Texas Public Charter School Start-Up Grant (2011–2015) Evaluation: Final Report

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Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CC	Campus charter school
CSP	Charter School Program
EOC	End-of-course
ESEA	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
ESSA	The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016
ISD	Independent school district
NCLB	The No Child Left Behind Act
NSD	New school designated under an existing charter
OEC	Open-enrollment charter school
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
RFA	Request for Application
RQ	Research Question
SEA	State education agency
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
STAAR®	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness
TAPR	Texas Academic Performance Reports
TAKS	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TEC	Texas Education Code
UCS	University charter school

Executive Summary

In 2010, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) applied for and was awarded a five-year federal Charter School Program (CSP) Grant to support the planning, design, and initial implementation of new public charter schools authorized from the 2010–11 through the 2014–15 school years. Through this funding, TEA awarded Public Charter School Start-Up subgrants through a competitive process among four types of eligible charter schools that began in the 2011–12 school year. Throughout the grant period, TEA made subawards totaling around $25.5 million to 41 grantees across four cohorts. Grantees could use funds to meet the substantial costs of starting up a charter school, through the planning phase (up to 18 months) and initial implementation phases (up to two years), in categories that included payroll, professional and contracted services, supplies and materials, other operating costs, capital outlay, and indirect costs.

Evaluation of the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant

TEA contracted with ICF to conduct an evaluation of its Public Charter School Start-Up Grant program. This contract began in July 2011 and is now complete. Through this evaluation, ICF (1) examined how grantees budgeted for and used their grant funds; (2) gathered data to understand charter school planning and initial implementation; and (3) examined charter school performance, with a particular focus on the characteristics of high-performing charter school campuses and best practices in how grantees use grant funds.

This report is the second comprehensive report to be produced for the evaluation of the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant program, and it incorporates and builds on findings from the first comprehensive report, and includes analyses and data from grantees collectively across Cohorts I–IV. In addition to analyses of grant applications, budgets, and expenditures, this report includes findings from data collected through surveys administered to charter school campus teachers, administrators, and charter holder board members and from site visits to selected Cohort I and II charter schools and all Cohort III charter schools. This report addresses all five research questions, and findings are presented in this summary by each research question.

Key Findings

Research Question 1: In what specific ways do grantees use Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds?

Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee spending varied by charter type. Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools spread their grant funding over a wider range of products and services, while new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter school grantees were more likely to target their spending in a smaller number of areas. This result may be because new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter schools were more likely to receive more services (such as legal services or financial management software) from their charter holder organizations and authorizing districts and, therefore, did not have to purchase those services themselves.

Although small differences in spending also existed between Cohorts III and IV, these differences are largely explained by the relative breakdown of the two cohorts among grantees with different charter types.

No cohort-based patterns across the four cohorts of grantees were found in grantee spending by expenditure category, but Public Charter School Start-Up Grant spending by expenditure category was related to charter type. Nearly all grantees in all charter types spent grant funds on at least one product or service related to instructional programs and materials. Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to spend grant funds on school facilities and equipment than grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter or campus charter schools.[1] About the same percentage of grantees across each of the three charter types spent grant funds on staffing. Grantees operating campus charters were more likely than grantees operating open-enrollment charters and new schools designated under an existing charter to spend grant funds on professional development and on other services. Grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter were least likely of the three charter types to spend grant funds on professional development and on other services. This is likely due to new schools designated under an existing charter having access to professional development and other services through their larger organization.

Research Question 2: What best practices can be identified in how grantees use funds?

Six best practices were culled from the analysis of data from the nine high-performing grantees across Cohorts I and II, the four grantees that participated in site visits, and additional examples from Cohort III grantees (not high-performing). Although these best practices are based on preliminary findings from three cohorts, some implications can be drawn.

Potential Best Practice 1: Spending Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds to establish and support school culture and climate helped foster engagement and ownership. Having a clear vision from the outset of the school culture and climate that will be promoted and then devoting a proportion of funds to making this vision apparent for students, teachers, and others in the school community helped foster engagement and ownership.

Potential Best Practice 2: Building a diverse support network, specifically to assist with a variety of processes, including finance, business management, and compliance with TEA guidelines, helped with effective start-up implementation. Recognizing aspects of program development and implementation where support might be needed to build a more effective program is crucial. This strategy can make tasks seem less insurmountable, especially if guidance from experts or from those experienced in a particular area allows grantees to focus energy on other key areas that need attention.

Potential Best Practice 3: Demonstrating flexibility in planning and use of funds throughout the grant period helped grantees with implementation. An important consideration for this practice was maintaining the overall vision for the charter, while being open to changes. Successful grantees will need to exhibit some degree of flexibility in

[1] In this report, school facilities and equipment refers to expenditures related to classroom furniture, school maintenance (including salaries for custodial staff), and/or financial management software and training. In general, charters are not allowed to budget grant funds for facilities.

implementation and in how funds are used to strike a delicate balance between reinforcing a school vision established at the onset and being open to important adjustments that may emerge over time. Of equal importance is the implementation modification process; specifically, who is involved in decision making, and what data are used to prompt changes in implementation. Two aspects of the best practice of flexibility in use of funds were prevalent across grantees. First, budget revisions were carefully considered through deliberate processes such as needs assessments. Second, changes proposed through amendments did not alter, but instead enhanced, the overall vision.

Potential Best Practice 4: High-performing start-up grantees used evidence to support the use of funds to inform practice, particularly in making decisions about policies, activities, and purchases. Relying on evidence from assessments and other data sources can help inform grantees of what is working and where improvements are needed, thus helping to target instructional and management approaches. This best practice speaks again to a process of continuous improvement and refinement, based on feedback from stakeholders and student needs.

Potential Best Practice 5: Integrating technology with curriculum and instructional approaches helped grantees address gaps and reinforce their school models. This best practice goes further than simply having technology available. By closely and thoughtfully integrating technology with the overall instructional approach, gaps across subject areas can be addressed and the school model can be reinforced for teachers and students. Implementation of this best practice can have important benefits for low-income students, who may have less access to technology outside of the school environment. In addition, overall student engagement can be improved by appropriate technology integration.

Potential Best Practice 6: Using funds to create a collaborative relationship among stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and parents helped improve the school culture. Involving teachers and other stakeholders in decision making encourages a collective school culture and buy-in from staff. Throughout the best practices described, a recurring theme of fostering a collaborative environment is apparent. Being open to feedback from experts, teachers, and parents is important for improvement of processes and better outcomes. By involving stakeholders, a community of individuals invested in the charter school's success is established, and students benefit from an environment shaped to their learning needs.

3. Within high-performing charter schools, to what extent do student outcomes differ by charter school type, mission, or focus?

Student outcomes differed to some extent within high-performing charter schools based on charter type and mission. Overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among charter type and academic performance, among mission and academic performance, or among charter type and attendance.

- Student academic achievement outcomes differed to some extent within high-performing charter schools based on charter type, but overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among charter type and academic performance.

- Student academic achievement outcomes differed to some extent within high-performing charter schools based on charter mission, but overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among mission and academic performance.
- Attendance outcomes differed to some extent by charter type, but overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among charter type and attendance.

4. To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools?

Student and school outcomes differed between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools to some extent.

- Academic achievement outcomes differed between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools to some extent over time; however, results were inconclusive due to small sample sizes.
- Attendance and grade-level promotion outcomes differed between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools to some extent over time.

5. To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between charter schools approved and funded through the 2011–2015 competitive grant process and those approved for noncompetitive funding in 2010–11?

Student-level and school-level academic achievement differed to some extent between competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools.

- Academic achievement outcomes differed between students in competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools to some extent across grade levels, with students in competitively-funded charter schools performing lower than students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools.
- Students in competitively-funded charter schools exhibited rapid increases in academic achievement outcomes over time and students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools did not.
- Academic achievement outcomes of students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools differed significantly as time progressed from those of students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools, with high-performing, competitively-funded charter school eventually out performing noncompetitively-funded charter schools.
- Attendance outcomes of students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools and of students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools differed to some extent, but there were no consistent patterns over time.

Next Steps

While this evaluation is now complete, TEA has implemented a new CSP grant and will evaluate and provide findings and recommendations in the years to come.

Introduction

Charter schools have continued to grow in popularity over the past 20 years as promising school reform models and alternatives to the traditional public school. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 6,633 public charter schools operated across the U.S. during the 2014–15 school year—about 7% of all public schools in the U.S. As of 2017, 43 states and the District of Columbia had public charter school laws in effect (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2017).

All public charter schools share the goal of improving student achievement and being held accountable to this purpose. However, public charter schools, in comparison to traditional public schools, have greater flexibility in pursuing the goal of student achievement through various models and innovative strategies. For example, charter schools may have a foreign language immersion program; a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-focused curriculum; or they may alter the learning environment by having extended learning time or multi-age/multi-grade programs. Charter schools may also specifically target at-risk students or maintain parent involvement policies that are more specific than those at traditional public schools (Christensen & Lake, 2007; Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011).

Public Charter Schools in Texas

Texas passed its public charter school law in 1995, and the first charter schools opened in 1996. Since then, the number of charter schools operating in the state has grown. In the 2014–15 school year, there were 613 open-enrollment charter schools in operation in the state. Texas's charter school law allows for multiple school campuses to operate under one charter and additionally allows independent school districts (ISDs) to operate charter school campuses within their districts. Hence, in the 2014–15 school year, 679 charter school campuses were in operation. Overall, 5% of the public school population in Texas, or 262,103 students, attended charter school campuses in the 2014–15 school year.

According to the Texas Education Code (TEC § 12.001), the purposes of charter schools are to improve student learning, increase the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system, create professional opportunities that will attract new teachers to the public school system, establish a new form of accountability for public schools, and encourage different and innovative learning methods.

In 2010, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) applied for and was awarded a five-year federal Charter School Program (CSP) Grant to support the planning, design, and initial implementation of new public charter schools authorized from the 2010–11 to the 2014–15 school years. At the time of this award, the U.S. Secretary of Education was authorized to award CSP State Education Agency (SEA) Grants to SEAs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) Section 5201-5211 (20 U.S.C. 7221a). In 2002, the ESEA was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and was most recently reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Through this funding, TEA awarded Public Charter School Start-Up subgrants through a competitive process that began in the 2011–12 school year and ended in the 2015–16 school year, resulting in five cohorts of grantees, the first four of which

participated in this evaluation .[2] According to the Request for Application (RFA) for the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant, TEA intended to support the federal program by providing financial assistance to assist charter schools with planning, program design, and initial implementation; and expanding the number of high-quality charter schools available to students across the state.

Four types of charter schools were eligible for the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant: campus charter schools, open-enrollment charter schools, schools designated by the commissioner of education as new charter school campuses under an existing open-enrollment charter, and university or junior college charter schools. The following is a brief description of types of charter schools eligible to receive start-up grant funds.

1. **Campus charter schools:** These charter schools may be granted by the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of a school district. Grant applications for this type of charter must be signed by the district's superintendent or the appropriate designee. There is no legislative cap on the number of campus charter schools that can be authorized in a given year. Campus charter schools can be new campuses or conversions of an existing campus. In the 2014–15 school year there were 66 campus charter schools operating in Texas. Campus charter schools can be authorized through:
   - **TEC Chapter 12, Subchapter C, § 12.052,** when a petition is signed by the majority of parents and the majority of teachers at that school campus;
   - **TEC Chapter 12, Subchapter C, § 12.0521,** when a new district campus or a program is operated by an entity contracted by the district to provide educational services and is at a facility located within the boundaries of the district; or
   - **TEC Chapter 12, Subchapter C, § 12.0522,** when a school board grants a district charter to one or more campus that meets specific criteria (e.g., the campus(es) serves no more than 15% of the total district enrollment in the preceding year or any campus that received the lowest accountability performance rating).
2. **Open-enrollment charter schools (TEC Chapter 12, Subchapter D, § 12.101):** These charter schools are authorized by the commissioner of the SEA and operate as independent local education agencies (LEAs) with a charter holder governing board.[3] Applications for an open-enrollment charter school must be signed by the chief operating officer having legal authority to bind the organization in a contractual agreement. Legislation capped the number of open-enrollment charter schools at 225 through

[2] Prior to the 2011–12 school year, Public Charter School Start-Up Grants were awarded on a noncompetitive basis. TEA received CSP funds for the 2010–11 school year, but none of the grants were awarded through the competitive process; two were awarded through the noncompetitive process.
[3] Legislation enacted in 2013 (Senate Bill 2, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session) modified the process for authorizing Subchapter D open-enrollment charter schools. The new charter authorization process became effective on September 1, 2013, granting authorization authority to the commissioner of education. Prior to this legislation open-enrollment charter schools were authorized by the State Board of Education (SBOE). This change affected the authorization of the Generation 18 open-enrollment charter schools, which were awarded in the fall of 2013 and began operation in the 2014–15 school year. The open-enrollment charter schools included in the analysis presented in this report were authorized by the SBOE.

August 31, 2015; however, multiple campuses can be opened under an existing charter.[4] As of the 2014–15 school year, there were 195 open-enrollment charter schools operating 613 campuses within the state.

3. **New school designation under an existing open-enrollment charter (TAC § 100.1033(b)(12)):** Campuses that operate as new schools designated under an existing open-enrollment charter are also authorized by the commissioner of education and are considered open-enrollment charter school campuses.
4. **College, university, or junior college charter schools (TEC Chapter 12, Subchapter E, § 12.152):** This type of open-enrollment charter school may be granted to a public college, university, or junior college to operate on the campus or in the same county as the college, university, or junior college. Applications submitted by a college, university, or junior college charter school must be signed by the chief operating officer having legal authority to bind the organization in a contractual agreement. There is no legislative cap on the number of these charter schools that can be authorized. As of the 2014–15 school year, 19 of the 613 open-enrollment campuses were operated by a college or university.

In order to receive grant funds, applicants had to demonstrate that they met both statutory (federal and state) and TEA programmatic requirements for eligibility as outlined in the RFA for each annual iteration of the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant.[5]

Through the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant competitive process, TEA made about $25.5 million available for funding the start-up of 41 new charter schools across the four cohorts of subgrantees. Table 1 shows the number of grant awards and total funding for each cohort.

[4] Legislation enacted in 2013 (Senate Bill 2, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session) gradually increases the authorization cap for Subchapter D open-enrollment charter schools over time each fiscal year through September 1, 2019, when the cap will be 305 charter schools. This change became effective on September 1, 2013, and was in effect for Generation 19 open-enrollment charter schools, which were awarded in the fall of 2014.

[5] 2014–15 Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Competitive RFA, Part 2: Program Guidelines, pages 10–13.

Table 1. Subgrant Awards Made by the Texas Education Agency through the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant

Cohort	Number of Awards	Total Amount Awarded	Amount Per Grant Award (or Range)
Cohort I (2011–2012)	11	$5,500,000	$500,000
Cohort II (2012–2014)[a,b]	17	$9,900,000	$162,500 to $600,000
Cohort III (2013–2015)[c]	5	$3,789,983	$589,983 to $800,000
Cohort IV (2014–2015)	8	$6,299,825	$750,000 to $800,000
Total	**41**	**$25,489,808**	**$162,500 to $800,000**

Source. Grantee Applications, Cohorts I–IV.

Notes.

[a]An additional grantee, Victory Prep, was awarded start-up funds during the same time as Cohort II. However, because Victory Prep was already serving students and because its grant period (which ended December 31, 2012) was different from that of other Cohort II grantees, it was not included in the evaluation.

[b]Three other schools were awarded funding at the same time as Cohort II but did not open in the 2012–13 school year. Therefore, two of these schools (Elite Academy and Champions Academy) were not included in the analyses, while one (Global Learning Village) was included as a Cohort III to align its opening with the Cohort III timeline.

[c]One other school (Great Hearts Academy) was awarded funding at the same time as Cohort III and would have been a Cohort III charter, but they postponed opening in the 2013–14 school year.

Grantees may use funds to meet the substantial costs of starting up a charter school, through the planning and initial implementation phases. Per the provisions set forth in Title V, Part B of NCLB, TEA awarded all subgrants to grantees for a period of not more than three years, and each grantee could not use more than 18 months for planning and program design and could not use more than two years for the initial implementation of a charter school.

Description of Grantees

Table 2 lists the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant program grantees included in the evaluation, along with their charter holder organizations and charter authorization types by grantee cohort. Across Cohorts I–IV, grantees started up 38 new charter schools in Texas, including 21 open-enrollment charter schools, 9 new schools designated under an existing open-enrollment charter, 6 campus charter schools, and 2 university charter schools.

