

**S T A T U T O R Y   R E P O R T**

**2007-2008**

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**CHARTER SCHOOLS**

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
ELIZABETH BURMASTER, STATE SUPERINTENDENT**

# **Statutory Report Series**

## **Legislative Report on Charter Schools**

### **2007-2008**

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## Executive Summary

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This report offers a summary of charter school activity in the 426 Wisconsin school districts during the 2007-2008 school year. The purpose of this report is to identify and describe the actions taken on new charter school petitions or proposals. The data is based upon an electronic survey administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), document review, and follow up contacts with local school district officials. As stated in § 115.28 (49), Wis. Stats., the department is required to submit this report to the Legislature in the manner provided under § 13.172 (2), Wis. Stats., regarding the status of existing charter schools, the number of petitions for new charter schools, and school board as well as departmental action taken on petitions for new charter schools.

An electronic survey was administered to the 426 Wisconsin public school districts. Using a mixed mode methodology that included an online survey, e-mails, letters and phone calls, a 100 percent response rate was achieved. Document review included federal charter school grant applications and annual charter school publications. Additionally, follow-up phone calls were made to districts that submitted federal charter school grant applications or who were identified as members of a consortium on grant applications submitted to the DPI and not reported on the electronic survey.

For the purposes of this report, two distinct levels of decision-making were documented. A first-level decision is defined as a concept approval or participation in a consortium whereby a school board supported further study of the charter school concept (of a proposed charter school) or a school board clerk and district administrator provided a signature on a charter school planning grant application submitted to the department for the purposes of seeking federal grant funds to develop a new charter school. A second-level decision is defined as a decision to issue a charter, provide a signature on an agreement to participate in a multi-district charter school, or a school board official signature on an implementation grant to seek federal charter school start up funds from the department.

During the 2007-2008 school year, there were 71 first level charter school decisions made by 47 school boards statewide and 58 second level charter school decisions made by 39 school boards statewide. Sixty-one of 71 ( 86 percent) proposals were approved at the level one decision, and ten (14 percent) were denied. At the level two decision, 57 (98.2 percent) proposals were approved and 1 proposal was denied. Eleven school districts reported a second level decision but not a first level decision, bringing the total number of districts reporting charter school activity between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 to 58 (13.6 percent) of Wisconsin's 426 public school districts.

This study shows that charter school planners sought petition approval and school boards approved proposals at the first and second levels in order to realize an alternative vision for schooling, serve special populations, and increase student achievement, among other reasons. The possibility of political ramifications, lack of district capacity to support a charter, and declining enrollment, among others, were cited as reasons for denial of petitions at the first and second level. The denial or limitation of federal charter school grant funds—which cannot be used for salaries, facility leasing, or student transportation—contributes to the lack of charter school development at the first-level decision. Charter School Program funds are

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intended to provide seed money for charter school development as opposed to ongoing funds to cover expenses such as staffing, pupil services or building costs.

## Introduction

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The Wisconsin Charter School Program was established in 1993 to provide educational alternatives for students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The initial law permitted 10 school districts to establish up to two charter schools each and created a ceiling of 20 schools statewide. Thirteen charter schools were created under this early law. In 1995, revisions to the charter school law gave chartering authority to all school boards statewide and eliminated the cap on the total number of charter schools that could be created in the state. In 1997, the state legislature gave chartering authority in Milwaukee to the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM), to the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and to the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee. In 2005 Wisconsin Act 11, the 2001-2003 budget bill, gave limited chartering authority to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside to create a charter school for no more than 480 children.

During the 2007-2008 school year there were 231 charter schools authorized by 99 Wisconsin school boards and 17 charter schools authorized by non-school board sponsors for a total of 231 operating charter schools. A report published in 2003 evaluating the role and processes of authorizers in 24 states gave Wisconsin above average scores for every criterion used to evaluate the charter approval process (Palmer, Gau, & Shekerjian, 2003). Respondents in this study described the approval process in Wisconsin to be nonpolitical and focused on application quality. Application procedures were noted as varying from district to district, with some but not all having formal application processes.

While there are multiple authorizers in the state of Wisconsin, the data in this report specifically addresses local school board action and does not include activity or action taken on new charter school petitions or proposals by non-school board sponsors.

In 2005, the DPI applied for and was awarded a three-year, \$52 million federal grant by the United States Department of Education (USDE) to support planning and start up of new charter schools and the dissemination of best practices to increase student achievement in charter schools. The state charter plan submitted to the USDE by the DPI projected 100 new charter schools by the 2007-2008 school year.

# Charter Schools in Wisconsin and Other States

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Charter schools, as defined by the United States Department of Education are a form of public school choice providing increased innovative educational options for parents and students. At the federal level, significant funding has been allocated to promote charter schools and to encourage states to enact charter school legislation. The 2007 appropriation for the USDE Public Charter Schools Program was approximately \$200 million. As of the 2007-2008 school year, 40 states, and the District of Columbia have signed charter school legislation into law and have operating charter schools. The first charter school law in the country was created in Minnesota in 1991 and the country's first charter school opened in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in 1992. Ten years later, in the 2000-2001 school year, there were over 1,700 charter schools operating, serving approximately 430,000 school children (Hill et al., 2001). As of the 2007-2008 school year there were over 4,300 charter schools in operation across the nation serving over 1.2 million students, representing 4 percent of all public schools and 3 percent of all students attending public schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2008).

Wisconsin's charter law was conceived in 1993. The first charter school in Wisconsin was authorized by the Stevens Point Area School Board in 1994. During the 2007-2008 school year, there were 231 operating charter schools in Wisconsin ranking Wisconsin among the top ten states with the most number of operating charter schools among the 40 states with operating charter schools. Table 1 presents the top ten states in the country with the largest number of operating charter schools.

