

# The Legal, Fiscal and Oversight Challenges of Granting New Charters in Philadelphia

## Key Findings

- + Because the School Reform Commission does not have taxing powers, opening new charter schools will require cuts to already cash starved District-run schools and harm students unless substantial new funding is made available by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the City of Philadelphia.
- + Of the charter applicants, 20 currently operate 40 charter schools in Philadelphia and are seeking to add 29 new charter schools.
- + District charter payments could grow to more than a billion dollars per year, or 42 percent of the District's budget; and charter student enrollment would increase to 51 percent of the District's total enrollment.
- + State law requires that the Commission consider the impact of expanded charter access on all students.
- + Nearly half of the applicants operate schools where less than 50 percent of the students are on grade level in either reading or math.
- + A strong majority of the applicants operate schools with fewer minority, English Language Learners and low-income students than the District's average enrollment of these students.
- + Less than a quarter of the applicants operate schools that reflect the District's low-income population and have a School Performance Profile considered to be "on track" by the state.
- + There is insufficient data to determine applicant transfer or drop out rates.
- + A majority (21) of applicants propose to open charters in neighborhoods where the School Redesign Initiative or University Partnerships are planned or currently in place.
- + Some of the applicants are under investigation by the state or other authorities.

## Introduction

On November 15, 2014, the School Reform Commission received 40 applications for charter schools seeking to expand charter enrollment by 40,341 students. The influx of applications is a result of a 2014 amendment to state law that requires the School Reform Commission to annually review and act on charter applications. By law, the Commission is required to act on all applications no later than February 21, 2015.

The charter slots requested could grow total charter enrollment to 104,642 students or approximately 51 percent of the District's total enrollment. Nationally, Philadelphia ranks 3rd highest for percentage of students who are enrolled in charter schools, trailing only New Orleans and Detroit. If the roughly 40,000 seats requested are approved, Philadelphia's charter school enrollment would balloon to 100,000 placing it behind only Los Angeles for the number of students enrolled in charter schools.

In the current fiscal year, the School District of Philadelphia will make payments to charters of approximately \$767 million from a total budget of \$2.4 billion.<sup>1</sup> The total seats requested could add an additional \$282 million in annual charter payments, bringing total District charter expenditures to over a billion dollars per year.

Governor Tom Ridge established a Charter Reimbursement line item in the state budget to help Districts cover the additional costs associated with charter enrollment. In FY 2010, the District received \$190 million in state funds for charter school reimbursement. That line item was eliminated from the state budget in FY 2011. Given the cuts to state aid and the fact that the Commission has no taxing powers, any expansion of charter enrollment must be paid for with existing District funds. That means that to make additional charter payments of \$282 million, cuts to District-run schools would be unavoidable.

In April 2014, the School Reform Commission adopted the Authorizing Quality Initiative defined as a "comprehensive effort to improve the quality, clarity, transparency, and consistency of the School District of Philadelphia's charter school authorizing practices." The mission aptly focuses on two distinct roles of the School Reform Commission: to responsibly allocate limited financial resources, and to provide charter school autonomy in exchange for academic, operational, and financial accountability.<sup>2</sup> It marks significant progress in standardizing the review of charter applications and in creating reasonable and appropriate processes for examining charter applications and performance.



Public Citizens for Children and Youth has identified sufficient legal, fiscal and oversight reasons to deny all new applications at this time. Specifically:

- + Additional charter school authorization stands at odds with state law that requires the Commission to ensure the welfare of all children as well as the District's fiscal solvency;
- + The resources of Philadelphia's Office of Charter Schools are insufficient to appropriately monitor and respond to the needs of the 86 existing charter schools. Further, the office does not have a robust data system that can support a thorough decision making process in a fair and objective manner;
- + Far too many of the existing charter schools seeking additional charters perform more poorly than traditional public schools and some face serious charges of fraud and abuse;
- + Some of the proposed charter schools could jeopardize current District-led initiatives and investments designed to bolster traditional public schools such as the School Redesign Initiative and University Partnerships.

**WE URGE THE COMMISSION TO RECOGNIZE THAT CHARTER EXPANSION IS  
ILL-ADVISED AND NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH EXISTING STATE STATUTES THAT  
PRESCRIBE DUTIES OF THE SCHOOL REFORM COMMISSION**

What follows is Public Citizens for Children and Youth's analysis of the legal context for reviewing charter applications, a review of the data on the performance of the applicants currently operating in Philadelphia, a summary of the implications of the proposed charter school expansion for existing District-led turnaround strategies and a summary of key management and fiscal challenges of some of the existing applicants.

