

Massachusetts Charter Public Schools: English Language Learners

Demographic and Achievement Trends

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Executive Summary

Massachusetts's charter public schools have long been and continue to be a topic of heated debate. In November, voters will decide whether to increase the number of charter public schools that can legally exist in the Commonwealth. One of the arguments opponents often make against raising the cap is that charter public schools do not enroll the same types of students as district schools. Specifically, they claim that charters do not serve the students with the greatest learning needs, among them, students with disabilities and English language learners. But these detractors overlook data showing that, in recent years and in response to public policy changes, charter schools have begun to reach demographic parity with their district counterparts.

As the number of charter students with disabilities and English language needs has increased, many charter schools, especially those in Boston, have continued to help all students, including these sub-groups, achieve excellent academic outcomes. A growing and increasingly rigorous body of research is helping to refute claims that charters are successful due to an inherent “selection bias,” or a tendency to enroll more motivated or more academically capable students.

While few studies have been performed to help the public understand how some high-performing charter schools help all students to achieve, some qualitative studies and an abundance of anecdotal evidence exist to suggest that certain practices, present in these charters and in other high-performing district schools, make the difference. Policymakers should pursue further research in this area. Policymakers might examine, for example, how these schools accommodate English language learners who come from diverse language backgrounds, as well as how these schools develop curricula tailored to the specific needs of their student populations.

The following paper describes how charter schools in Massachusetts and especially in Boston enroll and serve English language learners. Another report in this series provides similar information about students with disabilities. This paper provides enrollment, attrition, and achievement data for English language learners in charter schools across the Commonwealth, with a concentration on Boston and Gateway Cities such as Lawrence. It also summarizes some of the results of recent studies that have been conducted on this topic. The fourth section of this paper is a description of anecdotal evidence, gathered from school observations and interviews, about how some charter schools help English language learners achieve strong outcomes. The paper concludes with a series of recommendations for change, including recommendations for continued data collection and transparency around the enrollment and achievement of various student sub-groups and for the increased sharing of best practices across sectors.

Introduction

The long, heated battle over charter schools in Massachusetts has hinged on a few simplistic (though not simple) arguments. One concerns the population of students that charter schools serve.

Charter school supporters believe they expand options for families. They point to several high-quality studies conducted in the past 15 years, which find that charter schools, especially those in urban centers, help students achieve better test results and close achievement gaps.¹ Detractors question the external validity of these studies, arguing that charter and district schools serve different types of students. Charter schools, the detractors claim, do not enroll English language learners (ELL) and students with special educational needs (SPED students) at the same rates as their district school counterparts.²

At the heart of the controversy surrounding charter school demographics is a notable lack of information and ample misinformation. The stakes surrounding this confusion are high: In November, voters will consider whether to raise the cap on the number of charter public schools that can exist in Massachusetts, and misconceptions on both sides of the issue could affect the outcome.

Fortunately, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) houses a wealth of information, demographic and otherwise, about all public schools in the Commonwealth, including charters. These data are key to understanding who charter public schools enroll and how successfully they serve students. They also highlight how the student population in charters schools has changed over time, in some cases as a result of policy changes.

This paper presents data about English language learners in district and charter public schools in Massachusetts. It draws upon publicly available data and studies from DESE, as well as outside studies of charter and district school student achievement. Some, though not all, of the studies control for potential selection bias in charter schools, which is discussed in greater detail below.

In addition to presenting and contextualizing these data and studies, the paper also provides information about why charter school demographics may have changed over time. Finally, it proposes several ideas, based on qualitative research and anecdotal evidence, about why some charter schools may serve English language learners differently than their district school counterparts.

ELL Enrollment and Attrition in Charter Schools

When Massachusetts first began authorizing charter schools in 1995, demand was greatest in urban centers. Although the secretary of education (the first charter authorizer in Massachusetts) and later the DESE (where the charter school office moved in 1996) valued new and innovative approaches in potential schools, over time it became clear that some charter models produced better academic outcomes than others.³ As the number of charter schools grew, especially in places like Boston, so too did the number of families hoping to take advantage of their offerings. Throughout the 1990s and early 21st century, black families, especially those of low socio-economic status, were more likely than other demographic groups to apply to charter school lotteries. Charter enrollment of black, Hispanic and low-income students is above the state average. This is due in part to where charter schools choose to open.

Massachusetts Charter School Demographics

	Charters	State
African American	29.2%	8.8%
Asian	4.7%	6.5%
Hispanic	30.3%	18.6%
White	32.4%	62.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	35.5%	27.4%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2016

Boston Charter School Demographics

	Boston Charters	Boston Public Schools
African American	53%	32%
Hispanic	35%	42%
White	8%	14%
Economically Disadvantaged	43%	49%

Source: Authors calculations from data published at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/.