■ Table 1

*States with the Most Charter Schools in 2007-2008 compared to 2006-2007 School Year*

State	Number of Charters	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
California	618	710
Arizona	464	482
Florida	356	379
Ohio	315	315
Texas	207	300
Michigan	229	244
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>231</b>
Minnesota	119	147
Colorado	133	144
Pennsylvania	131	127

Sources: The Center for Educational Reform, May 2008. Wisconsin numbers obtained from the Department of Public Instruction.

Federal charter school planning and implementation start-up funds awarded to the DPI by the USDE are disseminated through the Wisconsin Charter School Program to support the development of successful charter schools. While charter school grant funds may influence and encourage the development of charter schools, chartering a new school at the local level is a separate and distinct activity from applying for charter school grant funds. Chartering requires communication and decision making between the operator of the charter school and

the local school administration and school board. There are two approaches to developing a charter school at the local level: petitions and proposals, each is discussed below.

## Two Methods to Create a Charter School: Petitions and Proposals

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### Charter School Petition

A written petition requesting the school board to establish a charter school must be filed with the school district clerk. A petition must be signed by at least 10 percent of the teachers employed by the school district or by at least 50 percent of the teachers employed at one school of the school district. By law, a petition includes all of the following:

1. The name of the person who is seeking to establish the charter school.
2. The name of the person who will be in charge of the charter school and the manner in which administrative services will be provided.
3. A description of the educational program of the school.
4. The methods the school will use to enable pupils to attain the educational goals under § 118.01, Wis. Stats.
5. The method by which pupil progress in attaining the educational goals under § 118.01, Wis. Stats. will be measured.
6. The governance structure of the school - including the method to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.
7. Subject to sub. (7) (a) and (am) and §118.19 (1), Wis. Stats. and §121.02 (1) (a) 2., Wis. Stats., the qualifications that must be met by the individuals to be employed in the school.
8. The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of the pupils.
9. The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the school district population.
10. The requirements for admission to the school.
11. The manner in which annual audits of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be performed.
12. The procedures for disciplining pupils.
13. The public school alternatives for pupils who reside in the school district and do not wish to attend or are not admitted to the charter school.
14. A description of the school facilities and the types and limits of the liability insurance that the school will carry.
15. The effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the school district.

To assist planners and authorizers, the DPI has established a contract benchmark sheet for guidance purposes that outlines required and suggested items for inclusion in a charter school contract (see Appendix A).

A petition is a culmination of collaborative effort between local groups, usually including teachers, administrators, parents, community members, universities or technical colleges, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, students, and-not-for profit or for-profit businesses or agencies. Planning requires an understanding of state and federal law as it relates to education, local needs and educational options.

### *Public Hearing or Granting of Petition*

A school board must hold a public hearing within 30 days after receiving a charter school petition. At the hearing, the school board, as part of the review process, considers the level of employee and parental support for the establishment of the charter school described in the petition and the fiscal impact of the establishment of the charter school on the school district. After the hearing, the school board may grant or deny the petition.

A school board may grant a petition that would result in the conversion of all of the public schools in the school district to charter schools if all of the following apply:

1. At least 50 percent of the teachers employed by the school district sign the petition.
2. The school board provides alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school.

In Milwaukee, if a school board denies a petition, the person seeking to establish the charter school may, within 30 days after receiving the denial, appeal the denial to the DPI. The department shall issue a decision within 30 days after receiving the appeal. The DPI's decision is final, and by statute is not subject to judicial review.

## Charter School Proposal

### *School Board Initiative or Charter School Proposal*

A school board may on its own initiative contract with a person to operate a charter school. The contract must include all of the 16 provisions required in a petition and may include other provisions as agreed to by all parties. Planning requires an understanding of state and federal law as it relates to education and an awareness of local needs and educational options.

### *Public Hearing on Granting of Proposal to Convert a Private School or Establish a Non-Instrumentality*

At least 30 days before entering into a contract that would convert a private school to a charter school or that would establish a charter school that is not an instrumentality of the school district, the school board shall hold a public hearing on the contract. At the hearing, the school board shall consider the level of employee and parental support for the establishment of the charter school and the fiscal impact of the establishment of the charter school on the school district.

A school board may not enter into a contract that would result in the conversion of all of the public schools in the school district to charter schools *unless* the school board provides alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school.

### *Notice*

Whenever a school board intends to establish a charter school, §118.40 (1), Wis. Stats., requires notification of the State Superintendent of its intention. A notice must include a description of the proposed school. A charter school contract, submitted to the department and which must include sixteen items according to §118.40, Wis. Stats., satisfies this required notification.

A contract between a school board and a charter school operator may be for any term not exceeding five school years and may be renewed for one or more terms not exceeding five school years. The contract must specify the amount to be paid to the charter school during each school year of the contract. The contract often includes reasons and procedures for revocation or renewal.

## Wisconsin Charter Schools

Wisconsin's charter schools are intended to encourage innovation in school organization and instruction. Charter schools are accountable in three major areas: 1) student achievement, 2) fiscal management, 3) teacher licensure and 4) adherence to their contracts and the charter school law. Charter schools in Wisconsin are exempt from most state requirements regarding public education but are not exempt from federal laws governing regular or special education or civil rights policies, nor are they exempt from local school board policies unless negotiated and documented in the charter contract. Charter school developers are free to be creative in setting up independent governance and administrative structures.

Under federal law, charter schools cannot charge tuition and must be equally accessible to all students in the school district. Preference in admission must be given to students living within the attendance area of an existing school that is converted to a charter school. Further, if more students apply for admission to charter schools than can be accommodated, students are admitted on the basis of a single lottery.

Charter schools may not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability. Specific information regarding special education may be found at the web address: <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/dlsea>.

Attendance at a charter school must be voluntary. Additionally, the district must provide alternative public education for pupils who do not wish to attend the charter school or who are not admitted to the charter school. The charter school contract must clearly describe how the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils and how the population of a charter school reflects the racial and ethnic balance in the school district as a whole. Table 2 is a breakdown of the Wisconsin charter school population compared to statewide data.

