



Indiana Charter School Demographics for 2007-2008

Report 2008-2
September 2008



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**OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOL RESEARCH
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Executive Summary

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The Office of Charter School Research (OCSR), located in Teachers College at Ball State University, was created to study the effectiveness of Indiana's charter schools. In particular, the OCSR focuses on the academic performance of pupils attending these schools. This report (2008-2) highlights the demographic makeup of students enrolled in Indiana's 40 charter schools for both the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 school years.

- Most of the 40 Indiana charter schools continue to attract families of minority students and those living in poverty, as defined by students qualifying for free or reduced lunch status.
- The percentage of minority student enrollment in Indiana's charter schools continues to exceed the average for all Indiana schools.
- Over the past year, there was a decrease in the percentage of students identified with disabilities in both the charter schools authorized by Ball State University—from 12.2% in 2006–2007 to 10.9% in 2007–2008—and those authorized by the Indianapolis Mayor's Office—from 10.8% in 2006–2007 to 10.4% in 2007–2008. Taken collectively, there was virtually no change in the percentage of students with disabilities.
- Membership in the Virtual Special Education Cooperative (VSEC) has decreased as schools have developed the means to provide special education services independently, in a smaller cooperative unit, or through a local school district. These alternate plans are approved through the Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners.
- Learning disabilities and communication disorders, respectively, remain the most common types of disabilities among the students attending Indiana's Charter Schools.

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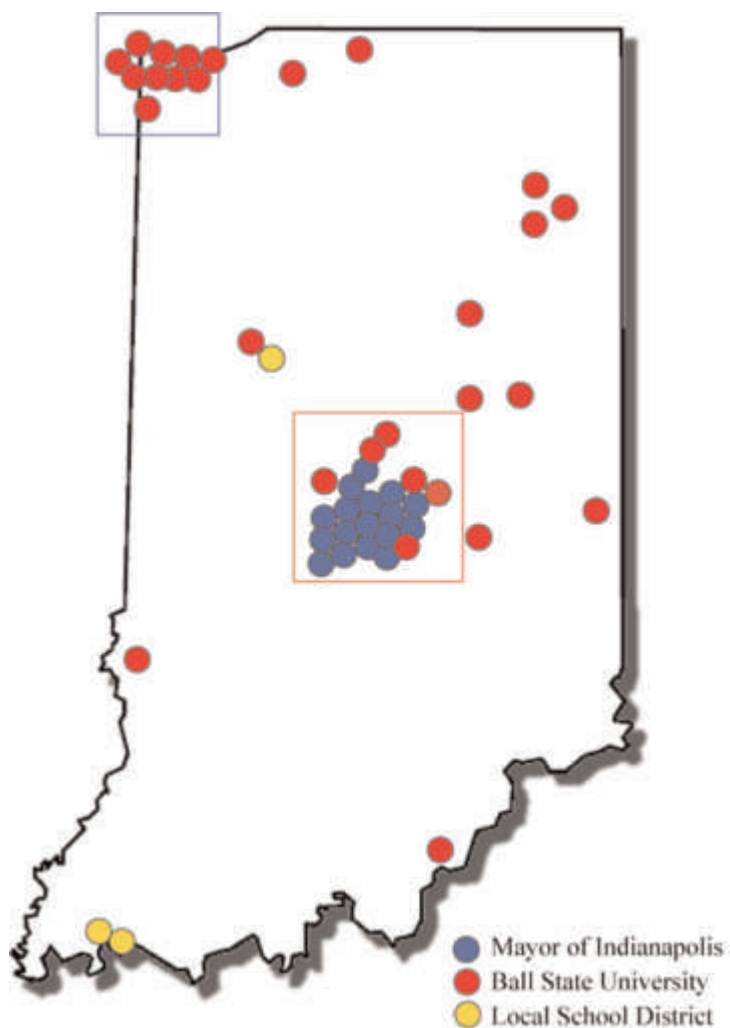
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Six years have passed since the charter school legislation allowed the inaugural class of Indiana charter schools to open in the fall of 2002. Indiana, the 20th state to enact legislation providing for the existence of public charter schools, has a rapidly-growing charter school movement, with 40 schools in operation during the 2007–2008 school year (see Figure 1), and 49 schools to be operating in the fall of 2008.

