



# Waiting for Their Chance

A Closer Look at Wait Lists in  
Urban Public Charter Schools

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# Introduction

Improving the quality of public education in our nation’s cities is a top priority for civic leaders. Beyond its impact on property values, the availability of safe, high-quality schools can have a substantial effect on the quality of life in urban neighborhoods, much like grocery stores, parks, and jobs that offer a living wage. But urban school districts often struggle. Some assert that the struggle is due to their more disadvantaged student population. In fact, in more than one-third of public schools in U.S. cities, 75 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.<sup>1</sup> Academic performance is also a challenge. On the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered by the U.S. Department of Education and also known as the “Nation’s Report Card,” only 28 percent of 8th graders in urban public schools were proficient in reading, and 29 percent were proficient in mathematics.<sup>2</sup> Given this performance, parents who can move out of a failing urban district often do. And those who cannot are forced to wait and hope that the traditional public schools will get better.

With the advent of public charter schools, however, parents finally have a viable public alternative in some of our lowest-performing urban school systems. Each school year thousands of families faced with schools unable to meet their children’s needs seek better options by applying to public charter schools. Unfortunately, in communities with few high-quality public school

“Our parents, like parents everywhere, are desperate to have good schools for their kids.”

-Jon Clark, Founder and Co-Director of Brooke Charter School

options, the demand for public charter schools is substantially higher than the number of seats available. When this happens, public charter schools hold lotteries to determine which students will be able to attend. And every year far too many students end up on wait lists, rather than in the schools of their choice. No student’s fate should be decided by a lottery ball.

This report examines conditions in 10 urban districts that have large wait lists for their public charter schools. These districts are from all regions of the country and from states with varying policy contexts, particularly as it relates to caps, facilities funding, and start-up dollars. However, what many of these school districts have in common is that their traditional public school systems perform well below their state’s average, and they have public charter schools that are achieving positive academic outcomes for their students.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, these school districts also have thousands of students who are still waiting for a chance to attend a public charter school.

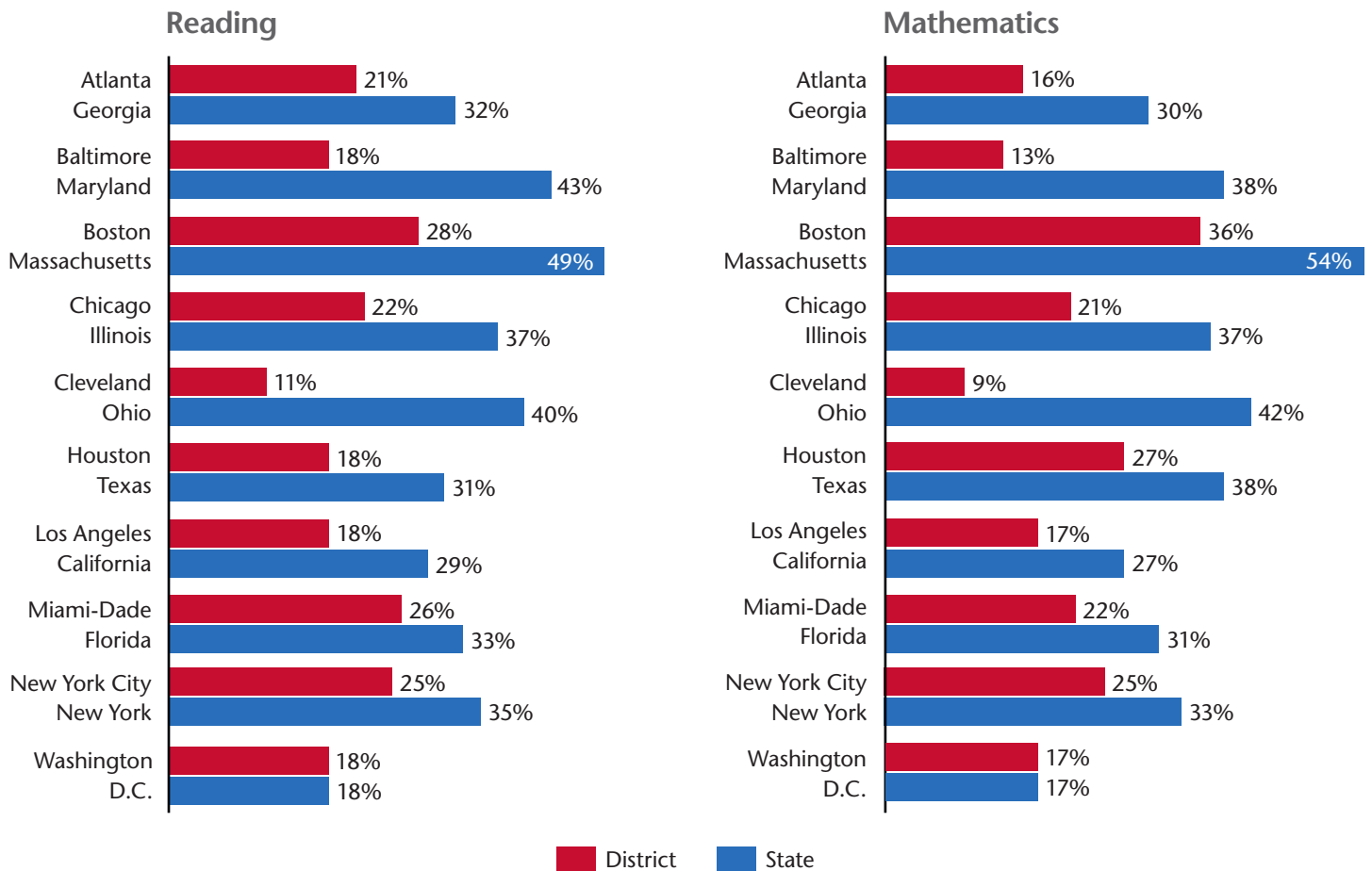
## Wait Lists and Enrollment in Ten Urban Districts

