

Statutory Report Series

2004-2005 Legislative Report on Charter Schools



**Prepared by School Management Services
Department of Public Instruction**

Acknowledgements

Beginning in the 2001-2002 school year, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has produced an annual report on charter schools in the state. Specifically, the report gathers data on the number of charter school petitions and proposals and the specific action taken by school boards on these petitions and proposals. This is the fourth report which presents data on charter activity in the state during the 2004-2005 school year. This and previous reports document the growing support for charter schools across the state.

The research for this report was undertaken by DPI staff. The report was prepared by Sharon Wendt, Margaret McMurray, Latoya Holiday and Jennifer Paepke. Robert A. Soldner provided support and supervision for the project. Finally, Patricia Stutz created the map, Jon Wellskopf created the electronic survey, and Jackie Abel formatted the report.

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Executive Summary

This report offers a summary of charter school activity in the 426 Wisconsin school districts during the 2004-2005 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 2004-2005 school year, there were 102 *first level* charter school decisions made by 63 school boards statewide and 83 *second level* charter school decisions made by 54 school boards statewide. Ninety-eight of 102 (96.1 percent) proposals were approved at the level one decision, and four (3.9 percent) were denied. At the *level two* decision, 80 (96.4 percent) proposals were approved and 3 (3.6 percent) proposals were denied. Fourteen 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, 2004 and June 30, 2005 to 77 (18.1 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 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

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 2001 Wisconsin Act 16, the 2001-2003 budget bill, gave limited chartering authority to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside to create a charter school for no more than 400 children.

During the 2004-2005 school year there were 161 operating charter schools authorized by 71 Wisconsin school boards and 12 charter schools authorized by non-school board sponsors. A recent report 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, Dau, & 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, this report specifically addresses local school board action as required by the legislature and does not include activity or action taken on new charter school petitions or proposals by non-school board sponsors.

In 2002, the DPI applied for and was awarded a three year, \$27 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 150 operating charter schools by the 2004-2005 school year. As noted above, at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year there were 161 operating charter schools; thus, the number of charter schools has exceeded this projection.

Charter Schools in Wisconsin and Other States

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 2005 appropriation for the USDE Public Charter Schools Program was over \$216 million. As of the 2004-2005 school year, 40 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have signed charter school legislation into law, and 39 of these states have operating charter schools. Tennessee is the only state with a charter law that does not have any operating charter schools (WestEd, 2006). 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 2004-2005 school year there were approximately 3,400 charter schools in operation across the nation serving nearly one million students, representing 4 percent of all public schools and 2 percent of all students attending public schools (Hassel, Ziebarth & Steiner, 2005).

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 2004-2005 school year, there were 161 operating charter schools in Wisconsin making the state rank 7th in total 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 2004-2005 compared to 2003-2004 School Year

State	Number of Charters	
	2003-2004	2004-2005
California	500	556
Arizona	491	492
Florida	258	311
Texas	241	242
Michigan	210	229
Ohio	142	208
Wisconsin	134	161
Pennsylvania	103	114
Minnesota	95	113
North Carolina	94	98

Sources: Center for Education Reform, October 2005; National Charter School Research Project, November 2006. 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

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.
16. The amount to be paid to the charter school during each school year of the contract.

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

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.

Contract

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, and 3) 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.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/index.html>.

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.

■ Table 2

Charter School Population by School Year

	2002--2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Charter	State	Charter	State	Charter	State
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.8%	3.3%	3.6%	3.4%	4.4%	3.4%
Black, not Hispanic	40.2%	10.4%	39.0%	10.5%	36.7%	10.5%
Hispanic	11.8%	5.4%	13.6%	5.8%	14.8%	6.3%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1.2%	1.5%	1.1%	1.4%	1.1%	1.5%
White, not Hispanic	43.0%	79.5%	42.8%	78.8%	42.9%	78.3%

Source: PI-1290 - Fall Enrollment Report

Table 3 shows the growth of Wisconsin charter schools from fall of 1994 to fall of 2004. In the fall of 2004 there were 161 operating charter schools in Wisconsin. The net increase of 27 charter schools between the falls of 2003 and 2004 reflects the addition of 35 new charter schools, the closing of 7 charter schools and one charter school reporting an inactive status at the start of the 2004-2005 school year. 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%

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 email with an introductory letter from the State Superintendent (see Appendix B). The information contained within this report reflects petition or proposal activity during the 2004-2005 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, 366 (86 percent) indicated their title as being district administrator, district superintendent or assistant superintendent; 20 (4.7 percent) indicated their title as being director of learning, director of student achievement, director of student services, director of pupil services or director of instructional services; 19 (4.5 percent) indicated their position as charter school director or program manager, school principal or assistant principal; 12 (2.8 percent) indicated their position as assistant to the superintendent, administrative assistant or district secretary and the remaining 9 (2.1 percent) held positions such as director of business services, director of staff relations, community education director and others.