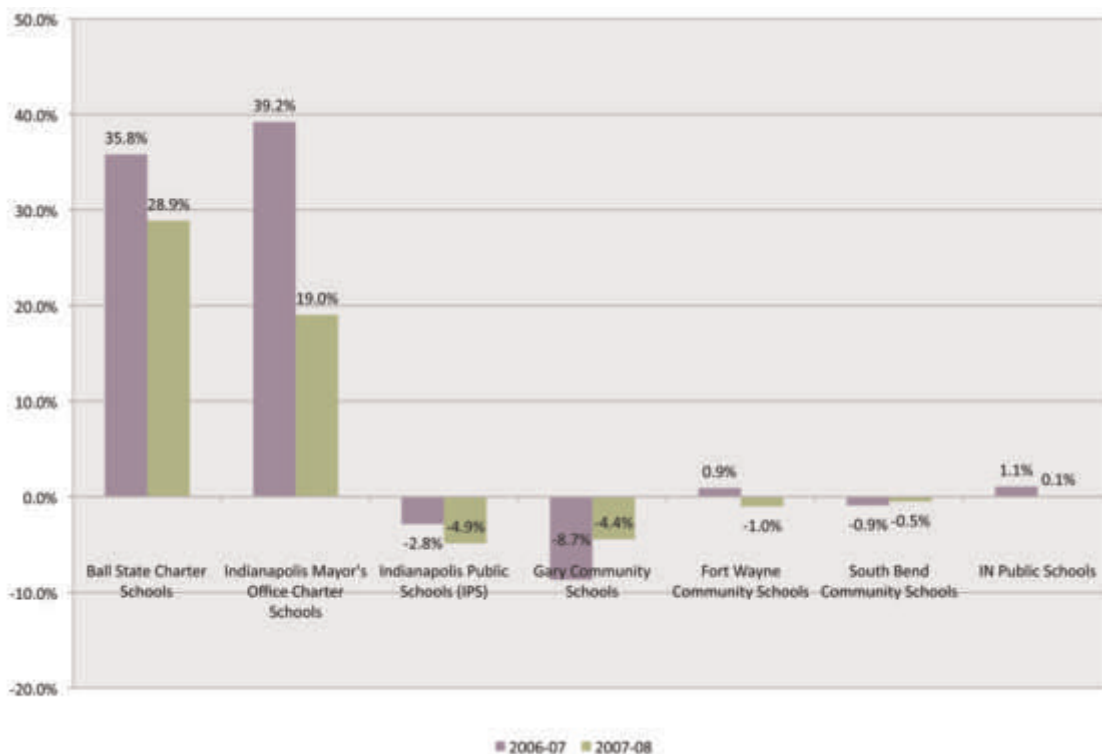
Figure 1
Map of Indiana Featuring Charter Schools



1. 21st Century Charter School (Gary)
2. Anderson Preparatory Academy (Anderson)
3. Aspire Charter Academy (Gary)
4. Campagna Academy (Schererville)
5. Charter School of the Dunes (Gary)
6. Community Montessori (New Albany)
7. Dr. Robert H. Faulkner Academy (Marion)
8. East Chicago Lighthouse Charter School (East Chicago)
9. East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy (East Chicago)
10. Galileo Charter School (Richmond)
11. Gary Lighthouse Charter School (Gary)
12. Geist Montessori (McCordsville)
13. Hoosier Academy–Indianapolis (Indianapolis)
14. Hoosier Academy–Muncie (Muncie)
15. Imagine MASTER Academy (Fort Wayne)
16. Imagine MASTER on Broadway (Fort Wayne)
17. Imagine Indiana Life Sciences Academy–East (Indianapolis)
18. Indiana Math & Science Academy (Indianapolis)
19. Irvington Community School (Indianapolis)
20. KIPP LEAD College Preparatory Charter School (Gary)
21. New Community School (Lafayette)
22. Options Charter School (Noblesville)
23. Options Charter School (Carmel)
24. Renaissance Academy Charter School (LaPorte)
25. Rural Community Academy (Graysville)
26. Thea Bowman Leadership Academy (Gary)
27. Timothy L. Johnson Academy (Fort Wayne)
28. Veritas Academy (South Bend)
29. West Gary Lighthouse Charter School (Gary)
30. Beacon Academy (Lafayette)
31. Joshua Academy (Evansville)
32. Signature School (Evansville)
33. Andrew J. Brown Academy (Indianapolis)
34. Challenge Foundation Academy (Indianapolis)
35. Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School (Indianapolis)
36. Christel House Academy (Indianapolis)
37. Decatur Discovery Academy (Indianapolis)
38. Fall Creek Academy (Indianapolis)
39. Flanner House Elementary School (Indianapolis)
40. Fountain Square Academy (Indianapolis)
41. Herron High School (Indianapolis)
42. Hope Academy (Indianapolis)
43. Indianapolis Lighthouse Charter School (Indianapolis)
44. Indianapolis Metropolitan High School (Indianapolis)
45. KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory (Indianapolis)
46. Lawrence Early College High School (Indianapolis)
47. Monument Lighthouse Charter School (Indianapolis)
48. Southeast Neighborhood School of Excellence (Indianapolis)
49. The Project School (Indianapolis)

Since 2002, charter school enrollment has increased each year in schools sponsored by Ball State University and in schools sponsored by the Indianapolis Mayor's Office. Over 11,000 public school students were enrolled in a charter school in 2007–2008, up from 9,000 in 2006–2007. In contrast, other urban districts in Indiana have had minimal increases or have seen a slight decrease in the number of students attending local schools, as illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2
Percent Change in Enrollment from Previous School Year in Indiana Schools¹



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Rising enrollment and the increased availability of charter school options is due in large part to the fact that Indiana law allows for multiple authorizers within the state. The two primary authorizers in Indiana are Ball State University, located in Muncie, and the Mayor of Indianapolis. Ball State University has the authority to charter schools throughout the state and in the fall 2007 had twenty-two in operation in 15 counties. The Indianapolis Mayor, whose fall 2007 roster included sixteen schools sponsored through his Office, has the power to issue charters within Marion County. Two additional charter schools are sponsored by the local school district in Evansville.