| District          | Number of student names on charter wait lists, fall 2014 | Number of charter schools, fall 2013 | Number of charter students, fall 2013 | Number of non-charter students, fall 2013 |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Atlanta, GA       | 4,500  | 17                                   | 6,560                                 | 45,130                                    |
| Baltimore, MD     | 5,000  | 36                                   | 12,350                                | 72,400                                    |
| Boston, MA        | 25,700   | 27                                   | 9,660                                 | 54,300                                    |
| Chicago, IL       | *12,800  | 130                                  | 54,000                                | 343,980                                   |
| Cleveland, OH     | 1,300  | 58                                   | 18,560                                | 28,880                                    |
| Houston, TX       | 35,000   | 124                                  | 49,890                                | 192,860                                   |
| Los Angeles, CA   | 68,200   | 254                                  | 139,170                               | 513,250                                   |
| Miami-Dade, FL    | 24,500   | 128                                  | 52,050                                | 304,190                                   |
| New York City, NY | *163,000   | 196                                  | 70,210                                | 982,560                                   |
| Washington, D.C.  | 18,500   | 107                                  | 36,570                                | 46,390                                    |

Sources: Fall enrollment data for public charter schools and traditional public schools were collected from each state’s department of education website. More information is available at the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools’ data dashboard: <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/home>. Data sources for the number of student names on wait lists for each district are available in the Technical Note.

\*Data are for 2013–14 school year—the latest available data for that district.

## Percent of Non-Charter School Students Scoring *Proficient* or Above on the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), by City and State



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), main NAEP and TUDA, 2013 Reading and Mathematics Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer, accessed April 6, 2015.

*Proficient* represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.

In some cities, there are more student names on public charter school wait lists than students enrolled in public charter schools. In Boston, for example, there are nearly three times more names on wait lists than there are public charter school students, and New York City has more than twice as many names on public charter school wait lists than there are enrolled students.

It should be noted that these wait list numbers do not account for the fact that some students may have their names on multiple wait lists or that some of them may be attending another public charter school. The likelihood of a student’s name being on multiple wait lists depends on how close in proximity public charter schools are to each

other within a district and, therefore, whether a number of different public charter schools would be realistic options for one student. Therefore, the only consistent way to report numbers across districts of different sizes is to use the raw number of names on wait lists. This approach still allows for an assessment of demand and supply in a given district.