Table 2. Grantees, Charter Holder Organizations, and Charter Authorization Types

Grantee and Charter Holder Organization	Charter Authorization Type
Cohort I Grantees (n=11)	
Arrow Academy Leadership Education Foundation	Open-enrollment Charter School
Compass Academy Compass Academy	Open-enrollment Charter School
Highland Park Critical Thinking Campus San Antonio Independent School District	Campus Charter School
Infinity Preparatory Middle School Uplift Education	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Leadership Prep School Leadership Prep School	Open-enrollment Charter School

Grantee and Charter Holder Organization	Charter Authorization Type
Newman International Academy of Arlington Newman International Academy	Open-enrollment Charter School
Pinnacle Preparatory Academy Uplift Education	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Premier Learning Academy Premier Learning Academy, Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School
Rhodes Technology and Media Charter School San Antonio Independent School District	Campus Charter School
Travis Early College High School San Antonio ISD	Campus Charter School
William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity (WALIPP) WALIPP	Open-enrollment Charter School
Cohort II Grantees (n=14)	
Austin Achieve Austin Achieve Public Schools, Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy Fallbrook Community Development Center	Open-enrollment Charter School
Founders Classical Academy Texas College Preparatory Academies	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Houston Gateway Academy, Elite Campus Houston Gateway Academy, Inc.	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Innovation Academy, University of Texas at Tyler The University of Texas System	University Charter School
KIPP Coastal Village Middle Galveston Independent School District	Campus Charter School
Luna Preparatory Secondary Uplift Education	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Legacy Preparatory Academy Legacy Preparatory Academy	Open-enrollment Charter School
The Media Arts Academy Texas College Preparatory Academies	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Prime Prep Academy Uplift Fort Worth CDC	Open-enrollment Charter School
The REAL Learning Academy Wayside Schools	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
UME Preparatory Academy UMEP, Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School
Uplift Meridian Preparatory Uplift Education	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Uplift Mighty Preparatory Uplift Education	New School Designation Under an Existing Open-enrollment Charter
Cohort III Grantees (n=5)	
Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy Ben Yehuda Academy	Open-enrollment Charter School
Global Learning Village Hope Academy Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School

Grantee and Charter Holder Organization	Charter Authorization Type
Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute Grand Prairie Independent School District	Campus Charter School
Pro-Vision Middle and The Pro-Vision Academy Pro-Vision Educational Services, Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School
Village Tech School Village Tech Schools	Open-enrollment Charter School
Cohort IV Grantees (n=8)	
BASIS San Antonio BTX Schools, Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School
Carpe Diem San Antonio Learning Schools of Texas	Open-enrollment Charter School
CORE Academy Generations of Life Foundation	Open-enrollment Charter School
El Paso Leadership Academy El Paso Leadership Academy	Open-enrollment Charter School
Great Hearts Academy San Antonio Great Hearts America - Texas	Open-enrollment Charter School
Magnolia Montessori for All Montessori for All, Inc.	Open-enrollment Charter School
Travis Heights Elementary Austin ISD	Campus Charter School
UTPB STEM Academy UT at Permian Basin	University Charter School

Source. Grantee Applications, Cohorts I–IV.

Appendix A, Table A1 includes a summary of all Cohorts I–IV grantees that describes them in terms of the geographic area served, charter type, and projected enrollment and staffing. The geographic service areas targeted by grantees in Cohorts I–IV were varied. Seven of the top ten largest school districts in Texas (based on student enrollment) are represented in this list, including Aldine ISD, Austin ISD, Dallas ISD, Fort Worth ISD, Houston ISD, as well as Northside ISD and North East ISD (both in San Antonio). In addition, some grantees were located in less populated places, such as Odessa.

Based on the analysis of data from grant applications, the targeted enrollment for Year 1 across all Cohort I–IV grantees ranged from 54 to 1,500 students per grantee, with a mean of 458 students and a combined projected enrollment of 17,393 students. Across all Cohorts I–IV, 33 of 38 grantees (87%) planned to serve students who would have otherwise attended traditional schools "in need of improvement."[6] The projected number of staff members for Year 1 across all Cohorts I–IV ranged from 8 to 80 staff members per school, with a mean of 29 staff members and a total of 1,118 staff members.

[6] Schools identified as "in need of improvement" are those that are identified by TEA as being a Priority or Focus school. Please see TEA's website for more information on Priority and Focus schools: http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Monitoring_and_Interventions/School_Improvement_and_Support/Priority,_Focus,_and_Reward_Schools/.

Evaluation Approach and Data Sources

Although much research has been conducted on the effectiveness of charter schools, findings tend to be mixed and many questions still remain, such as *what practices are related to the best outcomes and under what circumstances?* TEA contracted with ICF to conduct an evaluation of its Public Charter School Start-Up Grant program. The evaluation began in July 2011 and is now complete. Through this evaluation, ICF examined how grantees budget for and use their grant funds; gathered data from charter holder boards, administrators, and teachers to understand charter school planning and initial implementation; and examined charter school performance, with a particular focus on the characteristics of high-performing charter school campuses and best practices in how grantees use CSP funds.

The evaluation of the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant was guided by five research questions:

1. In what specific ways do grantees use Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds?
2. What best practices can be identified in how grantees use funds?
3. Within high-performing charter schools, to what extent do student outcomes differ by charter school type, mission, or focus?
4. To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools?
5. To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between charter schools approved and funded through the 2011–2015 competitive grant process and those approved for noncompetitive funding in 2010–11?

Evaluation Approach for the Report

The current report is the second comprehensive report to be produced for this evaluation. It incorporates and builds on the first comprehensive report and includes analyses and data from grantees collectively across Cohorts I–IV. This report addresses all five research questions. A summary of the evaluation approach and data sources is included here, and more details are provided in Appendix B.

Data Sources

Analyses of qualitative and quantitative data were conducted, using eight sources of data: Public Charter School Start-Up grantee applications; grant budgets; grant expenditure data (Expenditure Data); grantees' application amendments; the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey (Expenditure Survey); surveys of grantee administrators, teachers, and charter holder board members; interviews and focus groups conducted during site visits; and TEA extant data. The following is a more detailed description of each data source and the types of analyses conducted.

Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Applications. An analysis of Cohort I–IV grantees' applications was conducted to provide descriptive information about projected student

enrollment and staffing, as well as an estimate of the number of at-risk students who would attend.

Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Budgets. Cohort I–IV grantees' proposed start-up grant budgets were extracted from their grant applications. Quantitative analyses of these data were conducted to describe how grantees intended to use their planning and implementation funds and to identify any patterns across charter types.

Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data (Expenditure Data). Reimbursement requests for the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant expenditures were tracked in TEA's grantee expenditure database for Cohort I–IV grantees. Analyses were conducted on expenditures during the grant period of performance for each cohort, examining how grantees spent grant funds to carry out planning and implementation activities during these time periods (Research Question 1).

Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Application Amendments. In addition to grant expenditure data, amendments to Cohort I–IV grantees' applications requesting alterations to grant funding requests were reviewed to inform both Research Questions 1 and 2. These data helped discern how grantees planned for and used start-up grant funds.

Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey (Expenditure Survey). This instrument was developed by ICF and administered in the spring one time to each grantee across Cohorts I–IV. The purpose was to gain a more detailed understanding of the specific products and services on which schools spent funds, beyond the broader categories included in the data retrieved from TEA's grantee expenditure database (Research Question 1).

Surveys of Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Administrators, Teachers, and Charter Holder Board Members. Responses to selected items from surveys administered in the spring one time to each grantee across Cohorts I–IV were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the decision-making processes of grantees. Surveys were administered online and included a wide range of questions about the school facility, instructional approach and curriculum, technology, professional development, school operations, school governance and leadership, and challenges to starting a charter school.

Site Visit Interviews and Focus Groups. Site visits to four grantee charter school campuses from Cohorts I and II that demonstrated early evidence of success with student outcomes took place in May 2014, and to all five charter school campuses from Cohort III in May 2015. Each of the site visits included interviews with school administrators and charter holder board members as well as focus groups with teachers. Data were analyzed using codes and subcodes related to site visit goals and areas of interest, and findings were extracted to help identify potential best practices. Both Research Questions 1 and 2 were addressed through analysis of data from site visits.

TEA Extant Data. ICF used a variety of student-level and school-level TEA extant data to answer Research Questions 3, 4 and 5, including student achievement on State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) exams, as well as grade-level retention data, attendance data, and demographic data from Public Education Information Management

System (PEIMS). Chapters 3, 4, and 5 include more specifics about TEA extant data used in each analysis.

Reporting Structure

For this evaluation, ICF has prepared two comprehensive reports (an interim report and this final report), as well as an interim brief (unpublished) to collectively address the five research questions. The interim brief, submitted to TEA in December 2011, began to address Research Question 1 (RQ1). It described the characteristics of the 2011–2012 Public Charter School Start-Up grantees, or Cohort I grantees, who were the first to receive Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds under the competitive process, and provided a preliminary analysis on how grantees allocated their grant funds. Most of the findings were based on information provided in their grant applications, from their school websites, and from the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant expenditure data from TEA.

The interim report (ICF, 2017) was the first comprehensive report to be produced for this evaluation. It incorporated and built on findings from the first interim brief and included analyses and data from both Cohort I grantees and Cohort II grantees (recipients of 2012–2014 Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds through a competitive process). In addition to analyses of grant applications, budgets, and expenditures, this report presented findings from data collected through surveys administered to charter school campus teachers, administrators, and charter holder board members and from site visits to selected Cohort I and Cohort II schools. That interim report also addressed RQ1 and began to address Research Question 2 (RQ2).

Structure of the Report

This final evaluation report is divided into seven chapters, in which ICF built on the initial findings presented in the first comprehensive report and analyzed data from grantee charter schools in Cohorts I–IV to answer RQ1 and RQ2, from Cohorts I–II to answer Research Question 3 (RQ3) and Research Question 4 (RQ4), and from Cohorts I–III to answer Research Question 5 (RQ5) using the data sources described above; where appropriate, comparisons are made between cohorts as well as charter school types:

- The **Introduction** provides basic insight into the grant program, each cohort of grantees, and the evaluation.
- **Chapter 1** addresses RQ1, describing how grantees have used Public Charter School Start-Up funds to implement their programs. Data sources included the Expenditure Data and the Expenditure Survey. Grant amendments were also reviewed to look at changes in how grantees allocated their funds.
- **Chapter 2** addresses RQ2, introducing a potential set of best practices in how grantees use funds. Data sources included site visit interviews and focus groups, supplemented by data from surveys, the Expenditure Data, the Expenditure Survey, and budget amendments.
- **Chapters 3, 4, 5** address RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5, respectively, using TEA extant data and conducting various analyses aligned with each RQ.
- **Chapter 6** summarizes key findings and conclusions.

Also included with this report are six appendices:

- **Appendix A** includes a summary table of Cohort I–IV grantees that describes them in terms of the geographic area served, charter type, and projected enrollment and staffing.
- **Appendix B** provides details on the evaluation methodology, including specifics on analysis of charter school budgets and expenditures as well as survey administration, site visit execution, and analysis of the resulting data.
- **Appendix C** provides individual grantee profiles (*dashboards*) for Cohort I–IV grantees. Each dashboard includes basic information about the grantees (e.g., charter type, charter holder organization, summary of the mission, student enrollment, grant expenditures), as well as student achievement data in mathematics and reading for the first two school years the charter school campus served students.
- **Appendix D** includes additional tables of results for analyses presented in Chapter 3.
- **Appendix E** includes technical considerations for Propensity Score Matching presented in Chapter 4.
- **Appendix F** includes additional tables of results for analyses presented in Chapter 5.

The findings presented in this report build on initial analyses conducted for the project, which includes a complete tracking of expenditures, surveys, site visits, and student performance assessments over time.

Chapter 1: Grantee Use of Charter School Funds

This chapter provides the ICF evaluation team's findings related to Research Question 1 of this evaluation: "In what specific ways do grantees use Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds?" This chapter summarizes products and services purchased by grantees using grant funds. Specifically, the evaluation team summarizes findings from analyses using quantitative data on how grantees have used their grant funds to plan and implement their educational programs. The evaluation team then presents findings from analyses of how grantees have allocated grant funds to different types of expenditures to meet their goals, looking at trends across cohorts and charter types. However, these trends or patterns are primarily descriptive in nature and provide an overview of how grantees spent or targeted their grant funds; this chapter does not evaluate the effectiveness of that spending. In Chapter 2 of this report, the evaluation team reports the results in this chapter in conjunction with qualitative data to address Research Question 2, which seeks to identify potential best practices in the use of grant funds.

Data Sources

Building on findings from the first comprehensive report on grantees in Cohorts I and II, the analyses in this chapter are based on two sources of data from Cohort III and Cohort IV grantees – expenditure data and the expenditure survey.

Expenditure Data

TEA provided ICF with Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data (Expenditure Data) from five Cohort III grantees (implementation period of July 1, 2013 to July 31, 2015):

- Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy
- Pro-Vision Academy + Pro-Vision Middle
- Global Learning Village
- Grand Prairie Collegiate Academy Charter
- Village Tech Schools/Village Tech

TEA also provided the same data from eight Cohort IV grantees (implementation period of May 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015):

- BASIS San Antonio
- Carpe Diem San Antonio
- CORE Academy
- El Paso Leadership Academy
- Great Hearts Academy San Antonio
- Magnolia Montessori for All
- Travis Heights Elementary
- UTPB STEM Academy

Reimbursement requests for the Public Charter School Start-Up grant expenditures are tracked in TEA's grantee expenditure database. These data were used to examine how grantees spent Public Charter School Start-Up grant funds to conduct start-up planning and initial implementation activities during those time periods. The descriptive statistics for Expenditure

Data for each cohort from the time of their grant award to the last day of their award are included in this section.

Expenditure Survey

This was a one-time administration of the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey (Expenditure Survey) to Texas Charter School Start-Up grantees in Cohorts III and IV, as was done with Cohorts I and II. The purpose of the Expenditure Survey was to gain a more detailed understanding of the specific products and services on which charter school campuses spent funds. The survey was designed by ICF as an Excel form and emailed to the administrator at each charter school campus. The administrator was asked to forward the survey to the appropriate staff person (e.g., business manager) for completion.

Between May 12, 2014 and July 21, 2014, ICF conducted the Expenditure Survey with five Texas Charter School Start-Up grantees in Cohort III (implementation period of 7/1/13 to 7/31/15). All five grantees completed the Expenditure Survey for a 100% response rate.

Between May 5, 2015 and June 16, 2015, ICF conducted the Expenditure Survey with eight Texas Charter School Start-Up grantees in Cohort IV (implementation period of 5/1/14 to 7/31/15). The overall response rate from the Cohort IV grantees was 87.5%. (A response was received from seven of the eight Cohort IV grantees; BASIS San Antonio did not respond.)

Profile of Grant Expenditures During the Grant Periods

Answering RQ1 requires an understanding of how grantees decided to allocate their funds, both between different grant periods and among different expenditure categories. To analyze expenditures in a comprehensive way, the evaluation team relied on data from TEA's grantee expenditure database after drawdowns from all grantees had been completed.

Summary of Cohorts I and II

On average, grantees across Cohorts I and II spent 97% of the start-up grant funds that they were awarded. This percentage was similar between Cohort I (96%) and Cohort II (98%) grantees. Four grantees spent less than 95% of their total grant funds. Of these, three were Cohort I campus charter schools and one was a new school designated under an existing charter in Cohort II.

Cohorts III and IV

Table 1.1 shows that, on average, grantees across Cohorts III and IV spent 96% of the start-up grant funds that they were awarded, which was similar to Cohorts I and II. This percentage was similar between Cohort III (98%) and Cohort IV (96%) grantees. Three grantees spent less than 100% of their total grant funds. Of these, one was a Cohort III open-enrollment charter school, one was a Cohort III campus charter school, and one was a campus charter school in Cohort IV.

Table 1.1. Percentage of Grant Funds Spent by Cohort III and Cohort IV Public Charter School Start-Up Grantees

Charter School Campus Name	Charter Type	Percentage of Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds Spent
All Schools in Cohort III and Cohort IV Average (n=13)		**96%**
Cohort III (n=5) Average		**98%**
Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy	OEC	96%
Pro-Vision Academy + Pro-Vision Middle	OEC	100%
Global Learning Village	NSD	100%
Grand Prairie Collegiate Academy Charter	CC	93%
Village Tech Schools/Village Tech	OEC	100%
Cohort IV (n=8) Average		**96%**
BASIS San Antonio	OEC	100%
Carpe Diem San Antonio	OEC	100%
CORE Academy	OEC	100%
El Paso Leadership Academy	OEC	100%
Great Hearts Academy San Antonio	OEC	100%
Magnolia Montessori for All	OEC	100%
Travis Heights Elementary	CC	66%
UTPB STEM Academy	UCS	100%

Source. Texas Education Agency, Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data, 2015.
Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; CC= campus charter school; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; UCS = university charter school.

