VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

2004 Annual Report

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

PRESENTED TO

THE HONORABLE MARK R. WARNER
GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA
AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

October 28, 2004

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

PREFACE

Section 22.1-212.11 of the *Code of Virginia*, as amended, requires local school boards to report annually to the Virginia Board of Education the status of public charter schools. Based on these compliance and performance criteria and other evaluation considerations, the objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- Evaluate charter schools' compliance with the goals and provisions dictated by their charter application.
- Evaluate charter schools' progress in achieving the goals as delineated in their charter.
- Evaluate the performance of charter school students versus the performance of other public school populations.
- Evaluate the impact of charter school's activities in terms of contribution to the community and education system, in general.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The external evaluation of the public charter schools of Virginia examines the seven public charter schools in operation in the state during the 2003-2004 school year. Research Dimensions, Inc., conducted the evaluation for the Virginia Department of Education. All seven schools are designed to provide alternative and experiential learning opportunities for students who are at-risk. However, differences among these schools include: the histories of the schools, characteristics of the communities served, characteristics of the students enrolled, size of the student bodies, grade levels served, resources available, and educational approaches and priorities.

Key Observations and Findings

- Schools. The enrollment for all seven charter schools was 745 students as of June 2004. The majority of these students, over 90 percent, were in grades 9 through 12. No new charter schools were approved during the 2003-2004 school year. During this timeframe, three new charter school applications were denied. Two of the seven schools included in this report have ceased operating in 2004-2005.
- Staff. The schools reported a total of approximately 100 staff members including principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors. The average student-to-teacher ratio was ten students for every one teacher. All principals and close to 90 percent of all teacher positions were filled by licensed and endorsed individuals.
- Charter Compliance. A review of the evidence provided supported the charter schools' belief that they are all in compliance with the provisions of their charters. All applicant school divisions reported a high level of support from both state and local officials in expediting the charter school process.
- Progress in Achieving Goals. Standards of Learning (SOL) test data provide results that suggest improved student academic performance. Charter school student dropout rates are higher than those in traditional schools. Additionally, reports suggest that while dropout rates are higher, the expected failure or dropout rates of these students in traditional schools may have been much higher prior to transitioning to charter schools. Some schools report high graduation and completion rates, and most report improved student academic performance.
- Student Performance. None of the schools report having conducted a comprehensive comparison of the performance of their students and the students in the traditional schools in their division. Similarly, none of the schools reported longitudinal analysis of year-to-year improvement on a student-by-student basis.
- Impact on the Community. Schools report programs to build students' sense of responsibility, character, planning, community, and other personal growth goals. The perceptions of the schools, community awards, other forms of recognition, and parental surveys suggest significant success in these efforts. Available information suggests that the small size, individualized instruction, and innovative approaches to education found in these schools have had a positive impact on the communities they serve.

Chapter One

Purpose

This report provides the results of an external evaluation of the public charter schools of Virginia conducted for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) by Research Dimensions, Inc. The evaluation examined the seven public charter schools in operation in Virginia during the 2003-2004 school year. All of these schools serve at-risk students.

Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

The goals of the seven charter schools included in this evaluation are similar in that they are all designed to provide alternative and experiential learning opportunities for students who are at-risk. While there are similarities in terms of the general goal, there are also significant differences among these schools in terms of the:

- histories of the schools
- characteristics of the communities served
- characteristics of the students enrolled
- size of the student bodies
- grade levels served
- resources available and
- educational approaches and priorities

A. Summary Report

The Summary Report focuses on evaluation considerations applicable for all charter schools in the commonwealth. Section 22.1-212.11 of the *Code of Virginia*, as amended, requires local school boards to report annually to the Virginia Board of Education the status of public charter schools. Various sections of this code delineate compliance and performance criteria. In that context, the objectives of this external evaluation are as follows:

1. Evaluate charter schools' compliance with the goals and provisions dictated by their charter applications.
2. Evaluate charter schools' progress in achieving the goals as delineated in their charter.
3. Evaluate the performance of charter school students versus the performance of other public school populations.
4. Evaluate the impact of charter schools' activities in terms of contribution to the community and education system, in general.

B. School-Specific Attachments

Dissimilarities in the characteristics of the seven schools, in the data provided by each school, and in the availability of comparable data, limit the potential depth of analysis and even the ability to provide comparable reporting of *charter school performance* at the summary report level. These dissimilarities also preclude capturing in the summary report many of the unique characteristics and accomplishments of the individual schools. Consequently, an attachment is provided for each of the seven individual charter schools evaluated. Each attachment includes school-specific information, to the extent available and appropriate, for the same evaluation areas considered in the summary report.

C. Sources

The observations and findings in both the summary report and the attachments are primarily based on the following sources:

- Information collected by the VDOE on the number of charter school applications approved and denied by local school boards through Superintendent's Memorandum, Number 33, Administrative, dated July 9, 2004.
- Information collected by VDOE through an annual evaluation report and the supplemental information provided with these reports. These reports were submitted to VDOE in September 2004 for the 2003-2004 school year by the school divisions in which the seven public charter schools operated during that period.
- Internal VDOE data for comparison of charter school and traditional school student performance.

D. Report Structure

The following sections of this summary report address:

- background information related to the *Code of Virginia* as it applies to charter schools and summary data related to the charter schools, waivers, staff, and associated funding (Section III);
- charter schools' charter compliance (Section IV); and
- charter schools' progress towards their goals as related to student performance and the resulting educational and community impact (Section V).

Chapter Two

Background and Summary Information

This section provides general information addressed in the *Code of Virginia* as it applies to charter schools. General information profiling Virginia's charter schools and related waivers, staffs, and funding is presented.

A. *Code of Virginia* as Applied to Charter Schools

As delineated in the *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-212.5), public charter schools in Virginia are nonsectarian, nonreligious, or non-home-based alternative schools located within a public school division intended to:

- stimulate the development of innovative educational programs
- provide opportunities for innovative instruction and assessment
- provide parents and students with more options within their school divisions
- provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative innovative instruction and school scheduling, management, and structure
- encourage the use of performance-based educational programs
- establish and maintain high standards for both teachers and administrators and
- develop models for replication in other public schools

The 2004 session of the Virginia General Assembly created several amendments to previous statutes governing public charter schools. Some of these amendments involved minor wording changes or financial issues not within the scope of this evaluation. The other amendments pertinent to this evaluation are listed below:

> **§ 22.1-212.8. [Charter application] Subsection C.** ***The charter applicant shall include in the proposal agreement the results of any Board of Education review of the public charter school application that may have been conducted as provided in subsection D of § 22.1-212.9***
> **§ 22.1-212.9. [Review of public charter school application] Subsection C.** ***The public charter school applicant may submit its proposed charter application to the Board of Education for review and comment. The Board's review shall examine such applications for feasibility, curriculum, financial soundness, and objective criteria as the Board may establish, consistent with existing state law. The Board's review and comment shall be for the purpose of ensuring that the application conforms with such criteria, but shall not include consideration as to whether the application shall be approved by the local school board.***
> **§ 22.1-212.11. [Public charter school restrictions] Subsection A.** ***In establishing public charter schools within the division, local school boards shall give priority to public charter school applications designed to increase the educational opportunities of at-risk students particularly those at-risk students currently served by schools that have not achieved full accreditation.***
> **§ 22.1-212.11. [Public charter school restrictions] Subsection B.** ***Local school boards shall report the grant or denial of public charter school applications to the Board, the number of charters granted or denied, and the reasons for any such denials; and whether a public charter school is designed to increase educational opportunities of at-risk students or any students served by schools that have not achieved full accreditation.***
> **§ 22.1-212.12. [Public charter school term; renewals and revocations] Subsection A.** ***A charter may be approved or renewed for a period not to exceed five years. A public charter school renewal application submitted to the local school board or, in the case of a regional public charter school, to the relevant school boards shall contain:***

1. ***A report on the progress of the public charter school in achieving the goals, objectives, program and performance standards for students, and such other conditions and terms as the school board or boards may require upon granting initial approval of the charter application.***
2. ***A financial statement, or forms prescribed by the Board, that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the public charter school and that has been concisely and clearly written to enable the school board or boards and the public to compare such costs to those of other schools or comparable organizations.***

B. Schools

Since the initial state legislation for charter schools was passed in 1998, eight charter schools in eight school divisions have been approved. Seven of these schools continued to operate during the 2003-2004 school year. The eighth charter school, New Opportunities for Winning in Franklin County, reported closing in the fall of 2003 because of insufficient funds to continue operations. Beginning with 2004-2005, two additional schools have closed for reasons related to lack of funds. These are New Directions Academy in Greene County and Victory Academy in Gloucester County.

Most of these schools have operated as charter schools for two to three years. They serve a variety of grade levels and are relatively small, i.e., on average, about 100 students each. There were a total of 745 students enrolled as of June 2004 in grades 3 through 12 in all seven charter schools. The majority of these students, over 90 percent, were in grades 9 through 12. The number of students enrolled in charter schools increased from 685 in 2002-2003. Table 1 below provides summary information about the seven schools evaluated in this report.

Table 1.
Virginia Public Charter Schools – 2003-2004

Division	School	Year Opened	Grades Served	Enrollment (as of June 2004)
Albemarle County	Murray High School	2001	9-12	98
Chesterfield County	Chesterfield Community High	2002	9-12	298
Gloucester County	Victory Academy	1999	7-8	42
Greene County	New Directions Academy	2001	6-12	24
Hampton City	Hampton Harbour Academy	2001	3-12	159
Roanoke City	Blue Ridge Technical Academy	2001	9-12	85
York County	York River Academy	2002	9-10	39

No new charter schools were approved during the 2003-2004 period, but the following three charter school applications were submitted to three different school divisions and all were denied.

