



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

REPORT

**A REPORT ON
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
FOR 2008-2009**

PRESENTED TO

**GOVERNOR TIMOTHY M. KAINÉ
AND THE
VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

September 17, 2009



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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September 29, 2009

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Members of the General Assembly of Virginia
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Governor Kaine and Members of the General Assembly:

I am pleased to submit the Board of Education's report on Public Charter Schools pursuant to Section 22.1-212.15 of the *Code of Virginia*. The *Code* requires the Board of Education to report annually its findings and evaluations of public charter schools to the Governor and the General Assembly, including the number of public charter school applications approved and denied.

If you have questions or require additional information relative to this transmittal request, please do not hesitate to contact Diane Jay, associate director, by telephone at 225-2905 or via e-mail Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia I. Wright".

Patricia I. Wright

PIW/dj
Attachment

c: The Honorable Thomas Morris, Secretary of Education
Dr. Mark Emblidge, President, 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' progress in achieving the goals.
- Evaluate the performance of charter schools compared to the performance of other public school populations.
- Evaluate the impact of charter schools' activities in terms of contributions to the community and education system, in general.

The staff member assigned to the preparation of the report was Diane L. Jay, associate director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, Division of Instruction, Virginia Department of Education, P. O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120. Questions concerning the report should be directed to Ms. Jay at (804) 225-2905 or by e-mail at Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation of the public charter schools of Virginia examines the four public charter schools in operation in the state during the 2008-2009 school year. The schools operating provided alternative and experiential learning opportunities for at-risk students. 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

National

- Legislation. Forty (40) states and the District of Columbia have charter school laws in place.
- Schools. Of the more than 130,407 public K-12 schools nationally, nearly 4,600 are charters schools. For the 2008-2009 school year, 355 new charter schools opened.
- Students. Charter schools serve more than 1.4 million children. The total United States public school enrollment is 49,113,000.¹

Virginia

- Schools. Four charter schools operated in Virginia in 2008-2009. As of June 2009, the total enrollment for the four charter schools was 256 students.
- Staff. The four schools reported a total of 43.9 staff members including principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors. The average student-to-teacher ratio was 10 students per teacher.
- Progress in Achieving Goals. Progress as reported in terms of academic status, average daily attendance, and decreased dropout rates varies from year-to-year and among the schools. Murray High School and York River Academy achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) performance targets under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) for the 2009-2010 school year based on data from 2008-2009. Hampton Harbour Academy did not achieve AYP performance targets for 2008-2009 and will not operate as a school for 2009-2010. The Community Public Charter School did not achieve its AYP targets for 2009-2010 based on assessment data from 2008-2009. The school was also not accredited for 2009-2010. Murray High School and York River Academy have been fully accredited since 2004-2005. Hampton Harbour Academy was conditionally accredited for the 2007-2008 and the 2008-2009 school years. In 2006-2007, the school status was “Accreditation Withheld/Improving School Nearing Accreditation.” For 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, the school was accredited with warning.

¹ “Charter Schools Fast Facts.” 6 June 2009. Center for Education Reform. Washington, D.C. 6 June 2009.

<http://www.edreform.com/index.cfm?fuseAction=section&pSectionID=15&cSectionID=97#ENROLLMENT> Path: Site Index.

- Average Daily Attendance and Dropout Rates. The overall average daily attendance rate in the charter schools has improved slightly during the last several years and is presently at 90.8 percent. The state rate for 2008-2009 for all schools was 95 percent. Dropout rates in the public charter schools have historically been higher than comparable rates for the divisions in which they are chartered; however, during the past several years, dropout rates in the charter schools have been comparable to the school divisions in which they were chartered. In 2007-2008, the dropout rate for charter schools was 1.3 percent; the state dropout rate was 1.89 percent. Official dropout rates for 2008-2009 will be available from the Virginia Department of Education after October 1, 2009.
- Comparison of Student Performance. The performance of pupils in charter schools as compared to students in other schools is reported in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Accreditation status. The schools self-reported that the students in the charter schools are generally performing better than if they had remained in a traditional school.
- Impact on the Community. All of the schools reported programs to achieve parental and community involvement. The perceptions of the schools, community awards, other forms of recognition, and parental surveys suggest success in these efforts. Survey results suggest 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.