### The Legal Context

To guide the Commission's review of the charters, Public Citizens for Children and Youth finds the state law is clear about the duties of the Commission and it provides clarity on the purview of the Commission with respect to review of charter applications. Taken together the state law compels the Commission to reject all of the applications.

#### Duties and Powers of the Commission

State law offers the School Reform Commission clear guidance on its duties of fiscal stewardship. Every school board and especially the state-appointed School Reform Commission in Philadelphia has the duty to consider the impact that all of its decisions will have on its financial solvency, as well as on the welfare of all students. This includes decisions about charter schools, labor contracts, and changes in school configuration.

In the case of Philadelphia specifically, state law dictates that the Commission not only assumes powers of the local school board but also the duties of the school board.

One example of this duty is found in Section 701 which requires all school boards to provide a suitable school for every child as follows:

*“The board of school directors of each District shall provide the necessary grounds and suitable school buildings to accommodate all the children between the ages of six and twenty-one years, in said District, who attend school.”*

The purpose of ensuring necessary and suitable buildings for every child is to provide a conducive environment so that every student can have a quality education.

Further, state law describes the specific duties of the School Reform Commission as:

*“The School Reform Commission shall be responsible for the operation, management and educational program of the school District of the first class.”*

Commission duties were defined as such because, in 2001, the Philadelphia School District met the conditions of distress, defined in state law. The state legislature established

**COMMONWEALTH DEFINED DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION**

- + The school district of the first class failed to adopt or to comply with a valid budget to operate the school district for a minimum instructional school year;
- + The school district of the first class failed to allocate or transfer revenues to ensure that funds are sufficient to provide a minimum instructional school year;
- + The city of the first class failed to transfer revenues to the school district consistent with the current budget; or
- + The school district of the first class has failed or will fail to provide for an educational program in compliance with the school code of the State Board of Education or standards of the Secretary of Education.

the School Reform Commission to remediate the financial troubles of the District and to ensure the welfare of every student. Unlike every school District in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the state legislature did not give the commission any local taxing powers. As such, to meet its fiscal solvency obligations, the commission must limit District expenditures to the revenues provided by federal grants and state or local taxes.

Years after the establishment of the Commission, a last minute 2014 amendment was made to state education law which required the Commission to act on charter school applications annually and makes decisions appealable to the State Charter Appeal Board. While this change in state law is consistent with

the requirements of any other District in the Commonwealth, since all other school boards have taxing powers, if they approve new charters those school boards have the power to increase local taxes to cover those costs.

The hastily inserted provision requires the Commission to act on charter applications but it does not relieve the Commission of its basic duties and obligations. Charter school expansion will require the District to make payments to charter schools and the source of those payments, absent more state or local aid, will have to come from already starved District-operated schools.

## Scope of Review

Since the Commission's decisions on the charter applications are now appealable to the State Charter Appeal Board and ultimately to the courts, the Commission must act on each application and ensure to the greatest extent possible that the Charter Appeal Board has legally sound reasons for supporting the Commission's decisions.

A review of the statute with respect to the minimum criteria the Commission must consider in reviewing charter applications is instructive. The state law reads as follows:

*A charter school application submitted ... shall be evaluated by the local board of school directors based on criteria, including, but not limited to, the following:*

*(i) The demonstrated, sustainable support for the charter school plan by teachers, parents, other community members and students, including comments received at the public hearing held under subsection (d).*

*(ii) The capability of the charter school applicant, in terms of support and planning, to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students pursuant to the adopted charter.*

*(iii) The extent to which the application considers the information requested in section 1719-A (1719-A describes contents of charter application documents) and conforms to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A (1702-A describes intent of establishment of charters)<sup>3</sup>*

*(iv) The extent to which the charter school may serve as a model for other public schools.*

The language that reads, "based on criteria, including, *but not limited to*" explicitly permits the Commission's scope of review to be consistent with the Authorizing Quality Initiative. This fact is supported by the charter review elements as well as the duties and powers section of the state law establishing the School Reform Commission.

It is possible that a proposed charter that is denied may attempt to claim that the Commonwealth Court has already issued decisions that could be interpreted as limiting District review to the factors enumerated above. But the cases in question have not involved Districts where the state has disbanded the local school board and where the state has imposed and sits on the Board of Control. In fact, the Court has not ruled on such matters at all. As such, appeals to the Court will put the Court in the position of having to make its first examination of the duties and powers of the Commission as it considers the statutes requirements to act on charters.