- Fairfax County – Pace School (charter school for children with autism) was denied because it was operationally unfeasible within funding available.
- Prince William County – Prince William Linguistics Academy was denied because there were unresolved legal issues, and the applicant had limited experience in providing instructional services and programs for limited English speaking and economically disadvantaged students.

- Norfolk City – Norfolk Academy for Science and Technology was denied due to lack of financial structure and substandard quality of the curriculum.

C. Waivers

Based on information collected in response to Superintendent's Memorandum, Number 33, Administrative, dated July 9, 2004, and the annual evaluation report in September 2004, no waivers were requested by any of the seven operating Virginia public charter schools during the 2003-2004 school year.

D. Staff

The total numbers of administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors in the seven charter schools are shown in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs) in Table 2 below. In addition to these staff members, several schools employ other personnel such as exceptional education teachers, security officers, nurses, clinic aides, tutors, monitors, parent involvement facilitators, and adjunct teachers. Data are presented for total staff as well as for totals and percentages of those positions filled by licensed and endorsed individuals.

Table 2.
Summary of Charter School Staffing

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	8.0	8.0	100.0%
Teachers	74.4	66.4	89.2%
Paraprofessionals	12.3	7.0	56.8%
Guidance Counselors	7.5	5.5	73.3%
Totals	102.2	86.9	85.0%

All administrator positions, and over 90 percent of all of the administrator and teacher positions, were filled by licensed and endorsed individuals. The average student-to-teacher ratio for all schools was ten students for every teacher.

In this year's annual evaluation report, data were collected for several professional development areas. More detailed descriptions of professional development programs provided in the charter schools are included in the attachments for each school. In general, the responses related to charter school staff professional development indicated that:

- a wide variety of professional development programs were provided
- most professional development programs were customized for charter school personnel
- the number of professional development programs provided varied widely by school ranging from only a few to a dozen or more
- all schools reported that there was very little communication between their school and other charter schools in Virginia and

- only one school, York River Academy, sent representatives to one or more national charter schools meetings

E. Funding

Funding data were incomplete and have not been reconciled in terms of consistency of reporting among schools. However, the data that are available suggest that about:

- 70 percent of the funds were from local sources
- 20 percent of the funds were from state funds and
- 10 percent of the funds were provided by federal and private sources

Chapter Three

Review of School Charters and Charter Compliance

The charters of seven Virginia public charter schools addressed by this report have a wide variety of goals, objectives, program and performance standards for students, and other conditions and terms as dictated by their the school boards. However, they all serve at-risk students, have many similar core objectives, and all state they have made progress towards their charter goals.

A. Process

All applicant school divisions reported a high level of support from both state and local officials in expediting the charter school application process. Further, all applicants stated that the proposal submitted and approved reflected an innovative approach in addressing the educational needs of an at-risk population of students.

The schools reviewed reported that the challenge of adequate funding served as the greatest limitation both during the application process as well as throughout the implementation period. The charter school that closed last year and two schools included in this report that have subsequently closed all attributed lack of sufficient funding as the primary reason for discontinuing.

B. Compliance with the Charter

Section § 22.1-212.12 of the *Code of Virginia* requires each charter school to evaluate annually its compliance with the goals and provisions dictated by their charter application. Further, the code requires an evaluation of each charter school's progress in achieving the goals as delineated in their charter.

The basic purposes of the seven charter school divisions are more similar than dissimilar. Phrases such as *intensive academic assistance, sharpened identification of career goals, reinforced academic environment, customized supportive services, alternative delivery models, individualized academic and personal growth plans, service learning, experimental learning, mastery learning, mentorship initiative, and extensive parental involvement* were consistent themes used within the charter proposals. Further, all applicants set objectives: 1) an increase in the graduation rate if secondary students were included; 2) a decrease in the drop out rate; 3) an overall improvement in student achievement; and 4) increased parental participation.

The approaches of the charter schools applicants varied widely in determining their success in meeting the objectives of their applications. Reporting ranged from measurements against a predetermined standard to anecdotal perceptions of success.

Most charter school reports included limited comparative assessments (qualitative and/or quantitative) of student achievement prior to attending a charter school versus their achievement during and after the charter school experience. Anecdotal responses suggested improvements as reported by students, school personnel, and parents.

Nearly all charter schools reported implementation obstacles with new applicants reporting the most obstacles. Most applicants reported the challenges of resource limitations, particularly with start up monies. Several reported that starting a new charter school was an exhausting yet exhilarating experience. In opening mission statements, many of the schools reported that the charter movement placed a strong emphasis on autonomy and accountability.

It was further evident that Virginia's charter schools have been shaped, not only by those establishing the school, but also by the legislation that established the parameters. Each charter applicant responding to the 2003-2004 annual evaluation report indicated that it had begun with the underlying assumption that the charter concept was an invitation to establish a school that would be considered a center of innovation free from the mandates of traditional government. All respondents also reported that they considered this objective to have been met.

C. Overall Assessment

The charter schools report that they are all in compliance with the provisions of their charters. This review of the evidence provided supported their perceptions.

Chapter Four

Evaluation of Charter School Student Performance and Impact

The public charter school population is not a representative subset of the traditional school student population. As previously noted, the seven public charter schools evaluated focus on increasing educational opportunities and providing alternative educational programs for students at risk of academic failure. Many of the students, particularly older students enrolled in high school programs, were in danger of dropping out of school prior to attending the charter schools. Poor attendance, past academic failure, and other risk factors create many challenges for the schools in raising the academic achievement level of these students.

In spite of the challenges, some progress has been demonstrated and reported in terms of improving academic achievement, average daily attendance, parental and community involvement, and a decrease in dropouts. However, as addressed in subsequent sections, the quantitative results that support this trend in achievement vary from year to year and among schools. Anecdotal research and responses provided in the Virginia annual evaluation report suggest that both parents and students report significant improvement.

A. Student Achievement

Measuring student achievement for the charter school student population presents many challenges. The charter school student populations are small and lack continuity from year-to-year. Ideally, student achievement should be described using both quantitative and qualitative metrics of improvement in areas such as academic performance; graduation and completion rates; communication skills; attitude; behavior; and discipline. However, consistent data, particularly quantitative data of this type and the resources needed to produce and analyze these data have not been collected.

1. Quantitative Measures of Achievement. Standards of Learning (SOL) test results are the most easily available quantitative metric for measuring achievement. However, since most of the students admitted to these charter schools exhibited poor academic performance in previous schools, the SOL test history and expectations of these students are weak. Given these caveats, four of the charter schools reviewed reported relatively high SOL test scores (i.e., mostly 70 to 100 percent pass rates) and/or generally exhibited improved pass rates over previous years. Two of the remaining three schools have subsequently ceased to be charter schools.

Some of the charter schools reported that their student populations change significantly from year-to-year; significantly more than the traditional schools in their districts. Consequently, indicators of year-to-year improvement on a student-by-student basis would provide a more accurate measure of student achievement than a comparison of data aggregated at the school- or class-levels. Limited resources have prevented most schools from using this approach and those that have reported mixed results. The schools included in this report mentioned using, in addition to SOL test data, numerous other quantitative approaches to measure improvement, i.e., Preliminary Scholastic

Assessment Test (PSAT), reading assessments, Brigance Test, Test of Adult Basic Education, mean gain per grade level assessments, core subject grades, and other standardized tests. Only three schools reported demonstrated academic improvement: 1) one by tracking SOL test score improvement; 2) one in using other multiple measurement tools such as those cited above; and 3) one by using primarily core subject grades combined with other measurement tools.

In summary, efforts to demonstrate public charter school student achievement using quantitative testing results are limited in scope. In general, available SOL test data provide results that suggest at least some student academic performance improvement. Schools reporting the use of other quantitative measurement approaches claim that they also show student performance improvement.

2. Other Measures of Achievement. Many of the at-risk students attending charter schools have a poor history of discipline, attitude, peer relationship, study habits, and communications issues. Since these characteristics lead to or are correlated with low attendance levels and high dropout rates, the charter schools have provided numerous faculty professional development and student programs emphasizing improvement in these areas.

The overall average daily attendance in the charter schools has improved slightly over the last several years and the attendance rate is now within five to ten percent of that in the traditional schools in their respective districts. Dropout rate data vary significantly from school to school and over time for each charter school. Charter school dropout rates have historically been much higher (e.g., 0 to 35 percent) than rates for traditional schools in their respective districts (e.g., 0 to 5 percent). The overall dropout rate in the charter schools over the past several years appears to have improved slightly. Available attendance and drop out data for 2003-2004, trends, and comparisons with traditional schools are summarized in the following table.

Table 3.
Attendance and Dropout Rates

Measure	Charter Schools 2003-2004	Traditional Schools in Division
Average Daily Attendance	88.7%	95% to 96%
Dropout Rate	Incomplete data [1]	2% to 3%

Note 1: By September 3, 2004, only four of the seven charter schools had compiled and reported dropout rate data for 2003-2004; the weighted average dropout rate for these four schools was about 13 percent. Of these four reporting schools, two reported 0 percent dropouts and the other two reported slightly lower rates than in previous years.

All of the schools reviewed claimed anecdotal evidence from students, parents, and the community suggesting that their approaches to improving attendance and reducing dropout rates have had a significant positive impact.