As the number of charter schools increases, so does public interest in both the educational environment they foster and the demographic makeup of these schools. It is up to stakeholders and organizations within the movement, then, to communicate the means by which charter schools seek to provide quality, innovative education and to increase student achievement. This report focuses on demographics of Indiana's roster of charter schools from fall 2007 to spring 2008.

Charter schools have a history that spans much longer than the six years of the Indiana movement. Many states have charters numbering in the hundreds, with enrollment in the tens of thousands. Despite the longevity of charter schools, many people are not familiar with what a

¹Source: Indiana Department of Education Web site for K–12 school data at <http://doe.state.in.us/htmls/education.html>. Retrieved February 18, 2008.

Indiana
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charter school is. The Indiana Code provides a legal definition of a charter school, as allowed under Indiana legislation:

A charter school is a public school that is nonsectarian and nonreligious and operates under a charter. Under Indiana Code, charter schools are established to serve the different learning styles and needs of public school students, to offer public school students appropriate and innovative choices, to afford varied opportunities for professional educators, to allow freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of accountability, and to provide parents, students, community members, and local entities with an expanded opportunity for involvement in the public school system.²

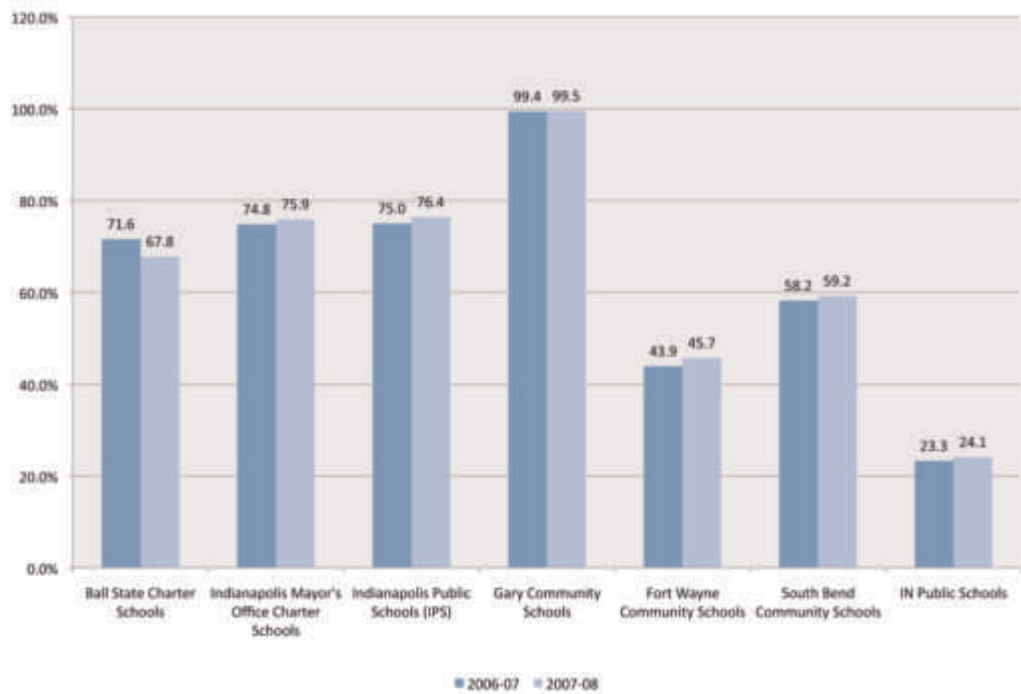
The key point in this definition is that charter schools are public schools. Their approach to education is varied, but remains at its heart a movement that seeks to enhance public education for all students.

As in previous years, data for 2007–2008 show that most of the 40 charter schools had high minority enrollment and high enrollment from students living in poverty, as defined by free or reduced lunch status. Indiana charter school enrollment is characterized by academic, socioeconomic, and ethnic diversity, as is evidenced by the figures in this report.

In Figures 3 and 4, minority and free or reduced lunch enrollment for the charter schools in both 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 is depicted. These statistics are a strong indication that charter schools represent a reasonable educational option for a diverse group of families.

Minority enrollment in large urban school districts far exceeds that of Indiana public schools taken collectively. In charter schools, too, which are largely concentrated in the urban cities of Gary (with eight located in the city and surrounding communities) and Indianapolis, the percent minority enrollment continues to exceed Indiana schools. The charter schools show similar