Despite serving disproportionately high numbers of minority students, in the early years of the movement Boston charter schools served almost no ELL students. In fact, as late as 2009—14 years after Massachusetts approved its first charters—ELL enrollment in Boston charter schools was a mere 2 percent. This number paled in comparison to 19 percent ELL enrollment in Boston Public Schools (BPS).⁴

Of course, overall numbers don't tell the whole story. Even during the charter movement's formative years, some schools in Boston and elsewhere enrolled numbers of ELL students

that were closer to the district average. In 2009, for example, Conservatory Lab Charter School, a school focused on music and expeditionary learning, had a student population that was almost 10 percent ELL.⁵ While this number was only a little more than half of the district average at the time, it was substantially more than other area charter schools.

By 2009, charter detractors were effectively highlighting this stark difference in charter and district school student populations. They did so, as some still do, to support the claim that charter schools “cherry pick” the best or most motivated students. Detractors also claimed that even when “hard to educate” students are admitted via lotteries, charters find a way to push those students out of their schools (a practice simply referred to as “push out”).⁶ Inherent in these claims are blanket assumptions about students based on demographics rather than individual circumstances. Moreover, these claims fail to account for the students charters were serving at the time: minorities from low-income backgrounds, many of whom were achieving excellent academic outcomes.

The validity of claims of “cherry picking” or “student push-out” notwithstanding, charter school leaders and educators could not hide from the data. They weren’t attracting English language learners to their schools, and the Commonwealth was starting to ask why.

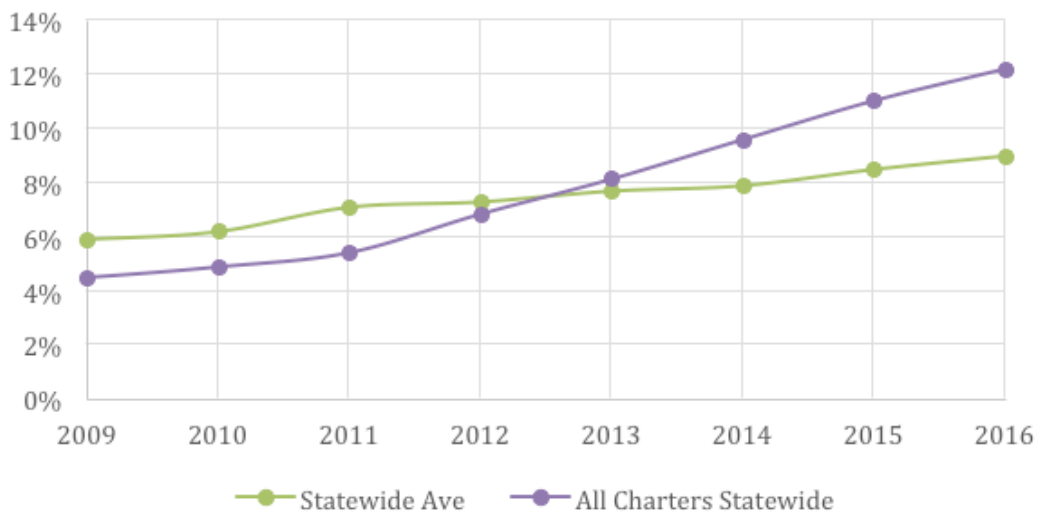
At the time, one common answer was that charters did not have the means to effectively recruit English language learners. Until 2010, district schools were not required to share information about enrolled students with their charter counterparts. Charters—many of which were middle and high schools⁷—were therefore left to recruit families by word of mouth, on-the-ground campaigns in the neighborhoods surrounding their campuses, or from gaining access to a group of students assembled at a sympathetic district school.⁸

A less frequently offered explanation for the disproportionately high enrollment of black students in charters is that many had carved out a brand for themselves and gained reputations for excellence in Boston’s black community. Parents who had seen one child succeed in a charter would enroll another child in that school’s lottery. They would also encourage extended family members and friends to take advantage of what charter schools had to offer.