Breakdown of Spending Between Planning and Implementation

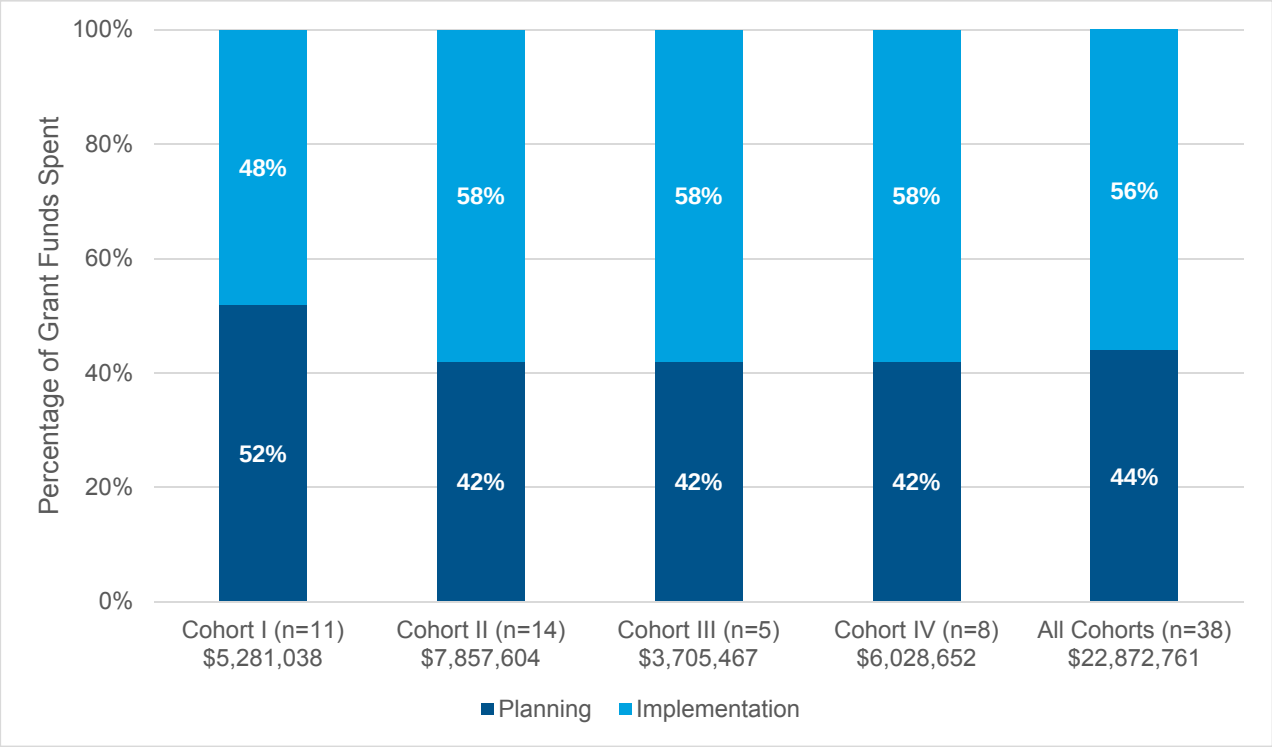
Grantees in Cohorts I–IV were all required to categorize all expenditures between (1) program planning and design (*planning*); and (2) initial program implementation (*implementation*).[7] Planning costs refer to expenses that were necessary for planning activities, and implementation costs refer to any expenses that were tied to implementation activities. According to the RFA, grantees could use planning funds for "not more than 18 months" and implementation funds for "not more than 2 years."

Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of grantees' total grant funds spent for planning and for implementation across Cohorts I–IV. Overall, the distribution of funds between planning and implementation was relatively even across Cohorts I–IV, with grantees spending a larger percentage of their money in the implementation phase (56%) than in the planning phase (44%). This breakdown was different only for Cohort I grantees, who spent a larger percentage of their grant funds on project planning (52%) than implementation (48%), while grantees in Cohorts II, III, and IV spent the same percentage of money on planning (42%) and implementation (58%). However, the variation between Cohort I and the other three cohorts

[7] The planning and implementation expenditure data for these analyses were based on when grantees spent funding. However, grantees were allowed, for example to spend grant funding on planning activities during the implementation phase, as long as it was during the initial 18 months of the grant funding period.

implies that these decisions were driven by grantee-specific needs rather than by a cohort-wide pattern. For example, in Cohort I, three grantees operating campus charter schools spent 100% of their funds on implementation, while three other grantees in Cohort I (two new schools designated under an existing charter and one open-enrollment charter school) spent less than 10% on implementation.

Figure 1.1. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditures Between Planning and Implementation by Cohort



Source. Texas Education Agency, Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data, 2012, 2014, and 2015.

There were also no apparent patterns in this respect among grantees by charter school type across the four grantee cohorts; within each charter type, the breakdown between planning and implementation varied widely.

Breakdown of Spending by Expenditure Category

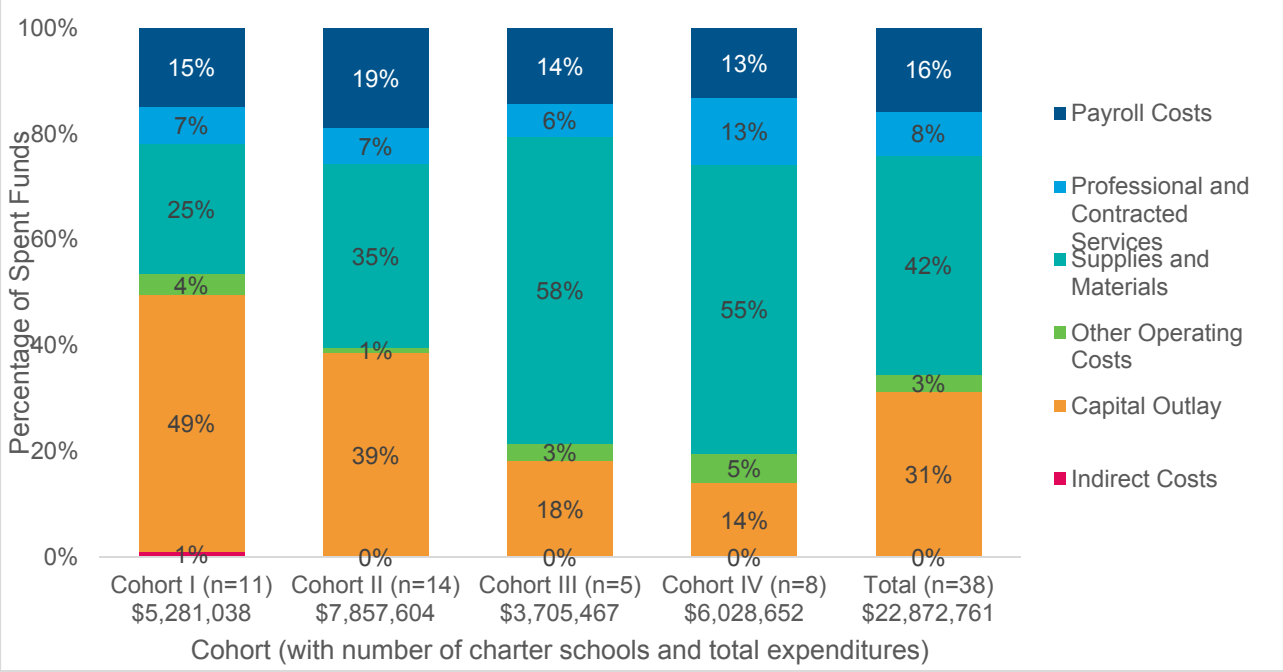
The terms of their grants required that Cohorts I–IV grantees allocate expenditures among five categories (1) Payroll; (2) Professional and contract services (e.g., technology consulting and support, cleaning and landscaping, staff development); (3) Supplies and materials (e.g., textbooks, reading materials, testing materials); (4) Other operating costs (e.g., expenses for travel, conferences, insurance, miscellaneous items); and (5) Capital outlay items (e.g., library books, furniture, and technology hardware, software). Only Cohort I grantees were allowed to allocate funds for Indirect Costs.

Figure 1.12 shows the breakdown of Public Charter School Start-Up funds spent by grantees by expenditure category. As a whole, grantees in Cohorts I–IV spent the largest percentage of grant funds (42%) on supplies and materials. Approximately one-third of funds (30%) was spent

on capital outlay, while 16% was spent on payroll costs. Smaller amounts were spent on professional and contracted services (8%) and other operating costs (3%). Because only Cohort I grantees were allowed to spend funds on indirect costs, this accounted for less than 1% of grant expenditures.

On average, Cohort I and Cohort II grantees spent a larger percentage of their grant funds on capital outlay items compared to grantees in Cohorts III and IV (49% and 39% compared to 18% and 14%) and a smaller percentage on supplies and materials (25% and 35% compared to 58% and 55%).

Figure 1.1. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditures by Expense Category, Overall and by Cohort



Source. Texas Education Agency, Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data, 2012, 2014, and 2015.
Note. Only Cohort I grantees were given the option to allocate funds to indirect costs. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Figure 1.2 shows the distribution of Public Charter School Start-Up funds spent across expenditure categories by grantee charter type.[8] There are notable differences in the way grantees with different charter types have spent their grant funds. Campus charter school grantees spent nearly half of their funds (46%) on capital outlay items. In addition, campus charter grantees spent less of their grant funds on payroll costs, as well as on supplies and materials, than did other charter types.

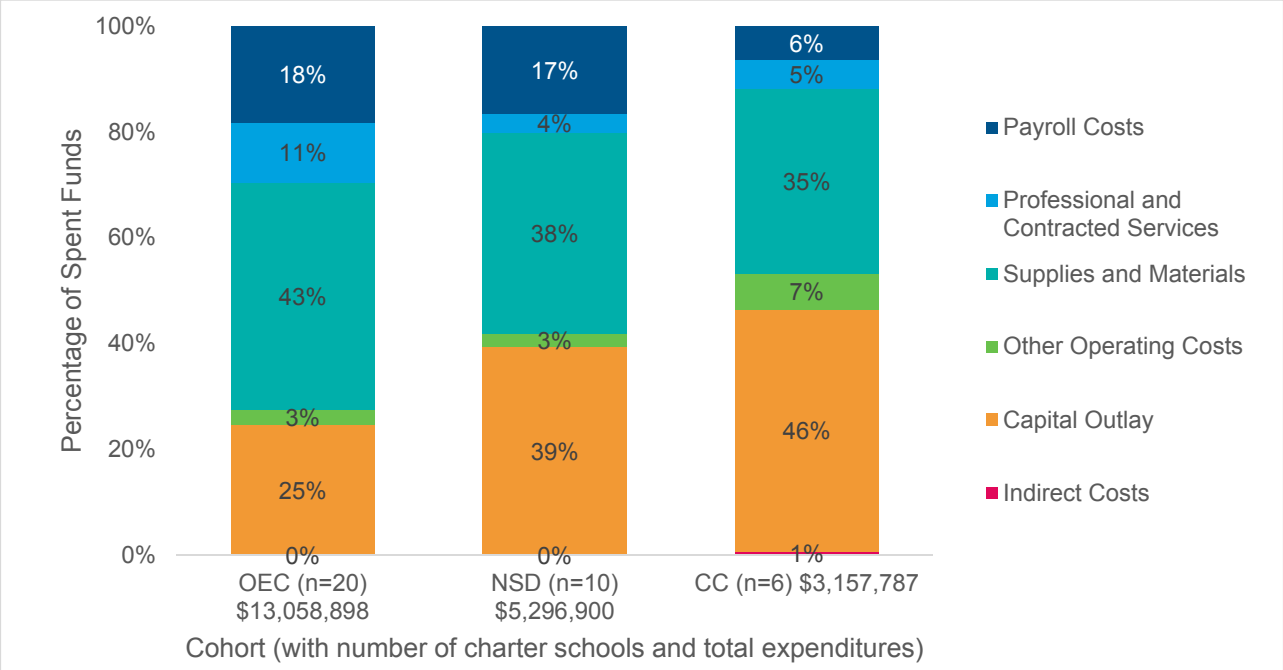
Compared to other charter types, grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to spend grant funds more uniformly across categories implying that they needed to

[8] The two university charter school grantees were not included in this analysis because it is inadvisable to attempt to discern any patterns unique to this charter type based on the expenditure data from two grantees alone.

expend funds to meet a greater range of needs. They also spent the highest percentage of grant funds for supplies and materials (43%) and the lowest percentage on capital outlay (25%). Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter spent about the same percentage of grant funds on payroll costs. Grantees operating campus charters spent the largest percentage on capital outlay.

This pattern may be due to the possibility that grantees with open-enrollment charter schools may have operated more independently than grantees with new schools designated under an existing charter or grantees operating campus charter schools and may not have received products and services from their charter holders or authorizing districts. As a result, open-enrollment charter schools would likely have had to use their start-up grant funds more broadly. New schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter schools, on the other hand, may have received products and services from authorizing organizations, and, as a result, could have used grant funds in more targeted ways. This pattern is explored in more detail in the following section of this report.

Figure 1.2. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Categories by Charter Type (Cohorts I–IV Combined)



Source. Texas Education Agency, Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data, 2012, 2014, and 2015.
Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter schools; NSD = new schools designated under an existing charter; CC = campus charter schools. Figure 1.2 includes only charter types for which the sample size of grantees was 6 or greater. For this reason, it does not include one Cohort II grantee that received a university charter. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Products and Services Purchased by Public Charter School Start-Up Grantees

Although the data from TEA's grantee expenditure database provide a comprehensive picture of how grantees allocated their Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds, one limitation of those data is that the expense categories used in the database were very broad. Therefore, ICF created the Expenditure Survey to gather more granular data from grantees about what products and services they purchased using grant funds. It is important to note that these data have one key weakness: because they are based on responses to a survey that was administered before the grant period had ended they reflect expenditures only up to that point. However, data from the Expenditure Survey still provide a detailed profile of the products and services that grantees opted to purchase with Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 include information on products and services within general expenditure categories where grantees reported spending funds. The descriptive statistics for the grantees' responses for each of the Expenditure Survey questions are included in this section.

The Expenditure Survey was administered to each cohort of grantees in spring one time during their respective grant periods. Two questions were asked in the survey. The first question provided grantees with a list of products and services, and asked whether grantees had purchased each item through any funding source since they received grant funds. These products and services were grouped into five categories. The first two columns in **Error! Reference source not found.**2 show the percentage of grantees by Cohorts III and IV that reported spending funds on any of the products and services in each of the five expenditure categories. Findings are discussed for Cohorts III and IV grantees in connection with findings for Cohorts I and II as presented in the first comprehensive report.

All grantees in Cohorts III and IV indicated that they spent some funds on at least one product or service related to professional development and staffing. All of the Cohort III grantees also spent money on instructional programs and materials and school facilities and equipment, while 86% of Cohort IV grantees did so. This same approach was previously used with grantees in Cohorts I and II, and all of those grantees indicated that they spent some funds on at least one product or service related to instructional programs and materials and staffing.

The second question on the Expenditure Survey provided the same list of products and services, and asked grantees to identify which they had purchased using Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds. The last two columns of **Error! Reference source not found.**2 show ata from this question for both Cohorts III and IV. It shows that all of the Cohort III grantees spent Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds on at least one product or service related to instructional programs or materials, professional development, and staffing. In addition, most Cohort III and Cohort IV grantees also spent start-up grant funds on at least one product or service related to all categories except other services, where less than half of Cohort IV grantees spent grant funds. Cohort III grantees were more likely to spend money in all categories than Cohort IV grantees. It is possible that Cohort IV grantees simply had different needs than Cohort III grantees, or that Cohort IV grantees learned that it was better to spend start-up grant funds on fewer categories. Except for lower spending on professional development, these findings were similar for Cohort I and Cohort II grantees presented in the first comprehensive evaluation report.

Table 1.2. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantees' Planning and Implementation Expenditures by Category (Cohorts III and IV)

Expenditure Category	Percentage of Grantees Reporting Having Spent Any Funds		Percentage of Grantees Reporting Having Spent Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds	
	Cohort III (n=5)	Cohort IV (n=7)	Cohort III (n=5)	Cohort IV (n=7)
School Facilities and Equipment	100%	86%	80%	71%
Instructional Programs and Materials	100%	86%	100%	86%
Staffing	100%	100%	100%	86%
Professional Development	100%	100%	100%	86%
Other Services (e.g., Legal Services, Outreach)	80%	57%	60%	43%

Source. Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey, 2014 and 2015.
Note. 1 of the 8 Cohort IV grantees did not return the Expenditure Survey.

A more detailed accounting of what percentage of grantees spent grant funds on each individual product or service is presented in Table 1.3. Almost all grantees in both Cohorts III and IV spent grant funds on classroom technology hardware (92%) and instructional software (92%). Percentages varied between the grantees in Cohorts III and IV in some areas; for example, the proportion of Cohort III grantees that spent grant funds on salaries and incentives for principals was higher than that of Cohort IV grantees (100% vs. 71%), while Cohort IV grantees spent more grant funds than Cohort III grantees on salaries for substitute teachers (14% vs. 0%). However, it is difficult to know to what extent cohort membership was responsible for these differences, because the composition of the two cohorts was different in terms of the charter types of the grantees. Similar differences were observed between Cohorts I and II grantees as presented in the first comprehensive evaluation report.