The academic achievement of the traditional public schools in these districts may affect the demand for public charter schools. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a nationally representative assessment of the achievement of U.S. students in various subjects.<sup>4</sup> Also known as the “Nation’s Report Card,” NAEP allows

for state-by-state comparisons and, beginning in 2002, comparisons among 21 large urban districts. NAEP scores can be translated to four achievement levels: below *Basic*, *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The *Proficient* level represents “solid academic performance and students who score *Proficient* or above are considered to have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.” Given the critical importance of producing students who are college- and career-ready, being proficient in reading and mathematics by high school should be a top educational priority.

About half of the 8th graders in Massachusetts traditional public schools (non-charter) scored *Proficient* or above in reading and mathematics on the 2013 NAEP assessment. In fact, Massachusetts is consistently one of the highest-performing states on NAEP. In Boston, however, only about one-quarter (28 percent) of non-charter students were *Proficient* or above in reading, and just one-third (36 percent) were *Proficient* or above in mathematics. Like Massachusetts, Maryland is considered to be a top-achieving state, and its proficiency rates for non-charter school students in 2013 were 43 percent in reading and 38 percent in mathematics. But the traditional public schools in Baltimore tell a different story. Only 18 percent of non-charter school students scored *Proficient* or above in reading in 2013, and only 13 percent achieved proficiency or above in mathematics. A similar story can be seen in Cleveland. While the non-charter school students in Ohio had proficiency rates of 40 percent in reading and 42 percent in mathematics, students in Cleveland’s traditional public schools fare much worse—only 11 percent, or one in 10 students, scored *Proficient* or above in reading and only 9 percent, less than one in 10 students, in mathematics. It is not surprising, therefore, that parents in these districts are desperate for another option for educating their children.

Any public school, traditional or charter, that operates in these districts will face the challenges that come with serving a disadvantaged urban student population. However, a recently released study conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University overwhelmingly found that students who attend public charter schools in these districts learn more than their traditional public school counterparts.<sup>5</sup> Using student-level data, this study was able to compare the achievement of students who attended public charter schools to closely matched students (“virtual twins”) who did not. By tracking the students’ achievement over six years—2006–07 through 2011–12—the researchers were able to determine the number of additional learning days

## Impact of Public Charter School Enrollment on Average Annual Learning Gains, in Days

| City  | Mathematics |
|---|-------------|
| Atlanta, GA                                 | 13          |
| Baltimore, MD                               | -           |
| Boston, MA                                  | 233         |
| Chicago, IL                                 | 17          |
| Cleveland, OH                               | 31          |
| Houston, TX                                 | 17          |
| Southern California (including Los Angeles) | 58          |
| Miami-Dade, FL                              | 21          |
| New York City, NY                           | 104         |
| Washington, D.C.                            | 96          |

| City  | Reading |
|---|---------|
| Atlanta, GA                                 | 22      |
| Baltimore, MD                               | -       |
| Boston, MA                                  | 170     |
| Chicago, IL                                 | 1       |
| Cleveland, OH                               | 40      |
| Houston, TX                                 | 13      |
| Southern California (including Los Angeles) | 48      |
| Miami-Dade, FL                              | 12      |
| New York City, NY                           | 24      |
| Washington, D.C.                            | 70      |

Source: The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), “Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions”, March 2015, <http://urbancharters.stanford.edu/>.

Baltimore, MD was not included in this study.

gained by students who attended public charter schools.

Students who attended public charter schools in Boston gained nearly a year's worth of learning in reading (170 days of a 180 day school year) and more than a year in mathematics (233 days) compared to non-charter school students. In Washington, D.C., students gained 70 days in reading and 96 days in mathematics, and in New York City, students gained 24 days in reading and 104 in mathematics.

The performance of the traditional public schools in these 10 districts is low. The gains made by students who are enrolled in public charter schools in these districts are significant. Yet thousands of students in these districts are still waiting for their chance to attend a public charter school. Let's take a closer look at the conditions in each of them.

# Atlanta, GA

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1993                    | 142%                                   | No                                    | No                                | Yes (but only to some schools)    |

Seventeen public charter schools enroll almost 6,560 students in Atlanta, with more than 4,500 student names on wait lists to attend public charter schools.