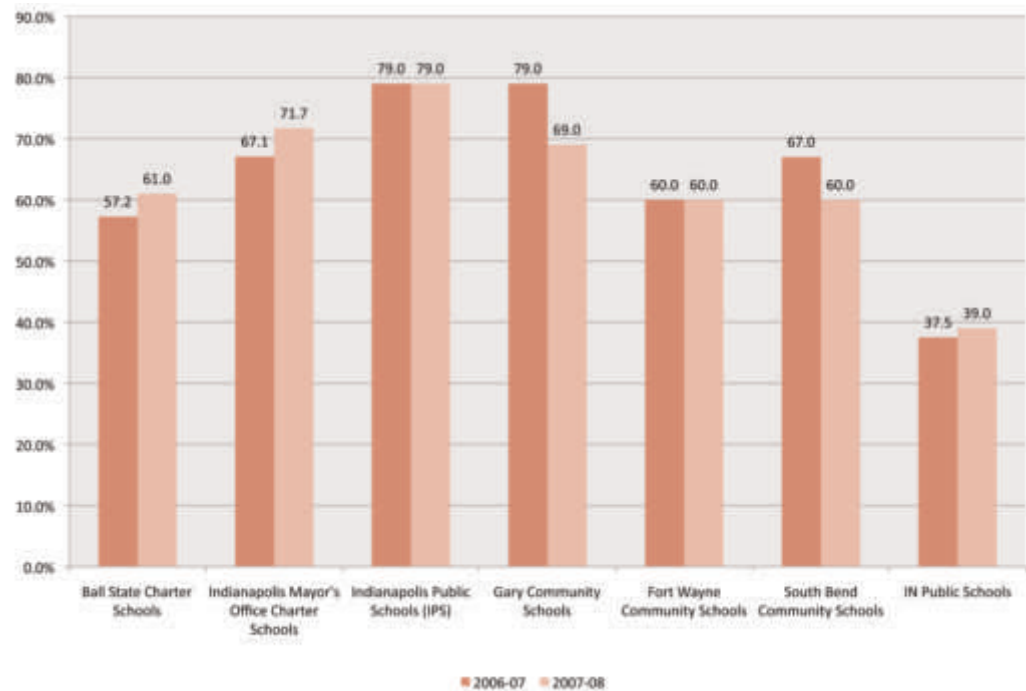
Figure 3
Percent Minority Enrollment in Indiana Schools for Select School Years³



²Source: Indiana Department of Education Web site at <http://doe.state.in.us/charterschools/faq.html#1>. Retrieved January 26, 2007.

³Source: Indiana Department of Education Web site for K–12 school data at <http://doe.state.in.us/htmls/education.html>. Retrieved February 18, 2008.

Figure 4
Percent Free and Reduced Lunch Enrollment in Indiana Schools
for Selected School Years⁴



minority enrollment to that of Indianapolis Public Schools, but remain behind that of Gary Community Schools.

With respect to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, the percentage in charter schools is comparable to that of other large districts in Indiana, with the exception of Gary Community Schools. From 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 Ball State University charters saw a slight decrease in the percentage of students on free or reduced lunch, while the Indianapolis Mayor's Office charter schools saw almost no change. The fact that these students are present in charters at a relatively constant rate, even as charter enrollment increases, is clear indication that these public schools continue to present an educational alternative for economically disadvantaged students.

Charter schools, by design, can employ innovative strategies to impact student achievement, offering parents and students educational opportunities that may boost performance. The charter schools, however, still face a tremendous challenge that has remained since the inaugural year: The majority of students entering the schools are behind their peers in other public schools academically. This is evidenced by ISTEP+ pass rates in Ball State- and Indianapolis Mayor-sponsored charter schools that have been in operation for more than one year compared to pass rates for other urban school corporations in Indiana, as well as ISTEP+ information for the state as a whole.

Figures 5 through 11 show ISTEP+ pass rates for Grades 3 through 10 across five years. These results indicate patterns of performance, with progress in the proficiency of cohorts of students (highlighted in corresponding colors).

⁴Source: Indiana Department of Education Web site for K–12 school data at <http://doe.state.in.us/htmls/education.html>. Retrieved February 18, 2008.

Charter schools, by design, can employ innovative strategies to impact student achievement offering parents and students educational opportunities that may boost performance.

Figure 5
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Year Ball State-Sponsored Charter Schools^{5,6}

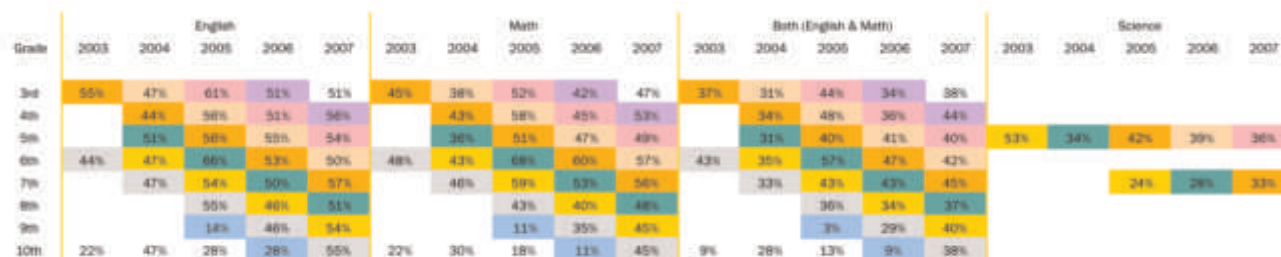


Figure 6
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Year Indianapolis Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools⁷