Figure 1 provides a breakdown by CESA of new charter school petitions filed during the 2004-2005 school year compared to those filed in 2003-2004. The number of new petitions increased in all CESAs except CESAs 1, 4, and 12. CESA 2 shows the most notable increase with a total of 13 new petitions filed in 2004-2005 compared to only 4 in 2003-2004.

■ Figure 1

*Number of New Petitions and Proposals in each CESA
in the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 School Years*

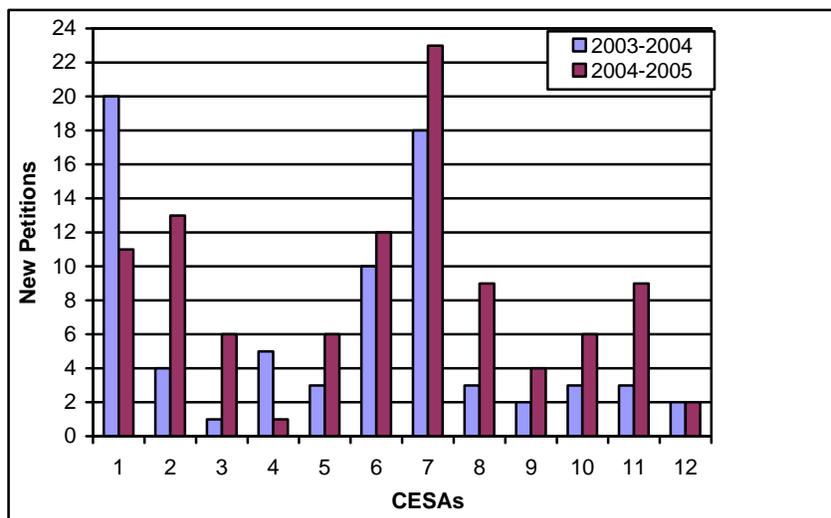
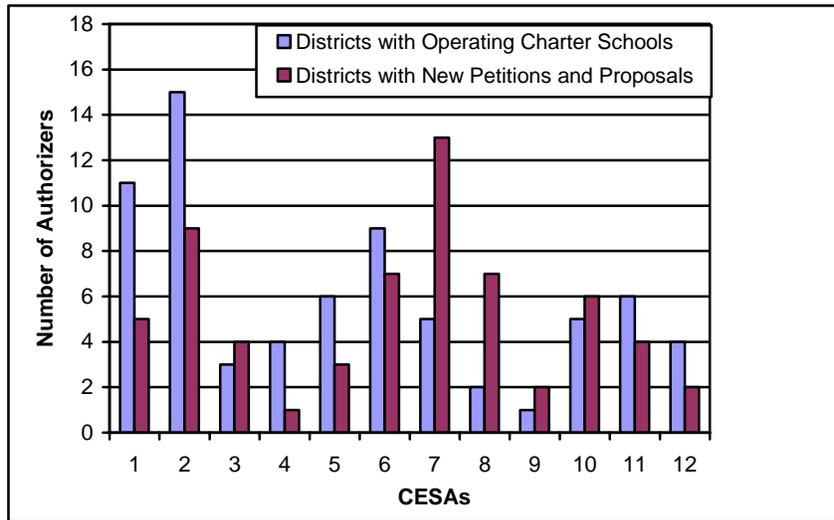


Figure 2 displays the comparison of districts in 2004-2005 with operating charter schools to the number of districts with new petitions. Forty-two (67.0 percent) of the districts with petitions in 2004-2005 were first time authorizers. Again, as in 2003-2004, CESA 7 showed the most notable increase in districts with new petitions. Twelve of the thirteen districts with new petitions in CESA 7 made decisions regarding the Northeast Wisconsin Online Charter School managed by the Kohler School District and CESA 7. Table 10 lists all of the districts that were involved in multi-district /partner charter activity during the 2004-2005 reporting period.

