EVALUATION OF NEW TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOLS (2007–10)

INTERIM REPORT
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TCER
Texas Center for Educational Research

EVALUATION OF NEW TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOLS (2007-10)

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Credits

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As interest in expanding the number of high quality charter schools available to parents and students has grown, policy makers have increased their focus on identifying and providing support to new charter programs that have the potential to improve student outcomes and satisfy parent and student needs. Since 1994, the U. S. Department of Education (USDE) has provided funding for new charter schools through a system of Charter School Program (CSP) grants. CSP funding is available to new charter schools for a period of 3 years, of which no more than 18 months may be used for school planning and design and 2 years may be used to implement the educational program. CSP grants are awarded to state education agencies, which then award funding to approved charter schools through a system of subgrants. As a condition of CSP funding, state education agencies are required to evaluate new charter schools using objective criteria and quantitative and qualitative data (Federal Register, 2007).

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) was awarded CSP funding in 2007, and specified that the required evaluation—the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools—would focus on the experiences and outcomes of new charter schools authorized to begin serving students across 4 school years: 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10. TEA categorizes charter schools in terms of "generations" that roughly align with the years in which schools are authorized to serve students as charter schools, which frames the evaluation in terms of Generation 11 (2006-07), Generation 12 (2007-08), Generation 13 (2008-09), and Generation 14 (2009-10) charter schools. The evaluation will produce three reports—two interim reports (spring 2009 and fall 2009) and a final report in summer 2010. Across years, the evaluation will answer the following research questions:

1. How are federal start-up funds used to implement new charter school programs?
2. What processes and practices guide the planning of new charter schools?
3. What processes and practices guide the implementation of new charter school programs?
4. How effective are new charter schools at designing and implementing successful educational programs?
5. How do students at new charter schools perform academically relative to comparable students at traditional district schools?
6. What is the effect of charter school maturity on students' academic outcomes?

The findings presented here are those of the evaluation's first interim report. Because Generation 13 and 14 charter schools were not serving students in 2007-08, they are not included in the first interim evaluation report (spring 2009). However, Generation 13 charter schools will be included in the second interim report (fall 2009), and all four generations will be included in the evaluation's final report (summer 2010).

The first interim report addresses Research Questions 1 through 4 and incorporates statistical analyses of the characteristics of Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, as well as an analysis of charter schools' use of federal CSP grant funds in their start-up years. Statistical analyses rely on archival data collected through TEA's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and its Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), and results are presented for new Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, as well as for established charter schools in Generations 1 through 10. The first interim report also includes findings from spring 2008 surveys of principals, teachers, and students in Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools, as well as a summer 2008 survey of parents of students attending such schools. The first interim evaluation limited surveys to respondents in open-enrollment charter schools in order not to burden respondents in campus charter schools who responded to a similar survey in the fall of

2007. Future evaluation reports will include survey results for new campus charter schools, as well as for open-enrollment and university charters.[1]

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

There were 24 Generation 11 and 15 Generation 12 charter schools operational in 2007-08. Compared to Generation 1 through 10 schools, a larger proportion of new charter schools were campus charter schools. However, a lower proportion of new charter schools were alternative education campuses. Compared to the more established Generation 1 through 10 schools, in the newer charter schools there were proportionately more students at kindergarten and Grades 1 through 7 and proportionately fewer students at the Early Childhood and Pre-kindergarten levels and Grades 8 through 12.

On average, charter school enrollments were less than the average enrollment across the state. On average, traditional public schools enrolled 568 students in the 2007-08 school year. In comparison, Generation 11 charter schools, with the largest average enrollment of charter schools, had an average enrollment of 321 students. Generation 1 through 10 charter schools had an average enrollment of 256 students and Generation 12 charter schools had an average student enrollment of 157 students.

A larger proportion of charter school students are economically disadvantaged. The percentages of economically disadvantaged students were 72% in both Generation 1 through 10 charter schools and Generation 11 charter schools and 55% in Generation 12 charter schools. These percentages compare to the state average of 55%. On average, all generations of charter schools reported larger populations of minority students than the state average.

While administrator salaries varied across charter school generations, in general, charter school administrators earned less than administrators at traditional public schools. Although Generation 11 campus administrators earned more than the state average salary, administrators at Generation 1 through 10 charter schools and Generation 12 charter schools earned less than the state average.

Charter school teachers earned less than the state average. This was likely due to the larger proportion of teachers with lower levels of experience teaching in charter schools relative to teachers working in traditional public schools. In the 2007-08 school year, average teacher experience across the state was 11 years, while Generation 11 teachers had an average of 7 years of experience and Generation 12 teachers had an average of 6 years of experience.

NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS' USE OF CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (CSP) GRANT FUNDS

Federal CSP grants provide funds for the planning and implementation of new charter school programs. New open-enrollment charter schools may receive up to 18 months of planning funds prior to opening, but campus charters are excluded from planning funds because of their levels of district support. Both open-enrollment and campus charter schools may receive up to two years of funding to be used for implementation of their programs.

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[1] Three types, or classes, of charter schools currently operate in Texas: open-enrollment, campus, and university charter schools. Open-enrollment charter schools are authorized by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and may be operated by independent nonprofit entities or governmental entities. Campus charter schools are authorized by traditional districts and may be converted district programs or programs operated under contract with an external provider of educational services. University charter schools are authorized by SBOE and operated by public colleges or universities. No university charters were authorized in Generations 11 and 12.

Open-enrollment and campus charter schools allotted CSP funds differently, likely due to district support of campus charter schools. While both open-enrollment and campus charter schools used a large portion of funds to support instruction, campus charter schools spent proportionately more on instruction than open-enrollment schools. Campus charter schools enjoyed the support of their local district in paying for general school maintenance and operation. In contrast, open-enrollment charter schools allocated larger shares of CSP funds to maintenance and operation.

SURVEY ANALYSES

The interim evaluation included surveys of principals, teachers, and students in new open-enrollment charter schools, as well as a survey of parents of students attending such schools. The following sections summarize the findings from surveys.

Survey of Principals in New Texas Charter Schools

Most new charter schools were located in spaces that were not designed for educational purposes. Seventy-five percent of schools were located in renovated facilities, many of which were previously used for non-educational purposes (e.g., warehouses, churches, office buildings, and so on) and required renovations. Nearly all new charter school operators made substantial payments toward a mortgage, lease, or monthly rent during 2008.

School administrators used a variety of strategies to recruit students and staff. New charter school principals indicated that they recruited students using flyers, brochures, postings on school websites, and parent and student word of mouth. New charter schools recruited teachers through advertisements in newspapers and participation in recruitment fairs at universities and education service centers. Generation 11 and 12 principals indicated that it was difficult for charter schools to compete for teachers with traditional districts that offered higher salaries.

Despite challenges, a majority of principals reported satisfaction working in new charter schools. Ninety-three percent of surveyed principals responded that they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* working in charter schools.

Survey of Teachers in New Texas Charter Schools

Many teachers who work in new charter schools lack experience. A majority of teachers responding to the spring 2008 survey held certifications in the subject they were currently teaching. However, on average, survey respondents had only taught 4.5 years prior to their current position, and approximately half of these years were spent in a traditional public school. The average experience for teachers who did not respond to the survey is not known, and may explain the difference between the average cited here and that cited in the "Characteristics of New Charter Schools" section of this summary.

A majority of new charter school teachers reported satisfaction with their positions. Teachers appreciated that their charter schools offered small class sizes, classroom autonomy, and positive relationships with colleagues. Ninety percent of new charter school teachers indicated that they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their work environment.

New charter school teachers designed lesson plans that promoted student collaboration. Many teachers in new charter schools reported organizing students in small groups or pairs during classroom instruction and often assessed students using teacher-made tests and student performances*.*

New charter school teachers estimated they participated in an average of 10 days of professional development during the 2007-08 school year. Training was generally provided on-site and addressed schools' missions and expectations. Most new charter school teachers indicated they were assessed using Texas' Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS).

Teachers reported that they took on additional responsibilities working in new charter schools. Teachers indicated that they assisted with administrative tasks and other aspects of school management.

Survey of Students Attending New Texas Charter Schools

A majority of new charter school students previously attended traditional public schools. Students indicated that parental influence and parents' perceptions of the school's quality were common factors in the decision to enroll in a charter school. Parents and students also considered teacher quality, specialized courses, smaller class sizes, and reduced student conflicts in the decision to attend a charter school. Most students responding to the survey indicated they were satisfied with their school and intended to return the following school year.

Students in new charter schools spend relatively little time on homework. Most students (78%) attending new charter schools reported spending less than an hour on homework per day, and a small percentage of students indicated that their grades had dropped since enrolling in a new charter school.

Survey of Parents of Students Attending New Texas Charter Schools

Parents' decisions to enroll their child in a new charter school were influenced by education programming and teacher quality. Parents reported that new charter schools provided educational options that were not available in traditional district schools (i.e., programs for special needs students, language immersion programs, and dual credit offerings) and nearly all surveyed parents (94%) were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their child's charter school.

While many charter school parents sign agreements to participate in their child's education, overall levels of parent involvement did not increase when students enrolled in charter schools. Parents reported increases in some activities the year in which their students enrolled in a new charter school; however, comparisons with survey results of parents of children in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools suggest that parent involvement may decrease as schools become more established.

THE ONGOING EVALUATION

The ongoing evaluation will expand to include quantitative analyses of new charter schools' effect on student outcomes, including standardized test scores, indicators of college readiness, and graduation rates. Statistical analyses will examine the effectiveness of new open-enrollment charter schools relative to the traditional district schools students previously attended, and the analysis of campus charter schools will consider whether the change in structure affects student outcomes. Analyses also will examine whether new charter schools' performance changes as schools overcome start-up challenges and gain greater experience serving students. The final evaluation report (summer 2010) will present findings from case studies of seven Generation 13 charter schools that began serving students in the fall of 2008. The case studies will describe the individual challenges faced by new charter schools and the strategies and support charter school operators use to overcome challenges.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACP   Alternative Certification Program

AEA   Alternative Education Accountability System

AEIS   Academic Excellence Indicator System

AskTED   Texas Education Directory

BRS   Border Research Solutions

CRPE   Center on Reinventing Public Education

CSP   Charter School Program Grant Funds

ESC   Education Service Center

FTE   Full-time Equivalent

GAO   Government Accounting Office

K   Kindergarten

NCES   National Center for Education Statistics

NCLB   No Child Left Behind

PDAS   Professional Development and Appraisal System

PEIMS   Public Education Information Management System

PK   Pre-Kindergarten

SBOE   State Board of Education

TAKS   Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

TCER   Texas Center for Educational Research

TEA   Texas Education Agency

TEC   Texas Education Code

USDE   U.S. Department of Education

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Nationally and at the state level there is growing interest in improving public understanding of charter schools and expanding the number of high quality charter programs available to parents and students (Harvey & Rainey, 2006; U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2008). Recognizing charter schools as an effective approach to providing high quality educational alternatives, policy makers have focused on improving the processes by which charter schools are created and sustained in order that new schools may "achieve excellence early in their operations" (USDE, p. 3).

Although most states with charter school legislation, including Texas, permit existing district schools to convert to charter schools, a majority of the nation's charter schools are entirely new schools (USDE, 2004).[2] As new educational ventures, charter schools and their operators may encounter a variety of start-up challenges. Common challenges include locating and financing facilities, establishing the curriculum, and recruiting staff and students. To offset challenges, the USDE provides Charter School Program (CSP) grants targeted to new charter schools in order to facilitate the planning of charter programs and support the expansion of high quality schools. CSP grants are administered through state education agencies and are provided to new charter schools for a period of up to 3 years. Up to 18 months of CSP funding may be used for the planning and design and design of new charter schools, and no more than 2 years of funding may be used for initial implementation of the school's program. As a condition of funding, state education agencies are required to evaluate their program of new charter schools using objective performance measures and quantitative and qualitative data (Federal Register, 2007).

In 2007, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) applied for and received a CSP grant to fund new Texas charter schools. TEA's CSP application specified that the Agency would contract with an external evaluator to conduct an evaluation of new Texas charter schools that would "complement" the state's existing evaluation of all Texas charter schools, "but focus more specifically on the effectiveness of charter schools receiving federal grant funds in their first few years of operation" (TEA, CSP Grant Application, 2007). To this end, TEA specified that the evaluation would include all Texas charter schools approved and funded in the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 school years. TEA further specified that the evaluation would provide descriptive analyses of new charter schools, including teacher and student characteristics, analyses of how new charter schools implement their instructional programs and use CSP funding, as well as the effect of new charter schools on student achievement outcomes, such as standardized test scores (TEA, CSP Grant Application, 2007).

TEA contracted with the Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER), a nonprofit research entity with extensive experience in evaluating the performance of Texas charter schools,[3] to conduct the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools (2007-10). Based on the TEA's specifications for the project, TCER identified the following research questions to guide evaluation activities:

1. How are federal CSP funds used to implement new charter school programs?
2. What processes and practices guide the planning of new charter schools?
3. What processes and practices guide the implementation of new charter school programs?
4. How effective are new charter schools at designing and implementing successful educational programs?

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[2]Texas also permits pre-existing private schools to reconstitute themselves as charter schools, so long as their programs are non-sectarian.
[3] TCER has participated in the annual evaluation of Texas charter schools since 1996.

5. How do students at new charter schools perform academically relative to comparable students at traditional district schools?
6. What is the effect of charter school maturity on students' academic outcomes?

The Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools spans 3 school years, beginning the spring of 2008 and concluding in the summer of 2010. Across this period, TCER will produce two interim reports (spring 2009 and fall 2009), as well as a final report in the summer of 2010. The ongoing nature of the evaluation enables TCER to examine the experiences and effectiveness of new charter schools across the 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 school years, and creates a scaffold on which to build the evaluation activities over time.

The findings presented here comprise the evaluation's first interim report and focus on Research Questions 1 through 4. The first interim report describes the characteristics of new Texas charter schools and trends in new charter schools' use of CSP funding. The report also presents information about new charter schools' planning and implementation processes and the effectiveness of new charter schools in meeting the needs of students and parents. Subsequent evaluation reports will more fully address new charter schools planning and implementation processes and will present analyses of new charter schools' effects on student achievement outcomes relative to traditional district schools and more tenured charter programs (Research Questions 5 and 6).

BACKGROUND ON TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOLS

Texas passed its initial charter school legislation in 1995 and the state's first charter schools opened in the fall of 1996. The legislature initially provided for three types, or classes, of charter schools: home-rule charter school districts, campus and campus program charter schools, and open-enrollment charter schools. In 2001, the legislature amended the Texas Education Code (TEC) to allow for a fourth class—university charter schools. Texas caps the number of open-enrollment charter schools at 215 schools, but places no caps on the number of university[4] and campus or campus program charter schools that may operate in the state. Each class of charter school is discussed in a section that follows.

Classes of Texas Charter Schools

Home rule school district charter. Texas' charter school law includes provisions that permit an entire school district to convert to charter school status and create a home-rule school district charter. Home-rule proposals may be adopted if approved by a majority vote in an election in which at least 25% of the district's registered voters participate (TEC §§12.021-12.022). The voter participation requirement of the home-rule district charter is a substantial hurdle for districts, and, as of this writing, no Texas district has sought home-rule conversion. Because no home-rule district charters exist in Texas, this class of charter school is necessarily omitted from the report's analyses.

Campus and campus program charter schools. In addition to enabling an entire traditional school district to convert to charter status, Texas permits traditional districts to operate charter schools through a process of conversion (campus charter schools) or by creating entirely new schools (campus program charter schools).

In order for a traditional district school to convert to *campus charter school* status, a majority of the school's teachers and the parents of a majority of students attending the school must sign a petition requesting conversion. Notably, the petition does not require the principal's signature, nor does

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[4] Although university charter schools are characterized as open-enrollment charters, they are "not considered for purposes of the limit on the number of open-enrollment charter schools" (TEC § 12.156[b]).

conversion require the principal's approval. The petition is presented to the district's governing board, which may not arbitrarily deny the request. Campus charter schools remain the legal responsibility of the district school board and receive state and local funding (TEC §§ 12.051-12.065).

The board of traditional school districts may also approve entirely new charter school programs under provisions for *campus program charter schools*. Campus program charter schools may be entirely new district schools or programs operated under contract with external entities that provide educational services. Campus program charters may be housed in district facilities or at another facility located within the district. District teachers and students must expressly agree to assignments at campus program charters (TEC § 12.0521). Like campus charter schools, campus program charters receive state and local funding and remain the responsibility of the local school board.

The state does not play a role in the authorization of campus or campus program charter schools—local school districts create their own application requirements and oversee authorization processes. However, campus and campus program charters are required to meet state and federal statutory requirements, and such schools may be closed if students perform unsatisfactorily on state tests and other academic indicators (TEC §12.054). In 2007-08, 68 campus charter schools operated in Texas.

Open-enrollment charter schools. Texas open-enrollment charters are entirely new public schools created by "eligible entities," such as nonprofit organizations, universities, or local government groups (TEC § 12.101). Open-enrollment charters are sponsored by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and are authorized for a period of 5 years. Charter schools receive state funding and are eligible for federal categorical programs, such as special education and Title 1 funding for disadvantaged students. Because open-enrollment charters have no taxable property, they do not receive local property tax revenues and are more reliant on state funding sources than traditional district schools. The charter school's governing board retains legal responsibility for the management, operation, and accountability of the school (TEC § 12.121) and is permitted to contract school management and instructional services from for-profit educational vendors (TEC § 12.125). Entities that receive authorization to operated open-enrollment charter schools may operate multiple charter campuses. Some Texas charter schools operate multiple campuses in a particular city or region of the state, while others operate statewide networks of charter campuses. In 2007-08, 196 charter schools operated 356 charter campuses in the state.

College or university charter schools. The legislature amended Texas' charter school law to allow for an "open-enrollment charter school to operate on the campus of a public senior college or university or in the same county in which the campus of the public senior college or university is located" (TEC § 12.152) in 2001. University charters are subject to largely the same regulatory provisions as open-enrollment charters, but must be supervised by a faculty member with expertise in educational matters and the school's financial operations must be overseen by the university's business office (TEC § 12.154). Similar to open-enrollment charters, university charter schools are able to operate multiple campuses, and 2 university charter schools operated 18 charter campuses in 2007-08.

Generations of Texas Charter Schools

The TEA categorizes open-enrollment charter schools, including university charters, in terms of "generations" defined by SBOE application and selection cycle for authorizing charter schools (TCER, 2006). To date, Texas has completed 14 application cycles and has authorized 14 generations of charter schools, with the most recent generation—Generation 14—to begin enrolling students during the 2009-10 school year. While campus and campus program charter schools are authorized by the governing boards of traditional school districts and university charters are approved by the SBOE, TEA includes these charters in the generations that define open-enrollment charters as a means to identify the grant cycles in which they are eligible for federal CSP funding and other grants. Although there are some exceptions, the

SBOE charter school application and selection process generally spans more than a full school year. New charter school applications are due to TEA in the winter and are approved by SBOE the following fall. Once approved, new charter schools are authorized to begin serving students, generally in the fall of the school year subsequent to their approval. University, campus, and campus program charters are identified for generations in alignment with the dates in which they begin serving students as charter schools. Although there are some variations with respect to when charter schools first begin serving students, most Generation 11 charter schools began enrolling students in 2006-07 and Generation 12 began enrolling students in 2007-08. Generation 13 charter schools began enrolling students in 2008-09.

As described earlier, the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools considers the experiences and outcomes of Texas charter schools authorized to begin serving students as a charter school in 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10. To this end, the evaluation focuses on Generation 11, 12, 13, and 14 charter schools. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the type and number of charter schools included in each generation. Given variations in the years in which each generation of charter schools begins serving students and the timing of data collection activities for the evaluation, Generation 13 and 14 charter schools are not included in the first interim report (spring 2009), and Generation 14 charter schools are also not included in the second interim report (fall 2009). All four generations of charter schools will be included in the evaluation's final report (summer 2010).

Table 1.1
New Charter Schools by Type and Generation, 2008-09

Generation	First Year Eligible to Serve Students as a Charter School	Type and Number of Charter Schools			
		Open-Enrollment	University	Campus or Campus Program	Total
11	2006-07	12	0	12	24
12	2007-08	10	0	5	15
13	2008-09	13	1	10	24
14	2009-10	8	0	NA	8

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System data files, 2008 AskTED (Texas Education Directory) data, and applications of Generation 13 charter schools.

Note. NA=Not Applicable. Because the Texas Education Agency does not control the authorization processes for campus charter schools, it is not clear how many Generation 14 campus charter schools have been authorized in Generation 14.

Although generations define the cycles by which charter schools receive authorization and begin serving students, there are variations within the cycles with respect to when individual campuses begin to operate as charter schools. For example, charter school operators who receive authorization to begin serving students within a given generation may opt to delay opening in order to develop their educational programs and attend to operational matters.

COMMON CHALLENGES FOR NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

Prior research has indicated that new charter school operators confront a range of challenges in founding their programs. (Ascher, Cole, Harris, & Echazarreta, 2004; Government Accounting Office [GAO], 2003; Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, & Branch, 2007). Charter school operators must locate and furnish school facilities, hire qualified staff, and recruit student enrollment prior to opening their schools. The level of start-up support for charter schools varies by state, depending on the political climate and the strength of charter advocacy and support groups, but most new charter schools confront similar challenges in

identifying and financing adequate facilities, securing start-up funding, and obtaining the necessary expertise to manage the legal, budgetary, and operational challenges of starting a new school (GAO, 2003).

Facilities Issues

Locating and funding school facilities. Perhaps the most daunting challenge for new charter schools is locating and funding adequate facilities. New charter school operators must locate available facilities that are appropriate to the needs of a school and include adequate space for classrooms, cafeterias, libraries, computer labs, and physical education requirements. Vacant school space is a rare find, and many charter operators must renovate commercial facilities or custom build facilities, both of which are expensive and time consuming ventures. In their early years of operation, when enrollment and revenue are low, many new charter schools choose to lease facilities. Some new charter schools arrange to share space with a church. Such space may be reasonably priced because the church may continue to use the facility when school is not in session in the evenings or on weekends (Ascher, Cole, Harris, & Echazarreta, 2004). A statewide survey of all Texas charter schools conducted in 2007 indicated that most open-enrollment charter schools lease their facilities from private or commercial sources, while nearly all campus charter schools remained in district-provided facilities (TCER, 2008).

The absence of equitable facilities funding remains one of the central barriers to expanding charter schools nationwide (Mead & Rotherham, 2007). Currently, 27 states and the District of Columbia provide some form of facilities assistance for charter schools. Such provisions include guaranteed loan programs, state reimbursements for facilities costs, per-pupil facilities allotments, the rent-free provision of vacant public school buildings, as well as the inclusion of charter school facility needs in traditional district bond referendums (Education Commission of the States, 2008). In spite of these efforts, many charter school operators report diverting instructional funds to pay for facilities, which may negatively affect instruction (Ascher et al., 2004).

Although Texas operates one of the nation's largest charter school programs, it does not provide facilities funding or facilities assistance to its open-enrollment or university charter schools.[5] However, the state does allow for an approved bonding authority to issue bonds to finance or refinance an authorized charter school. During the 2006-07 legislative session, the Texas legislature considered recommendations to provide high performing charter schools with facilities assistance; however, the measures lacked the support needed to become law.

Accommodating growth. Beyond the challenges associated with locating and funding an initial facility, many charter schools experience continued facilities challenges when their enrollment grows. Most new charters start small and expand their programs as enrollment increases. Further, many charter schools plan to grow their programs by adding grades as students matriculate, which requires that facilities include space for additional classrooms that may not be needed at the school's start. To accommodate such growth, charter schools must either (1) locate a facility large enough to accommodate students at full enrollment or (2) obtain a smaller facility for early enrollments and plan to move when enrollment grows. Both approaches pose challenges. Securing a large facility may prove financially untenable for new schools with low enrollments and per-pupil revenue, and moving to a larger facility when enrollment grows presents challenges in terms of locating and financing a larger facility, as well as disrupting currently enrolled students.

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[5] Campus charter schools are typically housed in district-provided facilities or facilities operated in conjunction with a partner organization (e.g., a local community college).

Start-Up Funding Beyond Facilities Needs

In addition to facilities, new charter schools must purchase instructional materials and supplies, furniture, computers, and curricula; pay the salaries of administrators and staff; and pay insurance and legal fees (GAO, 2003). And because most states, including Texas, fund charter schools on a per-student basis, revenue for such requirements may not become available until a school is enrolling students. New schools that are part of a charter school network or that have the support of a parent entity, such as a nonprofit organization or a university, may receive support for such expenses, but for entirely new or independent charter schools, obtaining seed money to get a program started may prove challenging.

While start-up funding is available through federal sources such as the CSP grant funds discussed in chapter 3 of this report, and through a variety of nonprofit organizations and public-private partnerships designed to support charter schools with financing,[6] many charter schools must apply for loans to cover start-up costs, and many lenders are reticent to finance charter schools because of perceived risks (Ascher et al., 2004). Even before the current credit crisis, many charter operators experienced difficulty obtaining loans because the investment community has been hesitant to grant funding to untested charter programs with small enrollments. Further, media reports of charter school failures have heightened concerns about the credit risks associated with financing new charter schools (Ascher et al.).

Missing Expertise

Unlike traditional district schools that may rely on central office administrators, most charter schools are small scale operations, in which campus-level administrators and teachers must wear many hats and absorb many of the responsibilities and job functions of central office personnel. In Texas, open-enrollment and university charter schools exist both as school districts and as individual campuses, and therefore, must cope with the operational and administrative tasks managed by both district- and campus-level administrators. In traditional school districts, central office administration generally either handles or provides substantial support for issues related to student transportation, food service delivery, the completion of federal- and state-level reporting requirements, the management of budgetary and legal matters, as well as recruiting staff and managing personnel issues. Texas' campus charter schools may continue to rely on their authorizing district's central administration for support, but for new open-enrollment and university charter schools, these responsibilities must be addressed by school operators.

There are a broad range of management tasks associated with operating a new school, which have the potential to overwhelm even the most experienced school administrators. However, because many operators of new charter schools are educational entrepreneurs who have other backgrounds, such expertise is often lacking (Hess, 2008). Even when new charter school operators have strong backgrounds in education, they often lack expertise in the legal and business side of school operations. While programs exist to assist school operators in obtaining the necessary skills and expertise to manage a new charter school, the availability and quality of such resources tend to vary by state (GAO, 2003).

Each spring, TEA hosts a multi-day orientation for administrators and staff involved in starting new charter schools in Texas. This training covers state and federal legal and regulatory provisions that affect charter schools; curriculum and instruction; student assessment; state reporting requirements; as well as issues related to special education, meal service delivery, and school leadership. However, once charter schools get started, they tend to rely more heavily on regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) for assistance (TCER, 2006, 2007, 2008).

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[6] For a list of charter school financing providers, see the Local Initiatives Support Corporation website at: www.lisc.org/resources

METHODOLOGY OF THE INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

The sections that follow provide a brief introduction to the data sources included in this interim report, as well as the report's approach to analyses. Individual chapters provide more detailed information about the methodologies used to analyze new charter school data.

Data Sources

The interim evaluation relies on a mixed methods approach and includes quantitative and qualitative data on new Texas charter schools. Data sources include the following:

- PEIMS (TEA's archival database containing all data requested by the Agency, including student demographic and academic performance data, as well as information about school staffing, finance, and organization);
- AEIS (TEA's archival database that provides information about the academic performance and accountability rating of each public school district and campus in Texas);
- AskTED (TEA's public school directory);
- Surveys of Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter school principals, teachers, and students (Spring 2008); and
- Survey of parents of students attending Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools (Summer 2008).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data. Chapter 2 of the interim evaluation presents descriptive statistics of new Texas charter schools, including the characteristics of students and teachers, disaggregated by generation (Generations 11 and 12), as well as by school type (i.e., open-enrollment or campus charter school). Data are drawn from the PEIMS and AEIS databases and results for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools and statewide averages for all public schools are presented for purposes of comparison. In previous evaluations of Texas charter schools, quantitative results have been disaggregated by charter schools evaluated under the state's standard and alternative education accountability (AEA) procedures. Standard accountability procedures guide the assignment of accountability ratings to the state's standard campuses (including non-registered alternative education campuses), while AEA procedures govern the assignment of ratings to campuses designed to serve the needs of at-risk students and registered as alternative education programs. As presented in chapter 2 of this report, only two Generation 11 charter schools and no Generation 12 charter schools are characterized as AEA campuses. The small number of new AEA charter schools precludes researchers from disaggregating results by accountability program for this report because doing so risks making results for AEA campuses and survey respondents identifiable.

The analysis of CSP grant funds for Texas charter schools presented in chapter 3 examines charter schools' use of CSP funds across school years and analyses address Research Question 1. Given lags in the availability financial data provided through PEIMS, the analysis of CSP data examines trends in the use of CSP data over time and relies on data collected across the 2000-01 to 2006-07 school years.[7]

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[7] At the time of the writing of the first interim report, the most current financial data available in PEIMS were for the 2006-07 school year.

The analysis compares open-enrollment and campus charter schools' use of CSP funds to their use of all funding sources, and examines CSP expenditure patterns across categories designated by the state's system of financial reporting (i.e., function, object, and program codes).

Survey data. Survey data provide information about how charter school operators plan and implement their programs, as well as information about the effectiveness of new charter schools in meeting the needs of students and parents (Research Questions 2, 3, and 4). The surveys administered for the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools are similar to surveys administered as part of the state's evaluation of all Texas charter schools (TCER 2008, 2007, 2006), and facilitate comparisons between respondents in new charter schools and respondents from charter schools generally.

Analyses of survey data for Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter school respondents are disaggregated by generation and results are compared to previous surveys of all charter schools, where appropriate. Note that the 2008 surveys were not administered to campus charter school respondents because campus charter schools were the focus of similar surveys administered in the fall of 2007 for the Texas Charter School Evaluation 2006-07 (TCER, 2008). In order not to burden campus charter school respondents with multiple surveys during the same school year, campus charters were omitted from surveys conducted for the interim evaluation report. No university charters were included in surveys because no university charter schools were authorized in either Generation 11 or 12. Future evaluation surveys to be conducted in the spring of 2009 and the spring of 2010 will include campus, university, and open-enrollment charter schools.

The Ongoing Evaluation

As noted earlier, the ongoing evaluation will build on the information provided in this report and expand to include quantitative analyses of the effect of new charter schools on student outcomes as the evaluation progresses. Researchers will survey new charter school staff, students, and parents again in the spring of 2009 and the spring of 2010.

As increased data on the outcomes of new charter schools become available and as research activities progress, the evaluation will expand to include statistical analyses of the effectiveness of open-enrollment charter schools on student outcomes, such as TAKS scores and attendance rates, relative to the traditional district schools that students previously attended, as well as how the campus charter school structure may affect the educational outcomes of traditional district students who attend such schools. The ongoing evaluation will also consider how the effectiveness of new open-enrollment and university charter schools may change over time. Subsequent evaluation reports will include the results of this research and will continue to build upon the findings presented in this interim report.

The final evaluation report (August 2010) also will present findings from case studies of seven Generation 13 charter schools. The case studies will identify common themes in the experiences of new charter schools and identify issues particular to individual schools or types of charter schools. Researchers selected Generation 13 charter schools for case studies because these schools were just getting started in the fall of 2008. Researchers visited schools before they enrolled students in the summer of 2008 and returned for a second visit late in the schools' first semester of operation (November 2008). Researchers will visit schools again at the conclusion of the schools' first year of operation (May 2009), and again at the conclusion of the schools' second year of operation (May 2010).

Structure of the Interim Report

The first interim report for the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools (March 2009) is organized as follows:

- Chapter 1 provides background on Texas charter schools and introduces the evaluation's research questions, as well as the data sources and analyses included in the interim report.
- Chapter 2 presents information on the characteristics of new Generation 11 and 12 charter schools.
- Chapter 3 discusses new charter schools' use of CSP funds across years and across funding categories established by Texas' system of financial reporting for public schools.
- Chapter 4 presents the results of a survey of principals working in Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools.
- Chapter 5 presents the results of a survey of teachers working in Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools.
- Chapter 6 presents the results of a survey of students attending Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools.
- Chapter 7 presents the results of a survey of parents of students attending Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools.
- Chapter 8 presents summary information and commentary on the results of the interim evaluation report.
- Appendix A includes the online survey of principals and teachers working in new open-enrollment charter schools.
- Appendix B includes the paper-and-pencil survey of students attending new open-enrollment charter schools (separate surveys: Grades 4 and 5 and Grades 6-12).
- Appendix C includes the script (Spanish and English) for a telephone survey of parents of students attending new open-enrollment charter schools.

CHAPTER 2
CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

This chapter presents the characteristics of new charter schools and the students these schools serve, focusing on those charter schools that were authorized to begin serving students in the fall of 2006 (Generation 11) and in the fall of 2007 (Generation 12). Data sources include TEA's AEIS district and campus data files, individual student data from TEA's PEIMS, and information from the Texas Education Agency Directory (AskTED). In the sections that follow, data are presented separately for Generation 11, Generation 12, and for the aggregate of more established charter schools from Generations 1 through 10, as well as the state average for all public schools in Texas, when appropriate. In some cases, results are reported by the charter district or "charter school," in other cases, results are reported by the "campus" or the individual student. Tables and figures describe the characteristics of new charter schools, including the type of charter school (open-enrollment or campus charter), the accountability system, the size and type of campus (elementary school, middle school, etc.), the grade level distribution, student demographics, and staff and teacher characteristics.

NEW CHARTER SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS BY GENERATION

Of the 24 Generation 11 campuses that operated in 2007-08, half (50%) were open-enrollment charter schools and half (50%) were campus charter schools (Table 2.1). There were proportionately more open-enrollment campuses among Generation 12 charter schools. Of the 15 Generation 12 charter schools, two thirds (67%) were open-enrollment charter schools and one third (33%) were campus charter schools. Only 9% of Generation 1 through 10 charter schools were campus charter schools, while 91% were open-enrollment charter schools. Thus, Generations 1 through 10 had relatively fewer campus charter schools. This change may be the result of SBOE imposed limit on the number (215) of open-enrollment charter schools or districts (note that charter schools or districts may have multiple campuses) that may operate at any one time. There are no limits on the number of college or university sponsored charter schools or on the number of campus charter schools.

