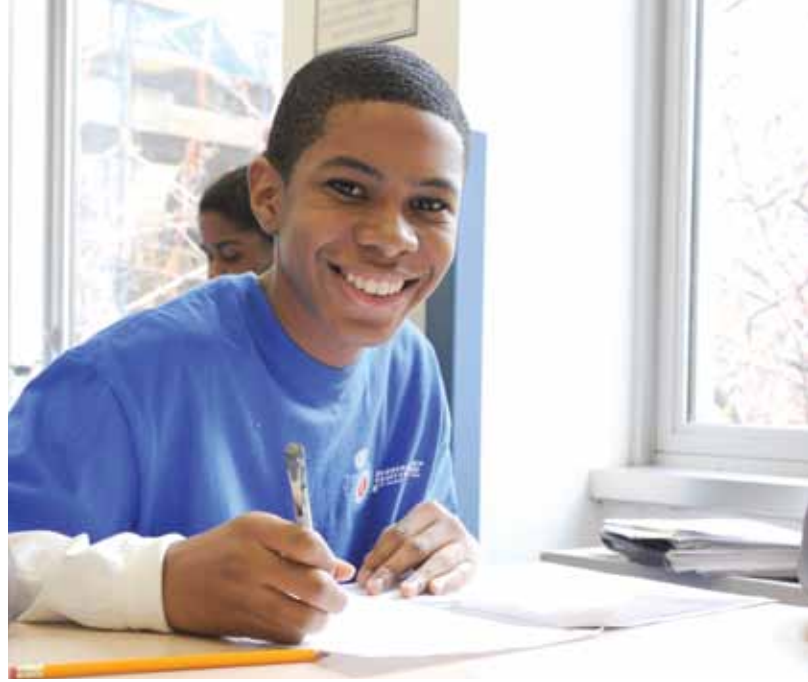




A GROWING MOVEMENT:
AMERICA'S LARGEST
CHARTER SCHOOL
COMMUNITIES

**SIXTH ANNUAL EDITION
OCTOBER 2011**

GROWTH



Public charter schools are a growing part of America’s public education system. Nearly 20 years after the first charter school opened, charter schools provide significant public educational options for parents and students in an increasing number of communities. In the last two years alone, 19 states partially or entirely lifted their arbitrary caps on the number of charter schools, and Maine enacted a law in 2011 to permit charter schools to operate for the first time in its history. All these policy changes create the potential for even greater growth of public charter schools. And the growth in public charter school enrollment presented in this report shows that parent demand for school options continues.

Annually, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools examines the growing student enrollment in public charter schools. This report describes which communities have the highest percentage and number of public school students enrolled in public charter schools. We know that in communities where families have a choice, they are increasingly choosing public charter schools over the traditional public schools

available to them. And in countless other communities, parents are clamoring for more high quality public options for their children. As a result, the public education landscape is shifting in many major cities.

Today, a record number of school districts—six—have at least 30 percent of their public school students enrolled in public charter schools. Charter schools in New Orleans enroll an astounding 70 percent of public school students. Additionally, 18 school districts have 20 percent or more of their public school students enrolled in charter schools, eleven more than when we first printed this report six years ago. Nearly 100 districts now have at least 10 percent of public school students in charter schools.

These numbers illustrate that charter enrollment growth remains strong. And with approximately 420,000 more students across the country hoping for an additional seat in a charter school, we expect these numbers to continue to rise.



“TOP 10” DISTRICTS SERVING THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

For the sixth year in a row, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools has gathered public school enrollment data to find the markets with the highest local proportions of students enrolled in public

charter schools. The market share table below shows the results for the 2010-2011 school year.