**BASED ON A REVIEW OF THE STATE LAW, PUBLIC CITIZENS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH BELIEVES THAT THE UNIQUE POSITION OF THE SCHOOL REFORM COMMISSION AS A STATE IMPOSED BOARD OF CONTROL REQUIRES THAT IT REFRAIN FROM APPROVING ANY NEW CHARTERS IN ORDER TO MEET ITS LONG ESTABLISHED FIDUCIARY OBLIGATIONS AND THAT IT PROTECT STUDENTS FROM THE NEGATIVE FINANCIAL IMPACT THAT ANY EXPANSION WILL HAVE ON PHILADELPHIA STUDENTS.**

### The Performance of Applicants

This section provides an analysis of the data on the applicants compared to the Authorizing Quality Initiative’s priorities of “equity by protecting the rights of students, parents, and public interest” and accountability by “setting high standards” for charter schools.

Research shows that a charter school’s current performance is an important indicator for what will become of the charter school. Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) found that charter schools, as they age or replicate into networks, are very likely to continue the patterns and performance set by early years of operation, and their ultimate success or failure can be predicted by year three of a school’s life.<sup>5</sup>

This cohort of applicants is broad and diverse. Some of the applicants are new to charter management altogether while others are national managers without a presence in Philadelphia. The majority of applicants currently manage schools in Philadelphia.

Public Citizens for Children and Youth examined the data available for 20 charter managers that together seek 29 new charters. The managers currently operate 40 schools in Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup> Eleven other managers who do not currently run schools in the District also applied for new charters.

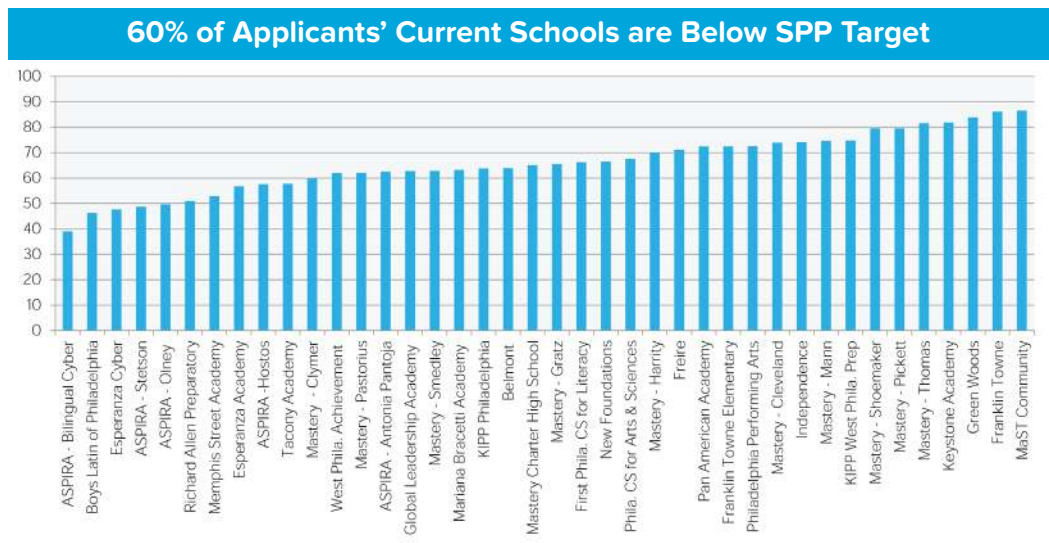
The data for this report comes from the Pennsylvania Auditor General, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Philadelphia City Controller and the Philadelphia School District.

### School Performance Profile

The Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (SPP) is one measure that, while not perfect, can be used to evaluate the performance of the applicants that are already operating in Pennsylvania. The SPP combines standardized test scores, student growth, attendance, and graduation rates to develop a final composite score for each school. The state considers schools with an SPP above 70 to be on the right track.

Of the 40 charters currently operated by applicants for new charters, we found that for FY 2013:

- + Forty percent, or 16 charter schools, had an SPP above 70, and;
- + Sixty percent, or 24 charter schools, had an SPP below 70.



**CHARTER SCHOOLS WITH SPP SCORES OF 70 OR HIGHER: 2013-2014**

Existing Charter School	School Performance Profile
MaST Community	86.6
Franklin Towne Charter High School	86.1
Green Woods	83.8
Keystone Academy	81.8
Mastery - Thomas	81.5
Mastery - Shoemaker	79.5
Mastery - Pickett	79.5
KIPP West Philadelphia	74.7
Mastery - Mann	74.6
Independence	74.1
Mastery - Cleveland	73.9
Philadelphia Performing Arts CS	72.5
Pan American Academy	72.4
Franklin Towne	72.4
Freire	71.2
Mastery - Harrity	70.2