■ Figure 2

Comparison by CESA of existing authorizers to new authorizers in 2004-2005



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, 2004 and June 30, 2005, 63 (14.8 percent) of 426 school districts in the state of Wisconsin reported a total of 102 petitions or proposals filed with their school board. Respondents reported that at the first level, 98 (96.1 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=98)	Percentage
Realizes an alternative vision for schooling	48	49.0%
Increases student achievement	38	38.8%
Serves a special population	38	38.8%
Increases parent/community involvement	34	34.7%
Attracts students	32	32.7%
Participates in a charter school consortium	28	28.6%
Other	3	3.1%

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 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 “realizes an alternative vision for schooling” (49.0 percent). Similarly, 48 percent of local authorizers participating in the USDE evaluation survey cited “create alternatives for students and parents” as a very important reason to sponsor a charter school (Finnigan et. al, 2004).

Wisconsin school board authorizers cite “serving a special population” more frequently than local authorizers participating in the USDE evaluation survey, 38.8 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 32.7 percent of Wisconsin school boards cite “attracts students” as a reason for approving new petitions (Finnigan et. al, 2004). A significant amount of districts in Wisconsin (34.7 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.

Respondents indicating “other” to explain reasons for approval of first level decisions provided further explanation. The reasons given were “provides a project based research learning environment”, “partnership created with [another] school district” and “whole school conversion”.

Four districts reported a denial of a first level decision. Among the reasons for denial were declining enrollment, financial constraints, and withdrawal from a multi-district consortium. Two districts indicating “other” reported “political ramifications” and “capacity of district to support” as reasons for denying petitions at the first level.

■ Table 5

Reasons for Denial of First Level Decisions

Reason	Number (n=4)	Percentage
Declining enrollment	2	50.0%
Financial reasons	2	50.0%
Program not unique or innovative	0	0.0%
Lack of teacher, parent or community support	0	0.0%
Liability of district	0	0.0%
Withdrew from multi-district consortium	1	25.0%
Other	2	50.0%

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

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, 2004 and June 30, 2005, 54 (12.8 percent) of Wisconsin school districts reported making 83 second level decisions. Eighty decisions were approved at the second level and 3 were 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=80)	Percentage
Realizes alternative vision for schooling	41	51.3%
Increases student achievement	34	42.5%
Serves a special population	34	42.5%
Attracts students	33	41.3%
Increases parent/community involvement	30	37.5%
Participates in a charter school consortium	23	28.8%
Other	1	1.3%

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. “Realizes an alternative vision for schooling” was cited most frequently as a reason for approving a second level decision. “Serves a special population” and “increases student achievement” were the second most frequently cited reasons for approval of second level decisions mirroring those most frequently cited at the first level decision. A single district reporting “other” stated that decisions were approved in order to “provide a project based research learning environment.” Reasons given for denial of decisions at the second level are also similar to those reported for level one denials. Respondents cited “declining enrollment” and “financial reasons” as explanation for denial of decisions at the second level.

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=72)	Percentage
School Administration	42	58.3%
District Superintendent	38	52.8%
Teachers	31	43.1%
Parents	19	26.4%
CESA	15	20.8%
Community (not for profit)	15	20.8%
Business for profit	0	0.0%
Other	2	2.8%

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 2004-2005 reporting period. Surprisingly, parents were the source of only 26.4% of new petitions in 2004-2005, a significant decline from 2003-2004 where parents were involved in initiating over 70% of new petitions. The two districts reporting “other” indicated that the source of new charter petitions were the Community Education Advisory Council and UW-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

Planning Group Participants

Question 15

Respondents were asked to identify planning group members.

■ Table 8

Charter School Planning Group Members

Source	Number (n=71)	Percentage
School Administration	64	90.1%
Teachers	54	76.1%
Parents	52	73.2%
District Superintendent	51	71.8%
Community (not for profit)	42	59.2%
CESA	23	32.4%
Business for profit	12	16.9%
Other	6	8.5%

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 2004-2005 while district superintendents were close behind.

Comments

Question 16

Question 16 of the electronic survey provided space for “Open Comments.” Ninety-five comments were provided that covered topics such as the usefulness of charter schools, the success 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. Fourteen districts indicated that they were in the process of planning for a charter school or were exploring the concept and conducting further study. Thirteen districts with operating charter schools expressed their continued support for charters and shared some of the successes they have experienced in their respective charter schools. Five districts expressed deep appreciation for the assistance and guidance provided by the department through the Wisconsin Charter School Program.