Table 2.1
Charter School Campuses by Generation and Charter Type, 2007-08

Generation	Open-Enrollment Charter[a]		Campus Charter		All Campuses	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Generation 11	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	24	100.0%
Generation 12	10	66.7%	5	33.3%	15	100.0%
Generations 11 and 12	22	56.4%	17	43.6%	39	100.0%
Generations 1-10	351	91.2%	34	8.8%	384	100.0%

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 AEIS data files and 2008 AskTED (Texas Education Directory) data.
[a]There were no college or university sponsored charter schools in Generations 11 or 12 that served students in 2007-08.

Typically, alternative education campuses offer programs designed to support students at risk of failure or of dropping out. These campuses often confront different educational challenges than schools that enroll proportionately fewer at-risk students. Table 2.2 shows that proportionately fewer new charter schools were registered as alternative education campuses in 2007-08. While 43% of Generation 1 through 10

charter schools were evaluated under alternative education procedures, only 5% of Generation 11 and 12 schools were characterized as alternative education campuses.

Table 2.2
Charter School Campuses by Generation and Accountability Procedure, 2007-08

	Standard AP		Alternative Education AP		All Campuses	
Generation	N	%	N	%	N	%
Generation 11	22	91.7%	2	8.3%	24	100.0%
Generation 12	15	100.0%	0	0.0%	15	100.0%
Generations 11 and 12	37	94.9%	2	5.1%	39	100.0%
Generations 1-10	220	57.1%	165	42.9%	384	100.0%

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System data files and 2008 AskTED (Texas Education Directory) data.
Note. AP means accountability procedures.

TEA categorizes schools into one of four classifications based on the lowest and highest grades served by the school. These classifications are *elementary, middle* (including junior high school), *secondary,* and *both elementary/secondary* (K-12). Typically, elementary schools include Grades pre-kindergarten (PK)-5 or Grades PK-6, middle schools include Grades 6-8, secondary schools include Grades 9-12, and both elementary/secondary schools include Grades kindergarten (K)-12. Schools with different grade spans are grouped in TEA databases with the school type most similar to their grade span (TEA, 2008).

Table 2.3 shows that most new charter schools operating in 2007-08 were elementary campuses (54%). Fewer than 10% were middle schools (5% or 4% in Generation 11 and 7% in Generation 12). While 29% of Generation 11 charter schools were secondary schools, none of Generation 12 charter schools was a secondary school. Approximately 23% of new charter schools represented grade configurations that spanned elementary through secondary school grades (21% in Generation 11 and 27% in Generation 12). In comparison to Generation 1 through 10, Generation 11 and 12 charter schools had proportionately more elementary schools (54% vs. 36%) and proportionately fewer middle schools (5% vs. 10%), secondary schools (18% vs. 25%), and both elementary through senior high school grade configurations (23% vs. 29%).

Table 2.3
Charter School Campuses by Generation and School Type, 2007-08

	Generation 11		Generation 12		Generations 11 and 12		Generations 1-10	
School Type	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary School	11	45.8%	10	66.7%	21	53.8%	137	35.6%
Middle School	1	4.2%	1	6.7%	2	5.1%	38	9.9%
Secondary School	7	29.2%	0	0.0%	7	17.9%	97	25.2%
Elementary through Senior High School	5	20.8%	4	26.7%	9	23.1%	113	29.4%
Total	**24**	**100.0%**	**15**	**100.1%**	**39**	**99.9%**	**385**	**100.1%**

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data files and 2008 AskTED (Texas Education Directory) data.
Note. School type was taken from the 2007-08 AEIS campus reference file.

Table 2.4 shows that the average student enrollment was largest for Generation 11 charter schools (321 students) in 2007-08. Generation 1 through 10 charter schools were smaller (256 students), on average, as were Generation 12 charter schools (157 students). This may be due to the higher percentage of typically larger campus charter schools among Generation 11 schools (50% vs. 33% for Generation 12 and only 9% for charter schools in Generation 1 through 10). In 2006-07, for example, the average enrollment at campus charter schools was approximately 150 students larger than the average enrollment at open-enrollment charter schools (TCER, 2008). Note that average charter campus enrollments were less than the average student enrollment in public schools across the state (568 students) (TCER, 2008).

With a higher percentage of campus charter schools, the range in campus enrollment was larger for Generation 11 charter schools than for Generation 12 charter schools. Generation 11 campuses ranged in enrollment from 51 students to 560 students, while Generation 12 campuses ranged in enrollment from 91 students to 235 students. Campus enrollments were even more variable among Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. For these schools, enrollments ranged from a single student to 1,448 students.

Table 2.4
Charter School Campus Size Characteristics by Generation, 2007-08

Size Characteristic	Generation 11	Generation 12	Generations 11 and 12	Generations 1-10
Number of campuses	24	15	39	384
Average enrollment	320.9	156.7	257.7	255.5
Median enrollment	348.5	161.0	213.0	182.0
Total students	**7,702**	**2,350**	10,052	98,374

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System campus student statistics data file and campus reference data file.

Figure 2.1 presents the average enrollments of new and Generation 1 through 10 charter schools by type of school. At the secondary school and elementary levels, the average campus enrollments were larger for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. However, at the middle school level and for campuses having atypical grade configurations, the newer Generation 11 and 12 charter schools had the largest average enrollments.

Figure 2.1. Average enrollment of charter school campuses by generation and school type, 2007-08.
Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System campus student statistics data file and campus reference data file.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2.5 reports the distribution of students across grades for Generation 11 and 12 and more established Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. Compared to Generations 1 through 10, newer charter schools served proportionately more students at K and Grades 1 through 7 and proportionately fewer at the early childhood and PK levels and Grades 8 through 12 in 2007-08. Generation 11 charter schools had the largest proportion of students at Grades 3 to 5 and at the middle school grades, Grades 6 through 8. Generation 12 charter schools had the largest proportion of students in K through Grade 2 and at the early high school grades, Grades 9 and 10. Generation 1 through 10 charter schools had the largest proportion of students at the early childhood and PK levels, and at the upper high school grades, Grades 11 and 12.

Table 2.5
Charter School Grade Level Distributions by Generation, 2007-08

Grade Level	Generation 11		Generation 12		Generations 11 and 12		Generations 1-10	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early Childhood	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	164	0.2%
Pre-K	407	5.2%	119	5.0%	526	5.2%	11,613	11.7%
K	606	7.8%	214	9.1%	820	8.1%	7,421	7.5%
1	666	8.5%	236	10.0%	902	8.9%	7,093	7.1%
2	696	8.9%	215	9.1%	911	9.0%	6,504	6.5%
3	691	8.9%	168	7.1%	859	8.5%	5,890	5.9%
4	625	8.0%	178	7.5%	803	7.9%	5,197	5.2%
5	619	7.9%	175	7.4%	794	7.8%	5,483	5.5%
6	795	10.2%	161	6.8%	956	9.4%	7,348	7.4%
7	678	8.7%	116	4.9%	794	7.8%	6,610	6.7%
8	489	6.3%	98	4.2%	587	5.8%	6,047	6.1%
9	489	6.3%	420	17.8%	909	9.0%	9,605	9.7%
10	397	5.1%	244	10.3%	641	6.3%	7,537	7.6%
11	239	3.1%	17	0.7%	256	2.5%	6,839	6.9%
12	398	5.1%	NS	NS	398	3.9%	5,983	6.0%
Total	**7,795**	**100.0%**	**2,361**	**99.9%**	**10,156**	**100.0%**	**99,334**	**100.0%**

Source: Fall 2007 Public Education Information Management System demographic data file.
Notes. NS = no students. Shaded cells denote the grouping (Generation 11, Generation 12, or Generations 1-10) having the largest relative proportion of students at that grade level.

Table 2.6 summarizes student demographic information for charter campuses by generation. Major differences in student racial/ethnic group categories exist between Generation 11, Generation 12, and Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. Generation 11 charter schools had the highest percentage of Hispanic students and the lowest percentages of African American and White students. Generation 12 charter schools had the highest percentage of White students and the lowest percentage of Hispanic students. Generation 1 through 10 charter schools had the highest percentage of African American students. Compared to state averages of 14% African American, 47% Hispanic, and 35% White student, all charter school classifications had higher percentages of African American students and lower percentages of White students, although the Generation 12 percentage of White students was very close to the state average (34% vs. 35%). The state percentage of Hispanic students (47%) was higher than the Generation 12 percentage (38%), but lower than the Generation 11 and Generation 1 through 10 charter school percentages (64% for Generation 11 and 51% for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools).

Table 2.6
Charter School Student Demographic Information by Generation, 2007-08

Student Group	Generation 11 (n=7,795)	Generation 12 (n=2,361)	Generations 11 and 12 (N=10,156)	Generations 1-10 (N=99,334)	State Average (N= 4,651,516)
Native American	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	5.5%	3.3%	5.0%	2.3%	3.4%
African American	17.9%	24.4%	19.4%	30.4%	14.3%
Hispanic	63.7%	38.0%	57.8%	50.9%	47.2%
White	12.5%	33.9%	17.5%	16.0%	34.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	72.0%	55.4%	68.1%	71.8%	55.3%
Special Education	6.7%	4.7%	6.2%	8.9%	10.0%
Limited-English Proficient	14.2%	5.5%	12.2%	15.2%	16.7%
Gifted and Talented	8.9%	10.0%	9.1%	3.2%	2.0%

Sources: Fall 2007 Public Education Information Management System demographic data file and 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System State Report.

Table 2.6 shows that the percentage of economically disadvantaged students was similar for Generation 11 charter schools and Generation 1 through 10 charter schools (72%). That percentage was higher than the Generation 12 percentage, which was similar to the state average (55%). The percentage of students classified as limited English proficient was similar for Generation 11 charter schools, Generation 1 through 10 charter schools, and the state average (14% for Generation 11, 15% for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools, and 17% for the state average). There were proportionately fewer limited English proficient students in Generation 12 charter schools (6%). The percentages of special education students attending charter schools were all below the state average of 10% (7% for Generation 11, 5% for Generation 12, and 9% for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools). Finally, all charter classifications (9% for Generation 11, 10% for Generation 12, and 3% for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools) had higher percentages of gifted and talented students than the state average (2%).

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2.7 shows staff data for Generation 11 and 12 charter schools along with Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. In 2007-08, approximately 1% of staff was central administration for each classification of charter schools, as well as for the state average. The percentage of staff that was campus administration was higher than the percentage that was central administration. It was 3% for each classification of charter schools and for the state average. Given that charter districts and campuses are generally smaller than most traditional districts and campuses and don't benefit as much from economies of scale, it is surprising that the percentages of staff members listed as administrators were similar to overall public school averages.

Table 2.7
Charter School Staff Characteristics by Generation, 2007-08

Staff Characteristic	Generation 11	Generation 12	Generations 1-10	State Average
Central administration[a]	0.9%	1.4%	1.1%	1.0%
Campus administration[a]	2.6%	3.3%	3.0%	2.8%
Average central administrator[a] salary	$76,026	$68,881	$77,081	$83,529
Average campus administrator salary[c]	$70,345	$63,050	$55,011	$67,397
Average teacher salary[b]	$42,297	$38,558	$37,640	$46,179
Average staff FTE[b]	26.9	15.9	22.1	77.3
Average teacher FTE[b]	20.1	12.3	15.9	39.3
Teachers[b]	74.5%	77.7%	72.0%	50.8%
Students per teacher[b]	14.9	14.0	16.2	14.5

Sources: Texas Education Agency (TEA) 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) district staff statistics file, 2008 AEIS campus staff statistics file, and 2008 AEIS State Report.
Notes. Charter school personnel percentages were based on full time equivalent (FTE) counts in the 2008 AEIS district staff statistics file and the 2008 AEIS campus staff statistics file. This follows procedures used in the 2008 AEIS State Report. FTE or full-time equivalent is a way to measure a staff member's involvement at an educational institution. An FTE of 1.0 means that the staff member is full-time, while an FTE of 0.5 means that the staff member is half-time.
[a]2008 TEA AEIS district staff statistics file.
[b]2008 TEA AEIS campus staff statistics file.

Table 2.7 shows that, on average, central administrators earned the most in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools (about $77,000) and least in Generation 12 charter schools (about $69,000). Overall, charter school central administrators earned about $6,500 to $14,500 less than the state average[8] (includes both traditional and charter school central administrators) of about $83,500, depending on the generation of the charter school. However, campus administrators earned the most in Generation 11 charter schools (about $70,000), and least in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools (about $55,000) (see Table 2.7). Figure 2.2 presents campus administrator salaries for open-enrollment charter schools and campus charter schools within each generation. Charter school campus administrators received, on average, $22,000 more in campus charter schools than in open-enrollment charter schools. The disparities in campus administrators' earnings among charter generations reflect the percentages of campus charter schools in each group. While only 9% of the Generation 1 through 10 schools are campus charters, 33% of Generation 12 and 50% of Generation 11 schools are campus charters. The state average (includes both traditional and charter school campus administrators) of about $67,000 for campus administrators was higher than the overall averages for Generation 12 (about $63,000) and Generation 1 through 10 charter school administrators (about $55,000), but it was lower than the average earnings of Generation 11 campus administrators (about $70,000).

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[8] State averages include both traditional public schools and charter schools and are from the Texas Education Agency Division of Performance Reporting Academic Excellence Indicator System 2007-08 State Performance Report.
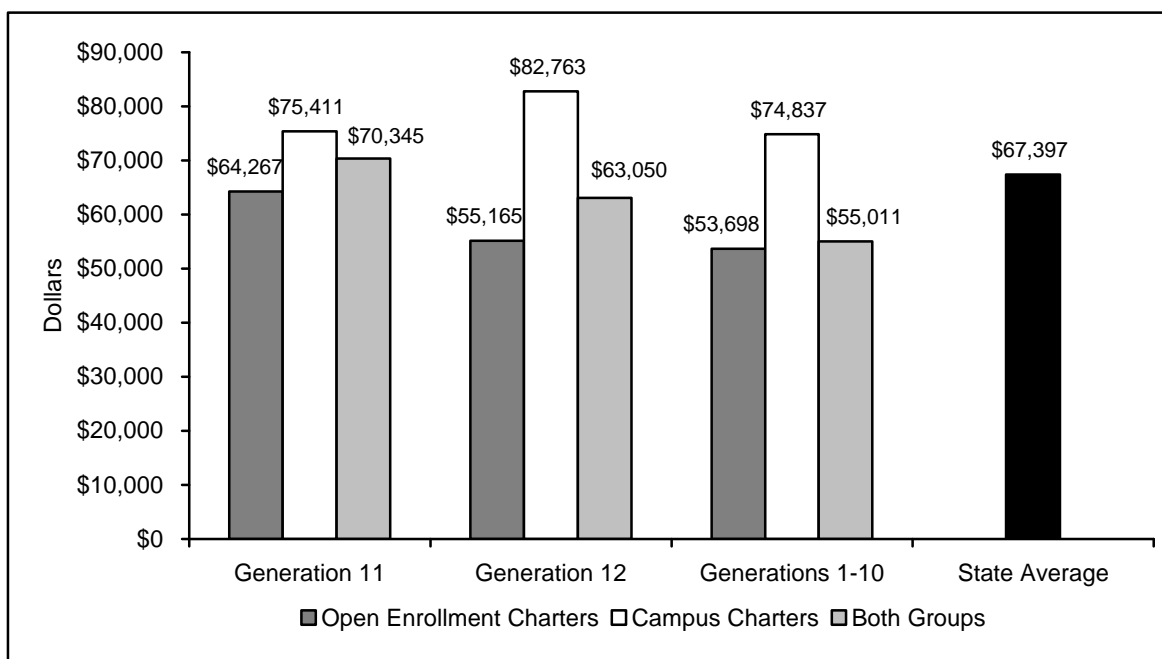
Figure 2.2. Average salaries of charter school campus administrators by generation and type, 2007-08.

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) campus staff statistics file. The state average is from the 2008 AEIS State Report.

Note. State average includes both traditional and charter school campus administrators.

Charter school teachers earned, on average, more in the newer charter schools (see Table 2.7). The average teacher salaries were about $42,000 for Generation 11 charter schools, $38,500 for Generation 12 charter schools, and $37,500 for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. Figure 2.3 shows the teacher salaries for the open-enrollment charter schools and the campus charter schools within each generation. Similar to campus administrators, charter school teachers received, on average, more pay (about $11,000 more) in campus charter schools than in open-enrollment charter schools. Again, the disparities in teachers' earnings among charter generations reflect the higher percentages of campus charter schools in Generation 12 and particularly Generation 11 charter schools, than in the Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. Overall, all classifications of charter school teachers earned less than the state average (includes both traditional and charter school teachers) of about $46,000.
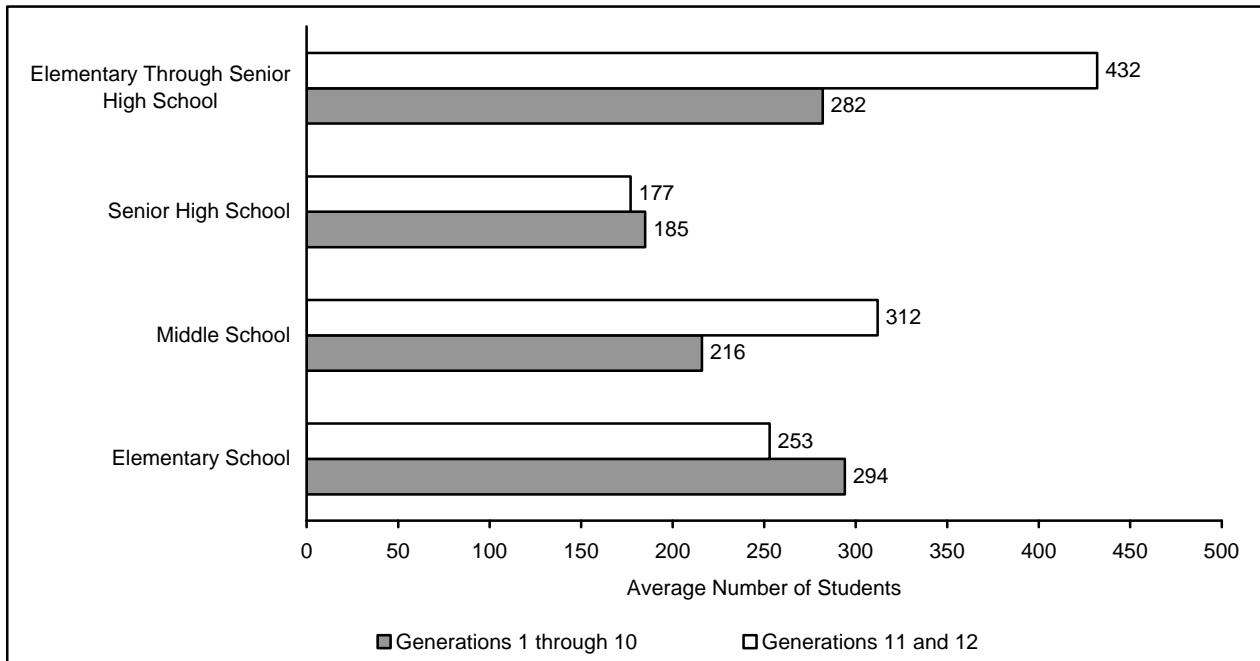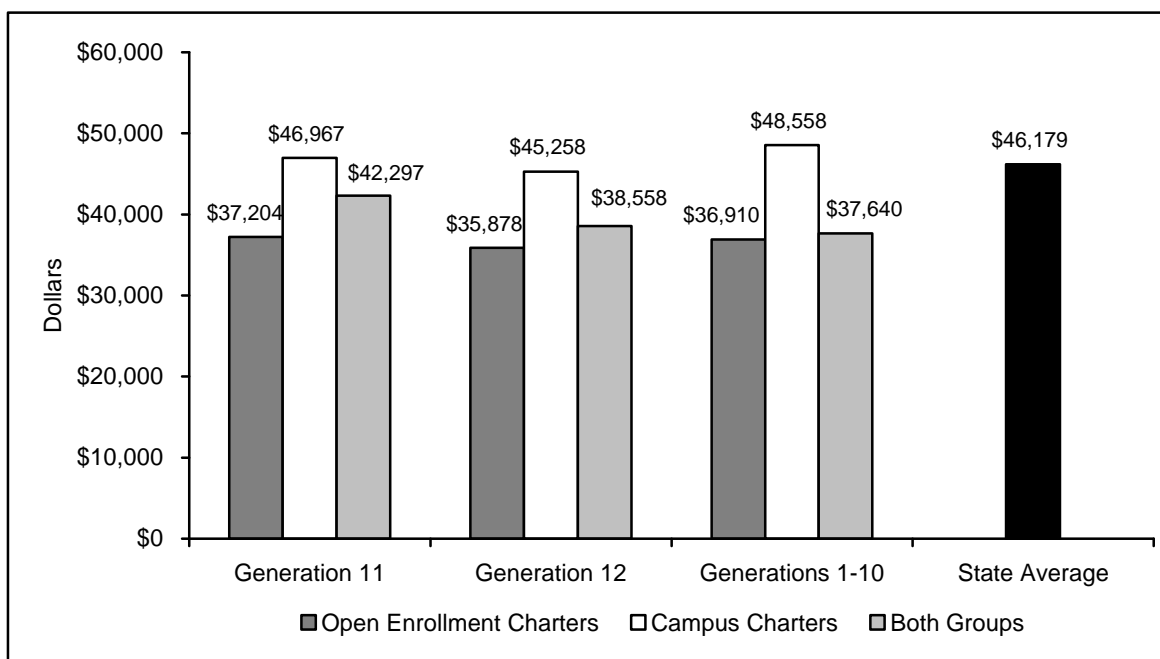
Figure 2.3. Average salaries of charter school teachers by generation and type, 2007-08.
Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) campus staff statistics file. The state average is from the 2008 AEIS State Report.
Note. State average includes both traditional and charter school teachers.

In 2007-08, the average number of staff and teacher full-time equivalents (FTEs) was smallest in Generation 12 charter schools (16 and 12), largest in Generation 11 charter schools (27 and 20), and of an intermediate size in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools (22 and 16). The percentage of staff who are teachers was similar among the charter classifications (between 72% and 78%), and was higher than the state average (63%). The number of students per teacher was higher in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools (16.3) than it was in Generation 11 (14.9) and Generation 12 charter schools (14.0). The newer charter schools had student-teacher ratios that are similar to the state average (14.5).

Table 2.8 shows that Generation 11 charter schools, as well as Generation 1 through 10 charter schools employed higher percentages of minority teachers (56% and 51%, respectively) than Generation 12 charter schools (20%). Across the state, 32% of teachers were minorities (Hispanic or African American). A higher percentage of White teachers (78%) were employed in Generation 12 charter schools than the state average of 68%, as well as Generation 1 through 10 charter schools' average of 45% and Generation 11 average of 42%. The experience level of charter school teachers reflects the relative newness of charter schools. Beginning teachers and teachers having 1 to 5 years of experience accounted for approximately two thirds of Generation 1 through 10 charter school and Generation 11 charter school teachers, and for approximately three fourths of Generation 12 charter school teachers in 2007-08. The state average, on the other hand, was 38%. While teachers having 11 or more years of experience make up 42% of teachers across the state, they account for only 20% of Generation 11 charter school teachers, 9% of Generation 12 charter school teachers, and 18% of teachers in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. Average teacher experience in years also reflects the relative newness of charter schools. While the state average was 11 years, it was 7 years for Generation 11 charter schools, 6 years for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools, and 4 years for the newest Generation 12 charter schools. The lower average salaries for teachers in all charter schools may partially be accounted for by charter school teachers' relative inexperience.

Table 2.8
Charter School Teacher Characteristics by Generation, 2007-08

Teacher Characteristic	Generation 11	Generation 12	Generations 1-10	State Average
Minority teachers[a]	55.6%	20.4%	50.9%	31.0%
African-American	19.3%	7.4%	30.7%	9.6%
Hispanic	36.3%	13.0%	20.2%	21.4%
White	41.6%	78.0%	45.4%	67.5%
Teacher average years of experience[a]	6.5	3.8	5.9	11.3
Teacher tenure in years[a]	4.0	1.1	2.1	7.4
Beginning teachers	21.5%	45.8%	25.2%	7.9%
1-5 years experience	45.3%	31.8%	40.2%	29.8%
6-10 years experience	13.1%	13.7%	17.2%	19.7%
11-20 years experience	8.0%	5.4%	10.8%	23.4%
More than 20 years experience	12.1%	3.4%	6.7%	19.2%
Teachers with no degree[b]	0.8%	0.7%	1.4%	0.8%
Teachers with advanced degrees[b]	15.7%	31.0%	27.3%	21.5%
Teacher annual turnover rate[b]	40.1%	--	38.2%	15.2%

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2008 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) district staff statistics file and 2008 AEIS campus staff statistics file and 2008 AEIS State Report.
Note. Charter school personnel percentages were based on full time equivalent counts in the 2008 AEIS campus staff statistics file.
[a]2008 TEA AEIS campus staff statistics file.
[b]2008 TEA AEIS district staff statistics file.
[c]Teacher turnover rates for the 2007-08 school year are based on the total full-time equivalent count of teachers working in districts in 2006-07. Because no Generation 12 charter schools were in operation in 2006-07, data were not available for Generation 12 teacher turnover rates.

Teacher tenure, a measure of how much time the teacher has been employed in the district, was lower for all classifications of charter schools (4 years for Generation 11 charter schools, 1 year for Generation 12 charter schools, and 2 years for Generation 1 through 10 charter schools) than across the state of Texas (8 years). The percentage of teachers having no degree was similar for the classifications of charter schools and for the state average (1%). The percentage of teachers having advanced degrees was highest for Generation 12 teachers (31%), followed by teachers at Generation 1 through 10 charter schools (27%) and Generation 11 charter schools (16%). The 2007-08 state average was 22%. The turnover rate for teachers in charter schools was higher than the state average (15%). The charter school average ranged from 40% in Generation 11 schools, to 38% in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools, to 16% in Generation 12 charter schools.

SUMMARY

This chapter describes the characteristics of Generation 11 and Generation 12 charter schools that enrolled students during the 2007-08 school year. Specifically, 24 Generation 11 and 15 Generation 12 charter schools were in operation in 2007-08. In addition, 385 charter campuses from Generations 1 through 10 were also in operation. Compared to the more established Generation 1 through 10 schools, the newer charter schools had a higher percentage of campus charter schools and a lower percentage of alternative campuses. The newer charter schools also had a higher percentage of elementary campuses. Consequently, in the newer charter schools there were proportionately more students in kindergarten and Grades 1 through 7 and proportionately fewer students in Grades 8 through 12.

Compared to the Generation 1 through 10 charter schools, the Generation 11 and 12 schools had a higher percentage of Hispanic students and a slightly higher percentage of White students, but a lower percentage of African American students. The percentages of economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and limited English proficient students were also lower in Generation 11 and 12 charter schools. When charter schools were compared to state averages, charter schools had higher percentages of African American and Hispanic students and lower percentages of White students. Charter schools also had a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students, but lower percentages of limited English proficient and special education students.

Similar percentages of staff were assigned to central administration (approximately 1%) and campus administration (approximately 3%) for each generation of charter school, as well as for the state average. Central administrators, on average, earned most in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools and least in Generation 12 charter schools. Campus administrators, on average, earned most in Generation 11 charter schools and least in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. This reflects the higher percentages of campus charter schools among the newer charter schools. Campus charter schools are associated with traditional public school districts which typically pay more than open-enrollment charter schools. Overall, charter school central and campus administrators earned less than their peers in traditional public schools.

Charter school teachers earned, on average, most in the Generation 11 charter schools and least in the Generation 1 through 10 charter schools. Again, this reflects the higher percentages of campus charter schools included in Generations 11 and 12. All classifications of charter school teachers earned less than the state average. Lower relative experience among charter school teachers may partly account for salary differences when comparisons are made to state averages. While the average level of teacher experience across the state was 11 years, average experience was 7 years for Generation 11 teachers, 6 years for teachers in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools, and 4 years for Generation 12 teachers. Finally, Generation 11 charter schools, as well as Generation 1 through 10 charter schools employed higher percentages of minority teachers (56% and 51%, respectively) than Generation 12 charter schools (20%), and the state average (32%).

CHAPTER 3
NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS USE OF CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (CSP) GRANT FUNDS

As discussed in chapter 1, a central purpose of the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools is to understand how new charter schools use federal CSP grant funds to implement their programs (Research Question 1). The CSP system of grants has been in place since 1994,[9] providing funding in support of the "planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools" (USDE, 2004, p. 2). CSP grants are awarded to state education agencies, which in turn award subgrants to approved charter schools. CSP funds may be used for post-award planning and design of the educational program, as well as for initial implementation of a charter school. In Texas, CSP funds are available to open-enrollment and university charter schools for a period of up to 3 years. No more than 18 months of this time may be used for planning and program design, while up to 2 years may be used for initial implementation activities. Because many campus charter schools are pre-existing district schools that opt to convert to charter schools, they are excluded from the planning and design component of CSP grants, and are only eligible for 2 years of implementation funding. Charter schools have substantial flexibility in their use of CSP funds to support program goals. For example, CSP funds may be used to purchase equipment and educational materials, support payroll, implement instructional programs, and so on.

Previous comparisons of the expenditure patterns of Texas' campus and open-enrollment charter schools have indicated that campus charter schools allocate their expenditures differently, and tend to spend their resources in a manner that is more consistent with traditional districts (TCER, 2008). Campus charter schools' accounting structures tend to look like those of traditional districts, and because campus charters receive district support for facilities maintenance and operation, they are able to devote more resources to instruction than open-enrollment charter programs. Comparisons of the CSP expenditures of campus and open-enrollment charter schools also reveal differences in the spending patterns, which, for the most part, reflect the differences in the start-up resources available to each type of charter school.

This chapter examines trends in open-enrollment and campus charter schools' use of CSP funding across 7 school years (2000-01 through 2006-07). Across this time, TEA's application requirements for CSP funding did not require that applicants budget in terms of planning and program design costs and implementation costs,[10] and PEIMS financial reporting does not identify CSP funds expended for program planning or for program implementation. This creates limitations for the analyses presented in this chapter because it is not possible to identify how new open-enrollment charter schools use CSP planning and program design funds relative to their use of CSP implementation funds. Instead, researchers examine open-enrollment charter schools' aggregate use of CSP funding across the years in which funds were expended.

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[9]The CSP system of grants was first authorized in 1994 under Title X, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The CSP was amended by Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 and by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

[10] Beginning with the 2008-09 cycle of CSP grant awards (Generation 13 charter schools), TEA required that grant applicants budget CSP funding in terms of (1) planning and program design and (2) program implementation.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter examines Texas charter schools' use of CSP grant funds and relies on PEIMS financial data from the 2000-01 through the 2006-07 school years. PEIMS financial data are submitted by fiscal year and submission timelines delay in the availability of financial data relative to other school data submitted as part of PEIMS. At the time of this writing, the 2006-07 PEIMS financial data were the most current school finance data available. In future evaluation reports, researchers will analyze subsequent years' CSP data as they become available.

The analyses presented in this chapter are averages across the charter school campuses expending CSP data in a given school year. Analyses consider the overall use of CSP funds by open-enrollment and campus charter schools, as well as charter schools' use of funds across expenditure categories established by Texas' system of public school financial reporting. Given the relatively small number of charter schools reporting CSP expenditures each school year, it is important to note that a single charter school may substantially affect the overall average.

OVERVIEW OF THE USE OF CSP FUNDS BY TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOLS

Open-Enrollment Charter Schools

Since the 2000-01 school year, a total of 177 open-enrollment charter schools[11] have been awarded CSP funding. Open-enrollment charter schools may receive up to 18 months of CSP planning funds as they design their educational programs and up to 2 years of implementation funding to supplement other state and federal revenues once schools are operational. Table 3.1 presents the number of open-enrollment charter schools that reported spending CSP funds within a given school year, as well as the amount of CSP dollars spent in each year. As the table indicates, the average open-enrollment charter school spent substantially less in 2000-01 than the average open-enrollment charter school in subsequent grant years. While the average CSP expenditure per open-enrollment charter school was $47,746 in 2000-01, the average ranged from $106,340 to $188,025 in subsequent years.

Table 3.1
Number of Open-Enrollment Charter Schools Reporting CSP Grant Expenditures, Total CSP Expenditures, and Average CSP Expenditures per Charter School by School Year

School Year	Number of Open-Enrollment Charter Schools Reporting CSP Expenditures	Total CSP Expenditures	Average CSP Expenditures per Charter School
2000-01	74	$3,533,212	$47,746
2001-02	105	$19,742,615	$188,025
2002-03	48	$6,874,935	$143,228
2003-04	48	$6,760,288	$140,839
2004-05	30	$4,016,954	$133,898
2005-06	31	$3,296,545	$106,340
2006-07	27	$3,961,457	$146,721

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.

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[11] Totals for open-enrollment charter schools include university charters.

Campus Charter Schools

A total of 47 campus charter schools reported spending CSP funds, beginning in 2001-02. The analysis of campus charter school CSP data is complicated by the fact that not all school expenditures are allocated at the campus level. Certain costs, such as central administration services and plant maintenance and operations, are allocated at the district level, and campus charter schools may draw upon them as needed. Others, such as staff salaries, are more clearly attributable to an individual campus. According to the *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide* (TEA*, 2008), "school districts are mandated to record payroll costs by campus level for educational personnel including professional and paraprofessional personnel where the cost is clearly attributable to a specific organization" (page 455-456). *The Guide* further specifies that individuals clearly attributable to a campus include those that are "dedicated to the day-to-day operations of the campus (partially or fully) and… under the direct or indirect supervision of the campus principal" (pp. 455-456). *The Guide* provides examples of the kinds of individuals that are likely to fall into that category, including classroom teachers, teacher aides, classroom assistants, librarians, principals, counselors, and social workers.