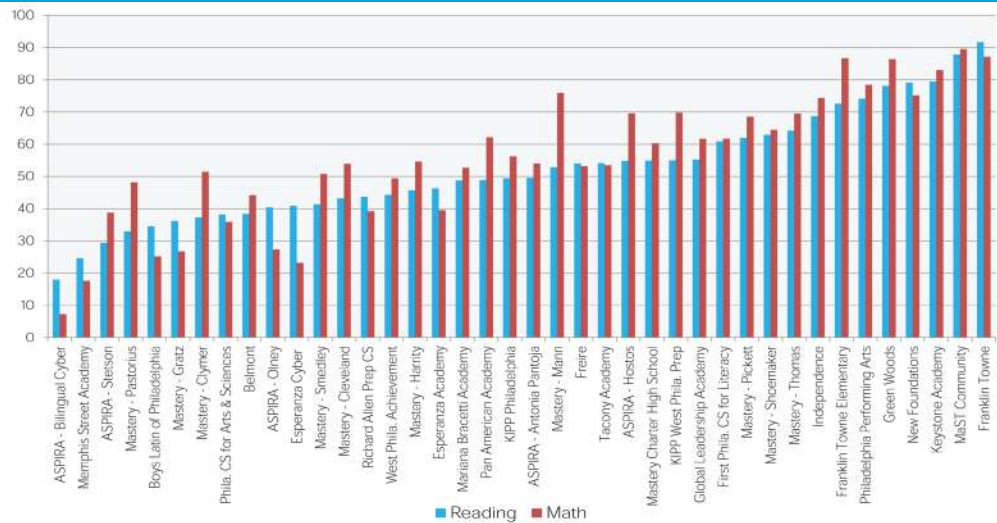
**PSSA/Keystone Performance**

The PSSA and Keystone Exams are state-administered tests designed to assess how well students are progressing to meet state standards. In 2014, the District’s average PSSA scores were 42 and 47 percent in reading and math, respectively, across all grades.<sup>6</sup>

In comparison to the District’s average scores, the data shows that:

- + Forty-eight percent, or 19 of the 40 charter applicants, have fewer than half of their students on grade level in either reading or math.

**48% of Applicants’ Current Schools have Fewer than Half of Students on Grade Level**



## Student Demographics

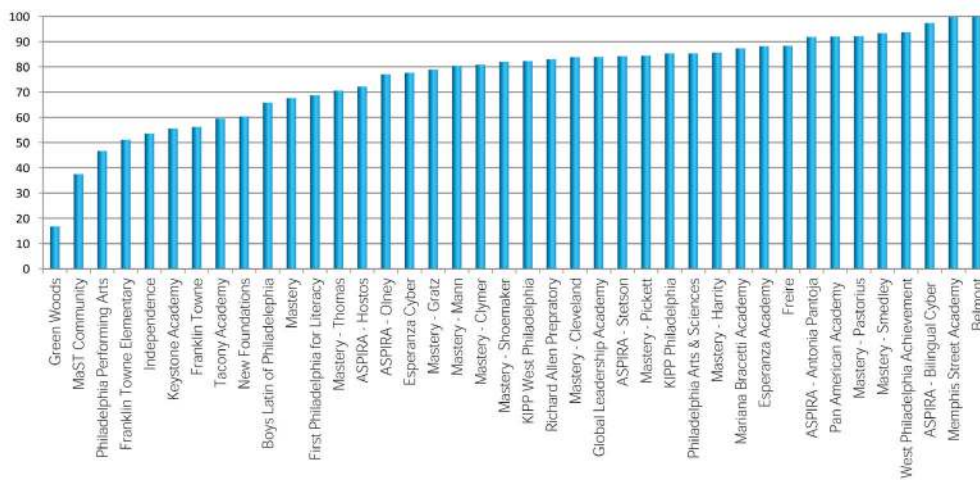
Philadelphia is the nation's poorest big city. According to the 2013 American Community Survey, 185,000 Philadelphians, including 60,000 children live in families with annual incomes of less than \$10,000 a year for a family of three.

Eighty-four percent of the District's students are low-income. It is essential that the District consider a charter applicant's ability to educate low-income students since data shows that students who live in poverty or struggle with food and housing insecurity often arrive at school with significant challenges to academic success. Public schools are a critical venue for offsetting the impact of poverty.

A review of student income data for the charter applicants shows:

- + Forty percent, or 16 of the 40 charter applicants serve more economically disadvantaged students than the District's average enrollment of low-income students;
- + Sixty percent, or 24 of the 40 charter applicants serve a smaller share of students who are economically disadvantaged than the District's average enrollment.