With the passage of “*An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap*” in 2010, the Commonwealth lifted the charter cap in the lowest performing 10 percent of districts. The legislation also included many other provisions. One was a requirement that districts share student mailing addresses with their charter school counterparts; another was that charter schools provide the Commonwealth with detailed recruitment and retention plans. They are useful tools for holding charters accountable for enrolling similar numbers of ELL and SPED students as district schools.⁹

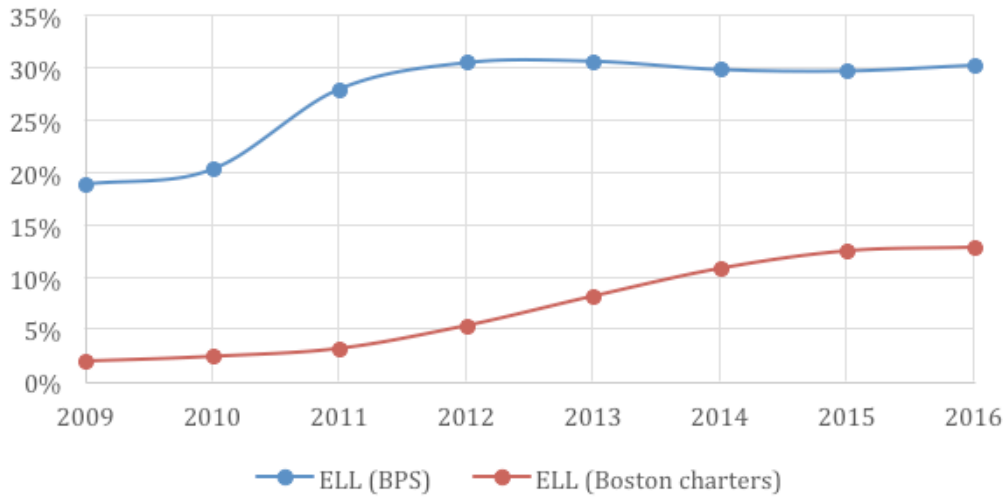
By 2011, the year after the law went into effect, it was clear that charters were responding to the call to recruit more English language learners. This was most obvious in urban centers such as Boston, where the disparity between district and charter ELL enrollment was greatest. By 2012, ELL enrollment in Boston charter schools had more than tripled. It has grown steadily since that time, rising from 2 percent in 2009 to 14 percent in 2016. ELL enrollment in charter schools in some Gateway Cities, such as Lawrence, had always been higher than the district and remained so.¹⁰ The following graphs show this enrollment increase over time. The fourth graph below, taken from a 2015 study by Elizabeth Setren, shows an increase in ELL enrollment in charter school entry grades in Boston after 2010.¹¹

ELL Enrollment %, Statewide



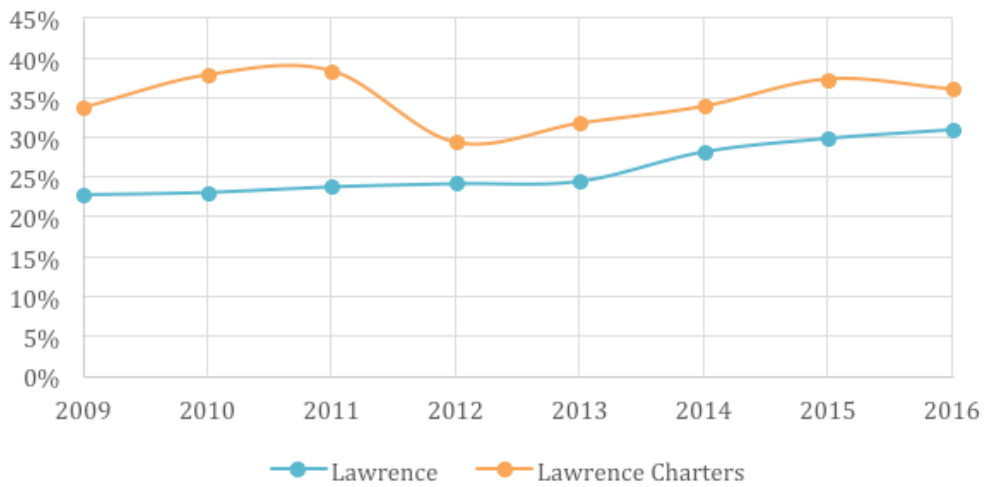
Source: Authors calculations from data published at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/.