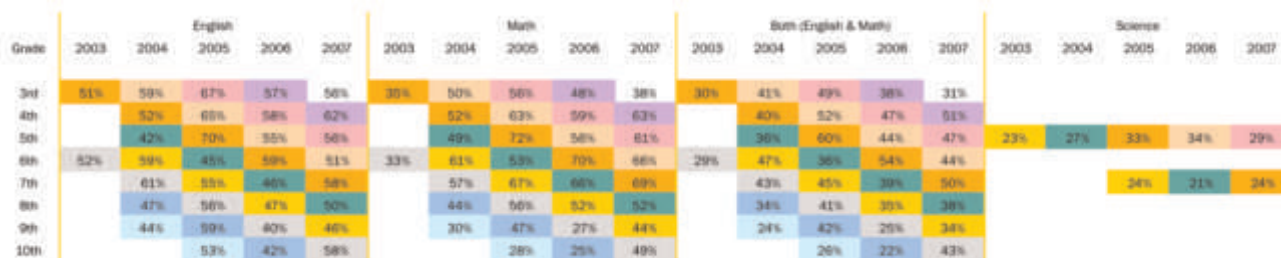


Figure 7
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in Gary Community Schools⁸

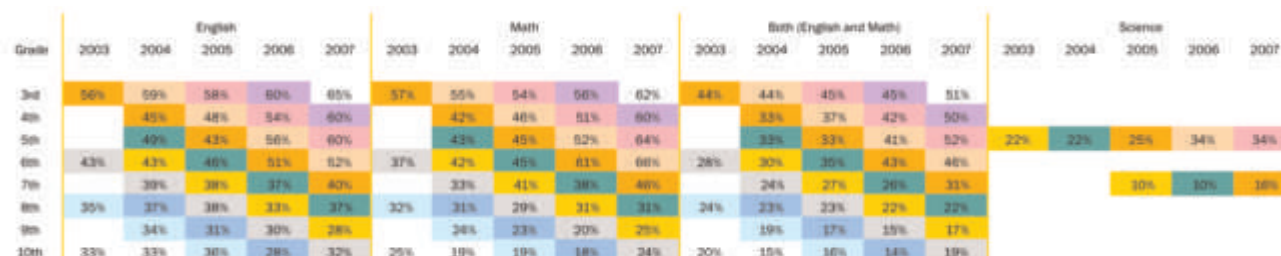
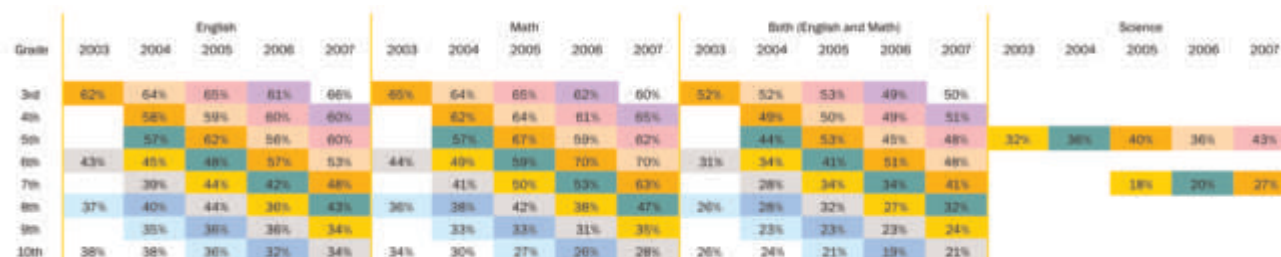


Figure 8
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in Indianapolis Public Schools⁹



⁵ISTEP+ results for 2007 do not include school data sets for grades in which less than ten students were tested.
⁶Source: Indiana Department of Education ISTEP+ Results media reports for 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 from <http://doe.state.in.us/istep/welcome.html>. Retrieved April 29, 2008.
⁷Ibid.
⁸Ibid.
⁹Ibid.

Figure 9
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in South Bend Community School Corporation¹⁰

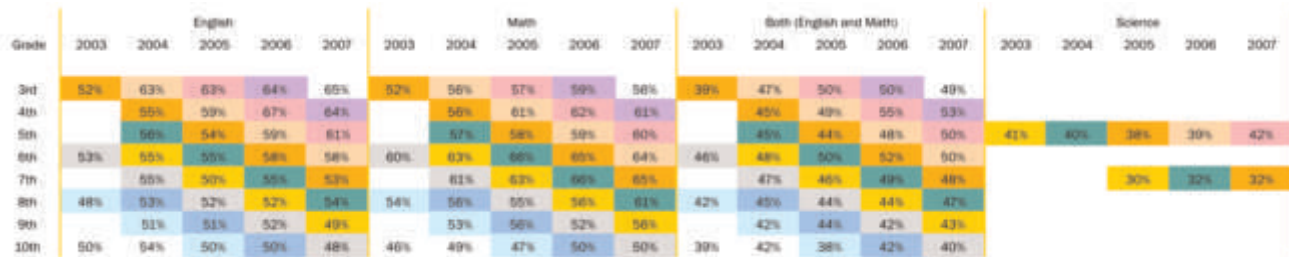


Figure 10
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in Fort Wayne Community Schools¹¹