Similar anecdotal data suggest that the charter school environment and approaches

have had success in improving other discipline, attitude, peer relationship, study habits, and communications problems. All schools reported aggressive programs to involve and communicate with parents and the community. These programs varied in nature and extent from school to school, but in general, were perceived by the schools as being successful (see school comments in the attachments).

3. Comparing Charter School and Traditional School Student Performance

None of seven charter schools in Virginia reported having conducted a comprehensive comparison of the performance of their students with the students in the traditional schools in their division. Several of the charter schools reported performing, or considering to perform, limited comparisons using different approaches to compare their students with comparable populations in traditional schools. Given the dissimilarities in the student populations and the objectives of the schools, defining "comparable" student populations for comparison purposes is difficult. Moreover, the differences in reported student performance among the charter schools may dictate different comparative approaches for the various charter schools.

Generally, the objective of the charter schools is to provide an alternative educational approach and environment to improve educational results for students who experienced failure or poor performance in the traditional schools. Consequently, the comparative performance issue is one of determining whether each individual student would perform or has performed better in a traditional or charter school. There are limited data to support these types of longitudinal analyses and some schools claim to be investigating options to do so on a student-by-student basis. However, available resources to pursue these options are limited.

4. Overall Assessment. From the perspective of the charter schools, they have all made progress towards or have achieved the goals and objectives as stated in their charters. For most of these schools, quantitative data available tend to support these perceptions while the qualitative/anecdotal data more strongly support these perspectives.

B. Impact of Public Charter Schools

The impact of public charter school contributions is difficult to define in Virginia or nationally. Of the 88,000 public schools nationally, only about 3,000 were charter schools and only seven of those were in Virginia. The total charter school population was less than 0.1 percent of the total Virginia public school population.

Since the students attending these schools were deemed to be at risk of failing academically or performing below their potential, the ultimate charter school impact, from the perspectives of the students, their parents/guardians, and the community, is to produce graduates that are more successful than they would have been without the charter school opportunity. There are no available quantitative, scientifically-based options to demonstrate that the charter schools are achieving this goal, but there are numerous sources of information that suggest at least partial success.

First, not all students succeed in charter schools. The charter student drop out rate is much higher than in traditional schools. While the charter school drop out rate appears to have improved over the last several years, the overall drop out rate for charter

schools still appears to be roughly about five times that of students in the traditional schools (albeit, some charter schools report drop out rates near zero). A more relevant set of observations is derived from responding charter school administrators and reported parental and student feedback. These sources suggest that while drop out rates for the charter school students are high, the expected failure/drop out rates of these students in traditional schools may have been much higher given their performance prior to switching to charter schools. No quantitative analysis is available to confirm this perception.

Second, there are varied results reported by the charter schools relating to the overall success of their programs and their impact on the communities that they serve. Some schools report very high graduation/completion rates. Most schools report improved testing results and core subject academic performance. The data and data availability vary significantly from school to school, but the general performance results appear to be positive.

Third, all schools report aggressive programs to achieve student-parental-community involvement, and most of these schools self-report significant success. This success has been at least somewhat confirmed by community awards and other forms of recognition and by parental surveys. Several schools report extensive and successful programs to build students' sense of responsibility, character, planning, community, and other personal growth areas not necessarily captured by the core subject area academic performance. Again, this success has been at least somewhat confirmed by community recognition and by parental surveys.

There is no capacity within the scope of this evaluation to assess the return on the investment for the public charter schools of Virginia. However, available information suggests that the small size, individualized instruction, and innovative approaches to education found in these schools have had a positive impact on the communities that they serve.

ATTACHMENTS

The seven charter schools in Virginia are very different. These differences limit the ability to generalize charter school performance and impact. Consequently, the information, observations, and conclusions reflected in the summary report do not reflect many of the unique accomplishments of the charter schools evaluated.

The following sections provide an attachment for each individual school that is included in the summary report. Each attachment includes school-specific information, to the extent available, for the same evaluation areas considered in the summary report. Specifically, the following attachments provide:

- school-specific general school information
- school-specific student SOL test data
- school-specific attendance data
- school-specific drop out data
- school-specific professional development information and
- school-specific staffing data/information

Sections in italics and beginning with the word "comment" are derived from (or are taken directly from) information provided by the charter schools in their 2003-2004 annual evaluation report. These responses often provide insight related to school accomplishments and student performance that could not be captured in the summary report. Specifically, these qualitative reflections of school responses are related to:

- student achievement
- professional development programs
- parent/community involvement
- effectiveness in meeting the needs of the population served
- charter compliance and
- progress towards the charter school goals

Attachment A1
Albemarle County, Murray High School

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2003-2004:	9-12
Enrollment 2003-2004:	98
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement

Murray High School SOL test results have improved over their three years as a charter school and their 2003-2004 results generally compare favorably with, or exceed, overall division and Virginia SOL test results, as depicted in the following table.

Table A1.1.
SOL Test Results for Murray High School

SOL End of Course Test Results	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004 [1]	Division Results 2002-2003
English Reading	71%	100%	96%	94%
English Writing	67%	93%	92%	91%
Algebra I	100%	75%	75%	84%
Algebra II	71%	N/A	73%	79%
Geometry	90%	83%	90%	88%
World Geography	63%	60%	100%	50%
World History I	N/A	100%	N/A	89%
World History II	75%	89%	100%	90%
U. S. History	57%	68%	93%	72%
Earth Science	70%	N/A	93%	81%
Biology	100%	75%	100%	90%
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	N/A	93%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

Comment. Other measures of student academic progress include graduation and completion rates. All students seeking a diploma or Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) completion were successful. In June 2004, 31 students were graduated, the largest graduating class since the school opened. Three students earned an advanced studies diploma and 17 earned a standard diploma. Of the 31 graduates, 27 plan to continue their education at the community college or university levels. Four students went directly into the workforce. Another student joined the Marines Corps immediately after graduation. In addition to the 31 graduates, two Murray students earned their General Educational Development (GED) certificate through the ISAEP program at the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC).

The following table summarizes average daily attendance and dropout rates for Murray High School. Attendance has improved slightly since becoming a charter school and is approaching the overall attendance rates of 95 to 96 percent for the district. Dropout

rates are very low and have historically been better that those in the traditional school system in the district and statewide.

Table A1.2.
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for Murray High School

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Murray High School	90.5%	93.3%	93.8%
Dropout Rates	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Murray High School	0.00%	0.01%	[1]

Note [1]: 2003-04 dropout data cannot be determined until after October 1 per VDOE procedures.

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	No
Professional development hours provided	Hundreds
Professional development activities provided	11
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	No

Comment: Along with their continued participation in division-based staff development in areas such as reading strategies in the content areas, engaging active learners, using technology to support instruction, and differentiated instruction, Murray staff participated in school-based staff development initiatives related to differentiated instruction, the integration of technology in the classroom, and Choice Theory. Providing differentiated instruction and project-based (active) learning are two major goals at Murray High School. Teachers also participated in local and regional professional development activities specific to their content areas.

Parental/Community Involvement

Comment: Activities were held during 2003-2004 to promote parent and community relations. These activities included open houses for students and their families; parent forums; parent-teacher conferences; and orientations and information sessions about Murray for prospective students and their families. Parents also volunteered at special school activities and participated on division and school committees. A monthly parenting group met to focus on improving relationships within the family using principles of William Glasser. The group was facilitated by Charlotte Wellen, a Murray teacher trained at the advanced level by the Glasser Institute. The 2003-2004 School Improvement Team, which develops goals and monitors progress for the school, included parents, staff, and students. Other efforts to become more involved in the community and to promote positive community relations included student participation in activities such as working with community members in Women Build, a Habitat for Humanity project; mentoring middle school students at the Enterprise Center (a local alternative school for students with discipline problems); raising money for the SPCA as a part of Make a Difference Day; making presentations at schools, conferences, and at the University of Virginia on Choice Theory and Quality Schools; and participating in fine arts events, such as art exhibits at local businesses, musical performances, and poetry readings.

Staff

The 2003-2004 school year staffing data indicated that there was one Murray High School teacher for every 10.4 students enrolled. The school reported that the issue of teachers that were not licensed and endorsed was being addressed. Staffing data for Murray High School are summarized in Table A1.3 below.

A1.3.
Staffing for Murray High School

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100%
Teachers	9.4	7.4	79%
Paraprofessionals	0.33	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	N/A

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Comment: One of the ways in which Murray High School measures whether or not we are meeting the needs of students is by setting as a target that at least 80 percent of our students will meet the criteria to be invited back and will choose to return to Murray. Just over 89 percent of the students were invited to return for 2004-2005. Of the 2003-2004 students, only three (less than 5 percent) chose to return to their base school for 2004-2005.

Compliance with current charter

Comment: Murray High School has met the objectives, conditions, standards, and procedures as determined by the charter with the school board. In February 2004 Murray High School was approved for an additional three years as a charter school.

Progress towards or in achieving goals and objectives of charter

General Comment: Teachers developed new differentiated activities based on the needs, interests, and learning styles of students. Students completed culminating projects in the majority of their classes, which required them to apply the knowledge and concepts that they had learned throughout a given course. Students were encouraged to develop and pursue more intensive studies related to a particular course. All staff participated in staff development activities related to differentiated instruction. Other staff participated in workshops related to using technology to extend learning and engage students in active learning.

More specific responses addressing 2003-2004 Murray High School specific goals as developed by the Murray High Improvement team follow.

Goal #1: The Murray community will work to improve the academic performance of students.