Rank	School District	State	Charter Market Share	Charter Enroll	Non-Charter Enroll	Total District Enroll	Rank and Market Share in 2010
1.	New Orleans Public School System	LA	70%	27,728	12,149	39,877	#1 and 61%
2.	District of Columbia Public Schools	DC	39%	29,366	45,630	74,996	#2 and 38%
3.	Detroit Public Schools	MI	37%	45,073	75,264	120,337	#3 and 33% ⁱ
4.	Kansas City, Missouri School District	MO	35%	9,312	17,326	26,638	#4 and 32%
5.	Flint City School District	MI	32%	5,008	10,557	15,565	#6 and 28% ⁱ
6.	Gary Community School Corporation	IN	30%	4,834	11,161	15,995	#6 and 28% ⁱ
7.	St. Louis Public Schools	MO	29%	10,406	25,084	35,490	#7 and 27%
8.	Dayton Public Schools	OH	27%	5,995	16,256	22,251	#5 and 29% ⁱ
9.	Youngstown City Schools	OH	24%	2,527	8,128	10,655	Not in Top 10 ⁱⁱ
10.	Albany City School District	NY	23%	2,421	8,228	10,649	#9 and 24%
	Cleveland Metropolitan School District	OH	23%	14,310	46,818	61,128	Not in Top 10 and 21%
	Toledo Public Schools	OH	23%	7,721	26,488	34,209	Not in Top 10 and 22%

“TOP 10” DISTRICTS SERVING THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

For the third year in a row, we include a top ten list of school districts by the number of public charter school students enrolled. The ten districts with the largest number of students in public charter schools represent 21.7 percent of the total public charter school population

nationwide—a total of 395,555 students out of roughly 1.8 million. Between the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, the top ten districts increased public charter school enrollment by over 42,000 students (growth of 12 percent).

Rank	School District	State	Charter Enroll	Non-Charter Enroll	Total District Enroll	Charter Market Share	Rank and Charter Enrollment in 2010
1.	Los Angeles Unified School District	CA	79,385	588,824	668,209	12%	#1 and 66,809 ⁱⁱⁱ
2.	Detroit Public Schools	MI	45,073	75,264	120,337	37%	#2 and 45,036 ⁱ
3.	The School District of Philadelphia	PA	40,322	166,272	206,594	20%	#4 and 33,916
4.	New York City Department of Education	NY	38,743	973,210	1,011,953	4%	#7 and 30,049
5.	Chicago Public Schools	IL	37,909	365,069	402,978	9%	#5 and 33,711
6.	Houston Independent School District	TX	37,499	188,553	226,052	17%	#3 and 34,567
7.	Miami-Dade County Public Schools	FL	35,380	312,026	347,406	10%	#6 and 30,859
8.	District of Columbia Public Schools	DC	29,366	45,630	74,996	39%	#8 and 27,660
9.	New Orleans Public School System	LA	27,728	12,149	39,877	70%	#9 and 22,481
10.	Broward County Public Schools	FL	24,150	232,981	257,131	9%	#10 and 21,603

“TOP 10” DISTRICTS WITH THE HIGHEST GROWTH OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

For the first time, we include a list of the top ten districts with the largest growth in the number of public charter students enrolled (this list was selected from the 50 districts with the most public charter school students enrolled; *see the districts in Appendix B*). The districts on this top ten list all had nearly 20 percent or more growth in the number of students attending public charter schools between the

2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. The growth among these districts is largely due to the opening of a significant number of new public charter schools. In two large districts, expanding enrollment in existing schools and 27 new public charter schools each resulted in 12,567 more students attending charter schools in Los Angeles and 8,694 more students attending charter schools in New York City.

Rank	School District	State	Charter Market Share	2009-2010 Charter Enroll	2010-2011 Charter Enroll	Increase in Charter Enroll	% Growth in Charter Enroll
1.	Orange County Public Schools	FL	3%	4,207	5,994	1,787	42%
2.	Memphis City Schools	TN	5%	3,822	5,405	1,583	41%
3.	New York City Department of Education	NY	4%	30,049	38,743	8,694	29%
4.	Mesa Public Schools	AZ	16%	9,877	12,574	2,697	27%
5.	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD	13%	8,472	10,704	2,232	26%
6.	New Orleans Public Schools	LA	70%	22,481	27,728	5,247	23%
7.	Alpine School District	UT	9%	5,495	6,711	1,216	22%
8.	San Antonio Independent School District	TX	21%	10,529	12,730	2,201	21%
9.	Indianapolis Public Schools	IN	22%	7,675	9,238	1,563	20%
10.	Los Angeles Unified School District	CA	12%	66,809	79,385	12,567	19%
	The School District of Philadelphia	PA	20%	33,916	40,322	6,406	19%

A CLOSER LOOK

New Orleans Remains Number One in Market Share Percentage

Public charter schools have changed the landscape of public education in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. An astounding 70 percent of public school students in New Orleans attended public charter schools in the 2010-2011 school year. Not only are charters in New Orleans serving a higher percentage of public school students than anywhere else in the nation, they are also the highest performing sector of public schools in the city. More importantly, the city's public schools as a whole continue to outperform the pre-Katrina system^{iv}.