### **Independent (2r) Charter Schools in Wisconsin**

In 1997, the state gave chartering authority in Milwaukee to the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UW-Milwaukee), to the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and to the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee. In 2005 Wisconsin Act 11, the 2001-2003 budget bill, gave limited chartering authority to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside to create a charter school for no more than 480 students. These chartering entities are often referred to as independent (2r) authorizers because §118.40 (2r) is the statute that refers to these entities.

In 2006, the law was changed to allow school boards or independent (2r) authorizers to enter into contracts for the establishment of a charter school that enrolls only one sex or that provides one or more courses that enroll only one sex if the school board or independent (2r)

authorizer makes available to the opposite sex, under the same policies and criteria of admission, schools or courses that are comparable to each such school or course.

During the 2007-2008 school year there was a total of 17 independent (2r) charter schools in operation in the State of Wisconsin. Below is a list of these schools and their authorizers.

<u>Authorizer</u>	<u>School</u>
City of Milwaukee	Academy of Learning and Leadership
City of Milwaukee	Central City Cyberschool
City of Milwaukee	Darrell Lynn Hines Academy
City of Milwaukee	Downtown Montessori Academy
City of Milwaukee	Maasai Institute
UW-Milwaukee	BEAM
UW-Milwaukee	Capitol West Academy
UW-Milwaukee	Inland Seas School of Expeditionary Learning
UW-Milwaukee	Milwaukee Academy of Science
UW-Milwaukee	Milwaukee College Preparatory School
UW-Milwaukee	Milwaukee Renaissance Academy
UW-Milwaukee	School for Early Development & Achievement
UW-Milwaukee	Seeds of Health Elementary School
UW-Milwaukee	Tenor High School
UW-Milwaukee	YMCA Young Leaders Academy
UW-Milwaukee	Woodlands School
UW-Parkside	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Preparatory School

■ Table 2

*Charter School Population by School Year*

	2006-2007		2007-2008	
	Charter	State	Charter	State
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.1%	3.6%	5.1%	3.6%
Black, not Hispanic	33.7%	10.5%	31.8%	10.5%
Hispanic	15.3%	7.2%	14.4%	7.6%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1.0%	1.5%	1.0%	1.5%
White, not Hispanic	44.9%	77.3%	47.7%	74.8%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
PEDE08 – Public Enrollment by District by Ethnicity 08

Table 3 shows the growth of Wisconsin charter schools from fall of 1994 to fall of 2007. In the fall of 2007 there were 231 operating charter schools in Wisconsin. The net increase of 41 charter schools between the falls of 2006 and 2007 reflects the addition of 51 new charter schools, and the closing of 10 charter schools. The department publishes an annual charter school yearbook that includes a history of the Wisconsin charter school law, charter licensing requirements, and a description of each operating charter school in the state. This and other related information can be found on the charter school website at:

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/csindex.html> .

■ Table 3

*Charter School Growth in Wisconsin*

Year	Number of Charter Schools	% Increase
1994-1995	1	-
1995-1996	8	700%
1996-1997	13	63%
1997-1998	18	38%
1998-1999	40	122%
1999-2000	63	58%
2000-2001	86	37%
2001-2002	109	27%
2002-2003	129	18%
2003-2004	134	4%
2004-2005	161	20%
2005-2006	183	14%
2006-2007	190	4%
2007-2008	231	22%

This section reviewed the procedures for developing a charter school using two approaches, a petition or a proposal. The next section will provide an overview of petition and proposal activity in school districts and action taken by school districts and the department. For the purposes of this report, subsequent sections may use the terms ‘proposal’ and ‘petition’ interchangeably.

## Survey Results

The department contacted all 426 school district superintendents by mail with an introductory letter from the State Superintendent (see Appendix B). The information contained within this report reflects petition or proposal activity during the 2007-2008 school year collected from 426 school districts (100 percent) via an electronic online survey (see Appendix C). Where inconsistencies were noted between survey data and grant documentation, follow-up contacts were made. The results are a compilation from all data sources.

Questions one through three identified the district, district code and name and title of the person completing the survey. Questions four through fifteen dealt with substantive issues related to charter school creation and question sixteen was space provided for open comments about charter schools generally or comments specifically about the Wisconsin Charter School Program.

All of the 426 survey respondents indicated their position within the district. Within these responses, 334 (78.4 percent) indicated their title as being district administrator, district superintendent or assistant superintendent; 22 (5.2 percent) indicated their title as being director of academic services, director of student services, director of pupil services, director of instruction, director of education, curriculum director, educational coordinator or director of business services; 17 (4 percent) indicated their position as charter school director or program manager, school principal or assistant principal; 35 (8.2 percent) indicated their position as assistant to the superintendent, administrative assistant or district secretary and the remaining 18 (4.2 percent) held positions such as bookkeeper, coordinator of community programs, technology director, director of alternative programs, financial assistant, research analyst and others.

Figure 1 provides a breakdown by CESA of new charter school petitions filed during the 2007-2008 school year compared to those filed in 2006-2007. The number of new petitions decreased in all CESA's except CESAs 3 and 11.