Objective #1: To improve student achievement related to the skills and knowledge in the Standards of Learning so that:

1. Murray High School remains fully accredited in 2004-05

   Evidence of Success: Fully Accredited Status for 2004-05

2. Student pass rates are at least 90 percent in English and 80 percent in the three other content areas.

   Evidence of Success: Pass rate targets for 2004-05 are as follows:

   English remain at 92 percent

   History from 76 to 80 percent

   Mathematics at least from 77 to 80 percent

   Science from 78 to 80 percent

Progress Made: Pass rates for 2004-05 are as follows:

English 94 percent (2 percent above target)

History 94 percent (14percent above target)

Science 96 percent (16 percent above target)

Mathematics 79 percent (1 percent below target)

3. Students will earn sufficient credits and verified credits by 2004 to graduate with a standard, advanced studies, modified standard, or special diploma.

   Evidence of Success: 100 percent of students at Murray High School will earn their high school diploma.

   Progress Made: All seniors earned sufficient credits and verified credits to graduate with either an advanced studies or standard diploma.

Objective **#2: To develop and provide differentiated learning activities that encourage students to apply knowledge and produce quality work.**

Evidence of Success:

1. Students will produce at least one quality product during the school year and will prepare it to include in their final portfolio.
2. Each teacher will develop at least one major unit each semester that includes a project-based component.

Progress Made: Teachers continued to add project-based learning to classes so that students were required to apply and synthesize knowledge. All seniors were asked to select quality products for inclusion in their senior portfolios. Workshops on quality products and quality work were presented at the beginning of the year to all students. All seniors were required to do a senior portfolio before graduation. One of the requirements for the portfolio was the inclusion of quality work that the students had done while at Murray. Most seniors chose to do an electronic (DVD) portfolio.

Goal #2: The Murray community will work to better prepare students for "life after high school."

Evidence of Success: 80 percent of seniors will participate in a senior internship, Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) program, and/or college-level class in 2003-04.

Progress Made: Of the 31 seniors, approximately 60 percent completed a senior internship, CATEC program or college-level class. It was difficult to schedule these activities for seniors who transferred into Murray for their final year of school that represented about one-fourth of the senior class in 2003-04. Often there was not room in their schedule to take advantage of these activities. Other students could not take college classes because of financial considerations. Also, we had a number of seniors who needed to take core academics at Murray in order to graduate and could not participate in the internships, CATEC, or Piedmont Valley Community College (PVCC). We are continuing to make this a priority for our seniors.

Goal #3: The Murray community will create and sustain a school environment that invites personal commitment and learning for all.

Evidence of Success: 80 percent of the students at Murray in 2003-04 will meet the criteria to be invited to return to Murray HS in 2004-5. (Students must earn at least five credits, miss no more than ten days (excluding absences for illness, medical/court appointments, emergencies, or school-related absences) and adhere to RAMPS (Respect, Attend, Mediate, Participate, and Share).

Progress Made: Student orientations and workshops were held the first week of school to build team and community spirit. Regular school-wide (community) meetings were planned and conducted by students. Open microphone time has been incorporated in community meetings to give students the opportunity to express their ideas and concerns in a less formal way. Just over 89 percent of students were invited to return to Murray for 2004-05. Only three students chose to return to their base schools.

Goal #4: The Murray community will become a more family friendly school.

Evidence of Success: 80 percent of parents/families indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very

satisfied" with new parent activities, the Glasser–based parent meetings and the Community Evening of Sharing.

Progress Made: Murray does not have a parent-teacher organization. Instead parents are invited to come to school for specific activities such as forums or parent groups. Following a forum, parents asked for more information about using Choice Theory at home. Based on this interest, Charlotte Wellen, a Murray teacher and an instructor for the Glasser Institute, organized and facilitated monthly parent meetings. In 2004-05, she will continue with the parent group started last year, and will start a new group for first-time parents. All parents who participated in the 2003-2004 parent group and who were contacted were very satisfied with the Glasser meetings. The Community Evening of Share was cancelled because of bad weather and could not be rescheduled. A Community Day of Sharing was held with the community during the day (at lunch time), and parents were invited to attend.

Goal #5: New technology will successfully be used by students in class and at home.

Evidence of Success: Each student will successfully and appropriately utilize laptop computers to enhance their learning experiences and to attain high school credit.

Progress Made: During the 2003-04 school year sufficient funding was available to purchase enough laptops so that every student had access to technology in every class. The computers are used in every class, for such activities as research, project creation, word processing, and digital video. In a survey in the spring of 2004, teachers felt that they were able to use technology effectively in their classes, and that students were using technology to advance their learning.

Attachment A2
Chesterfield County, Chesterfield Community High School

Year opened as a charter school:	2002
Grades served in 2003-2004:	9-12
Enrollment 2003-2004:	298
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement

As depicted in Table A2.1, Chesterfield Community High School (CCHS) SOL test results have been very weak relative to overall Virginia SOL test scores and there has been no clear pattern over the last two years. No other quantitative or qualitative measures of student performance were reported. SOL test results should be evaluated in the context of the selection criteria for attending Chesterfield Community High School. These include being a student who has: (1) been unsuccessful in a traditional school setting and who would benefit academically from a smaller, nontraditional school environment, (2) been retained one or more times, (3) dropped out of school and is returning to school one or more years behind their peers, and (4) chronic problems of attendance, discipline, and/or academic underachievement.

Table A2.1.
SOL Test Results for Chesterfield Community High School

SOL End of Course			Division Results
Test Results	2002-2003	2003-2004 [1]	**2002-2003**
English Reading/Lit	92%	69%	96%
English Writing	66%	47%	92%
Algebra I	35%	30%	78%
Algebra II	N/A	N/A	74%
Geometry	34%	18%	74%
World Geography	N/A	N/A	N/A
World History I	63%	32%	88%
World History II	N/A	N/A	89%
U. S. History	71%	83%	73%
Earth Science	39%	50%	77%
Biology	58%	32%	86%
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	86%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

Average Daily Attendance rates for Chesterfield Community High School have been just under 90 percent, which is lower than for the division or state in general (typically 95 to 96 percent). As noted above, dropout rates are much higher (about 20 percent) than for the division or state in general (typically 1 to 4 percent). These data are summarized in Table A2.2.

Comment: The attendance rate for the charter school is below the attendance rate for the other regular schools in the county. Poor attendance is one of the major issues that have affected the academic

achievement of the charter school students prior to their enrollment in the charter school. CCHS has a long-standing commitment to supporting student attendance as faculty and staff believe that consistent attendance is the foundation for academic success. To that end, a variety of activities have been instituted to encourage and recognize attendance including the following:

- *SOAR (Success, Ownership, Attendance, Respect) Program which acknowledges students with "Eagle Bucks" for being present and on time each day. Eagle Bucks can be redeemed in the school store for tangible items such as school supplies, food, and other student preferred items.*
- *Excellent Attendance Program for students having fewer than five absences during the semester. Students meeting attendance criteria are treated to a special breakfast to recognize their achievement.*
- *Student of the Month awards to recognize students who show academic progress and/or improvement, citizenship, and at least 90 percent attendance.*
- *Year-end Awards Ceremony to recognize students for attendance, effort, and/or achievement. Students receive certificates and plaques recognizing their success.*
- *Telephone call to absentees by attendance clerk and teachers to determine reasons for absences and to encourage improved attendance.*
- *Student Assistance Program that works with students who are referred for poor attendance. School social worker or other staff work with students and families on issues affecting school attendance.*
- *Pilot program involving student mentors. Students with good attendance were matched with students experiencing attendance problems. The student mentors made daily contact with their student and encouraged attendance.*

Comment: While dropout rates are higher than in the other nine high schools in the county, all students who are referred to the charter school are considered at risk of dropping out prior to their admission. A total of 112 students graduated through the day and night school programs who may not have graduated without the services of the charter school. A comparison to students in regular schools has not been made.

Table A2.2.
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for Chesterfield Community High School

Average Daily Attendance	2002-2003	2003-2004
Chesterfield Community High School	88%	89%
Dropout Rates	2002-2003	2003-2004
Chesterfield Community High School	22%	19.7%

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	**Yes**
Professional development hours provided	**31**
Professional development activities provided	**10**
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	**Very little**
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	No

Comment: Staff development training using Classroom Instruction That Works by Robert Marzano continued for teaching staff with a focus on the first three strategies: Identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note-taking, and reinforcing effort and providing recognition. Additionally, Virginia Commonwealth University's Technical Training and Assistance Center (T/TAC) offered a class for credit to all teachers on "Effective Instruction: Managing Classroom Behavior and Enhancing Academic Achievement." The textbook Classroom Management That Works, also based on the research-based strategies of Robert Marzano, was used for the course. The purpose of the course was to develop a

system within Chesterfield Community High School to support the ongoing use of effective classroom management and instructional strategies. Classes met weekly during the second semester.

Parental/Community Involvement

Comment: The Charter Management Committee met monthly during the 2003-2004 school year. The committee is comprised of six staff members and eight community members, two of whom are parents.

In addition to membership on the Charter Management Committee, parents were involved through membership on the SOAR committee that promotes positive behavior, academic achievement, and good attendance. Students are acknowledged for exhibiting positive behaviors and meeting school expectations through a reward system that can be redeemed for student selected items in the "SOAR Store." School staff and volunteers are involved in running the school store and in soliciting items to be made available to students. Parents are also involved in the athletic programs at Chesterfield Community High School and worked as volunteers at games and other athletic events.