### 60% Percent of Applicants' Current Schools Serve a Smaller Share of Low-Income Students than the District Average

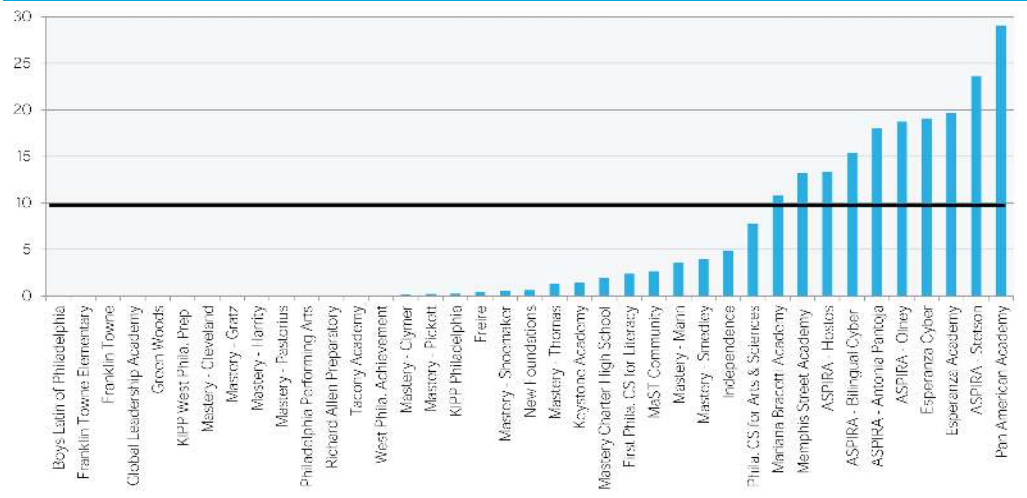


Underserved student groups must be ensured equal access to charters. Successful charter schools should have a track record of enrolling students who reflect the demographics of the city they seek to serve. Among the applicants currently operating charters in Philadelphia, the data shows:

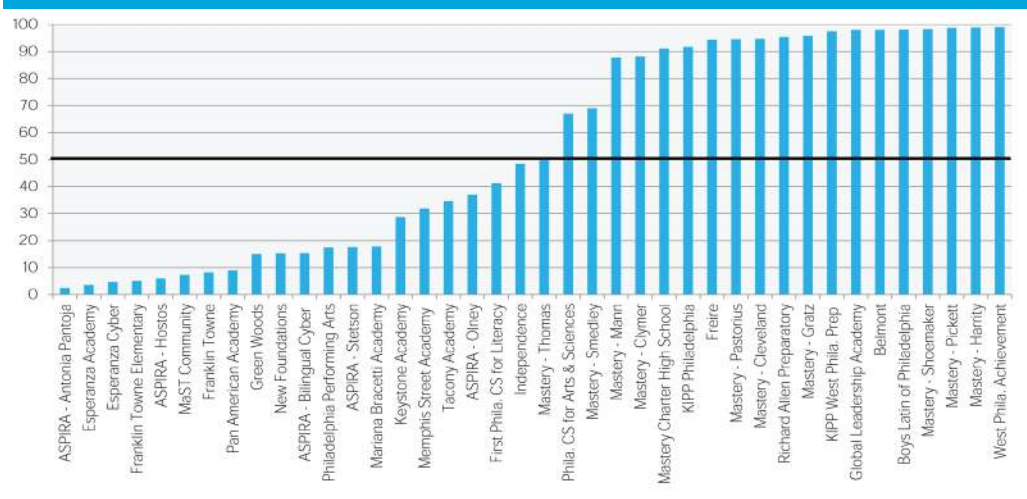
- + Seventy-five percent, or 30 of the 40 charter applicants, underserve English Language Learners in comparison to the District's average enrollment;
- + Fifty-three percent, or 21 of the 40 charter applicants, underserve African American students in comparison to the District's average enrollment;
- + Sixty-three percent or 25 of the 40 charter applicants, underserve Hispanic students in comparison to the District's average enrollment.



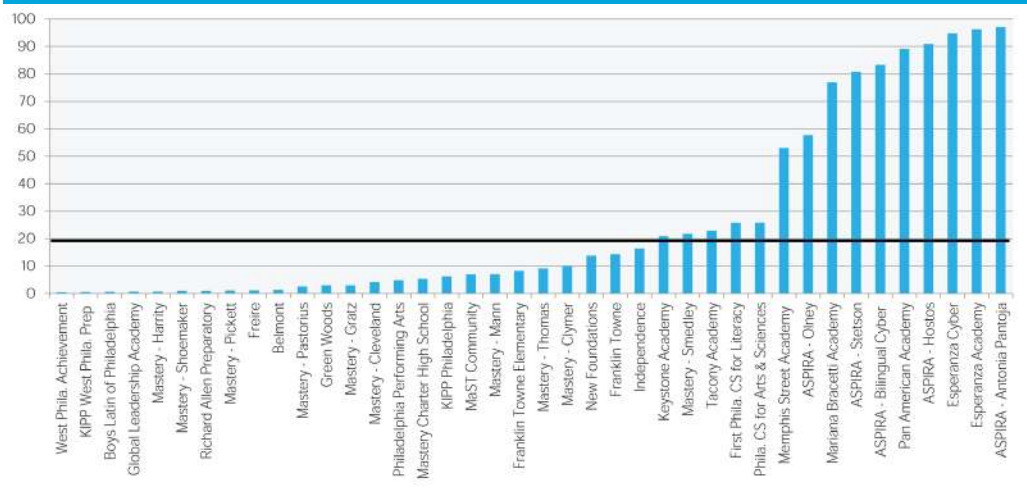
### 75% of Applicants' Current Schools Serve a Smaller Share of English Language Learners than the District Average