The *Code of Virginia* and Charter Schools

The Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 2311, Public Charter School Fund, during the 2006-2007 session that amended the *Code of Virginia* by adding a section numbered 22.1-212.5:1, establishing a public charter school fund. To date, no gifts, grants, bequests, or donations have been received in the fund for disbursement.

The Virginia General Assembly's most recent change to the charter school law was in 2009, and the change was to remove the limit on the number of public charter schools that could be established in a school division.

Growth of Charter Schools in Virginia

Since the initial state legislation for charter schools was passed in 1998, ten charter schools in nine school divisions have been approved. During the 2008-2009 school year, four schools operated. One of these four charter schools will close in 2009-2010. A fifth charter school received contract approval from its board during 2008-2009 and will open to students in 2010-2011. Information collected from division superintendents revealed that one charter school application was denied in 2008-2009.

In Superintendent's Memorandum, Number 117-09, dated May 1, 2009, "Charter School Report for 2008-2009," superintendents were asked to respond to the following charter school question: "Whether you have charter schools or not in your division, please list barriers you perceive in establishing charter schools in Virginia." Fifty-one (51) percent of the divisions did not respond to the question; 19 percent cited fiscal barriers; 17 percent indicated that there was no interest or need; and nine percent listed no barriers. Other barriers mentioned included: lack of facilities; difficulty obtaining licensed teachers; and restrictiveness of Virginia charter school law. The responses cited above are similar to responses received for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 charter school reports.

CHAPTER ONE

Purpose

This report provides the results of an evaluation of the public charter schools in Virginia. The evaluation examines the four public charter schools in operation during the 2008-2009 school year. All of these schools serve at-risk students.

Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

The goals of the four 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 the general goal is similar, there are also differences among these schools such as:

- 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.

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 evaluation are as follows:

1. Evaluate charter schools' progress in achieving their goals;
2. Evaluate the performance of charter school students compared to the performance of other public school populations; and
3. Evaluate the impact of charter schools' activities in terms of their contributions to the community and education system, in general.

School Specific Attachments

Differences in the characteristics of the four schools and in the data provided by each restrict the ability to provide comparable reporting of charter school performance at the summary report level. These differences also make it difficult to capture many of the unique characteristics and accomplishments of the individual schools. An attachment is provided for each charter school that includes selected school specific information for many of the same evaluation areas considered in the summary report.

Sources

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

- Information collected by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) through an annual report. These reports were submitted to the VDOE in June 2009 for the 2008-2009 school year by the school divisions that had public charter schools operating during that period.
- Additional data available to the VDOE that were used to augment the school division reports.
- Information collected by the VDOE on the number of charter school applications approved and denied by local school boards through Superintendent's Memorandum, Number 117-09, dated May 1, 2009.
- Relevant information previously published by the VDOE.

Structure of the Remaining Chapters of the Summary Report

The summary report provides a collective evaluation of the four public charter schools in Virginia. The following three sections of this summary report address:

- Background Information – Chapter Two relates to the *Code of Virginia* as it applies to charter schools as well as summary data related to the charter schools and student populations, waivers, staff, and initiatives to foster parental and community involvement;
- Evaluation – Chapter Three summarizes charter school academic status; and
- Overall Impact – Chapter Four examines the overall impact of charter schools in terms of:
 - effectiveness in meeting the needs of the students served;
 - progress in achieving the schools' goals;
 - benefits to the charter school students;
 - factors influencing the status of the schools; and
 - testimonials.

CHAPTER TWO

Background and Summary Information

This section provides general information addressed in the *Code of Virginia* as it applies to charter schools as well as general information profiling Virginia's charter schools.

A. The *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 nonhome-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 Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 2311, Public Charter School Fund, during the 2006-2007 session. This act amended the *Code of Virginia* by adding a section numbered 22.1-212.5:1, establishing a public charter school fund. The purpose of this fund is to establish a mechanism whereby gifts, grants, bequests, or donations from public or private sources can be paid into the state treasury and credited to the fund for establishing or supporting public charter schools in the Commonwealth that stimulate the development of alternative public education programs. Criteria for making distributions from the fund were approved by the Virginia Board of Education on January 10, 2008. To date, no gifts, grants, bequests, or donations have been received in the fund for disbursements.