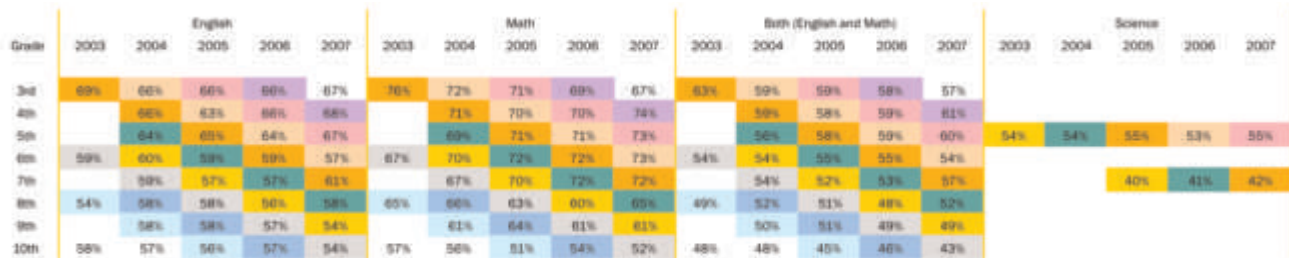
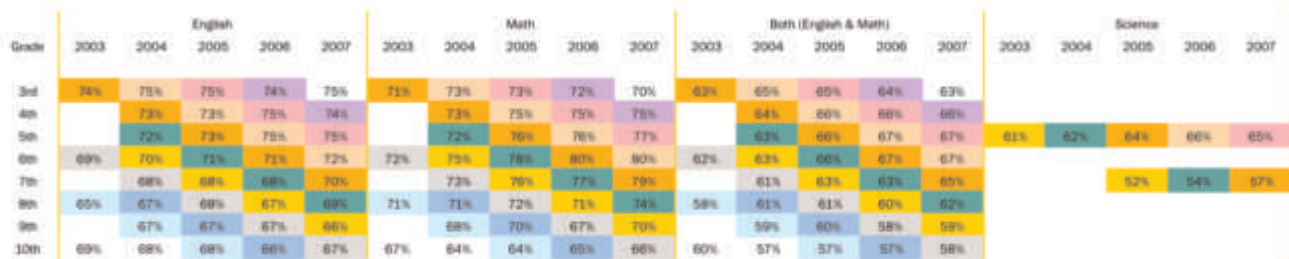


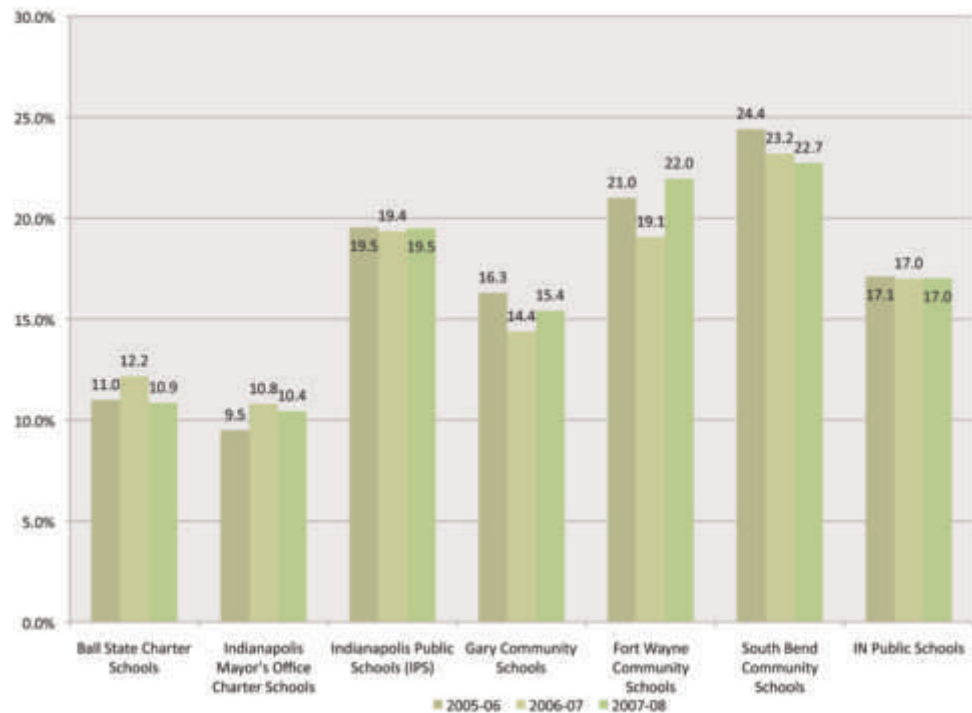
Figure 11
ISTEP+ Pass Rates in Indiana Public Schools¹²



Public charter schools, like traditional public schools, must be equipped to serve the needs of all students. This includes not only minority students and those from low-income families, but, also, those students with disabilities, who require special services. For many of the charter schools operating in 2006–2007, the number of students with disabilities increased in 2007–2008. Figure 12 depicts the percentage of students receiving special education services in Indiana schools for 2005–2006, 2006–2007, and 2007–2008. Among the school districts shown, only Indianapolis Public Schools, Gary Community Schools, and Fort Wayne Community Schools saw an increase in the percentage of special education students. In Indiana charter schools, taken collectively, the percent of students with disabilities enrolled had virtually no change. In Ball State charter schools the decrease was from 12.2% in 2006–2007 to 10.9% in 2007–2008; for Indianapolis Mayor's Office charters the percentage decreased from 10.8% special education enrollment in 2006–2007 to 10.4% in 2007–2008.

¹⁰Ibid.
¹¹Ibid.
¹²Ibid.