Chesterfield Community High School is a part of Communities In Schools (CIS) of Chesterfield and as such receives a great amount of community support through the public/private partnerships developed by CIS. CIS was developed to enhance the potential for youth to complete school and become contributing members of society. Community volunteers work one-on-on with students as mentors and tutors to provide supportive educational services to students. Volunteers were also recruited to serve as leaders in a book club program, "Chat and Chew," which offered lunchtime book discussions for interested students. A Student Assistance Program is also in place to address student and/or family issues that may affect academic achievement. A repositioned Department of Social Services (DSS) worker and a consultant from the adolescent substance abuse unit of Chesterfield Mental Health serve on the student assistance team in addition to the school nurse, school social worker, and school psychologist. Students are also paired with community volunteers for career exploration and job shadowing.

Staff

Staffing data for the 2003-2004 school year indicated that there was one Chesterfield Community High School teacher for every 14.5 students enrolled. Approximately 93 percent of all teachers were reported to be licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they taught. The following table summarizing staffing for the school.

Table A2.3.
Staffing for Chesterfield Community High School

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1	1	100%
Teachers	20.5	23	93%
Paraprofessionals	5	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1	1	100%

Note: In addition to the above staff Chesterfield Community High School reports two tutor/monitors, one security monitor, one clinic aide, and one CIS site coordinator.

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Comment: The charter school serves an at-risk population identified by school administrators and counselors, as well as by parents and students themselves, who would benefit from an alternative school setting with smaller classes and academic interventions and programs designed to meet the needs of academic underachievers. To this end, the charter school has been effective in providing an opportunity for identified students to remain in school and work toward completing graduation requirements. During 2003-2004, 242 students were promoted or graduated, with 36 students retained. This does not include students who were served through the GED, Pre-GED, and Literacy Development programs which provide educational opportunities for students who are not planning to continue to high school graduation.

Compliance with current charter

Comment: The charter school has effectively complied with the program objectives, conditions, standards and procedures as dictated by the current charter. The charter school follows the guidelines established by Chesterfield County Public Schools regarding curriculum and instruction, certification of the teaching staff, credit requirements, and funding.

Progress towards or in achieving goals and objectives of charter

Comment: The charter school has made progress toward the goals and objectives dictated by the current charter in terms of providing an alternative educational program for students who have been unsuccessful in a traditional school environment but who still wish to attain the goal of high school graduation. The charter school has provided students with a supportive environment and assistance in developing a plan for success in high school and beyond. Teachers and other staff have committed to learning and implementing effective instructional and classroom management strategies to help students be successful. On-going staff development and training is an integral part of the school improvement planning with adherence to guidelines established for lesson planning, pacing, data analysis, and remediation.

The primary goals for students at Chesterfield Community High School are to increase their basic skills in English, mathematics, science, and history and social sciences in order to pass the Virginia Standards of Learning tests, to complete high school, and to make the successful transition from school to work or higher education.

Pass rates on the SOL tests continue to fluctuate and have not reached the goal of 70 percent in all areas. The charter school is accredited with warning in mathematics for the second year in a row and steps have been taken to analyze instructional methods and provide ongoing training to teachers to help them develop more effective instruction. (Please refer to section on staff development for detail regarding teacher training).

On-going remediation programs both before and after school have been implemented to provide students with opportunities for additional instruction and support. Student Assistance Programming continues to provide intervention and supportive services to help students deal with issues affecting academic success. On-going evaluation and support from central office personnel is being provided to help the charter school achieve its goals.

Attachment A3
Gloucester County, Victory Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	1999
Grades served in 2003-2004:	7-8
Enrollment 2003-2004:	42
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	No

Student Achievement

Historically, Victory Academy's SOL test results have been weak compared to overall Virginia SOL test scores. However, as depicted in Table A3.1, there has been observable improvement in results for some subject areas for more recent years. The criteria for the selection of eligible students followed a pattern similar to that of other charter schools, i.e., students who were at risk of not being successful in the regular school setting and without excessive disciplinary referrals. Students selected were those who viewed themselves as not being successful in the regular school setting. A prerequisite for admission was a requirement for each applicant to be up to two years behind in the basic skills and have average ability.

Table A3.1.
SOL Results for Victory Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 [1]	**Division Results 2002-2003**
English Reading/Lit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	87%
English Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	92%
Algebra 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	65%
Algebra II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%
Geometry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	78%
World Geography	N/A	40%	24%	70%	42%	57%	80%
World History I	N/A	45%	55%	58%	77%	N/A	82%
World History II	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	85%
U. S. History	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	73%
Earth Science	N/A	40%	63%	21%	27%	N/A	74%
Biology	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	77%
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	89%
Grade 8 SOL Results	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	**2002-2003**
English Reading	0%	21%	20%	45%	27%	32%	81%
English Writing	8%	11%	25%	40%	18%	41%	77%
Mathematics	0%	11%	0%	30%	27%	50%	80%
Science	50%	47%	47%	74%	38%	62%	91%
History and SS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	85%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

Average Daily Attendance rates for Victory Academy have improved since opening as a charter school. As depicted in Table A3.2, by the 2003-2004 school year, attendance rates had risen to a level that exceeded the statewide attendance averages of 95 to 96 percent. From the 2000-2001 school year to the 2003-2004 school year the Victory Academy attendance rate increased from 81.8 to 97.8 percent, or a 16 percent gain. Dropout data were not provided by the school. Limited available VDOE data suggested that Victory Academy dropout rates were higher than both division and state levels, but were actually somewhat better than the overall Virginia charter school population.

Table A3.2.
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for Victory Academy

Average Daily Attendance	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Victory Academy	90.9%	81.8%	87.8%	91.8%	97.8%
Dropout Rates	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Victory Academy	12.2% [1]	Not Reported	2.8% [1]	Not Reported	Not Reported

Note [1]: Drop out data provided by VDOE, not the school.

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	Yes
Professional development hours provided	4
Professional development activities provided	5
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	No

Comment: Teachers at the Victory Academy were offered professional development in the area of instructional strategies in the form of a teacher handbook. Four strategies were identified for professional development purposes: Cooperative Learning, Guided Practice, Note-Taking/Graphic Organizers, and Problem-Based Learning. A one-hour workshop was conducted on each strategy by an area consultant. All teachers at the Victory Academy participated. The professional development activity assisted teachers in analyzing the variables in teaching situations as well as provided them with strategies that would likely lead to students success.

Parental/Community Involvement

Gloucester County reported that it was difficult to engage parents and community in the new concepts. Only after months of parental communication and education of the public did the level of participation improve. The improvement was described as dramatic. Parents visited the school during the regular school day as well as attending routinely on conference nights. Although the Victory Academy has closed, its management team reported the level of parental participation to have remained high up until the end. In addition, Victory Academy adopted a highly sophisticated system of notifying parents of student absences. This included, but was not limited to, a computer generated letter including student absentee status after two missed days, a mid-quarter interim progress report indicating absences and the routine report card indicating absences at the end of a grading period. Follow-up calls were made whenever parental notification was deemed to be less than satisfactory.

Staff

Staffing data for the 2003-2004 school year indicated that there was one Victory Academy teacher for every 10.5 students enrolled. Approximately 75 percent of all teachers were reported to be licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they teach. The following table summarizes Victory Academy staffing.

Table A3.3.
Staffing for Victory Academy

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1	1	100%
Teachers	4	3	75%
Paraprofessionals	1	1	100%
Guidance Counselors	.5	.5	100%

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Overall officials of the Gloucester School Division reported the Victory Academy venture to have been a successful one. Although further data were not available for analysis purposes as a result of the school closing, it can be concluded from a review of SOL test score results, improved attendance, and dropout data, that the Victory Academy realized some success. Financial limitations were reported to be the ultimate cause of its closing.

Compliance with current charter

Progress towards or in achieving goals and objectives of charter

(combined response)

Although specific data were not provided for absolute determination of full compliance, the objectives and goals reported to have been achieved would suggest at least general compliance. Victory Academy served as an alternative school among the Gloucester County schools and provided some evidence of an increase in their students' basic skill development as well as reporting substantial improvement in students' attitude toward school. Truancy, social problems, absences and other well-known factors adversely affecting a student's success were reported to be at a minimum. Victory Academy appeared to provide students an environment that supported student success.

Attachment A4
Greene County, New Directions Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2003-2004:	6-12
Enrollment 2003-2004:	24
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	No

Student Achievement

As depicted in Table A4.1, SOL test results for students at the New Directions Academy have historically been much weaker than statewide results. The New Directions Academy 2003-2004 results were particularly low. The validity of any comparison of these results with either other schools or other years is problematic because these tests involved a total student population of only 24 mostly at-risk students across seven grade levels.

Table A4.1.
SOL Test Results for New Directions Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004 [1]	Division Results 2002-2003
English Reading/Lit	50%	100%	100%	89%
English Writing	N/A	100%	N/A	81%
Algebra I	N/A	N/A	N/A	72%
Algebra II	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
Geometry	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%
World Geography	80%	25%	9%	77%
World History I	N/A	43%	N/A	85%
World History II	N/A	N/A	N/A	58%
U. S. History	N/A	100%	N/A	76%
Earth Science	25%	14%	25%	73%
Biology	20%	33%	N/A	78%
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	N/A	89%
Grade 8 SOL Test	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	**2002-2003**
English Reading	N/A	57%	26%	54%
English Writing	N/A	43%	38%	80%
Mathematics	N/A	17%	11%	55%
Science	N/A	43%	38%	88%
History and SS	N/A	N/A	N/A	68%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

Comment: The staff at the New Directions Academy (NDA) uses SOL test results, nine week testing, and daily work to determine progress. Several students were placed at NDA as a recommendation of the School Board. These students were not academically at-risk. Their work was compared with the at-risk students' work.