Given this structure, not all CSP funds are attributable to campus charter schools. This is reflected in Table 3.2, which presents total CSP expenditures, including those that are not allocated to the campus, and CSP funds that are spent at the campus level (allocated funds). As is apparent in the table, campus charter schools' total CSP expenditures exceeded those allocated at the campus-level across each spending year. Across years, campus charters reported spending between $81,774 and $248,488 per campus, on average. Relative to open-enrollment charter schools, there are wider variations in expenditure patterns of campus charters. This trend results from the relatively small number of campus charters receiving CSP grant funds across years (i.e., 3 to 27 schools), and the large effect an individual school's expenditures may have on averages when the total number of schools expending funds is small. Campus charter school participation in CSP funding has increased over time as campus charter schools have grown in number.

Table 3.2
Number of Campus Charter Schools Reporting CSP Grant Expenditures, Total CSP Expenditures, and Average CSP Expenditures per Charter School by School Year

School Year	Number of Campus Charters Reporting CSP Expenditures	Total CSP Expenditures (includes unallocated funds)	Total CSP Expenditures Reported by Campuses (allocated funds)	Average CSP Expenditures per Charter Campus
2000-01	0	0	0	0
2001-02	3	$534,486	$351,801	$178,162
2002-03	9	$735,967	$650,503	$81,774
2003-04	18	$4,408,437	$3,797,205	$244,913
2004-05	19	$4,721,269	$4,306,678	$248,488
2005-06	27	$2,392,209	$2,359,223	$88,600
2006-07	23	$4,231,299	$4,227,319	$183,970

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.
Note. For the purposes of this report, data are examined in the year in which the funds are spent, rather than the year in which funds are awarded. Consequently, average expenditures per charter campus may vary significantly from year-to-year. For example, the dip in average expenditures per campus in 2002-03 followed by increases in 2004-05 and 2005-06 is the result of charters carrying over funds from 2002-03 to be spent in the subsequent years.

ANALYSIS OF CSP GRANT SPENDING BY FUNCTION, OBJECT, AND PROGRAM CODES

Texas' financial reporting system organizes district expenditures in terms of function, object, and program codes. Generally speaking, object codes identify broad categories of items purchased by school districts (e.g., salaries, benefits, supplies and materials), function codes designate the general operational area in which funds are spent (e.g., instruction, transportation, central administration), and program codes delineate the specific program areas for which funds are used (e.g., special education or compensatory education). The following sections examine open-enrollment and campus charter school expenditure patterns across the three codes.

In order to ensure apples-to-apples comparisons of open-enrollment and campus charter schools' use of CSP funds, the sections that follow present data for total CSP expenditures (including unallocated funds) for campus charter schools.

Analysis of CSP Grant Spending by Function Code

Open-enrollment charter schools. Regardless of the year, open-enrollment charter schools tended to spend the largest proportion of CSP funds in the area of instruction (see Table 3.3). Across the period defined by the 2000-01 through the 2006-07 school years, the proportion of CSP funds allocated to instruction for open-enrollment charter schools ranged from a high of 59% in 2000-01 to a low of 31% in 2005-06. Across the same time period, instructional expenditures for all open-enrollment charter schools from all funding sources (federal, state, and local) ranged from a low of 46% in 2000-01 to a high of 51% in 2006-07. The percentage of CSP funds spent on instruction was highest in the 2000-01 school year and declined in subsequent years.

The percentage of funds spent in the area of instruction may be a function of whether the school is using planning funds or implementation funds. New open-enrollment charter schools may need to use a larger proportion of funds on non-instructional costs during planning in order to address administrative tasks necessary to opening a school. Plant maintenance and operations (ranging from 13% in 2004-05 to 35% of all CSP funds in 2006-07) and general administration (ranging from 6% in 2006-07 to 20% in 2001-02) were the next highest expenditure categories. When examining all open-enrollment charter schools using all fund sources, the proportion of expenditures on plant maintenance and operations ranged from a low of 12% in 2000-01 to a high of 15% in 2002-03. General administration expenditures for all open-enrollment charter schools using all fund sources ranged from 11% to 15% across the same period. The percentage of funds spent in the area of general administration declined in 2006-07, while the percentage of funds spent in the area of school leadership generally increased during over time, suggesting a shift in the use of CSP funds toward campus-level school management, including the salaries of campus-level administrators.

Table 3.3
Average Percentage of Open-Enrollment Charter School Total CSP Expenditures by Function Code and School Year

Function Code Category	2000-01 (n=74)	2001-02 (n=105)	2002-03 (n=48)	2003-04 (n=48)	2004-05 (n=30)	2005-06 (n=31)	2006-07 (n=27)
Co and Extra Curricular Services	0.04%	0.19%	0.13%	0.20%	0.21%	0.04%	0.98%
Community Services	--	0.08%	6.62%	5.38%	6.35%	0.57%	0.50%
Curriculum & Staff Development	1.20%	3.76%	0.91%	1.94%	2.31%	1.89%	1.13%
Data Processing	0.76%	1.69%	1.79%	7.59%	7.73%	3.37%	0.91%
Debt Services	--	0.35%	--	--	--	--	--
Food Service	--	0.39%	0.60%	1.04%	0.99%	0.07%	0.08%
Fund Raising	--	0.11%	--	0.00%	0.00%	0.17%	--
General Administration	10.52%	25.97%	14.94%	14.91%	19.90%	9.62%	5.52%
Guidance Counseling / Evaluation	2.26%	0.63%	1.62%	0.90%	1.14%	1.08%	0.26%
Health Services	0.05%	0.72%	--	0.49%	0.63%	0.01%	0.03%
Instruction	59.28%	41.64%	49.18%	40.98%	37.28%	31.38%	37.19%
Instructional Leadership	0.49%	0.67%	1.14%	1.09%	--	0.09%	1.00%
Instructional Resources	1.56%	0.24%	1.54%	0.60%	1.01%	0.76%	4.01%
Other Intergovernmental Charges	--	--	--	--	0.02%	--	--
Plant Maintenance & Operations	19.39%	20.38%	14.86%	15.22%	13.45%	28.38%	35.47%
School Leadership	4.34%	2.83%	5.77%	9.05%	7.32%	15.26%	12.00%
Security & Monitoring	0.06%	0.11%	0.43%	0.16%	1.02%	0.59%	0.13%
Social Work	--	0.04%	0.44%	--	--	--	--
Transportation	0.04%	0.22%	0.03%	0.43%	0.55%	6.73%	0.82%
No Functional Category	--	--	--	--	0.09%	--	--

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.
Notes. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding. Percentages are the proportion of funds spent in a particular category averaged across campuses. N represents the number of open-enrollment charter schools included in averages.

Campus charter schools. As presented in Table 3.4, campus charter schools tended to spend a higher proportion of their CSP funds on instruction (between 74% and 87% across years) and relatively less on plant maintenance and operations. Campus charter schools spent, on average, less than 1% of CSP funds in on plant maintenance and operation in each year between 2001-02 and 2006-07.

Table 3.4
Average Percentage of Campus Charter School Total CSP Expenditures by Function Code and School Year

	2001-02 (n=3)	2002-03 (n=9)	2003-04 (n=18)	2004-05 (n=19)	2005-06 (n=27)	2006-07 (n=23)
Co and Extra Curricular Services	--	--	--	--	--	0.03%
Community Services	--	8.53%	1.87%	1.93%	0.63%	1.29%
Curriculum & Staff Development	7.04%	1.92%	1.74%	5.36%	11.08%	15.00%
Data Processing	--	--	--	0.02%	0.50%	0.32%
Debt Services	--	--	--	--	--	--
Food Service	--	--	--	--	--	--
Facilities Acquisition and Construction	--	--	--	--	0.16%	1.05%
Fund Raising	--	--	--	--	--	--
General Administration	--	--	--	3.42%	1.85%	--
Guidance Counseling / Evaluation	4.63%	0.20%	0.01%	0.55%	1.67%	0.79%
Health Services	--	--	--	--	--	0.01%
Instruction	76.67%	86.88%	96.09%	87.26%	79.25%	74.35%
Instructional Leadership	11.56%	2.47%	--	--	--	0.05%
Instructional Resources	0.10%	--	0.11%	0.22%	1.95%	1.71%
Other Intergovernmental Charges	--	--	--	--	--	--
Plant Maintenance & Operations	--	--	0.07%	0.32%	0.35%	0.52%
School Leadership	--	--	--	0.92%	2.57%	3.82%
Security & Monitoring	--	--	--	--	--	1.05%
Social Work	--	--	--	--	--	--
Transportation	--	--	--	--	--	--
No Functional Category	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.
Notes. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. Percentages are the proportion of funds spent in a particular category averaged across campuses. N represents the number of campus charter schools included in averages.

The differences in how open-enrollment and campus charter schools allocated their CSP revenue across function codes are likely a reflection of differences in start-up and operations costs between the two kinds of schools. Because open-enrollment charter schools are entirely new schools that begin operations outside of traditional district structures, they must spend a larger share of funds on non-instructional categories related to start-up costs, such as spending on facilities (plant maintenance and operations) and general administration. In contrast, many campus charter programs start with a furnished facility in place and with district administrative support.

Analysis of CSP Grant Spending by Object Code

Open-enrollment charter schools. The bulk of open-enrollment charter schools' CSP expenditures across object codes went to payroll, professional and contracted services, and supplies and materials, though the relative ranking of each of these areas varies from year to year (see Table 3.5). Closer examination of expenditures categorized as professional and contracted services reveals that open-enrollment charter schools committed roughly a third of these expenditures across years to leases on facilities (analysis of PEIMS Actual Financial Data; data not included in Table 3.5). Capital outlay represented a smaller proportion of CSP spending, but patterns across these two categories suggest that open-enrollment charter schools were using a substantial portion of CSP funds to pay for facilities.

Table 3.5
Average Percentage of Open-Enrollment Charter School Total CSP Expenditures by Object Code and School Year

	2000-01 (n=74)	2001-02 (n=105)	2002-03 (n=48)	2003-04 (n=48)	2004-05 (n=30)	2005-06 (n=31)	2006-07 (n=27)
Payroll	17.24%	23.51%	41.72%	41.42%	42.26%	28.25%	28.44%
Professional & Contracted Services	30.17%	32.49%	30.87%	34.81%	36.40%	50.75%	44.24%
Supplies and Materials	48.32%	41.71%	23.22%	17.60%	15.26%	16.08%	24.38%
Other Operating Costs	3.03%	2.25%	3.35%	4.96%	5.96%	4.92%	2.94%
Debt Service	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	--	0.00%	--	0.01%
Capital Outlay	1.23%	0.00%	0.84%	1.21%	0.12%	--	--

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.
Notes. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. Percentages are the proportion of funds spent in a particular category averaged across campuses. N represents the number of open-enrollment charter schools included in averages.

Campus charter schools. As presented in Table 3.6, campus charter schools showed less consistency from year to year in the proportion of expenditures allocated across various object code categories. Again, this is likely related to the small number of campus charter programs reporting expenditures relative to open-enrollment charter schools. Generally speaking, campus charter schools tended to spend more CSP funds on capital outlay than their open-enrollment counterparts, and relatively less on payroll; however, this was not consistently true across years.

Table 3.6
Average Percentage of Campus Charter School Total CSP Expenditures by Object Code and School Year

	2001-02 (n=3)	2002-03 (n=9)	2003-04 (n=18)	2004-05 (n=19)	2005-06 (n=27)	2006-07 (n=23)
Payroll	32.68%	24.31%	4.36%	16.35%	31.03%	18.15%
Professional & Contracted Services	24.24%	58.63%	81.37%	68.70%	22.33%	12.67%
Supplies and Materials	25.43%	10.05%	8.25%	10.00%	21.65%	42.86%
Other Operating Costs	2.16%	1.28%	0.78%	1.96%	5.58%	6.36%
Debt Service	--	--	--	--	--	--
Capital Outlay	15.50%	5.73%	5.24%	2.99%	19.41%	19.97%

Source: PEIMS Actual Financial Database, various years.
Notes. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. Percentages are the proportion of funds spent in a particular category averaged across campuses. N represents the number of campus charter schools included in averages.

Analysis of CSP Grant Spending by Program Code

When analyzed by program code, a majority of CSP funds either were unallocated to a specific program area or were allocated to the basic educational services (this is the general education program, which includes costs associated with honors, advanced placement and college preparatory courses). Table 3.7 presents the primary CSP allocations for open-enrollment charter schools, and Table 3.8 presents the primary CSP allocations for campus charter schools. Program codes with notably small expenditures (i.e., less than 2%) are omitted from tables. For open-enrollment charter schools, basic educational services and unallocated expenditure comprised more than 90% of CSP expenditures from 2000-01 to 2006-07 (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7
Average Percentage of Open-Enrollment Charter School Total CSP Expenditures by Program Code and School Year

	2000-01 (n=74)	2001-02 (n=105)	2002-03 (n=48)	2003-04 (n=48)	2004-05 (n=30)	2005-06 (n=31)	2006-07 (n=27)
Basic Educational Services	13.90%	34.64%	48.00%	42.87%	46.14%	41.89%	37.32%
Unallocated	76.81%	63.12%	42.78%	51.58%	45.04%	53.17%	57.21%

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.
Notes. Totals may not equal 100%. Some program codes have been omitted because of small allocations. Percentages are the proportion of funds spent in a particular category averaged across campuses. N represents the number of open-enrollment charter schools included in averages.

For campus charter schools, expenditure patterns showed more variation (see Table 3.8). While basic educational services comprised the bulk of expenditures, a smaller proportion of expenditures was undistributed across program areas. In 2001-02, a substantially larger proportion of CSP funds was allocated to the area of bilingual education (34%) relative to subsequent years. In 2005-06 and 2006-07, several campus charter schools allocated an increasing proportion of CSP funds to accelerated education. Accelerated education programs provide credit-recovery, remediation, and support for students at-risk of dropping out. The increase in CSP expenditures on accelerated education likely reflects the increased interest of urban districts in providing alternative charter programs focused on dropout prevention and recovery.

Table 3.8
Average Percentage of Campus Charter School Total CSP Expenditures by Program Code and School Year

	2001-02 (n=3)	2002-03 (n=9)	2003-04 (n=18)	2004-05 (n=19)	2005-06 (n=27)	2006-07 (n=23)
Basic Educational Services	58.54%	79.34%	91.58%	84.62%	46.43%	34.48%
Accelerated Education	--	--	--	4.76%	35.53%	54.73%
Bilingual / Special Language	34.18%	11.59%	2.29%	2.73%	--	--
Undistributed	7.28%	9.07%	6.13%	6.60%	9.66%	5.35%

Source: Public Education Information Management System Actual Financial Database, various years.
Notes. Totals may not equal 100%. Some program codes have been omitted because of small allocations. Percentages are the proportion of funds spent in a particular category averaged across campuses. N represents the number of campus charter schools included in averages.

SUMMARY

The federal system of CSP grants provides new charter schools with funding across 3 years. Up to 18 months of funding may be used to support the planning the new charter school and up to 2 years of funding may be used for implementation of its program. As district schools, Texas' campus charters are excluded from receiving CSP planning funds, but are eligible for implementation funding.

This chapter examined how new charter schools use CSP funding to implement their programs (Research Question 1), and examined trends in the use of CSP funds for open-enrollment and campus charter schools from the 2000-01 to the 2006-07 school years. Findings indicate that both open-enrollment and campus charter schools tended to use the largest share of their CSP funds to support instruction; however, differences in spending patterns between the two school types suggest that campus charters were able to devote more funds to instruction because of district support. Notably, open-enrollment charter schools spent proportionately more of their CSP funding on issues related to plant maintenance and operations and general administration. Campus charter schools used small proportions of CSP funds for these spending categories, which is likely a reflection of district support.

Because open-enrollment charter schools do not account for use of CSP funds by planning and implementation years in PEIMS, it was not possible to track differences in the use of CSP revenues across funding periods. This limits the use of data to general analysis of school's use of funds across funding codes and years. If future data collection efforts identify funds by grant period (i.e., planning vs. implementation), researchers may be able to shed more light on the different types of support new charter schools need as they plan their programs and as they begin to serve students.

The ongoing evaluation will continue to examine trends in new charter schools use of CSP funding, focusing more specifically on the use of funding by Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, and will seek to incorporate information included in budgets of Generation 13 and 14 charter schools identifying how funds may be spent across the planning and implementation periods of CSP grants.

CHAPTER 4
SURVEY OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Researchers have found that an effective principal can have a "measureable, though indirect, effect on school effectiveness and student achievement" (Hallinger & Heck, 1997; Schiff, 2002). An effective principal is able to direct instruction, support achievement and growth in personnel and students, and manage the operation of the school by fostering a positive and respectful working environment (Mazzeo, 2003; Center on Reinventing Public Education [CRPE], 2007). In a charter school setting, an effective and experienced leader is considered necessary to avoid challenges and complications that many new charter schools face (Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000). For example, in addition to the roles of a "traditional" principal, charter school principals are often responsible for locating and securing an adequate facility, hiring a skilled and cohesive staff, recruiting students to ensure sufficient enrollment for funding, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders (CRPE, 2007).

Recognizing the significance of leadership in new charter schools, as well as the ability of campus-level administrators to provide firsthand knowledge of their schools, this chapter uses information gathered in the spring of 2008 from an online survey of principals to address the processes and practices that guide the planning and implementation of new charter schools (Research Questions 2, 3, and 4). Specifically, these questions explore principals' perceptions of opening a new charter school, including locating, securing, and financing a facility; recruiting teachers and students; the primary challenges and benefits of working in new charter schools; and principals' overall satisfaction working in new charter schools.

METHODOLOGY

In May of 2008, principals at Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools (12 and 10 schools respectively) were sent an email invitation to complete an online survey. Principals were given a month to complete the survey, and principals who did not respond within the specified time period were provided an extension and multiple reminders to complete the survey.[12] As presented in Table 4.1, principals at 6 Generation 11 and 10 Generation 12 charter schools responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 73%. It is possible that the lower response rate of Generation 11 principals (50%) may have resulted from a perception that they had already completed the survey. Generation 11 charter schools enrolled students during the 2006-07 school year, and therefore, were included in a similar survey administered in the fall of 2007 as part of the 2006-07 Texas Charter School Evaluation (TCER, 2008). Given that both surveys were administered online by TCER, Generation 11 principals may have thought they had already completed the survey. In contrast, Generation 12 principals were not included in the fall 2007 survey and had no prior experience with a TCER-administered online survey, which may have resulted in a higher response rate (100%).

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[12] As discussed in chapter 1 of this report, campus charter schools were targeted for surveys in the fall of 2007 as part of the 2006-07 Texas Charter School Evaluation (TCER, 2008). In order to reduce survey fatigue among students and staff in campus charter programs, the interim evaluation of new Texas charters limited spring 2008 surveys to open-enrollment charter schools. Note that no university charter schools began operations in Generation 11 or 12. Future activities in the evaluation of new Texas charter schools will extend surveys to include campus charters; and future evaluation reports will include results for principals of new campus charter schools, as well as those in open-enrollment and university charter schools.

Table 4.1
Distribution of the New Charter School Principals Survey Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Generation	Principals Surveyed	Principals Responding	Percentage of Principals Responding
Generation 11	12	6	50.0%
Generation 12	10	10	100.0%
All Respondents	22	16	72.7%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Note. Responses only represent principals of open-enrollment charter schools.

The online survey was designed for principals and teachers, and asked both groups about their backgrounds and school environments. Principals were then routed to a separate set of questions addressing school facilities, teacher and student recruitment, and the challenges principals encounter in starting new charter schools. A copy of the online survey of principals and teachers is included in Appendix A.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRINCIPALS OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

The principal survey asked a series of questions addressing the characteristics of principals at new open-enrollment charter schools, including principals' gender, ethnicity, education, and certification status. Principals also described their prior work experience, as well as the amount of time spent working in their current position. As presented in Table 4.2, in Generation 11, 100% of principals responding to the survey were male, and Generation 12 respondents were evenly distributed across genders. Survey results indicate that 75% of responding principals were White, 13% were African American, and 13% responded "Other."[13] New charter school principals indicated high levels of education, with 63% having completed coursework beyond a bachelor's degree. Of these, 44% had completed a master's degree and 13% held a doctorate. In spite of the high levels of education, only 31% of principals in new charter schools had obtained a Texas mid-management certificate—a credential often included as part of a master's degree in educational administration. The percentage of new charter school principals holding a mid-management certificate lags the average for all principals of open-enrollment charter schools (47%) reported in the Texas Charter School Evaluation 2006-07 (TCER, 2008, p.71).

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[13] When given the opportunity to define "Other" with an open-ended response, one principal specified his/her ethnicity as "White/Hispanic," while the second principal did not clarify the response.

Table 4.2
Characteristics of New Charter School Principals, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Characteristic	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (N=16)
Gender			
Male	100.0%	50.0%	68.8%
Female	0.0%	50.0%	31.3%
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	0.0%	20.0%	12.5%
White	66.7%	80.0%	75.0%
Other	33.3%	0.0%	12.5%
Highest Educational Level			
Bachelor's degree	16.7%	50.0%	37.5%
BA/BS and graduate courses	16.7%	0.0%	6.3%
Master's degree	50.0%	40.0%	43.8%
Doctorate	16.7%	10.0%	12.5%
Texas Mid Management Certification			
Yes	16.7%	40.0%	31.3%
No	83.3%	60.0%	68.8%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.

On average, new open-enrollment charter school principals had taught for approximately 8 years and held administrative positions for 7 years prior to their work in their current position (see Table 4.3). Survey findings indicate that principals were most likely to work in traditional public schools prior to their current position, averaging 4 years as an administrator and 5 years as a teacher. In comparison, principals reported teaching and holding administrative positions in charter schools for an average of 2 years. However, in analyzing the survey responses, it became clear that averages were skewed. Specifically, the data revealed that a larger proportion of principals worked in charter schools previously, but for a shorter period of time (2 to 6 years).[14] In contrast, few principals reported working in traditional public schools, but such principals held these positions for longer periods of time, with responses ranging from 12 to 30 years.

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[14] Skewness describes the distortion of a distribution due to the presence of particularly large or small values (i.e., outliers). Although the averages in the chart appear to indicate principals were more likely to work in traditional public schools, more principals worked in charter schools but for shorter durations of time than those who worked in traditional public schools.

Table 4.3
New Charter School Principals' Prior Experience, as a Mean of Years by School Type and Generation, 2007-08

Role by School Type	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (N=16)
Administrator			
Traditional public schools	2.5	4.3	3.7
Non-religious private	0.0	1.3	0.8
Religious private	0.0	0.2	0.1
Charter schools	3.0	1.4	2.0
Average total of years as an administrator	**5.5**	**7.2**	**6.6**
Teacher			
Traditional public schools	5.2	4.9	5.0
Non-religious private	0.0	1.8	1.1
Religious private	0.0	0.0	0.0
Charter schools	2.2	1.5	1.8
Average total of years as a teacher	**7.4**	**8.2**	**7.9**

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.

As shown in Table 4.4, on average, open-enrollment charter school principals have worked as administrators in their current charter school for approximately a year and a half. Working in a new charter school requires an investment of time, as principals worked an average of 57 hours per week.

Table 4.4
New Charter School Principals' Tenure and Work-Week, as a Mean of Years and Hours by Generation, 2007-08

Time Spent	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (N=16)
Years at current charter school	1.8	1.4	1.6
Average hours per week	55.8	57.0	56.6

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. One Generation 12 principal reported having worked 4 years at his/her current location. This is likely a response error. Omitting this response, Generation 12 principals have worked at their current school for an average of 1.1 years.

Open-enrollment principals also identified the length of time they were contracted to work. As presented in Figure 4.1, 80% of all respondents were contracted to work between "200 and 230 days" each year. Thirteen percent of principals reported working extended years, with contracts spanning "231 to 260 days." According to responses, Generation 11 principals worked longer years, with proportionately more principals reporting a contract spanning 211 to 260 days (67% vs. 44%).
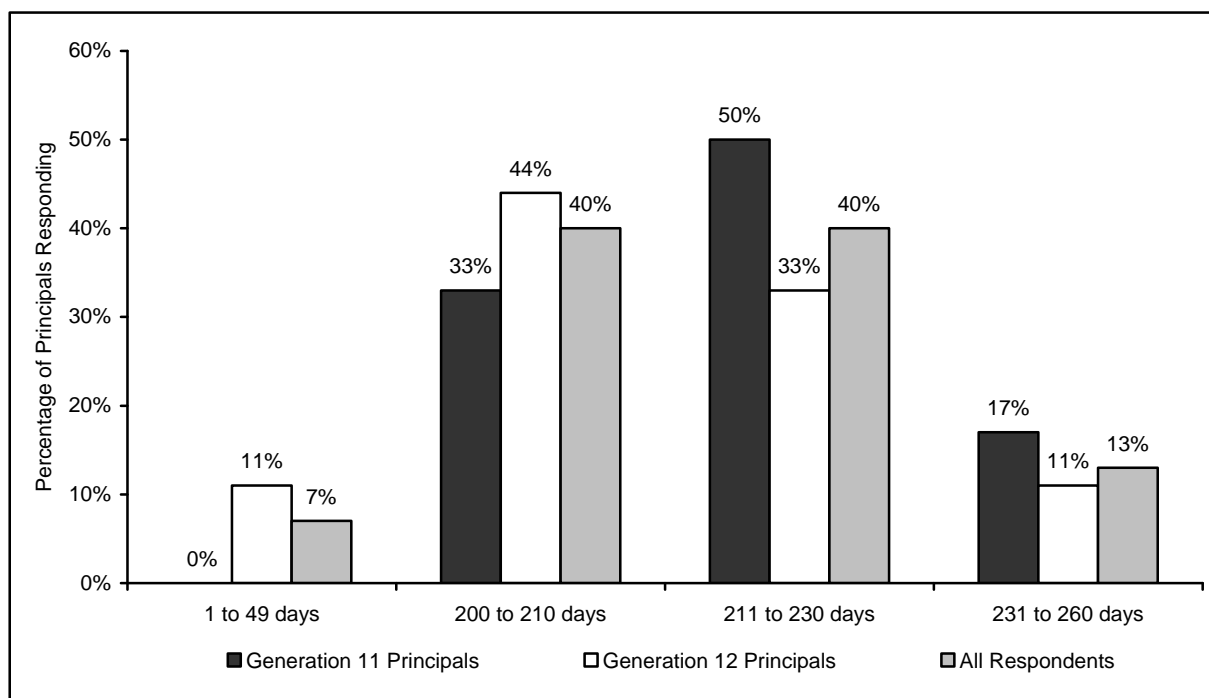
Figure 4.1. New charter school principals' contract days, as a percentage by generation, 2007-08.
Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. N=15. Although one Generation 12 principal indicated having a contract spanning 1 to 49 days, this is likely a response error, as the corresponding school's website indicates a standard school year (approximately 185 days).

SCHOOL MISSION AND ENVIRONMENT

Principals of open-enrollment charter schools also responded to items that described school characteristics, including academic and curricular missions, and school environment, including school safety, parental involvement, available resources, and so on. Principals' responses are discussed in the following sections.

School Mission

As presented in Table 4.5, principals of open-enrollment charter schools reported their schools' missions and goals. Principals of "Elementary and Middle School" and "High School" programs cited "College readiness," "Science and technology," and "Advanced coursework" (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Talented and Gifted programs) as the focus of instruction in their schools. Not surprisingly, substantially more high school programs promoted college and career preparation than elementary and middle school programs. Larger proportions of elementary and middle school programs were focused on "Foreign languages" and "Liberal arts." A substantial percentage of principals (23% of elementary and middle school principals and 22% of high school principals) indicated that their schools promoted "Other" missions and goals. These goals, clarified in open-ended responses, included a focus on the performing arts and film and fine arts, as well as a high school program that promoted "early college admission."

Table 4.5
New Charter School Principals' Description of Their Schools' Missions and Goals, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation and Grade Level, 2007-08

Missions and Goals	Generation 11		Generation 12		All Respondents	
	Elementary and Middle School (n=3)	High School (n=5)	Elementary and Middle School (n=10)	High School (n=4)	Elementary and Middle School (N=13)	High School (N=9)
College preparatory program	100.0%	80.0%	70.0%	100.0%	76.9%	88.9%
Science and technology	66.7%	60.0%	60.0%	100.0%	61.5%	77.8%
Advanced coursework	66.7%	60.0%	20.0%	25.0%	30.7%	44.4%
Foreign languages	--	--	30.0%	50.0%	23.1%	22.2%
Programs for at-risk students	--	16.7%	20.0%	25.0%	15.4%	22.2%
Technical/ career preparation	--	16.7%	--	25.0%	--	22.2%
Focus on liberal arts	--	--	10.0%	50.0%	7.7%	--
Other	--	16.7%	30.0%	--	23.1%	11.1%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. (N) does not equal 16 across programs because several principals provided responses for both "Elementary and Middle School" programs and "High School" programs. Percentages will not total to 100. Principals could provide more than one response within programs. In elementary and middle school programs, "Advanced coursework" refers to Gifted and Talented Programs. In high school programs, "Programs for at-risk students" refers to Dropout Recovery Programs.

School Environment

Within the survey, open-enrollment charter school principals rated their level of agreement with statements describing their schools' environments, indicating whether they (1) *strongly disagreed*, (2) *disagreed*, (3) *agreed*, or (4) *strongly agreed*. Table 4.6 presents principals' average responses sorted from high to low in terms of the "All Respondents" column. Values closer to 4 indicate higher levels of agreement. On average, principals *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their schools provided a safe environment during school hours, communicated often with parents, and had effective school leadership, as each statement received an average rating of 3.7. The availability of sufficient resources (2.8) received the lowest average rating from new charter school principals. Notably, this finding is also reflected in the results of the survey of new charter school teachers and parents of students attending new charter schools (see Table 5.7 in chapter 5 and Table 7.5 in chapter 7). Teachers indicated lack of resources was one of the primary challenges of working in a new charter school (see chapter 5). This common response suggests that many new charter schools face challenges providing adequate resources for students and that the lack of resources is apparent across stakeholders.

On average, Generation 12 principals rated each statement more highly than Generation 11 principals, with one exception—a larger percentage of Generation 11 principals *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement: "Parents and community members attend school meetings and activities." In accordance, several Generation 12 principals entered written responses citing low levels of parental involvement as one of the greatest challenges of their schools' first year. However, this finding conflicts with the survey responses of parents (see Table 7.9 in chapter 7), in which parents of students attending Generation 12 charter schools indicated higher levels of involvement across a range of school activities.

Table 4.6
New Charter School Principals' Ratings of Their School Environment, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Statement about School Environment	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (N=16)
School staff, students, and visitors feel safe in the building during school.	3.5	3.8	3.7
School administrators communicate often with parents.	3.3	3.9	3.7
This school has effective leadership.	3.3	3.9	3.7
School administrators set high expectations and communicate expectations to students and staff.	3.3	3.7	3.6
School staff, students, and visitors feel safe in the building before and after school.	3.3	3.8	3.6
The school is well managed; things work.	3.2	3.8	3.6
The school building is neat and clean.	3.2	3.7	3.5
Teachers and other staff participate in school decision making.	3.3	3.5	3.4
Teachers and parents work together to ensure student success.	3.3	3.5	3.4
Students in this school are committed to learning.	3.2	3.5	3.4
Parents and community members attend school meetings and activities.	3.5	3.3	3.4
Parents and community members volunteer time for school fundraising efforts.	3.2	3.5	3.4
The community supports the school's mission and goals.	3.2	3.5	3.4
Parents and community members volunteer time to work in the school.	3.3	3.4	3.3
This school has a positive relationship with the local school district(s).	2.7	3.1	2.9
Parents participate in school decision making.	2.8	2.8	2.8
The school has sufficient resources.	2.5	2.9	2.8

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagreed*, (2) *disagreed*, (3) *agreed*, (4) *strongly agreed*, with higher ratings indicating greater agreement.

NEW CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES

Much of the prior research on new charter schools indicates that obtaining adequate school facilities poses a significant challenge to fledgling charter schools (see chapter 1). According to charter school experts and recent research, "securing adequate facilities is one of the most challenging aspects of starting a new school. Unlike traditional public schools that rely on school districts for support, charter schools are responsible for locating, securing, and renovating their school buildings" (GAO, 2003, p. 9). Research on charter schools nationally has found that "lack of access to appropriate public facilities or to public funding for facilities continues to be a major obstacle for charter school operators" (Balboni, Rainer, Chae, & Olsen, 2007, p. 2). This is particularly true of states, such as Texas, that do not provide facility funding or assistance to open-enrollment or university charter schools (see chapter 1). The spring 2008 survey asked principals to address the processes and challenges involved in finding and financing a facility for new Texas charter schools.