ELL Enrollment %, Boston

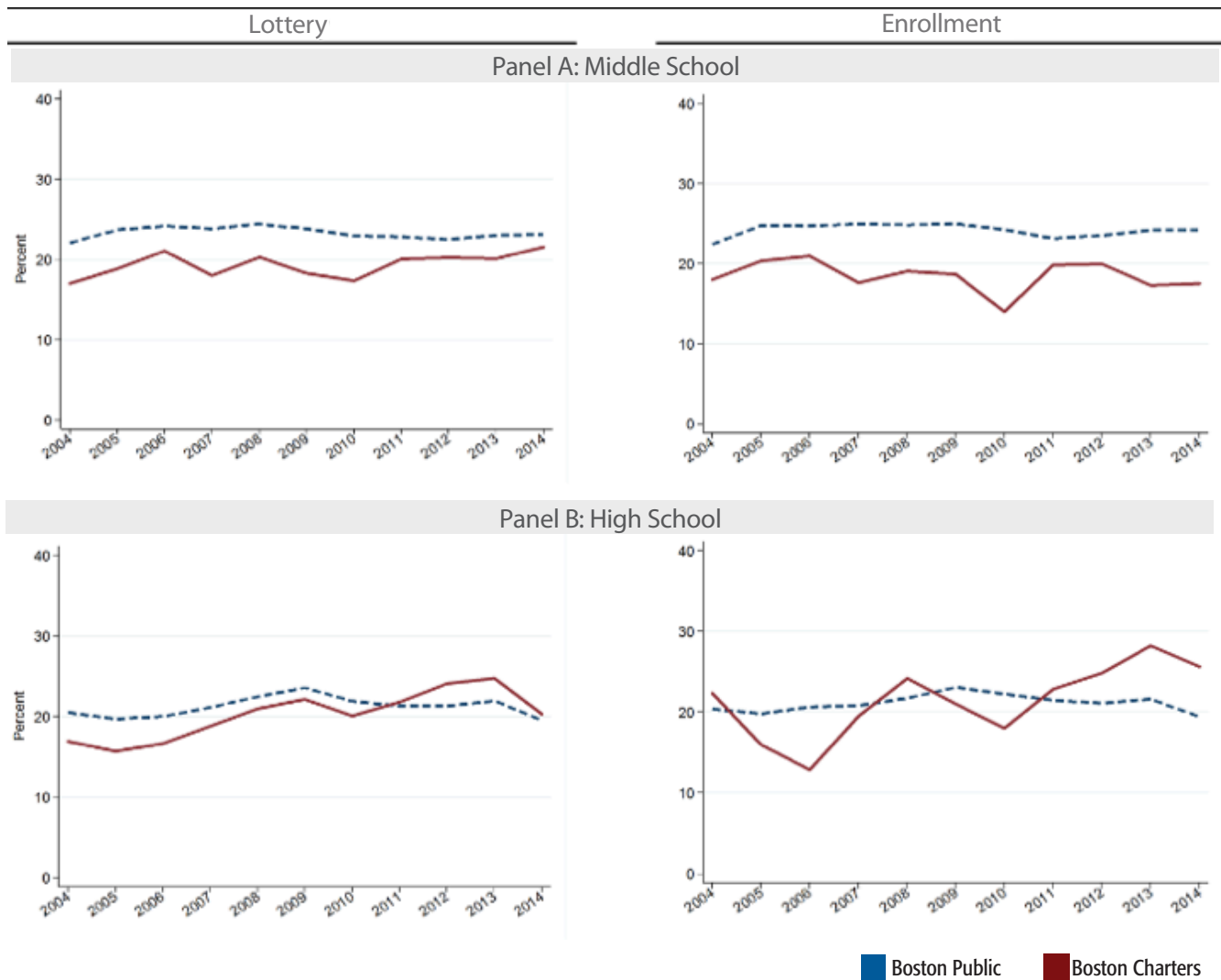


Source: Authors calculations from data published at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/.

ELL Enrollment %, Lawrence



Source: Authors calculations from data published at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/.



Some of this growth in ELL enrollment, especially in Boston, comes from charter schools that were authorized after the 2010 law went into effect. At the time of this cap lift, the Commonwealth authorized some charters with explicit missions to serve ELL students. Among these schools is Match Community Day, which opened in Boston’s Hyde Park neighborhood in 2011.¹²

The enrollment jump is also driven by an increase in the ELL populations of charter schools that existed before 2010. As a result, a growing number of individual charter schools in Boston and other parts of Massachusetts now meet or exceed parity of ELL enrollment with sending districts. And while Boston charters, as a group, are still shy of the 30 percent ELL enrollment that BPS had in 2016, enrollment of new ELL students in charters is trending steadily upward.

Trends in ELL enrollment in charters in Boston and beyond are encouraging. They suggest that the 2010 legislation has held charters accountable for serving all students and, at the same time, facilitated a process for helping charters to do so.

However, as DESE cautions, expecting complete demographic parity between charter and district schools in general and between individual charter and district schools is unrealistic; charters are subject to “various policies and other factors that impact student enrollment patterns.”¹⁴

Not least among these mitigating policies and factors is that charters admit students via lottery and district school enrollment trends are based heavily upon residence. Given this, understanding whether ELL students are applying to charter school lotteries may be even more telling than understanding whether they are winning the lotteries and attending charters. A recent study by Elizabeth Setren of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) looked at charter school lottery applicants in Boston and found that “By Spring 2014, students across the pre-lottery levels of special education classroom inclusion and English language proficiency are, for the most part, similarly represented in charter lotteries and BPS.”¹⁵