Students' SOL test scores are plotted to show achievement or decline in ability for grades 5, 8 and End-of-Course tests. Beginning in 2004-2005, a longitudinal study will be made of areas of weakness and strength in each of the four core areas.

Qualitative data related to student performance come from discipline reports and notes on students' improvement in attitude and grades as well as from suspension rates and grades between the years 2003-04 and 2004-05.

Other metrics of student performance included:

- *The senior at the school graduated.*
- *Two students took extra academic courses and earned enough credits to rejoin their classmates on the grade level at which they are now qualified to belong.*
- *Eight percent of the students were on the A/B Honor Roll.*
- *A total of 29 percent of the students were on the A/B/C Honor Roll. Most of these students came to the New Directions Academy with grades in the D to F range.*
- *One third of the students received recognition for Outstanding Academic Achievement.*
- *Several students represented the school by speaking to audiences about the school.*
- *One sixth of the students represented the school on junior varsity and varsity sports teams.*

Average Daily Attendance rates for the New Directions Academy in 2003-2004 (76 percent) were significantly below attendance rates for traditional Greene County schools or the state, in general (95 to 96 percent). The New Directions Academy 2003-2004 dropout rate was higher than statewide dropout rate of approximately 1 to 4 percent but generally lower than other charter schools serving at-risk students. Available data for average attendance and drop out rates are presented in the following table.

Table A4.2.
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for New Directions Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
New Directions Academy	No Data	99%	76%
Dropout Rates	2000-2001	2002-2003	2003-2004
New Directions Academy	No Data	4%	5%

Note: From VDOE, not school supplied, data.

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	Yes
Professional development hours provided	18
Professional development activities provided	5
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	No

Comment: Staff development activities included:

- *One full day as well as two teacher workdays to work on classroom management, lesson planning, and focusing on individual students*
- *Several meetings focusing on individual students. These meetings included personnel from Central Office.*

Parental/Community Involvement

Comment: Activities included the following:

- *Parental contacts through phone calls, home visits, Open House, or Award Nights*
- *Student participation in landscaping projects and related field trips involving private and public organizations in the community*
- *Student participation in civil war history projects involving speakers from the community*
- *Presentations by the principal to community groups regarding the school*
- *Creation of a community mentorship relationship*

Staff

Staffing data for the 2003-2004 school year indicate that there was one New Directions Academy teacher for every 8 students enrolled. All five (100 percent) of the New Directions Academy teachers were reported to be licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they taught. The following table provides summary data related to school staffing.

Table A4.3.
Staffing for New Directions Academy

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1	1	100%
Teachers	3	3	100%
Paraprofessionals	2	2	100%
Guidance Counselors	0	0	N/A

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Comment: The charter school worked with very at-risk children and had some success dealing with a small population (24 students for 2003-2004) over six grades. The school had a principal, three teachers, and two paraprofessionals. Despite limited resources, the school did meet the needs of the students served.

Compliance with current charter

Comment: The charter school has effectively complied with the program objectives, conditions, standards and procedures as dictated by the current charter.

Progress towards or in achieving goals and objectives of charter

Comment: The charter school has made progress toward the goals and objectives dictated by the current charter. The Academic Review Technical Assistance Report 2003-2004 had similar findings. The report cited several areas for improvement. A main issue for the charter school has been a limited set of resources to meet a broad set of objectives.

Attachment A5
Hampton City Schools, Hampton Harbour Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2003-2004:	3-12
Enrollment 2003-2004:	159
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement

As depicted in Table A5.1, student SOL test scores suggested substantial variability by year, grade level, and test. Although the Hampton Harbour Academy results were significantly lower than division and statewide results, the data suggested that significant gains have been made in most subject areas.

Table A5.1.
SOL Results for Hampton Harbour Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004 [1]	Division Results 2002-2003
English Reading/Lit	58%	92%	80%	95%
English Writing	60%	69%	86%	88%
Algebra I	11%	10%	42%	81%
Algebra II	N/A	N/A	N/A	88%
Geometry	40%	39%	71%	79%
World Geography	25%	25%	16%	72%
World History I	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
World History II	N/A	N/A	N/A	87%
U. S. History	10%	31%	33%	69%
Earth Science	14%	35%	46%	69%
Biology	35%	40%	80%	82%
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	N/A	78%
SOL Grades 3, 5, 8 Test Results [2]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	**2002-2003**
Grade 8				
English: Writing	23%	23%	48%	73%
English: Reading	28%	26%	32%	65%
Mathematics	8%	16%	45%	77%
History/Social Science	22%	38%	76%	79%
Science	41%	44%	82%	78%
Grade 5				
English: Writing	56%	33%	64%	83%
English: Reading	40%	75%	30%	79%
Mathematics	30%	17%	40%	67%
History/Social Science	30%	33%	40%	72%
Science	56%	50%	30%	76%
Grade 3				
English	10%	9%	14%	68%
Mathematics	11%	100%	43%	78%
History/Social Science	25%	19%	33%	78%
Science	22%	30%	14%	75%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

Hampton Harbour Academy is one charter school that has tried to identify a comparison group with which to compare its students. These efforts and results are provided below.

Comment: It is a simple matter to compare our students to those in regular schools by looking at division wide data such as SOL test scores, attendance, and dropout rates. But, since we have aggregated a group of students who are very different than the population of traditional schools, it is more reasonable to compare our results with particular schools, such as certain Title I elementary schools where the student populations are similar in other characteristics.

As the only required criterion for entry to Hampton Harbour is being two or more years over-age for grade level, we have gathered performance data on students enrolled in regular schools who are also two or more years over-age for their grade level to use as a comparison group. Unfortunately, the use of this group is not statistically sound as they are not a matched group on any other criterion than being over-age. Since they come from a variety of schools, there is no ready way to aggregate data on other characteristics to do a more valid comparison. Still, the results that we used for comparison of the Spring 2004 results are shown below for grades 3-8. Since grades 9-12 are no longer part of the charter for the upcoming year, data on those grade levels are not reported.

Spring 2004 SOL Test Results by Group	Division	HHA	Comparison Group	Group Size	Number Tested
Grade 3 English	60.8%	14%	34.8%	47	43
Grade 3 Math	81.9%	43%	55.3%	47	47
Grade 3 History/Social Science	79.2%	33%	5.2%	47	19
Grade 3 Science	86.9%	14%	48.2%	47	47
Grade 5 Writing	86.4%	64%	66%	49	53 (+recov)
Grade 5 English	78.5%	30%	66%	49	53 (+recov)
Grade 5 Math	68%	40%	37.5%	49	40
Grade 5 History/Social Science	83.2%	40%	0%	49	8
Grade 5 Science	79.8%	30%	54.9%	49	49
Grade 8 Writing	75.7%	48%	36%	113	98
Grade 8 English	69.6%	32%	34.6%	113	99
Grade 8 Math	80.2%	45%	56%	113	80
Grade 8 History/Social Science	86.2%	76%	15%	113	13
Grade 8 Science	85.2%	82%	55%	113	96

The school did not operate as a "stand alone" entity until the 2001-2002 school year when it made the transition from an alternative program, into which students were placed for a variety of reasons—most often behavior related, to a charter school of choice with a focus on academic intervention.

Because the school's population changes greatly from year to year, it is not surprising that there is much variability in yearly SOL test results. While there are tremendous gains in achievement in some areas, there are actual drops in pass rates in a number of tests. This may be attributable to the change in cohort group from year to year. This is especially true of the elementary population, where the numbers are so small (12 per grade level), the results vary greatly with the performance of each individual child.

As for waivers of any Standards of Accreditation, in its original application, the school requested an exception to operate on a year-round calendar. Since the focus of the school is now academic intervention, the school administration does not seek an exemption from standards, but hopes instead for the acceptance of an alternative accreditation plan, which focuses on the academic gains of students on

a yearly basis. Since the school's population is often replaced with a new group of learners yearly, who may be more behind academically than the previous group these data give a much more accurate picture of academic performance.

The elementary students are administered Brigance Tests of academic achievement when they enter the school. This allows the staff to tailor instruction to the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student. The test is given again in the spring to measure progress before the students exit the school. The middle school students are given the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) for the same purposes.

The school has, in the past, reported the mean (average) gain for each grade level. Unfortunately, mean or average scores are highly variable from the influence of extreme student scores at both the high and low ends of the scale. For this reason, the school has begun measuring its results by the percentage of students making a 1.5 grade level gain in mathematics problem solving (applied mathematics) and reading comprehension. These are the two areas of focus for academic intervention for every student at the school. The percentage of students making the 1.5-year gain more readily mirrors state standards (in students passing the SOL tests). These performance measures are those that were originally proposed for an alternative accreditation plan.

The school fell short of its own goals for the 2003-2004 academic year. At the elementary level, only 17 percent of the students made the stated 1.5-year gain in reading comprehension. In mathematics problem solving, 37.9 percent made the requisite gain. These limited gains may be due, in part, to the limited sensitivity of the particular testing instrument used, so the school is investigating the use of more comprehensive diagnostic tests for the upcoming academic year. As may be expected the mean gains are low as well. At the middle school level, 40.7 percent of the students made a 1.5-year gain or higher, while in mathematics problem solving, 46.8 percent made the mark. The mean gain for the middle school grades is strong at 1.64 percent in reading comprehension and 1.67percent in mathematics problem solving.