The Virginia General Assembly's most recent change to the charter school law was in 2009, and the change was to remove the limit on the number of public charter schools that could be established in a school division.

B. Waivers

Based on information collected in the annual evaluation in June 2009, Hampton Harbour Academy requested and received approval for certain waivers in its alternative accreditation plan, including the concentration of instruction time in reading, writing, and mathematics. The school does not offer any elective courses in an effort to help students gain the core skills needed to move forward towards high school graduation.

C. Schools and Student Populations

Since the initial state legislation for charter schools was passed in 1998, ten charter schools in nine school divisions have been approved by local school boards in the following school divisions: Albemarle (2), Chesterfield, Gloucester, Greene, Franklin, and York Counties

and Hampton, Richmond, and Roanoke Cities. The charter schools in Chesterfield, Gloucester, Greene, Franklin Counties, and Roanoke City have closed. Four schools operated during the 2008-2009 school year: two in Albemarle, one in Hampton, and one in York. Hampton’s charter school closed at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. The charter school located in Richmond City received contract approval in 2008-2009 and will open to students in 2010-2011. Information collected from division superintendents revealed that one charter school application was denied by the Norfolk City School Board in 2008-2009.

A Virginia public charter school may be approved or renewed for a period not to exceed five school years; however, the school can be granted multiple renewals that permit operation for more than a total of five years. Table 1 provides summary information about the four charter schools in operation for 2008-2009.

Table 1.
Virginia Public Charter Schools in Operation – 2008-2009

Division	School	Year Opened	Grades Served	Enrollment [1]
Albemarle County	Murray High School	2001	9-12	110
Hampton City	Hampton Harbour Academy	2001	6-8	75
York County	York River Academy	2002	9-12	48
Albemarle County	The Community Public Charter School	2008	6	23

Note [1]: Enrollment numbers are based on charter school self-reported data.

D. Student Populations

Virginia’s public charter schools serve grades 6-12 and enroll a small number of students. The schools reported a total of 256 students enrolled as of June 2009. Virginia’s public charter school student population grew steadily from the opening of the first school in 1999 through the 2003-2004 school year. The student population declined in 2004-2005 and further declined during 2005-2006 with the decrease in the number of schools. The charter school populations remained relatively constant between 2005-2006 and 2008-2009. In 2008-2009, one charter school added a grade, and a new charter school opened serving one grade level. Table 2 profiles the statewide public charter school population over the last nine years.

Table 2.
Trend in Student Populations in Virginia Public Charter Schools

School Year	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Number of Charter Schools	1	1	6	8	7	5	3	3	3	4
Total Student Population [1]	41	40	440	685	745	555	231	237	248	256

Note [1]: Student population is based on charter school self-reported data.

CHAPTER THREE

Evaluation of Charter School Student Performance

Virginia's four public charter schools in operation in 2008-2009 focused on increasing educational opportunities and providing alternative educational programs for students who are potentially at risk of academic failure. However, their population is not a representative subset of the traditional school student population. Examining the accreditation status of the schools and meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives provides some insight toward performance, but for the charter school population, other metrics require consideration.

Many of the students, particularly older students enrolled in the two 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 challenges for the schools in raising the academic achievement level of these students, graduating them, and preparing them to be productive members of society. Despite the challenges, progress has been demonstrated and reported in improved academic achievement, average daily attendance, and dropout rates.

A. Student Selection Criteria

Because the four schools evaluated have different educational models and objectives, they have different student populations. However, many of the criteria used to select students are similar. These criteria include selecting students who:

- have been unsuccessful in a traditional school setting and would benefit academically from a smaller, nontraditional school environment;
- are at risk for leaving school or graduating below potential;
- are over age for the grade level for a variety of reasons (e.g., dropped out, failed grade(s), medical reasons); and/or
- have chronic problems of attendance and/or discipline.