Type of Facility

Research on charter schools nationally has established that the first facilities of many new charter schools are spaces not originally "designed for the purposes of public education" (Ascher, Cole, Harris, & Echazarreta, 2004, p. 24). As presented in Figure 4.2, survey results for new open-enrollment Texas charter schools reflect this finding. Although half of Generation 11 principals reported their charter school operators built custom facilities, a majority of principals (75%) indicated they renovated previously occupied spaces, and 50% of schools were housed within buildings previously used for non-educational purposes, such as former warehouses (19%), churches (13%), retail spaces (13%), and office buildings (6%).
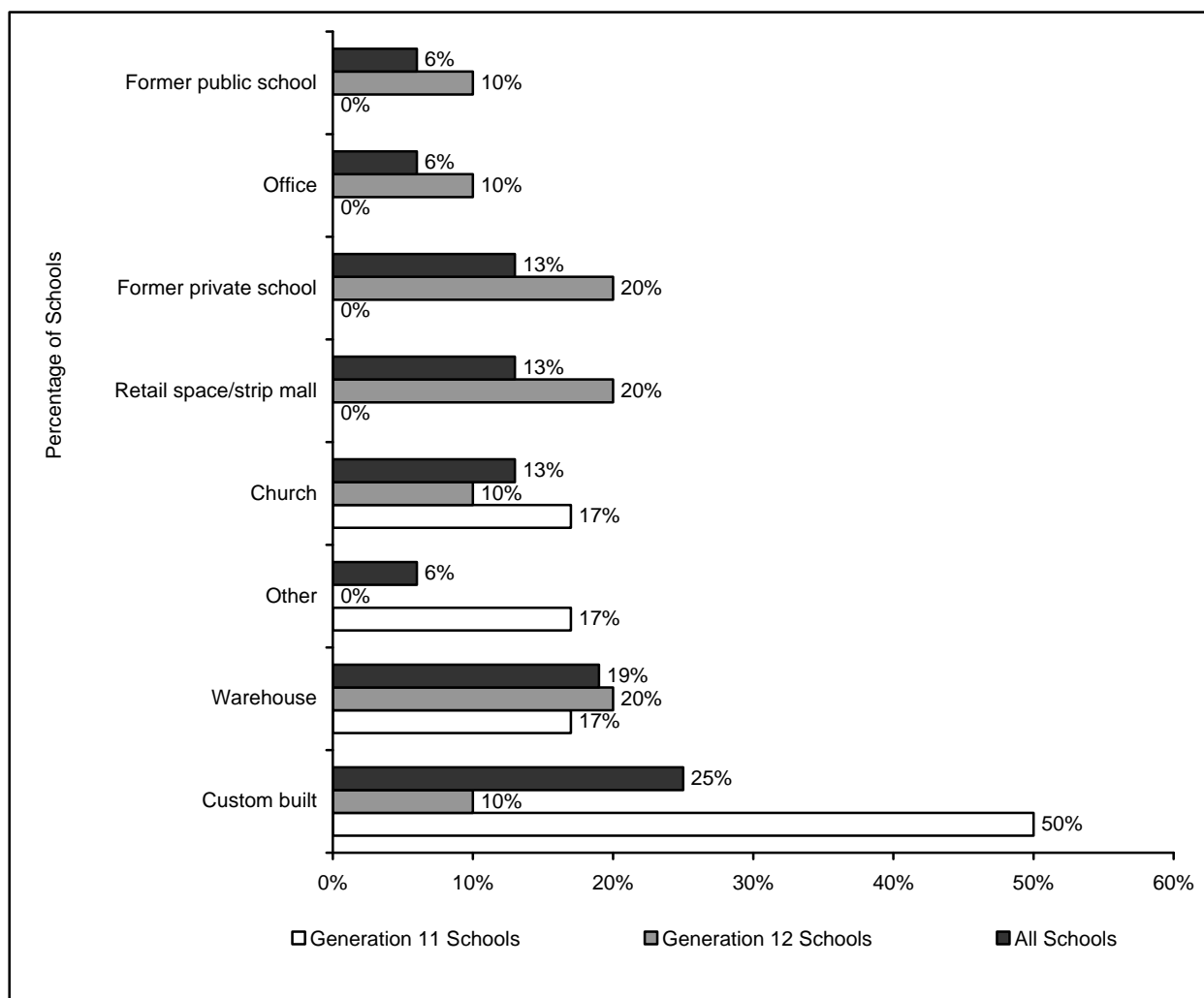
Figure 4.2. Types of facilities used by new charter schools, as a percentage of respondents by generation, 2007-08.
Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. N=16. In response to an open-ended probe, "Other" was specified as an "abandoned college campus."

Financing Facilities

New open-enrollment charter school principals identified whether new charter school facilities were "Purchased" (financed through a loan or mortgage), "Donated," "Leased," or "Rented on a monthly basis."[15] Findings presented in Figure 4.3 indicate that operators of new charter schools were most likely to "Lease" or "Rent" school facilities than to own property through a "Purchase" or "Donation." Specifically, 6% of new charter schools were housed within donated facilities, 19% within purchased facilities, and approximately 75% within leased or rented facilities. Proportionately, more Generation 11 charter school operators rented facilities on a monthly basis (50%), while Generation 12 charter school operators were more likely to "Lease" their facilities (50%). About a third (30%) of Generation 12

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[15] Lease agreements are generally established for extended periods of time (e.g., a year or more), while rental agreements are specified for shorter terms (e.g., month-to-month).

operators purchased their facilities and 17% of Generation 11 operators acquired donated facilities.[16] These findings align with national research on charter schools that indicates that most charter schools are housed within rented or leased facilities (Hassel & Page, 2001).
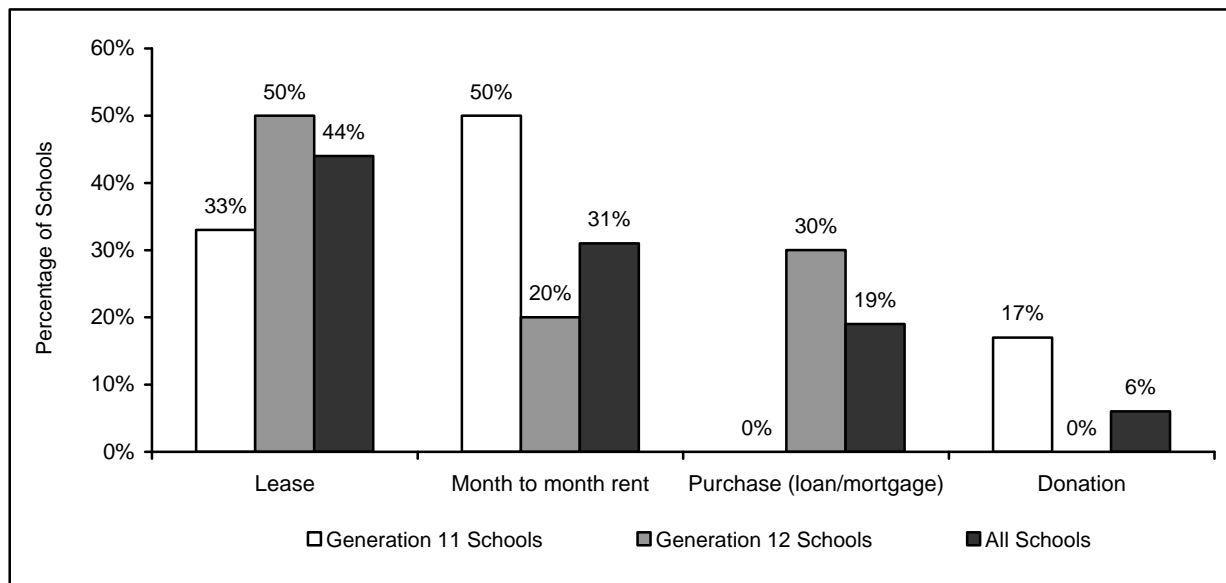
Figure 4.3. New charter schools' methods of financing facilities, as a percentage of respondents by generation, 2007-08.
Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Note. N=16.

With only one school housed in a donated facility (see Figure 4.3), nearly all new charter school operators (94%) were required to make payments toward a mortgage, lease, or monthly rent. According to principals, on average, Generation 11 charter school operators paid $443,500 annually (or a monthly equivalent of $36,958) (see Table 4.7). Operators of Generation 12 schools, on average, paid substantially less, at $125,734 annually and $10,478 monthly, despite having purchased a larger percentage of their facilities. This discrepancy is likely due to the large percentage (50%) of Generation 11 schools that were custom built (see Figure 4.3). Generation 11 principals in custom built facilities reported annual payments as high as $750,000, skewing the average annual payment.[17] Surprisingly, despite the substantially higher payments, none of the custom built Generation 11 facilities was purchased.

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[16] With a small number of observations (n), 17% is the equivalent of one school.

[17]Skewness describes the distortion of a distribution due to the presence of particularly large or small values (i.e., outliers). Although this number is the *average* payment, it is likely a majority of Generation 11 schools paid less than $443,500. However, two schools did not provide payment information. Therefore, the presence of one very high payment ($750,000), distorted the average payment amount.

Table 4.7
New Charter Schools' Average Annual and Monthly Payments for Facilities, as a Mean Dollar Amount by Generation, 2007-08

Payments	Generation 11 Principals (n=4)	Generation 12 Principals (n=8)	All Respondents (N=12)
Annual payment	$443,500	$125,734	$231,656
Equivalent monthly payment	$36,958	$10,478	$19,305

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. Four new charter school principals (two Generation 11 and two Generation 12 principals) did not provide an estimated annual payment for their facility.

As presented in Table 4.8, the three facilities purchased by new charter school operators were smaller in size or less expensive than those that were rented or leased (according to principals' estimations). The average annual payment for a purchased facility was $71,000, compared with $264,000 for a rented or leased facility. Therefore, school operators renting or leasing facilities were paying approximately four times the annual payment of schools housed within purchased facilities. Although this price procured a larger facility (19,000 square feet larger, on average) and a newer facility, 75% of new charter school operators were paying towards a property they will not own and which may not be available in the future. For example, one principal (making significant annual payments towards a lease) expressed concern in a written statement regarding the school's ability to maintain "access to the building long-term."

Table 4.8
New Charter Schools' Financing of Facilities by School, 2007-08

Type of Facility (N=16)	Estimated Size (Square Feet) (n=15)	Financing (N=16)	Annual Payment (n=12)	Price per Square Foot (n=11)
Other	5,000	Donated	--	--
Former public school	35,000	Rent	$160,000	$4.57
Retail space	25,000	Rent	$180,000	$7.20
Warehouse	48,000	Rent	$250,000	$5.21
Custom built	30,000	Rent	$574,000	$19.13
Custom built	95,000	Rent	$750,000	$7.89
Church	15,000	Lease	--	--
Warehouse	37,000	Lease	--	--
Former private school	25,000	Lease	$10,875	$0.44
Church	--	Lease	$48,000	--
Custom built	23,500	Lease	$200,000	$8.51
Retail space	34,000	Lease	$225,000	$6.62
Office	20,000	Lease	$240,000	$12.00
Warehouse	25,000	Purchase	--	--
Former private school	7,000	Purchase	$65,000	$9.29
Custom built	16,000	Purchase	$77,000	$4.81
Average[a]	**29,367**	**--**	**$231,656**	**$7.79**

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. Four schools did not provide annual payment information and one school did not provide an estimated size.
[a] An average of responses using (n) as the denominator.

Facility Size

As previously noted, new open-enrollment charter schools are often housed in facilities originally designed for non-educational purposes. New charter schools frequently locate new facilities that are too small to accommodate growth, but that accommodate initial enrollments and offset the financial strains of getting started (Ascher et al., 2004), and national research on charter schools has indicated that most charter school operators "plan either to move or to expand their facilities to accommodate future growth" (Hassel & Page, 2001, p. 7).

The survey asked new charter principals to describe the size of their facilities in relation to their plans for school expansion and growth. Specifically, principals provided an estimated size of their facility and also responded to the following questions:

- Is there space in your current facility to accommodate additional grade levels?
- Is there room in your current facility to accommodate increased enrollment?
- Does your charter school plan to expand to include additional grade levels? and
- Does your school share its facility with another organization?

As presented in Figure 4.4, a majority of principals indicated their current facilities had adequate space for future growth, including space to accommodate additional grade levels (81%) and increased enrollment (75%). However, responses varied slightly when compared by generation. Generation 11 principals indicated their facilities were larger than Generation 12 facilities, averaging approximately 11,000 more square feet (36,083 square feet vs. 24,889 square feet). This is likely related to the larger proportion of Generation 11 facilities built to custom specifications and sizes (see Figure 4.2). Due to initially acquiring a smaller and more affordable facility, Generation 12 schools were less likely to be able to serve all grade levels, as indicated by the somewhat larger proportion of Generation 12 principals who reported plans to add additional grade levels (see Figure 4.4). However, in these smaller facilities, fewer Generation 12 principals indicated that they currently had the space to accommodate additional grade levels. Similarly, 16% fewer Generation 12 principals indicated an ability to increase enrollment in their current facilities. In written responses, several Generation 12 principals raised concerns about funding projected expansions, noting the greatest challenge with respect to facilities was "getting the funding to purchase a larger facility to accommodate expected growth."
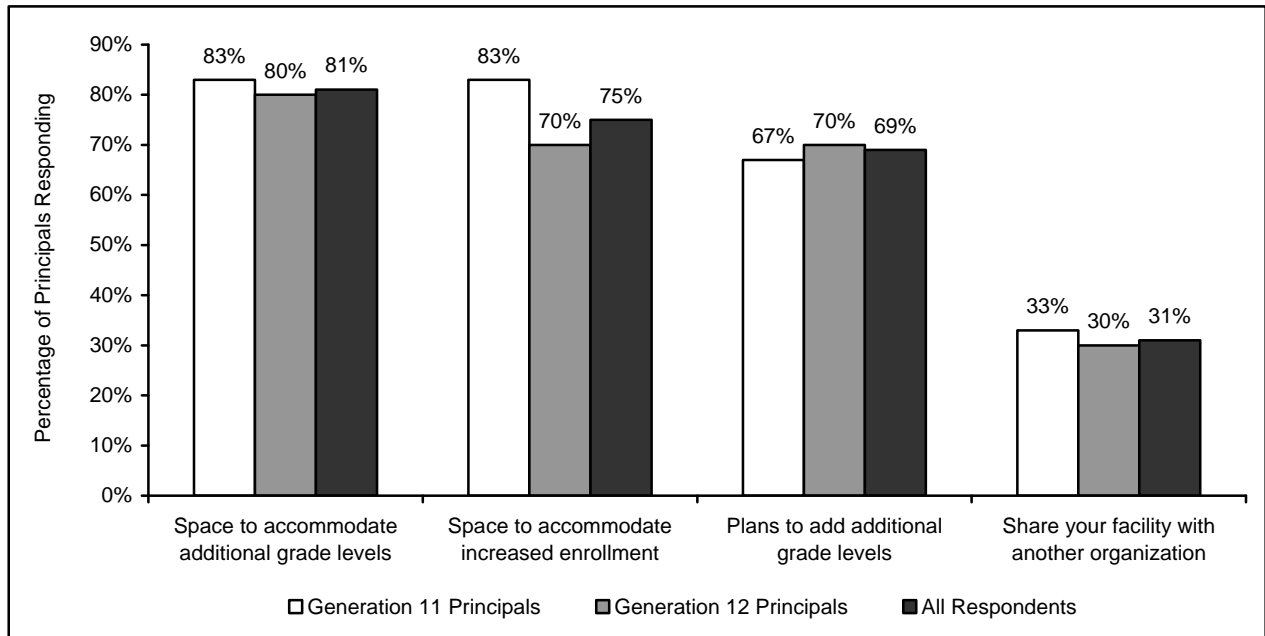
Figure 4.4. New charter school principals' perception of the relationship between size of their current facility and plans for future expansion, as a percentage of respondents by generation, 2007-08.

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.

Notes. N=16. Percentages will not total to 100. Principals responded "yes" or "no" to the following items: (a) "Is there space in your current facility to accommodate additional grade levels?"; (b) "Is there room in your current facility to accommodate increased enrollment?"; (c) "Does your charter school plan to expand to include additional grade levels?"; and (d) "Does your school share its facility with another organization?" The figure illustrates the percentage of principals responding "yes."

Facility Issues

Principals responded to statements addressing facilities challenges, rating issues as *not a problem*, *minor problem*, *moderate problem*, or *serious problem*. In alignment with previous findings, Generation 11 principals indicated their facilities were adequately sized, with a majority of principals reporting "Classroom space" (67%), "Office space" (67%), "Library space" (50%) were *not a problem* (see Table 4.9). Findings indicate that Generation 12 schools were more likely to lack space within facilities, while Generation 11 principals were more likely to report problems furnishing (computers) and maintaining (general and outdoor maintenance) facilities. Responses to an open-ended probe asking principals to "describe their greatest challenges with respect to facilities" provided further evidence that Generation 12 schools were lacking the space and the necessary funding to accommodate expected growth (see Figure 4.4). Four Generation 12 principals (25%) described a need for expansion and growth, with one principal specifically writing, "We need a larger facility."

Table 4.9
New Charter School Principals' Ratings of Facility Issues, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Facility Issue	Rating	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)
Classroom space	Not a Problem	66.7%	60.0%
	Minor Problem	16.7%	30.0%
	Moderate Problem	16.7%	0.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	10.0%
Office space	Not a Problem	66.7%	50.0%
	Minor Problem	0.0%	30.0%
	Moderate Problem	33.3%	10.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	10.0%
General maintenance	Not a Problem	33.3%	60.0%
	Minor Problem	33.3%	30.0%
	Moderate Problem	33.3%	10.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	0.0%
Library space	Not a Problem	50.0%	40.0%
	Minor Problem	16.7%	20.0%
	Moderate Problem	33.3%	10.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	30.0%
Computer labs	Not a Problem	66.7%	70.0%
	Minor Problem	16.7%	20.0%
	Moderate Problem	16.7%	10.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	0.0%
Classroom computers	Not a Problem	33.3%	50.0%
	Minor Problem	50.0%	30.0%
	Moderate Problem	16.7%	20.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	0.0%
Grounds and outdoor maintenance	Not a Problem	33.3%	40.0%
	Minor Problem	50.0%	50.0%
	Moderate Problem	16.7%	0.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	10.0%
Cafeteria space	Not a Problem	50.0%	50.0%
	Minor Problem	50.0%	40.0%
	Moderate Problem	0.0%	10.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	0.0%
Cafeteria equipment	Not a Problem	66.7%	60.0%
	Minor Problem	33.3%	40.0%
	Moderate Problem	0.0%	0.0%
	Serious Problem	0.0%	0.0%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.

In general, all respondents indicated that new charter school facilities were adequate, as presented in Figure 4.5. For example, a substantial majority of principals (81% or more) rated "Classroom space," "General maintenance," "Computer labs," "Outdoor maintenance," "Cafeteria space," and "Cafeteria equipment" as *not a problem* or a *minor problem.* However, six principals (approximately 40%) reported a *moderate* or *serious problem* regarding library space. Three principals reported having *serious problems* with library space, making this one of the most frequent and serious facilities challenges for new charter schools (once a facility was secured).
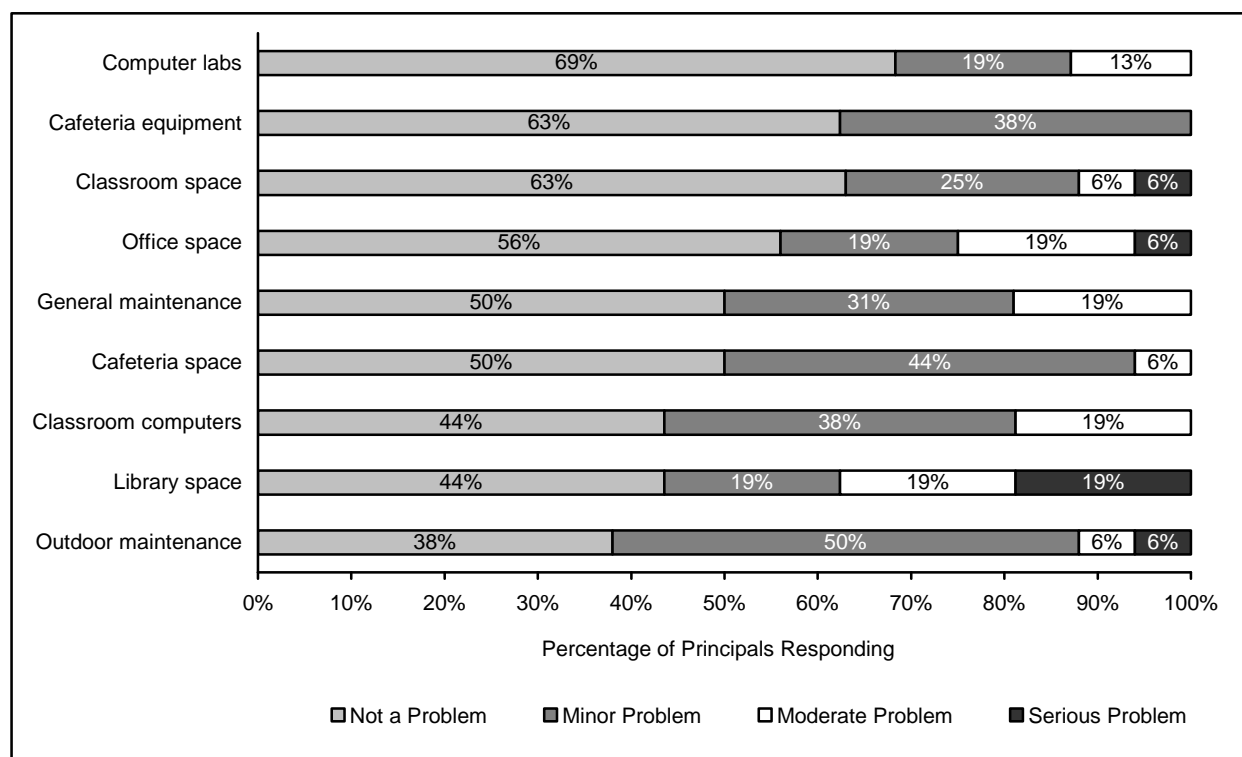
Figure 4.5. New charter school principals' ratings of facility issues, as a percentage of respondents by rating, 2007-08.
Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. N=16. Responses reflect answers to the same survey item as Table 4.9, but represent "All Respondents." Although 6% of principals reported serious problems with classroom space, office space, and outdoor maintenance, 6% is representative of one response due to a small number of observations (N).

TEACHER RECRUITMENT, STAFFING ISSUES, AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The spring 2008 survey, asked principals to describe the staff and student recruitment processes for open-enrollment charter schools. Principals detailed the methods used to recruit staff, the challenges related to recruiting staff, and the means used to recruit students. Principals also estimated the benefit of each student recruitment method and its contribution toward enrollment. Principals' responses are discussed in the following sections.

Teacher Recruitment

New charter school principals identified strategies used to recruit teachers to new charter schools (see Table 4.10). A large percentage of principals reported placing "Advertisements in newspapers or trade journals" (75%) and attending "University recruitment events" (69%) or "Regional teacher recruitment fairs" (69%). Most principals used multiple strategies, as is evident in the large proportion of principals who responded to each method. For example, the two least utilized means of recruitment, "Coordination with an independent teacher organization" and "Other," were still implemented by a quarter and approximately a fifth of schools respectively. Principals utilizing "Other" methods of recruitment indicated these strategies included Internet postings, television commercials, and partnerships with regional education service centers.

Table 4.10
New Charter Schools' Methods of Teacher Recruitment, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Teacher Recruitment Method	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (n=16)
Advertisements in newspapers or trade journals	83.3%	70.0%	75.0%
University recruitment event	66.7%	70.0%	68.8%
Regional teacher recruitment fairs	83.3%	60.0%	68.8%
Word of mouth	50.0%	60.0%	56.3%
Referrals from districts	50.0%	30.0%	37.5%
Coordination with a teachers' college	33.3%	30.0%	31.3%
Coordination with an independent teacher organization (e.g., Teach for America)	33.3%	20.0%	25.0%
Other	0.0%	30.0%	18.8%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. Percentages will not total to 100%. Respondents could provide more than one response.

Staffing Issues

New open-enrollment charter school principals also rated the severity of various staffing issues, responding *not a problem*, *minor problem*, *moderate problem*, or *serious problem*. Figure 4.6 presents the proportion of principals' indicating the severity of each issue. As evidenced by the figure, a substantial proportion of both generations of new charter principals felt that staffing issues were *not a problem.*
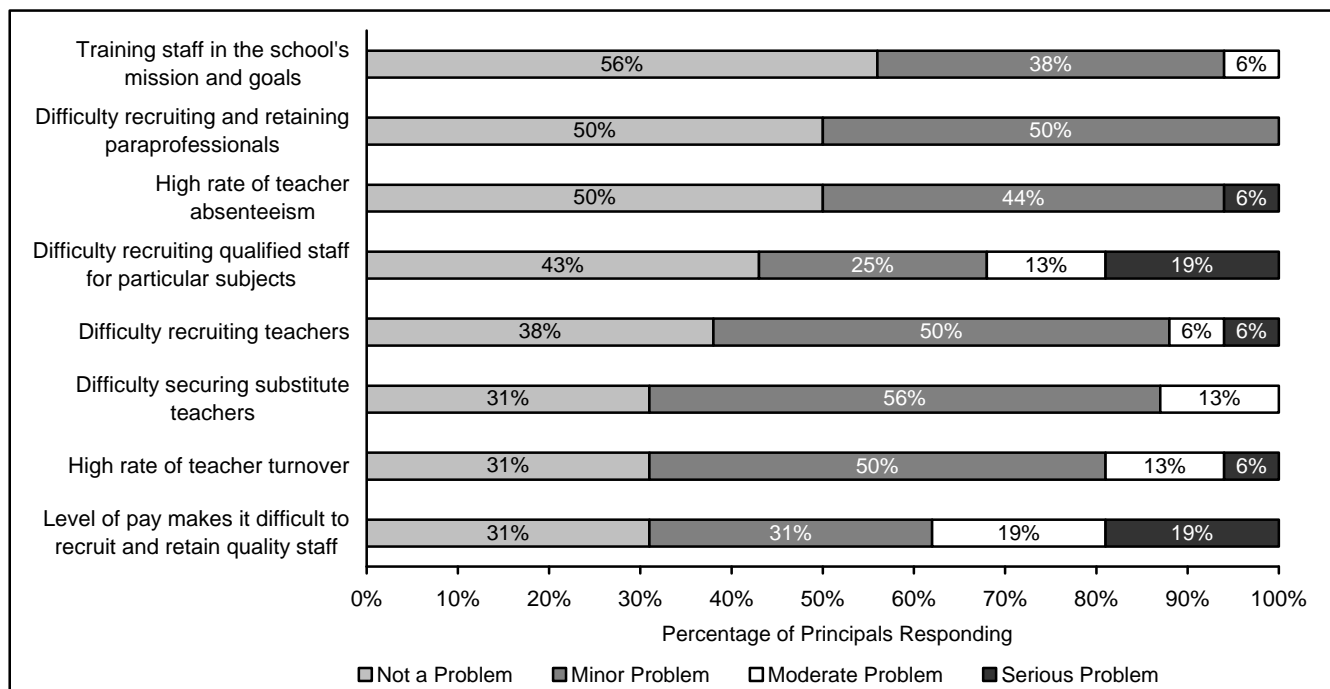
Figure 4.6. New charter school principals' ratings of staffing issues, as a percentage of respondents by rating, 2007-08.
Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Note. N=16.

According to data reported through TEA's AEIS, the average teacher salary for Generation 11 and Generation 12 charter schools lags both campus charter schools and the state average (see Figure 2.3 in chapter 2). Therefore, it is not surprising that principals found the relationship between low pay and the difficulty recruiting quality staff to be the greatest staffing challenge, with 38% of principals indicating this was a *moderate* or *serious problem* (see Figure 4.6). In written responses to a related probe, two principals (13% of all respondents) wrote about the challenges associated with low teacher salaries.

Generation 12 principals also cited "Difficulty recruiting qualified staff for particular subjects (i.e. math, science, technology)" (40%) and the "High rate of teacher turnover" (30%) as significant challenges. Principals of both generations found the task of "Training staff in the school's mission and goals" to be the easiest issue to address, with 56% of schools indicating this was *not a problem*. However, in open-ended responses, three principals (19%) stated this presented the "greatest challenge" with respect to staffing and was often a recurring issue. "[The greatest challenge is] overcoming the 'traditional school' mindset and completely replacing it with the philosophy of our school," explained one such principal. "The 'traditional school' mindset seems to creep back in too often."

Interestingly, within the open-ended responses, new charter school principals made the distinction between "qualified" and experienced teachers. While the survey item asked principals to address challenges regarding the recruitment of "quality" staff, two principals used the open-ended response section to address difficulty in recruiting "experienced" staff. Inexperienced teachers may be highly qualified (as defined by No Child Left Behind [NCLB]), but require substantial support from school administrators. This poses a problem when schools find it "difficult to recruit mid-career staff," as one principal reported, because there are few mentors for inexperienced teachers. Another principal explained, "New teachers need support and we have more new teachers than [we have] experienced teachers." This

challenge is not surprising, as a substantially larger percentage of new charter schools were staffed with beginning teachers and teachers having 1 to 5 years of experience than the state average (see Table 2.8 in chapter 2).[18]

Student Recruitment

New charter principals also identified strategies used to recruit students. As presented in Table 4.11, a substantial proportion of schools utilized "Parent/student word of mouth" (88%) and "Flyers, brochures, and posters" (81%). Proportionately, more Generation 12 principals said they used each strategy, indicating a greater variety of recruitment methods than Generation 11 schools.

Table 4.11
New Charter Schools' Methods of Student Recruitment, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Student Recruitment Method	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (N=16)
Parent/student word of mouth	83.3%	90.0%	87.5%
Flyers, brochures, posters	83.3%	80.0%	81.3%
Print advertising (i.e., newspaper, magazines)	66.7%	70.0%	68.8%
Community outreach (i.e., meetings with youth groups, community organizations)	50.0%	80.0%	68.8%
Traditional district referral	33.3%	50.0%	43.8%
Broadcast advertising (i.e., TV, radio)	16.7%	50.0%	37.5%
Coordination with military recruitment entities	0.0%	10.0%	6.3%
Other	0.0%	10.0%	6.3%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Notes. Percentages will not total to 100%. Respondents could select more than one response.

According to principals' survey responses, the top two methods of student recruitment ("Parent/student word of mouth" and "Flyers, brochures and posters") were also considered the most effective. Principals estimated these methods have contributed approximately 40% and 39% to student enrollment, respectively (see Table 4.12). However, results varied between generations for the remaining recruitment methods. Generation 11 principals found "Print advertising" to be effective, estimating these efforts contributed 50% to student enrollment. In contrast, the 70% of Generation 12 principals that used "Print advertising" (see Table 4.11) did not find the method beneficial; indicating it only resulted in a 6% contribution to enrollment. Similarly, Generation 11 principals found "District referrals" to be substantially more beneficial than Generation 12 principals, while Generation 12 principals reported "Community outreach" to be an effective means of recruitment. In written statements, several principals indicated that recruitment remained a challenge because students were reluctant to attend charter schools with limited extra-curricular activities offerings and unappealing facilities.

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[18] Note that Table 2.8 represents averages for all Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, including campus charter schools.

Table 4.12
New Charter School Principals Ratings of Recruitment Methods' Contribution to Enrollment, as a Mean Percentage by Generation, 2007-08

Method of Recruitment	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=10)	All Respondents (N=16)
Parent/student word of mouth	36.0%	41.6%	39.7%
Flyers, brochures, posters	40.0%	38.3%	38.8%
Print advertising (i.e., newspaper, magazines)	50.0%	5.7%	23.4%
Community outreach (i.e., meetings with youth groups, community organizations)	7.5%	23.0%	18.6%
Broadcast advertising (i.e., TV, radio)	10.0%	16.2%	15.2%
Traditional district referral	17.5%	1.0%	12.0%
Coordination with military recruitment entities	--	5.0%	5.0%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100%. Respondents could select more than one response.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Recognizing individual new charter schools may face unique challenges not specifically addressed by survey questions, the open-enrollment principal survey included an open-ended probe, "Please describe other challenges you have experienced in implementing your educational program during this school year." In addition, the survey allowed principals to describe their schools' accomplishments in an open-ended response to the probe, "Please describe the greatest successes you have experienced in implementing your charter school's educational program during this school year."

Implementation Challenges

Principals responding to the open-ended probe regarding implementation challenges highlighted several common issues for new charter schools. For example, principals serving at-risk student populations noted the challenge of working with students who lack course credits. One principal reported, "An overwhelming majority of the students who enrolled in our school were one or more grade levels behind. Their parents chose us because they were failing in the traditional school system." Many such students also faced personal issues that limited their ability to recover the lost credits. One principal explained, "We have experienced difficulty with some [students] because of the severity of their needs (housing, health, [and so on])." Despite these challenges, new charter schools are expected to meet the same academic accountability standards as traditional public schools. "[Our students] come to us not knowing the basics in math, yet we must test them on their grade level on the TAKS," one principal explained. [19]

Four principals cited low parental expectations and a lack of parental involvement as their greatest challenge. One principal reported that the lack of parental commitment to the mission and goals of the school had affected student enrollment, as parents often "change their mind and withdraw students."

Of the 10 principals responding to the open-ended probe, 50% indicated that financing and acquiring resources were their greatest challenges in the 2007-08 school year. For example, one principal noted "working with the city and other taxing entities" posed challenges. Two other principals discussed

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[19] TAKS is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the standardized test used by the state of Texas to measure accountability.

complications in acquiring necessary curricular and testing materials, as well as finding appropriate professional development opportunities for charter school teachers.

However, when asked to describe their job satisfaction 93% of all respondents reported that they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* (see Table 4.13). Notably, 100% of Generation 11 principals and a substantial percentage of all respondents (86%) indicated they were *very satisfied* with their current position as a new charter school principal. These findings indicate that, although new charter schools faced great challenges, compelling successes and rewards were also present.

Table 4.13
New Charter School Principals' Job Satisfaction, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Satisfaction	Generation 11 Principals (n=6)	Generation 12 Principals (n=9)	All Respondents (N=15)
Very dissatisfied	0.0%	11.1%	6.9%
Dissatisfied	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Satisfied	0.0%	11.1%	6.9%
Very satisfied	100.0%	77.8%	86.1%

Source: New Charter School Teacher/Principal Survey, Spring 2008.

Successes

A larger proportion of new charter school principals responded to the open-ended probe detailing their school's successes (81%) than those who responded to the question addressing charter school challenges (63%). Of the 13 principals describing successes, 38% cited increased student achievement (as measured by TAKS) and success in regional math and science competitions as their greatest achievements in the 2007-08 school year.

Principals were not only pleased with increased academic achievement, but also with students' personal growth. Twenty-three percent of principals cited improved discipline, social growth, and personal growth as major accomplishments for their students and their charter schools. Parents assisted with students' growth, as 15% of principals reported increased family and community involvement during the past year. One principal expressed satisfaction in the increased excitement for students' academic achievement and personal growth, writing, "[The greatest success] is hearing students at graduation say, 'If it hadn't been for this school, I would have been a drop-out. Thank you.'"

For three schools, demonstrated student achievement and increased community support has resulted in increased student enrollment. Enrollments had as much as tripled, requiring waiting lists for two of the schools. Although charter school principals considered growth in enrollment as a success, increased enrollment may introduce challenges, such as renovating the school's current facility or obtaining a larger facility.