Average Daily Attendance rates for Hampton Harbour Academy have declined slightly over the last three years from just over 85 percent to just under 83 percent. These rates are approximately 10 to 12 percent less than the division and State as a whole. The dropout rate improved from 2001-2002 to 2002-2003, but was considerably higher than for the school division as a whole (2 to 3 percent). Both attendance and drop out rates are summarized in the following table.

Table A5.2
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for Hampton Harbour Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hampton Harbour Academy	85.4%	83.1%	82.8%
Dropout Rates	2000-2001	2002-2003	2003-2004
Hampton Harbour Academy	17%	9.2%	[1]

Note [1]: 2003-04 dropout data cannot be determined until after October 1 per VDOE procedures.

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	Yes
Professional development hours provided	No data provided
Professional development activities provided	11
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	No

Comment: Staff development activities frequently involve parents as involvement facilitators to the staff. They coordinated and facilitated workshops and training and various topics that incorporated strategies to assist parents with their children's academic success. The facilitator also provided information regarding school and community resources that would be advantageous to the family.

Staff Development activities were offered in a broad range of classes:

- Who Moved My Cheese? An Understanding of Change
- A Framework for Understanding Poverty
- E-Class Training
- PATTS (Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations) Training for teachers
- Using Portfolios for Academic Improvement
- Level Three Technology Training
- Parents on Your Side
- Dealing with Negative Attitudes in the Workplace
- Introduction to Accelerated Reader and Mathematics
  - Update on Drug Use among Adolescents
  - Learning Styles
  - Brain-based Learning Strategies

Parental/Community Involvement

Comment: Hampton Harbour Academy provides alternative education for students in grades 3-12. Students do not come from one central area; thus they are coming from various areas throughout the city. This factor does pose a challenge as it relates to parental/community involvement. This challenge was initially addressed through the efforts of the specific teachers coordinating activities.

During the latter portion of the 2002 academic year, the school added a Title I parent involvement facilitator to the staff. The parent involvement facilitator at Hampton Harbour Academy is essential to the successful fulfillment of the school's mission and vision. The primary responsibility of this position is to function as a liaison between the home and school, providing resources to enhance the overall academic success of the students. The parent involvement facilitator coordinates and facilitates workshops and training on various topics that incorporate strategies to assist parents with their children's academic success. The facilitator also provides information regarding school and community resources that would be advantageous to the family. Home visits and parent meetings are conducted on an as-needed basis to help parents with various concerns.

The parent involvement facilitator also developed a Parent Resource Center. The resource center is equipped to provide parents access to resources via the Internet and numerous videotapes, books, and manuals. Some of the activities that have been successfully completed to bring parents to the school include: Open-House, Fall Kick-Off Breakfast (SOL Based), Parent Institute (mathematics and reading based), Parent Awareness Meeting, 100 Day Celebration, Fifth Grade Cultural Diversity Day, Hampton Harbour Academy Management Team monthly meetings, SOL After-School Program, and Third Grade Open-House. Community partners include: Wal-Mart, Hampton Parks and Recreations, In-Sync Partnerships, Peninsula Reads, The Continentals, The Flower Box, and Beacon of the Cross Roads.

Staff

Staffing data for the 2003-2004 school year indicate that there was one Hampton Harbour Academy teacher for every 6.9 students enrolled. Over 90 percent of these teachers were reported to be licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they taught. The following table provides summary data related to school staffing.

Table A54.3.
Staffing for Hampton Harbour Academy

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	2	2	100%
Teachers	23	21	91%
Paraprofessionals	3	3	100%
Guidance Counselors	3	1	33%

Note: Other instruction staff included parental facilitators and Deans of Students.

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Comment: We have made tremendous progress with our students both in their basic skills in reading and mathematics and their SOL test performance, but we have a very long way to go. We recognize that these students will have to master high-stakes, criterion referenced testing in order to graduate from high school with a standard diploma. We feel that the school offers an essential niche to students who have otherwise become very frustrated in the traditional setting and have begun to have discipline problems or disengage from the process altogether. We hope to find more effective academic interventions for this target group to continue improving their educational outcomes.

Compliance with current charter

Based upon an examination of the data reported, Hampton Harbour Academy complied with the agreements as prescribed within the charter. They reported that this was particularly applicable to admission practices, instructional practices, and operating procedures. They acknowledged that the academic performance measures had yet a ways to go.

Comment: We are in compliance with the agreements we made in the charter as far as admissions, instructional programs and operating procedures. We have not yet reached the academic performance measures stated in the agreement.

Progress towards or in achieving goals and objectives of charter

The school considered the progress since its inception to be noteworthy. Of the eleven major goals, eight were reported to have been achieved. Failure to achieve the 1.5 grade level progress per year in language arts and mathematics and failure to meet or exceed the federal requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress as set forth in the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* were the major cited weaknesses.

Comment: Since being held accountable for meeting the Standards of Accreditation, the school has made amazing progress in improving its instructional program. A new administrator was hired and nearly 50 percent of the teaching staff has been reassigned to assure that highly qualified instructors, fully endorsed in their subject areas are in the classrooms. We are using core curricula and materials well aligned with the SOL. We are using research-based instructional strategies, shown in the literature to be effective interventions with at-risk students. We have had excellent technical assistance from the central staff in Hampton City Schools and from the Virginia Department of Education. Still, we are serving the neediest students in the division and it shows in terms of outcomes. Progress is slow, but there is no alternative but to continue giving our best to these youngsters until we can find the key to unlock their potential. Below is a table reporting the status of each goal and objective in the charter agreement:

Hampton Harbour Academy Goals

Goal I: To improve student academic performance.	**Status**
Objective 1: To increase identified students' performance in language arts and math by 1.5 grade levels per year.	**Unmet**
Objective 2: To meet or exceed Virginia's SOL benchmarks by demonstrating continuous improvement in individual student performance on required SOL tests for students in grades 3, 5, 8.	Unmet
Objective 3: To meet or exceed the federal requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress as set forth under No Child Left Behind.	Unmet
Goal II: To address students' instructional needs through innovative approaches to learning time, instructional groupings, and curricular offerings.	**Status**
Objective 1: To improve the use of time by implementing extended-day school programs, a year-round school calendar with intersession instruction and a concentration of instructional time on critical subject areas, i.e. reading/language arts and mathematics.	Met
Objective 2: To organize for elementary and middle school instruction based on the level of students' instructional needs as determined through reading and math assessments.	Met
Objective 3: To implement a competency-based transitional program for over-age 8th grade students who are not making progress toward high school matriculation.	Met
Goal III: To prepare transition students for the world of work.	**Status**
Objective 1: To offer a multi-level curriculum exposing all transition program students to essential credentials, employability skills, workplace basics, career exploration, and academic/career links.	Met
Objective 2: To provide a variety of preparatory activities to support students' transition to the employment sector, career/technical or other adult education programs.	Met
Goal IV: To implement and sustain an on-going student-centered network in which families, the school, and the community are partners.	**Status**
Objective 1: To adopt an organizational structure that incorporates a school management committee composed of parents of enrolled students, teachers and administrators of the school, and community and business partners.	Met
Objective 2: To promote parental involvement in the educational process through participation in: a) conferences with teachers and staff, b) school-sponsored functions, c) school volunteerism, and d) school management teams.	Met
Objective 3: To establish and maintain a variety of student enrichment and support initiatives to: a) promote academic achievement, b) foster the development of responsibility, leadership, and citizenship skills and, c) enhance the overall school climate.	Met

Attachment A6
Roanoke City Schools, Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2003-2004:	9-12
Enrollment 2003-2004:	85
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement

As depicted in Table A6.1, Blue Ridge Technical Academy SOL test results were mixed, but generally comparable to statewide and Roanoke City Public School results. English and history scores exceeded statewide and district scores; mathematics scores exceeded division scores and were comparable to statewide scores; and science scores were lower than both division and statewide scores. The small sample size and differences in the populations preclude valid comparisons.

Table A6.1.
SOL Test Results for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004 [1]	Division Results 2002-2003
English Reading/Lit	N/A	89%	100%	88%
English Writing	N/A	89%	100%	86%
Algebra I	100%	71%	78%	71%
Algebra II	100%	67%	N/A	89%
Geometry	100%	N/A	83%	76%
World Geography	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
World History I	N/A	29%	87%	75%
World History II	N/A	N/A	N/A	88%
U. S. History	N/A	46%	88%	65%
Earth Science	N/A	N/A	66%	63%
Biology	N/A	45%	65%	77%
Chemistry	N/A	50%	N/A	83%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

The following observations and comments made by the school provide insight as to the differences in student populations and attempts to assess "comparable" student populations as well as other Blue Ridge Technical Academy approaches for measuring student achievement.

Comment: Although SOL test data are compared with the district as a whole, we feel it is better to compare the Blue Ridge Technical Academy (BRTA) students with students who are also enrolled in a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program at the other high schools. This is a more comparable measure because the students share similar educational and career goals. The 2003-2004 CTE Annual Performance Report will not be released until Spring 2005. When comparing the 2002-2003 Annual Report for Roanoke City Public Schools with the 2002-2003 SOL test results for BRTA's students, English and mathematics were "strength" areas for the school. Science and social studies scores were weaker at BRTA than within Roanoke City as a whole.

Previous SOL test results are available for students to measure their performance prior to entering Blue Ridge Technical Academy, but this is not necessarily allowing us to compare "apples to apples" in terms of the subjects that are taught at the elementary and middle schools. The faculty at BRTA looks at each student's 8th grade SOL test scores for mathematics, science, history and social sciences, and English to determine if there are any weaker areas that need extra attention for particular students. The goal, of course, is to work with students to minimize any weaknesses or deficiencies in particular subjects. The 2003-2004 school year was the first year for a ninth grade cohort at BRTA; all of these students have not yet taken End of Course SOL tests in mathematics or English, so it is premature to analyze these data for any trends.