### 53% of Applicants' Current Schools Serve a Smaller Share of African American Students than the District Average



### 63% of Applicants' Current Schools Serve a Smaller Share of Hispanic Students than the District Average



The horizontal bar on each graph above, represents the District average.

### SPP Scores Compared to Student Income

Considering a charter’s SPP score along with data on the income level of students offers a meaningful picture of a charter school’s capacity to educate the typical child in Philadelphia. In this section, we compare a charter’s performance and share of low-income students to help examine how well a charter is educating at-risk students. For instance, Green Woods has a strong SPP score of 83.8, which may be attributable to the very small share of its students who are low-income. In contrast, Belmont Academy Charter has an SPP score of 63, but 99.9 percent of its students are low-income students.

Looking across the applicants currently operating charters in the District, the data shows:

- + Two of the 40 charter applicants enroll significantly smaller shares of low-income students than the District’s average enrollment and also have an SPP score less than 70;
- + Twenty-three percent, or nine of the 40 charter applicants, have SPP scores higher than the state target and have a share of low-income students that is at or above the District average.

#### CHARTER SPP GROUPED BY LOW-INCOME ENROLLMENT

Below District Share of Low-Income Students & Below SPP Target	Below District Share of Low-Income Students & Above 70 SPP Target	At/Above District Share of Low-Income Students & Below SPP Target	At/Above District Share of Low-Income Students & Above SPP Target
New Foundations	Green Woods	First Philadelphia CS for Literacy	Mastery – Thomas
Tacony Academy	MaST Community Philadelphia	Mastery – Gratz	Mastery – Shoemaker
	Performing Arts	Mastery Charter High School	Mastery – Mann
	Franklin Towne Elementary	Belmont	Mastery – Cleveland
	Franklin Towne Independence	KIPP Philadelphia	Mastery – Harrity
	Keystone Academy	Mariana Bracetti Academy	Mastery – Pickett
		Mastery – Smedley	KIPP West Phila. Prep
		Global Leadership Academy	Freire
		ASPIRA - Antonia Pantoja	Pan American
		Mastery – Pastorius	
		West Phila. Achievement	
		Mastery – Clymer	
		ASPIRA - Hostos	
		Esperanza Academy	
		Memphis Street Academy	
		Richard Allen Preparatory	
		ASPIRA - Olney	
		ASPIRA - Stetson	
		Esperanza Cyber	
		Boys’ Latin of Philadelphia	
		ASPIRA - Bilingual Cyber	
		Philadelphia CS for Arts & Sciences	

## Student Mobility

In spite of what appears to be a small group of the applicants with a track record of enrolling disadvantaged students and showing reasonable results, data is not publicly available that would confirm a charter school's ability to retain their students. If a charter school is regularly losing students to transfers or drop out, high performance on the SPP could be less meaningful.

Public Citizens for Children and Youth has regularly called on the District to monitor student mobility among both traditional and charter schools through the use of a unique student identifier. The ability to track individual students as they move among schools would provide a much fuller understanding of which schools are meeting students' needs and help schools with high transition rates to improve. The absence of publicly available data for what is termed "in-school retention" in any building including charters makes the track record of charter applicants difficult to evaluate.

Public Citizens for Children and Youth examined enrollment data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and tracked enrollment for two cohorts: a 4th grade cohort of students beginning in 2009-10, until they were 8th graders in 2013-14; and a 9th grade cohort for the same years. In those years, some charters saw sharp decreases in enrollment, as much as 50 percent, while others maintained or increased cohort enrollment.

For schools that maintained enrollment, it is impossible to know if the same students were retained for four years or if the charter schools admitted new students as students left their schools. This is because of an absence of "in-school retention reports."

Clearly, the ability of a charter to retain its students is a critical element of review that should be completed by the Charter Office before the Commission acts. The data should also be released publicly so that charter applicants can be confident in the data and the methodology of analysis.