SUMMARY

In the spring of 2008, 16 new charter school principals (6 Generation 11 and 10 Generation 12 principals) responded to an online survey. Principal responses reflect national research (see chapter 1), indicating locating, acquiring, and financing facilities are the primary challenges for new Texas charter schools. Although half of Generation 11 principals reported their schools built custom facilities, a majority of principals responding to the survey (75%) indicated their schools renovated previously occupied spaces, and 50% of schools were housed within buildings previously used for non-educational purposes. Nineteen

percent of Texas new charter schools were housed within purchased facilities and approximately 75% of schools occupied leased or rented facilities, requiring substantial payments toward a mortgage, lease, or monthly rent. Charter school operators who rented or leased facilities paid approximately four times the annual payment of school operators in purchased facilities towards a property they will not own and are not necessarily guaranteed in the future.

Due to using a large portion of funding for facilities, principals indicated new charter schools did not have sufficient funding and resources remaining for instructional planning and other purposes. This finding corresponds with national research (see chapter 1), as well as findings from new Texas charter school teachers (see chapter 5) and parents of new charter school students (see chapter 7). Fifty percent of responding principals reported that financing and acquiring resources were their greatest challenges in the 2007-08 school year. According to principals' responses, this affected recruitment of both staff and students. Specifically, principals perceived the inability to compete financially with traditional public schools by offering teachers a competitive salary and students a variety of extra-curricular activities as a barrier to recruitment.

In the ongoing evaluation, analyses will address methods new charter schools use to overcome these and other challenges in future years, as well as how these challenges affect classroom instruction and student outcomes.

CHAPTER 5
SURVEY OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL TEACHERS

Charter schools provide alternatives for teachers, as well as for parents and students, and may be attractive work environments for teachers for a variety of reasons, including increased teacher autonomy in curricular and instructional decisions (Farmer-Hinton, 2006; Johnson & Landman, 2000; Nelson & Miron, 2003). In spite of charter schools' inherent appeal to some teachers, teaching in a charter school may be a challenging endeavor. Charter school teachers often work with fewer resources than teachers in traditional district schools, even though many charter schools serve disadvantaged students with substantial educational needs (Schorr, 2002). In addition, charter school teachers often take on additional management responsibilities in order to provide support for school administration, and some charter teachers work longer hours in the classroom in order to provide support for at-risk students (Gross & Pochop, 2008; Johnson & Landman, 2000; Malloy & Wohlstetter, 2003). Despite the additional work, charter school teachers in most states, including Texas, tend to earn less than teachers working in traditional district schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002; TCER, 2006, 2007, 2008), which may strain teachers' commitment over time.

This chapter presents findings from a survey of teachers working in new Texas open-enrollment charter schools during the 2007-08 school year, which address the processes and practices that guide the planning and implementation of new charter schools (Research Questions 2, 3, and 4). The survey was administered in the spring of 2008 to teachers working in Generation 11 charter schools (schools that began serving students in 2006-07) and teachers in Generation 12 charter schools (schools that began serving students in 2007-08). Survey results indicate that while teachers who work in new Texas charter schools confront challenges in terms of insufficient resources, added responsibilities, and at-risk student enrollments, most teachers are satisfied with their choice of employment and plan to remain with the school for the next school year.

METHODOLOGY

In the spring of 2008, teachers of Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools were asked to participate in an online survey. The survey link was sent to principals and contained items for both principals and teachers in new charter schools. Principals were asked to forward the link to teachers on their campuses. Teachers and principals were given a month to complete the survey. Researchers provided principals with regular reports of the teachers on their campuses who completed the survey and asked principals to follow up with teachers who had not taken the survey in order to increase participation rates. Teachers and principals who did not complete the survey within the specified time period were provided with an extension and multiple reminders to complete the survey.

As presented in Table 5.1, teachers at seven Generation 11 and ten Generation 12 charter schools responded to the survey for an overall school-level response rate of 85%. However, school-level response rates differed substantially for Generation 11 and 12 charter schools (58% vs. 100%). This difference is largely attributable to student enrollment patterns. In the spring of 2008, two Generation 11 charter schools reported that they were not yet serving students. Teachers in these schools did not complete the survey. In total, 196 teachers responded to the survey (85 Generation 11 teachers and 111 Generation 12 teachers); however, it was not possible to calculate teacher-level response rates because researchers did not have complete data on the total number of teachers employed by Generation 11 and 12 charter schools.

Table 5.1
New Charter Schools Responding to the Teacher Survey, as Number and Percentage of Schools by Generation, 2007-08

Generation	Number of Schools Surveyed	Number of Schools with Teachers Responding	Percentage of Schools Responding
Generation 11[a]	10	7	58.3%
Generation 12	10	10	100.0%
Total	**20**	**17**	**85.0%**

Source: Response rate from Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
[a]Teachers in two Generation 11 charter schools did not respond to the survey because their schools had not yet enrolled students at the time of survey administration.

The survey asked principals and teachers a common set of questions about their school environments and then routed teachers to a separate set of questions about their backgrounds, the reasons they chose to teach in new charter schools, school management, their approaches to instruction and assessment, school resources, professional development opportunities, and the primary benefits and challenges the experience working in new charter schools. A copy of the online survey of principals and teachers is included in Appendix A.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Respondents to the survey of teachers working in new open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to be female than male (67% vs. 33%), but somewhat larger proportions of male respondents worked in Generation 11 than Generation 12 charter schools (39% vs. 29%). Across both generations of charter schools, a majority of respondents were White. According to responses, Generation 11 charter schools employed a notably larger proportion of Hispanic teachers than did Generation 12 schools (27% vs. 9%). Generation 11 teachers were less likely to have completed coursework beyond a bachelor's degree (38%) in comparison to Generation 12 teachers (49%) or to hold subject area certification for the courses they taught in 2007-08 (58% vs. 69%, respectively).

Table 5.2
Characteristics of New Charter School Teachers, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Characteristic	Generation 11 Teachers (n=85)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=111)	All Respondents (N=196)
Gender			
Male	38.8%	28.8%	33.2%
Female	61.2%	71.2%	66.8%
Race/Ethnicity			
Hispanic	27.1%	9.0%	16.8%
African American	3.5%	12.6%	8.7%
White	61.2%	70.3%	66.3%
Other	8.2%	8.1%	8.2%
Highest Educational Level			
Completed high school	1.2%	0.9%	1.0%
Less than 4 years of college	2.4%	0.0%	1.0%
Bachelor's degree (BA/BS)	58.8%	50.5%	54.1%
BA/BS and graduate courses	11.8%	23.4%	18.4%
Master's degree	22.4%	25.2%	24.0%
Doctorate	3.5%	0.0%	1.5%
Hold Certification in Subject Areas Currently Taught			
Yes	58.3%	69.1%	64.4%
No	41.7%	30.9%	35.6%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.

TEACHER CREDENTIALS AND EXPERIENCE

Teacher Certification Status

In general, a substantial proportion (36%) of teachers working in new open-enrollment charter schools indicated that they did not hold certification in subject areas currently taught (see Table 5.2). In addition to lacking certification in subject areas taught, Table 5.3 shows that larger proportions of Generation 11 than Generation 12 teachers were neither certified nor seeking certification (14% vs. 6%). Similar proportions of Generation 11 and 12 teachers indicated they were certified to teach in Texas or in another state, although Generation 12 teachers were somewhat more likely to be working towards Texas certification than their Generation 11 counterparts (31% vs. 25%).

Table 5.3
New Charter School Teacher Certification Status, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Certification Status	Generation 11 Teachers (n=85)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=111)	All Respondents (N=196)
I am not certified and not working to obtain certification	14.1%	6.3%	9.7%
I am currently certified to teach in Texas	58.8%	60.4%	59.7%
I am currently certified to teach in another state	9.4%	9.9%	9.7%
I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification	24.7%	30.6%	28.1%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100%. Some respondents were characterized by more than one category.

Response patterns presented in Table 5.4 indicate that Generation 12 teachers were more likely to have obtained certification through an undergraduate or post-graduate certification program offered by a college or university, while Generation 11 teachers were more likely to have participated in an alternative certification program (44% vs. 25%).

Table 5.4
New Charter School Teachers' Route to Certification, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Certification Route	Generation 11 Teachers (n=50)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=65)	All Respondents (N=115)
College/university undergraduate certification program	38.0%	49.2%	44.3%
Alternative certification program (ACP)	44.0%	24.6%	33.0%
College/university post-bachelor certification program	18.0%	26.2%	22.6%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. N=115 because this item was only asked of teachers that indicated they were currently certified to teach (see Table 5.3).

Teacher Experience

As indicated in Table 5.5, teachers working in new Texas open-enrollment charter schools had an average of almost 5 years teaching experience in 2007-08. As presented in chapter 2, beginning teachers and teachers with up to 5 years of experience account for approximately two thirds of Generation 11 and approximately three fourths of Generation 12 teachers (see Table 2.8 in chapter 2).[20] Generation 11 and Generation 12 teachers who responded to the survey gained most of their prior experience working in traditional public schools. Teachers' responses reveal few differences in experience levels across Generation 11 and 12 charter schools.

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[20] Note Table 2.8 also includes the experience of teachers working in campus charter schools.

Table 5.5.
New Charter School Teachers' Experience, in Mean Years by School Type and
Generation, 2007-08

Experience	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
Traditional public schools	2.3	2.2	2.2
Non-religious private	0.3	0.4	0.4
Religious private	0.3	0.4	0.4
Charter schools	1.6	1.5	1.6
Total years	**4.5**	**4.6**	**4.6**

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. One teacher in Generation 11 and one teacher in Generation 12 did not respond to this survey item.

TEACHER EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS

Factors Affecting Teachers' Decisions to Work in New Charter Schools

To determine the factors that may influence a teacher's decision to work in a new charter school, the survey asked teachers to rate a series of statements about the reasons they chose to work in charter schools using a 4-point scale: (1) *not important,* (2) *somewhat important,* (3) *important,* and (4) *very important*. Teachers' mean, or average, responses are presented in Table 5.6, and are sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" column. Values closer to 4 indicate factors that teachers weighted more heavily in their employment decisions.

The factor rated most highly by teachers across both generations of charter schools was school mission and goals (rated to be *important* or *very important* with an average of 3.5). Teachers weighted a school's academic reputation (an average of 3.3), as well as small class and school sizes (both an average of 3.2) similarly. Interestingly, teachers only rated competitive salary an average of 2.5. However, principals indicated salary was of greater importance to teachers and the inability to offer competitive pay created challenges when recruiting staff (see Figure 4.6 in chapter 4). Teachers placed less importance on concerns about standardized testing (an average of 2.1), teacher certification requirements (an average of 2.0), and difficulty finding another position (an average of 1.9).

Table 5.6
New Charter School Factors Influencing Teachers' Decisions on Choice of Workplace, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Factor	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
The school's mission and goals	3.5	3.5	3.5
Academic reputation/high standards of this school	3.3	3.3	3.3
Small class sizes at this school	3.1	3.3	3.2
Small school size	3.2	3.3	3.2
Interested in being involved in an educational reform effort	3.2	3.1	3.1
Opportunity to work with like-minded educators	3.1	3.0	3.0
The high level of parent involvement	3.0	3.0	3.0
More autonomy at this school	2.8	2.9	2.9
Opportunity to teach and draw retirement pay	2.6	2.7	2.7
Convenient location	2.4	2.7	2.6
Competitive salary and benefits	2.6	2.5	2.5
Opportunity to work with a specific student population	2.3	2.6	2.5
Less standardized testing pressure	2.1	2.0	2.1
Able to teach without certification	2.2	1.8	2.0
Difficulty finding another position	1.9	1.8	1.9
Other[a]	1.8	2.3	2.1

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Notes. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *not important,* (2) *somewhat important,* (3) *important,* (4) *very important.* One teacher in Generation 11 and one teacher in Generation 12 did not respond to this survey item.
[a] Only 50 teachers (23 in Generation 11 and 27 in Generation 12) responded to this survey item.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The survey of teachers in new open-enrollment charter schools also provided a set of questions addressing school environment, including the length of class periods and school days, teaching assignments, teachers' views of instructional management, and the benefits and challenges of working in a charter school.

In order to gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of their school environments, the survey asked teachers to rate their level of agreement with a set of statements describing school characteristics using a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree,* (2) *disagree,* (3) *agree,* and (4) *strongly agree*. Table 5.7 presents teachers' average, or mean, rating for each statement sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" column. Values closer to 4 indicate higher levels of agreement with each statement.

Across both generations of charter schools, teachers agreed that they felt safe in their schools, both during school hours (an average of 3.7), as well as before and after school (an average of 3.6). In addition, teachers tended to *agree* or *strongly agree* that school buildings were kept neat and clean (an average of 3.5). Teachers also agreed that administrators communicated often with parents (average of 3.4) and set high expectations for students and staff (an average of 3.4), and that parents worked with teachers to

ensure student success (an average of 3.4). Teachers were less likely to agree that their school had sufficient financial resources.

Table 5.7
New Charter School Teachers' Perceptions of School Environment, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

School Characteristic	Generation 11 Teachers (n=85)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=111)	All Respondents (N=196)
School staff, students, and visitors feel safe in the building during school.	3.7	3.7	3.7
School staff, students, and visitors feel safe in the building before and after school.	3.6	3.6	3.6
The school building is neat and clean.	3.4	3.5	3.5
School administrators communicate often with parents.	3.5	3.4	3.4
School administrators set high expectations and communicate these expectations to students and staff.	3.5	3.3	3.4
Teachers and parents work together to ensure student success.	3.4	3.4	3.4
Students in this school are committed to learning.	3.3	3.3	3.3
This school has effective leadership.	3.3	3.2	3.3
Parents and community members volunteer time for school fundraising efforts.	3.3	3.2	3.2
Parents and community members volunteer time to work in the school.	3.2	3.3	3.2
The school is well managed; things work.	3.3	3.2	3.2
The community supports the school's mission and goals.	3.2	3.2	3.2
Parents and community members attend school meetings and activities.	3.1	3.1	3.1
This school has a positive relationship(s) with the local school district(s).	3.0	3.0	3.0
Teachers and other staff participate in school decision making.	3.0	3.1	3.0
The school has sufficient financial resources.	2.9	2.9	2.9
Parents participate in school decision making.	2.7	2.9	2.8

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree,* (2) *disagree,* (3) *agree,* (4) *strongly agree.*

Length of Instructional Day and Class Periods

New Generation 11 and 12 charter school teachers taught an average of five class periods a day (see Table 5.8). There were slight variations in average class period length, with an average of 55 minutes for Generation 11 and 47 minutes for Generation 12 schools. In addition, there were slight variations between the lengths of the school day. In Generation 11, the school day lasted, on average, 8 hours and 9 minutes. In Generation 12, the school day lasted, on average, 7 hours and 13 minutes.

Table 5.8
New Charter School Mean School Day, Period, and Number of Periods Taught Daily by Generation, 2007-08

Period	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
Average length of school day[a]	8 hours, 9 minutes	7 hours, 13 minutes	7 hours, 37 minutes
Length of class period (in minutes)	55 minutes	47 minutes	51 minutes
Class periods taught per day	5 periods	5 periods	5 periods

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. Two Generation 12 teachers did not respond to this item.
[a]One Generation 11 school participating in the survey offered flexible enrollment options, in which students may attend a 4-hour school day offered in either a morning or afternoon session, which may have slightly affected Generation 11's average length of school day.

Teaching Assignments

Of the new open-enrollment charter school teachers who participated in the survey, 48% reported that they taught middle school, and 42% taught elementary school (see Table 5.9). While the proportion of teachers working with middle school grades was similar across both generations of charter schools, in comparison with Generation 11 a greater proportion of Generation 12 teachers reported teaching elementary (54% vs. 28%) and primary grades (47% vs. 20%). Generation 11 respondents, on the other hand, were more likely to teach at the high school level (48% vs. 5%). These differences are explained by the differences in the types of schools authorized in each generation. As presented in chapter 2, a majority of Generation 11 and 12 charter schools served students in the elementary grades (PK-5), and smaller numbers of schools, particularly in Generation 12, served high school students in 2007-08 (see Table 2.3).

Table 5.9
New Charter School Instructional Levels Taught, as Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Instructional Level	Generation 11 Teachers (n=85)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=111)	All Respondents (N=196)
Primary (PK-2)	20.0%	46.8%	35.2%
Elementary (3-5)	28.2%	54.1%	42.9%
Middle (6-8)	47.1%	49.5%	48.5%
High School (9-12)	48.2%	5.4%	24.0%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100%. Some respondents teach more than one level.

Among teachers of new open-enrollment charter schools who responded to the survey, smaller proportions of Generation 11 teachers were assigned to core content area courses than their counterparts in Generation 12 charter schools (see Table 5.10). Differences between Generation 11 and 12 teachers assigned to teach in the core content areas were most notable in social studies (25% vs. 49%), mathematics (31% vs. 54%), and science (31% vs. 52%).

Table 5.10
New Charter Schools' Subject Area Taught, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Subject Area Taught	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
Other	52.4%	40.0%	45.4%
Mathematics	31.0%	53.6%	43.8%
Science	31.0%	51.8%	42.8%
English/language arts	32.1%	49.1%	41.8%
Social studies	25.0%	49.1%	38.7%
Reading	26.2%	43.6%	36.1%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100%. Some respondents teach more than one subject. One Generation 11 teacher and one Generation 12 teacher did not respond to this question.

Views of Instructional Management

Teachers in new open-enrollment charter schools responded to survey statements about instructional management at their school, indicating whether they (1) *strongly disagree,* (2) *disagree,* (3) *agree,* or (4) *strongly agree*. Table 5.11 presents teachers average level of agreement sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" column. Overall, teachers *strongly agreed* that their schools had high standards and expectations for students (an average of 3.5). In addition, teachers *agreed* with statements concerning the clarity of their schools' mission and goals to faculty, parents, and students (a mean of 3.3 for each group).

Teachers tended to *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that class sizes were too large (a mean of 1.8), and indicated that they *disagreed* that their school lacked adequate curriculum guides (a mean of 2.0). While there are few notable differences between teachers across charter school generations, teachers in Generation 12 schools had lower levels of agreement across most response categories.

Table 5.11
New Charter School Teachers' Agreement on Use of Instructional Management Characteristics, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Instructional Management Characteristic	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
This school has high standards and expectations for students.	3.5	3.6	3.5
This school's mission and goals are clear to faculty.	3.4	3.3	3.3
Students usually are assigned homework.	3.2	3.4	3.3
This school's mission and goals are clear to parents.	3.4	3.2	3.3
This school's mission and goals are clear to students.	3.3	3.2	3.3
This school is meeting students' learning needs that were not addressed at other schools.	3.3	3.2	3.2
I am satisfied with the school's curriculum.	3.3	3.1	3.2
School administration supports teachers' autonomy.	3.3	3.1	3.2
Taking attendance and other classroom management activities do not interfere with teaching.	2.9	3.1	3.0
I have ample time for planning instruction.	3.0	2.9	3.0
The school provides appropriate special education services for students who require it.	2.8	2.7	2.8
There are few outside interruptions of class work.	2.8	2.7	2.7
Student behavior problems do not disrupt instructional time.	2.8	2.5	2.6
I have insufficient classroom resources.	2.2	2.2	2.2
This school does not have adequate curriculum guides for the subject(s) I teach.	2.0	2.0	2.0
Class sizes are too large.	2.0	1.7	1.8

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Notes. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree,* (2) *disagree,* (3) *agreed,* (4) *strongly agree.*
One Generation 11 and one Generation 12 teacher did not respond to this question.

Primary Benefits of Teaching in a New Charter School

The survey of new open-enrollment charter schools asked teachers to respond to an open-ended question about the benefits of teaching at a charter school and were provided with space to respond. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents (171 teachers) provided a written answer. Researchers categorized responses thematically, and Table 5.12 presents the five benefits teachers described most frequently. Across both generations, teachers said they appreciated working with small class sizes that enabled them to build better relationships with students. One teacher described professional satisfaction that came from a variety of sources, noting, "It has been a pleasure to work with a small class size and have the children be a part of a fine arts program that they wouldn't get in a public school. I also enjoy working with a small group of teachers that are very helpful."

Table 5.12
New Charter Schools' Primary Benefits of Teaching, as a Percentage of
Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Benefit	Generation 11 Teachers (n=73)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=98)	All Respondents (N=171)
Small class sizes	24.6%	32.6%	29.2%
Student quality	24.6%	11.2%	16.9%
Instructional autonomy	10.9%	20.4%	16.3%
Collegial environment	17.8%	12.2%	14.6%
Engaged parents	13.7%	9.2%	13.4%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Notes. Open-ended responses were categorized thematically. Percentages will not total to
100; only the five most frequent response categories are included. Only 73 teachers in
Generation 11 and 98 teachers in Generation 12 responded to this survey item.

Teachers expressed satisfaction with the quality of students attending charter schools, as well as with parents' level of engagement in students' schooling. Teachers also wrote that they enjoyed the instructional autonomy provided by charter schools. One teacher noted, "I am lucky to have the freedom to be creative in developing my own curriculum based on our students' needs and the state requirements."

Primary Challenges of Teaching in a New Charter School

In addition, teachers participating in the survey of new open-enrollment charter schools responded to an open-ended question that probed the challenges of working in a new charter school. Researchers categorized responses thematically, and as shown in Table 5.13, the major challenge teachers faced was a lack of adequate resources. Some teachers responded that their schools had less funding than traditional public schools, and the reduced revenue meant that supplies and teaching materials were strained. Teachers noted that the lack of school resources required that they borrow resources from a library or locate appropriate materials on the Internet.

Teachers also wrote that they wore many hats when starting a new school and that their added responsibilities absorbed a considerable portion of their schedules. "The primary challenge [of working in a new charter school] is having a lot more responsibilities than other school teachers," explained one such teacher. Another wrote, "We have to do a lot of multi-tasking."

Teachers also explained that the challenges of starting a new school left them feeling overwhelmed. For example, one teacher wrote, "Because we are a new school, we have been just a little underprepared to do most of the things we promised we would do." While the challenges of starting a new school proved daunting for some teachers, others were excited by the opportunity to develop new programs. As one teacher explained, "It has been an exciting challenge to develop a model dual language program with integrated curriculum in a low socioeconomic area."

Table 5.13
New Charter School's Primary Challenges of Teaching, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Challenge	Generation 11 Teachers (n=73)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=98)	All Respondents (N=171)
Insufficient resources	8.2%	18.3%	14.0%
Added responsibilities	10.9%	5.1%	7.6%
The challenges of starting a new school	2.7%	11.2%	7.6%
Large class sizes	6.8%	7.1%	7.0%
Lack of student discipline	5.4%	8.1%	7.0%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Notes. Only 73 teachers in Generation 11 and 98 teachers in Generation 12 responded to this survey item. Open-ended responses were categorized thematically. Percentages will not total to 100; only the top five response categories are included.

Some teachers indicated that their class sizes were too large; and others felt that student discipline issues created challenges in their schools. However, teachers said that the small school size and the collegial environment they experienced in new charter schools were a benefit to managing student behavior. One teacher writing of discipline issues noted, "It is refreshing, however, when administration and fellow teachers back you up and have zero tolerance for disrespect and misbehavior." Teachers explained that they overcame challenges with the support of parents, school administrators, and other teachers.

Teacher Satisfaction with New Charter School Employment

The survey of new open-enrollment charter schools also asked teachers about their overall level of satisfaction with their work in new charter schools, and Table 5.14 presents teachers' responses. Nearly 90% of teachers across both generations of charter schools were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their choice of employment. However, teachers in Generation 12 charter schools were somewhat more *dissatisfied* (8% vs. 5%) or *very dissatisfied* (6% vs. 2%) than teachers in Generation 11 charter schools.

Table 5.14
New Charter School Teachers' Level of Satisfaction with Employment, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Satisfaction Level	Percentage of Generation 11 Teachers (n=85)	Percentage of Generation 12 Teachers (n=108)	Percentage of All Respondents (N=193)
Very Dissatisfied	2.4%	5.6%	4.1%
Dissatisfied	4.7%	8.3%	6.7%
Satisfied	47.1%	33.3%	39.4%
Very Satisfied	45.9%	52.8%	49.7%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. All Generation 11 teachers answered this survey item, but only 108 Generation 12 teachers responded.

Teachers' level of satisfaction with their employment was also reflected in their responses to a survey question that asked whether they planned to return to work in the new charter school in the subsequent school year. More than 80% of teachers in both generations responded that they would teach in their new charter school in 2008-09 (81% of Generation 12 and 85% of Generation 11 teachers).

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Instructional Methods

According to Texas' charter school law, a central premise of charter schools is to "encourage different and innovative learning methods" (TEC §12.001[a][5]). To determine the instructional methods used in new charter school classrooms, the survey asked teachers to rate the extent to which they used a set of instructional methods using a 4-point scale: (1) *not at all,* (2) *small extent,* (3) *moderate extent,* and (4) *large extent*. Table 5.15 details the extent to which teachers used these methods in their classrooms; mean values closer to 4 indicate that an instructional method was used to a greater extent.

On average, charter school teachers used each of the innovative learning methods at least to a *moderate extent,* with mean ratings of 2.5 and higher. However, charter school teachers were likely to use some methods to a greater extent than others. Of the methods cited, "Students work in pairs or small groups" and "Students work to improve basic skills," earned the highest overall rating (an average of 3.4 for both responses), which indicates that teachers use these two methods to a *moderate extent* and *large extent* in their classrooms. Interestingly, three of the six methods receiving lower than a 3.0 mean rating, involved the use of technology. However, it is unclear if this is a funding issue. Although new charter school principals, teachers and parents indicated schools did not have sufficient resources (see Table 4.6 in chapter 4, Table 5.7 in chapter 5, and Table 7.5 in chapter 7), teachers reported having access to technology (see Table 5.15). Permitting students to set individual course goals was the method used to the least extent, with a mean of only 2.5.

Table 5.15
Instructional Methods Used by Teachers, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Instructional Methods	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
Students work in pairs or small groups.	3.3	3.5	3.4
Students work to improve basic skills (e.g., reading, writing, math computation).	3.3	3.5	3.4
Students complete individual assignments (e.g., workbook or textbook exercise).	3.3	3.3	3.3
I guide interactive discussion with all students.	3.3	3.3	3.3
I provide one-on-one instruction.	3.2	3.3	3.3
I direct the whole group (lecture, control pace).	3.2	3.2	3.2
Students work with hands-on activities or manipulatives.	3.0	3.3	3.2
Students apply course concepts to solve real world problems.	3.1	3.1	3.1
Students use computers.	3.0	2.8	2.9
Students present oral reports.	2.8	2.8	2.8
Students complete longer-term projects (i.e., lasting more than a week).	2.8	2.7	2.8
Students use the Internet for classroom assignments.	2.7	2.6	2.6
I make multimedia or PowerPoint presentations.	2.7	2.5	2.6
Students set individual course goals that address the curriculum.	2.5	2.6	2.5

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Notes. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *not at all,* (2) *small extent,* (3) *moderate extent,* (4) *large extent.*
One Generation 11 teacher and one Generation 12 teacher did not respond to this question.

Technology Resources

Generation 11 and Generation 12 teachers reported similar access to technology resources. Eighty-four percent of Generation 11 teachers reported having Internet access in their classrooms, compared with 86% of Generation 12. Generation 11 teachers had an average of 1 computer for every 6 students, while Generation 12 teachers had an average of 1 computer for every 4 students.

Table 5.16
New Charter Schools' Classroom Internet Access, as a Percentage and Mean of Computers and Students per Class by Generation, 2007-08

Technology Resource	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	All Respondents (N=194)
Classrooms with Internet access	84.5%	85.8%	85.3%
Classrooms without Internet access	15.5%	14.2%	14.7%
Computers per class	3	4	4
Students per class	19	16	17

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. One Generation 11 teachers and one Generation 12 teacher did not respond to this survey item.

Assessment Methods

In addition to focusing on the teaching methods used in charter schools, the survey addressed methods for assessing student progress. Teachers responded to statements about their use of student assessments, using a 4-point scale: (1) *not at all,* (2) *small extent,* (3) *moderate extent,* and (4) *large extent*. Table 5.17 presents the mean responses for each assessment method; mean values closer to 4 indicate that a particular assessment method was used to a greater extent.

Teachers used tests of their own design most extensively (an average of 3.2). Student demonstrations and projects were also commonly used assessment tools (averages of 3.1 and 2.9, respectively). Standardized tests, such as TAKS, were used least often, with an average of 2.3. This is not surprising, given that standardized tests, such as TAKS, are generally only given once a year.

Table 5.17
New Charter Schools' Assessment Methods Used by Teachers, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Assessment Method	Percentage of Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Percentage of Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	Percentage of All Respondents (N=194)
Teacher-made tests	3.1	3.2	3.2
Student demonstrations or performances	3.0	3.2	3.1
Student projects	2.9	2.9	2.9
Student writing samples	2.6	2.8	2.8
Student oral presentations (alone or in groups)	2.7	2.8	2.7
Student portfolios	2.4	2.8	2.6
Textbook or publisher provided tests	2.6	2.7	2.6
Standardized tests (i.e. TAKS)	2.3	2.4	2.3

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Notes. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *not at all,* (2) *small extent,* (3) *moderate extent,* (4) *large extent*. One Generation 11 teacher and one Generation 12 teacher did not respond to this survey item.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Professional Development Opportunities

Texas' charter school law is concerned with creating professional opportunities for teachers in addition to improving student education (TEC §12.001[a][3]). Teachers responded to a series of survey questions addressing their participation in professional development and their school's approach to teacher appraisal. On average, Generation 11 teachers attended 10 days of professional development in 2007-08, and Generation 12 teachers attended 9 days. As presented in Table 5.18, the most common professional development activity for both Generation 11 and 12 teachers was attending a general session sponsored by the school (91%). Most teachers also received an orientation to the school's mission and goals (89%), and many teachers attended professional development opportunities sponsored by ESCs (77%).

Table 5.18
New Charter School Teacher Participation in Professional Development Activities, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Professional Development Activity	Percentage of Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Percentage of Generation 12 Teachers (n=110)	Percentage of All Respondents (N=194)
General session sponsored by your school	95.2%	88.2%	91.2%
Orientation to school's mission and goals	95.2%	83.6%	88.7%
Session sponsored by ESC	76.2%	78.9%	77.7%
Professional conference	66.7%	61.8%	63.9%
Teaming or shared conference periods	64.3%	61.8%	62.9%
Release time for independent training activities	60.7%	55.5%	57.7%
Release time to work with other school educators	58.3%	55.5%	56.7%
Peer observation and critique	52.4%	52.3%	52.3%
Session sponsored by a traditional school district	27.4%	34.5%	31.4%
College or university coursework	22.6%	24.5%	23.7%
Other	2.4%	1.8%	2.1%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. One Generation 11 teacher and one Generation 12 teacher did not respond to this survey item.

Teacher Appraisal

Over 50% of teachers in Generation 11 and 12 charter schools were evaluated using PDAS, a formal evaluation system approved by the state, consisting of observations and teacher self-reports, which address criteria necessary for Learner-Centered Instruction. Twenty-one percent of teachers were evaluated using a formal system other than PDAS. Twenty-seven percent of Generation 11 and 22% of Generation 12 teachers were not evaluated using a formal system.[21] Charter school teachers tended to be evaluated twice a year; 39% of teachers in both generations reported that they were observed in the classroom once a semester (see Table 5.19). In a response to an open-ended survey question, one teacher explained that, "At any time, an administrator can walk in our door. Formal observation happens in the spring and the informal observation happens in the fall." Interestingly, in open-ended responses, 7% of

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[21] This does not necessarily mean teachers were not evaluated, but administrators relied on informal observations and evaluating measures.

teachers in Generation 11 and 3% of teachers in Generation 12 said they were unsure how they were appraised.

Some teachers remarked that appraisals were not helpful. The common theme in teachers' comments was that the appraisals were based entirely on a single observation, without other performance measures or feedback. One teacher wrote that, "It is not informative and the teacher learns nothing. The principal sits in the room and then he gives you no feedback." This teacher's comments were echoed by several other respondents, both at the same and at other schools.

Table 5.19
New Charter School Frequency of Teacher Appraisals, as a Percentage of
Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Frequency of Appraisals	Generation 11 Teachers (n=84)	Generation 12 Teachers (n=111)	All Respondents (N=195)
Once a semester	40.5%	37.8%	39.0%
Once a year	29.8%	21.6%	25.1%
Other	16.7%	25.2%	21.5%
Once a grading period	13.1%	15.3%	14.4%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Teachers, Spring 2008.
Note. One Generation 11 teacher did not answer this survey item; all Generation 12 teachers responded.

SUMMARY

This chapter summarized the results of an online survey of teachers working in Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools. Generation 11 and 12 teachers had an average of 4.5 years of prior teaching experience. This finding corresponds with the larger percentage of beginning teachers (with 5 years of experience or less) employed by charter schools across the state, in comparison to traditional public schools (see chapter 2). A majority of teachers' prior experience was within traditional public schools, meaning, for many teachers, their current position is their first position within a charter school. Teachers' decisions to leave traditional public schools and work in new charter schools were largely influenced by the schools' missions and goals. Other reasons teachers cited for applying to new charter school positions included the smaller school and class size. Not only were new charter school teachers inexperienced, but a large proportion lacked degrees (46%) and certification (36%) in the subject they were teaching.

On average, teachers had positive perceptions of the school environment. However, similar to principals (see Table 4.5 in chapter 4) and parents of students attending new charter schools (see Table 7.5 in chapter 7), teachers were less likely to agree that their school had sufficient financial resources. This finding was reflected in responses to a probe addressing the primary challenges to teaching within a new charter school; lack of funding and resources was the most commonly cited response. Teachers also noted the added responsibilities and the inherent difficulties of starting a new school as key challenges to working in new charter schools. In spite of workplace challenges, 89% of new charter school teachers reported being *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their decision to teach in a new charter school, largely due to small class sizes, the quality of students and parents, classroom autonomy, and a collegial school environment.

CHAPTER 6
SURVEY OF NEW TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

To gain an understanding of students' perceptions of and experiences in new charter schools, the evaluation included surveys of students in Grades 4 through 12 in Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools. Separate surveys were provided for students in Grades 4 through 5 and for students in Grades 6 through 12 in order to accommodate differences in students' reading levels. Both sets of surveys addressed the reasons students and their families choose new charter schools, students' academic experiences in new charter schools, their satisfaction with their choice of schooling, and whether students planned to attend their charter school in the subsequent school year. Students in Grades 6 through 12 also completed a survey section addressing their postsecondary plans. The survey results presented in this chapter provide information about how new charter schools implement their educational programs and students' perceptions of school effectiveness (Research Questions 3 and 4). The student surveys are available in Appendix B.