Qualitative measures have not been implemented, but there is significant anecdotal evidence that parents and students believe Blue Ridge Technical Academy has positively impacted them academically and behaviorally.

Historically, the Average Daily Attendance rates for Blue Ridge Technical Academy students have been lower than both statewide (95 to 96 percent) and Roanoke City Public Schools (94 to 95 percent) attendance rates. Dropout rates have been significantly higher than both district and state levels. The following table summarizes these data.

Table A6.2.
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Blue Ridge Technical Academy	90.6%	84.3%	88.5%
Dropout Rates	2000-2001	2002-2003	2003-2004
Blue Ridge Technical Academy	33.3% [1]	29.4% [1]	[2]

Note [1]: Data from VDOE, not school, sources.
Note [2]: 2003-04 dropout data cannot be determined until after October 1 per the VDOE procedures.

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	No
Professional development hours provided	16+
Professional development activities provided	10
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	No

Comment: Teachers participated in Fred Jones' "Tools for Teaching" workshops to improve classroom management and instruction. An in-service on "Reading in the Content Area" was provided to all instructional staff to assist with SOL test preparation. End-of-course SOL course teachers each met with their instructional supervisors to receive ongoing help with curriculum frameworks and pacing guides. During the summer, a seminar on differentiation of instruction and using higher-level questioning techniques to encourage learning was provided to all instructional staff.

Parental/Community Involvement

Comment: Parents have continued to be an integral part of student success by serving as volunteers, partnering with teachers to improve student achievement, and serving on the Business Advisory Council. Attendance at Back-to-School Nights and Open Houses has been strong. Word-of-mouth recommendations by parents have increased awareness in the community and led to referrals of other students. Community involvement has been apparent based on the support provided through the Business Advisory Council. The council has followed through within the three areas served by the sub-committees -- Marketing and Public Relations, Student Needs, and Business/Industry Needs. A curricular

program of studies was developed with the help of the council. Members served as guest speakers, volunteers, and sites for internships and field trips.

Staff

Staffing data for the 2003-2004 school year indicate that there was one Blue Ridge Technical Academy teacher for every 8.9 students enrolled. Approximately 84 percent of all teachers were reported to be licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they taught. Staffing data are summarized in the following table.

Table A6.3.
Staffing for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1	1	100%
Teachers	9.5	8	84%
Paraprofessionals	1	1	100%
Guidance Counselors	1	1	100%

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Comment: Based on the increase in enrollment, Blue Ridge Technical Academy is doing a better job of awareness within the district-wide student population in order to attract students seeking careers in health/medical sciences and business/information technology. The first cohort of seniors graduated in 2003-2004 and all are seeking careers or postsecondary education in the above-mentioned career fields. BRTA is continuing to work on additional partnerships with institutions of higher education (Jefferson College of Health Sciences) and to offer opportunities for industry certifications while enrolled in classes with BRTA and/or dual enrollment opportunities with Virginia Western Community College. These certifications are: First Aid/CPR, Certified Nursing Assistant, Microsoft Office Specialist, A+, and IC3.

Compliance with current charter

Progress towards, or in achieving, the goals and objectives of charter

Combined comments:

Goal 1 The SOL goal of having 85 percent of all students pass SOL tests was achieved or exceeded in history and English. Mathematics and science did not meet that overall goal, but the specific objectives were implemented. In addition, strategies were developed last year with the assistance of a VDOE Academic Review Team to address these deficiencies and work on a plan of improvement for all academic areas. These strategies are being implemented during 2004-2005 as part of the three year School Improvement Plan. The GED pass rate at BRTA was 68 percent. This percentage will improve during 2004-05 as the appropriate guidelines for ISAEP are followed regarding student admittance to the program. The overall GED pass rate for all of Roanoke City was 61 percent, so BRTA compares favorably with the population as a whole.

Goal 2 The goal to increase Career and Technical Education competencies through work-related learning has been met. All students participated in career development opportunities and related field trips. Job shadowing was offered to all second-semester GED students and rising seniors.

Goal 3 The enrollment goal was met as evidenced by the increase of enrollment to 85 students.

Goal 4 Dual enrollment opportunities were available to students through a coordination of efforts with Virginia Western Community College.

Goal 5 Parental involvement was apparent through parent/teacher conferences, open houses, student support group meetings, and representation on the Business Advisory Council.

Attachment A7
York County Schools, York River Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2002
Grades served in 2003-2004:	9-10
Enrollment 2003-2004:	39
Will operate as a charter school during 2004-2005 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement

As depicted in Table A7.1, there are only limited SOL test results for York River Academy, they vary significantly across the two years of testing, the numbers of students involved is very small, and results generally compare favorably with division and state results.

Table A7.1.
SOL Test Results for York River Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results	2002-2003	2003-2004 [1]	Division Results 2002-2003
English Reading/Lit	50%	N/A	96%
English Writing	N/A	N/A	96%
Algebra I	33%	89%	86%
Algebra II	N/A	N/A	92%
Geometry	N/A	N/A	92%
World Geography	90%	85%	70%
World History I	N/A	100%	91%
World History II	N/A	N/A	87%
U. S. History	N/A	N/A	83%
Earth Science	100%	71%	78%
Biology	N/A	N/A	92%
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	95%

Note [1]: Student SOL test results as reported by the charter school.

Comment: Besides SOL tests, other assessment measures used to determine progress toward goals and objectives include Grade Point Average (GPA) and students' portfolios. Through core subject grades and averages, the York River Academy reports demonstrating performance improvement of their students.

Since the inception of York River Academy, we have used EOC SOL test results, Stanford 9, Stanford 10, Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and division-created mathematics benchmark tools. However, we make no distinctions between the York River Academy at-risk student body and the general student population in regular schools.

Average Daily Attendance rates for the York River Academy have improved slightly over the two years that the school has been in existence and were just slightly below division (96 to 97 percent) and statewide (95 to 96 percent) attendance levels during the 2003-2004 school year. York River Academy reported a zero drop out rate for both years of the school's existence. Table A7.2 depicts these data.

Table A7.2.
Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates for York River Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2002-2003	2003-2004
York River Academy	94.7%	95.4%
Dropout Rates	2002-2003	2003-2004
York River Academy	0%	0%

Professional Development

Customized for charter school personnel only	Yes
Professional development hours provided	40+
Professional development activities provided	11
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools	Yes

Comment: Teachers were trained in the use of handheld computers, digital portfolios, and multiple software applications. This professional development increased faculty capacities necessary to meet Goal #1 ("…offer computer and Web-design instruction and career-oriented opportunities for at-risk ninth and tenth grade students") and Goal #2 ("…create a learning environment that values both community responsibility and individual achievement"). In addition, teachers were scheduled for daily team meetings to develop a professional learning community culture. In support of Goal #3 ("…create and maintain effective partnerships among the school, family, and community), all teachers participated in the evening curriculum for the Parent Partnership Program.

Parent/Community Involvement

Comment: Parents and families attend evening research-based Parent Partnership Nights throughout the year designed to increase protective factors. Additionally, annual surveys of students and parents indicate significant increases in charter school satisfaction across many variables when compared to their previous traditional school experiences. Lastly, community partnerships have contributed almost $90,000 (cash or resources) to York River Academy since its inception.

Staff

Staffing data for the 2003-2004 school year indicate that there was one York River Academy teacher for every 7.8 students enrolled. All of the five teachers (100 percent) were reported to be licensed and endorsed in the areas in which they taught. Data summarizing staffing are depicted in the following table.

Table A7.3.
Staffing for York River Academy

Category	Total Number (in FTEs)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTEs)	% filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100%
Teachers	5.0	5.0	100%
Paraprofessionals	0	0	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100%

Waivers None

Overall Assessment All charter schools were requested to respond to three overall assessment questions related to their programs. Extracted responses for each of these three areas are reflected below.

Effectiveness in meeting needs of the population served

Comment: Students enrolled at York River Academy are self-defined as at-risk of not graduating or graduating below their potential. Yet these same students have demonstrated quantitative and qualitative gains in academic, social, familial, and professional achievement. While only two students failed a single core class at York River Academy (versus 46 F's and 41 D's in their last traditional school), the faculty continued to express the same high academic expectations communicated in traditional schools. Indeed, the YRA faculty and student body met the high expectations of "Full Accreditation" based upon adjusted 2004 SOL test scores. Clearly, increases in GPA's are indicative of genuine learning and not "grade inflation". In addition, every student completed service learning projects and was also trained in specific IT industry-approved curriculum. Compared to the significant patterns of failure and under-performance established in their previous traditional school setting, our students have notably improved their lives while attending York River Academy.

Compliance with current charter

Comment: York River Academy has met or is meeting all goals and objectives listed in its charter. Our efforts to meet these goals and objectives have had positive ancillary school rewards: 2003 Award of Excellence from the National School Public Relations Association, 2003 Technology Pathfinder Award, 2004 Excellence in Technology Award from WHRO and the Consortium of Interactive Instruction, and numerous conference presentations (including the National School Board Association, Governor's Education Conference, and Virginia Society for Technology in Education). Parent survey results indicate a significant increase in school satisfaction when compared to opinions about previous traditional school settings.

Progress towards or in achieving goals and objectives of charter

Comment: York River Academy reports having met all of its goals and objectives on schedule or ahead of schedule.