These criteria are unique to these schools and warrant consideration when evaluating the student performance. Other selection criteria such as student career interests and student willingness to commit to school policies and objectives vary. The local selection process also differs among schools.

B. Comparing Charter School and Traditional School Student Performance

Since the objective of Virginia's 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, the issue of comparative performance is one of determining whether each individual student would perform, or has performed, better in a traditional or charter school. The performance of pupils in charter schools is reported in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and accreditation status of the schools.

C. Academic Achievement 2008-2009

Measuring academic achievement for the charter school student population also presents challenges. The charter school student population is small and lacks continuity from year-to-year. Given the at-risk profile of these students, modest gains in testing results may reflect significant improvement and may represent only a small portion of the actual educational benefit realized.

1. **Academic Status.** Since 2004-2005, Murray High School and York River Academy have been fully accredited. Murray High School and York River Academy met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives for the 2009-2010 school year based on assessment data from 2008-2009. Hampton Harbour Academy did not meet its AYP objectives for 2008-2009, and the status of the school was “conditionally accredited.” The school closed as a charter school at the end of June 2009. The Community Public Charter School was in its first year of operation in 2008-2009. The school did not achieve its AYP targets for 2009-2010 based on assessment data from 2008-2009. The school was also not accredited for 2009-2010.

2. **Qualitative Measures of Achievement.** Several schools conduct surveys that address student attitudes about the school experience, the desire to attend school, and the learning climate. These surveys also try to measure increases in the students’ personal ethics, collaboration, and cooperation. Some schools survey parents regarding the perceptions of their children’s attitudes and observable changes. Schools report that this qualitative and other anecdotal feedback suggest additional evidence of student improvement in the charter school setting.

3. **Other Measures of Achievement.** Many of the at-risk students attending charter schools have a history of difficulties in discipline, attitude, and peer relationships; poor study habits; and communications issues. These characteristics lead to, or are correlated with, low attendance levels and higher dropout rates; however, over the years these measures have improved in the charter schools and are comparable with data reported in the divisions in which they are located.

D. Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Rate

Chronic attendance problems are one of the selection criteria for entry into the middle and two secondary charter schools operating in Virginia. Consequently, public charter schools in Virginia generally have student populations that historically have had lower ADA rates than the traditional public student population.

Charter school and comparable division ADA rate data since 2001 are presented in Table 3. Average daily attendance rates for the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years were reported for only one charter school and are not included. Complete ADA histories for the four evaluated schools and their divisions are provided in the school’s attachment. The overall

ADA rate in the charter schools improved modestly between 2001-2002 and 2006-2007. In 2007-2008, there was a small drop in ADA; in 2008-2009, the ADA improved to the levels recorded in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. The division rates have remained constant at near the average state rate of 96.2 percent for 2008-2009.

Table 3.
Average Daily Attendance – Charter Schools and Their Divisions

Average Daily Attendance [1]	2001-2002 [2]	2002-2003 [3]	2003-2004 [4]	2004-2005 [5]	2005-2006 [6]	2006-2007 [6]	2007-2008 [6]	2008-2009 [7]
Charter	86.87%	86.15%	88.71%	87.78%	90.6%	91.3%	87.5%	90.8%
Divisions	95.10%	95.18%	95.19%	95.36%	95.7%	95.5%	95.2%	96.2%

Note [1]: Based on data provided by the VDOE.

Note [2]: Includes six charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [3]: Includes eight charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [4]: Includes seven charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [5]: Includes five charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [6]: Includes three charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [7]: Includes four charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

E. Dropout Rate

Another criterion used to select students for charter school placement is “their risk of leaving school.” The operating charter schools in Virginia generally have student populations that would predictably have higher dropout rates than the overall student population. Overall charter school and comparable division dropout rate data for the previous five years are presented in Table 4. Official dropout rates for 2008-2009 will not be available until after October 1, 2009. Dropout rates for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 were reported for only one charter school and were not included. Complete dropout histories for the four evaluated schools and their divisions are provided in the school’s attachment.