Student retention is a reasonable indicator of school quality. Charter schools that limit enrollment are able to minimize disruption and benefit from teacher and student relationships from the beginning of the school year. Thus, they are effectively operating on a completely different set of ground rules than other charters. Traditional schools are required to accept all students at all times, including students who are returning from juvenile justice placement or struggling with housing insecurity. These students may be automatically blocked from attending some charters because they do not admit new students after the first year of enrollment (ex. a student must begin in 9th grade for a 9-12 school). In effect, by not enrolling students to fill empty seats, these charters help to concentrate the hardest to educate students in neighborhood schools and in other charters that are willing to take students mid-year.

Unfortunately, given the absence of publicly available data, it is impossible to determine which schools are doing a good job at retaining their students. Before any charter expansion is authorized, the Commission should be able to review reliable data on an operator's track record, including the school's ability to retain students.

### Implications of Charter Expansion for District Investments and Partnerships

In addition to examining the ability of a charter to serve a diverse student population comparable to the District's overall enrollment, the Commission must also appropriately allocate resources. To the extent possible under state law, they should ensure that investments aimed at improving traditional public schools are not undermined by charter expansion.

In this regard, Public Citizens for Children and Youth is very concerned that charter school applicants were encouraged by the Commission to submit applications for expansion in communities where the District is also supporting early-stage turn-around efforts through School Redesign Grants or promising University Partnerships. We urge the Commission to ensure clarity in the strategic allocation of resources and not make any charter authorization decisions that would undermine turnaround efforts.

### School Redesign Initiative

Thirteen charter applicants are proposing to open schools in close proximity to School Redesign grantees. Specifically, Chester Arthur, Carnell and Tilden are likely to be affected by these 13 new charters whose expansion could negatively impact enrollment and undermine the success of a school's School Redesign grant. While not all of the students who enroll in these new charters would necessarily be enrolled in one of the Redesign Schools, the projected charter enrollment for the new applicants is substantially larger than the enrollment of each of these schools.

### PROPOSED CHARTERS THAT WOULD DRAW FROM SCHOOL REDESIGN INITIATIVE GRANTEES

School Redesign Initiative Grantee	Span	Students	Charter Applicants in School's Area	Grades	Proposed Enrollment
Arthur, Chester A	K-8	259	String Theory – Greys Ferry	K-12	1,300
			MaST Community – The Partnership School for Science and Innovation	K-12	1,500
Carnell, Laura H	K-5	1,007	American Paradigm - Oxford Circle	K-8	900
			MaST Community - Roosevelt Independence West	K-8	900
* Tilden, William T.	5-8	545	PHMC Preparatory	K-12	1,000
			Richard Allen Prep	K-12	1,200
			ACES Business Entrepreneur Academy	6-12	700
			Girls' Latin	K-12	1,450
			KIPP West Philadelphia	K-12	1,380
			** Urban STEM Academy	K-12	1,200

\* Located in an area identified by the School District of Philadelphia as high-need/desirable location for new charters

\*\* School plans to draw from all of the high-need areas identified by the District for their primary enrollment

**University Partnerships**

Fourteen charter applicants are proposing to open schools near one of the six schools that are currently part of groundbreaking University Partnerships. As with the School Redesign grantees, not all students who enroll in these new charters would necessarily come from a University Partnership school. However, large projected charter enrollment for the new applicants threatens University Partner schools like Lea and Duckrey. The application from Philadelphia Music and Dance can cause at least one of the schools in its community to become destabilized and most certainly can cause the university partnership to suffer. The formation of these partnerships has taken years to “get right” and in most cases the partnerships are essential to the school’s improvement. Moreover, in some cases, substantial investments by private foundations have augmented the partnerships. Granting any new charters or charter expansions in these communities is likely to undermine years of work and cause critically needed investments in these schools to disappear.

**PROPOSED CHARTERS THAT WOULD DRAW FROM UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS**

Zip Code	Schools w/ University Partnerships in Zip Code	Span	Students	Charter Applicants in Zip Code	Span	Proposed Enrollment
19104	Powell (Drexel)	K-4	259	Philadelphia Music and Dance	K-12	925
	McMichael (Drexel)	K-8	404			
	Washington, M (Drexel)	K-8	467			
	Penn Alexander (Penn)	K-8	564			
19103	Lea (Penn)	K-8	505	Independence West	K-8	900
				Phila. Music and Dance	K-12	925
				ACES Business Entrepreneur Academy	6-12	700
				Girls' Latin	K-12	1,450
				KIPP Dubois	K-12	860
				Green Woods @ Overbrook Farms	K-8	723
				**Urban STEM Academy	5-12	1,200
19121	Duckrey (Temple)	K-8	605	New Foundations – Brewerytown	K-12	1,075
				Leon H Sullivan Opportunities	K-12	1,075
				Mastery - North Philadelphia	K-8	756
				Mastery - Gillespie	K-8	756
				KIPP North Philadelphia	K-12	1,380
				**Urban STEM Academy	5-12	1,200