Because the number of charter applicants who identify as ELL is the same as the number of ELL students in the

Percent Change in ELL Enrollment, Boston Charter Schools*¹³

School	ELL % 2009	ELL % 2016	Change
Excel Academy Charter	3.8%	14.3%	10.5%
Academy Of the Pacific Rim Charter Public	0.8%	6.7%	5.9%
Boston Preparatory Charter Public	0.0%	9.6%	9.6%
Bridge Boston Charter School	N/A	36.9%	N/A
Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy Charter Public	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%
Codman Academy Charter Public	0.9%	5.0%	4.1%
Conservatory Lab Charter	9.6%	5.2%	-4.4%
Neighborhood House Charter	1.5%	6.6%	5.1%
Boston Collegiate Charter	0.0%	3.4%	3.4%
KIPP Academy Boston Charter School	N/A	26.6%	N/A
MATCH Charter Public School	0.0%	33.0%	33.0%
Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter	N/A	29.1%	N/A
Boston Renaissance Charter Public	3.7%	5.8%	2.1%
Roxbury Preparatory Charter	2.2%	14.2%	12.0%
Brooke (3 schools: East Boston, Mattapan, and Roslindale)	1.0%	6.1%	5.1%
City on a Hill (2 schools: Circuit Street and Dudley Square)	0.7%	10.1%	9.4%

*numbers reflect all school campuses unless otherwise indicated.

district, the current disparity in overall ELL enrollment between Boston charters and the district is likely due to past enrollment patterns. This means policy makers could expect to see enrollment parity in the near future. However, as the number of ELL students enrolled in charter schools reaches parity with sending districts, it is important to understand whether those students stay in charters once they enroll. For many years, Massachusetts charter schools have been accused of “pushing out” students, especially those with special needs (such as ELL students), who may need more support to do well on standardized examinations.

In 2009, the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) published a paper on this topic entitled: “*Charter school success? Or selective out-migration of low-achievers?: Effects of enrollment management on student achievement.*” The title suggests that charters “manage” student enrollment by “selecting out” students who might not be a good fit. According to the MTA: “Claims of high performance on the part of some of these [Massachusetts charter] schools appear to be the result of significant student attrition.”¹⁶

The MTA claim that some charter schools have higher than desirable attrition rates is true; many charters lose a significant number of students before graduation; many of whom return

to district schools. But attrition is a complicated concept, and it can be difficult for a school to accurately capture why students leave. It can be even harder for policymakers and others to understand whether students leave a school of their own volition or whether a school—charter or otherwise—implicitly or explicitly tells a student that he or she might be better served in a different school.

Given these unknowns, charter school attrition is better understood when compared to attrition in the sending district, acknowledging that it is not a straightforward comparison. For example, if a student moves within the city of Boston, he or she may no longer want to attend a charter school that is far from home and might therefore choose a district school instead. In this case, the student would drop out of the charter, which would count as attrition. If the same student moved from one district school to another, s/he would not be counted as leaving the Boston Public Schools.

Even considering these complicating factors, the data on attrition for ELL students—a population likely to be victimized by “push out”—are favorable to charters. In Boston, for example, a city with very high ELL enrollment, roughly 10 percent of ELL students leave charter schools, which is lower than the 15 percent of ELLs who leave the Boston Public

Schools annually.¹⁷ This 2014-15 attrition rate for ELLs is reflective of a decrease in attrition rates for all charter school students. Defining attrition as “the percentage of students who were enrolled at the end of one school year and did not remain in the same school in the following fall” DESE¹⁸ finds for the 2014-15 school year:

- *The weighted attrition rate of Boston charter schools has remained lower than the weighted attrition rate of Boston district schools.*
- *The weighted attrition rate of charter schools located in Gateway cities has remained lower than the weighted attrition rate of district schools located in Gateway cities and has declined over time.*

Elizabeth Setren’s results are even more compelling. She compares students who entered charter school lotteries but did not enroll to students who entered and did enroll. Looking at how often these students switch schools, she finds that “ELL students enrolled in charters are less likely to switch schools after a year” than their counterparts in district schools.¹⁹

Understanding the changing enrollment and attrition patterns of charter ELL students is important for ensuring that charters are serving all students equitably. Given the trends outlined thus far, it appears that most are. Equally important, however, is understanding whether charters enable ELL students to achieve academic gains. The section below focuses on achievement results for ELL students in charter and district schools in Massachusetts.