Table 1.3. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantees' Use of Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds for Planning and Implementation, by Product or Service (Cohorts III and IV)

Expenditure Category	Product or Service	Percentage of Grantees Reporting Having Spent Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds		
		Cohort III (n=5)	Cohort IV (n=7)	All (n=12)
School Facilities and Equipment	Classroom Furniture	80%	71%	75%
School Facilities and Equipment	Financial Management Software and Training	60%	43%	50%
School Facilities and Equipment	School Maintenance (including salaries for custodial staff)	0%	0%	0%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Assessments	60%	43%	50%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Classroom Technology Hardware	100%	86%	92%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Core Curriculum	80%	71%	75%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Curriculum Development	60%	57%	58%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Instructional Software	100%	86%	92%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Library/Media Expenditures	40%	29%	34%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Summer School	20%	29%	25%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Supplemental Materials	80%	71%	75%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Textbooks and Other Instructional Supplies	80%	71%	75%
Staffing	Employee Benefits	40%	57%	50%
Staffing	Professional Staff Extra-Duty Pay	60%	29%	42%
Staffing	Salaries and Incentives for Principals	100%	71%	83%
Staffing	Salaries for Project Management Staff (e.g., project director)	60%	43%	50%
Staffing	Salaries for Substitute Teachers		14%	8%
Staffing	Salaries for Support Staff (e.g., administrative assistant)	80%	57%	67%
Professional Development	Contracted Professional Development Services (e.g., speakers)	80%	71%	75%
Professional Development	Registration Fees for Staff to Attend Conferences/ Workshops	100%	71%	83%
Professional Development	Travel Reimbursement for Staff to Attend Professional Development	80%	71%	75%
Professional Development	Tuition Costs for Courses Directly Related to the Grant Program	0%	0%	0%
Other Services (e.g., Legal Services)	Advertisement (as part of outreach)	20%	43%	33%
Other Services (e.g., Legal Services)	Community Outreach Efforts	20%	29%	25%
Other Services (e.g., Legal Services)	Specific Legal Services Related to Charter School Start-Up	40%	0%	17%
Other Services (e.g., Legal Services)	Transporting Students to or from Grant Activities	40%	0%	17%

Source. Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey, 2014 and 2015.
Note. 1 of the 8 Cohort IV grantees did not return the Expenditure Survey.

To assess whether grantees in Cohorts I–IV with different charter types might spend funds in systematically different ways, ICF repeated its analysis of the Expenditure Survey data, using each charter type as a separate group. Combining all cohorts allowed for a larger number of grantees in each of the three charter type groups. As shown in Table 1.4, nearly all grantees in all charter types spent grant funds on at least one product or service related to instructional programs and materials.[9] Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to spend grant funds on school facilities and equipment than grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter or campus charter schools. About the same percentage of grantees across each of the three charter types (between 83% and 90%) spent grant funds on staffing. Grantees operating campus charters were more likely than grantees operating open-enrollment charters and new schools designated under an existing charter to spend grant funds on professional development and on other services. Grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter were least likely of the three charter types to spend grant funds on professional development and on other services. This is likely due to new schools designated under an existing charter having access to professional development and other services through their larger organization.

Table 1.4. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditures by Category and Charter Type (Cohorts I–IV)

Expenditure Category	Percentage of Grantees Reporting Having Spent Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds		
	OEC[a] (n=19)	NSD (n=10)	CC (n=6)
School Facilities and Equipment	95%	70%	67%
Instructional Programs and Materials	95%	100%	100%
Staffing	89%	90%	83%
Professional Development	68%	30%	83%
Other Services (e.g., Legal Services, Outreach)	42%	30%	67%

Source. Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.
Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; CC = campus charter.
[a]One OEC from Cohort IV did not respond to the Expenditure Survey.

Table 1.5 breaks down the expenditure data further by charter type, presenting the percentage of grantees that spent grant funds on each individual product or service. As one would expect, this analysis mirrors the same patterns that were apparent in Table 1.4. For example, in terms of school facilities and equipment, at least two-thirds of grantees operating schools under all three types of charters spend funds on classroom furniture.

With regard to instructional programs and materials, grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to spend grant funds on core curriculum and instructional software

[9] Note that the two university charter school grantees were removed from the analyses in Figure 1.3, Table 1.4, and Table 1.5 to mask the identification of the survey data from any individual school.

than the grantees operating the other two charter types. Grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter mostly spent grant funds on classroom technology hardware, supplemental materials, and textbooks other instructional supplies. A larger percentage of grantees operating campus charter schools spent grant funds on supplemental materials and summer school than grantees operating the other two charter types.

In terms of staffing, grantees operating open-enrollment charters and new schools designated under an existing charter were more likely to pay salaries for principal, project management staff, and support staff, as well as employee benefits, while campus charters were more likely to pay for substitute teachers and extra-duty pay for professional staff. This is likely because school districts authorize and oversee campus charters and may provide funds for salaries and benefits expenses themselves.

Grantees operating campus charters and grantees operating open-enrollment charters were more likely to spend funds on contracted professional development and conferences than new schools designated under an existing charter, on which only a small percentage spent funds on these services.

To take the analysis one step further, ICF calculated the average number of products or services on which grantees of each type reported spending grant funds. Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools reported spending grant funds on an average of 12.7 products and services listed on the Expenditure Survey, compared to 9.6 for grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter and 11.0 for campus charter school grantees. These data indicate that new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter school grantees did target their funds on fewer products and services, while open-enrollment charter grantees spent their funds more broadly. This mirrors the evaluation team's analysis of data from TEA's grantee expenditure database (Figure 1.2), which also found that the open-enrollment charter school grantees spent grant funds on a wider range of products and services.

Table 1.5. Public Charter School Start-Up Grantees' Use of Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds, by Product or Service and Charter Type (Cohorts I–IV)

Expenditure Category	Product or Service	Percentage of Grantees Reporting Having Spent Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Funds		
		OEC[a] (n=19)	NSD (n=10)	CC (n=6)
School Facilities and Equipment	Classroom Furniture	95%	70%	67%
School Facilities and Equipment	School Maintenance (including salaries for custodial staff)	11%	30%	0%
School Facilities and Equipment	Financial Management Software and Training	68%	10%	0%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Core Curriculum	79%	40%	33%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Supplemental Materials	89%	80%	100%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Textbooks and Other Instructional Supplies	89%	90%	83%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Assessments	47%	30%	33%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Summer School	63%	10%	83%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Curriculum Development	11%	0%	33%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Classroom Technology Hardware	84%	100%	100%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Instructional Software	89%	10%	67%
Instructional Programs and Materials	Library/Media Expenditures	37%	20%	50%
Staffing	Salaries and Incentives for Principals	63%	90%	17%
Staffing	Salaries for Project Management Staff (e.g., project director,)	58%	80%	0%
Staffing	Salaries for Support Staff (e.g., administrative assistant)	63%	80%	0%
Staffing	Professional Staff Extra-Duty Pay	21%	10%	83%
Staffing	Salaries for Substitute Teachers	11%	10%	67%
Staffing	Employee Benefits	58%	70%	33%
Professional Development	Contracted PD Services (e.g., speakers)	58%	10%	83%
Professional Development	Registration Fees for Staff to Attend Conferences/Workshops	53%	30%	50%
Professional Development	Travel Reimbursement for Staff to Attend Professional Development	47%	20%	50%
Professional Development	Tuition Costs for Courses Directly Related to the Grant Program	0%	0%	
Other Services	Specific Legal Services Related to Charter School Start-Up	21%	10%	0%
Other Services	Community Outreach Efforts	32%	20%	0%
Other Services	Advertisement (as part of outreach)	21%	30%	33%
Other Services	Transporting Students to or from Grant Activities	5%	10%	17%

Source. Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; CC = campus charter.

[a]One OEC from Cohort IV did not respond to the Expenditure Survey.

Conclusion

This chapter is intended to provide a comprehensive answer to RQ1: “In what specific ways do grantees use Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds?” The analyses used to answer this question were based primarily on two sources of data: data from TEA’s grantee expenditure database, which provided comprehensive information about grantee spending and how that spending was spread across different budget categories, and the results of the Expenditure Survey, in which grantees detailed the specific products and services on which they spent funds.

The primary pattern that emerged in the analyses described in this chapter is that grantees with different charter types spent grant funds in various ways. Most important, grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools appeared to have spread their grant funding over a wider range of products and services, while new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter school grantees were more likely to target their spending in a smaller number of areas. This result may be because new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter schools were more likely to receive more services (such as legal services or financial management software) from their charter holder organizations and authorizing districts and, therefore, did not have to purchase those services themselves.

Although small differences in spending also existed between Cohorts III and IV, these differences are largely explained by the relative breakdown of the two cohorts among grantees with different charter types.

The results described in this chapter are primarily descriptive in nature, in that they seek to provide a profile of grantee spending rather than evaluating the effectiveness of that spending. The next chapter in this report focuses on several potentially promising practices in the use of grant funds.

Chapter 2: Potential Best Practices in the Use of Funds

Introduction

The previous chapter summarized the products and services purchased by grantees with Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds. This chapter elaborates on those findings by offering a closer examination of effective ways that grantees have used funds to plan, design, and implement charter school programs. Specifically, in this chapter the evaluation team answers Research Question 2 of this evaluation: "What best practices can be identified in how grantees use funds?" To answer this question, the evaluation team analyzed what types of products and services grantees found most useful, as well as the policies, strategies, and decision-making processes that influenced those purchases. The evaluation team initially focused analysis for the first comprehensive evaluation report (ICF, 2017) on charter schools started by grantees in Cohorts I and II that demonstrated early evidence of effectiveness in order to highlight common practices associated with high-performing grantees, and expanded on that in this report by exploring practices used by all grantee charter schools started by Cohort III grantees.[10] This examination contributes to the overall evaluation because it identifies potential best practices employed by successful charter schools.

Throughout this chapter, the evaluation team describes *what* grantees do based on analysis of *how* those actions contribute to their perceived success. In the following section, the evaluation team explains how data were collected, articulates a functional definition of best practices, and outlines the limitations of the evaluation approach. The evaluation team then summarizes six potential best practices from high-performing grantees from Cohorts I and II, and then adds to this based on the analysis of data from Cohort III grantees. Because the analysis of data collected from Cohort III grantees did not result in any additional promising practices, an example of how at least one Cohort III grantee was implementing each practice is included, even though these grantees were not found to be "high-performing" prior to the visit. This suggests that the promising practices initially identified in "high performing" charter schools were also identified in non-high-performing charter schools. For each practice identified, the evaluation team uses examples to illustrate how a grantee has incorporated the practice, describes how the practice benefits the grantee, and suggests ways other charter school campuses might adopt the practice. After highlighting the individual potential best practices, the evaluation team offers some concluding thoughts about trends or patterns common across these practices and shows how the analysis of such practices fits within the overall evaluation.

Data Sources

Site Visits

[10] See the first comprehensive evaluation report (ICF, 2017) for information on how the evaluation team selected the schools to examine for potential best practices to operationalize "high performance" of charter schools. All Cohort III schools were selected because none met the criteria for "high performance" of charter schools.

Site visit data from four of the nine grantees from Cohorts I and II demonstrating early evidence of success, then of all five Cohort III grantees, were used to identify potential best practices and effective features in the use of Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds. During the site visits, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with school and district-level administrators, board members, and teachers. The purpose of these inquiries was to comprehensively explore how grantees used their Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds and to identify the decision-making practices related to their use of these funds. Data collected from the site visits provided a robust foundation in distinguishing approaches that site visit grantees identified as effective in successfully operating their charter school campuses, supporting their mission, and contributing to their early evidence of success. Once the evaluation team identified the potential best practices from the site visits, the evaluation team then analyzed other sources of data from all charter school campuses showing early evidence of success to assess the prevalence of the practice across the grantees and the extent to which practices identified from site visit data could be corroborated in other sources of data.

Expenditure Data

Data from the Expenditure Survey, TEA's grantee expenditure database, and budget amendments were first used to corroborate data from the site visits that focused on how grantees used start-up funds. These data also illuminated patterns/trends in spending across all grantee charter schools included in the analysis. Identifying patterns/trends allowed the evaluation team to expand its focus beyond potential best practices from the charter schools visited and provided a framework for identifying potential best practices. Linking the patterns/trends in the expenditure data and the potential best practices across all of these schools in the analysis was a critical step in validating the importance and prevalence of the practices the evaluation team highlights in this report.

Stakeholder Surveys

Selected questions from the charter school stakeholder surveys were used as another source of data to substantiate and expand upon the initial set of practices identified from site visit data. The stakeholder surveys were administered to administrators, board members, and teachers of all Public Charter School Start-Up Grant charter schools; thus, these data were available for all grantees in Cohorts I–III in the analysis. These surveys gathered data regarding how grantees used start-up funds, how grant funds supported innovative or unique features at each school, the level of stakeholder involvement in decision making, and the challenges that schools experienced in implementing their start-up grant. Systematic analysis of these data provided additional evidence to support the potential best practices that the evaluation team identified.

Defining Best Practice

The charter schools evaluated in this report used a wide range of models in their approach to education, resulting in a diverse array of procurement practices and policies. For example, some charter schools focused on particular fields such as STEM or college and career readiness, while others emphasized novel instructional approaches across subjects. This diversity necessitates a functional definition of best practices, where the merit or success of a practice can be evaluated in the context of a particular grantee's mission. For the purposes of this report, the evaluation team defined best practice as a policy, procedure, or habitual action in

relation to the allocation or spending of the Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds that helped a grantee achieve its mission. These may be practices that grantee stakeholders perceived as effective on their charter school campuses or practices common across successful grantees.

Limitations

The scope of this chapter has some important limitations. The purpose here is not to quantitatively measure or predict the impact of certain practices, nor is it to provide a representative sample of common practices employed across schools. Instead, the evaluation team sought to identify and describe approaches that successful grantees employed and found promising. The analysis initially focused on grantees from high-performing charter schools from Cohorts I and II, followed by all Cohort III grantees (since none met the criteria to be considered high-performing). Because of the limitations associated with selection and cohort membership and labeling of high-performing and non-high-performing charter schools, the findings in this chapter should be interpreted with caution, so these practices are labeled potential best practices. Further, it is important to note that the main data source consists of information gathered during site visits. These visits allowed the evaluation team to gather rich information from the ten charter schools selected for a site visit, but the selected sites constitute a small proportion of all charter school campuses examined in the overall report. Though stakeholder surveys provide additional information about all charter schools that received a grant, they cannot provide the same detail gathered from the site visits.

Analysis of Best Practices Among Grantees

The evaluation team culled six best practices from the analysis of data from the nine high-performing grantees across Cohorts I and II, and the four grantees that participated in site visits, and additional examples from Cohort III grantees added to these potential best practices. Although these best practices are based on preliminary findings from three cohorts, some implications can be drawn. For more details on these best practices based on Cohorts I and II, see the first comprehensive evaluation report (ICF, 2017).

Potential Best Practice 1: Spending Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds to establish and support school culture and climate helped foster engagement and ownership. Having a clear vision from the outset of the school culture and climate that will be promoted and then devoting a proportion of funds to making this vision apparent for students, teachers, and others in the school community helped foster engagement and ownership. One Cohort III grantee operating a campus charter school indicated that the superindentent had a vision for a collegiate academy and was able to use the grant to help realize this vision for the school district.

Potential Best Practice 2: Building a diverse support network specifically to assist with a variety of processes, including finance, business management, and compliance with TEA guidelines, helped with effective start-up implementation. Recognizing aspects of program development and implementation where support might be needed to build a more effective program is crucial. This strategy can make tasks seem less insurmountable, especially if guidance from experts or from those experienced in a particular area allows grantees to focus

energy on other key areas that need attention. One Cohort III grantee operating an open-enrollment charter school reported that the grant helped to get their founding team on staff during the planning stage to continue doing critical work to launch. One administrator stated that, “I think that's the probably least understood part of charter start up, or maybe ignored, or we just don't talk about that, is that time from application being awarded to that time that your doors open. It's a pretty intense 8 to 10 months. It's just a massive amount of work.”

Potential Best Practice 3: Demonstrating flexibility in planning and use of funds throughout the grant period helped grantees with implementation. An important consideration for this practice was maintaining the overall vision for the charter, while being open to changes. Successful grantees will need to exhibit some degree of flexibility in implementation and in how funds are used to strike a delicate balance between reinforcing a school vision established at the onset and being open to important adjustments that may emerge over time. Of equal importance is the implementation modification process, specifically, who is involved in decision making and what data are used to prompt changes in implementation. Two aspects of the best practice of flexibility in use of funds were prevalent across grantees in Cohorts I and II. First, budget revisions were carefully considered through deliberate processes such as needs assessments. Second, changes proposed through amendments did not alter, but instead enhanced, the overall vision. One Cohort III grantee operating an open-enrollment charter school described how the flexibility in the grant helped them to purchase classroom books and manipulatives that the teachers could request to meet their instructional goals.

Potential Best Practice 4: High-performing start-up grantees used evidence to direct the use of funds to inform practice, particularly in making decisions about policies, activities, and purchases. Relying on evidence from assessments and other data sources can help inform grantees of what is working and where improvements are needed, thus helping to target instructional and management approaches. This best practice speaks again to a process of continuous improvement and refinement, based on feedback from stakeholders and student needs. For example, one Cohort III grantee operating an open-enrollment charter school used grant funds to develop an academic dashboard to promote data-driven decision making, which they described as an innovative practice.