## Management Challenges

Finally, beyond legal and data issues, the Commission must consider questionable management practices among four charter operators seeking new charters. These applicants are:

- + Friendship Education Foundation is a national operator managing nine schools in Washington, DC, Baltimore and Baton Rouge. While the application cites “three high performing elementary/middle schools” only two schools have math and reading proficiency rates above the 50 percent mark. Of the Friendship Education Foundation’s schools founded in 1998 and 1999, one school has proficiency rates as low as 37 percent in reading. The Friendship Academy of Science and Technology of Baltimore was closed for low performance last year after proficiency rates in math dropped 28 percentage points and 14 percent in reading from 2011-2013. A survey of parents, teachers, and students also rated the school ineffective and the school’s enrollment declined.
- + In March 2013, Friendship Public Charter School’s Technology Preparatory Academy in Washington, DC was being investigated by the DC Charter School Board for its high incidence of suspending students with disabilities.<sup>7</sup>
- + In March 2014, Liguori Academy received \$25,000 from the Philadelphia Schools Partnership (PSP) for planning a new, alternative Catholic high school for at-risk students. The school’s website states its mission as “grounded in the spirit of Saint Alphonsus Liguori to promote God’s boundless love” and strives to “provide a Catholic education” for students. In November, the Philadelphia Public School Notebook found that the school’s website had recently been changed to remove religious language.<sup>8</sup>
- + ASPIRA and Franklin Towne charter have been cited for financial mismanagement.

## Conclusion

Through the Authorizing Quality Initiative the District established a balanced approach for the approval of additional charters by evaluating academic and financial factors. Specifically, it calls for a new charter approval process that is, “Consistent with its mission to allocate limited financial resources to all public schools in Philadelphia.” Given this principle, the 40,341 seats requested from charter applicants this year, which would increase the District’s charter reimbursement by \$282 million contradicts the District’s Authorizing Quality Initiative goals.

The performance data is evidence that several applicants are not educating students effectively to state standards. The absence of data on retention and student mobility means that solid decisions about expansion based on a charter’s track record are not possible at this time. Given these concerns and the very limited capacity of the Office of Charter Schools, it would be irresponsible to add any more charters to the District’s portfolio at this time.

In closing, since the District has suffered severe cuts in state aid including the full elimination of state funds for charter costs, the payments necessitated by new charters will harm students in District-run schools. To ensure that no student is injured by the loss of school resources due to charter expansion, and thus to be in compliance with the duties given the Commission under state law, it must reject the applicants.

## Endnotes

1. <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/uploads/dP/rA/dPrAVit1k8Xa4CJXcyxemQ/FY2014-15-Consolidated-Budget.pdf>
2. [http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/c/charter\\_schools/authorizing-quality-initiative](http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/c/charter_schools/authorizing-quality-initiative)
3. Section 1702-A. Legislative Intent.--It is the intent of the General Assembly, in enacting this article, to provide pupils and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school District structure as a method to accomplish all of the following:(1) Improve pupil learning.(2) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.(3) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.(4) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.(5) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.(6) Hold the schools established under this act accountable for meeting measurable academic standards and provide the school with a method to establish accountability systems.
4. In some cases two charter schools operate under one charter agreement. The state treats these two schools as one entity for reporting purposes, and PCCY employed that same practice in the way data is presented in this report.
5. <http://credo.stanford.edu/pdfs/CGAR%20Press%20Release%20FINAL.pdf>
6. <https://webapps.philasd.org/news/display/articles/2209>
7. <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/d.c.-charter-school-board-to-start-investigating-special-education-practices/article/2525495>
8. <http://thenotebook.org/sites/default/files/Liguori%20Academy%20-%20November%2017%20website.pdf>
9. [http://articles.philly.com/2013-08-09/news/41205051\\_1\\_the-nlrp-three-school-administrators-charter-school](http://articles.philly.com/2013-08-09/news/41205051_1_the-nlrp-three-school-administrators-charter-school)

Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) serves as the leading child advocacy organization working to improve the lives and life chances of children in the region.

Through thoughtful and informed advocacy, community education, targeted service projects and budget analysis, PCCY watches out and speaks out for children and families. PCCY undertakes specific and focused projects in areas affecting the healthy growth and development of

children, including child care, public education, child health, juvenile justice and child welfare.

Founded in 1980 as Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, our name was changed in 2007 to better reflect our expanded work in the counties surrounding Philadelphia. PCCY remains a committed advocate and an independent watchdog for the well-being of all our children.

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