

## TOP 10 CHARTER COMMUNITIES BY MARKET SHARE

**Todd Ziebarth**  
**Senior Policy Analyst, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools**  
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With more than a million students now enrolled in public charter schools, and with long waiting lists to boot, we know that the charter school movement is succeeding in offering families new hopes and new choices.

But chartering is also beginning to work at scale, which strengthens the chances that it can be a force for broader system change. The impact of charter schools' growing "market share" may be minimized, however, because educators and policy analysts usually think of it in terms of still-modest national numbers (only 2% of all public school students) or the somewhat larger state numbers (where Arizona leads the pack, with 8% in 2005-06).

What's often neglected is the growing market share of charters in an increasing number of *individual communities*. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools has looked around the country to find the highest local proportions of students enrolled in public charter schools during the 2005-2006 school year. The table below shows the results. Due to numerous ties, there are actually 19 communities that made the 2006 "Top 10."

### ***The "Top 10"***

<b><u>Community</u></b>	<b><u>Charter Market Share</u></b>	<b><u>Charter</u></b>	<b><u>Non-Charter</u></b>	<b><u>All</u></b>
1. New Orleans, LA	69%	7,815	3,578	11,393
2. Dayton, OH	28%	6,374	16,365	22,739
3. Washington, DC	25%	18,000	54,000	72,000
4. Pontiac, MI	20%	2,563	10,385	12,948
Kansas City, MO	20%	6,457	25,766	32,223
Youngstown, OH	20%	2,326	9,248	11,574
5. Chula Vista, CA	18%	4,640	21,832	26,472
Detroit, MI	18%	28,047	131,643	159,690
Southfield, MI	18%	2,233	9,907	12,140
Toledo, OH	18%	6,561	30,200	36,761
6. Cincinnati, OH	17%	7,029	35,479	42,508
7. Brighton, CO	16%	1,632	8,818	10,450

Cleveland, OH	16%	10,858	59,035	69,893
Milwaukee, WI	16%	15,059	81,275	96,334
8. Buffalo, NY	15%	6,332	37,000	43,332
Mohave County, AZ	15%	4,315	23,593	27,908
9. Dearborn, MI	14%	3,016	18,094	21,110
Oakland, CA	14%	6,668	41,467	48,135
10. Minneapolis, MN	13%	5,558	38,532	44,090

### ***A Closer Look***

***Charter Market Share at least 13% in 19 Communities, at least 20% in 6 of Them:*** After gathering and analyzing market share data for communities with at least 10,000 public school students in the 2005-06 school year, we found that charters had a market share of at least 13% in 19 of them. In six of those communities, it was at least 20%.

***Big States Unevenly Represented in “Top 10”:*** In sheer numbers, California and Arizona are charter behemoths, with 212,000 and 83,000 students respectively. But because of urban scale and charter distribution in both states, only three communities make our list (Chula Vista, CA, Oakland, CA, and Mohave County, AZ). By contrast, Michigan and Ohio (#3 and #6 charter states by student population) are better represented, with four communities from Michigan and five from Ohio. Michigan's high-share charter communities are concentrated in the Detroit metropolitan area. Ohio law formerly restricted chartering to a few big cities – so not surprisingly, five of them are on our list. Florida and Texas, also among the largest charter states in terms of student population, had no communities in the “Top 10.”

***Size of Communities Ranges from 10,450 to 159,690:*** Nine of the 19 communities in the “Top 10” each had fewer than 30,000 public school students. Only four of the communities on the list are large urban ones (Cleveland, Washington, DC, Milwaukee, and Detroit). The smallest community was Brighton, Colorado (about 20 miles northeast of Denver), and the largest one was Detroit.

***Rebuilding Public Schools in New Orleans: The Role of Public Charter Schools:*** In the weeks following the destruction wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, local, state, and federal officials pledged to create a new system of public schools in New Orleans, with charter schools playing a central role. Although the enrollment numbers changed from day to day, the percentage of public school students enrolled in charters by the conclusion of the 2005-06 school year was 69%. While not an all-charter district, it was the nearest to one that we've seen during the 15 years of chartering in this country. Much remains in flux in New Orleans, including the number of students who will return this school year and how large of a role charter schools will play in the new system. However, we do know that at least 13 new charter schools will be opening this fall, bringing the total number to 31 (out of 53 public schools).

***Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Nation's School Choice Capital:*** Not only is Milwaukee home to one of the nation's largest publicly funded voucher programs (with almost 15,000 students in the program in 2005-06), it is also home to a robust charter school sector (over 15,000 students in 2005-06). The types of charters in Milwaukee range from district-sponsored charters largely independent of the district, to district-sponsored charters that are still part of the district, to charters authorized by non-district entities (the city or a local university) that are completely independent of the district.

### ***A Note About Methodology***

In this analysis, we examined market share in communities with more than 10,000 public school students (both charter and non-charter) in the 2005-06 school year. We gathered charter and non-charter public school enrollment data from state department of education personnel and databases, and from state charter association and resource center staff.

As we found out in the course of our research, charter market share means different things in different places. In most places, it means the percentage of public school students in a given community attending public charter schools. But, a couple of states don't gather the data at that level of detail, and instead organize it by either county (Arizona) or metropolitan area (Texas).

The growing numbers of virtual charter schools that enroll children from across an entire state also proved to be a tricky 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 communities where virtual charter schools enrolling large numbers of students from outside the community constituted much of the charter market share in that community.