Figure 12
Percent Special Education Enrollment for Select School Years in Indiana Schools¹³



Statewide, the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities in charter schools has served as a working model for other states.

Charter schools have responsibility for addressing the needs of students with disabilities as specified in individualized education programs (IEPs). Many of Indiana's charter schools initially joined the Virtual Special Education Cooperative (VSEC), which maintains accountability for mandates under federal special education law and state regulations for its member schools. In the early years of the charter school movement in this state, the VSEC administered federal funds for students with disabilities and provided support, training, and intervention strategies through consultation and direct services. Although the VSEC still works closely with some Indiana charters, the majority have successfully transitioned to independently delivering special education services or have formed smaller regional cooperatives. Statewide, the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities in charter schools has served as a working model for other states.

Figures 13 through 15 show special education enrollment in each individual charter school for the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 school years. The majority of schools shown are current members of the VSEC, but Decatur Discovery Academy, Hope Academy, and Lawrence Early College High School receive services through a neighboring school district. The 21st Century charter schools provide services through their own cooperatives, as approved through the Indiana Department of Education. For those schools that opened for the first time in fall 2007, only 2007–2008 special education data is available.

¹³Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners, Incidence Rates for December 1, 2007 (Certified March 2008).

Figure 13
Percent Special Education Enrollment: Ball State-Sponsored Charter Schools¹⁴

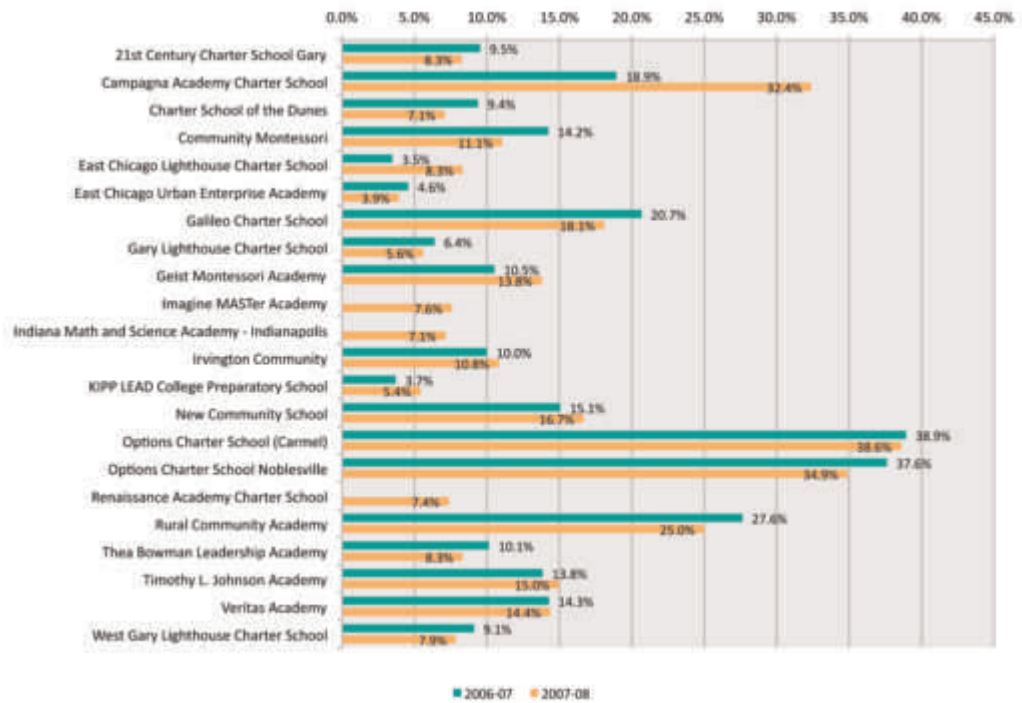
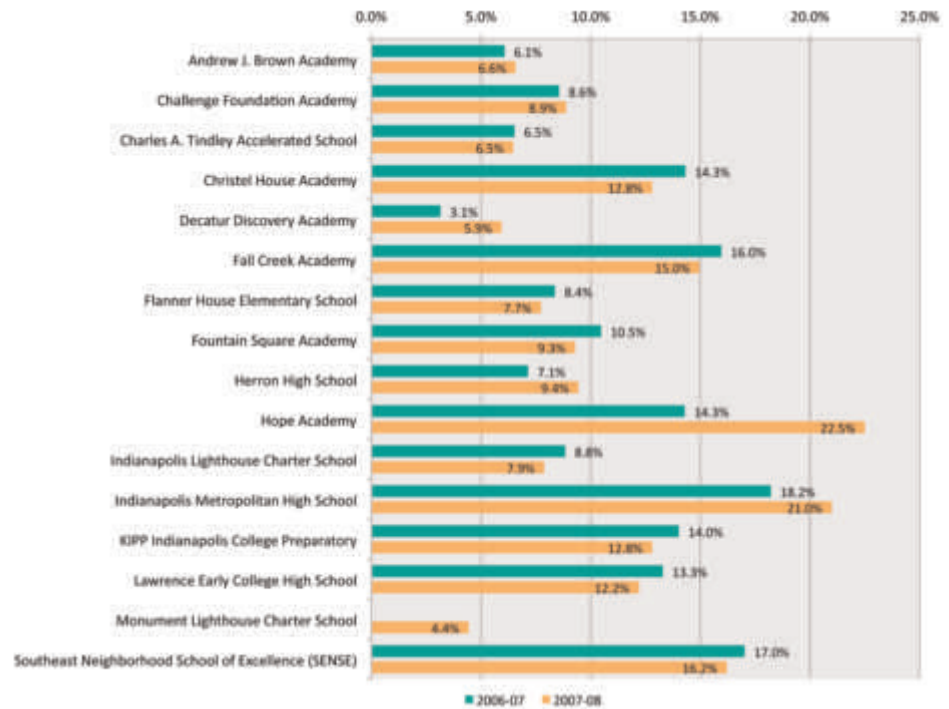