Six School Districts Reach at Least 30 Percent Market Share

This year, Flint City School District (32 percent) and Gary Community School Corporation (30 percent) join New Orleans (70 percent),

Washington, D.C. (39 percent), Detroit (37 percent), and Kansas City, Mo. (35 percent) with at least 30 percent of public school students enrolled in public charter schools.

Eighteen School Districts Are Now at 20 Percent or More

When we first compiled this report in 2005, a market share of 20 percent would land a community in the fourth highest position. For the third year in a row, such a concentration does not break into the top ten. The number of communities with at least a 20 percent market share has steadily climbed from six in 2005-2006 to eight in 2006-2007, 12 in 2007-2008, 14 in 2008-2009, 16 in 2009-2010, and 18 in 2010-2011—with several more districts likely to pass this threshold in the 2011-2012 school year. There are now 96 school districts with at least a 10 percent market share (*see Appendix A*).

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH AT LEAST 10 PERCENT MARKET SHARE, 2010-2011

Rank	School District	State	Charter Market Share	Charter Enrollment	Non-Charter Enrollment	Total District Enrollment
1	New Orleans Public Schools	LA	70%	27,728	12,149	39,877
2	District Of Columbia Public Schools	DC	39%	29,366	45,630	74,996
3	Detroit City School District	MI	37%	45,073	75,264	120,337
4	Kansas City, Missouri School District	MO	35%	9,312	17,326	26,638
5	Flint City School District	MI	32%	5,008	10,557	15,565
6	Gary Community School Corporation	IN	30%	4,834	11,161	15,995
7	Saint Louis Public Schools	MO	29%	10,406	25,084	35,490
8	Dayton Public Schools	OH	27%	5,995	16,256	22,251
9	Youngstown City Schools	OH	24%	2,527	8,128	10,655
10	Albany City School District	NY	23%	2,421	8,228	10,649
	Cleveland Metropolitan School District	OH	23%	14,310	46,818	61,128
	Toledo Public Schools	OH	23%	7,721	26,488	34,209
11	Adams County School District 50	CO	22%	2,770	9,678	12,448
	Indianapolis Public Schools	IN	22%	9,238	33,080	42,318
12	San Antonio Independent School District	TX	21%	12,730	46,782	59,512
13	Columbus City School District	OH	20%	13,028	52,102	65,129
	Grand Rapids Public Schools	MI	20%	4,376	17,560	21,936
	The School District of Philadelphia	PA	20%	40,322	166,272	206,594
14	Brighton 27J School District	CO	19%	2,858	12,205	15,063
	Grossmont Union High School District	CA	19%	4,694	19,400	24,094
	Milwaukee Public Schools	WI	19%	16,798	70,582	87,380
	Phoenix Union High School District	AZ	19%	5,622	24,009	29,631
	Roosevelt School District 66	AZ	19%	2,393	10,482	12,875
	Trenton Public School District	NJ	19%	2,121	8,797	10,918
15	Buffalo City Schools	NY	18%	6,986	31,590	38,576
	Duncanville Independent School District	TX	18%	2,895	12,902	15,797
	Falcon School District 49	CO	18%	2,706	12,002	14,708
	Minneapolis Public Schools	MN	18%	7,761	34,336	42,097
	Saint Paul Public Schools	MN	18%	8,507	37,859	46,366
	Tucson Unified School District	AZ	18%	11,414	53,730	65,144
16	Camden City Public Schools	NJ	17%	2,799	13,796	16,595
	Chula Vista Elementary School District	CA	17%	4,733	22,981	27,714
	Houston Independent School District	TX	17%	37,499	188,553	226,052
	Oakland Unified School District	CA	17%	7,894	38,581	46,475
17	Cincinnati Public Schools	OH	16%	6,642	34,742	41,384
	Flagstaff Unified School District	AZ	16%	1,969	10,250	12,219
	Harrison School District 2	CO	16%	1,816	9,636	11,452
	Mesa Public Schools	AZ	16%	12,574	66,144	78,718
	Newark Public Schools	NJ	16%	6,281	33,253	39,534

The Floor for the “Top 10” Market Share List Holds Steady at 23 Percent

For the first three years that this report was assembled, the tenth highest market share percentage was less than 20 percent. For the second year in a row, the number 10 market share percentage is 23 percent.