Potential Best Practice 5: Integrating technology with curriculum and instructional approaches helped grantees address gaps and reinforce their school models. This best practice goes further than simply having technology available. By closely and thoughtfully integrating technology with the overall instructional approach, gaps across subject areas can be addressed and the school model can be reinforced for teachers and students. Implementation of this best practice can have important benefits for low-income students, who may have less access to technology outside of the school environment. In addition, overall student engagement can be improved by appropriate technology integration. One Cohort III grantee operating an open-enrollment charter school echoed the importance of spending grant funds on technology. An administrator stated, “One thing we really wanted, we wanted a one-to-one environment with technology. We wanted to provide the students with some tools and teachers with resources that they may not have had at other campuses, and so that stood out in our mind in terms of grant use.”

Potential Best Practice 6: Using funds to create a collaborative relationship among stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and parents helped improve the school culture. Involving teachers and other stakeholders in decision making encourages a collective school culture and buy-in from staff. A Cohort III grantee operating a new school designated under an existing charter reported that they were able to involve teachers in using grant funds to purchase textbooks and multimedia resources in multiple languages to effectively implement their multi-language approach that was the crux of their mission.

Conclusion

Throughout the six potential best practices described, a recurring theme of fostering a collaborative environment during the planning and implementation for charter school start-up grantees (Cohorts I–III) is apparent. Aligning grant resources to the mission and vision of the charter school through spending on school facilities and instructional resources and materials was critical, as was paying for staffing and professional development to lead the school and implement the curriculum. Being open to feedback from experts, teachers, and parents is important for improvement of processes and better outcomes. By involving stakeholders, a community of individuals invested in a charter school's success is established, and students benefit from an environment shaped to their learning needs.

Chapter 3: Outcomes Within High-Performing Grantee Charter Schools

Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question 3 (RQ3), which is: Within high-performing charter schools, to what extent do student outcomes differ by charter school type, mission, or focus? To answer this question, the evaluation team conducted several comparative analyses within grantee charter schools from Cohorts I and II that were identified as being high-performing between 2013–14 and 2014–15.[11]

Data Sources

TEA Extant Data

Outcomes examined included student academic achievement and school-day attendance. Academic achievement was measured by performance on the STAAR-Reading and Mathematics assessments for students in Grades 3–8 and the STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments for English I, English II, and Algebra I for students who took these exams.[12] Assessments in Grades 3–8 were combined for this analysis. The EOC data were examined separately from the grade-level assessment data for these analyses. Student achievement outcomes consisted of STAAR vertical scale scores and data on the percentages of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Reading and Mathematics exams. Attendance rates were based on PEIMS data and included students' average attendance rate and the proportion of students with an attendance rate at or above the average state attendance rate

Limitations

This analysis was exploratory in nature given the small sample size and reliance on a coding framework by Renzulli, Barr, and Paino (2015) used to categorize the mission/focus of charter schools. Therefore, findings should be interpreted with caution.

Data Analysis

Charter school campuses were categorized by charter school type and mission/focus of the school. The charter school types studied through this analysis included the following three categories of charter schools: (a) campus charter schools, (b) open-enrollment charter schools, and (c) new schools designated under an existing charter. Charter schools were also categorized by mission/focus of the school, which included the two categories: Generalist

[11] Three criteria were used to determine whether the Cohort I and II grantees initially identified as high-performing sustained high performance in 2013–14 and 2014–15: (a) received a Met Standard accountability rating for the 2012–13, 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years, (b) obtained at least one academic achievement distinction or had a System Safeguard score of 100% in the 2012–13, 2013–14 and 2014–15 accountability ratings, and (c) achieved an attendance rate of 95% or higher for the 2012–13 and 2013–14 school years. All four Cohort I grantees sustained high performance but one of the three Cohort II grantees did not.

[12] Note that for students in Grades 7 and 8, who took a STAAR EOC exam, their results were examined with the analysis sample of secondary students who took a STAAR EOC exam in the same year.

schools (charter schools with no stated intentions of serving special populations or using a particular approach to teaching) and specialist schools (charter schools with a specific specialty area, such as serving at-risk students).

Table 3.1 shows the number of students reported attending Cohort I and II campuses in fall 2013 and fall 2014 by charter school type and mission/focus type. Tables D1–D4 in Appendix D provide details on the demographic characteristics of the enrolled students in each type.

Separate analyses were performed for the 2013—14 and 2014—15 school years on the outcomes of interest. The analytic samples differed in size depending on the data available. Analysis of variance, or ANOVA, was conducted to measure the differences across charter types and mission/focus type on student-level academic performance and attendance data. In the analysis, main effects of cohort membership were also examined. In addition, within the same analysis period, logistic regression was used to examine differences in the proportion of students: (a) who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR, and (b) who had an attendance rate at or above the state attendance average in 2013–14 and 2014–15.

Table 3.1. Number of Students in High-Performing Grantee Charter Schools in Cohorts I and II by Charter School Type and Mission/Focus of the Charter School, Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 Enrollment Data

Category/Subcategory of Charter Schools	Cohort I Students		Cohort II Students		Total Sample of Students	
	2013 14	2014 15	2013 14	2014 15	2013 14	2014 15
Charter School Type						
Campus charter school (n=2 schools)	400	402	224	0[b]	624	402
Open-enrollment charter school (n=2 schools)[a]	1,144	1,384	0[C]	0[C]	1,144	1,384
New school designation under an existing charter (n=3 schools)	387	510	1,116	1,368	1,503	1,878
Mission/Focus of the Charter School						
Generalist (n=3 schools)	400	402	622	561	1,022	963
Specialist (n=4 schools)	1,531	1,894	718	807	2,249	2,710
Total (n=7 schools)	**1,931**	**2,296**	**1,340**	**1,368**	**3,271**	**3,664**

Source. Public Education Information Management System Fall 2013 and 2014; Grantee Applications

Note. In 2014–15, one of the Cohort II high-performing charter schools received a rating of 'Needs Improvement' and no distinction designations for academic achievement. Therefore, this school was removed from the 2014–15 charter type and mission/focus analyses.

[a]Includes Subchapter D and E charter schools.

[b]There were no high-performing Cohort II campus charter schools in 2014–2015.

[c]There were no high-performing Cohort II open-enrollment charter schools in 2013–14 or 2014–2015.

Academic Performance

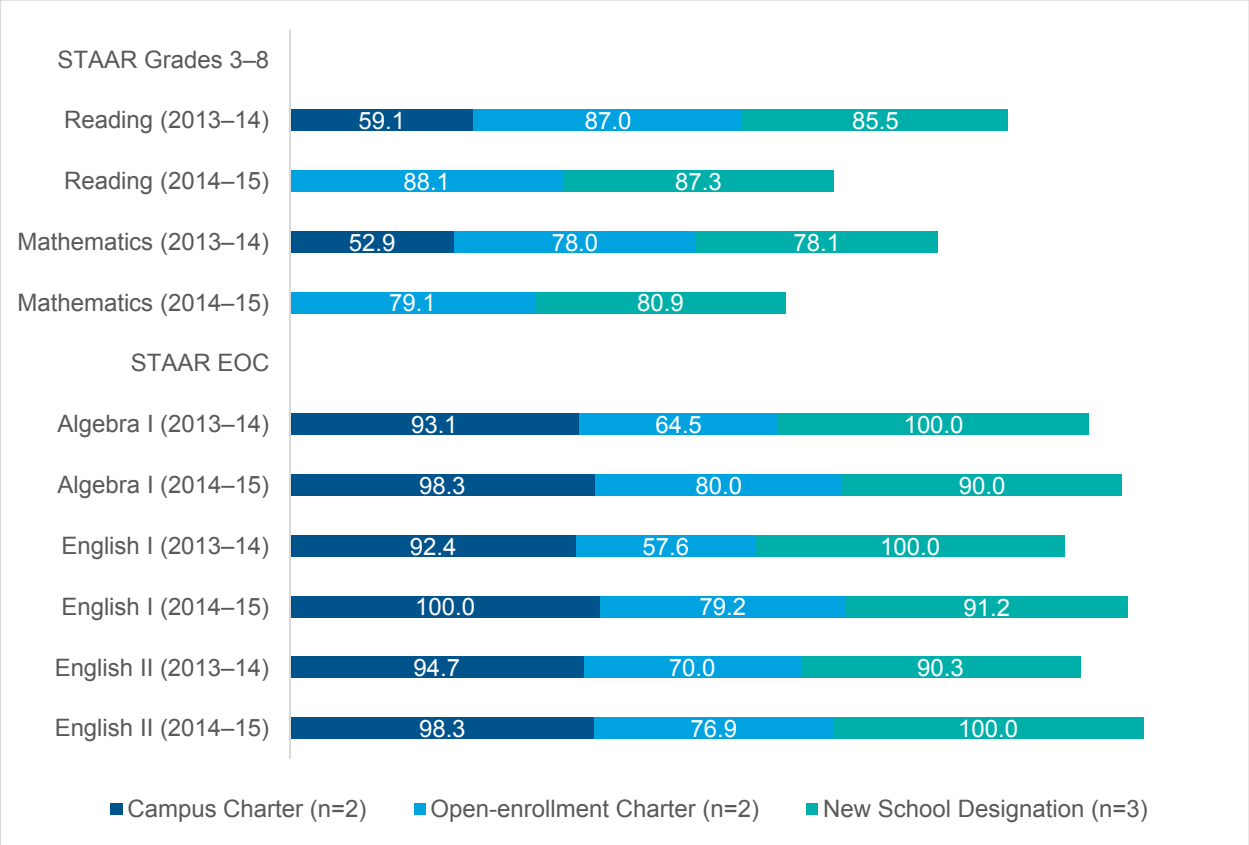
Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present the percentage of students in Grades 3–8 who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the STAAR-Mathematics and Reading tests and the STAAR EOC exams in 2013–14 and 2014–15 for each charter type and mission/focus type. Comparisons were performed between all charter types on average STAAR scores as well as the proportion of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard. Results are shown in Appendix D, Tables D5–D8. Overall, students in campus charter schools performed significantly lower in mathematics and reading in 2013–14 compared to students from open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter.[13] More students from open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter compared to students from campus charter schools (by 25 percentage points) met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading tests. However, the STAAR EOC results showed that the performance of students from campus charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter were significantly higher (by between 20–42 percentage points) on all three EOC exams compared to students from open-enrollment charter schools, but they were not statistically significantly different from each other. The differences between scale scores on all STAAR EOC exams ranged, on average, from 268.8 to 446.6 scale score points higher for campus charter schools and 327.8 to 583.6 scale score points higher for new schools designated under an existing charter than for open-enrollment charter schools.

In 2014–15, no students in Grades 3–8 from campus charter schools were included in the analysis of the academic achievement data (Appendix D, Table D7).[14] Thus, comparisons for this outcome were performed between open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter. Unlike 2013–14, the differences between these charter types on the STAAR-Mathematics and Reading tests in 2014–15 were statistically significant with new schools designated under an existing charter performing higher, on average, by 25 scale score points. Additionally, in 2014–15, students from campus charter schools demonstrated significantly higher performance on two of the three STAAR EOC exams than students from open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter. The STAAR EOC performance of students in campus charter schools, on average, was 591.7 scale score points higher on the STAAR Algebra I EOC and 833.4 scale score points higher on the STAAR English I EOC than for students from open-enrollment charter schools. When compared to students from new schools designated under an existing charter, those differences were 405.9 and 622.7 scale score points higher, respectively, for students from campus charter schools. Students enrolled in new schools designated under an existing charter in 2014–15 also performed significantly higher than students from open-enrollment charter

[13] In using the term significant to discuss differences in this chapter, $p < .05$ was minimum cut point. This significance level means that statistically there is only a 5% chance that the amount of difference occurred due to chance alone.
[14] In 2014–15, one of the Cohort II high-performing schools received a rating of 'Needs Improvement' and no distinction designations for academic achievement. This school was the only campus charter school in the sample that served students in primary grades. The school was removed from the 2014–15 charter type analyses. As a result, there were no students in Grades 3–8 included in the analysis of STAAR data in 2014–15 from campus charter schools.

schools on the STAAR English II EOC by 419.5 scale score points and by 211.0 scale score points on the STAAR English I EOC.

Figure 3.1. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard on Various STAAR Exams by Charter Type, 2013–14 and 2014–15

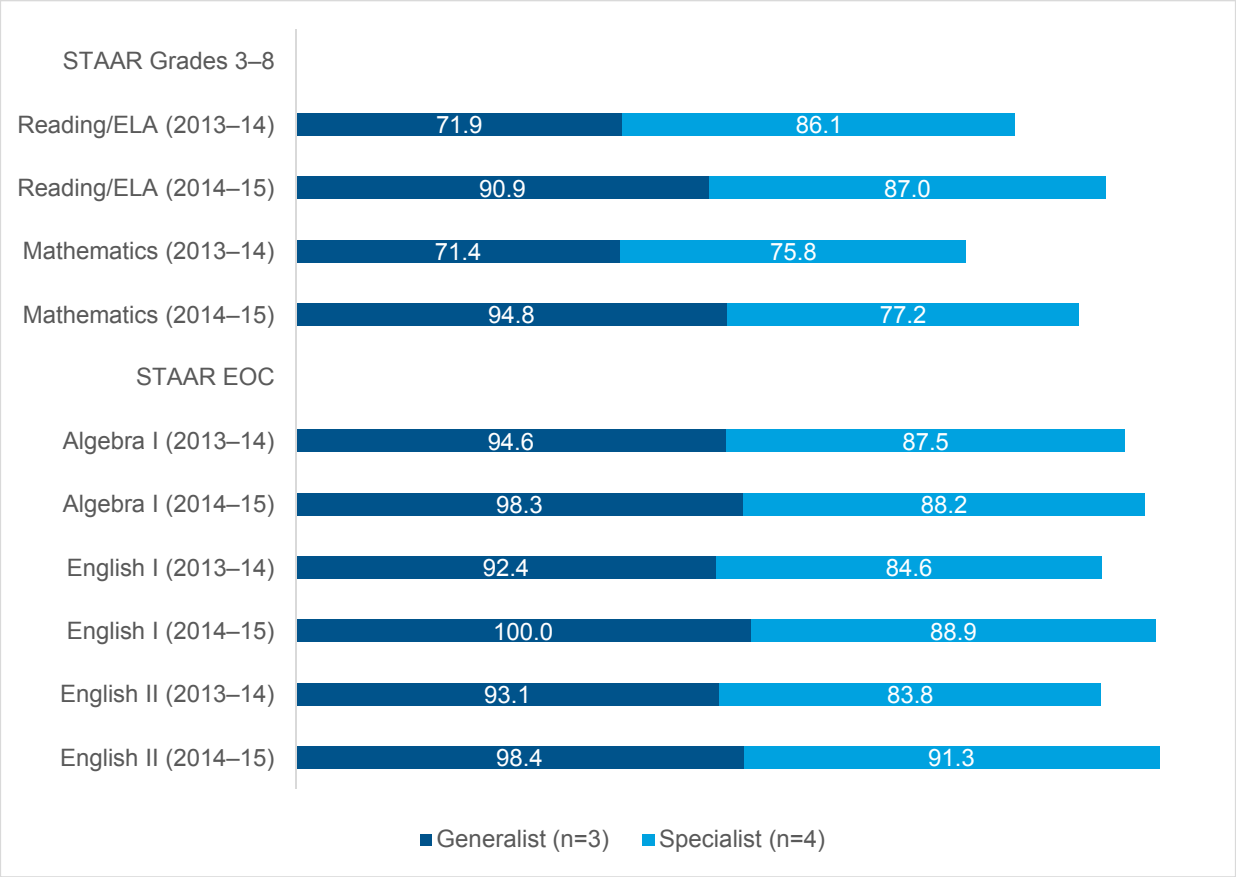


Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2013–14 data. STAAR data include the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.
Note. In 2014–15, one of the Cohort II high-performing schools received a rating of 'Needs Improvement' and no distinction designations for academic achievement. This school was the only campus charter school in the sample that served students in primary grades. The school was removed from the 2014–15 charter type analyses. As a result, there were no students in Grades 3–8 included in the analysis of STAAR data in 2014–15 from campus charter schools.

When academic achievement was examined for students attending high-performing charter schools with a generalist focus compared to schools with a specialist focus, it was found that students in Grades 3–8 attending charter schools with a specialist focus performed significantly higher in 2013–14 on the STAAR-Reading test (see Appendix D, Table D6 and Table D8). Performance in reading among students at high-performing charter schools with a specialist focus was, on average, 68.8 scale score points higher, and the rate of students meeting the satisfactory performance standards was 14 percentage points higher. There were no significant differences found for mathematics. In 2014–15, students in Grades 3–8 from high-performing charter schools with a generalist focus performed higher on the STAAR-Mathematics test than students from schools with a specialist focus. Performance was, on average, 95.5 scale score

points higher, and the rate of students meeting the Level II Phase-in 1 standard was 18 percentage points higher. There were no significant differences in reading. Students from high-performing charter schools with a generalist focus also exhibited notable and significant differences on performance on the STAAR EOC exams in both years. In particular, in 2013–14 students performed, on average, 113.8 and 128.6 scale score points higher on the STAAR English I and II EOCs, respectively. The same patterns were observed with the 2014–15 EOC data where students scored, on average, significantly higher on all three STAAR EOC exams (440.3 points on STAAR Algebra I EOC, 666.2 points on STAAR English I EOC, and 294.8 points on STAAR English II EOC).