■ **Figure 1**  
*Number of New Petitions and Proposals in each CESA in the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 School Years*

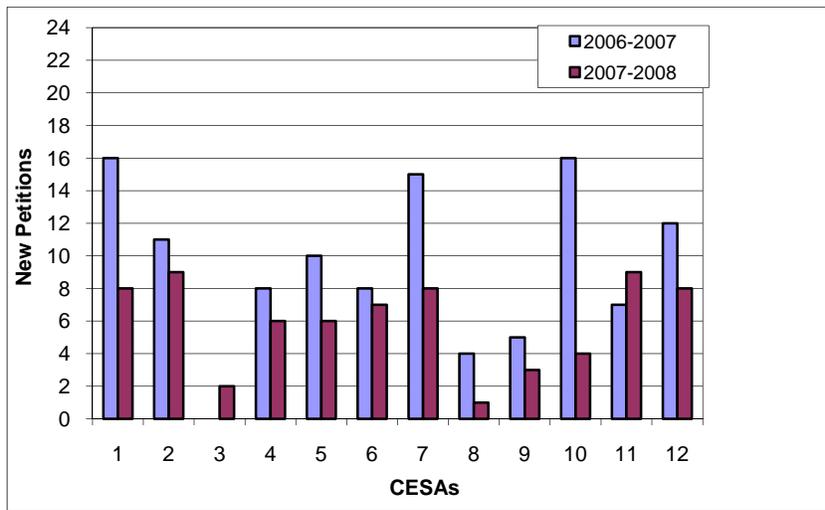
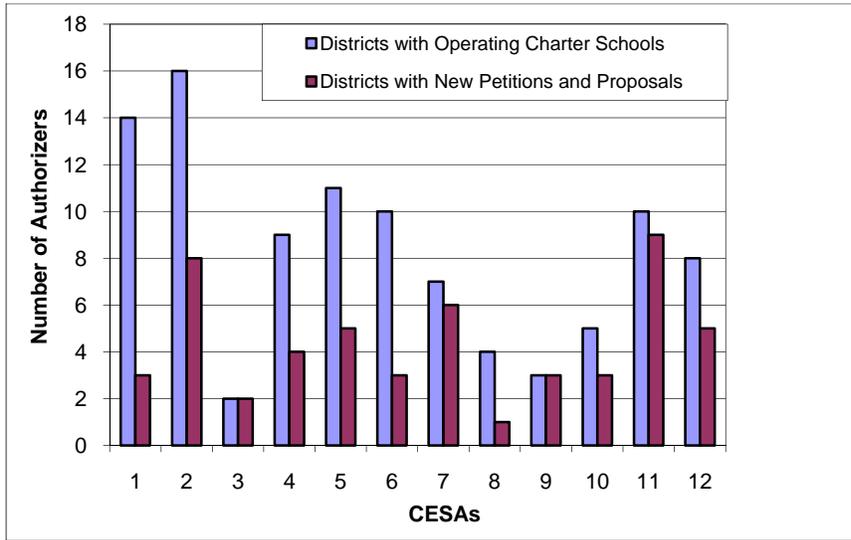


Figure 2 displays the comparison of districts in 2007-2008 with operating charter schools to the number of districts with new petitions. Twenty-five (53 percent) of the 47 districts with new petitions in 2007-2008 were first time authorizers.

■ Figure 2

*Comparison by CESA of existing authorizers to authorizers in 2007-2008*



## First Level Decisions

### *Questions 4-8*

District administrators were asked to report on the number of first level decisions approved and the number of first level decisions denied. Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, 47 (11 percent) of 426 school districts in the state of Wisconsin reported a total of 71 petitions or proposals filed with their school board. Respondents reported that at the first level, 61 (86 percent) proposals filed were approved. Districts reporting approval of a petition or proposal on the electronic survey provided a rationale for the action taken.

■ Table 4

*Reasons for Approval of First Level Decisions*

Reason	Number (n=61)	Percentage
Realizes an alternative vision for schooling	30	49.1%
Increases student achievement	34	55.7%
Serves a special population	29	47.5%
Increases parent/community involvement	24	39.3%
Attracts students	24	39.3%
Participates in a charter school consortium	6	9.8%
Other	3	4.9%

*Note: Districts could provide more than one reason for approval. Therefore, the total exceeds 100%.*

In 2004 a Final Report entitled *Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program* was issued by the United States Department of Education. This report detailed the reasons authorizers sponsor charter schools. Three types of authorizers were surveyed for this report; local authorizers, state authorizers, and university authorizers. Local authorizers who participated in the survey responded to survey questions on the basis of which factors they believed to be “very important” reasons to sponsor charter schools. The reason cited by 72 percent of local authorizers who participated in the national survey as being very important to sponsorship of a charter school was to “create competition in the school system” (Finnigan et. al, 2004). The reason most cited by Wisconsin school boards for approving new petitions was “increases student achievement” (55.7 percent).

Wisconsin school board authorizers cite “serving a special population” more frequently than local authorizers participating in the USDE evaluation survey, 47.5 percent compared to 20 percent. Forty-six percent of local authorizers in the USDE survey cited “keeping students in the public school system” as a very important reason to sponsor charters whereas 24 percent of Wisconsin school boards cite “attracts students” as a reason for approving new petitions (Finnigan et. al, 2004). A significant amount of districts with new petitions in Wisconsin (39.3 percent) cited “increases parent/community involvement” as a reason for approving new petitions. This item was not one of the USDE survey items so it is unknown how important increasing parent and community involvement rates with those local authorizers who participated in the national survey.

Five districts reported denials of first level decisions. The total number of decisions denied at the first level was ten. Table 5 below provides detail of the reasons for denial.

■ Table 5  
*Reasons for Denial of First Level Decisions*

Reason	Number (n=10)	Percentage
Declining enrollment	0	0%
Financial reasons	4	40%
Program not unique or innovative	0	0%
Lack of teacher, parent or community support	2	20%
Liability of district	0	0%
Withdrew from multi-district consortium	0	0%
Other	0	0%

*Note: Districts could provide more than one reason for approval and, therefore, the total percentage may exceed 100%. Additionally, several districts had more than one denial, and data is recorded by district not by decision, therefore, the total number cited for each reason will equal less than the total number of denials.*

## Second Level Decisions

### *Questions 9-13*

Survey respondents were asked to report on the number of second level decisions approved and the number of second level decisions denied. Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, 39 (9.2 percent) of Wisconsin school districts reported making 58 second level decisions. Fifty-seven decisions were approved at the second level and 1 decision was denied. Districts making second level decisions provided reasons for the approval and denial of the proposals.