METHODOLOGY

In April of 2008, paper and pencil surveys and survey instructions were mailed to each of the 19 Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools that enrolled students in Grades 4 through 12 during the 2007-08 school year.[22] Schools were provided with postage paid UPS envelopes in which to return completed surveys. Schools were given a month to complete the surveys, and schools that did not complete surveys by the specified deadline were provided with an extension and multiple reminders to complete surveys. In total, 1,433 students responded to surveys (921 Generation 11 students and 512 Generation 12 students). Because researchers did not have complete data on the number of students attending new charter schools, it was not possible to calculate student-level response rates.

Table 6.1 presents school-level response rates in terms of the number of schools targeted for surveys and the number of schools that returned surveys, as well as the survey response rates by surveyed grade levels and charter school generation. Across both generations of charter schools, 19 schools that served students in Grades 4 through 12 and were targeted for surveys. Eleven of the targeted schools served students in Grades 4 and 5, as well as Grades 6 through 12, which affects the calculation of the "Total Schools" column. Of the 19 surveyed schools, 15 returned completed surveys for a total school-level response rate of 79%. Across grade levels, Generation 12 charter schools responded at higher rates than Generation 11 charter schools.

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[22] As discussed in chapter 1 of this report, campus charter schools were targeted for surveys in the fall of 2007 as part of the 2006-07 Texas Charter School Evaluation (TCER, 2008). In order to reduce survey fatigue among students and staff in campus charter programs, the interim evaluation of new Texas charter schools limited spring 2008 surveys to open-enrollment charter schools. Note that no university charter schools began operations in Generation 11 or 12. Future activities in the evaluation of new Texas charter schools will extend surveys to include campus charters; and future evaluation reports will include results for students of new campus charter schools, as well as those who attend open-enrollment and university charter schools.

Table 6.1
New Charter School Response Rates, as Number and Percentage by Grade-Level, 2007-08

	Schools Serving Grades 4-5	Schools Serving Grades 6-12	Total Schools[a]
Generation 11 charter schools targeted for surveys	6	8	10
Generation 11 campuses submitting surveys[b]	4	6	7
Generation 11 response rates	**66.7%**	**75.0%**	**70.0%**
Generation 12 charter schools targeted for surveys	9	7	9
Generation 12 campuses submitting surveys[c]	8	6	8
Generation 12 response rates	**88.9%**	**85.7%**	**88.9%**
Generation 11 and 12 charter schools targeted for surveys	15	15	19
Generation 11 and 12 campuses submitting surveys[d]	12	12	15
Total response rates	**80.0%**	**80.0%**	**78.9%**

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
Note. The grade ranges listed were selected to match the student survey analysis and are not necessarily inclusive of the full grade span served by the campuses.
[a]Four targeted Generation 11 charter schools and 7 targeted Generation 12 charter schools served both grade levels.
[b]Of the Generation 11 charter schools submitting surveys, 3 served both grade levels.
[c] Of the Generation 12 charter schools submitting surveys, 6 served both grade levels.
[d]Across both Generation 11 and 12 charter schools submitting surveys, 9 served both grade levels.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN GRADES 4 THROUGH 12

Students' survey responses revealed differences in the racial composition of the student bodies of Generation 11 and Generation 12 schools. In comparison to Generation 11 students, greater percentages of Generation 12 students identified themselves as African American or White. In contrast, Generation 11 students were more likely to have described themselves as Hispanic (see Table 6.2). Across both generations, notably large proportions of students (21% of students in Grades 4 and 5 and 18% of students in Grades 6-12) described their racial/ethnic background as "Other." Students responding "Other" were provided with space to provide a written description of their race or ethnicity. Of the students who entered written responses, 30% indicated they were Asian, 20% indicated they were from a mixed race background (e.g., African American/Hispanic or Hispanic/White), 13% provided nonsensical responses (e.g., alien or vampire),[23] and 10% indicated they were Mid-Eastern. Smaller percentages of students said they were Italian, Irish, Turkish, and so on. In terms of grade groupings, Table 6.2 indicates that all Generation 12 students who participated in the student survey for Grades 6 through 12 were enrolled in middle school grades (i.e., Grades 6 through 8).

Comparison of students' responses to data provided through PEIMS for all Generation 11 and 12 charter schools (see Table 2.6 in chapter 2) indicates that White students were overrepresented and African American and Hispanic students were underrepresented in the survey results for both generations of charter schools. This result is a function of the demographic characteristics of the students attending schools that participated in the survey and indicates that survey results are not representative of the full population of students attending new charter schools.

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[23] Researchers examined overall survey response patterns of students entering nonsensical answers for ethnicity and found no evidence that students' other responses were nonsensical.

Table 6.2
New Charter Schools' Student Characteristics, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

	Generation 11 Students		Generation 12 Students		All Respondents	
	Grades 4 and 5 n=329	Grades 6-12 n=592	Grades 4 and 5 n=271	Grades 6-12 n=241	Grades 4 and 5 N=600	Grades 6-12 N=833
Race/Ethnicity						
African American	8.4%	7.0%	20.1%	8.4%	13.7%	7.4%
Hispanic	47.5%	36.9%	18.7%	27.4%	34.4%	34.2%
White	18.3%	35.6%	45.9%	52.3%	30.8%	40.4%
Other	25.8%	20.5%	15.3%	11.8%	21.0%	18.0%
Gender						
Male	45.0%	49.2%	52.6%	47.3%	48.4%	48.6%
Female	55.0%	50.8%	47.4%	52.7%	51.6%	51.4%
Age						
10 or under	69.4%	0.0%	62.6%	0.4%	66.3%	0.1%
11 to 13[a]	30.3%	43.1%	37.4%	78.4%	33.7%	53.4%
14 to 17	0.0%	43.8%	0.0%	21.2%	0.0%	37.3%
18 or over	0.0%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%
Grade Groupings						
4 or 5	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
6 through 8	0.0%	50.1%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	64.5%
9 through 12	0.0%	49.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	35.5%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
[a]Ninety-six Generation 11 students in Grades 4 and 5 indicated that they were 11 years old, and four indicated that they were 12 years old.

PREVIOUS SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

As illustrated in Table 6.3, most Generation 11 and 12 charter school students reported attending a traditional public school before enrolling in a charter school, with prior private school attendance ranking a distant second across generations and grade levels.

Table 6.3
New Charter School Students' School Type Attended Before Charter School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

School Type	Generation 11 Students		Generation 12 Students		All Respondents	
	Grades 4 and 5 n=329	Grades 6-12 n=592	Grades 4 and 5 n=271	Grades 6-12 n=241	Grades 4 and 5 N=600	Grades 6-12 N=833
Traditional public school	90.2%	85.3%	86.6%	78.2%	88.5%	83.2%
Private school	5.8%	10.3%	6.7%	3.8%	6.2%	8.4%
Home schooled	1.5%	2.0%	2.6%	7.6%	2.0%	3.6%
Did not attend school	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%
Other	2.5%	1.9%	3.7%	10.5%	3.0%	4.3%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO ATTEND A CHARTER SCHOOL

The survey of students attending new open-enrollment charter schools asked respondents in Grades 4 and 5 to assess the influence of 12 factors on the decision to attend a charter school using the response categories: *not sure*, *disagree*, and *agree*. Table 6.4 presents response items and the percentage of students who said they *agreed* or *disagreed* that each factor influenced the decision to attend a new charter school. Responses are disaggregated by generation and sorted in terms of the percentage of "All Respondents" who agreed that a factor influenced their enrollment choice.

Student responses indicate that most students thought parental influence, teacher quality, special classes, and school size were the reasons they attended a charter school. Less influential factors included experiences at a previous school, including poor academic performance, disciplinary problems, and teachers' willingness to help students. There were few notable differences across charter school generations. Students in Generation 12 charter schools were more likely to agree that teacher quality, as well as small school and class size influenced their enrollment choice; while Generation 11 students were more likely to agree that their parents preferred charter schools (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4
New Charter School Reasons Students in Grades 4 and 5 and Their Families Chose a Charter School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

	Generation 11 Students (n=329)		Generation 12 Students (n=271)		All Respondents (N=600)	
Reason	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
My parents think this school is better for me.	3.4%	83.2%	7.4%	76.3%	5.2%	80.1%
There are good teachers at this school.	7.7%	73.3%	5.6%	82.7%	6.8%	77.5%
This school has special classes I like.	17.7%	71.4%	15.7%	73.7%	16.8%	72.4%
This school is smaller.	33.6%	55.4%	28.5%	65.2%	31.1%	59.8%
My friends are going to this school	29.5%	54.2%	30.3%	56.6%	29.9%	55.2%
I wanted to do more in my classes.	29.1%	49.7%	26.7%	55.6%	28.0%	52.4%
This school has smaller classes.	38.0%	44.9%	27.8%	60.5%	33.4%	51.9%
This school is close to my home.	39.8%	41.6%	43.5%	44.9%	41.4%	43.1%
This school has fewer fights between students.	35.5%	43.1%	35.3%	42.9%	35.4%	43.0%
Teachers at my old school did not help me enough.	57.4%	33.4%	59.9%	32.6%	58.5%	33.1%
I got into trouble at my old school.	80.2%	11.2%	74.8%	19.2%	77.8%	14.8%
I was not getting good grades at my old school.	84.4%	8.0%	80.5%	13.9%	82.6%	10.6%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100. "Not sure" category omitted from the table.

Students in Grades 6 through 12 also were asked to identify the key factors in the decision to enroll in a charter school. However, the survey asked older students to evaluate the importance of the 12 factors using a 4-point scale: (1) *not important*, (2) *somewhat important*, (3) *important*, or (4) *very important.* Table 6.5 displays the students' average, or mean, responses across the 12 categories. Values nearer to 4 indicate that students considered a particular factor to be more important in their enrollment decision. Responses are disaggregated by charter school generation and sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" category. Similar to students in Grades 4 and 5, older students indicated that that their parents' perceptions, teacher quality, and special classes were important factors in the decision to attend a charter school; however, older students also rated reduced student conflicts and poor teacher quality at their previous campus as reasons for choosing a charter school.

Table 6.5
New Charter Schools Reasons Students in Grades 6-12 and Their Families Chose a Charter School, as Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Reason	Generation 11 Students n=592	Generation 12 Students n=241	All Respondents N=833
My parents think this school is better for me.	3.3	3.0	3.2
There are good teachers at this school.	2.9	2.6	2.8
This school has fewer conflicts between students.	2.5	2.2	2.4
This school offers special classes in a subject that I enjoy.	2.5	2.1	2.4
Teachers at my previous school did not help me enough.	2.3	2.0	2.2
I wanted more challenging classes.	2.3	2.0	2.2
This school has small classes.	2.1	2.2	2.1
This school is smaller.	2.0	2.1	2.0
My friends are attending this school.	2.0	2.0	2.0
This school is close to my home.	2.0	2.0	2.0
I was not getting good grades at my previous school.	1.9	1.8	1.9
I got into trouble at my previous school.	1.7	1.5	1.6

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
Note. Mean rating based on a 4-point scale: (1) *not important, (2) somewhat important, (3) important*, (4) *very important*.

STUDENT ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES IN NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

To gain a sense of students' academic experiences in new charter schools, the surveys asked students about the time they spent on homework, as well as the types of grades they received in their current charter school and the grades they received at the school they previously attended.

Time Spent on Homework

The survey asked students in Grades 6 through 12 to estimate the amount of time they spent on homework each day using four time ranges: *Less than 30 minutes*, *30-59 minutes*, *1-2 hours*, and *More than 2 hours*. As presented in Table 6.6, most students reported that they spent an hour or less on homework each day, although a larger proportion of high school (Grades 6-12) reported spending an hour or more on homework (27% vs. 20% for middle school students).

Table 6.6
New Charter School Student Time Spent on Homework, by Grade Level and Generation, 2007-08

Time Spent on Homework	Generation 11 Students	Generation 12 Students	All Respondents
Middle School (Grades 6, 7, and 8)[a]			
Less than 30 minutes	28.0%	26.6%	27.3%
30-59 minutes	52.9%	51.4%	52.3%
1-2 hours	11.6%	14.9%	13.1%
More than 2 hours	7.5%	7.1%	7.3%
High School (Grades 6 through 12)[b]			
Less than 30 minutes	46.1%	NA	46.1%
30-59 minutes	26.4%	NA	26.4%
1-2 hours	20.3%	NA	20.3%
More than 2 hours	7.1%	NA	7.1%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
[a]There were 293 Generation 11 and 241 Generation 12 respondents in Grades 6 through 8 (534 total).
[b]There were 295 Generation 11 and 0 Generation 12 respondents in Grades 6 through 12 (295 total).
Note. NA means "Not Applicable" because there were no Generation 12 respondents in Grades 6 through 12.

Student Grades

The survey also asked all students about the grades they receive in their current schools, as well as their grades prior to attending a charter school. Students selected options related to traditional grading standards: *mostly As*, *As and Bs*, *Bs and Cs*, and so forth. As presented in Table 6.7, 79% of students in Grades 4 and 5 and 67% of students in Grades 6 through 12 reported receiving *mostly As* or *As and Bs,* and fewer than 8% of students from each grade grouping reported receiving *mostly Cs* or poorer grades. When disaggregated by generation, greater percentages of students in Generation 11 charter schools reported receiving higher marks than their Generation 12 peers.

Table 6.7
New Charter School Student Grades Earned at Current School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Grade Level and Generation, 2007-08

Grades Earned	Generation 11 Students[a]	Generation 12 Students[b]	All Respondents[c]
Grades 4 and 5[a]			
Mostly As	27.4%	23.0%	25.4%
As and Bs	55.3%	52.2%	53.9%
Mostly Bs	4.0%	7.4%	5.5%
Bs and Cs	8.8%	11.9%	10.2%
Mostly Cs	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%
Cs and Ds	2.1%	3.3%	2.7%
Mostly Ds	0.0%	0.7%	0.3%
Ds and Fs	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%
Mostly Fs	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Grades 6 through 12[b]			
Mostly As	27.0%	19.5%	24.8%
As and Bs	43.3%	38.6%	41.9%
Mostly Bs	9.2%	6.8%	8.5%
Bs and Cs	14.8%	23.7%	17.3%
Mostly Cs	2.0%	3.4%	2.4%
Cs and Ds	2.9%	4.2%	3.3%
Mostly Ds	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ds and Fs	0.3%	2.1%	0.8%
Mostly Fs	0.5%	1.7%	0.8%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
[a]There were 329 Grades 4 and 5 and 592 Grades 6 through 12 Generation 11 survey respondents.
[b]There were 271 Grades 4 and 5 and 241 Grades 6 through 12 Generation 12 survey respondents.
[c]There were 600 Grades 4 and 5 and 833 Grades 6 through 12 total survey respondents.

Table 6.8 presents the grades students reported earning at the schools they attended prior to enrolling in a charter school. Comparisons of results to those presented in Table 6.7 indicate that some students are receiving lower grades in charter schools. While 86% of students in Grades 4 and 5 reported earning *mostly As* or *As and Bs* in their previous school, only 79% had such grades in charter schools. Similarly, 72% of students in Grades 6 through 12 earned *mostly As* or *As and Bs* in their previous school compared with only 67% of students who reported such grades in their charter school. Although some differences emerged in the percentages of students who reported receiving certain grades, most students experienced similar academic outcomes in both educational settings. For example, students who received high grades at their previous schools, received similar grades in their current charter school. Similarly, students who had poor academic outcomes in their previous schools continued to struggle when they enrolled in a new charter school.

Table 6.8
New Charter School Student Grades Earned at Previous School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Grade Level and Generation, 2007-08

Grades Earned	Generation 11 Students[a]	Generation 12 Students[b]	All Respondents[c]
Grades 4 and 5			
Mostly As	35.3%	33.0%	34.2%
As and Bs	52.6%	50.4%	51.6%
Mostly Bs	3.6%	3.3%	3.5%
Bs and Cs	5.2%	9.3%	7.0%
Mostly Cs	0.3%	1.5%	0.8%
Cs and Ds	1.8%	1.1%	1.5%
Mostly Ds	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ds and Fs	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%
Mostly Fs	0.3%	0.7%	0.5%
Grades 6 through 12			
Mostly As	31.1%	26.5%	29.7%
As and Bs	39.6%	48.3%	42.1%
Mostly Bs	7.0%	7.1%	7.0%
Bs and Cs	9.2%	13.0%	10.3%
Mostly Cs	3.4%	0.4%	2.5%
Cs and Ds	5.3%	3.8%	4.8%
Mostly Ds	0.8%	0.0%	0.6%
Ds and Fs	2.2%	0.4%	1.7%
Mostly Fs	1.5%	0.4%	1.2%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
[a]There were 329 Grades 4 and 5 and 592 Grades 6 through 12 Generation 11 survey respondents.
[b]There were 271 Grades 4 and 5 and 241 Grades 6 through 12 Generation 12 survey respondents.
[c]There were 600 Grades 4 and 5 and 833 Grades 6 through 12 total survey respondents.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

The survey of students enrolled in new open-enrollment charter schools also asked respondents to indicate their satisfaction with the characteristics of their schools. Students in Grades 4 and 5 were asked to think about their current school and indicate their agreement with a variety of statements (e.g., "This is a good school for me.") using three possible response categories: *not sure*, *disagree*, and *agree*. Table 6.9 presents response items and the percentage of students who said they *agreed* or *disagreed* with each statement. Responses are disaggregated by generation and sorted in terms of the percentage of "All Respondents."

Across generations, students were in agreement that they work hard to get good grades, that charter teachers knew them by name and helped them a lot. Further, students agreed that they learned more in charter schools and had more homework than in their previous school. However, large proportions of students disagreed that their charter school had classroom computer resources available for student use.

Table 6.9
New Charter School Students in Grades 4 and 5 Ratings of Statements about Current School, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Statement	Generation 11 Students (n=329)		Generation 12 Students (n=271)		All Respondents (N=600)	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
I work hard to get good grades in this school.	4.0%	86.3%	3.4%	87.2%	3.7%	86.7%
Most teachers at this school know my name.	6.2%	79.1%	8.4%	84.4%	7.1%	81.5%
My teachers help me a lot.	10.5%	72.8%	9.9%	76.3%	10.2%	74.4%
I am learning more here than at my old school.	12.3%	73.6%	19.6%	70.2%	15.6%	72.1%
I have more homework than at my old school.	24.4%	68.3%	27.0%	68.2%	25.6%	68.2%
This school has enough extra activities (e.g., gym, music, art).	25.7%	66.4%	27.6%	69.4%	26.5%	67.7%
This is a good school for me.	11.1%	67.3%	15.3%	67.2%	13.0%	67.2%
I feel safe at this school.	18.7%	59.5%	15.1%	65.3%	17.1%	62.1%
Other students at this school help me learn.	31.7%	49.2%	41.4%	49.4%	36.1%	49.3%
My teachers ask me to think about my future.	39.8%	40.7%	41.7%	42.8%	40.7%	41.7%
I wish this school had classes in more subjects.	42.8%	41.0%	52.4%	37.5%	47.1%	39.4%
There is a computer for students to use in my classroom.	67.7%	24.9%	56.8%	37.1%	62.8%	30.4%
Students in this school like learning.	29.2%	25.2%	27.9%	30.9%	28.6%	27.8%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100. "Not sure" category omitted from the table.

The survey asked students in Grades 6 through 12 to indicate their level of agreement with the statements about of charter schools, using a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *agree*, or (4) *strongly agree*. Table 6.10 presents the students' average responses across each category. Values nearer to 4 indicate that students expressed strong agreement with the statement. Responses are disaggregated by charter school generation and sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" category.

Like students in Grades 4 and 5, students in higher grade levels generally agreed that their teachers knew them by name, they worked hard to earn their grades, and they learned more at their charter school. Although the differences in response patterns across charter school generations were small, students in Generation 11 charter schools were more likely to agree that they were learning more in their new charter school, but less likely to agree that they felt safe or that their peers were interested in learning than their counterparts in Generation 12 charter schools. Students across both generations expressed the low levels of agreement with statements indicating that their schools have sufficient computer resources and extra-curricular activities.

Students' responses presented in Tables 6.9 and 6.10 provide a possible explanation for the decline in grades reported in the previous section. Across grade levels, students indicated that they "worked hard" to earn their grades, that they were "learning more" and had "more homework" in their new charter school than they did in their previous school. These results suggest that students may be experiencing more challenging work in new charter schools, which may result in somewhat lower grades.

Table 6.10
New Charter School Students in Grades 6-12 Ratings of Statements about Current School, as a Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Statement	Generation 11 Students (n=592)	Generation 12 Students (n=241)	All Respondents (N=833)
Most teachers at this school know me by name.	3.3	3.4	3.3
I work hard to earn the grades I get.	3.2	3.2	3.2
I am learning more here than at my previous school.	3.3	2.8	3.2
This school is a good choice for me.	3.3	2.7	3.1
My teachers help me understand things we are learning in class.	3.1	2.9	3.0
I wish there were more courses, subjects I could choose from.	3.0	3.1	3.0
I feel safe at this school.	3.0	2.8	3.0
My teachers encourage me to think about my future.	3.1	2.8	3.0
I have more homework at this school than at my previous school.	2.8	3.1	2.9
I get a lot of individual attention from my teachers.	2.8	2.5	2.7
Other students at this school help me learn.	2.8	2.5	2.7
Students in this school are interested in learning.	2.7	2.3	2.6
I have a computer available in my classroom when I need one.	2.5	2.4	2.5
This school has enough extracurricular activities.	2.4	2.4	2.4

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
Note. Mean rating based on a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagree*, (2) *disagree*, (3) *agree*, or (4) *strongly agree*.

Positive Attributes of New Texas Charter Schools

Students in Grades 6 through 12 also responded to an open-ended survey item asking what they liked most about their charter schools. A common theme across responses was the quality and helpfulness of teachers. For example, one student wrote, "I like the small classroom setting and the one-on-one time you get with the teachers. I also like how determined the teachers are to help us in anything they can (they really care about us) plus they actually teach us instead of putting our noses in the textbooks." Another respondent echoed that sentiment, "I think if you need help you get more attention than [traditional] public schools and the teachers try and do all they can for you to pass." Other students wrote that they enjoyed the smaller size and intimacy of the schools. One commented, "[The school] is small and you feel safe in it. You know all of the teachers and staff so you don't really have to be scared." Other students responded that they appreciated the curricular diversity, preparation for higher education opportunities, and access to technology available in their charter schools.

School Problems and Concerns

As part of the survey of students in new open-enrollment charter schools, students in Grades 6 through 12 also had the opportunity to express their thoughts on what they liked least about their schools. Many of the students attending charter schools operated by the same entity identified having to wear uniforms, poor food quality, and insufficient extracurricular activities as problems at their charter schools. One student wrote, "The biggest problem with this school is that it only displays excellence in academics … but [it offers] no activities like orchestra or band." At another charter school students expressed frustration with school administrators, explaining, "[T]he authority figures don't care what happens to the students. [A]lthough much is gained when joining this program, much is also lost." Another student in the same school agreed, noting "The high school administration is unorganized, intrusive, incapable of helping the students be successful and lacks the understanding and knowledge of how to handle teenagers."

Overall Satisfaction

Students in new open-enrollment charter schools indicated their overall satisfaction with their school using three response categories: *not satisfied*, *satisfied*, or *very satisfied*. In spite of complaints, most students in Grades 6 through 12 indicated that they were satisfied with their choice of schooling. Nearly 85% of all respondents said that they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their school. However, more Generation 12 than Generation 11 students expressed dissatisfaction with their charter school (30% vs. 10%). Correspondingly, larger proportions of Generation 11 than Generation 12 students said they were either *satisfied* (58% vs. 50%) or *very satisfied* (32% vs. 20%) with their school (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11
New Charter School Students in Grades 6-12 Overall Satisfaction with Their New Charter School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Level of Satisfaction	Generation 11 Students n=592	Generation 12 Students n=241	All Respondents N=833
Not satisfied	9.6%	30.0%	15.5%
Satisfied	58.4%	49.6%	55.8%
Very satisfied	32.0%	20.4%	28.6%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.

FUTURE PLANS

Post-High School Plans

As presented in Table 6.12, nearly 80% of students in Grades 6 through 12 reported that they planned to pursue postsecondary educational opportunities after graduating from high school. Most students (69%) indicated that they would attend a 4-year college or university, while smaller percentages said they would attend a community college (7%) or enroll at a technical school (3%). Notably small percentages of students indicated that they would seek employment (4%) or join the military (3%). Generation 11 students were somewhat more academically ambitious than students in Generation 12 charter schools— 72% of Generation 11 students planned for a 4-year degree compared with 65% of Generation 12 students. Differences between the generations among the other post-graduation options were negligible.

Table 6.12
New Charter School Students in Grades 6-12 Post-High School Plans, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Plans After Graduation	Generation 11 Students n=592	Generation 12 Students n=241	All Respondents N=833
Go to a 4-year college, university	71.5%	64.6%	69.4%
Go to a community college	7.4%	7.2%	7.3%
Don't know	6.0%	8.9%	6.8%
Get a job	3.7%	5.1%	4.1%
Go to a technical school	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Join the military	2.8%	3.4%	3.0%
Other	5.8%	8.0%	6.4%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.

As shown in Table 6.13, few differences emerged when results for postsecondary plans were limited to 12th-graders. While no Generation 12 charter schools enrolled 12th-grade students in 2007-08, results for Generation 11 charter schools indicate that a somewhat larger percentage of 12th-grade students than students in combined grades (6-12) planned to pursue some postsecondary education (82% vs. 80%). The percentage of 12th-grade students planning to attend a 4-year college or university was somewhat lower than that of students in combined grades (68% vs. 69%), while the percentage of students planning to attend a community college increased (11% vs. 7%) when results were limited to 12th-grade students.

Table 6.13
New Charter School Students in Grade 12 Only: Post-High School Plans, as Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Plans After Graduation	Generation 11 Students n=91	Generation 12 Students n=0	All Respondents n=91
Go to a 4-year college, university	68.1%	NA	68.1%
Go to a community college	11.0%	NA	11.0%
Don't know	6.6%	NA	6.6%
Get a job	3.3%	NA	3.3%
Go to a technical school	3.3%	NA	3.3%
Join the military	2.2%	NA	2.2%
Other	5.5%	NA	5.5%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.
Note. NA means "Not Applicable" because there were no Generation 12 Grade 12 respondents.

Plans to Attend Charter School Next Year

The student surveys asked students whether they planned to attend their current charter school in the next school year. Overall, slightly more than 65% of students across grade levels reported that they planned to return the following year (see Table 6.14). When asked why they wanted to return to the charter school, many students offered explanations similar to those that influenced their initial enrollment choice, including parental influence, teacher quality, curricular rigor, and friendships. One student, for instance, explained, "My parents want me to come to this school because of the opportunities." Another commented, "It helps me learn better and I understand things."

Table 6.14
New Charter School Student Plans to Attend Charter School Next Year, as Percentage of Respondents by Grade Level and Generation, 2007-08

Response	Generation 11 Students		Generation 12 Students		All Respondents	
	Grades 4 and 5 n=329	Grades 6-12 n=592	Grades 4 and 5 n=271	Grades 6-12 n=241	Grades 4 and 5 N=600	Grades 6-12 N=833
Yes	73.8%	70.3%	55.7%	53.5%	65.6%	65.4%
No	9.5%	19.6%	22.1%	30.3%	15.2%	22.7%
Not sure	16.8%	10.1%	22.1%	16.2%	19.2%	11.9%

Source: Survey of New Texas Charter School Students, Spring 2008.

Overall, a greater percentage of students in Grades 6 through 12 than students in Grades 4 and 5 indicated that they would not return in the subsequent school year (23% versus 15%). When disaggregated by generation, a larger percentage of Generation 12 students in Grades 4 and 5 reported that they would not attend their current charter school than their Generation 11 peers (22% versus 10%). Similar gaps existed between generations in Grades 6 through 12 (20% in Generation 11 and 30% in Generation 12). Students' explanations for leaving the charter school included moving away, graduating, the charter school does not offer classes in their subsequent grade, dissatisfaction with various aspects of the school (management, curriculum, organization, discipline, and teachers), parental choice, and problems with fellow classmates.

SUMMARY

Separate student surveys were administered to new charter school students in Grades 4 and 5 and students in Grades 6 through 12 in the spring of 2008. Of the 19 Generation 11 and 12 charter schools that operated in 2007-08, 15 participated in the survey for a school level response rate of 79%. Because researchers did not have information about student enrollment in new charter schools, it was not possible to calculate response rates at the student level. Comparison of students' responses to data collected through PEIMS for all Generation 11 and 12 charter schools indicated that White students may be overrepresented and African American and Hispanic students may be underrepresented in survey results.

Most respondents from both grade groups in both Generation 11 and Generation 12 reported attending a traditional public school before enrolling at their current charter school. Students reported a range of factors that influenced the decision to enroll in a charter school. Most students in Grades 4 and 5 agreed that parental influence, teacher quality, special classes, and school size were important reasons for choosing to attend a charter school. Students in Grades 6 through 12 reported that parental perceptions of school quality, teacher quality, reduced student conflicts, and teacher willingness to help students influenced their choice of schooling.

After moving to a charter school some students reported a decrease in the grades they earned, although students' achievement patterns did not change markedly. Students who earned high grades in their previous school also tended to earn high grades in charter schools, and students who struggled academically in previous schools also struggled in charter schools.

In spite of reduced grades, most students in Grades 6 through 12 reported that they were satisfied with their new charter schools. However, a notably larger percentage of Generation 12 than Generation 11 students said they were *not satisfied* with their schools (30% vs. 10%). Students' responses to open-ended survey items that asked about the positive and negative attributes of their schools indicated that students appreciated the smaller school environments, as well as the high levels of teacher support offered by new charter schools, but faulted new charter schools for their lack of extracurricular activities.

Overall, slightly more than 65% of all surveyed students reported that they planned to return the following year. However, somewhat larger proportions of students in Generation 12 charters indicated that they would not return. Students offered a variety of reasons for not returning, including moving, graduating, dissatisfaction with the curriculum or school administration, and lack of subsequent grade levels at the current school.

CHAPTER 7
SURVEY OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING NEW TEXAS CHARTER SCHOOLS

Choice-based school reforms, such as charter schools, are rooted in the idea that parents are effective educational decision makers who will seek out information about schools and make appropriate decisions about the best schools for their children (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Proponents of school choice further reason that when parents are permitted to choose their children's schools they become more informed consumers of education. As a result, students attending choice schools will experience improved academic outcomes because they are matched to schools with curricula and instructional practices aligned with their interests and learning styles, and because parents who choose their schools will become more involved in their children's education (Bulkey, 2007; Godwin & Kemerer, 2002). However, not all research on school choice supports this understanding. Some research has indicated that choosing parents, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, may make poor choices because they lack complete information about their educational options, or choose schools for reasons other than academic performance (Elacqua, 2005; Weiher & Tedin, 2002; Wells, 1996).

This chapter presents information gathered through a survey of parents of students attending new open-enrollment charter schools, and presents information about the effectiveness of new charter schools in implementing their programs and engaging parents in school activities (Research Question 4). The survey questionnaire, which is included in Appendix C, addresses parents' background characteristics, their sources of information about new charter school programs, the reasons they chose a new charter school for their child, and participation in school activities, as well as their satisfaction with their choice of schooling. While the evaluation does not link parents' survey responses to student achievement outcomes, it does provide some insight into the ways in which charter school choice may influence parent involvement in schooling. In particular, the results presented in this chapter suggest that parents may initially be more involved in some aspects of their children's schooling when they move to a new charter school, but that involvement decreases as schools become more established.

METHODOLOGY

Similar to parent surveys included in previous statewide evaluations of charter schools (see e.g., TCER, 2007, 2008) researchers developed a protocol for a telephone survey of parents of students enrolled in new open-enrollment charter schools. Survey items were translated into Spanish and the survey was administered in Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents.

In the spring of 2008, researchers requested parent-student contact databases, including parent name, address, and telephone numbers, from all Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools (12 and 10 schools, respectively). [24] A total of 19 charter schools returned contact databases, including 9 Generation 11 and 10 Generations 12 schools. From these data researchers selected a random sample of 1,500 parents of students enrolled in new charter schools stratified by charter school generation, students' grade level, as well as school location. In June of 2008, all parents included in the databases received a

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[24] As discussed in chapter 1 of this report, campus charter schools were targeted for surveys in the fall of 2007 as part of the 2006-07 Texas Charter School Evaluation (TCER, 2008). In order to reduce the likelihood that parents of students attending campus charter schools would be contacted a second time for an evaluation survey, the interim evaluation of new Texas charters limited the summer 2008 survey to parents of students attending open-enrollment charter schools. Note that no university charter schools began operations in Generation 11 or 12. Future activities in the evaluation of new Texas charter schools will extend surveys to include campus charter schools, and future evaluation reports will include results for parents of students attending new campus charter schools, as well as those of students attending open-enrollment and university charter schools.

postcard notifying them that they might be contacted for a telephone survey about new charter schools and encouraging their participation. TCER contracted with Border Research Solutions (BRS), a Texas firm specializing in the administration of telephone surveys, to administer the telephone survey to approximately 500 of the 1,500 parents included in the database. The database exceeded the number of desired surveys in order to allow for wrong or disconnected numbers, households in which no one answered the phone, and parents or guardians who did not wish to participate in the survey.

In July of 2008, BRS administered the telephone survey to 505 parents of students attending new open-enrollment charter schools. All BRS interviewers were bi-lingual (Spanish and English) and trained in identifying appropriate survey respondents (i.e., a parent or guardian). BRS interviewers called between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays and between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturdays. Interviewers made seven attempts to reach a respondent at a given telephone number (e.g., no answers, answering machines, busy signals) before selecting a replacement from the database that matched stratification criteria (e.g., student in attending the same school and grade level). Further, interviewers who reached an inappropriate respondent (e.g., a child or relative) called again at another day and time in an attempt to reach a parent or guardian. Upon reaching a parent or guardian, BRS interviewers explained the purpose of the survey and clarified that participation was voluntary. If a parent declined to participate in the survey, interviewers selected a replacement with the same stratification criteria from the database. BRS interviewers accommodated parents and guardians who desired to participate in the survey, but requested that interviewers contact them at a different time. BRS interviewers recorded participants' survey responses on response forms. Response form data were then entered into a database which was provided to TCER in August of 2008.