The Atlanta Public Schools (APS) district has experienced almost 150 percent growth in its public charter school enrollment over the past five years. This growth is partially due to more families moving back to the city, which creates additional demand for both traditional public and public charter schools. However, the reputation of traditional public schools in Atlanta has been tarnished recently as details have emerged on a widespread test score cheating scandal. This scandal, as well as persistent low performance, has increased the number of parents seeking out public charter schools.

Fortunately, while the demand for more public charter schools has grown, APS, which authorizes many of the public charter schools in Atlanta, has refined its authorizing practices to include strong and transparent

guidelines around the application, oversight, and closure/non-renewal processes for public charter schools. Its merit-based decisionmaking for approving new public charter school applications has enabled strong applicants to open new schools and weaker applicants to understand areas for improvement. This strong authorizing has created better public charter schools, which in turn leads more parents to apply to public charter schools due to their positive performance and word-of-mouth reputation.

As of the 2013 school year, public charter school students were only 13 percent of Atlanta’s total public school enrollment. But, expanding the number of high-quality public school options will require new schools, which creates a need for more facilities funding. While the state provides some facilities funding, the applications for funding far outweigh the amount of funds appropriated. These facilities funds are adequate to open only a handful of schools, further limiting public charter school growth.



“Getting in a school is based on what neighborhood you live in. I wasn’t willing to take that gamble with my child.”

-Shaleea Vass-Bender, parent of Brooke Charter Schools (Mattapan) 1st grader

## Baltimore, MD

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2003                    | 67%                                    | No                                    | No                                | No                                |

Baltimore public charter schools enroll 12,350 students in 36 schools. An additional 5,000 student names are on wait lists to attend public charter schools.

A central component of the public charter school model is giving school leaders the autonomy to make a wide variety of decisions, including those related to personnel. However, under Maryland law, all public charter school employees must be district employees and must be included in the district’s collective bargaining agreement, both of which significantly constrain the flexibility of school leaders to make decisions. This lack of school-level autonomy is one of the major reasons that Maryland is the lowest-ranking state on the National Alliance for Public

Charter Schools’ most recent rankings of state public charter school laws.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of autonomy afforded to public charter school leaders creates challenges in hiring, training, and retaining the teaching staff needed to build a unique school culture. It also leads to management difficulties for principals as they work to balance the specific needs of their schools with broader directives from the district. These restrictions deter existing public charter school operators from expanding and new charter schools from opening—including those from national operators outside of Baltimore.

## Boston, MA

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1993                    | 90%                                    | Yes                                   | No                                | Yes                               |

In Boston, 9,660 students attend 27 public charter schools, with nearly three times as many names (25,700) on wait lists. There are likely a couple of reasons for this: the outstanding academic performance of Boston public charter schools and the state’s many caps on public charter school growth.

According to the CREDO study cited earlier, Boston public charter schools posted the largest achievement gains—a year or more of learning in both reading and mathematics—seen in any city or state that the independent research organization has studied to date.<sup>7</sup> Yet, despite the public charter schools’ overwhelming academic success, their growth in Boston has hit a wall.

Massachusetts has some of the country’s most significant restrictions on public charter school growth.<sup>8</sup> Most

problematic, there is a cap on the amount of funding that any district can direct to public charter schools. For most districts, that cap is 9 percent of their net school spending. However, as a result of legislation passed in 2010, in the state’s lowest-performing districts (those districts with performance in the bottom 10 percent on statewide accountability tests) the cap increases from 9 to 18 percent between fiscal years 2011 and 2017. Unfortunately, several of these districts, including Boston, have already reached the new cap—meaning that no new public charter schools can open. This restriction directly affects Boston students’ access to the strong academic programs in public charter schools and leads to growing wait lists.



“Just by the nature of our lottery, it feels like you’ve won something or you’ve lost something—you didn’t get chosen. We try to work with that. We work very closely and have good relationships with our community schools.”

-Don Doran, Head of School of Charles R. Drew Charter School



## Chicago, IL

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1996                    | 90%                                    | Yes                                   | No                                | No                                |

Chicago is the third largest school district in the country, with 343,980 students in traditional public schools and 54,000 students served by public charter schools. There are 130 public charter schools with 12,800 student names on their wait lists. Despite the large number of public charter schools and demand for them, the political climate facing public charter schools is tense.