Figure 3.2. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding at the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard on Various STAAR Exams by Mission/Focus, 2013–14 and 2014–15



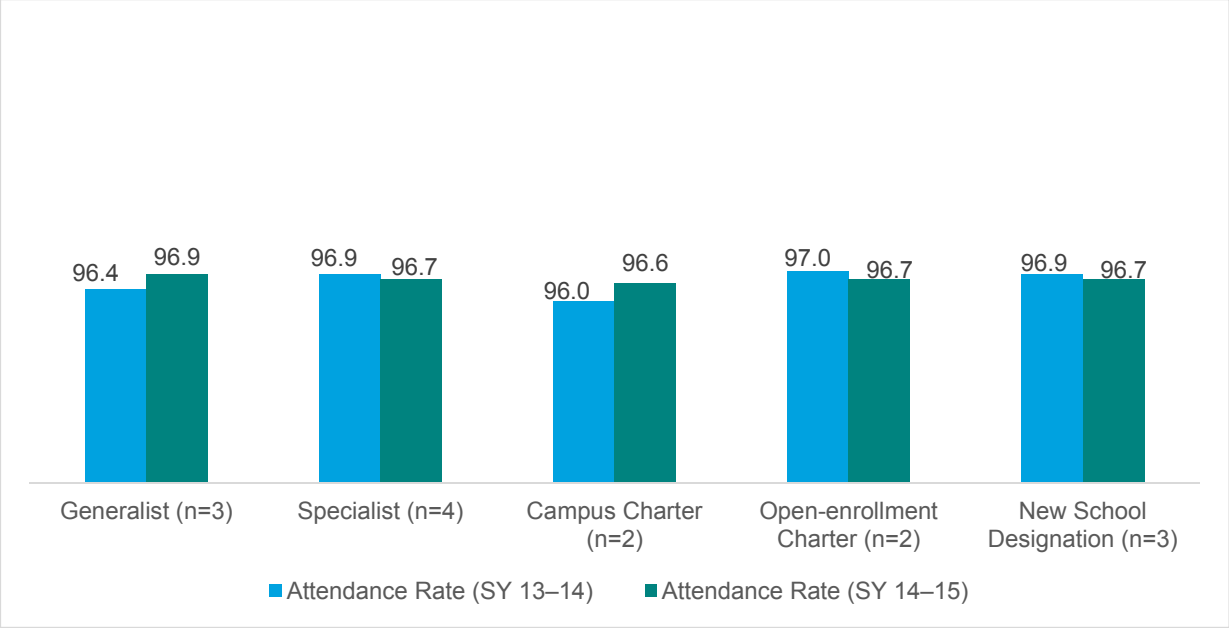
Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2014–15 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.
Note. In 2014–15, one of the Cohort II high-performing schools received a rating of 'Needs Improvement' and no distinction designations for academic achievement. The school was removed from the 2014–15 mission/focus analyses.

Attendance

As shown in Figure 3.3, among the three different types of charter schools, students from open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter had a

significantly higher attendance rate (97%) in 2013–14 compared to students from campus charter schools (96%). In 2014–15, the attendance rates among the three groups did not exhibit any significant differences. In 2013–14, high-performing charter schools with a specialist focus had a significantly higher attendance rate (97%) than charter schools with a generalist focus (96%). While the results are statistically significant, a one percentage point difference does not represent a practical difference, so while there is a statistical difference it may not be a meaningful one. The opposite, however, was observed in 2014–15. Additionally, in 2013–14 high-performing charter schools with a specialist focus had a higher percentage of students with an attendance rate at or above the state attendance rate (75% vs. 68%) compared to schools with a generalist focus, but this difference was not statistically significant. See Tables D5–D8 in Appendix D for more information. All attendance rates were higher than the percentage of students who were at or above the statewide attendance rate in 2013–14 (68% and 75% for generalist schools and specialist schools, respectively; 65%, 78%, and 73% for campus charter schools, open-enrollment charter schools, and new schools designated under an existing charter, respectively.

Figure 3.3. Attendance Rate by Mission/Focus of the Charter School and Charter School Type, All Enrolled Students, 2013–14 and 2014–15



Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2013–14 and 2014–15.

Conclusion

In 2013–14, students in Grade 3–8 who were enrolled in new schools designated under an existing charter and open-enrollment charter schools performed significantly higher on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading than the students who attended campus charter schools. On the STAAR EOC exams, students from new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter schools performed better than students from open-enrollment charter schools, but they did not differ from each other. In 2014–15, there were also differences observed

between students from new schools designated under an existing charter and students from campus charter schools, with students from campus charter schools performing higher. Overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among charter type and academic performance.

When academic achievement was examined for students attending high-performing charter schools with a generalist focus compared to schools with a specialist focus, it was found that students in Grades 3–8 attending charter schools with a generalist focus performed significantly lower in 2013–14 on the STAAR-Reading test, but had notably higher performance on the EOC exams. Also, in 2014–15 generalist schools performed higher in mathematics than specialist schools. These significant differences in the EOC exams were also observed in 2014–15 with at least 98% of students from schools with a generalist focus meeting the satisfactory performance standards. Overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among mission and academic performance.

Among the three different types of charter schools, students from open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter had statistically significant, but not meaningfully, higher average daily attendance rates in 2013–14 compared to students from campus charter schools. In 2014–15, the rates of daily attendance among the three groups did not exhibit any differences. In 2013–14, high-performing charter schools with a specialist focus had a statistically significant, but not meaningfully, higher attendance rate compared to charter schools with a generalist focus. The opposite was observed the following year. Overall there were no consistent, or practically significant, findings to explain the relationship among charter type and attendance.

Chapter 4: Outcomes Comparing High-Performing Grantee Charter Schools and Traditional Neighborhood Schools

Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question 4 (RQ4), which is: To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools? High-performing charter schools from Cohorts I and II were the best viable options for examining student outcomes because enough years had passed since inception to establish evidence of success. The analysis focused on high-performing schools and the students that were enrolled for the first time in 2012–13 in Cohort I and II high-performing charter schools.[15]

Data Sources

TEA Extant Data

Data used for this analysis included student achievement data from STAAR as well as grade-level promotion and attendance data from PEIMS for matched samples of students from the 2012–13 through the 2014–15 school year.[16] Student achievement outcomes consisted of STAAR vertical scale scores and data on the percentages of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics exams. In all three years analyzed, elementary and middle school students who took grade-level STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics were examined separately from students who took the STAAR EOC exams. Note that for students in Grades 7 and 8 who took a STAAR EOC exam, results were examined with the analysis sample of secondary students who took a STAAR EOC exam in the same year. Separate analyses of STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics were performed for each year while controlling for prior year achievement, cohort membership, and student characteristics (see Appendix E for results from the statistical models). For the samples of matched students examined on English I EOC, English II EOC, and Algebra I EOC in Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3, only descriptive analyses of means and percentages of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard are reported due to small sample sizes.

The attendance rates of matched pairs of students from charter schools and traditional schools were examined across all three years, including the proportion of students with an attendance rate at or above the average state attendance rate in Year 1 and Year 2, and the proportion of students promoted to the next grade level from 2013 to 2014 and from 2014 to 2015. The

[15] All four Cohort I grantees sustained high performance but one of the three Cohort II grantees did not.
[16] Beginning in the 2011–12 school year, the state's standardized testing program, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), was replaced by STAAR. For high school students, STAAR exams for certain high school courses began replacing TAKS exams in 2011–12. Students who were in Grade 9 in 2011–12 were the first to take the STAAR EOC exams. The analysis for this chapter focused on the elementary and middle school students who participated in the newly standardized testing program and the students in Grade 9 who took the STAAR EOC exams beginning at baseline (2011–12).

attendance rate and grade-level promotion analytic samples span all grades of matched students.

Limitations

The students enrolled in the charter schools in this analysis were not randomly selected and the pool of comparison students was drawn from traditional neighborhood public schools. To adjust for differences that may exist prior to 2012–13 between the two groups of students in their demographic, assessment, and other background characteristics, a matched comparison group of students from traditional neighborhood public schools was created by applying propensity score matching (see Appendix E and Tables E2–E4 for technical details on the matching approach) on students' 2011–12 academic achievement and demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, English language learner status, special education status, at-risk status, economically disadvantaged status).

Data Analysis

Students who were enrolled in the second year of operation of the Cohort I charter schools and students who were enrolled in the first year of operation of the Cohort II charter schools as well as their matched comparison students from traditional public schools were analyzed together. This comparison reflects the impact of attending high-performing charter schools and attendance at the traditional neighborhood schools in 2012–13 on several 2012–13 (Year 1), 2013–14 (Year 2) and 2014–15 (Year 3) outcomes in analysis of covariance (ANCOVA; for continuous outcomes) and logistic regression (for dichotomous outcomes) analyses.

Before conducting each analysis, the samples of matched traditional students were examined using PEIMS fall and end of year data to identify any students who may have had attended a charter school during the analysis period. This was a closed sample over time whereby students were not added to the sample as they came into the school. None of the matched traditional students switched to a charter school from 2012–13 to 2014–15. Additionally, the matched samples of charter and traditional school students vary from analysis to analysis depending on the data available for each matched pair. When a matched student in a pair was missing data for an outcome of interest, the matched counterpart was also removed from the relevant analysis. The matched pairs of students in each analytic sample were then examined on their baseline characteristics. With the application of the case-by-case matching with exact matching on several variables (i.e., race/ethnicity, special education status, at risk status) the distribution of the exactly matched baseline variables remained balanced in each analytic sample. The matched pairs in each analytic sample were examined to see if they remained balanced on their baseline achievement and attendance information (meeting the decision criterion of standardized mean differences below, yet close to 0.10). Appendix E includes Tables E6–E8 with baseline equivalence results for the student achievement, attendance, and grade-level promotion analytic samples.

Academic Performance

The matched samples of charter and traditional neighborhood school students did not differ in their baseline achievement data for all three years examined (see Appendix E, Table E6). Thus, in analyzing student achievement outcomes, it was not necessary to adjust for any baseline

differences. Analyses used to calculate the results shown in Table 4.1 are controlling for cohort membership, the students' demographic characteristics (e.g., economically disadvantaged status, at-risk status, and race/ethnicity) in the year they were tested, and their prior year achievement score.

During 2012–13 to 2014–15, students in Grades 4–8 at high-performing Cohort I and II charter schools had, on average, higher scores on the grade-level STAAR-Mathematics test than matched students from traditional public schools. The differences ranged from 15.4 to 31.4 scale score points with the differences observed in 2013–14 (Year 2) being significant. A similar pattern emerged when examining the grade-level STAAR-Reading test data (Table 4.2). The impact of attending a high-performing charter school in 2012–13 manifested in Years 2 and 3 with charter school students having higher scale scores than students in traditional neighborhood schools—between 10.8 and 15.6 points higher. In 2014–15 (Year 3), in particular, the 15.6 scale score point difference between the matched charter and traditional students was statistically significant.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 also exhibit the performance differences on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading regarding the percentage of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard. Overall, more students in high-performing charter schools met standard compared to matched students in traditional neighborhood schools in all three years examined. In particular, in 2013–14 (Year 2), more charter-school students met standard in math than students in traditional neighborhood schools (by 8 percentage points). In 2014–15 (Year 3), more students in charter schools met standard in reading than their matched counterparts who attended traditional neighborhood schools (by 7 percentage points), which was a statistically significant difference.

Table 4.1. Grades 4–8 STAAR-Mathematics Results for the Analytic Samples of Matched Pairs of Students in 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15

		Grades 4–8 STAAR-Mathematics			Difference from Traditional Students	
Year of Analysis	Group of Students	Count	Mean Score (St. Dev.)	% at or above Level II Phase-in 1	Mean Scale Score (Prob. F Sig.)	% at or above Level II Phase-in 1 (Prob. Chi Sq.)
Year 1 2012–13	Charter	475	1622.7 (155.6)	77.9	+15.4 (0.258)	+3.1 (0.498)
	Traditional	475	1607.3 (148.3)	74.7		
Year 2 2013–14	Charter	355	1659.6 (144.4)	80.9	+29.0** (0.009)	+8.4 (0.052)
	Traditional	355	1630.6 (146.4)	73.5		
Year 3 2014–15	Charter	209	1663.2 (143.5)	77.5	+31.4 (0.073)	+5.2 (0.887)
	Traditional	209	1631.8 (123.9)	72.3		

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 to 2014–15.

Note. The analytic samples of matched pairs of students in the 2012–13, 2013–14 and 2014–15 analyses included students who took the first administration of the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded). Analytic samples include the pairs of matched 2012–13 students with valid data in a given year and achievement data from the prior year. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$

Table 4.2. Grades 4–8 STAAR-Reading Results for the Analytic Samples of Matched Pairs of Students in 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15

			Grades 4–8 STAAR-Reading		Difference from Traditional Students	
Year of Analysis	Group of Students	Count	Mean Score (St. Dev)	% at or above Level II Phase-in 1	Mean Score (Prob. F Sig.)	% at or above Level II Phase-in 1 (Prob. Chi Sq.)
Year 1 2012–13	Charter	490	1587.4 (135.4)	76.9%	+0.2 (0.324)	+1.4 (0.939)
	Traditional	490	1587.2 (131.3)	75.5%		
Year 2 2013–14	Charter	432	1637.5 (120.6)	83.3%	+10.8 (0.308)	+3.4 (0.431)
	Traditional	432	1626.7 (128.8)	79.6%		
Year 3 2014–15	Charter	323	1674.4 (127.1)	87.0%	+15.6* (0.044)	+7.4* (0.024)
	Traditional	323	1658.8 (130.3)	79.6%		

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 to 2014–15.

Note. The analytic samples of matched pairs of students in the 2012–13, 2013–14 and 2014–15 analyses include students who took the first administration of the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded). Analytic samples include the pairs of matched 2012–13 students with valid data in a given year and achievement data from the prior year. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$

Student performance on the STAAR English I, English II, and Algebra I EOC exams was also examined for the same analysis periods. The analytic samples for these analyses were small across the three years examined, with samples across cohorts ranging from 19 to 56 students for the Algebra I EOC analysis,16 to 64 students for the English I EOC analysis, and 6 to 21 students for the English II EOC analysis. Because of the small sample sizes, only descriptive analyses were conducted. Table 4.3 displays the average STAAR scale scores, as well as the percentage of students (high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools) who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on each EOC exam. Students in high-performing charter schools scored lower, on average, than matched students at traditional schools across all years and assessments with the exception of English I EOC in Years 2 and 3. Additionally, the percentage of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the STAAR Algebra I EOC increased from Year 1 to Year 3 at charter schools while remaining nearly constant at traditional neighborhood schools. A similar pattern was observed for the percentage of students who met standard on the STAAR English II EOC from 2012–13 to 2014–15.

Table 4.3. STAAR End-of-Course Results for the Analytic Samples of Matched Pairs of Students in 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15

Year of Analysis	Group of Students	STAAR Algebra I EOC Count	STAAR Algebra I EOC Mean Score (St. Dev.)	STAAR Algebra I EOC % at or above Level II Phase-in 1	STAAR English I EOC Count	STAAR English I EOC Mean Score (St. Dev.)	STAAR English I EOC % at or above Level II Phase-in 1	STAAR English II EOC Count	STAAR English II EOC Mean Score (St. Dev.)	STAAR English II EOC % at or above Level II Phase-in 1
Year 1 2012–13	Charter	19	3772.3 (410.7)	68.4	16	2022.0 (210.7)	81.3	6	2102.8 (357.5)	66.7
	Traditional	19	3895.3 (405.5)	84.2	16	2038.7 (284.8)	75.0	6	2117.2 (250.8)	100.0
Year 2 2013–14	Charter	32	4025.5 (524.6)	84.4	24	4125.2 (451.3)	91.7	17	4105.8 (496.5)	70.6
	Traditional	32	4054.5 (497.8)	84.4	24	4097.3 (533.6)	75.0	17	4172.9 (544.2)	82.4
Year 3 2014–15	Charter	56	4090.1 (611.4)	89.3	64	4049.0 (422.8)	79.7	21	4051.2 (488.6)	81.0
	Traditional	56	4092.5 (519.0)	85.7	64	4041.7 (439.3)	71.9	21	4231.0 (675.9)	81.0

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 to 2014–15.
Note. The analytic samples per content area include all students who took the first administration of the English version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded). In 2012–13 the STAAR English I EOC and STAAR English II EOC were administered with separate reading and writing assessments. Starting in 2013–14, the reading and writing assessment were combined into a single assessment for both the STAAR English I and English II EOCs. Analytic samples include the pairs of matched 2012–13 students with valid data in a given year.