PARENT CHARACTERISTICS

The ethnicities of parent survey respondents are presented in Table 7.1, which indicates that an ethnically diverse group of parents enrolled their children in new charter schools. Across both generations of charter schools, the greatest percentage of respondents said they were Hispanic (42%), followed by White (35%), other (11%), and African American (10%). Of the parents responding "Other," 60% said they were Asian, 8% said they were Indian, and smaller percentages said they were Turkish, Muslim, Egyptian, or that they preferred not to specify their ethnicity.

Table 7.1
New Charter School Parent Ethnicity, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Ethnic Group	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)	Generation 12 Parents (n=156)	All Respondents (N=505)
African American	7.4%	14.7%	9.7%
Hispanic	46.1%	34.0%	42.4%
White	29.5%	45.5%	34.5%
Other	14.3%	3.8%	11.1%
Did not respond	2.6%	1.9%	2.4%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.

While parent and student ethnicities may differ, comparisons of the data presented in Table 7.1 with PEIMS reports of student ethnicity presented in chapter 2 (see Table 2.6 in chapter 2) suggest that White parents may be overrepresented in survey responses and African American and Hispanic parents may be underrepresented. This trend is also reflected in the student survey responses presented in chapter 6, and

is likely a function of the characteristics of parents who enrolled their children in new charter schools that returned parent-student contact databases.

Table 7.2 presents various demographic characteristics reported by survey respondents, including income levels, education attained, type of household (i.e., single or two-parents, and households that speak English as their primary language). Comparison of parent characteristics across generations indicates that Generation 11 parents tended to earn more, had higher levels of education, and lived in two-parent households more often than their Generation 12 counterparts.

Table 7.2
New Charter School Parents Selected Characteristics, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Characteristic	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)	Generation 12 Parents (n=156)	All Respondents (N=505)
Annual Income Level			
Less than $10,000	2.0%	5.1%	3.0%
$10,000–14,999	2.3%	4.5%	3.0%
$15,000–24,999	10.0%	9.6%	9.9%
$25,000–34,999	10.0%	9.0%	9.7%
$35,000–49, 999	17.2%	19.9%	18.0%
$50,000 or more	44.4%	33.3%	41.0%
Don't know	5.4%	5.8%	5.5%
Did not respond	8.6%	12.8%	9.9%
Education Level			
Less than high school	6.0%	9.0%	6.9%
Completed high school	20.9%	19.9%	20.6%
Less than 4 years college	20.3%	27.6%	22.6%
College graduate	35.5%	30.1%	33.9%
Graduate courses, no degree	4.9%	5.1%	5.0%
Graduate or professional degree	12.3%	7.7%	10.9%
Did not answer	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%
Type of Household			
Two parents or guardians	81.1%	73.1%	78.6%
Single parent or guardian	18.9%	26.3%	21.2%
Did not answer	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%
English as Primary Home Language	82.2%	84.6%	83.0%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.

Income Level

Nearly 69% of all surveyed parents reported earning $25,000 or more, with the largest percentage of parents reporting incomes of $50,000 or more (41%). Across generations, the percentages of parents earning up to $49,999 were fairly equal. A larger percentage of Generation 11 than Generation 12 parents reported earning $50,000 or more (44% vs. 33%). This result is somewhat surprising given that PEIMS data reported in chapter 2 indicate that students from Generation 11 charter schools were notably more likely than their Generation 12 peers to be characterized as economically disadvantaged (72% vs. 55%, respectively) (see Table 2.6 in chapter 2).

Education Level

A majority of parents from both generations reported completing some form of postsecondary education, and more than a third (34%) indicated that they were college graduates. Generation 11 parents were more likely than their Generation 12 counterparts to have completed a bachelor's degree (36% versus 30%) or a graduate degree (12% versus 8%). Across both generations, 50% of parents had not reached a 4-year degree, and 28% of parents completed high school or lower levels of education.

Primary Language

A majority of parents in both generations (83%) reported that English was their primary home language.

Household Composition

Across both generations, a majority of parents (79%) reported living in two-parent households. When disaggregated by generation, a slightly larger percentage of Generation 11 parents (81%) reported two-parent households than Generation 12 parents (73%).

HOW PARENTS FIND OUT ABOUT NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS

Questions included in the survey also asked parents how they learned about new charter school programs. As presented in Table 7.3, most parents said they relied on school brochures (69%) and websites (66%), as well as reports of students' academic performance (66%). Proportionately fewer surveyed parents learned about new charter schools from other parents with children at the school. These findings differ markedly from a 2006 survey of parents of students attending open-enrollment charter schools.[25] Responses to the 2006 survey indicated that other parents were the primary source of information about charter schools (72%), and school brochures (51%) and websites (27%) were used by notably smaller percentages of parents (see TCER, 2007, p. 96). However, because the 2008 survey is limited to parents of students in *new* open-enrollment charter schools, the differences in response patterns are likely to be a reflection of the available information. For example, it is less probable that parents will learn about a school from other parents with children at the school if the school has just begun to enroll students. This reasoning is supported by the increase in the percentage of Generation 11 parents who say they gain information from other parents (58%) vs. Generation 12 parents (47%).

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[25] The 2006 parent survey was administered more broadly and was not limited to the parents of students attending new charter schools.

Table 7.3
New Charter School Parents' Use of Informational Sources in School Selection, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

School Information Source	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)	Generation 12 Parents (n=156)	All Respondents (N=505)
Written brochures or descriptions of this school	67.6%	71.8%	68.9%
Information from the school's website	65.6%	66.7%	65.9%
Academic performance of students at this school	67.3%	61.3%	65.5%
Information from parents with children at this school	58.2%	47.1%	54.8%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.
Note. Percentages will not total to 100. Parents may choose more than one response.

To gain a sense of whether parents had basic information about their child's school, the survey asked parents if they could identify the school's principal. While most parents were able to provide some information about the principal (i.e., a first name, last name, or a nickname [e.g., Mr. Q]), across generations, 26% of parents did not know the name of the school's principal. The percentage of parents who did not know the name of their school's principal was somewhat higher for Generation 11 parents than for Generation 12 (26% vs. 24%, respectively).

FACTORS AFFECTING SCHOOL CHOICE

The survey asked parents to rate the influence of various factors on the decision to enroll their child in a charter school using 4-point scale: (1) *not important, (2) somewhat important, (3) important,* and (4) *very important*. Table 7.4 presents parents' average, or mean, responses across factors, sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" column. Values closer to 4 indicate that parents considered a particular factor to be more important in their enrollment decisions.

Table 7.4
New Charter School Parents' Reasons for Choosing a Charter School, as Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

School Factor	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)	Generation 12 Parents (n=156)	All Respondents (N=505)
The educational program of this school	3.7	3.7	3.7
Good teachers	3.7	3.7	3.7
Academic reputation of this school	3.6	3.5	3.5
The school's discipline approach	3.5	3.4	3.5
The teaching of moral values similar to mine	3.6	3.4	3.5
Reputation of school administrators or staff	3.5	3.4	3.4
Small school size	3.2	3.4	3.3
The school's ability to effectively serve my child's specific educational needs[a]	3.4	3.3	3.3
Convenient location	2.6	2.6	2.6
Dissatisfaction with the educational program and instruction at my child's previous school	2.6	2.6	2.6
My child's poor performance at his/her previous school	2.4	2.6	2.4
District assignment	2.2	2.3	2.2
Recommendations from a family member or friend	2.2	2.2	2.2
Recommendations from teachers or staff from my child's previous school	2.0	2.1	2.0

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.
Note. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *not important, (2) somewhat important, (3) important,* and (4) *very important*.
[a]Specific needs such as special education, dyslexia, and dropout recovery.

Across both generations of charter schools, parents said that educational programming, teacher quality, school reputation, the school's approach to discipline and the teaching of moral values were the factors they weighted most heavily in their choice of new charter schools. There were few differences between the response patterns of Generation 11 and 12 parents.

Parents also had the opportunity to state reasons for enrolling their children in a charter school that were not included in the list of statements. About 100 parents provided alternate reasons for choosing a new charter school. Common responses included parents' preference for charter schools that provide high school students with the opportunity to participate in dual credit courses leading to an associate's degree, charter schools that require school uniforms, and charter schools that offer special services for students with learning disabilities.

PARENT SATISFACTION WITH SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES

The survey also asked parents to respond to a list of statements about campus characteristics, indicating whether they (1) *strongly disagreed,* (2) *disagreed,* (3) *agreed,* or (4) *strongly agreed* with each statement. Table 7.5 presents parents' average responses sorted in terms of the "All Respondents" column. Values closer to 4 indicate higher levels of parent agreement.

Table 7.5
New Charter School Parents' Agreement with Attributes of Their Student's School, as Mean of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Statement About School	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)	Generation 12 Parents (n=156)	All Respondents (N=505)
This school has high expectations and standards for students.	3.4	3.4	3.4
I am satisfied with this school's basic educational program (including reading, language arts, math, science, social studies).	3.3	3.4	3.3
I am satisfied with the instruction offered.	3.3	3.3	3.3
Teachers and school leaders are accountable for student achievement.	3.2	3.3	3.3
This school regularly keeps me informed about how my child is performing academically.	3.3	3.4	3.3
I am satisfied with this school's enriched educational programs (including music, art, foreign language).	3.2	3.2	3.2
This school has small class sizes.	3.1	3.3	3.2
My child receives sufficient individual attention.	3.2	3.3	3.2
The charter school meets the needs of my child that were not addressed at his/her previous school.	3.2	3.2	3.2
The rate of staff turnover at this school is acceptable.	3.1	3.1	3.1
I am satisfied with the kinds of extracurricular activities offered at this school.	3.1	3.1	3.1
This school emphasizes educational content more than test preparation (TAAS or TAKS).	3.1	3.1	3.1
I am satisfied with the building and grounds of my child's school.	3.0	3.0	3.0
This school provides adequate support services (such as counseling, healthcare, social services).	2.9	3.0	3.0
My child's grades have improved since attending [school name].	3.0	3.1	3.0
My child's TAAS/TAKS scores have improved since attending [school name].	3.0	3.1	3.0
This school has sufficient financial resources.	2.9	2.8	2.9

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.
Note. Mean ratings based on a 4-point scale: (1) *strongly disagreed,* (2) *disagreed,* (3) *agreed,* or (4) *strongly agreed*

Overall, parents voiced strong levels of agreement with each statement, and there were few differences in the responses of parents across charter school generations. Parents agreed most strongly that new charter schools had high expectations and standards for students, that they were satisfied with their school's educational program and instruction, that teachers and school leaders were accountable for achievement, and that the school kept them informed about students' performance. While parents generally agreed that their child's grades had improved since attending a new charter school, this finding conflicts with the student survey responses presented in chapter 6. Results from the student surveys indicated that many students reported a *decrease* in grades when they enrolled in a new charter school. Notably, parents had the lowest level of agreement with the statement indicating their new charter school had sufficient financial resources.

Parent Overall Satisfaction with Current and Previous Schools

As presented in Table 7.6, most parents (75%) reported that their children attended a traditional public school prior to enrolling in a new charter school. A somewhat larger percentage of Generation 11 parents said their children previously attended either a traditional public school or a private school, while Generation 12 parents were more likely to indicate their children attended another charter, were home schooled or did not attend school before enrolling in their current charter school.

Table 7.6
New Charter School Students' Type of School Attended Prior to Charter School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Type of School	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)	Generation 12 Parents (n=156)	All Respondents (N=505)
Traditional public school	76.8%	70.5%	74.9%
Private school	10.0%	6.4%	8.9%
Another charter school	2.6%	5.8%	3.6%
Home schooled	1.7%	3.8%	2.4%
Did not attend school	8.9%	13.5%	10.3%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.

Table 7.7 presents parents' levels of satisfaction with their current charter school and the school students previously attended. Across charter school generations, most parents (94%) reported being *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their children's current charter schools, and less than 10% of parents expressed dissatisfaction with their current choice of schools. While it is not surprising that parents enrolling their children in a new charter school would express greater levels of dissatisfaction with their child's previous school, results indicate that most surveyed parents also were satisfied with the schools their children previously attended. Overall, 67% percent of surveyed parents said they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their child's previous school. Results from the section addressing the factors that influenced parents' choice of schools suggest that parents may choose charter schools not because of their dissatisfaction with their previous school, but because charter schools offer something that the traditional district schools do not. For example, parents said that they chose new charter schools because they offered dual credit options, discipline and uniforms, and access to specialized educational services that were not available in their previous schools.

Table 7.7
New Charter School Parents' Overall Satisfaction with Their Student's Previous School and New Charter School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

Level of Satisfaction	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)		Generation 12 Parents (n=156)		All Respondents (N=505)	
	Previous School	New Charter School	Previous School	New Charter School	Previous School	New Charter School
Very dissatisfied	9.3%	2.9%	10.9%	3.2%	9.8%	3.0%
Dissatisfied	22.0%	2.9%	25.8%	3.8%	23.1%	3.2%
Satisfied	53.0%	36.7%	50.8%	37.2%	52.4%	36.8%
Very satisfied	15.7%	57.6%	12.5%	55.8%	14.7%	57.0%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.

While there were few differences between the levels of satisfaction of parents of students in Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, there were notable differences between the levels of school satisfaction reported by parents and students. Student survey results presented in chapter 6 indicate that 16% of students were dissatisfied with their charter school, and Generation 12 students were more likely to be dissatisfied than students attending Generation 11 charters schools (30% vs. 10%) (see Table 6.6 in chapter 6).

PARENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS

In order to gauge how charter schools may affect parents' participation in their children's education, the survey asked parents whether they participated in a list of activities at their current charter school and at their child's previous school. Table 7.8 presents the percentage of surveyed parents who said they participated in each activity at both their previous school and their current charter school. Percentages in bold-faced text represent an increase in the percentage of parents who said they participated in a particular activity when their child attended a new charter school.

Table 7.8
New Charter School Parents' Participation in School Activities at Their Student's Previous School vs. Charter School, as a Percentage of Respondents by Generation, 2007-08

School Activity	Generation 11 Parents (n=349)		Generation 12 Parents (n=156)		All Respondents (N=505)	
	Previous School	New Charter School	Previous School	New Charter School	Previous School	New Charter School
Communicated with teachers or administrators by telephone or in writing.	90.4%	**95.7%**	92.2%	**97.4%**	90.9%	**96.2%**
Assisted with or monitored your child's homework at home.	92.9%	**93.4%**	96.1%	**97.4%**	93.9%	**94.7%**
Attended parent-teacher conferences.	94.6%	91.7%	94.6%	93.6%	94.6%	92.3%
Tutored your child at home using materials and instructions provided by the teacher.	86.5%	86.0%	93.0%	91.7%	88.4%	87.7%
Observed/visited my child's classroom.	88.1%	83.7%	91.5%	**92.9%**	89.1%	86.5%
Read with your child at home.	84.6%	81.4%	96.1%	94.2%	88.0%	85.3%
Signed a contract or agreement about participation in my child's education.	60.3%	**76.8%**	64.3%	**80.1%**	61.5%	**77.8%**
Assisted your child in making college plans and choosing courses to support these plans.[a]	70.8%	**78.5%**	58.9%	**59.0%**	67.3%	**72.5%**
Helped with fundraising.	72.8%	65.9%	78.3%	76.9%	74.4%	69.3%
Volunteered for school activities.	66.0%	54.7%	76.0%	74.4%	68.9%	60.8%
Attended PTA meetings.	62.8%	54.4%	60.5%	**62.8%**	62.1%	57.0%
Attended a school board meeting.	31.1%	28.4%	23.3%	**30.8%**	28.8%	**29.1%**
Helped make educational program or curricular decisions.	21.5%	21.2%	14.7%	**24.4%**	19.5%	**22.2%**
Served as a member of the school's governing board or a school-related committee.	16.0%	15.8%	14.0%	12.2%	15.4%	14.7%

Source: Survey of New Charter School Parents, Summer 2008.
Note. Bold faced text indicates an increase in activity at the new charter school.
[a]No Generation 12 charter schools enrolled students in the 12th grade in 2007-08, which may explain the reduced percentages of Generation 12 parents involved in college planning.

In general, the results presented in Table 7.8 indicate that parent participation in school activities did not change greatly when students enrolled in new charter schools. Parents were somewhat more likely to communicate with teachers or administrators or to assist with their child's homework, but these changes were small. The most notable change is in the percentage of parents who said they had signed a contract agreeing to participate in their child's education, but the level of participation in other school activities suggests that such contracts may be ineffective, as parent involvement in many activities *decreased* when students enrolled in new charter schools.

Perhaps most notable are the differences in the response patterns of Generation 11 and 12 parents. Responses indicated that Generation 12 parents tended to be more involved in most school activities both

at their child's previous school and at their new charter school. This finding may indicate that parents become more involved in their child's schooling immediately before and after a decision to change schools, and that involvement declines when parents grow more comfortable with their choice of schools. This reasoning is supported by the results of a survey of parents of students attending open-enrollment charter schools administered in 2006 that contained identical items addressing parents' participation in school activities. The 2006 survey was not limited to the parents of students in new charter schools, and therefore, contained the responses of parents of children attending more established charter schools. For each school activity, parents responding to the 2006 survey reported a lower participation rate than parents of either generation of new charter school. For example, 88% of 2006 parents said the communicated with school staff or helped students with homework, 83% attended parent-teacher conferences, and only 79% visited their child's classroom (see TCER, 2007, p. 103).

For some school activities, parents' decreased involvement may reflect increased confidence in the quality of their charter school. A recent national survey of parents of high school students revealed that parents whose children attended high-performing schools tended to be less involved in some aspects of their children's education than were parents of students in low-performing schools (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008). Parents of students in low-performing schools felt a greater need to advocate for their children to ensure that they were enrolled in the right courses and taught by the best teachers, while parents of students in high-performing schools were more likely to trust school personnel to make educational decisions (Bridgeland et al., pp. 18-19).

SUMMARY

Overall, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with their children's charter schools. Ninety-four percent of all surveyed parents were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their choice of schooling. When asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about new charter schools, parents agreed most strongly that new charter schools held high standards for student achievement, that they were satisfied with the school's educational program and instruction, that teachers and administrators were accountable for student achievement, and that the new charter schools kept them informed about student performance. Parents expressed the lowest level of agreement with a statement indicating that new charter schools had sufficient financial resources.

Parents said they relied on school brochures and websites, as well as reports of student academic performance to gain information about new charter schools. This finding differs from the results of previous surveys administered to parents of students attending more established charter schools, which have found that parents were most likely to rely on other parents for information about charter schools and less likely to use school websites or brochures. This difference is probably a reflection of the information available to parents of students attending new charter schools. When schools are newly opened and all students are newly enrolled, parents have less experience with schools and, therefore, less information to share with other parents.

Parents said that they weighted educational programming and teacher quality most heavily in the decision to enroll their child in a new charter school. Parents also considered the school's academic reputation and approach to discipline and the teaching of moral values as important factors in their decisions.

Most parents said that their child attended a traditional public school prior to attending a new charter school (75%), and most parents were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their child's previous school (67%). Results from survey items addressing the factors influencing parents' choice of schools suggest that parents chose charter schools not because they are dissatisfied with their previous school, but because the charter school offers something that the previous school did not, such as a specialized educational program.

Although proportionately more parents signed contracts or agreements about participating in their child's education when they enrolled their child in a new charter school (78% vs. 62% in child's previous school), there were few increases in parent participation across a range of school activities when students attended charter schools. Larger proportions of Generation 12 parents reported increased involvement in school activities both at their child's previous school and at the new charter school. The patterns of parent responses across new charter school generations and a 2006 survey of parents of students in more established charter schools suggest that parent participation in school activities may increase when a child moves to a new charter school, but that participation wanes as parents grow more comfortable with their choice of schooling.

CHAPTER 8
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools considers the experiences and outcomes of the state's new charter schools, and the first interim report focuses on the startup experiences of charter schools that first began serving students in either the 2006-07 or 2007-08 school years, or Generation 11 and 12 charter schools. TEA categorizes charter schools in "generations" determined by the years in which schools are authorized to begin serving students as charter schools. There have been 14 generations of Texas charter schools since the state first passed its charter school law in 1995, and the most recent generation of charter schools, Generation 14, will begin serving students in the fall of 2009.

The ongoing evaluation will include information about charter schools in Generations 11 through 14, as well as case studies describing the start-up experiences of a set of seven Generation 13 charter schools (schools that opened in the fall of 2008). Generation 13 and 14 charter schools were not operational in the 2007-08 school year when data were collected for the evaluation's first interim report, and therefore, were not included in analyses. Across evaluation years and reports, the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools will address the following research questions:

1. How are federal CSP funds used to implement new charter school programs?
2. What processes and practices guide the planning of new charter schools?
3. What processes and practices guide the implementation of new charter school programs?
4. How effective are new charter schools at designing and implementing successful educational programs?
5. How do students at new charter schools perform academically relative to comparable students at traditional district schools?
6. What is the effect of charter school maturity on students' academic outcomes?

The first interim report focuses on Research Questions 1 through 4. The report's findings are drawn from statistical analyses of the characteristics of Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, as well as an analysis of charter schools' use of federal CSP grant funds in their start-up years. Statistical analyses rely on archival data collected through TEA's PEIMS and AEIS. In addition, the first interim report includes findings from surveys administered to principals, teachers, students in Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools, and the parents of students who attend these schools.

This chapter presents preliminary findings to Research Questions 1 through 4, and discusses how the ongoing evaluation will address the full set of questions. It begins with an overview of the limitations of the first interim report.

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE FIRST INTERIM REPORT

The first interim report is limited by its data sources and the availability of student outcome data, such as TAKS scores and attendance rates. The sections that follow discuss data source limitations and how limitations may affect findings.

Survey Data

The surveys administered for the first interim report (spring 2008) were limited to open-enrollment charter schools, in order not to burden respondents in campus charter schools who participated in similar surveys in the fall of 2007. Therefore, survey results do not represent perceptions of stakeholders from the full range of charter schools operating in Texas. Surveys conducted for the second interim report (spring 2009) and the final evaluation report (spring 2010) will include campus and open-enrollment charter schools.[26]

Variations in the response rates to the surveys conducted in the spring of 2008 also created limitations for the report. Across all surveys, Generation 12 charter schools responded at higher rates than Generation 11 schools, and the characteristics of student survey respondents suggest that survey findings may not be fully representative of the population of Generation 11 and 12 charter school stakeholders. Comparison of the demographic characteristics of student survey respondents to PEIMS data for all students attending Generation 11 and 12 charter schools indicated that White students were overrepresented and African American and Hispanic students were underrepresented in the survey data. This trend also occurred in the parent survey data, and was a reflection of the enrollment patterns of the schools that participated in the spring 2008 surveys. That is, charter schools that enrolled larger proportions of White students participated in surveys at higher rates than schools enrolling larger proportions of minority students. This pattern suggests that survey findings may not be representative of the full range of staff and students in Generation 11 and 12 charter schools, or the full range of parents who chose to enroll their children in these schools.

Quantitative Data

The schedule governing the availability of student outcome data, such as TAKS scores and attendance rates, collected through PEIMS created limitations. Data addressing student outcomes were not available at the time of the report's writing, which limited report findings to Research Questions 1 through 4. In addition, information on the effectiveness of new charter schools included in the response to Research Question 4 is based on the perspectives of respondents to the spring 2008 surveys, which, as noted earlier, may not be representative all Generation 11 and 12 charter school stakeholders. The ongoing evaluation will incorporate student outcome data collected through PEIMS, which will enable subsequent reports to address Research Questions 5 and 6, and to provide quantitative information about the effectiveness of new charter schools in response to Research Question 4.

The CSP data collected as part of PEIMS Actual Financial data limited researchers' ability to fully address Research Question 1. Because PEIMS does not identify funds allocated or expended in terms of the planning and implementation periods of CSP grant funding, it was not possible to identify new open-enrollment charter schools' use of CSP funds across planning and implementation years. This limitation will persist across evaluation reports, and restricts analysis of CSP data to trends in new charter schools' use of CSP funding across years and the comparison of trends across campus and open-enrollment charter schools.

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[26]Because only one university charter schools was authorized in Generations 13 and 14, future evaluation reports will not disaggregate findings for university charters from those of open-enrollment charter schools

Qualitative Data

In addition to data collected through surveys and TEA's archival data systems (i.e., PEIMS and AEIS), the Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools includes qualitative data collected through case studies of a set of seven Generation 13 charter schools. Qualitative data include interviews with Generation 13 administrators; focus group discussions with Generation 13 teachers, students, and board members; as well as observations in Generation 13 classrooms. Researchers visited case study sites before schools began serving students in the summer of 2008, and at the end of the first semester (fall 2008), and will visit them again at the end of their first and second years of operation (spring 2009 and spring 2010).

The first interim report did not include qualitative data gathered during the summer and fall 2008 site visits because this information did not reflect schools' experiences across a full school year. The second interim report will incorporate information gathered across case study sites' first full year of operation (2008-09), and the final evaluation report will include individual case studies of each site's first two years of operation (2008-2010). The absence of qualitative data in the first interim report limited researchers' ability to explain some patterns observed in the report's quantitative analyses and survey data. However, the inclusion of qualitative data in subsequent reports will provide more complete understandings of new charter schools' start-up experiences and enable more robust responses to each of the evaluation's research questions.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS: PRELIMINARY RESPONSES TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 4

The following responses to Research Questions 1 through 4 are drawn from the first interim report's findings. Each research question is framed broadly and includes ancillary questions that address specific aspects of school operations and effectiveness. Given the limitations imposed by the data sources, the interim report's responses to the research questions are preliminary, and in some instances do not address the full range of ancillary questions that guide the evaluation. The ongoing evaluation will expand to include qualitative data collected during site visits to new charter schools, PEIMS student outcome data (e.g., TAKS and attendance rates), and survey data collected from new campus as well as open-enrollment charter schools. The inclusion of expanded data sources will enable researchers to respond to all of the evaluation's research questions, and to provide more complete information in response to Questions 1 through 4.

Research Question 1: How Are Federal CSP Funds Used to Implement New Charter School Programs?

The federal system of CSP grants provides new charter schools with funding across three years. Up to 18 months of funding may be used to support the planning of the new charter school and up to two years of funding may be used for implementation of its program. As district schools, Texas' campus charters are excluded from receiving CSP planning funds, but are eligible for implementation funding.

Research Question 1 addresses the use of CSP funding to support new charter school programs, including how open-enrollment charter schools use funding across the planning and implementation periods of the grant. However, as noted earlier, limitations in the way in which CSP data are reported in PEIMS preclude researchers from examining open-enrollment charter schools' use of planning and implementation funds. PEIMS data do permit the examination of patterns in new charter schools' use of CSP funds across time and differences in the use of funds across open-enrollment and campus charter schools.

What patterns emerge in new charter schools' use of CSP funds across years?

Across the 2000-01 through the 2006-07 school years, both open-enrollment and campus charter schools tended to use the largest share of CSP funding to support instruction. More than a third of open-enrollment charter schools' CSP funding was expended on categories related instruction across years. Open-enrollment charter schools also spent notable proportions of CSP funding on categories related to plant maintenance and operation and general administration. More than 74% of campus charter school funding was spent on instruction from 2000-01 to 2006-07.

What patterns emerge in the use of CSP funding across open-enrollment and campus charter schools?

Variations in open-enrollment and campus charter schools' use of CSP funding reflect differences in the type of support schools receive. Because campus charter schools are district entities, many receive considerable support for facilities, administration, and school operations from their parent districts. This support is reflected in the trends discussed in the previous section. Notably, the presence of district support enables campus charter schools to devote more CSP funding to instruction. In contrast, open-enrollment charter schools use large proportions of CSP funding for issues related to facilities and administration.

Research Question 2: What Processes and Practices Guide the Planning of New Charter Schools?

Research Question 2 considers the planning of new charter school programs, including the characteristics of charter school founders and planning staff, the role of local communities in planning processes, the challenges charter school operators encounter in the planning process, and how challenges are overcome. The evaluation's approach to understanding charter schools' planning processes relies heavily on information collected through interviews with new charter school founders, administrators, and board members conducted as part of the case study analyses of Generation 13 charter schools. The omission of case study information in the first interim report limits the report's ability to fully address charter school planning processes; however, the results of the spring 2008 surveys of principals and parents provide some information about how new charter schools plan for the recruitment of staff and students.

What processes are used to facilitate charter school planning?

Recruiting staff. Open-enrollment principals used numerous strategies to recruit staff and students. A large percentage of principals responding to the spring 2008 survey reported placing "advertisements in newspapers or trade journals" and attending "university recruitment events" or "regional teacher recruitment fairs" to recruit staff. A significant proportion of both generations of new charter school principals indicated, on average, staffing issues were *not a problem.* However, both Generation 11 and 12 principals found the relationship between low pay and the difficulty recruiting quality and experienced staff to be the greatest staffing challenge.

Recruiting students. To recruit students, a substantial proportion of surveyed principals used "parent/student word of mouth" and "flyers, brochures, and posters." However, most surveyed parents said they learned about new open-enrollment charter schools from information provided by the school rather than word of mouth. School-provided information included school brochures and websites, as well as reports of student academic performance. In contrast, parents of students attending Generation 1 through 10 charter schools relied most on information from other parents. This difference is probably a reflection of the information available to parents of students attending new charter schools. When schools are newly opened and all students are newly enrolled, parents have less experience with schools and, therefore, less information to share with other parents.

Research Question 3: What Processes and Practices Guide the Implementation of New Charter School Programs?

Research Question 3 seeks to understand how new charter schools implement their programs, including the characteristics of new charter school staff and students, as well as the processes that facilitate and the challenges that impede program implementation. The PEIMS, AEIS, and survey data collected for the first interim report provide preliminary insight into most of these questions, but the incorporation of interview and site visit data in subsequent evaluation reports will enable more complete understanding new charter schools' implementation experiences, including the processes that facilitate the implementation of new charter schools.

What are the characteristics of staff who work in new charter schools?

Administrators. Open-enrollment charter school principals responding to the evaluation's spring 2008 survey had high levels of education, with 63% having completed coursework beyond a bachelor's degree. In spite of the high levels of education, only 31% of responding principals in new open-enrollment charter schools had obtained a Texas mid-management certificate. Responding principals had taught in traditional district schools for 5 years and held traditional district administrative positions for 4 years, on average. Principals also had charter school teaching and administrative experience. Principals had taught in charter schools an average of 2 years and held charter school administrative positions an average of 3 years. Surveyed principals were largely satisfied working in new open-enrollment charter schools. Ninety-three percent of all respondents said they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their work in new charter schools.

Analyses of 2007-08 AEIS data presented in chapter 2 indicate that district-level administrators in open-enrollment charter schools earned less than their peers in traditional public schools and in Generation 1 through 10 open-enrollment charter schools.[27] At the campus level, school administrators earned most in Generation 11 charter schools and least in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools; however notable differences emerge in the salaries of campus administrators in campus and open-enrollment charter schools. Across generations, administrators in open-enrollment charter schools earned less than the state average and less than campus administrators in campus charter schools. The salaries of campus administrators in campus charter schools exceeded the state average across all generations.

Teachers. AEIS data indicate that Generation 11 charter schools employed higher percentages of minority teachers (56%) than charter schools in Generation 12 (20%) or Generations 1 through 10 (51%), and the state average for all public schools (32%). Teacher experience varied across new charter schools. Generation 11 teachers had 7 years experience, on average, compared with 4 years experience in Generation 12 schools. Teachers in Generation 1 through 10 charter schools had 6 years average experience and the state average was 11 years experience. Across charter school generations, teachers working in open-enrollment charter schools earned less than the state average, while teachers working in campus charter schools tended to earn more than teachers across the state.

Open-enrollment charter school teachers who responded to the spring 2008 survey had high levels of education, but lacked teaching experience. Fifty-four percent of teachers responding to the survey had undergraduate degrees and 24% held graduate degrees. In addition, 64% of new charter school teachers held certifications in the subjects they currently teach. Teachers considered their school's mission and goals as the most important factor influencing their decision to teach in new charter schools. Teachers also were drawn to their school's reputation and standards, as well as small school and class sizes. Surveyed teachers were generally satisfied with their work in new charter schools, although there were

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[27]Because campus charter schools are part of traditional districts, it is not possible to disaggregate district-level administrators for these schools.

variations in the rates of job dissatisfaction across generations. Ninety percent of new charter school teachers reported feeling *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their experiences at their school. However, Generation 12 teachers were more likely to report being *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* with their teaching experiences (14% vs. 7% respectively).

What are the characteristics of students who attend new charter schools?

Analyses of PEIMS data indicate that new charter schools enrolled larger proportions of Hispanic students (58%) compared to more established charter schools in Generations 1 though 10 (51%) and the state average for public schools (47%) in 2007-08. Compared to state averages, all generations of Texas charter schools enrolled higher percentages of African American students and lower percentages of White students. New charter schools enrolled smaller proportions of economically disadvantaged students (68%) relative to previous charter school generations (72%), but still exceeded the state average of 55%. Students attending Generation 11 charter schools were more likely to be characterized as economically disadvantaged than students in Generation 12 schools (72% vs. 55%).

Most students in open-enrollment charter schools who responded to spring 2008 surveys attended a traditional public school before enrolling at their current charter school. Students reported a range of factors that influenced their decision to enroll in a charter school. Most students in Grades 4 and 5 agreed that parental influence, teacher quality, special classes, and school size were important reasons for choosing to attend a charter school. Students in Grades 6 through 12 reported that parental perceptions of school quality, teacher quality, reduced student conflicts, and teacher willingness to help students influenced their choice of schooling.

