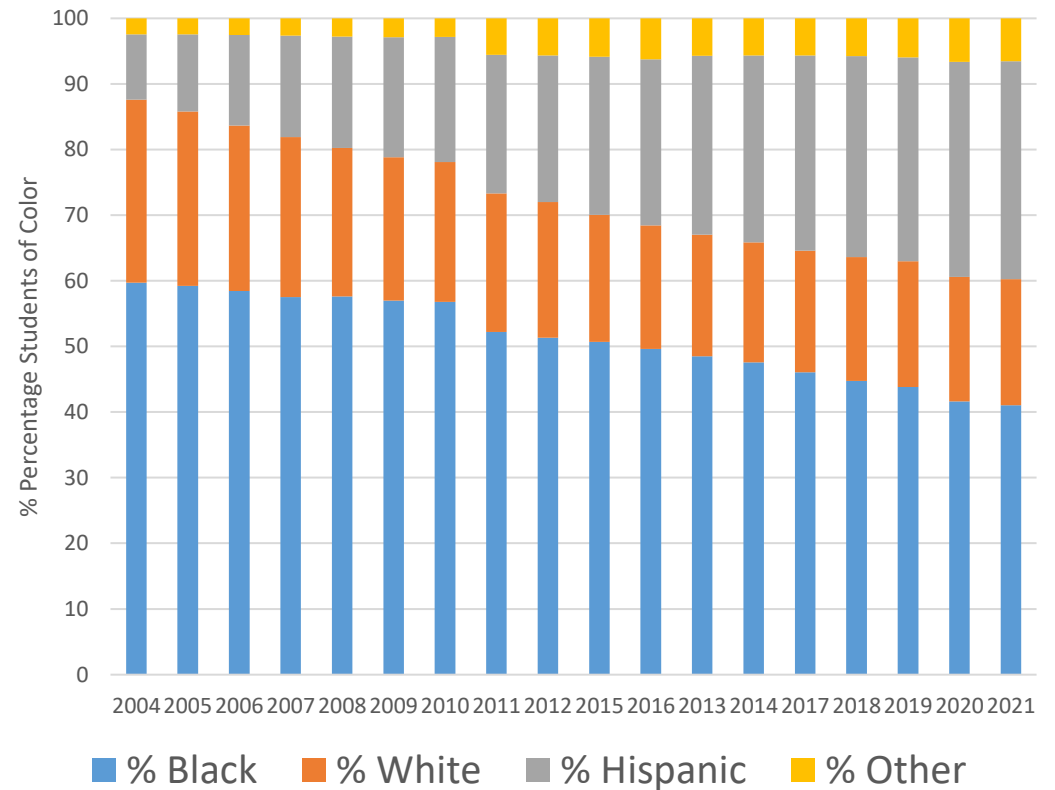
Discovery Charter School

Racial mix of students – Durham charters compared to Durham traditional public schools.

Durham Charter Schools (2005 Missing)



Durham Public Schools



Policy issues

- Racial segregation and racial isolation. Do charter schools increase racial segregation?
- Performance of charter schools. Are charter schools more effective than traditional public schools?
- Adverse effects on traditional public schools
 - Funding
 - Planning challenges
- Limited accountability
- Compacts as a proposed, but unsuccessful, solution

Charters and racial segregation

National studies – **mixed findings**. In some big cities, charters reduced racial segregation

North Carolina studies – Movement from traditional public schools to charter schools **increases segregation**

Early 2000s –Whites moved to whiter charters schools, blacks to blacker charter schools

(Bifulco and Ladd, 2006)

2016-17 choices. Segregation up mainly because of the decisions of white movers

(Ladd and Mavzuna, 2019)

What do parents value when they are making school choices?