Four districts indicated that they do not anticipate initiating charter schools in their districts. Several districts submitted comments regarding the inability to financially sustain charter schools. Two districts explained that the restriction on the use of grant funds limits their district’s ability to form charter schools and one district commented that the charter school grant process is “overwhelming for understaffed districts”. Many districts expressed concern about accountability and the “efficacy” of charters. The respondent from the Chilton school district questioned the “rigor” of some of the charter schools in the Milwaukee area and believes that site visits should be incorporated into the grant funds disbursement process. Others believe that charter schools should not supplant public school efforts and that they decrease resources for public education. 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.

2004-2005 Charter School and Federal Grant Status

There were 161 operating charter schools in the 2004-2005 school year, 149 of which were authorized by 71 school districts. Of the remaining twelve charter schools, four were authorized by the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, seven 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 7/2006 are revealed below in Table 9.

■ Table 9

2004-2005 Action Taken By the Department of Public Instruction and School Status

District and School Name	Grant Type	Date Signed by School Board	Funding Status	School Status as of 7/2006
Appleton—Active Hands Academy	Planning	7/27/04	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Appleton—Appleton Public Montessori	Planning	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2005
Appleton—Dan Spalding Academy	Implementation I	6/30/04	Funded	Open 2004
Appleton—Fox River Academy	Planning	11/8/04	Funded	Open 2005
Appleton—Valley New School	Implementation II	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2003
Argyle—Argyle Land Ethic Academy	Implementation I	7/22/04	Funded	Open 2004
Argyle—Lafayette County Community Charter School	Implementation II	7/30/04	Funded	Open 2003
Augusta—Science Research Charter School	Planning	7/20/04	Funded	Open 2005
Blair-Taylor—School of Science, Engineering and Technology	Implementation I	7/19/04	Funded	Open 2004
City of Milwaukee—Academy of Learning and Leadership	Implementation II	10/20/04	Funded	Open 2003
City of Milwaukee—Living Arts High School	Planning	8/2/04	Not Funded/Withdrawn	Did not open
City of Milwaukee—Maasai Institute	Planning	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2005
Clinton—LIFT Charter School	Implementation I	7/15/04	Funded	Open 2004
Cornell—Cornell STAR Charter School	Planning	7/30/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Flambeau—Flambeau Charter School	Implementation II	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2003
Grantsburg—Grantsburg Virtual School	Implementation I	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2004
Greendale—Time 4 Learning Charter School	Implementation II	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2003
Hurley—Northern Region Home School Charter School	Planning	7/29/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Janesville—Janesville International Charter School	Planning	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2005
Kiel—Meeme LEADS Charter School	Planning	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2005
Kimberly—Caring Opportunities for Recovery Education	Planning	7/30/04	Funded	Open 2005
Kohler—Northeast Wisconsin Online Charter School	Implementation I	7/27/04	Indefinitely Postponed	Open 2004
LaFarge—Crooked River Middle School	Planning	7/30/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Lena—LEARN	Planning	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2005
Madison—Neuestro Mundo Community School	Implementation I	8/2/04	Funded	Open 2004
Medford—Rural Virtual Academy	Planning	7/22/04	Funded	Open 2005
Menasha—Chance II Charter School	Planning	7/20/04	Funded	Open 2005
Menomonie—Transition Partnership School	Planning		Not Funded	Did not open
Milwaukee—Academy of Language and Fine Arts	Implementation I	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Advanced Language and Academic Studies	Implementation I	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—AGAPE Center of Academic Excellence	Planning	Not Signed	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Milwaukee—Alliance High School of Milwaukee	Planning	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2005
Milwaukee—Aurora Weir Bilingual Early College High School	Planning	10/4/04	Funded	Open 2005
Milwaukee—Carter Charter School of Excellence	Implementation II	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2003