Most student survey respondents in Grades 6 through 12 reported that they were satisfied with their new open-enrollment charter schools. When asked about the positive and negative attributes of their new charter schools, students expressed an appreciation for the smaller school environments, as well as the high levels of teacher support, but disappointment in the lack of extracurricular activities. A majority of all surveyed students reported that they planned to return to their charter school for the subsequent school year; however, approximately one quarter of Generation 12 students indicated they would not return the following year. Students offered a variety of reasons for not returning, including moving, graduating, and being dissatisfied with the curriculum or school administration, and, in some cases, the absence of subsequent grade levels at the current school.

What challenges impede the implementation of new charter school programs?

Most Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools were located in facilities that were repurposed to accommodate the needs of schooling. Surveyed principals indicated that charter schools were located in retail spaces, warehouses, or churches, and were, for the most part, leased or rented. Principals felt that their facilities had sufficient space to accommodate increased enrollment and added grade levels, but that facilities issues limited their ability to provide cafeteria services and library space. In written statements, several principals indicated that charter school facilities created challenges to recruiting students because students were not attracted to the schools that had unappealing facilities and lacked resources for extra-curricular activities, such as sports and band.

Surveyed principals working in open-enrollment charter schools that served large populations of at-risk students noted the challenge of working with students who lacked course credits. Many such students also faced personal issues that affected their school work. Despite these challenges, principals said they were expected to meet the same academic accountability standards as traditional public schools. Principals cited low parental expectations and a lack of parental involvement, as well as insufficient funding as their greatest challenges in the 2007-08 school year.

Across the 2008 principal, teacher, student, and parent surveys, respondents consistently indicated that the lack of sufficient resources created challenges for new charter school programs. Surveyed teachers also identified a lack of time, the general challenges of starting a new school, large class sizes, and student discipline as challenges.

Research Question 4: How Effective Are New Charter Schools at Designing and Implementing Successful Educational Programs?

Research Question 4 addresses the effectiveness of new charter schools in implementing their programs, and includes sub-questions that probe the effectiveness of school leaders in establishing the school mission and high standards for student achievement, as well as safe and orderly school environments. Research Question 4 also considers how new charter schools monitor student progress, provide time for student learning, and provide opportunities for parent involvement. As noted earlier in this chapter, the first interim report's response to Research Question 4 is based on the perceptions of stakeholders gathered during the spring 2008 surveys of Generation 11 and 12 open-enrollment charter schools, and does not include quantitative measures of school performance. Subsequent evaluation reports will include quantitative performance data, qualitative data collected as part of the Generation 13 case studies, and surveys of stakeholders in both open-enrollment and campus charter schools. The broader range of data included in subsequent reports will facilitate more thorough understanding of the effectiveness of new charter schools in implementing successful programs.

How effective are new charter school leaders at establishing a clear mission and high expectations for student success?

Respondents to the spring 2008 open-enrollment principal and teacher surveys expressed high levels of agreement with statements indicating that school leaders were effective in establishing the school mission and high expectations for student achievement. Survey respondents indicated that most new open-enrollment charter schools are focused on preparing students for college and delivering a rigorous academic program, and a majority of students in Grades 6 through 12 who participated in the spring 2008 student survey indicated that they planned to pursue postsecondary education (78%).

Overall, surveyed parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with their student's new open-enrollment charter school. Ninety-four percent of parents were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their choice of schooling. Specifically, parents were satisfied with schools' high standards for student achievement, educational program and instruction, accountability for student achievement, and consistent communication regarding student performance. Parents said they considered educational programming and teacher quality most important in the decision to enroll their child in a new open-enrollment charter school. Other factors parents considered important included the school's academic reputation and approach to discipline, as well as the teaching of moral values.

Most surveyed parents said that their child attended a traditional public school prior to attending a new open-enrollment charter school, and most parents were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their child's previous school. Results from survey items addressing the factors influencing parents' choice of schools suggest that parents chose charter schools not because they were dissatisfied with their previous school, but because the charter school offered something, such as a specialized educational program, that the previous school did not have.

How effective are new charter school leaders at establishing a safe and orderly school?

Across surveys of open-enrollment charter school principals, teachers, and students, respondents expressed high levels of agreement with statements indicating that new charter schools had safe and orderly school environments. Surveyed students underscored their feelings of safety in written responses

to a survey question asking what they liked best about charter schools. Comments suggested that students' sense of safety was linked to small school size and familiarity with teachers and other students.

How do new charter schools monitor student progress?

Surveyed teachers in new open-enrollment charter schools indicated that they designed lesson plans that involved students working in pairs or small groups, and work to improve basic skills in core content areas. In order to track student progress, teachers most heavily relied on teacher-made tests, student demonstrations and performances, and student presentations.

How much time do students in new charter schools spend on instructional activities?

Surveyed teachers working in new open-enrollment charter schools indicated that class periods lasted an average of 51 minutes. Student survey respondents in Grades 6 through 12 indicated the amount of time they spent on homework each day, and most students reported spending less than an hour on homework. Proportionately more students in Grades 9 through 12 spent an hour or more on homework relative to students in Grades 6 through 8 (27% vs. 20%).

Surveyed students attending new open-enrollment charter schools expressed high levels of agreement with statements indicating that they worked hard in new charter schools and were learning more than in their previous school. Students also indicated that they received strong encouragement and support from teachers.

What opportunities are provided for parent involvement in new charter schools?

Although proportionately more surveyed parents signed contracts or agreements about participating in their child's education when they enrolled their child in a new open-enrollment charter school than in the previous school, there were few increases in parent participation across a range of school activities. Larger proportions of Generation 12 parents reported increased involvement in school activities. Responses from parents of students attending new charter schools and Generation 1 through 10 charter schools suggest that parent participation in school activities may increase when a child moves to a new charter school, but that participation wanes as parents grow more comfortable with their choice of schooling.

THE ONGOING EVALUATION

The first interim report's responses to evaluation research questions are preliminary. As the evaluation expands to include quantitative data on student outcomes in new charter schools, qualitative data collected through interviews with new charter school stakeholders, and survey data that include respondents in both campus and open-enrollment charter schools, it will provide more a more complete understanding of how new charter schools get started.

The second interim report (fall 2009) will include the results of spring 2009 surveys of Generation 11, 12, and 13 campus and open-enrollment charter schools, and will incorporate qualitative data collected across a set of seven Generation 13 charter schools' first year of operation. The second interim report will also examine the effectiveness of open-enrollment charter schools on student outcomes relative to the traditional district schools that students previously attended, and how the campus charter school structure may affect the educational outcomes of traditional district students who attend such schools (Research Question 5). The second interim report will also consider how the effectiveness of new open-enrollment and university charter schools may change as schools become more established and gain experience serving students (Research Question 6)

The final evaluation report (summer 2010) will build on findings presented in the evaluation's interim reports and will include individual case studies of the start-up experiences of a set of seven Generation 13 charter schools across their first 2 years of operation. The case studies will identify common themes in the experiences of new charter schools and identify issues particular to individual schools or types of charter schools.

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Appendix A:
Survey of Principals and Teachers
in New Open-Enrollment Charter Schools

Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your Name: _____

School Name: _____

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

How many days do you work each year (contracted)?

_____

What is your race/ethnicity?

○ Hispanic

○ African American

○ White

○ Other
  (specify)

_____

What is your highest education level? (Select only one.)

○ Completed high school

○ Less than 4 years of college

○ Bachelor's degree (BA/BS)

○ BA/BS and graduate courses

○ Master's degree

○ Doctorate

SCHOOL MISSION AND GOALS

Please indicate which of the following statements best reflect your school's mission and goals. (Mark all that apply.)

High School Programs (Grades 9-12)

☐ College preparatory program

☐ Technical and/or career preparation

☐ Dropout recovery program

☐ Focus on Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate coursework

☐ Focus on science and technology

☐ Focus on liberal arts

☐ Focus on foreign languages

☐ Other
  (specify)

_____

Elementary and Middle School Programs (Grades PK-8)

☐ College preparatory program

☐ Montessori program

☐ Talented and Gifted program

☐ Program for at-risk students

☐ Focus on science and technology

☐ Focus on liberal arts

☐ Focus on foreign languages

☐ Other
  (specify)

_____

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The school building is neat and clean.	○	○	○	○
School administrators set high expectations and communicate these expectations to students and staff.	○	○	○	○
Parents and community members attend school meetings and activities.	○	○	○	○
The community supports the school's mission and goals.	○	○	○	○
The school has sufficient financial resources.	○	○	○	○
The school is well managed; things work.	○	○	○	○
School staff, students, and visitors feel safe in the building during school.	○	○	○	○
School staff, students, and visitors feel safe in the building before and after school.	○	○	○	○
School administrators communicate often with parents.	○	○	○	○
Parents and community members volunteer time to work in the school.	○	○	○	○
This school has effective leadership.	○	○	○	○
Teachers and other staff participate in school decision making.	○	○	○	○
Parents and community members volunteer time for school fundraising efforts.	○	○	○	○
Parents participate in school decision making.	○	○	○	○
This school has a positive relationship(s) with the local school district(s).	○	○	○	○
Students in this school are committed to learning.	○	○	○	○
Teachers and parents work together to ensure student success.	○	○	○	○

	Teacher	Principal or School Leader
Please indicate your position in this charter school.	○	○

In what year were you born?

_____

What is your current teaching certification?
(Select all that apply.)

☐ I am currently certified to teach in Texas
☐ I am currently certified to teach in another state
☐ I am working to obtain Texas teaching certification
☐ I am not certified and not working to obtain certification

If you are certified to teach in Texas, what was your certification route?

○ College/university undergraduate certification program
○ Alternative certification program (ACP)
○ College/university post-bachelor certification program

What instructional levels do you currently teach? (Select all that apply.)

☐ Primary (PK-2)
☐ Elementary (3-5)
☐ Middle (6-8)
☐ High School (9-12)

What subject area(s) do you teach? (Select all that apply.)

☐ Language Arts
☐ Social Studies
☐ Reading
☐ Mathematics
☐ Science
☐ Other
(specify)

_____

Are you certified in all of the subject area(s) your currently teach?

○ Yes
○ No

Including this school year, how many years have you worked in your current charter school?

_____

How many years of experience (including the current school year) have you had in each of these types of schools as a teacher?

Public School	Non-Religious Private	Religious Private	Charter School
_____	_____	_____	_____

How important were the following factors in your decision to seek employment at this school?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Interested in being involved in an educational reform effort	○	○	○	○
The school's mission and goals	○	○	○	○
Small school size	○	○	○	○
Able to teach without certification	○	○	○	○
Less standardized testing pressure	○	○	○	○
Academic reputation/high standards of this school	○	○	○	○
The high level of parent involvement	○	○	○	○
More autonomy at this school	○	○	○	○
Difficulty finding another position	○	○	○	○
Opportunity to work with like-minded educators	○	○	○	○
Small class sizes at this school	○	○	○	○
Opportunity to work with a specific student population	○	○	○	○
Competitive salary and benefits	○	○	○	○
Opportunity to teach and draw retirement pay	○	○	○	○
Convenient location	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

(specify)

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This school is meeting students' learning needs that were not addressed at other schools.	○	○	○	○
Class sizes are too large.	○	○	○	○
Taking attendance and other classroom management activities do not interfere with teaching.	○	○	○	○
The school provides appropriate special education services for students who require it.	○	○	○	○
This school does not have adequate curriculum guides for the subject(s) I teach.	○	○	○	○
There are few outside interruptions of class work.	○	○	○	○
This school's mission and goals are clear to faculty.	○	○	○	○
This school's mission and goals are clear to students.	○	○	○	○
This school's mission and goals are clear to parents.	○	○	○	○
I have insufficient classroom resources.	○	○	○	○
Students usually are assigned homework.	○	○	○	○
School administration supports teachers' autonomy.	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with the school's curriculum.	○	○	○	○
This school has high standards and expectations for students.	○	○	○	○
I have ample time for planning instruction.	○	○	○	○
Student behavior problems do not disrupt instructional time.	○	○	○	○

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

To what extent are the following instructional methods used in your classroom?

	Not at All	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Large Extent
Students use computers.	○	○	○	○
Students use the Internet for classroom assignments.	○	○	○	○
I guide interactive discussion with all students.	○	○	○	○
Students apply course concepts to solve "real world" problems.	○	○	○	○
I provide one-on-one instruction.	○	○	○	○
Students work in pairs or small groups.	○	○	○	○
Students complete individual assignments (e.g., workbook or textbook exercise).	○	○	○	○
Students present oral reports.	○	○	○	○
I direct the whole group (lecture, control pace).	○	○	○	○
Students work with hands-on activities or manipulative's.	○	○	○	○
Students complete longer-term projects (i.e., lasting more than a week).	○	○	○	○
Students set individual course goals that address the curriculum.	○	○	○	○
I make multimedia or PowerPoint presentations.	○	○	○	○
Students work to improve basic skills (e.g., reading, writing, math computation).	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○

(specify)

To what extent are the following methods of assessment used to measure students' performance in your classroom?

	Not at All	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Large Extent
Teacher-made tests	○	○	○	○
Textbook or publisher provided tests	○	○	○	○
Student portfolios	○	○	○	○
Student demonstrations or performances	○	○	○	○
Student oral presentations (alone or in groups)	○	○	○	○
Student projects	○	○	○	○
Student writing samples	○	○	○	○
Standardized tests (TAKS)	○	○	○	○
Other (specify)	○	○	○	○

_____

Does your classroom have Internet access?

○ Yes

○ No

How many computers do you have in your classroom?

_____

What is the average number of students in your class/classes?

_____

How long are class periods?

_____ minutes

How many class periods do you teach each day?

_____

At what times does the typical school day begin and end for students?

Begin   End

_____   _____

What professional development activities have you attended <u>since beginning work at this charter school</u>?

	Yes	No
Orientation to school's mission and goals	○	○
General session sponsored by your school	○	○
Session sponsored by an education service center	○	○
Session sponsored by a traditional school district	○	○
Professional conference	○	○
Peer observation and critique	○	○
Release time to work with other school educators	○	○
Release time for independent training activities	○	○
Teaming or shared conference periods	○	○
College or university coursework	○	○
Other (specify)	○	○

How many days of professional development have you attended <u>this school year</u>? _____

Does your school have a formal teacher appraisal process?

○ No

○ Yes, we use the state system (Professional Development and Appraisal System or PDAS).

○ Yes, we use another system.
   (please describe)

How often do school administrators observe in your classroom?

○ Once a year
○ Once a semester
○ Once a grading period
○ Other
(specify)

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What have been the primary benefits of teaching at your charter school <u>this school year</u>?

_____

_____

_____

What have been the primary challenges of teaching at your charter school <u>this school year</u>?

_____

_____

_____

Are you planning on teaching at this charter school next year?

○ Yes

○ No

Why?

_____

_____

_____

Click to continue   ○

Your job title: _____

	Yes	No
Do you have TX mid-management certification?	○	○

How many years of experience (including the current school year) have you had in each of these types of schools as an administrator and as a teacher?

Years as an ADMINISTRATOR					Years as a TEACHER			
Public School	Non-Religious Private	Religious Private	Charter School		Public School	Non-Religious Private	Religious Private	Charter School
_____	_____	_____	_____		_____	_____	_____	_____

Including this school year, how many years have you worked in your current charter school?

_____

On average, how many hours per week do you work for this campus?

_____

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mark the response below that best describes your school's building type.

- ○ Custom built
- ○ Former public school
- ○ Office
- ○ Retail space/Strip mall
- ○ Former private school
- ○ Church
- ○ Community building

- ○ Other public building
- ○ College or university building
- ○ Warehouse
- ○ Other
  (specify)

  _____

Please estimate the size of your school facility.

_____ square feet

Is there room in your current facility to accommodate increased enrollment?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Does your charter school plan to expand to include additional grade levels?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Is there space in your current facility to accommodate additional grade levels?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Does your school share its facility with another organization?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

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	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Moderate Problem	Serious Problem
To what extent is each of the following facilities issues a problem at your school?				
Classroom space	○	○	○	○
Office space	○	○	○	○
General maintenance	○	○	○	○
Library space	○	○	○	○
Computer labs	○	○	○	○
Classroom computers	○	○	○	○
Grounds/Outdoor maintenance	○	○	○	○
Cafeteria space	○	○	○	○
Cafeteria equipment	○	○	○	○
Other (specify)	○	○	○	○

How are you financing your school facility? (Mark only one.)

○ Month to month rent
○ Lease
○ Purchase (loan/mortgage)
○ Lease to own
○ Donated
○ Other
  (specify)

_____

What is the annual lease, rent, or mortgage payment for your school?

_____

Please describe your greatest challenge with respect to facilities.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please indicate the methods your charter school uses to recruit teachers. (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Regional teacher recruitment fairs

☐ University recruitment events

☐ Advertisements in newspapers or trade journals

☐ Word of mouth

☐ Coordination with a teachers college

☐ Coordination with an independent teacher organization (e.g., Teach for America)

☐ Referrals from districts

☐ Other

(specify)

To what extent is each of the following staffing issues a problem at your school?

	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Moderate Problem	Serious Problem
Difficulty recruiting teachers	○	○	○	○
High rate of teacher turnover	○	○	○	○
High rate of teacher absenteeism	○	○	○	○
Difficulty securing substitute teachers	○	○	○	○
Difficulty recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals	○	○	○	○
Level of pay makes it difficult to recruit and retain quality staff	○	○	○	○
Training staff in the school's mission and goals	○	○	○	○
Difficult recruiting qualified staff for particular subject areas (e.g., science and math)	○	○	○	○
Other (specify)	○	○	○	○

Please describe your greatest challenges with respect to staffing.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Indicate whether your school uses each of the following recruitment methods and the approximate percent of students recruited by each method. Percents should total to 100.

——— Broadcast advertising (i.e., TV, radio)

——— Print advertising (i.e., newspaper, magazines)

——— Flyers, brochures, posters

——— Community outreach (ie.e, meetings with youth groups, community or parent organizations, etc.)

——— Coordination with juvenile justice entities

——— Coordination with military recruitment entities

——— Traditional district referral

——— Parent/student word of mouth

——— Other (specify) _____

_____

_____ TOTAL (out of 100)

Please describe your greatest challenges with respect to student recruitment.

_____
_____
_____
_____

OTHER START UP CHALLENGES

Please describe other challenges you have experienced in implementing your charter school's educational program during this school year.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Please describe the greatest successes you have experienced in implementing your charter school's educational program during this school year.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Please rate your level of satisfaction with your experience working in this charter school for this school year.

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
○	○	○	○

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Appendix B:
Survey of Students Attending
New Open-Enrollment Charter Schools
(Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6-12)

Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools Spring 2008
Survey of 4th and 5th Grade Charter School Students

Marking Directions: Please fill in the circles using a **number 2 pencil only**. Make dark marks that fill the circle completely. Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change. Make no stray marks.

USE A No. 2 PENCIL
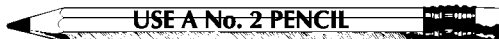
GENERAL INFORMATION

Are you a boy or a girl?

- ○ Boy
- ○ Girl

Which of the following best describes you?

- ○ Hispanic/Latino
- ○ African American
- ○ White
- ○ Other (describe) _____

What grade are you in?

- ○ 4th
- ○ 5th

How old are you today?

- ○ 7   ○ 11
- ○ 8   ○ 12
- ○ 9   ○ 13
- ○ 10

Did you attend this school last year?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What kind of school did you attend before this school?

- ○ Public school
- ○ Private school
- ○ Home schooled
- ○ Did not attend school
- ○ Other (describe) _____

What kinds of grades did you get at the school you used to attend?

- ○ Mostly A's
- ○ A's and B's
- ○ Mostly B's
- ○ B's and C's
- ○ Mostly C's
- ○ C's and D's
- ○ Mostly D's
- ○ D's and F's
- ○ Mostly F's

What kinds of grades are you getting *this school year*?

- ○ Mostly A's
- ○ A's and B's
- ○ Mostly B's
- ○ B's and C's
- ○ Mostly C's
- ○ C's and D's
- ○ Mostly D's
- ○ D's and F's
- ○ Mostly F's

Do you plan on attending this charter school next year?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure

Why or why not? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

CONTINUED ON BACK

Think about why you and your family chose this school. How much do you agree or disagree with each statement below? Choose only **one** answer for each statement.

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
This school is close to my home	○	○	○
My parents think this school is better for me	○	○	○
I was not getting good grades at my old school	○	○	○
I got into trouble at my old school	○	○	○
This school is smaller	○	○	○
Teachers at my old school did not help me enough	○	○	○
There are good teachers at this school	○	○	○
This school has fewer conflicts between students	○	○	○
I wanted to do more in my classes	○	○	○
My friends are going to this school	○	○	○
This school has smaller classes	○	○	○
This school has special classes I like	○	○	○
Other (specify) _____	○	○	○

Think about your current school. How much you agree or disagree with each statement below? Choose only **one** answer for each statement.

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
I work hard to get good grades in this school	○	○	○
I have more homework than I had at my old school	○	○	○
I am learning more here than at my old school	○	○	○
Students in this school like learning	○	○	○
This school has enough extra activities (like gym, music, or art class)	○	○	○
I wish this school had classes in more subjects	○	○	○
There is a computer for students to use in my classroom	○	○	○
I feel safe at this school	○	○	○
My teachers ask me to think about my future	○	○	○
My teachers help me a lot	○	○	○
Other students at this school help me learn	○	○	○
Most teachers at this school know my name	○	○	○
This is a good school for me	○	○	○

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Evaluationof New Texas Charter Schools Spring 2008
Survey of 6th through 12th Grade Charter School Students

Marking Directions: Please fill in the circles using a **number 2 pencil only**. Make dark marks that fill the circle completely. Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change. Make no stray marks.

USE A No. 2 PENCIL
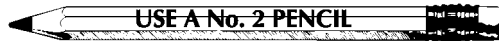
GENERAL INFORMATION

What is your gender?

○ Male
○ Female

Which of the following best describes you?

○ Hispanic/Latino
○ African American
○ White
○ Other (describe) _____

What grade are you in?

○ 6th ○ 10th
○ 7th ○ 11th
○ 8th ○ 12th
○ 9th

How old are you today?

○ 9   ○ 13 ○ 17
○ 10 ○ 14 ○ 18
○ 11 ○ 15 ○ 19
○ 12 ○ 16 ○ 20 or older

What kind of school did you attend before this school?

○ Public school
○ Private school
○ Home schooled
○ Did not attend school
○ Other (describe) _____

How satisfied are you with this school?

○ Very satisfied
○ Satisfied
○ Not satisfied

What kinds of grades did you get at the school you used to attend?

○ Mostly A's   ○ B's and C's   ○ Mostly D's
○ A's and B's   ○ Mostly C's   ○ D's and F's
○ Mostly B's   ○ C's and D's   ○ Mostly F's

What kinds of grades are you getting at school *this school year*?

○ Mostly A's   ○ B's and C's   ○ Mostly D's
○ A's and B's   ○ Mostly C's   ○ D's and F's
○ Mostly B's   ○ C's and D's   ○ Mostly F's

How much time do you typically spend on school homework at night?

○ Less than 30 minutes
○ 30-60 minutes
○ 1-2 hours
○ More than 2 hours

What do you plan to do when you finish high school?

○ Get a job
○ Go to technical school
○ Go to a community college
○ Go to a four-year college/university
○ Join the military
○ Other (describe) _____
○ Don't know

Do you plan on attending this charter school next year?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Not sure

Why or why not? _____
_____

CONTINUED ON BACK

What do you like most about this charter school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the biggest problem or the thing you dislike most at this school?

_____

_____

_____

YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL

Think about why you and your family chose this school. For each statement, choose how important it was in selecting this school. Choose only **one** answer for each statement.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
This school is close to my home	①	②	③	④
My parents think this school is better for me	①	②	③	④
I was not getting good grades at my previous school	①	②	③	④
I got into trouble at my previous school	①	②	③	④
This school is smaller	①	②	③	④
Teachers at my previous school did not help me enough	①	②	③	④
There are good teachers at this school	①	②	③	④
This school has fewer conflicts between students	①	②	③	④
I wanted more challenging classes	①	②	③	④
My friends are attending this school	①	②	③	④
This school has small classes	①	②	③	④
This school offers special classes in a subject that I enjoy	①	②	③	④
Other (specify) _____	①	②	③	④

Think about your current school. For each statement, choose how much you agree or disagree. Choose only **one** answer for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I work hard to earn the grades I get	①	②	③	④
I have more homework at this school than I had at my previous school	①	②	③	④
I am learning more here than at my previous school	①	②	③	④
Students in this school are interested in learning	①	②	③	④
This school has enough extracurricular activities	①	②	③	④
I wish there were more courses/subjects I could choose from	①	②	③	④
I have a computer available in my classroom when I need one	①	②	③	④
I feel safe at this school	①	②	③	④
My teachers encourage me to think about my future	①	②	③	④
I get a lot of individual attention from my teachers	①	②	③	④
My teachers help me understand things we are learning about in class	①	②	③	④
Other students at this school help me learn	①	②	③	④
Most teachers at this school know me by name	①	②	③	④
This school is a good choice for me	①	②	③	④

Appendix C:
Survey of Parents of Students Attending
New Open-Enrollment Charter Schools

Evaluation of New Texas Charter Schools
SURVEY OF NEW CHARTER SCHOOL PARENTS
School Year 2007-08

ENGLISH

<u>Introduction</u>

Hello! My name is **[interviewer's name]**. I am calling on behalf of the Texas Center for Educational Research.

We are conducting a survey with parents of students who are attending **[school name]** to obtain parents' perceptions of and experiences with the school.

May I speak with the parent or guardian of **[child's name]** or the adult in your household who is most involved in decisions about the education of this child?

We would like to talk with you about **[child's name]**'s experiences at school.

Your name has been randomly selected to participate in this survey. All answers will be kept completely confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and if there is a question you don't wish to answer, please let us know and we'll go on to the next question.

Are you at least 18 years old? *{If "no", end survey.} {Please note gender of respondent.}*
   ○ Female   ○ Male

SURVEY ID #_____

1. Was **[child's name]** enrolled in **[school name]** last year?
   ○ Yes ○ No

{If no} 1.a. Did you have another child attending **[school name]** last year? *{If "no", end survey.}*
   ○ Yes ○ No

{If yes} 1.b. Is **[child's name]** still enrolled at this school?
   ○ Yes ○ No

2. How many years has **[child's name]** attended this school, including the current year?

   _____ # of years

3. Did you have any other children enrolled in **[school name]** in 2007-08?
    ○ Yes ○ No

{If "yes"} 3.a. In what grades were these children enrolled?

○ Kindergarten	○ 4th Grade	○ 8th Grade	○ 12th Grade
○ 1st Grade	○ 5th Grade	○ 9th Grade	
○ 2nd Grade	○ 6th Grade	○ 10th Grade	
○ 3rd Grade	○ 7th Grade	○ 11th Grade	

4. Think about when you first decided to enroll your child in **[school name]**. How important were the following factors in your decision to choose this school? Please respond with not important, somewhat important, important, or very important.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
a. District assignment.	○	○	○	○
b. Convenient location.	○	○	○	○
c. Academic reputation of this school.	○	○	○	○
d. Small school size.	○	○	○	○
e. The school's discipline approach.	○	○	○	○
f. The educational program of this school.	○	○	○	○
g. The teaching of moral values similar to mine.	○	○	○	○
h. The school's ability to effectively serve my child's specific educational needs (such as special education, dyslexia, dropout recovery).	○	○	○	○
i. Good teachers.	○	○	○	○
j. Reputation of school administrators or staff.	○	○	○	○
k. My child's poor performance at his/her previous school.	○	○	○	○
l. Dissatisfaction with the educational program and instruction at my child's previous school.	○	○	○	○
m. Recommendations from teachers or staff from my child's previous school.	○	○	○	○
n. Recommendations from a family member or friend.	○	○	○	○

o. Are there any factors I haven't mentioned?
   ○ Yes ○ No
{If yes, what are those other factors?}

_____

_____

5. When you were considering sending your child to [school name], what types of information did you use to make the decision? I will read a list of information sources. Please answer "yes" or "no" to indicate whether you gathered this information prior to enrolling your child in this school.

	Yes	No
a. Written brochures or descriptions of this charter school	❍	❍
b. Information from the charter school's website	❍	❍
c. Academic performance of this school's students	❍	❍
d. The school's accountability rating	❍	❍
e. Information from parents with children at this school	❍	❍

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's school? Please respond with strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. This school has sufficient financial resources.	❍	❍	❍	❍
b. I am satisfied with this school's basic educational program (including reading, language arts, math, science, social studies).	❍	❍	❍	❍
c. I am satisfied with the instruction offered.	❍	❍	❍	❍
d. The rate of staff turnover at this school is acceptable.	❍	❍	❍	❍
e. I am satisfied with this school's enriched educational programs (including music, art, foreign language).	❍	❍	❍	❍
f. This school has high expectations and standards for students.	❍	❍	❍	❍
g. This school has small class sizes.	❍	❍	❍	❍
h. I am satisfied with the building and grounds of my child's school.	❍	❍	❍	❍
i. This school provides adequate support services (such as counseling, healthcare, social services).	❍	❍	❍	❍
j. Teachers and school leaders are accountable for student achievement.	❍	❍	❍	❍
k. My child receives sufficient individual attention.	❍	❍	❍	❍
l. I am satisfied with the kinds of extracurricular activities offered at this school.	❍	❍	❍	❍
m. This school emphasizes educational content more than test preparation (TAAS/TAKS).	❍	❍	❍	❍
n. This school regularly keeps me informed about how my child is performing academically.	❍	❍	❍	❍
o. The charter school meets the needs of my child that were not addressed at his/her previous school.	❍	❍	❍	❍
p. My child's grades have improved since attending [school name].	❍	❍	❍	❍
q. My child's TAAS/TAKS scores have improved since attending [school name].	❍	❍	❍	❍

7. Have you participated in any activities at your child's school? I will read a list of activities. Please answer "yes" or "no" to indicate whether you participated in these activities at **[school name]**.

	Yes	No
a. Attended PTA meetings.	○	○
b. Volunteered for school activities.	○	○
c. Attended a school board meeting.	○	○
d. Served as a member of the school's governing board or a school-related committee.	○	○
e. Helped make educational program or curricular decisions.	○	○
f. Helped with fundraising.	○	○
g. Attended parent-teacher conferences.	○	○
h. Observed/visited my child's classroom.	○	○
i. Signed a contract or agreement about participation in my child's education.	○	○
j. Communicated with teachers or administrators by telephone or in writing.	○	○
k. Assisted with or monitored your child's homework at home.	○	○
l. Tutored your child at home using materials and instructions provided by the teacher.	○	○
m. Read with your child at home.	○	○
n. Assisted your child in making college plans and choosing courses to support these plans.	○	○

8. How many students are in your child's class *[if elementary]/*classes *[if middle or high school],* on average?

   _____ # of students per class

9. What grade levels are offered at your child's school?

   ○ Kindergarten   ○ 5th Grade   ○ 10th Grade
   ○ 1st Grade   ○ 6th Grade   ○ 11th Grade
   ○ 2nd Grade   ○ 7th Grade   ○ 12th Grade
   ○ 3rd Grade   ○ 8th Grade
   ○ 4th Grade   ○ 9th Grade

10. Approximately how many students attend your child's school?

    _____# of students per school

11. What is the name of the principal or director of your child's school?

    _____

12. Thinking about you and your child's experiences at **[school name]**, please rate your level of satisfaction with the 2007-08 school year.

    ○ Very dissatisfied   ○ Dissatisfied ○ Satisfied   ○ Very satisfied

13. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your child's experiences at **[school name]**?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now let's talk about the school your child previously attended.

14. What kind of school did your child/children attend before this charter school?

- ⭘ Public school (traditional)
- ⭘ Private school
- ⭘ Another charter school
- ⭘ Home schooled {*if home schooled, skip to demographic questions*}
- ⭘ Did not attend school {*if did not attend, skip to demographic questions*}

15. In what activities did you participate at your child's previous school? I will read a list of activities. Please answer "yes" or "no" to indicate whether you participated in these activities at your child's previous school.

	Yes	No
a. Attended PTA meetings.	⭘	⭘
b. Volunteered for school activities.	⭘	⭘
c. Attended a school board meeting.	⭘	⭘
d. Served as a member of the school's governing board or a school-related committee.	⭘	⭘
e. Helped make educational program or curricular decisions.	⭘	⭘
f. Helped with fundraising.	⭘	⭘
g. Attended parent-teacher conferences.	⭘	⭘
h. Observed/visited my child's classroom.	⭘	⭘
i. Signed a contract or agreement about participation in my child's education.	⭘	⭘
j. Communicated with teachers or administrators by telephone or in writing.	⭘	⭘
k. Assisted with or monitored your child's homework at home.	⭘	⭘
l. Tutored your child at home using materials and instructions provided by the teacher.	⭘	⭘
m. Read with your child at home.	⭘	⭘
n. Assisted your child in making college plans and choosing courses to support these plans.	⭘	⭘

16. Thinking about you and your child's experiences at that previous school, please rate your level of satisfaction.

⭘ Very dissatisfied   ⭘ Dissatisfied ⭘ Satisfied   ⭘ Very satisfied

Finally, I'd like to finish by asking you a few brief background questions.
{Demographic Questions}

17. What is your race/ethnicity?

   ○ White   ○ Hispanic   ○ Don't know
   ○ African American   ○ Other _____   ○ Refused

18. Which of the following languages are primarily spoken in your home?

   ○ English   ○ Vietnamese   ○ Refused
   ○ Spanish   ○ Other_____
   ○ Chinese   ○ Don't know

19. How much formal education have you had?

   ○ Did not complete high school   ○ Graduate courses, no degree
   ○ Completed high school   ○ Graduate/professional degree
   ○ Less than four years of college   ○ Don't know
   ○ College graduate (BA/BS)   ○ Refused

20. Which best describes your household?

   ○ Two parents or guardians   ○ Don't know
   ○ Single parent or guardian   ○ Refused
   ○ Other _____

21. What is the estimated annual income of your household/family?

   ○ Less than $10,000   ○ $25,000 - $34,999   ○ Don't know
   ○ $10,000 - $14,999   ○ $35,000 - $49,999   ○ Refused
   ○ $15,000 - $24,999   ○ $50,000 or more

Your responses have been very helpful. Your participation in this survey will help your school district better understand the needs of their students. Thank you for completing this survey!

*****************************END OF PARENT SURVEY****************************

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