Annual dropout rate data vary from school to school and over time for each charter school. The Department of Education can calculate an event dropout rate for three of the four charter schools for 2008-2009 and compare data for prior years. As indicated by the data in Table 4, dropout rates in Virginia public charter schools have historically been higher than comparable rates for the divisions in which they are chartered. However, in 2006-2007, the charter schools’ dropout rates dropped significantly from previous years and were well below the state dropout rate of 1.87 percent. For 2007-2008, the dropout rate was slightly higher in the charter schools. The cohort dropout rate is calculated for only one of the four public charter schools. Murray High School in Albemarle County has a lower cohort dropout rate than two of the other three high schools in the county. The remaining secondary charter school, York River Academy, added a grade 12 for the first time during 2008-2009 and therefore does not have a 2008 cohort dropout rate. The school’s 2009 cohort dropout rate will be available after October 1, 2009.

Table 4.
Annual Dropout Rates – Charter Schools and Their School Divisions

Dropout Rates [1]	2001-2002 [2]	2002-2003 [3]	2003-2004 [4]	2004-2005 [5]	2005-2006 [6]	2006-2007 [6]	2007-2008 [7]	2008-2009 [8]
Charter Schools [1]	18.0%	12.9%	6.7%	1.6%	3.6%	.6%	1.3%	TBD
School Divisions [1]	2.6%	1.7%	1.5%	0.8%	1.7%	1.9%	1.1%	TBD

Note [1]: Based on data provided by the VDOE.

Note [2]: Includes six charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [3]: Includes eight charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [4]: Includes seven charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [5]: Includes five charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [6]: Includes the three charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [7]: Includes the four charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [8]: Official dropout rates for 2008-2009 for the charter schools will not be available until fall 2009.

CHAPTER FOUR

Overall Assessment

The charter schools state that they have all made progress toward the goals and objectives as stated in their charters. They believe that they have contributed positively toward the educational experience and lives of their students and the communities they serve. For most of these schools, available quantitative data support these perceptions, and qualitative data reinforce them.

A. Effectiveness in Meeting the Needs of the Populations Served

The schools identify their effectiveness as a school by the degree in which the school meets the “special needs” of its students. In general, they believe that the student populations served require an individualized, nurturing, and safe educational environment for success in school and to increase their opportunity for success beyond school. Success cited by the schools includes return rates, graduation rates, parental support and feedback, community support, and school division support. The schools also demonstrated academic improvement by accreditation status and meeting AYP targets.

B. Progress in Achieving Goals

The public charter schools evaluated in this report expressed their progress differently, but stated their goals as:

- achieving state accreditation and meeting AYP targets;
- assuring graduation, completion, or promotion;
- facilitating student access to postsecondary education and training opportunities;
- helping students transition into postsecondary educational, work force, or military opportunities; and
- increasing parental and community involvement.

All of these schools report progress toward meeting some of these goals. However, goals varied from school to school and progress was mixed. For 2008-2009, two schools achieved their AYP targets and were fully accredited. One school did not meet its AYP target and was conditionally accredited. The fourth school operated for its first year, and data are not yet available.

C. Benefits Provided to Students

The schools report that a primary benefit provided for the students is an educational environment in which: (1) students can be comfortable and competitive; (2) targeted post-graduation opportunities can be provided for secondary students; and (3) special individual needs of students can be met.

D. Factors Influencing the Status of Charter Schools in Virginia

Schools provided a variety of responses regarding the factors that have contributed to their present status. Reported perceptions included support (i.e., school system, community, and parental support), funding, facilities, student selection, emphasis on technology, small, structured environments, and excellent staff.

E. Testimonials

Schools have provided statements from students and parents during the course of the year on the success of their charter school.

Student Comments:

“I would like to say thank you for not giving up on me. I would also like to say I really appreciate all that you have done and all that you are doing. I have learned a lot of things; one is that you learn something new every day; another is that I have people in this school I can always come and talk to, but most of all you have taught me the most important thing and that is miracles happen every day.”

“The teachers cared about us and really gave us hope when we didn’t think we could do something. We owe you a thank you and when I become a sports broadcaster, I will be sure I send you some Redskins tickets.”