Composition of students

Distance to the charter

Quality of the school

Availability of services

Subsidized meals

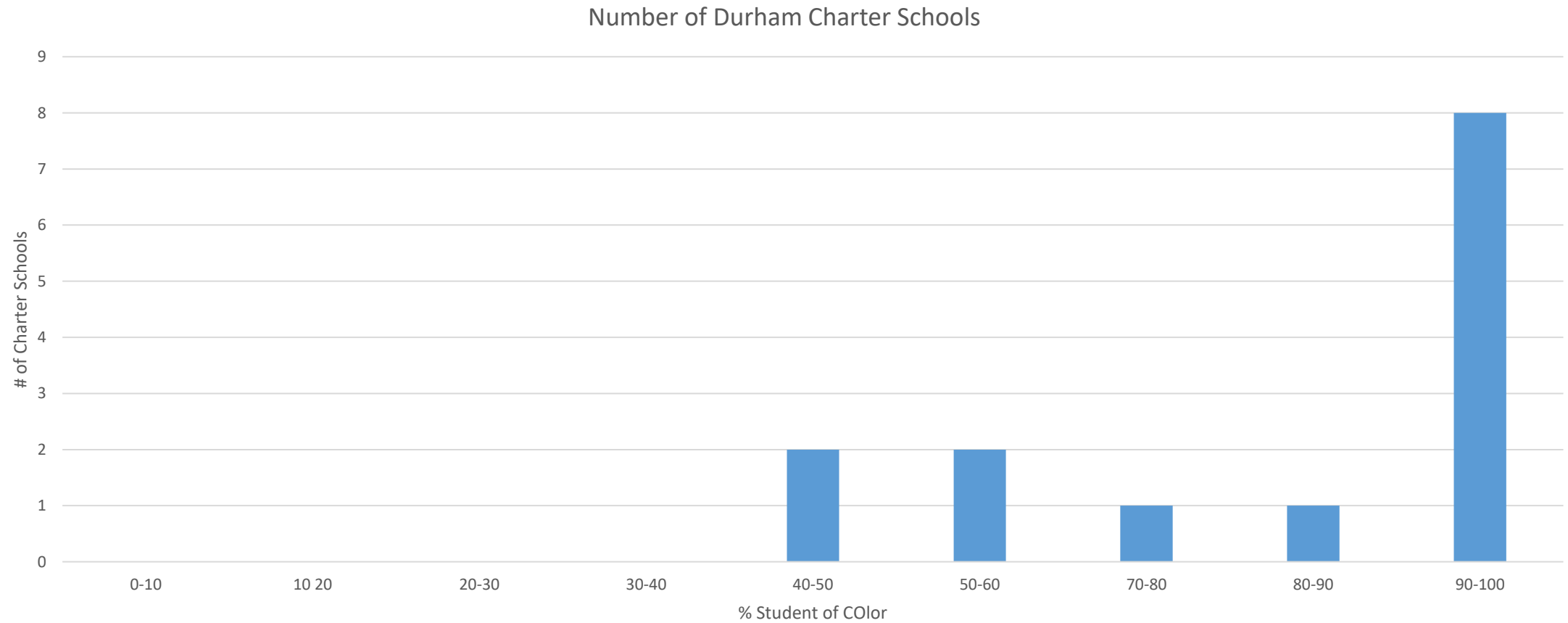
Transportation

School mission

Hard to have racially balanced charter schools

See graph for Durham

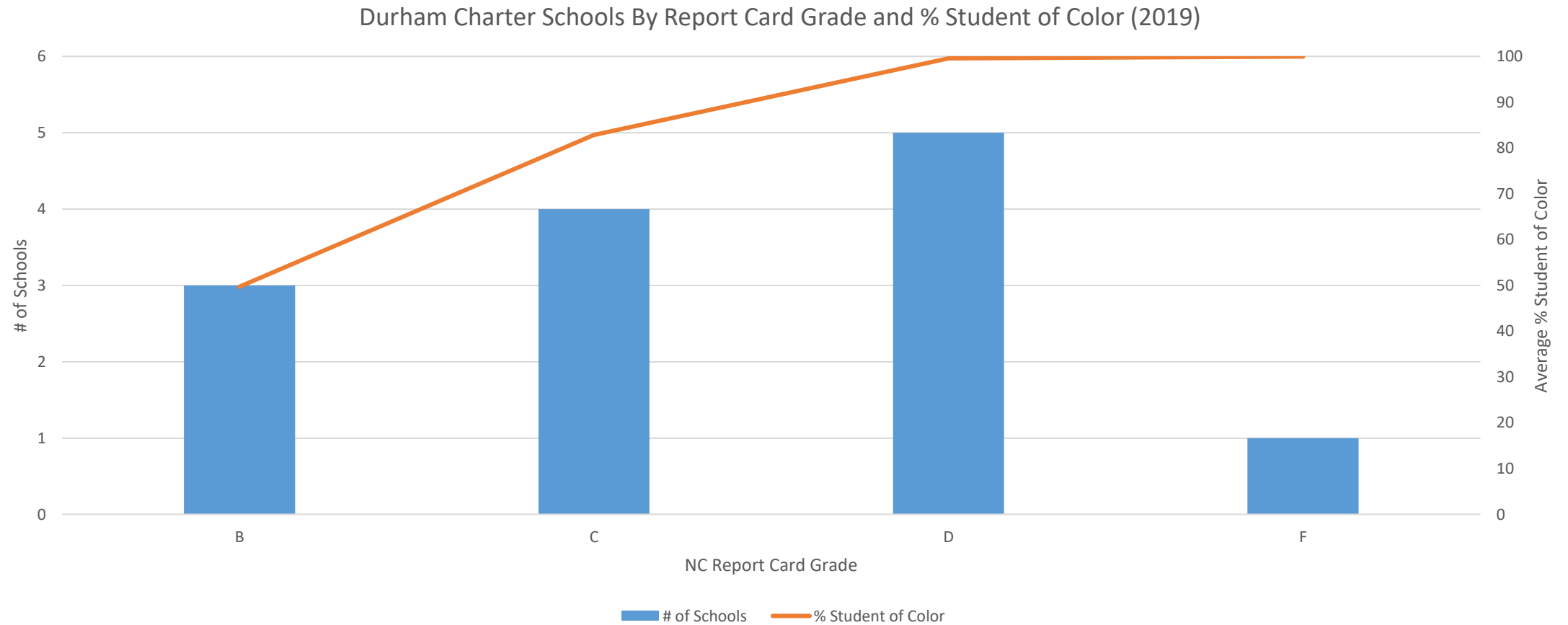
Number of charter schools by percent students of color--



Charter school performance

- See graph with letter grades based on state wide test scores
- Letter grades are not the right way to measure performance
 - Need to compare achievement of charter students to that of comparable students
 - National studies - charters no better on average
 - National urban studies- charters better in some urban areas
 - Boston charters – many effective because of a no-excuses approach.
 - Studies of North Carolina charters
 - Bifulco and Ladd – early 2000s, negative effects
 - Ladd , Clotfelter and Bifulco – 1999-2012. Many weak charters shut down. Overall performance no better than in the traditional public schools.

Letter grades – for Durham Charter Schools



Charters and the public interest

Two views of charter schools

- a few charter schools on the fringe of the basic public system
- many charter schools – with the goal of disrupting the traditional public system (e.g. Denver, New Orleans)

Adverse effects of charters on public schools in Durham

Costly for the district – loss of students means loss of funds,
underrepresentation of expensive to educate students

(estimated costs from one study – \$500 per traditional public school student)

Difficulty of planning for facilities

Need for strong accountability

- Weak accountability in North Carolina – just state test scores with associated letter grades, and 10 year charter renewals
- Compare charter school accountability in Massachusetts
 - Inspection system based on 10 performance criteria
 - Equity criteria
 - Fair access for disadvantaged students
 - Fair treatment of disadvantages students

No good solutions

Two separate systems within a district do not make a lot of sense.

- Competition for students

- Uncertainty related to enrollment patterns

- More costly than a single system

- Challenges for transportation planning

Possibility of a **compact** between the school district and the charters

- Failed discussions in Durham

- Gates funded efforts in other cities

 - Mixed results at best

Should the state limit the number of charter schools?