The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, is strongly opposed to public charter schools and allege that they take money from the district system. In reality, the per-pupil funding follows the student, so parents can vote with their feet to send their children and tax dollars to schools that best fit their needs.

The strain between CTU and public charter schools intensified in September 2012, when Chicago district school teachers went on strike for the first time in more

than 25 years. While the district system was shut down over contract disputes, students attending public charter schools proceeded with their learning days. This sharp contrast between district and charter public school operations drew media attention, further straining the political climate for public charter schools.

In the 2015 Chicago mayoral election, the incumbent mayor faced a runoff election with a union-backed candidate whose central campaign platform included a moratorium on new public charter schools. The CTU echoed this call for no new public charter schools in its latest round of contract negotiations, as did several members of the Chicago City Council. This attempt to avoid competitive pressure and force all students into a single district system hurts the many families clamoring for choice and the unique instructional models offered by public charter schools.

## Cleveland, OH

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1997                    | 63%                                    | Yes                                   | No                                | Yes                               |

There are 58 public charter schools serving 18,560 Cleveland students. Approximately 1,300 student names are on public charter school wait lists. Even with continuing demand for public charter schools, Cleveland is an example of a district in which the significant funding disparity between public charter schools and district schools makes succeeding at scale difficult for public charter schools.

Cleveland has the largest funding discrepancy in the state. Cleveland’s public charter schools receive about half as much funding (46 percent) as traditional public schools—a difference of more than \$7,000 per pupil in fiscal year 2011.<sup>9</sup> This funding gap, one of the largest in the nation, is a huge deterrent for public charter school operators to open new schools in Cleveland and offer innovative programs to families who want more educational options.

While there are funding inequities between traditional and charter public school students throughout Ohio,

## Houston, TX

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1995                    | 69%                                    | Yes                                   | No                                | No                                |

In Houston, there are 49,890 students enrolled in public charter schools, with an additional 35,000 names on wait lists. There are 124 operating public charter schools in the city.

Houston is a great example of public charter school quality and parental demand fueling growth. Texas has a cap on the number of new charters that can be issued to school operators. However, in May 2013 it was raised, due in part to the large number of students on wait lists to attend Texas public charter schools.

Many of the nation’s largest and most successful nonprofit public charter school operators (CMOs) got their start in

Houston, including KIPP, YES Prep, and Harmony Public Schools. These CMOs run multiple schools in the city. While new campuses of existing charter operators do not count against the statewide cap, public charter school advocates successfully made the case that independent charter schools, considered to be the next generation of potential CMOs, were limited by the cap. As a result of this advocacy, beginning in September 2014, there will be gradually increasing numbers of new charters that can be granted in the state. This means that Houston, and other cities throughout Texas, can continue to incubate innovative public charter schools and give more students access to school choice options.

# Los Angeles, CA

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1992                    | 138%                                   | Yes                                   | No                                | Yes                               |

Los Angeles serves the largest number of public charter school students in the country, with more than 140,000 students enrolled in public charter schools in 2013–14. Enough students are enrolled in L.A.’s public charter schools to place it among the top 20 of the 100 largest school districts in the United States. But even with this large number of students served in 269 public charter schools, 68,200 student names are still on wait lists. Like other urban districts, finding physical space for existing and new public charter schools is a struggle in Los Angeles.

Proposition 39 was passed by California voters in 2000 to ensure that all public school students have equal access to district facilities. However, the full intent of the law was

not followed in practice. In 2007, the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) initiated what became a series of lawsuits against the Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD) for its failure to comply with the law’s mandate that LAUSD share public school space with students served by public charter schools. A portion of CCSA’s second lawsuit was recently heard by the California Supreme Court. In April 2015, the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of CCSA and public charter schools, requiring LAUSD to change its classroom allocation methodology to comply with the law and to ensure that public charter schools have more equitable access to classrooms in the district, as intended by the voters. This ruling should improve access for public charter schools and enable them to serve more students.

“I applied to BLSYW because I wanted my daughter to have the opportunities the school provides, their focus on college prep, the high student expectations, the small class sizes, and how they focus on getting students ready for their future. That’s very important to me.”