“I had a lot of memorable experiences. I discovered that our school is like a lost gem waiting to be found. Thank you for believing in us to get the job done.”

“My year has been bitter and sweet. At times I have hated this school with everything I had. But at other times, I have walked these halls slowly, almost savoring the warmth. It has encouraged, almost pushed me, to do better at the things that I have difficulty in. The teachers have this uncanny way of finding ways to relate to us, of finding the talents hidden deep inside us and bringing them out, nurturing them until we are proud, until we take pleasure in doing good. I have learned lessons here. I have learned patience, and I have learned gratitude. Though I looked at the beginning of this school year as the end of the world, I now look at the end of it the same way.”

“Thank you for believing in me and saying that I have talent and that I can do a lot with my life.”

“I want to thank my teachers for helping me learn what I need to achieve my goals in the real world and achieve the goals I set for myself.”

“I’ve learned a lot of things through my attendance at this school. Sure I have great grades, but I’ve found that I absorbed something more. The people of this school transformed me from ordinary to extraordinary, from a common sparrow to a flying phoenix.”

“I’m not sure where I would be right now without this school, but I know that because of it, I’ll be able to find the way to go in the future.”

“Before I came to the school, I had no idea who I was. I felt as though I had no place in the world. The school helped me discover what living is all about -- it’s finding that authentic person in us that makes us special. It’s realizing that we have a purpose in life and we can either ignore that purpose and just settle for what’s in front of us, or we can develop it and create something of quality.”

“People who knew me at my base school can’t believe it when I tell them, but because the charter school worked so well for me, I am graduating high school a year early with two B’s and all the rest A’s. The school was exactly what I needed. There are really great people there and I found the perfect learning environment. I’m really lucky to have gone to a place like this school.”

“The school is small, and everybody knows everyone else. The teachers usually always have a positive attitude, and you can tell that they love having you here. They take the time to get to know each of the students and show interest in things that the students are doing, even if it has to do with something outside of school. Personally, I love the idea of teachers being so involved. I have developed great relationships with some of them. So to sum it up, Murray has changed my life. I’ve come from being about to drop out of school, to writing this at the end of my 11th grade year. I look forward to being a senior next year, and all the excitement that it will bring.”

“I liked school this year. The teachers made me feel good about going to school and about the work.”

“I like to read now better than I did before. I learned that what I do makes a big difference in my work.”

“I love my school now. I can do interesting work and have time to spend drawing my roller coasters. In science next year I can learn all about the way roller coasters work and maybe build one.”

Parent Comments:

“I have seen improvement in self-confidence in his scholastic skills. His grades have greatly improved. He has also gained some insight into identifying inappropriate behaviors and choices, and improved his course to more appropriate behaviors, although he still has a long way to go.”

“The charter school has been a good place for my daughter. We have seen her grow in many ways, especially in learning to trust adults. She has become a much more serious student.”

ATTACHMENTS

Charter Schools Evaluation – 2008-2009

The four charter schools in Virginia included in this evaluation are different. These differences make generalizations about charter school performance and impact difficult.

The following sections provide an attachment for each individual school that is included in the summary report. Each attachment includes the following school-specific information:

- General school information;
- Academic status;
- Attendance data;
- Dropout data;
- Professional development information; and
- Staffing data and information.

The data shown in these attachments are a combination of school self-reported information and information derived from Virginia Department of Education data sources.

Attachment A1

Albemarle County Schools, Murray High School

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2008-2009:	9-12
Enrollment 2008-2009:	110
School designed to serve students considered to be at risk:	Yes
Intends to operate as a charter school during the 2009-2010 school year:	Yes

Academic Status. Table A1.1 provides the Accreditation and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status at Murray High School since 2004-2005. Of the 25 schools, 22 schools made AYP for 2009-2010, and three schools did not make AYP. Murray High School is fully accredited for 2009-2010.

Table A1.1.
Accreditation and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status for Murray High School

Academic Status	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Accreditation	Fully Accredited					
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	Made AYP	Made AYP [1]				

Note [1]: Virginia AYP status for 2009-2010 based on achievement results from 2008-2009.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A1.2. provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for Murray High School and the school division in which it is chartered. Average daily attendance has remained relatively constant since becoming a charter school in 2001 and approaches overall attendance rates for the division.