Figure 14
Percent Special Education Enrollment:
Indianapolis Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools¹⁵



¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

Charter schools leverage a full range of administrative, instructional, and therapeutic support services in their efforts to improve the educational outcomes for all students with special needs.

Figure 15
Percent Special Education Enrollment:
Local District-Sponsored Charter Schools¹⁶

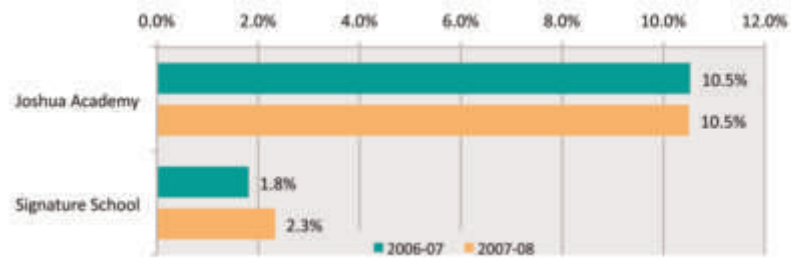
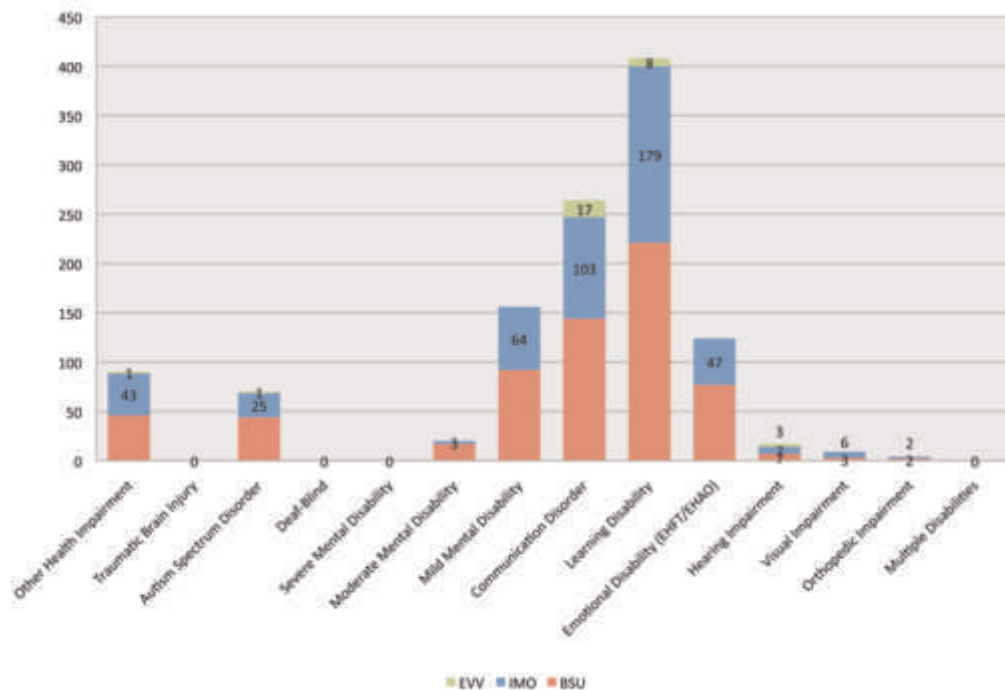


Figure 16 depicts the special education count by specific disability for all Indiana charter schools.

Most students who are eligible for special education services in Indiana charter schools are identified as having learning disabilities or communication disorders. It is imperative that these students have access to appropriate instruction and specialized supports that facilitate their educational progress in the least restrictive environment. As mandated in their charter contract and accountability standards, charter schools leverage a full range of administrative, instructional, and therapeutic support services in their efforts to improve the educational outcomes for all students with special needs.

Figure 16
Charter School Special Education Student Count by Primary Disability¹⁷
2007-2008



¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

Indiana charter school demographics for the past two years represent an increase in the number of minority students, students who receive free or reduced lunch, and students with disabilities. Charter schools will continue to address their unique educational needs to increase student achievement among those who are at an educational disadvantage because of social, physical, or economic factors. Because there has been a steady increase in total charter enrollment over the six years that charter schools have been in existence in the state, there are even more students who have a stake in the success of these nontraditional public schools. With that in mind, the Office of Charter School Research will continue to monitor the trends in charter school enrollment, as well as the impact of charter school strategies on student achievement.



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