Milwaukee—CITIES Project High School	Implementation I	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—City Prep Charter School	Planning	8/3/04	Funded	Did not open
Milwaukee—Community High School	Implementation I	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Community Trade and Business Center	Implementation I	7/23/04	Funded	Closed 2006
Milwaukee—Genesis High School	Implementation I	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Hmong American Peace Academy	Implementation I	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Honey Creek School	Planning	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2005
Milwaukee—Humboldt Park School	Implementation I	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Kamoni Preparatory Academy	Planning	Not signed	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Milwaukee—La Causa Charter School	Implementation II	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2003
Milwaukee—Lightstreams Education Center	Planning	Not signed	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Milwaukee—Milwaukee Academy of Aviation, Science and Technology	Planning	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2005
Milwaukee—Milwaukee Learning Laboratory and Institute	Planning	10/29/04	Funded	Open 2005
Milwaukee—Milwaukee School of Entrepreneurship	Implementation I	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Milwaukee Urban Preparatory School	Planning	11/3/04	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Milwaukee—New Concept Self Development Center	Planning	3/05	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Milwaukee—New Hope Institute of Science and Technology	Implementation II	7/26/04	Funded	Closed 2006
Milwaukee—Next Door Charter School	Planning	8/31/04	Funded	Open 2005
Milwaukee—Nzingha Institute for Creative Learning and Living	Planning	Not signed	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Milwaukee—Preparatory School for Global Leadership	Implementation I	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Professional Learning Institute	Implementation II	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2003
Milwaukee—School of Humanities	Implementation I	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—Travis Technology High School	Planning	Not signed	Not Funded	Did not open
Milwaukee---Truth Institute for Leadership and Service	Implementation I	7/26/04	Funded	Open 2004
Milwaukee—W.E.B. DuBois High School	Planning	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2005
Monroe—Monroe Independent Education Charter School	Implementation II	9/27/04	Funded	Open 2003
Monroe—Monroe Middle Level Bridges Program	Planning	8/2/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Mukwonago—Eagleville Elementary Charter School	Implementation I	7/22/04	Funded	Open 2004
Neenah—Alliance Charter Elementary	Implementation I	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2004
Osceola—Osceola Charter Preschool	Planning	7/23/04	Funded	Open 2005
Oshkosh—Accelerated Alternative Learning Program School	Implementation I	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2004
Oshkosh—Charter High School	Implementation I	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2004
Oshkosh—Journey's School	Implementation I	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2004
Oshkosh—OASD Environmental Education Charter School	Implementation II	7/14/04	Funded	Open 2003
Phillips—Northern Outreach Academy	Planning	Not signed	Funded/Withdrawn	Did not open
Rhineland—Northwood's Community Elementary School	Implementation I	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2004
Rhineland—Northwood's Community Secondary School	Implementation I	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2004
River Valley—River Valley Arts Charter School	Planning	7/30/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Shorewood—New Horizons for Learning	Planning	7/18/04	Funded	Open 2005
Sparta—S.A.I.L.S.	Implementation I	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2004
Sparta—Sparta Montessori Charter School	Implementation I	8/2/04	Funded	Open 2004
Stevens Point—Jefferson School for the Arts	Implementation I	6/28/04	Funded	Open 2004
Stevens Point—Kennedy School for Learning and Wellness	Planning	7/6/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Stevens Point—Plover Whiting School of Innovation	Planning	7/26/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Stevens Point—Roosevelt IDEA School	Implementation I	7/6/04	Funded	Open 2004
Stevens Point—Science Walkabout Academy of Stevens Point	Planning	7/26/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Stevens Point—Washington Service Learning Center	Implementation I	7/6/04	Funded	Open 2004
Stevens Point—Wellness for Life Charter School	Planning	7/26/04	Not Funded	Did not open
UW Milwaukee—Capitol West Academy	Implementation I	7/14/04	Funded	Open 2004
UW Milwaukee—Career Education Academy	Planning	7/28/04	Funded	Open 2005

UW Milwaukee—Inland Seas School of Expeditionary Learning	Planning	8/2/04	Funded	Open 2005
UW Milwaukee—Woodlands School	Implementation I	7/15/04	Funded	Open 2004
Waukesha—iQ Academies at Wisconsin	Implementation I	7/30/04	Not funded	Open 2004
Waukesha—Waukesha Academy of Health Professions	Implementation I	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2004
Wautoma—TBA	Planning	7/20/04	Funded/Declined	Did not open
Wausau—Alternative Charter School	Planning	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2005
Wausau—Wausau Montessori Charter School	Planning	7/27/04	Funded	Open 2005
Wausaukee—Wausaukee Rural Charter Academy	Planning	7/30/04	Funded	Did not open
West Salem—Rowe Environmental Action Learning Center	Planning	6/30/04	Not Funded	Did not open
Wisconsin Rapids—Central Cities Health Institute	Planning	7/7/04	Funded	Open 2005

Funding status and school status are closely related. Only one of the 12 schools that did not receive funding opened. Conversely, for two districts, funding did not lead to a school opening. Ten districts were funded but opted to decline the funding or withdraw their application. Two schools that were funded and in operation during this reporting period have since closed.