-Samantha Byrdsong, parent of Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women (BLSYW) 6th grader



## Miami-Dade, FL

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1996                    | 118%                                   | No                                    | No                                | Yes                               |

Miami-Dade public charter schools serve 52,050 students, with nearly half that number of names (24,500) on wait lists to attend a public charter school. The city has 128 public charter schools and has experienced more than 100 percent growth over the past five years. Yet there are still roadblocks to reducing public charter school wait lists.

While the Florida public charter school law is strong in several areas, it fails to provide for equitable funding for public charter school students. In fact, a University of

Arkansas study found that Miami-Dade’s public charter school students received 25 percent less in overall per-pupil funding in fiscal year 2011 than traditional public school students.<sup>10</sup> On top of these funding issues, there have been instances in Miami-Dade and Broward counties of local officials creating roadblocks for opening public charter schools through imposing zoning red tape or informal moratoria.<sup>11</sup> These funding discrepancies and roadblocks keep more students who want educational options on wait lists.

## New York, NY

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1998                    | 198%                                   | Yes                                   | Yes                               | Yes (but only to some schools)    |

New York City has the largest public charter school wait list in the country—with 163,000 student names—as well as some of the highest reported learning gains at their public charter schools—104 days in mathematics, according to the previously cited CREDO study.<sup>12</sup> These strong academic results have undoubtedly contributed to the large number of names on the wait lists for the 183 public charter schools in the city.

New York City has highly successful public charter schools that attract parents and teaching talent. However, even with a vibrant public charter school market, New York City public charter schools are continuously working to recruit and retain top teachers. A combination of school models built on extended learning time and the high cost

of living in New York City contribute to teacher burnout and relocation, which makes it difficult to find longer-term teaching staff to work in New York City public charter schools. The churn of teacher talent creates a continuous need to train new teachers on the school culture and expectations. As part of this focus on human capital, public charter schools—and CMOs in particular—are building career options through a promotion pathway that encourages results-oriented teachers to steadily take on more responsibility. A well-designed career pipeline, as well as the appeal of the Big Apple and its successful public charter schools, will hopefully lead to more teachers entering and remaining in the field, which will allow public charter schools to serve more students.



“I’ve witnessed parents get the call that their students have been accepted. There are parents who have cried because they were so happy... Parents are very determined to get their kids into good schools.”

-Erika Bryant, Executive Director of Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School

## Washington, D.C.

| Year charter law passed | Five-year growth in charter enrollment | Cap on the number of charter schools? | Start-up funds provided by state? | Facility funds provided by state? |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1996                    | 43%                                    | Yes                                   | No                                | Yes                               |

Washington, D.C., has 18,500 student names on wait lists to attend public charter schools. The 107 public charter schools serve 36,570 students. Despite the great demand, new public charters schools often face a significant hurdle from the outset.

Finding suitable facilities is a struggle for most public charter schools across the country, and Washington, D.C., is no exception. Although the D.C. government is required by law to give public charter schools the right of first refusal for unused or underused buildings, it is often hesitant to release these spaces to public charter schools.

Friends of Choice in Urban Schools, a D.C.-based charter support organization, estimates that more than 1.7 million square feet of unused or underused D.C. government-owned buildings have not yet been offered to public charter schools.<sup>13</sup> The government’s delay in releasing unused or underused facilities has made finding suitable locations to operate difficult for many public charter schools, keeping more children waiting for a public charter school seat.

## Conclusion

The first public charter school opened in 1992 in Minnesota. As of fall 2014, that number had grown from one to nearly 7,000 public charter schools operating throughout the nation. Over the past 15 years, enrollment in public charter schools has increased from 300,000 students to nearly 3 million, and the demand continues to grow. With the exception of Baltimore, the districts profiled in this report have had public charter schools for nearly 20 years. Public charter schools are known entities in these cities, not novel alternatives. It stands to reason that any student who wants to attend a public charter school should be able to.

There has been progress toward better access to public charter schools. The use of common application systems, which guarantee parents placement for their children in one of their top school choices, have been adopted in several cities. However, roadblocks such as caps on the number of schools, inadequate or nonexistent facilities funding, employment constraints, human capital challenges, and the political environment remain. It is crucial to begin clearing these roadblocks so that every student has access to a high-performing public school.