Los Angeles Again Tops the List in Number of Public Charter School Students

More than 79,000 students attended public charter schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District during the 2010-2011 school year, the highest number for any school district in the country. To provide a sense of scale, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools in Los Angeles, alone, would place the LA charter schools in the top 45 of the 100 largest school districts in the United States⁶. Public charter schools in Los Angeles enrolled 12,576 more students in 2010-2011 than in

2009-2010. (See Appendix B for a list of the top 50 school districts by the number of public charter school students.)

Strong Charter School Growth in Districts with Large Numbers of Public Charter School Students

Among the 50 districts with the largest charter school student enrollment, 19 districts had growth in the number of students enrolled in public charters by 10 percent or more between the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. The two districts with the largest growth of over 40 percent, Orange County Public Schools, FL and Memphis City Schools, TN, each had a significant number of new public charter schools open in 2010-2011. Eight new schools opened in Orange County and seven opened in Memphis.

Rank	School District	State	Charter Market Share	Charter Enrollment	Non-Charter Enrollment	Total District Enrollment	
18	Brandywine School District	DE	15%	1,809	10,657	12,466	
	Inglewood Unified School District	CA	15%	2,343	13,370	15,713	
	Irving Independent School District	TX	15%	6,192	34,243	40,435	
	Weld County School District 6	CO	15%	2,867	16,747	19,614	
19	Academy School District 20	CO	14%	3,241	19,878	23,119	
	Deer Valley Unified School District	AZ	14%	5,736	35,510	41,246	
	Dysart Unified School District	AZ	14%	4,099	24,811	28,910	
	East Central Independent School District	TX	14%	1,554	9,618	11,172	
	Lorain City School District	OH	14%	1,379	8,645	10,025	
	Napa Valley Unified School District	CA	14%	2,454	15,523	17,977	
	Amphitheater Public Schools	AZ	13%	2,311	14,857	17,168	
20	Appleton Area School District	WI	13%	1,959	13,235	15,194	
	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD	13%	10,704	73,096	83,800	
	Duluth Public Schools	MN	13%	1,371	9,114	10,485	
	Lee County Public Schools	FL	13%	10,640	71,325	81,965	
	Litchfield Elementary School District #79	AZ	13%	1,582	10,525	12,107	
	Oshkosh Area School District	WI	13%	1,269	8,842	10,111	
	Robbinsdale Area Schools	MN	13%	1,748	12,036	13,784	
	Vista Unified School District	CA	13%	3,376	22,415	25,791	
	21	Akron Public Schools	OH	12%	3,218	24,531	27,748
		Alameda Unified School District	CA	12%	1,280	9,180	10,460
Colorado Springs School District 11		CO	12%	3,637	27,349	30,986	
Dougherty County School System		GA	12%	1,898	14,008	15,906	
Lake County Schools		FL	12%	4,739	36,371	41,110	
Lansing Public School District		MI	12%	1,763	13,013	14,776	
Little Rock School District		AR	12%	3,243	23,730	26,973	
Los Angeles Unified School District		CA	12%	79,385	588,824	668,209	
Red Clay Consolidated School District		DE	12%	2,208	15,954	18,162	
West Chester Area School District		PA	12%	1,687	11,825	13,512	
22		Bethlehem Area School District	PA	11%	1,782	14,959	16,741
	Cartwright Elementary School District	AZ	11%	2,301	17,710	20,011	
	Colonial School District	DE	11%	1,238	9,925	11,163	
	Denver Public Schools	CO	11%	8,573	69,744	78,317	
	Nampa School District	ID	11%	1,809	14,154	15,963	
	Nebo School District	UT	11%	3,561	29,137	32,698	
	Oklahoma City Public Schools	OK	11%	4,735	38,629	43,364	
	Polk County Public Schools	FL	11%	10,736	84,442	95,178	
	Port Huron Area School District	MI	11%	1,225	9,930	11,155	
	Sanger Unified School District	CA	11%	1,158	9,594	10,752	
	Santa Fe Public Schools	NM	11%	1,589	12,661	14,250	

Additional district and school-level data can be found on the **Public Charter School Dashboard**: <http://dashboard.publiccharters.org>.