Several school districts indicated participation in multi-district charter activity during the 2004-2005 reporting period. Survey results show that 71 school districts and the Oneida Nation were involved in multi-district charter activity during the 2004-2005 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
Menasha	Appleton	Kohler/CESA 7	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
Beecher-Dunbar-Pembin	Florence Goodman-Armstrong Niagara Wausaukee		
Medford	Abbotsford Colby Prentice Rib Lake		
Cambridge	Deerfield Fort Atkinson Jefferson Johnson Creek Lake Mills Marshall Palmyra Eagle Whitewater		
Menomonie	Chippewa Falls Eau Claire Ellsworth		
Wilmot	Silver Lake (Riverview) Trevor Grade		
Lena	Coleman		
Fall Creek	Altoona Osseo-Fairchild		
Fond du Lac	Appleton Kiel		

The map on the following page depicts the outcome of charter school petitions or proposals filed during the 2004-2005 school year (see figure 3).

Wisconsin Charter Schools by Location 2003-2004

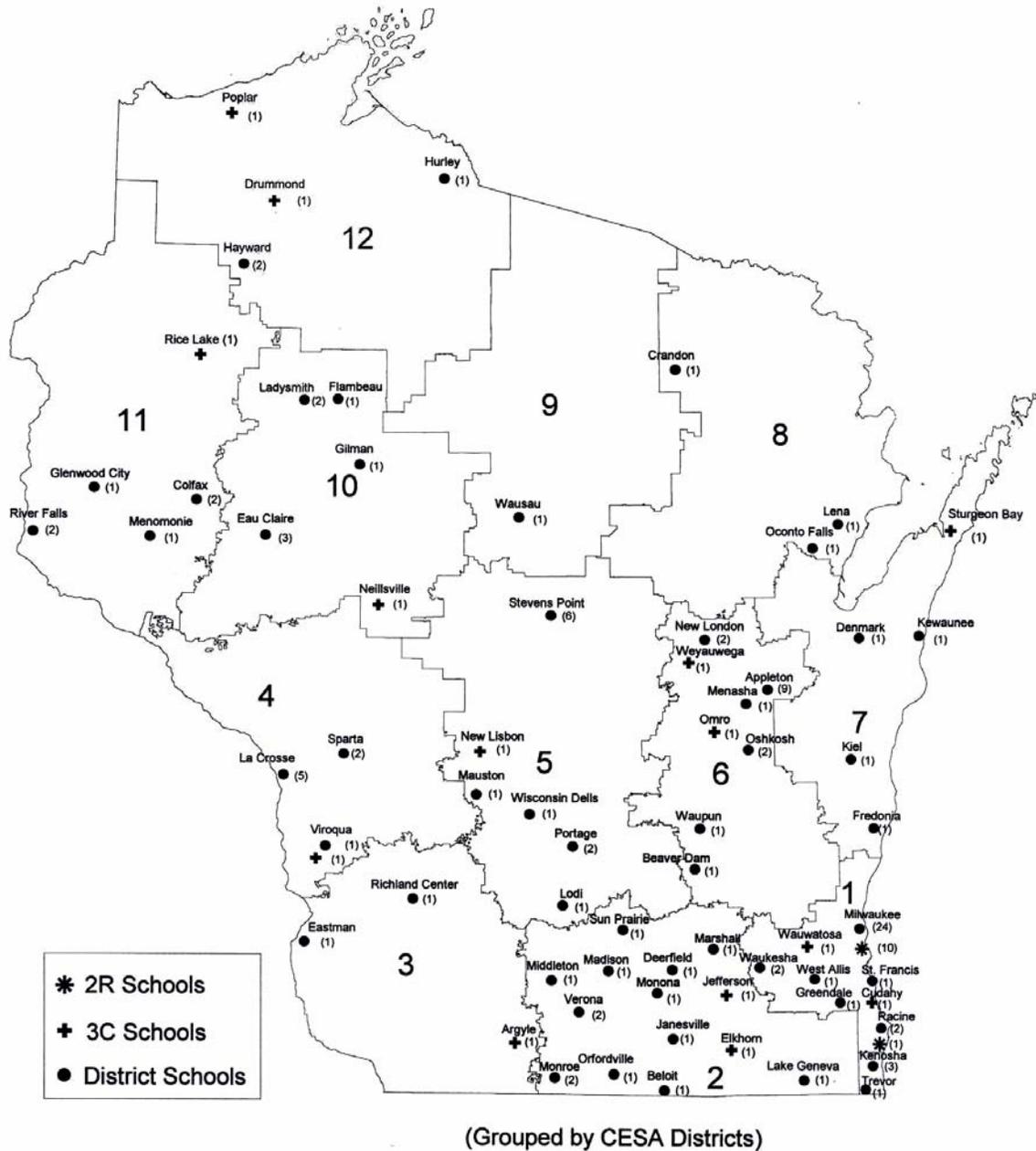


Figure 3: Status as of 7/2006 of charter school grants submitted to the department in 2004-2005. Picture includes districts with petitions or proposals and multi-district charter school consortium partners in all 12 Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) areas.

References

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Appendix A



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Charter School Contract Reviewer Benchmarks

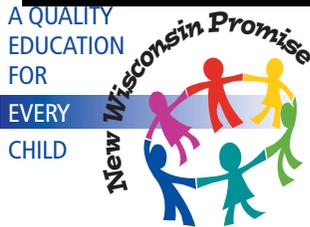
School District/Chartering Authority Name	Charter School Name
---	---------------------

Rating

Criteria	Rating	
	Present	Absent
General Information		
Indicates name of the person seeking to establish the charter school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates name of the person who will be in charge of the charter school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the manner in which administrative services will be provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract identifies the status of the school as a non-instrumentality or instrumentality of the school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charter School Program Description <i>Well organized description of school.</i>		
Describes the charter school educational program offered and students served.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the method used to enable pupils to attain educational goals under Wisconsin Statutes 118.01 <i>academic skills and knowledge.</i>	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governance/Structure		
Describes how the school will be governed, including method to be followed to ensure parental involvement.	<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.]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides procedures which the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of the pupils.	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outlines the admission policy or provides the requirements, if any, for admission to the school.	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the level of autonomy afforded the charter school relative to policy and budget development, staffing and evaluation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the procedures by which students will be disciplined.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criteria	Rating	
	Present	Absent
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicates how the program and attendance at the charter school is voluntary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearly states that the charter school does not charge tuition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial/Operational Criteria		