ELL Achievement in Charter and District Schools

Several recent studies comparing ELL performance in Boston charter and district schools have come to the same conclusion: on tests of student achievement, ELL students enrolled in

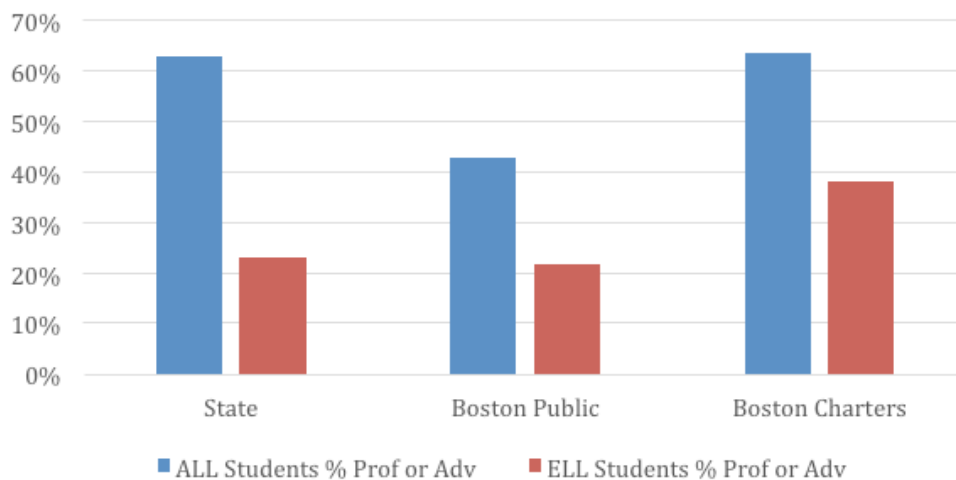
Boston’s charters achieve greater gains and higher scores than both their statewide and Boston Public Schools peers.

MCAS data from 2009 to 2014 show that while the percentage of ELL students scoring “advanced or proficient” on MCAS has declined slightly statewide, it has risen in both the Boston Public Schools and Boston’s charter public schools. More students enrolled in Boston charters, however, consistently score “advanced or proficient.” In 2009 only 12 percent of BPS students were categorized as such, compared to 22 percent in 2014. In Boston’s charter schools, 32 percent of ELL students achieved “advanced or proficient status in 2009; 38 percent achieved that status in 2014. Even as the number of ELL students enrolled in Boston’s charters has increased at a greater rate than BPS, charter schools continue to help concentrated groups of English language learners achieve at higher levels than their peers in district schools.²⁰

But these data, on their own, do not account for the potential “selection bias” that could be a factor in charter school enrollment. That is, ELL students who apply to charter school lotteries could be higher performing, in comparison to their peers, before they enter a charter.

But some studies, such as the previously mentioned study by Elizabeth Setren of MIT, avoid this problem by analyzing students who entered charter school lotteries. Comparing students admitted to charters to those who entered lotteries but were not admitted eliminates this selection bias. Setren is also able to estimate the impact of selection bias – i.e. to judge whether data suffering from selection bias is misleading. She finds that the effects of selection bias are “not statistically significant” in middle and high school charter lotteries, meaning there is not strong evidence that the high performance of charter schools is due to the students’ background or motivation. While selection effects are more

2014 MCAS, % Proficient and Advanced



significant at the elementary school level, they are “unlikely to explain elementary school exam results.”²¹

There is also evidence that charters may be more likely than their district counterparts to transition students out of the ELL category. That is, they are more likely to “FLEP” students, moving them from the English language learner or limited English proficient categories to the formerly limited English proficient category.

Data show that at all levels of schooling, “charters remove ELL status at the time of enrollment at a substantially higher rate than traditional public schools.”²² In fact, in Boston, roughly three times as many charter school students transition out of the ELL category after one year than in the district. There is limited research on why this is happening, and “FLEPping” has not been attributed to learning gains (or vice versa). However, anecdotal evidence from charter school interviews suggests that some charters may move students out of these categories earlier than their district counterparts because they use frequent, targeted formative assessment to diagnose student needs.²³

Why Some Charters May Boost ELL Achievement

Despite a growing body of research on ELL enrollment and performance in charter and traditional public schools, there is very little research explaining why some charters may boost ELL achievement. Some qualitative research and anecdotal evidence suggests that charters that help ELL students achieve use “best practices” that can be found across school sectors. Furthermore, some of these practices might be easier for charter schools, which have additional autonomies, to implement and execute compared to their traditional public school counterparts.