## Technical Note

The numbers of students on wait lists were collected from several sources:

**Atlanta, GA:** Data on the number of students on wait lists in Atlanta schools are collected by the Georgia Department of Education for their annual report. School-level wait list data were provided to the National Alliance by the Georgia Department of Education ([www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx)).

**Baltimore, MD:** School-level wait list data for Baltimore City are collected by the Office of School Innovations, a Maryland State Department of Education agency, through statewide public charter wait list surveys. These data were provided to the National Alliance through a formal data request to the Division of Student, Family and School Support ([www.marylandpublicschools.org/MsDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/index.html](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MsDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/index.html)).

**Boston, MA:** Data on the number of students on wait lists in Boston public charter schools are collected by the Massachusetts Department of Education and are available at [www.doe.mass.edu/charter/enrollment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/enrollment).

**Chicago, IL:** Wait list data for Chicago public charter schools were made available through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request by a third party. The results can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/foia/pdf/fy2015/October2014/15-106-doc3.pdf>.

**Cleveland, OH:** The wait list data for Cleveland public charter schools were collected by contacting each charter school. Of the 59 public charter schools in Cleveland, 19 did not respond or responded that the wait list data were not available. Wait list numbers for the remaining 40 schools, including those with no wait lists, were used to create an average percentage of students on wait lists compared to school enrollment. This percentage (7 percent) was used to estimate the number of students on wait lists for the 19 schools for which data could not be collected directly.

**Houston, TX:** Data on the number of students on wait lists for Houston public charter schools are estimated by the Texas Charter School Association (TCSA) ([www.txcharterschools.org](http://www.txcharterschools.org)). The estimate is based on a survey of public charter schools in Houston. The National Alliance collected supplemental wait list data capturing approximately 50 percent of the public charter schools in

Houston and used these data to confirm TCSA's wait list estimate.

**Los Angeles, CA:** Data on the number of students on wait lists for Los Angeles public charter schools are estimated by the California Charter School Association (CCSA) ([www.calcharters.org](http://www.calcharters.org)). The estimate is based on a survey of approximately 40 percent of the public charter schools in Los Angeles. Although the CCSA discounts their estimates to account for students being on multiple lists, the non-discounted number is used here.

**Miami-Dade, FL:** School-level wait list data for Miami-Dade are collected by the Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice, a Florida Department of Education agency which collects and provides information on behalf of Florida School Choice Programs ([www.floridaschoolchoice.org/default.asp](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/default.asp)).

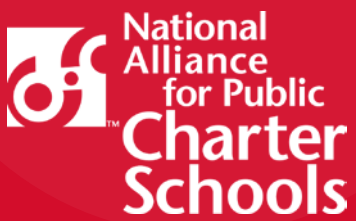
**New York City, NY:** Data on the number of students on wait lists in New York City public charter schools are estimated and reported by the New York City Charter Schools Center (NYCCSC) ([www.nyccharterschools.org/sites/default/files/resources/Lottery2014FinalReport.pdf](http://www.nyccharterschools.org/sites/default/files/resources/Lottery2014FinalReport.pdf)). The estimate is based on survey data on individual charter schools, charter school networks, and unique applicants through the Charter Center's Common Online Charter School Application. Although NYCCSC discounts their estimates to account for students being on multiple lists, the non-discounted number is used in this report.

**Washington, D.C.:** The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board collects wait list data each year, and the 2014–15 numbers can be found at <https://data.dcpcsb.org/Waitlists-Spaces-Available/Wait-Lists-and-Available-Seats-SY2014-15-/29u8-mtmd>.

# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Urban Education in America website, table B.1.3-1, [http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/urbaned/tables\\_archive.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/urbaned/tables_archive.asp).
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Urban Education in America website, table B.2.a-2, <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/tables/b.2.a.-2M.asp?refer=urban> and <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/tables/b.2.a.-1R.asp?refer=urban>.
- <sup>3</sup> Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University, Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions, March 2015, <http://urbancharters.stanford.edu>.
- <sup>4</sup> For more information on NAEP, see [www.nationsreportcard.gov](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov).
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