Describes the manner in which annual audits of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be performed.	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the effects of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the school district or the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the contracting entity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The contract specifies the amount to be paid to the charter school each year of the contract.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract addresses how the school district will allocate federal funding for which the charter school is eligible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes a program which is nonsectarian in its practices, programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addresses the procedures or reasons by which either party may withdraw or revoke the contract.	<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.	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other		
The length of the contract is specified, not to exceed five years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The contract is dated and signatures of the authorizer and the operator of the charter school are provided.	<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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
By September 1, 2004 operators of high school grades describe policy specifying criteria for granting high school diploma.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes manner of transportation, if provided, to and from the charter school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

September 8, 2005

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 **weo221**.

The information requested in the survey specifically complies with s. 115.28(49), Wis. Stats., and corresponds to charter activity between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005. Thank you for feedback regarding survey improvement and for a 100 percent response rate last year.

All districts are asked to complete and submit the survey electronically no later than September 30, 2005. If you have questions regarding the survey, you may contact Latoya Campbell at latoya.campbell@dpi.state.wi.us or Sharon Wendt at sharon.wendt@dpi.state.wi.us. Your timely completion of the survey is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

lc
Enclosure

Appendix C

Charter School Proposal Report

School District Name (District Number)

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

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 outside of the identified time frame. The following information is being collected in order for the department to comply with the Charter School Report required under Wis. Stats. 115.28(49).

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, 2004 and June 30, 2005 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 Campbell at 608-266-2819 or latoya.campbell@dpi.state.wi.us.

[View the 2002-2003 Legislative Report on Charter Schools](#)

1. District: District Name (District Number)
CESA:
2. Name of person completing form:
3. Title of person completing form:

4. From July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005 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, 2004 to June 30, 2005 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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