#### ■ Table 6

##### *Reasons for Approval of Second Level Decisions*

Reason	Number (n=57)	Percentage
Realizes alternative vision for schooling	23	40.3%
Increases student achievement	28	49.1%
Serves a special population	26	45.6%
Attracts students	20	35.0%
Increases parent/community involvement	16	28.0%
Participates in a charter school consortium	8	14.0%
Other	3	5.3%

*Note: Districts could provide more than one reason for approval and, therefore, the total percentage exceeds 100%.*

The reasons respondents provided for approving second level decisions are consistent with the reasons provided for approving first level decisions. “Increases student achievement” was cited most frequently as a reason for approving a second level decision. “Serves a special population” and “realizes an alternative vision for schooling” were the second most frequently cited reasons for approval of second level decisions mirroring those most frequently cited at the first level decision. One decision was denied at the second-level. The reason cited for the denial was “not sufficiently prepared, will reapply next year”.

## Source of Petitions/Proposals

### Question 14

Respondents were asked to indicate who initiated charter school concepts or proposals.

■ Table 7

#### *Source of Charter School Concepts or Proposals*

Source	Number (n=58)	Percentage
School Administration	36	62.0%
District Superintendent	22	37.9%
Teachers	29	50.0%
Parents	19	32.8%
CESA	8	13.8%
Community (not for profit)	10	17.2%
Business for profit	3	5.2%
Other	4	6.9%

*Note: Districts could provide more than one source. Therefore, the total exceeds 100%.*

Survey responses indicated that the majority of charter school concepts or proposals came from school administrators, district superintendents and teachers during the 2007-2008 reporting period. The districts reporting “other” indicated that the source of new charter petitions were students, the Ho-Chunk Nation and consortium district superintendents.

## Planning Group Participants

### Question 15

Respondents were asked to identify planning group members.

■ Table 8

#### *Charter School Planning Group Members*

Source	Number (n=58)	Percentage
School Administration	50	86.2%
Teachers	50	86.2%

Parents	40	68.9%
District Superintendent	30	51.7%
Community (not for profit)	29	50.0%
CESA	10	17.2%
Business for profit	15	25.9%
Other	7	12.1%

*Note: Districts could provide more than one source. Therefore, the total exceeds 100%.*

Survey results indicate that school administrators, teachers and parents made up the majority of charter school planning groups during the period 2007-2008 while district superintendents and community not-for-profit groups were close behind.

## Comments

### *Question 16*

Question 16 of the electronic survey provided space for “Open Comments.” Eighty-nine comments were provided that covered topics such as the usefulness of charter schools, the successes of current charter schools, the need for more accountability and oversight of charter schools, the feasibility of creating financially sustainable charter schools, and many others. Three districts identified that they are currently in the grant application process or will be applying for grants within the next year. Twelve districts noted that they wish to begin exploring the idea of implementing a charter school sometime in the future. Twelve districts stated that they currently have charter schools and many districts attribute student success to the implementation of these schools. Nineteen districts expressed their support for charter schools stating that charter schools are a great way to expand educational options available to students and that they are crucial to maintaining quality in the ever changing educational environment in Wisconsin. Other districts also shared feelings about the charter school grant program. Three districts indicated that the size and needs of their district limit their ability to entertain the option of opening a charter school. Four additional districts brought up concerns in regards to new regulations regarding teaching licensure, citing that they fear the new guidelines may hinder teacher innovation and furthermore, student performance as a result.

Seven districts expressed negative attitudes about charter schools and the Wisconsin Charter School Program. These responses varied in opinion. Three school districts discussed the grant application process and the drawbacks of extensively planning a school even though the implementation grant can be denied. Two discussed the financial problems involved with virtual charter schools and two feel that charter schools need more monitoring to be held to high standards. These districts believe that money spent on charter schools should be used to enhance and improve education for all children not just the select few that choose to attend these schools.

Overall, Wisconsin school districts share mixed feelings about charter schools and the Wisconsin Charter School Program. Responses indicate the need for greater dissemination of information about the benefits of charters and the financial and instructional aspects of charter schools.

## 2007-2008 Charter School and Federal Grant Status

There were 231 operating charter schools in the 2007-2008 school year, 214 of which were authorized by 99 school districts. Of the remaining seventeen charter schools, five were authorized by the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, eleven were authorized by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and one was authorized by UW-Parkside.

A listing of charter proposals, type of federal charter school grant application submitted to the department, the status of the application as funded or not funded, and school status as of September 2008 are revealed below in Table 9.

■ Table 9

*2007-2008 Action Taken by the Department of Public Instruction on Grant Applications submitted to the department and School Status as of September 2008*