One example of a best practice that might be easier for charters to implement and execute is assembling a staff uniquely qualified to meet the needs of students, especially large populations of English language learners. Under Massachusetts law, charters do not have to be unionized, and in non-union settings school leaders have the autonomy to hire the candidate they feel is best for the job without deference to, for example, seniority or experience level. The ability to hire a candidate of choice

ELL Classifications 2014-15, Boston Charter Schools

A	B	C	D	E
	Total ELL 2014	In District* 2015	Not ELL 2015	% not ELL Year 2 (D/C)
Boston (District)	16,168	13,741	1,382	10.1
Excel Academy Charter	94	92	40	43.5
Academy Of the Pacific Rim Charter Public	1			
Boston Preparatory Charter Public	33	28	14	50
Bridge Boston Charter School	75	69	9	13
Helen Y. Davis Leadership Academy Charter Public	21	17	1	5.9
Codman Academy Charter Public	19	16	0	0.0
Conservatory Lab Charter	67	58	41	70.7
Neighborhood House Charter	21	20	9	45.0
Boston Collegiate Charter	34	30	22	73.3
KIPP Academy Boston Charter School	85	82	25	30.5
MATCH Charter Public School	311	292	82	28.1
Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter	38	28	11	39.3
Boston Renaissance Charter Public	60	54	20	37.0
Roxbury Preparatory Charter	112	103	0	0.0
Brooke (2 schools)	78	68	33	48.5
City on a Hill (2 schools)	39	33	8	24.2

*numbers reflect all school campuses unless otherwise indicated.

may allow schools to be more sensitive to teachers' capacity to understand the cultures of the students they serve, a quality cited as important in the literature.²⁴ In a report published by Pioneer Institute earlier this year,²⁵ several leaders of high-performing charter schools that serve large English language learner populations cited that "knowing the community," was a very valuable asset in a candidate; these charters attempt to focus recruitment on teachers with the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as their students (though they aren't always successful in finding such candidates).

Charter schools in Boston and beyond are also known for developing their own, very specific, teacher induction and ongoing professional development programs.²⁶ In doing so, they can very specifically target teacher training to students' diverse and changing needs. School leaders in charters with high populations of ELL students, especially ELL students from diverse language backgrounds, point out that state-provided training is rarely enough or rarely tailored enough to meet the development needs of their teachers. Too often, says one school leader, professional development is tailored to schools that "have 10 students who are ELL and high needs. Here we have 200."²⁷

Charter schools may also have an edge when it comes to another important best practice for English language learners: family and community engagement.²⁸ In theory, if parents have applied to a charter school lottery, they might be more vested in engaging with the school. And many high-performing schools with large populations of ELL students, charter and otherwise, prioritize family and community engagement as a means of boosting student engagement and retention. Many successful Boston and Gateway City charter schools, like Phoenix Academies and Community Day in Lawrence and Excel Academies in Boston, recruit students using a "boots on the ground approach; going to homes and engaging with parents."²⁹ They also establish and maintain close ties with community organizations. The Phoenix Academy in Chelsea, for example, maintains very close ties to several organizations in that city focused specifically on helping at-risk students, many of whom are ELLs.³⁰

But there are some things high-performing charters do that are not necessarily enabled by charter status. "Providing a language-rich environment" to make content "comprehensible" is cited across the literature as critical to helping English language learners succeed.³¹ This is something that is and can be practiced across school sectors. Scaffolding lessons, providing appropriate language and text supports, and even leveraging knowledge of the first language in a way that can help students access their second language are all strategies that are promoted by research-based approaches to teaching ELLs.³²

Finally, continuous, consistent, and high-quality formative assessments are another strategy that high-performing charter schools have in common. This is a strategy that seems to serve all students, including English language learners, very well. In an article exploring why some Texas charter schools "are especially good for ELL students," Rich Harrison, chief academic officer of Uplift Education explained that his organization "aggressively looks at data by demographic group."³³ This focus on data-driven instruction, which many *No Excuses* charter schools have come to be known for (for good and ill), may not only help English language learners succeed, but also move more quickly from "limited English proficient" to "formerly limited English proficient."

Not to be overlooked is that charters, by their very nature, are mission-driven institutions. In Massachusetts, the charter on which each school is founded contains a clear mission and vision of whom that school will serve and how it will help students succeed.³⁴ In part because of DESE's efforts to encourage charters to achieve demographic parity with their district counterparts, there has been an increase in the number of charter schools focused exclusively on recruiting and serving ELL students. These schools have not only contributed to an overall increase in the number of ELL students that charters serve, they have also acted as laboratories of innovation for the strategies and tactics that are most helpful to students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Over the past 20 years, the charter movement has served Massachusetts students and families well. It has also undergone many changes, often in response to the strict accountability standards to which DESE holds charter schools. In addition to helping thousands of students succeed academically, charters have increased the number of students with language and other special needs that they serve and decreased the number of students who leave before graduation.

For these reasons, it is imperative that the Commonwealth move past the stale and often harmful debate about whether to lift the charter school cap. Charter schools have responded positively to calls to recruit more diverse student bodies, and the claims charter opponents make about charter enrollment and attrition have been proven false. Instead of continuing to debate whether Massachusetts should allow more charter schools, public education advocates should instead ask "what can we learn from the charter experience that can help us to improve all schools, district and charter alike?" The following recommendations highlight some of what we have learned.