Table A1.2.
Average Daily Attendance for Murray High School

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Murray High School	90.5%	93.3%	94.4%	91.6%	93.4%	94.5%	92.5%	91.5%
Albemarle County Public	95.9%	95.8%	96.0%	96.1%	96.0%	96.1%	95.9%	96.3%

Annual Dropout Rates. The following table summarizes annual dropout rates for Murray High School and the school division in which it is chartered. Dropout rates have been low and have historically been comparable to the division results. In 2006-2007, the dropout rate for Murray High School was below the county dropout rate. The 2008-2009 dropout rate results will not be available until fall 2009.

Table A1.3.
Annual Dropout Rates for Murray High School

Dropout Rates [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Murray High	0%	1.9%	2.3%	2.2%	1.9%	1.1%	1.9%	TBD
Albemarle County Public Schools	0.8%	0.6%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%	1.5%	1.6%	TBD

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2001-2008 were provided by VDOE.

Professional Development. In response to survey questions concerning professional development offered at school, the school's responses were:

Professional development customized for charter school personnel only:	No
Professional development hours provided:	Over 100
Number of professional development activities provided:	11 or more
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia:	Very little
Amount of communication with other charter schools outside Virginia:	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools:	No

Staff. The 2008-2009 staffing data indicate one Murray High School teacher per ten students enrolled. The school reported that all teachers were licensed and endorsed. Staffing data for Murray High School are summarized in Table A1.4.

Table A1.4.
Staffing for Murray High School for 2008-2009

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	10.83	10.83	100
Paraprofessionals	0.66	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Attachment A2

Hampton City Schools, Hampton Harbour Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2008-2009:	6-8
Enrollment 2008-2009:	88
School designed to serve students considered to be at risk:	Yes
Intends to operate as a charter school during the 2009-2010 school year:	No*

Academic Status. Table A2.1 provides the Accreditation and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status at Hampton Harbour Academy since 2004-2005. In 2008-2009, of the 34 schools in the Hampton City Public Schools, 22 did not make AYP; one school was conditionally accredited (Hampton Harbour Academy), one was accredited with warning, and the remaining schools were fully accredited. Hampton Harbour Academy closed as a charter school in June 2009.

Table A2.1.
Accreditation and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status for Hampton Harbour Academy

Academic Status	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009 [1]
Accreditation	Accredited with Warning	Accredited with Warning	Accreditation Withheld/ Improving School Nearing Accreditation	Conditionally Accredited	Conditionally Accredited
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	Did not Make AYP	Did not Make AYP	Did not Make AYP	Did not Make AYP	Did not Make AYP

Note [1]: Virginia Accreditation and AYP Status for 2008-2009 based on achievement results from 2007-2008.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A2.2. provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for Hampton Harbour Academy and the division in which it is chartered. The school's ADA has remained constant for the past few years. The ADA remains below overall attendance rates for the school division.

Table A2.2.
Average Daily Attendance for Hampton Harbour Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Hampton Harbour Academy	85.2%	83.1%	85.0%	82.1%	84.1%	85.2%	84.1%	87.8%
Hampton City Public Schools	94.8%	94.5%	94.8%	95.2%	95.0%	94.9%	94.8%	95.4%

*Hampton Harbour Academy closed as a charter school on June 30, 2009. The school will be converted to a program and will not operate as a charter school in 2009-1010.

Annual Dropout Rates. The school does not serve secondary students. There were no dropouts for 2008-2009.

Professional Development. In response to survey questions concerning professional development offered at school, the school's responses were:

Professional development customized for charter school personnel only:	Yes
Professional development hours provided:	25
Number of professional development activities provided:	11 or more
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia:	Very little
Amount of communication with other charter schools outside Virginia:	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools:	No

Staff. For the 2008-2009 school year, Hampton Harbour Academy reports one teacher per ten students enrolled. Staffing data for Hampton Harbour Academy are summarized in Table A2.3.