District and School Name	Grant Type	Date Signed by School Board	Funding Status	School Status as of 9/2008
Antigo Unified-Antigo Early Bird Charter School: Where Robins Take Flight	Planning	9/25/07	Not Funded	Did not open
Appleton-Appleton Career Academy	Implementation II	5/30/08	Funded	Open 2007
Appleton-Appleton Construction Career Academy	Planning	5/28/08	Funded	Planning
Appleton-Edison Elementary Charter School	Planning	5/28/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Appleton-Kaleidoscope Academy	Implementation II	5/23/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Appleton-United Public Montessori	Planning	5/29/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Baldwin-Woodville Charter School	Planning	9/25/07	Withdrawn	Did not open
Barron-Barron Area Montessori School	Implementation II	5/23/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Beloit-Eclipse Center Charter School	Implementation II	6/02/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Beloit-Roy Chapman Andrews Academy	Implementation II	6/02/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Birchwood-Blue Hills Charter School	Planning	5/29/08	Funded	Planning
Black River Falls-Black River Area Green School	Planning	5/27/08	Funded	Planning
Brown Deer-Fine Arts Academy of Brown Deer	Planning	9/26/07	Not Funded	Did not open
Brown Deer-Brown Deer School of Multicultural Arts	Planning	5/28/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Butternut-Promethean Charter School	Implementation II	5/29/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Central-Westosha UHS-Westosha Academy	Implementation II	9/18/07	Declined	Closed 2008
Chetek-Chetek Environmental Charter School	Planning	5/30/08	Not Funded	Did not open
City of Milwaukee-Lighthouse Learning Centers, Inc.	Planning	9/28/07	Not Funded	Did not open
City of Milwaukee-New Journey Institute	Planning	10/01/07	Not Funded	Did not open
Columbus-Discovery Charter School	Implementation II	5/30/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Cumberland-Island City Research Academy	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Glidden-Glidden Class ACT Charter School	Implementation II	5/21/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Green Bay-Whitney High School	Planning	5/28/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Greendale-Greendale School of Science and Engineering	Planning	10/01/07	Not Funded	Did not open
Green Lake-Green Lake Global and Environmental Learning Community	Implementation I	4/18/08	Not Funded	Opened 2008
Holmen-Ventures Charter School	Planning	9/24/07	Funded	Opened 2008
Holmen-Ventures Charter School	Implementation I	5/27/08	Not Funded	Opened 2008
Janesville-CRES Academy	Implementation I	9/26/07	Funded	Opened 2008
Janesville-Janesville Virtual Academy	Implementation II	5/13/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Janesville-TAGOS Leadership Academy	Implementation II	5/21/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Kenosha-Harborside Academy	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007

Kenosha-Technology Enhanced Curriculum	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Ladysmith-Hawkins-Health Care Academy	Implementation II	5/28/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Manitowoc-Manitowoc County Comprehensive Charter School	Implementation II	5/23/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Manitowoc-McKinley Academy	Implementation I	9/24/07	Funded	Opened 2007
Manitowoc-McKinley Academy	Implementation II	5/29/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Marshfield-Marshfield Core Advantage Charter School	Planning	9/28/07	Withdrawn	Planning
Marshfield-Marshfield Core Advantage Charter School	Planning	5/30/08	Funded	Planning
Mellen-Mellen Technology Charter School	Implementation II	5/30/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Mercer-Mercer Environmental Tourism	Implementation II	5/29/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-Audubon Technology and Communication Center High School	Planning	9/28/07	Funded	Opened 2008
Milwaukee-Audubon Technology and Communication Center High School	Implementation I	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2008
Milwaukee-Carmen H.S. of Science and Technology	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-Foster and Williams H.S. of the Visual Arts	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-James Madison Academic Campus	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-Marshall Montessori IB Charter School	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-Milwaukee African American Immersion High School	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-Milwaukee Business High School	Planning	9/24/07	Funded	Opened 2008
Milwaukee-Milwaukee Business High School	Implementation I	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2008
Milwaukee-School for Urban Planning and Architecture	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-WORK Institute	Implementation I	9/24/07	Not Funded	Opened 2007
Milwaukee-WORK Institute	Implementation I	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Montello-Marquette Alternative High School	Implementation I	6/02/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Nekoosa-Nekoosa Charter Middle School	Implementation I	6/02/08	Funded	Opened 2009
New London-School of Enterprise Marketing	Implementation II	5/19/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Oconto Falls-New Path Charter School	Implementation II	6/01/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Oconto-Oconto Literacy Charter School	Implementation II	5/22/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Osceola-Osceola Global Studies in Spanish	Planning	9/25/07	Withdrawn	Did not open
Oshkosh-Franklin Key to Learning Charter School	Implementation II	5/28/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Oshkosh-Jacob Shapiro Brain Based Instruction Laboratory School	Implementation II	5/28/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Rhineland-Rhineland Environmental Stewardship Academy	Implementation II	5/16/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Ripon-Crossroads Charter School	Planning	9/24/07	Funded	Opened 2008
Ripon-Crossroads Charter School	Implementation I	5/12/08	Funded	Opened 2008
Ripon-Quest Charter School	Planning	5/12/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Ripon-Tiger Pride Charter School	Planning	5/12/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Sheboygan-A2 Charter School	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-Elementary School of the Arts and Academics	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-Face to Face with Learning Online Charter	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-Lake Country Academy	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-Northeast Wisconsin Montessori	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-Pigeon River Environmental Education Elementary	Planning	5/27/08	Funded	Planning
Sheboygan-SUCCESS Academy Charter School	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-The Etude School	Implementation II	5/27/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Sheboygan-Washington School for Comprehensive Literacy	Implementation II	9/26/07	Funded	Opened 2006
Shorewood-Lake Bluff Multiage School	Implementation I	9/28/07	Not Funded	Did not open
South Shore-South Shore Charter School	Planning	5/21/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Tigerton-Tigerton Technology Academy	Planning	5/29/08	Not Funded	Did not open

UW Milwaukee-Milwaukee Renaissance Academy	Implementation II	5/06/08	Funded	Opened 2007
UW Milwaukee-Seeds of Health Elementary	Implementation II	5/08/08	Funded	Opened 2007
UW Milwaukee-Wisconsin Community Services-Project Excel	Planning	6/02/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Viroqua-School of the Arts	Planning	5/28/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Viroqua-Viroqua Healthcare Academy	Planning	5/27/08	Not Funded	Did not open
Waukesha-Waukesha Engineering Preparatory Academy	Implementation I	2/14/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Wausau-EEA Learning Academy	Implementation I	9/27/07	Funded	Opened 2007
Wauwatosa-Tosa School of Health Science and Technology	Implementation II	4/29/08	Funded	Opened 2007
West De Pere-Phantom Knight School of Opportunity	Implementation II	5/30/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Winter-Pathways	Implementation II	5/29/08	Funded	Opened 2007
Wisconsin Rapids-Mead Elementary School	Planning	9/10/07	Funded	Opened 2008
Wisconsin Rapids-Mead Elementary School	Implementation I	4/14/08	Funded	Opened 2008
Wisconsin Rapids-Vesper Elementary Charter	Planning	9/10/07	Funded	Opened 2007
Wisconsin Rapids-Vesper Elementary Charter School	Implementation I	5/05/08	Funded	Opened 2007

Funding status and school status are closely related. Only two of the 19 schools that did not receive funding opened. Three districts opted to decline funding or withdraw their application.