State Policy Matters

Not all aspects of the 2010 charter legislation helped improve our public schools. However, the requirement that districts share student mailing addresses with their charter school

counterparts, along with requirement that charters propose to DESE comprehensive plans for recruiting and retaining more diverse student populations, enabled charter schools to do what many had previously found very difficult: make their programming available to students with English language and special education needs. Legislators should consider the policy environment in which charters (indeed, all schools) are most likely to thrive: appropriate autonomy coupled with strict accountability for outcomes, as well as accountability for recruiting and retaining students of all backgrounds.

Transparency and Careful Data Collection Improve Our Schools

In the past 20 years, the DESE has done a commendable job of collecting data about all Massachusetts public schools and making it available to the public. This data has been important in holding schools accountable for student outcomes. It has also helped schools better understand how they fare on a number of different measures in comparison to their counterparts elsewhere. The consistent and careful collection and publication of school demographic and outcomes data was a key lever that DESE pulled in helping charter schools understand how they might recruit more diverse student bodies. DESE should continue this data collection and publication in its effort to consistently improve all public schools.

Accountability Works

Correct policy and ample data make little difference if schools are not held accountable for outcomes. If the Commonwealth's successful charter experiment has proved anything, it is that holding schools accountable improves their performance. When Massachusetts charter schools do not live up to the terms of their charter, they are closed. And academic performance is not the only factor DESE considers when holding schools accountable. Accountability shines a light on where schools can improve. In many cases, charter schools have proven that schools respond. The Commonwealth should consider how all public schools could benefit from being held to accountability standards similar to those in place for charter public schools.

Sharing "What Works" Across Sectors Supports Student Growth

Many charter schools have proven that they can serve the same student population as their district counterparts and help those students succeed in ways that some district schools do not. Charter schools may be able to implement some educational best practices more easily because of the enhanced autonomy they have, but this does not mean that district schools cannot learn from the strategies and tactics many high-performing charter schools employ. Likewise, charters can look to successful district schools to better understand how to serve many of their students. Collaboration has not been the norm within or across these sectors and new legislation related

to the charter school cap should consider how to facilitate such collaboration.

About the Authors

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About Pioneer

Pioneer Institute is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded research organization that seeks to change the intellectual climate in the Commonwealth by supporting scholarship that challenges the “conventional wisdom” on Massachusetts public policy issues.

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Massachusetts Charter Public Schools: Best Practices Using Data to Improve Student Achievement in Holyoke, White Paper, March 2016

Massachusetts Charter Public Schools: Best Practices Using Data to Improve Student Achievement in Springfield, White Paper, March 2016

Endnotes







1. See, for example: “Informing the debate: comparing Boston’s charter, pilot, and traditional schools,” (January, 2009), American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C.; “Charter school performance in Massachusetts,” (2013), Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO), Stanford University.
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3. See: Candal, Cara (2009), “Putting children first: The history of charter schools in Massachusetts,” Pioneer Institute White Paper, no. 48.
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5. See: “Boston Conservatory Lab, Mission & Vision,” <http://conservatorylab.org/about/mission-vision>.
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7. Massachusetts Charter Schools Fact Sheet, 2016, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/factsheet.pdf>.
8. Interview with Paul Hays, Chief Academic Officer, City on a Hill Charter School Network, published in: Candal, Cara (2013) “Preserving charter school autonomy,” Pioneer Institute White Paper, no. 99, p. 6.
9. Massachusetts Session Law, Chapter 12, Section 7.
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11. Setren, Elizabeth (2015) Special Education and English Language Learner Students in Boston Charter Schools: Impact and Classification.
12. See “Match Community Day, About Us,” <http://www.matcheschool.org/about/about-us/>.
13. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education publishes data at the school and district level. Each charter school is treated as a separate district in DESE reports.
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16. See: “Charter school success? Or selective out-migration of low-achievers?: Effects of enrollment management on student achievement,” (2009), Center for Education Policy and Practice, Massachusetts Teachers Association, p. 2.
17. Internal attrition data provided by MADESE.
18. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016), “Charter school enrollment data annual report,” p. 12; <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2016/02CharterReport.pdf>: According to DESE: to achieve weighted attrition rates, “school-level attrition rates were averaged, weighted by the number of students enrolled at the school. District-level attrition rates do not provide the appropriate comparison because they do not capture mobility between schools within the same district, which occurs frequently in urban districts.”
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20. MCAS data for multiple years retrieved from http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/mcas.aspx.
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34. "Application for a Massachusetts Public Charter School 2016-17," Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, p. 14.



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