Promotion and Attendance

Grade-level promotion data were compared for students attending the five high-performing Cohort I and II charter schools and a matched set of students attending traditional public schools. Two sets of analyses were conducted on the 2012–13 sample of matched students for this outcome. The first analysis included students who were promoted from one grade level to the next between 2012–13 and 2013–14. The second analysis included students from the 2012–13 sample who were promoted to the next grade level between 2013–14 and 2014–15. All analyses were conducted by comparing student attendance records form PEIMS from one year to the next to determine if students were promoted into a higher grade-level than in the previous year. In both analyses, all grade levels were included in the analysis. Table E8 in Appendix E displays the baseline equivalence results for both analytic samples for the matched samples of 2012–13 elementary and middle school students, as well as the 2012–13 high school students. Both analytic samples met an acceptable criterion for demonstrating equivalence between matched groups of students.

Table 4.4 shows the percentage of students from high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools that were promoted into the next grade level in both analysis periods. Separate analyses were conducted (1) for all students and (2) for elementary and

middle school students only. At the end of the 2012–13 school year, 5% fewer charter school students were promoted to the next grade level in 2013–14 compared to their matched counterparts from traditional neighborhood schools. This pattern was the same for both analyses: (1) all students and (2) elementary and middle school students only. The difference in the 2012–13 to 2013–14 promotion rate between charter and matched students at traditional schools was statistically significant. No differences were observed in the analysis of students promoted from 2013–14 to 2014–15.

Table 4.4. Promotion Results for Matched Pairs of Students between 2012–13 and 2014–15

		All 2012–13 Students			2012–13 Grades 3–8 Students		
Period	Group of Students	Total Students	% Promoted	Diff. from Traditional (Prob. Chi Sq.)	Total	% Promoted	Diff. from Traditional (Prob. Chi Sq.)
End of Year 1 (2012–13) to End of Year 2 (2013–14)	Charter	530	93.6	-4.9*** (<0.001)	521	93.7	-5.0*** (<0.001)
	Traditional	530	98.5		521	98.7	
End of Year 2 (2013–14) to End of Year 3 (2014–15)	Charter	506	97.6	-0.8 (0.315)	498	97.6	-0.8 (0.321)
	Traditional	506	98.4		498	98.4	

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2012–13 to 2014–15 data.
Note. Each reporting period tracks students appearing in the PEIMS end-of-year attendance data of one year to the PEIMS fall enrollment or the end-of-year attendance data of the following year. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$

The attendance rate of students in the sample of high-performing charter schools was compared to the attendance rate of the matched set of students attending traditional public schools. Additionally, a comparison of the proportion of students attending at or above the state attendance rate for both groups was calculated. Table E6 in Appendix E displays the baseline equivalence results for the matched samples of 2012–13 elementary and middle school students, as well as the 2012–13 high school students. Both analytic samples met an acceptable criterion for demonstrating equivalence. Table 4.5 presents the results only for the analysis that included students across all grade levels because the results without the high school students were almost the same in this case. Although no significance differences were found in the attendance rate of students who attended high-performing charter schools and those that attended traditional neighborhood schools, there were slight differences in their rates with charter school students attending at a slightly higher rate in all three years. Additionally, although not statistically significantly different, students who attended high-performing charter schools also had a higher percentage of students who attended at a rate that was at or above the state attendance rate than students in traditional neighborhood schools.

Table 4.5. Attendance Results for Matched Pairs of Students in 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15

School Year	Group of Students	Total Students	Attendance Rate		Above State Average	
			Mean (St. Dev.)	Diff. from Traditional (Prob. F Sig.)	% Above	Diff. from Traditional (Prob. Chi Sq.)
2012–13	Charter	553	97.1 (3.5)	+0.2	76.1	+2.0
	Traditional	553	96.9 (4.2)	(0.071)	74.1	(0.121)
2013–14	Charter	531	97.0 (3.3)	+0.5	73.3	+0.6
	Traditional	531	96.5 (4.7)	(0.188)	72.7	(0.893)
2014–15	Charter	511	96.1 (5.3)	+0.1	-	-
	Traditional	511	96.0 (5.6)	(0.600)	-	

Source. Public Education Information Management System 2012–13 to 2014–15 data.
Note. Attendance rate (percentage of days attended) was calculated by dividing the total number of days present by the total number of days member. Two models were run with attendance rate untransformed (as percentage) and transformed (arcsine-transformation). Results across both models did not differ and the untransformed rates are presented here. State average attendance data were retrieved from the Texas Academic Performance Reports: https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2015/state.pdf. 2014–15 state attendance data were not available at the time of the writing of this report.

Conclusions

During 2012–13 to 2014–15, students in Grades 4–8 at high-performing charter schools had, on average, higher scores on the grade-level STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading test than matched students from traditional public schools. The benefits from attending a high-performing charter school in 2012–13, in particular, were most notable in 2013–14 (Year 2) on STAAR-Mathematics and in 2014–15 (Year 3) on STAAR-Reading in which statistical differences between the groups were found. Although due to small sample sizes the differences were not statistically examined, students enrolled in high-performing charter schools generally demonstrated lower scores than matched students enrolled in traditional neighborhood public schools on STAAR Algebra and English II EOC exams in both 2012–13 (Year 1), 2013–14 (Year 2), and 2014–15 (Year 3), but performed higher on the STAAR English I EOC exam from 2013–14 (Year 2) to 2014–15 (Year 3). Results of the STAAR EOC data were inconclusive and should be interpreted with caution due to small sample sizes.

When examining attendance data, students attending high-performing charter schools exhibited higher attendance rates in 2013–14 and 2014–15 (Years 2 and 3), but the differences were not statistically significant. Results, however, were significant for grade-level promotion, with significantly fewer charter school students promoted to the next grade level from 2012–13 (Year 1) to 2013–14 (Year 2) than students in traditional neighborhood schools. This difference diminished between 2013–14 (Year 2) and 2014–15 (Year 3) with charter school students just as likely to be promoted as students in traditional neighborhood schools.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Outcomes Comparing Competitively-Funded vs. Noncompetitively-Funded Grantee Charter Schools

Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question 5 (RQ5), which is: To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between charter schools approved and funded through the 2011–2015 competitive grant process and those approved for noncompetitive funding in 2010–2011? The purpose of this analysis was to determine if the introduction of a competitive funding process contributed to the establishment of higher-performing students and charter schools.

Data Sources

TEA Extant Data

To address RQ5, student achievement, attendance, and grade-level retention data at both the student-level and school-level from competitively-funded charter schools were compared to relevant student outcomes for a set of noncompetitively-funded charter schools. In the student-level analysis, students who had fall demographic data and took the STAAR-Reading exam and STAAR-Mathematics exam in Grades 3–8 during the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years were examined separately from students who took the STAAR EOC exams during those years. Attendance data from PEIMS during these years for students in all grade levels were also examined. In the school-level analysis, trend analyses were conducted from 2011–12 to 2014–15 using the aggregated STAAR data that included all students tested. Attendance rates were based on student attendance data for the entire school year for students in Grades K–12.[17] Grade-level retention rates of students who were retained in grade from one year were calculated by comparing student attendance at the end of one year to fall enrollment in the next year.[18] Analyses included students across all grade levels. In addition, for the two latter outcomes of interest the state average trends are included to facilitate some comparisons between the competitively-funded charter schools and the schools that were funded under the noncompetitive process.

Limitations

One limitation was that the noncompetitive schools were open longer than the competitive schools, particularly those in Cohort III. In addition, the results presented in this chapter were based on propensity score analyses that accounted for differences in charter school and traditional school students' observed characteristics in 2011–12. Although this analysis accounted for several student demographic and academic differences, there are other

[17] The student-level attendance analysis results in the previous two chapters (Chapters 3 & 4) and Chapter 5 are based on fall enrollees' attendance data at PreK–Grade 12. In the school-level analyses, the attendance analyses are based on available school level retention data for grades K-12 (per TEA website https://tea.texas.gov/acctres/retention_index.html)
[18] This was the approach used for calculating promotion using available retention data.

characteristics such as student motivation, self-selection, or parental influences to attend a charter school for which we did not account and may contribute to the results.

Data Analysis

ANOVA and logistic regression analyses were conducted using data from competitively-funded Public Charter School Start-Up grantees from Cohorts I, II, and III from this CSP grant period and the last cohort of Public Charter School Start-Up grantees that were funded through a noncompetitive process during the previous CSP grant period. For both groups of charter schools, student-level data were analyzed for both the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years, and trend analyses were conducted for the school-level analysis between the 2011–12 and 2014–15 school years.

ANOVA was conducted for the STAAR and attendance outcome variables to compare all students from the Cohort I, Cohort II, and Cohort III competitively-funded charter schools to the group of students from the noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Main effects of cohort membership were also examined. Separate analyses were performed for 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years and examined the proportion of students: (a) who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the grade-level STAAR-Reading and Mathematics exams, as well as on the STAAR English I, English II, and Algebra I EOC exams, and (b) who had an attendance rate at or above the state attendance rate in 2013–14.

Table 5.1 displays the number of 2013–14 and 2014–15 schools and students for all three cohorts that were funded under the competitive process and the last cohort of charter schools that were funded under the noncompetitive process. It should be noted that the group of Cohort III schools funded under the competitive process were in their first year of operation in 2013–14 and consisted of a smaller number of schools than the groups of Cohort I and Cohort II schools. Table F1 and Table F2 in Appendix F show the demographic characteristics of the two analytic samples for this analysis (based on their PEIMS fall enrollment data).

The two types of charter schools differed somewhat in their demographic makeup. Across the noncompetitively-funded charter schools, the racial/ethnic composition of students in 2013–14 was 54% Hispanic and African American students combined, 30% White and 13% Asian students (see Appendix F, Table F1), however across competitively-funded charter schools the percentage of Hispanic and African American students was larger (74%) while 20% of students were White. The percentage of Asian students attending a new competitively-funded charter school campus was, on average, only 3% of the entire student population, which was substantially lower than the percentage of Asian students at noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Furthermore, in 2013–14 competitively-funded charter schools served more students identified as economically disadvantaged and at-risk (on average, 63% and 41%, respectively) than noncompetitively-funded charter schools (42% and 28%, respectively).

Demographic differences existed among the three cohorts of the competitively-funded schools as well: Cohort I schools had the largest percentage of Hispanic and African American students combined (78%) followed by Cohort II (72%) and Cohort III (69%). The percentage of White students ranged from 16% (Cohort I) to 25% (Cohort III). Additionally, Cohort I and Cohort II charter schools together served the largest percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged and at-risk (on average, 66% and 50%, respectively) compared to Cohort III

charter schools that served 44% of students identified as economically disadvantaged and 11% identified as at-risk. The demographic composition of the 2014–15 students followed the same pattern (see Appendix F, Table F2). Although these differences are important to note, they were controlled for in the analysis to ensure these differences were not accounting for any observed differences between the groups.

Table 5.1. Number of Schools and Enrolled Students in Cohorts I, II, and III of the Competitively-Funded Charter Schools and Noncompetitively-Funded Charter Schools, Fall 2014 and Fall 2015

	Fall 2014		Fall 2015	
School Group	# Schools	# Students	# Schools	# Students
Cohort I	14	5,515	13	5,810
Cohort II	19	6,591	18	7,110
Cohort III	5	1,184	5	1,462
Noncompetitively-Funded	7	4,123	7	4,482
Total	**45**	**17,413**	**43**	**18,864**

Source. Public Education Information Management System, Fall 2013 and Fall 2014.

Academic Performance

Students from Cohort I, Cohort II, and Cohort III competitively-funded charter schools were compared to the group of students from noncompetitively-funded charter schools on their average STAAR scores after adjusting for several student characteristics. Tables F3 and F4 in Appendix F include the results of the analysis based on students' average STAAR scores and the proportion of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard. Tables F3 and F4 also include individual comparison results between students at each cohort of competitively-funded charter schools and the students attending noncompetitively-funded charter schools. In addition, to compare outcomes across all groups, Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 illustrate the percentage of students in Grades 3–8 who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading for all students in competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools, and for students in each cohort of grantee charter schools. As an additional comparison, each figure also includes results for students in the Cohort I and Cohort II competitively-funded charter schools that were identified as high-performing in 2013–14 and 2014–15 (the same sample of schools analyzed for Research Question 3). The results discussed in this section are based on comparing all students from the Cohort I, Cohort II, and Cohort III competitively-funded charter schools to the group of students from the noncompetitively-funded charter schools, and from comparing the group of students from the noncompetitively-funded charter schools to the students from the Cohort I and Cohort II competitively-funded charter schools that have been in operation for a longer time than Cohort III charter schools.

Overall, a higher percentage of students in the noncompetitively-funded charter schools met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading in both 2013–14 and 2014–15. Across all three competitively-funded grantees, students performed significantly lower on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading compared to students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools as measured by STAAR scale scores and the percentage of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard. In 2013–14, performance among students in Cohort I, Cohort

II, and Cohort III at competitively-funded charter schools was, on average, 74.4 points lower on STAAR-Mathematics and 74.2 points lower on STAAR-Reading than students attending noncompetitively-funded charter schools. There were also significantly fewer students in competitively-funded charter schools meeting the satisfactory performance standards in math and reading (59% and 69%, respectively) compared to 80% and 85% of students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools, as shown in Figure 5.1.

Additionally, a smaller percentage of students in competitively-funded charter schools than noncompetitively-funded charter schools in 2013–14 met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the three STAAR EOC exams—Algebra I, English I, and English II—ranging from a 6.5 percentage point difference on STAAR Algebra I EOC to an 11.2 percentage point different on STAAR English II EOC as illustrated in Figure 5.3. Students in competitively-funded charter schools that took the STAAR EOC exams in 2013–14 also demonstrated significantly lower performance than the students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools based on scale score differences (see Table F3).

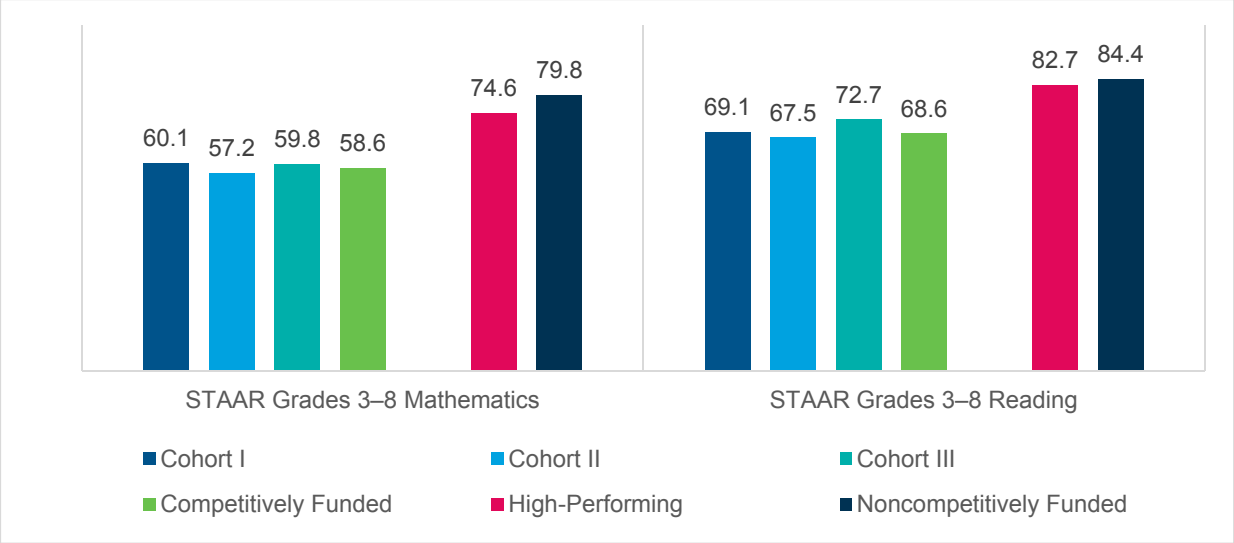
Likewise, similar performance differences were also noted in 2014–15 on STAAR-Mathematics, STAAR-Reading, and STAAR EOC tests with students from competitively-funded charter schools performing lower than students from noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Overall, across all students at competitively-funded charter schools, performance was 66.8 and 53.5 scale score points lower for the students from competitively-funded charter schools, which were significant differences. Further, rates for students from competitively-funded schools meeting the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading exams are 16 and 9 percentage points lower, respectively, than the rate exhibited by the noncompetitively-funded schools, but this percentage point difference was only significant for STAAR-Mathematics.

Although these differences are important to note, it's possible that some of the differences found among these groups may be due to the length of time the noncompetitively-funded schools have been in operation in comparison to the competitively-funded schools. Schools that have sustained operation over a longer period may be functioning at a higher level operationally and may be having a greater impact on students than newer, less established charter schools. To examine this possibility, results between Cohort I and II competitively-funded high-performing charter schools identified for Research Question 3 and noncompetitively-funded charter schools were examined as well. Not only have these schools been open longer than the Cohort III schools, they showed initial signs of success with students.