Several school districts indicated participation in multi-district charter activity during the 2007-2008 reporting period. 110 school districts and Oneida Nation were involved in multi-district charter activity during the 2007-2008 survey reporting period. A list of the sponsor districts and the consortium districts involved are listed below in Table 10.

■ Table 10

*School Districts Engaged in Multi-District/Partner Charter Activity*

Sponsor District	Consortium Districts	Sponsor District	Consortium Districts
<b>Medford</b>	Abbotsford Colby Prentice Rib Lake	<b>Kohler/CESA 7</b>	Algoma Ashwaubenon Brillion Cedar Grove Chilton Denmark De Pere Elkhart Lake Gibraltar Green Bay Hilbert Howard Suamico Howards Grove Kewaunee Luxemburg-Casco Manitowoc Mishicot New Holstein Oneida Nation Oostburg Plymouth Pulaski Random Lake Reedsville Sevastopol Seymour Sheboygan Sheboygan Falls Southern Door Stockbridge Sturgeon Bay Two Rivers Valders West De Pere Wrightstown
<b>Cambridge</b>	Deerfield Fort Atkinson Jefferson Johnson Creek Lake Mills Marshall Palmyra Eagle Whitewater		
<b>Manitowoc</b>	Kiel Mishicot Reedsville Two Rivers Valders Area		
<b>Lena</b>	Coleman		
<b>Menasha</b>	Appleton		
<b>Butternut</b>	Glidden Mellen Mercer		
<b>New Lisbon</b>	Elroy Hillsboro Necedah Mauston Wonewoc		
<b>Wilmot</b>	Silver Lake Trevor Grade		
<b>Rice Lake</b>	Barron Cameron Cumberland Chetek Turtle Lake	<b>Oak Creek-Franklin</b>  <b>West Allis</b>	South Milwaukee Cudahy  Brown Deer Cudahy Franklin South Milwaukee



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*Figure 3:* Status as of September 2008 of statewide petitions submitted to the department in 2007-2008. Picture includes districts with petitions or proposals and multi-district charter school consortium partners in all 12 Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) areas.

## References

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# Appendix A



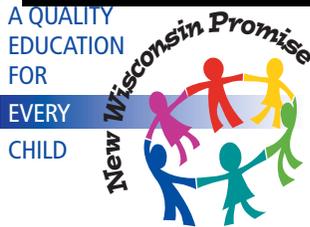
## Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Charter School Contract Reviewer Benchmarks

School District/Chartering Authority Name	Charter School Name	
General Information	Rating	
	Present	Absent
Indicates name of the person seeking to establish the charter school. §118.40(1m)(b)1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates name of the person who will be in charge of the charter school. §118.40(1m)(b)2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the manner in which administrative services will be provided. §118.40(1m)(b)2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies the status of the school as a non-instrumentality or instrumentality of the school district. §118.40(7)(a)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charter School Program Description <i>Well organized description of school.</i>	Present	Absent
Describes the charter school educational program offered and students served. §118.40(1m)(b)3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the method used to enable pupils to attain educational goals under Wisconsin Statutes 118.01. §118.40(1m)(b)4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the method by which evidence of student achievement or progress in attaining academic skills and knowledge will be measured. §118.40(1m)(b)5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governance/Structure	Present	Absent
Describes how the school will be governed, including method to be followed to ensure parental involvement. §118.40(1m)(b)6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes methods employed to review qualifications that must be met by individuals employed by the school, assuring that every teacher, supervisor, administrator or professional staff member holds a certificate, permit or license issued by the department before entering duties for such a position [Wisconsin Statutes 118.19(10) and 121.02(1)(a)2.] §118.40(1m)(b)7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides procedures by which the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of the pupils. §118.40(1m)(b)8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides the procedures used to achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the school district population. §118.40(1m)(b)9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides the requirements for admission to the school. §118.40(1m)(b)10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describes procedures school will follow if more students apply for admission than can be admitted, including a lottery process. §5210(1)(h) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the level of autonomy afforded the charter school relative to policy and budget development, staffing and evaluation. §5210(1)(a) of the ESEA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Describes the procedures by which students will be disciplined. §118.40(1m)(b)12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies the public school alternatives for pupils who reside in the school district and do not wish to attend or are not admitted to the charter school. §118.40(1m)(b)13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates how the program and attendance at the charter school is voluntary. §118.40(6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearly states that the charter school does not charge tuition. §118.40(4)(b)1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Financial/Operational Criteria</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Describes the manner in which annual audits of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be performed. §118.40(1m)(b)11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides a description of the facilities and the types and limits of the liability insurance that the school will carry. §118.40(1m)(b)14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the effects of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the school district and the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the contracting entity. §118.40(1m)(b)15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The contract specifies the amount to be paid to the charter school each year of the contract. §118.40(3)(b)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract addresses how the school district will allocate federal funding for which the charter school is eligible. §5203(b)(2) of the ESEA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes a program which is nonsectarian in its practices, programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations. §118.40(4)(a)2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes a nondiscrimination clause stating the charter school will not deny admission or participation in any program or activity on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. §118.40(4)(b)2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addresses the procedures or reasons by which either party may withdraw or revoke the contract. §118.40(5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes or identifies any waivers of school district policy agreed to by the authorizer and the operator of the charter school. §5210(1)A of the ESEA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specifies any administrative fee paid to the authorizer and agreed to by the authorizer and the operator of the charter school. §5204(f)(4)(B) of the ESEA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>