APPENDIX B

TOP 50 SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS, 2010-2011

Rank	School District	State	Charter Enrollment	Non-Charter Enrollment	Total District Enrollment	Charter Market Share
1	Los Angeles Unified School District	CA	79,385	588,824	668,209	12%
2	Detroit City School District	MI	45,073	75,264	120,337	37%
3	The School District of Philadelphia	PA	40,322	166,272	206,594	20%
4	New York City Department of Education	NY	38,743	973,210	1,011,953	4%
5	Chicago Public Schools	IL	37,909	365,069	402,978	9%
6	Houston Independent School District	TX	37,499	188,553	226,052	17%
7	Miami-Dade County Public Schools	FL	35,380	312,026	347,406	10%
8	District Of Columbia Public Schools	DC	29,366	45,630	74,996	39%
9	New Orleans Public Schools	LA	27,728	12,149	39,877	70%
10	Broward County Public Schools	FL	24,150	232,981	257,131	9%
11	Milwaukee Public Schools	WI	16,798	70,582	87,380	19%
12	Dallas Independent School District	TX	15,522	156,523	172,045	9%
13	Cleveland Metropolitan School District	OH	14,310	46,818	61,128	23%
14	Columbus City School District	OH	13,028	52,102	65,129	20%
15	San Antonio Independent School District	TX	12,730	46,782	59,512	21%
16	Mesa Public Schools	AZ	12,574	66,144	78,718	16%
17	San Diego Unified School District	CA	12,423	119,010	131,433	9%
18	Tucson Unified School District	AZ	11,414	53,730	65,144	18%
19	Polk County Public Schools	FL	10,736	84,442	95,178	11%
20	Baltimore City Public Schools	MD	10,704	73,096	83,800	13%
21	Lee County Public Schools	FL	10,640	71,325	81,965	13%
22	Saint Louis Public Schools	MO	10,406	25,084	35,490	29%
23	Fulton County Schools	GA	9,437	82,800	92,237	10%
24	Kansas City, Missouri School District	MO	9,312	17,326	26,638	35%
25	Indianapolis Public Schools	IN	9,238	33,080	42,318	22%
26	School District Of Palm Beach County	FL	8,822	165,837	174,659	5%
27	Denver Public Schools	CO	8,573	69,744	78,317	11%
28	Albuquerque Public Schools	NM	8,559	89,074	97,633	9%
29	Saint Paul Public Schools	MN	8,507	37,859	46,366	18%
30	Hawaii Department Of Education	HI	8,289	173,633	181,922	5%
31	Oakland Unified School District	CA	7,894	38,581	46,475	17%
32	Minneapolis Public Schools	MN	7,761	34,336	42,097	18%
33	Toledo Public Schools	OH	7,721	26,488	34,209	23%
34	Buffalo City Schools	NY	6,986	31,590	38,576	18%
35	Alpine School District	UT	6,711	66,045	72,756	9%
36	Cincinnati Public Schools	OH	6,642	34,742	41,384	16%
37	Newark Public Schools	NJ	6,281	33,253	39,534	16%
38	Hillsborough County Public Schools	FL	6,207	188,146	194,353	3%
39	Irving Independent School District	TX	6,192	34,243	40,435	15%
40	Dayton Public Schools	OH	5,995	16,256	22,251	27%
41	Orange County Public Schools	FL	5,994	169,992	175,986	3%
42	Cobb County School District	GA	5,986	101,329	107,315	6%
43	Dekalb County School System	GA	5,947	92,302	98,249	6%
44	Jeffco Public Schools	CO	5,852	80,078	85,930	7%
45	Deer Valley Unified School District	AZ	5,736	35,510	41,246	14%
46	Phoenix Union High School District	AZ	5,622	24,009	29,631	19%
47	School District Of Osceola County	FL	5,426	48,040	53,466	10%
48	Memphis City Schools	TN	5,405	106,563	111,968	5%
49	Boston Public Schools	MA	5,202	56,037	61,239	8%
50	Alief Independent School District	TX	5,189	45,768	50,957	10%