Table A2.3.
Staffing for Hampton Harbour Academy for 2008-2009

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	10.0	9.0	90
Paraprofessionals	3.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Attachment A3

York County Schools, York River Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2002
Grades served in 2008-2009:	9-12
Enrollment 2008-2009:	48
School designed to serve students considered to be at risk:	Yes
Intends to operate as a charter school during the 2008-2009 school year:	Yes

Academic Status. Table A3.1 provides the Accreditation and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status at York River Academy since 2004-2005. All schools in the York County Public Schools were fully accredited for 2009-2010. Fifteen of the 19 schools in the York County Public Schools made AYP for 2009-2010.

Table A3.1.
Accreditation and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status for York River Academy

Academic Status	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Accreditation	Fully Accredited					
Adequate Yearly	Made AYP	Made AYP [1]				

Note [1]: Virginia AYP status for 2009-2010 based on achievement results from 2008-2009.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A3.2 provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for York River Academy and the school division in which it is chartered. Average daily attendance rates for the school have been comparable to the school division ADA rates.

Table A3.2.
Average Daily Attendance for York River Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
York River Academy	98.8%	95.1%	95.2%	96.7%	95.6%	96.5%	93.9%
York County Public Schools	96.7%	96.3%	96.3%	96.6%	96.0%	96.3%	96.0%

Annual Dropout Rates. The following table summarizes annual dropout rates for York River Academy and the school division in which it is chartered. Historically, from 2002-2005, dropout rates for the school have been higher than division rates. For 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008, there were no dropouts at the school. The 2008-2009 dropout rate results will not be officially available until fall 2009.

Table A3.3.
Annual Dropout Rates for York River Academy

Dropout Rates [1]	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
York River Academy	0%	2.1%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	TBD
York County Public Schools	0.9%	0.2%	0.5%	.4%	.38%	.66%	TBD

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2002-2008 were provided by VDOE.

Professional Development. In response to survey questions concerning professional development offered at school, the school's responses were:

Professional development customized for charter school personnel only: No
 Professional development hours provided: 40
 Types of professional development activities provided: 11 or more
 Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia: Very little
 Amount of communication with other charter schools outside Virginia: Very little
 Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools: No

Staff. For the 2008-2009 school year, York River Academy reports the teacher-student ratio was no higher than one teacher per 12 students enrolled. The school reported that all teachers were licensed and endorsed. Staffing data for the school are summarized in Table A3.4.

Table A3.4.
Staffing for York River Academy for 2008-2009

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	7.0	7.0	100
Paraprofessionals	0.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Albemarle County Schools, The Community Public Charter School

Year opened as a charter school: 2008
 Grade served in 2008-2009: 6
 Enrollment 2008-2009: 23
 School designed to serve students considered to be at risk: Yes
 Intends to operate as a charter school during the 2009-2010 school year: Yes

Academic Status. The school opened in the fall of 2008. The school did not achieve its AYP targets for 2009-2010 based on assessment data from 2008-2009. The school was also not accredited for 2009-2010.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A3.2. provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for The Community Public Charter School and the school division in which it is chartered. Average daily attendance rates for the school are comparable to the school division’s ADA rates.

Table A4.1.
Average Daily Attendance for The Community Public Charter School

Average Daily Attendance	2008-2009
The Community Public Charter School	96.5%
Albemarle County Public Schools	96.3%

Annual Dropout Rates. The school does not serve secondary students. There were no dropouts for 2008-2009.

Professional Development. In response to survey questions concerning professional development offered at school, the school’s responses were:

Professional development customized for charter school personnel only: Yes
 Professional development hours provided: 87
 Types of professional development activities provided: 10
 Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia: Some
 Amount of communication with other charter schools outside Virginia: Some
 Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools: Yes

Staff. For the 2008-2009 school year, The Community Public Charter School reports the teacher-student ratio was one teacher per 10 students enrolled. The school reported that all teachers were licensed and endorsed. Staffing data for the school are summarized in Table A4.2.

Table A4.2.
Staffing for The Community Public Charter School for 2008-2009

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	0.5	0.5	100
Teachers	4.0	4.0	100
Paraprofessionals	1.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	0.0	0.0	0.0