The length of the contract is specified, not to exceed 5 years. §118.40(3)(b)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The contract is dated and signatures of the authorizer and the operator of the charter school are provided. §118.40(3)(a)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the authorizer where the authorizer is not a school district. §118.40(2r)(b)2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the charter school replaces a public school in whole or part, describes how it will give preference in admission to any pupil who resides in the attendance area or the former attendance area of that public school. §118.40(4)(a)1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
By September 1, 2004 operators of high school grades describe policy specifying criteria for granting high school diploma. §118.33(1)(f)2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes manner of transportation, if provided, to and from the charter school. ( <i>Note—school districts are not required to provide transportation to charter schools.</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Appendix B



## State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent**

July 17, 2008

Dear District Administrator:

State law requires the Department of Public Instruction to report annually to the legislature the status of existing charter schools, the number of petitions for new charter schools, as well as any school board or departmental action taken on petitions for new charter schools.

In compliance with this requirement, the department has developed an electronic survey to gather necessary data to include in our report to the legislature. Most of you will finish the survey in less than five minutes. This survey can be accessed via the following web address: <https://www2.dpi.wi.gov/sms-css/home.do>. Please note that the survey cannot be accessed through the Department of Public Instruction website.

Your password, which is case sensitive, is **kcs722**.

The information requested in the survey specifically complies with s. 115.28(49), Wis. Stats., and corresponds to charter activity between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008. Thank you for a 100 percent response rate last year and for your feedback regarding survey improvement.

All districts are asked to complete and submit the survey electronically no later than August 1, 2008. If you have questions regarding the survey, you may contact Ernie Saldana at [ernie.saldana@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:ernie.saldana@dpi.state.wi.us) or Latoya Holiday at [latoya.holiday@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:latoya.holiday@dpi.state.wi.us). Your timely completion of the survey is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burmaster  
State Superintendent

EB:es

# Appendix C

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## School Management Services

### Charter School Proposal Report 2007-2008

#### School District (0000)

*PII-0008 Collection of this information is a requirement of s.115.28(49), Wis. Stats.*

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Dear District Administrator,

The Department of Public Instruction must annually report to the Legislature on the status of existing charter schools, the number of petitions/proposals for new charter schools, and school board and departmental action on petitions/proposals for new charter schools.

You are asked to participate regardless of whether your district has charter schools or whether your district made decisions about charter school petitions/proposals.

Please respond to the questions below regarding approval or denial for each proposal filed, and select a reason(s) for approval or denial for each proposal filed. If multiple proposals have been approved or denied, provide clarification of reasons in the space for comments at the end.

The form seeks information on first and second level decisions on new charter school petitions or proposals within your school district **between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 only.**

A first level decision is defined as a concept approval for the purposes of further study, participation in a consortium or a signed charter school planning grant. A second level decision is defined as an approved charter contract between the district and the operator of a charter school, a written agreement to participate in a consortium or a signature on a charter school implementation grant.

The form may be electronically submitted by pressing the "Submit" button at the bottom of the survey.

If you have questions while completing the survey or encounter

difficulty when transmitting the survey please contact Latoya Holiday at 608-266-8066 or latoya.holiday@dpi.state.wi.us.

[View more information on Wisconsin Charter Schools including the 2004-2005 Legislative Report](#)

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1. District: School District (0000)  
CESA: 0
2. Name of person completing form:
3. Title of person completing form:
4. From July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 how many first level decisions were made by the district? First level decisions are defined as a concept approval for the purposes of further study, participation in a consortium or a signed charter school planning grant.

Note: If your district did NOT have any charter school activity between the dates above, please enter "0" and go to question 16.

5. Number of approved 1st level decisions:
6. If applicable, reason(s) for approving first level decisions (Select all that apply):
  - a. Serves a special population
  - b. Increases student achievement
  - c. Increases parent/community involvement
  - d. Attracts students
  - e. Realizes an alternative vision for schooling
  - f. Participates in a charter school consortium

*If so, list the districts in the consortium:*

g. Other

7. Number of denied 1st level decisions:

8. If applicable, reason(s) for denying proposals (Select all that apply):

- a. Declining enrollment
- b. Financial reasons
- c. Program not unique or innovative
- d. Lack of teacher, parent or community support
- e. Liability of district
- f. Withdrew from a multi-district consortium

*If so, list the districts in the consortium:*

g. Other

9. From July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 how many second level decisions were made by the district? Second level decisions are defined as an approved charter contract, a written agreement to participate in a consortium or a signature on a charter school implementation grant.

10. Number of approved 2nd level decisions:

11. If applicable, reason(s) for approving second level decisions (Select all that apply):

- a. Serves a special population
- b. Increases student achievement
- c. Increases parent/community involvement
- d. Attracts students
- e. Realizes an alternative vision for schooling
- f. Participates in a charter school consortium

*If so, list the districts in the consortium:*

g. Other

12. Number of denied 2nd level decisions:

13. If applicable, reason(s) for denying second level decisions  
(Select all that apply):

- a. Declining enrollment
- b. Financial reasons
- c. Program not unique or innovative
- d. Lack of teacher, parent or community support
- e. Liability of district
- f. Withdrew from a multi-district consortium

*If so, list the districts in the consortium:*

g. Other

14. Who initiated the charter school concept(s) or proposal(s)?  
(Select all that apply)

- a. District Superintendent
- b. School Administration (principal, curriculum director, etc.)
- c. CESA
- d. Teachers
- e. Parents
- f. Community (Not for Profit)
- g. Business For Profit
- h. Other

15. Identify members of the planning group (Select all that apply):

- a. District Superintendent
- b. School Administration (principal, curriculum director, etc.)
- c. CESA

- d. Teachers
- e. Parents
- f. Community (Not for Profit)
- g. Business For Profit
- h. Other

16. Open comments about charters or the Wisconsin Charter School Program:



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