METHODOLOGY

1. In this analysis, we examined market share in school districts with more than 10,000 public school students (both charter and non-charter) in the 2010-2011 school year. We gathered charter and non-charter public school enrollment data from state department of education databases and personnel.
2. More than 50 percent of charter schools nationwide are their own independent Local Education Agencies (LEAs), rather than part of traditional public school district LEAs. In the past, this fact meant that it was not always clear as to which public school district charter schools were physically located, especially for charter schools located in large metropolitan cities with more than one school district (e.g., Phoenix, Arizona and Houston, Texas). For the fifth and sixth editions of the “Top 10” charter communities by market share report, we used a geo-coding method to increase the accuracy of identifying the geographically relevant school districts for each charter. Specifically, we geo-coded every charter school that is an independent LEA to the geographically relevant traditional public school district LEA by mapping charter school addresses onto school district boundary maps available through the U.S. Census Bureau.
3. For Michigan and Ohio, we used student resident enrollment data that indicate the total number of students attending charter schools based on the district where students reside. The student residence enrollment data present more accurate information regarding how many students from a school district attend charter schools.
4. The growing numbers of virtual charter schools enrolling children from across an entire state present another issue. Because many states haven’t developed student enrollment reporting systems that allow the sorting of individual students by community of residence at each charter school, we excluded virtual school enrollment data from both the charter and total district enrollment data when calculating market share percentages. We recognize that this decision might create some undercounting in school districts where large numbers of students are enrolled in virtual charter schools. We do include enrollment from virtual schools in the District of Columbia and Hawaii where there is only one school district in the states and in Michigan and Ohio where we have resident enrollment data and we know the district where students live.
5. The approximate number of 420,000 students on waiting lists to attend charter schools was estimated from a national survey of charter schools during the 2009-2010 school year with a 30 percent response rate.

¹ The Michigan Department of Education’s Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), the entity that produces residential enrollment data, corrected the fall 2009 residential enrollment in the fall 2010 file used for this report. Two Michigan districts were in the top 10 lists from the 2009-2010 school year market share report, Detroit and Flint. We reported in the previous report that Detroit had total charter school enrollment of 50,139 and market share of 36%. CEPI corrected the charter school enrollment for Detroit for 2009-2010 to 45,036, which produces a market share of 33%. The corrected charter school enrollment still places Detroit as the #3 district for market share percentage and the #2 district for total number of public charter school students enrolled in the 2009-2010 school year. We reported that Flint had total charter school enrollment of 5,270 and market share of 29%, which tied Flint with Dayton for #5 on the list of districts with the highest market shares. CEPI corrected the charter school enrollment for Flint for 2009-2010 to 4,907, which produces a market share of 28%. This revised market share percent places Flint at #6 on the list instead of #5, tied with Gary Community School Corporation, IN.

² Youngstown City Schools did not meet the eligibility requirement of a minimum of 10,000 students enrolled in both charter and non-charter public schools in the 2009-2010 school year. As a result, we did not calculate a market share percentage for Youngstown for the 2009-2010 school year.

³ Official enrollment data for the state of California were not available when we released the 2009-2010 school year market share report. In the fifth edition, we reported the 2009-2010 enrollment of Los Angeles Unified School District as 68,469. After receiving official enrollment data for California, the 2009-2010 enrollment for Los Angeles was 66,809.

⁴ The Scott Cowen Institute. (2011). The 2011 state of public education in New Orleans. New Orleans, LA: Author. www.coweninstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/2011-SPENO-report.pdf

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2010). Characteristics of the 100 largest public elementary and secondary school districts in the United States: 2008-09. Statistical analysis report. Washington, DC: Author. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011301.pdf>

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National
Alliance
for Public
**Charter
Schools**

1101 15th Street, NW
Suite 1010
Washington, DC 20005

T.202.289.2700
F.202.289.4009

www.publiccharters.org