Analysis found that the scale score differences were smaller between the students in high-performing Cohort I and II competitively-funded charter schools and students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools than had been noted in the previous analysis. In 2013–14, students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools performed slightly, but still significantly lower, on STAAR-Mathematics and Reading, and STAAR Algebra I EOC than students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools, with the scale score differences ranging from 7.1 to 60 scale score points. On the other hand, students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools significantly outperformed the students from noncompetitively-funded charter schools on the STAAR English I and II EOC exams. In 2014–15, the students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools also demonstrated significantly higher

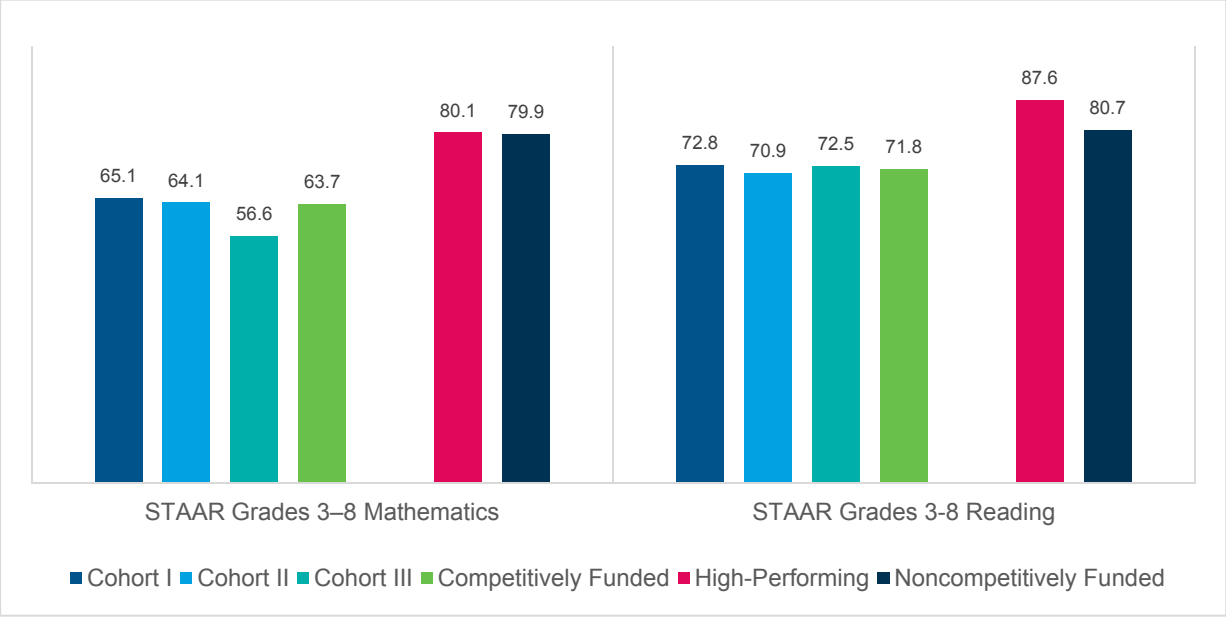
performance on STAAR-Reading, STAAR English I EOC, and STAAR English II EOC exam. On the STAAR EOC exams, in particular, more students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools (14 percentage points higher on STAAR English I EOC and 10 percentage points higher on STAAR English II EOC) met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard. While positive, these results should be interpreted with caution as findings may be due only to the high-performing status of the competitively-funded charter schools and not to the competitive nature of the grant.

Figure 5.1. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding at the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard on Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics and Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading, 2013–14



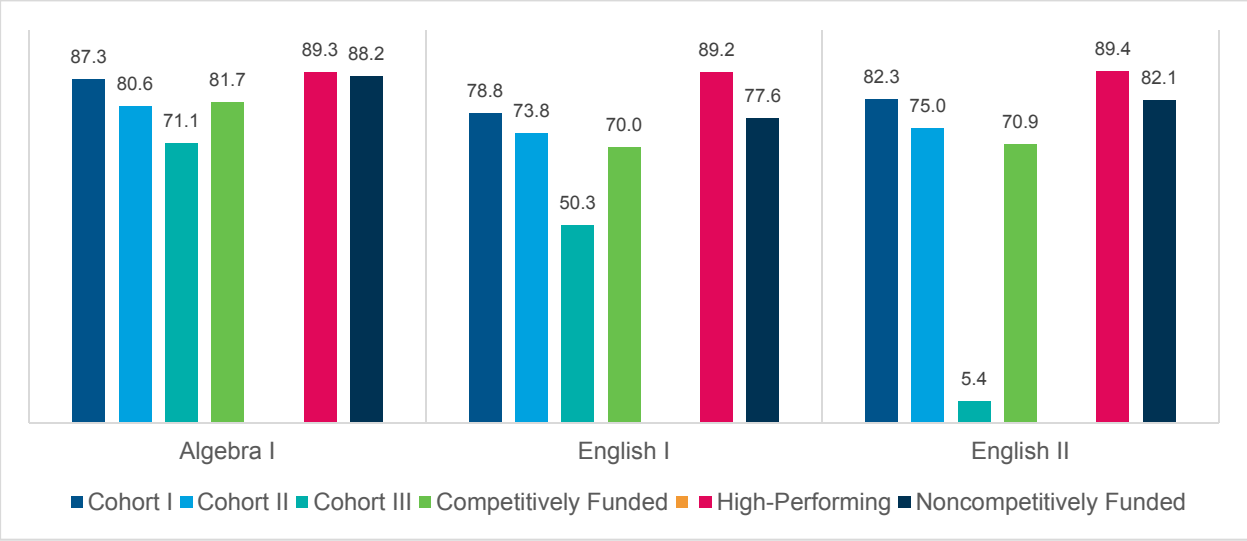
Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2013–14. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Figure 5.2. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding at the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard on Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics and Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading, 2014–15



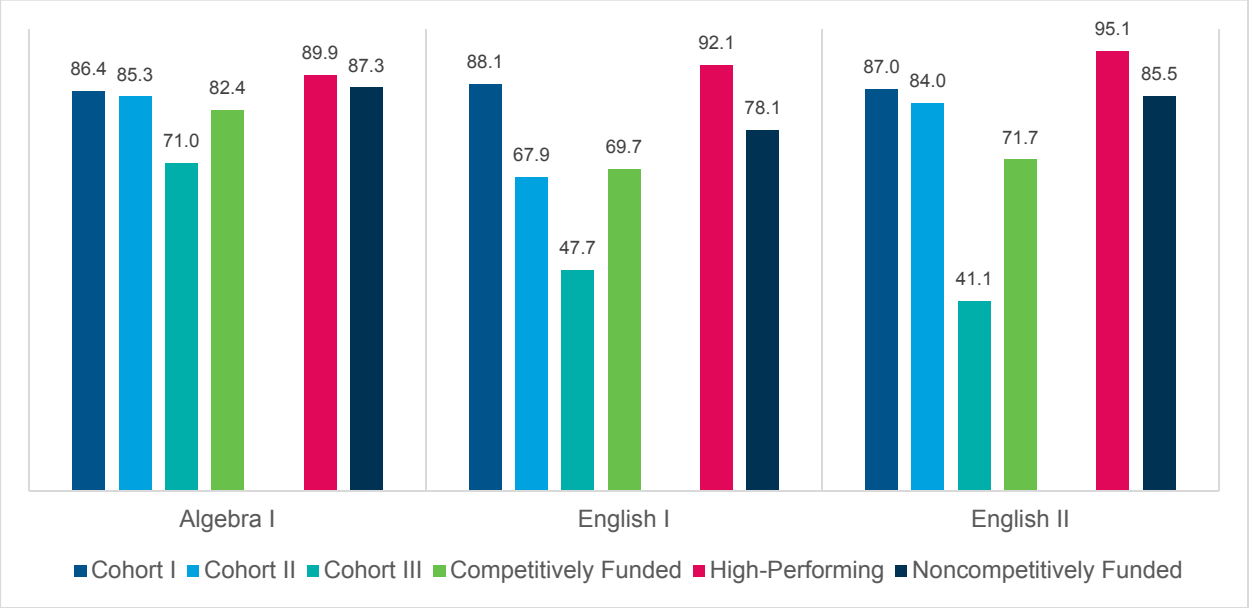
Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2014–15. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Figure 5.3. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding at the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard on STAAR EOC Exams, 2013–14



Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2013–14. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Figure 5.4. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding at the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard on STAAR EOC Exams, 2014–15

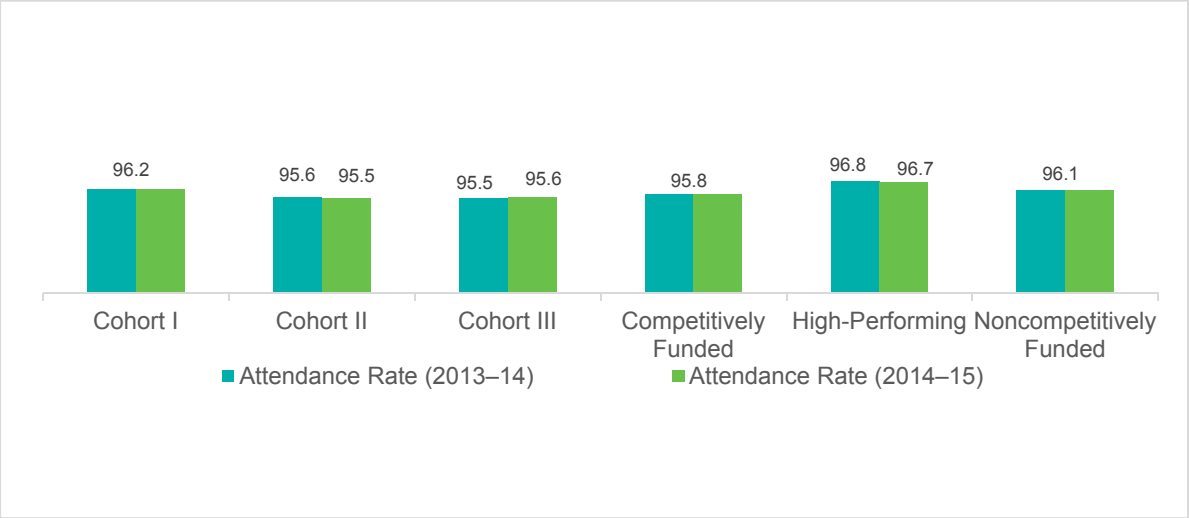


Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2014–15. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Attendance

Overall, across competitively-funded charter school cohorts, attendance rates ranged from 95.5% to 96.2% (on average, 95.8% for all cohorts) both in 2013–14 and 2014–15. The attendance rates of students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools were, on average, slightly higher at 96.1%, however this was not a significant difference (Appendix F, Table F5). At high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools, attendance rates were 96.8% and 96.7% in 2013–14 and 2014–15 respectively. When compared to noncompetitively-funded charter schools, the high-performing schools had a significantly higher attendance rate in both years.

Figure 5.5. Attendance Rates of All Enrolled Students by Cohort, 2013–14 and 2014–15

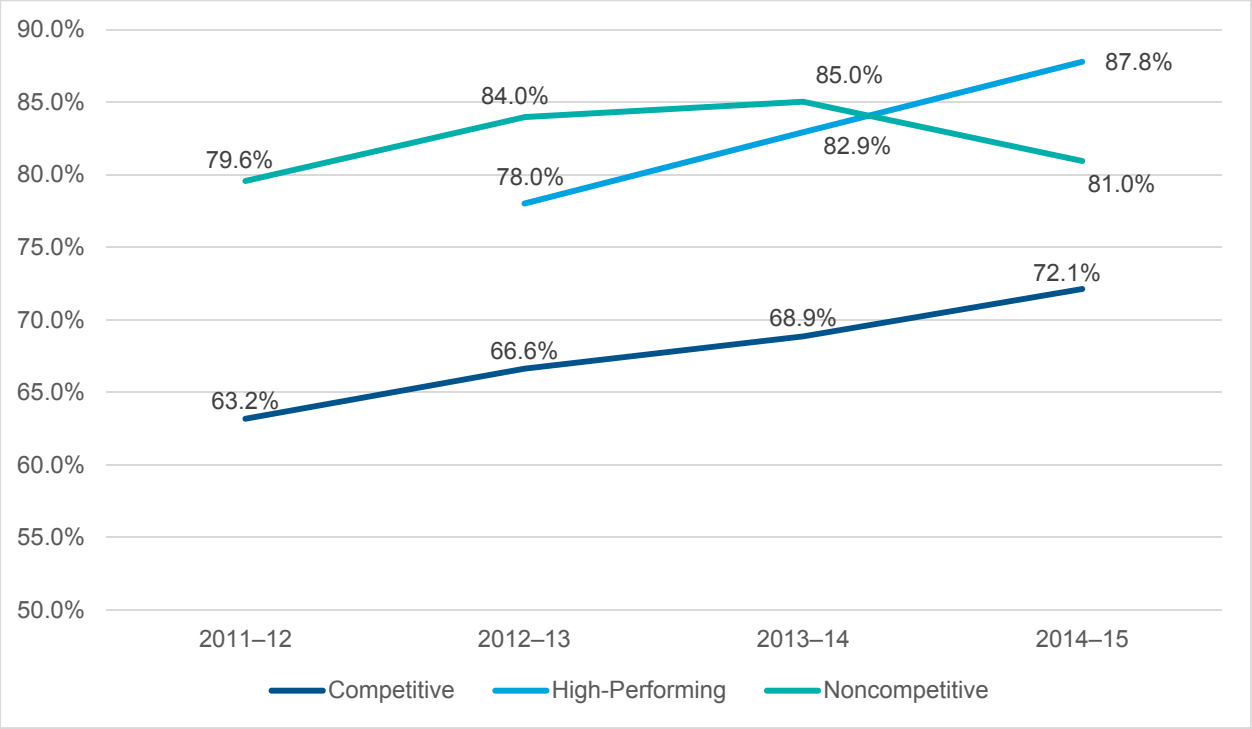


Source. Public Education Information Management System, 2013–14 and 2014–15.

School-level Analyses

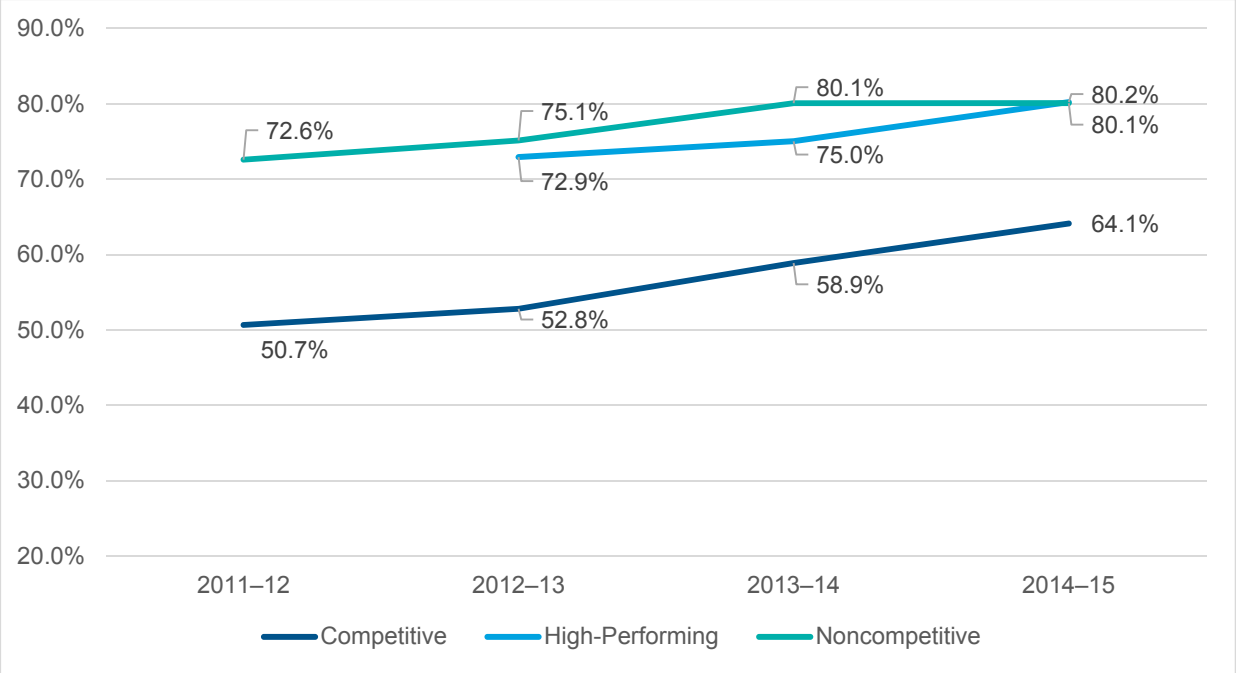
Figures 5.6 and 5.7 illustrate the results of the school-level trend analysis. The results indicate that for competitively-funded charter schools the rates of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard were generally lower than at noncompetitively-funded charter schools, but the rates increased over time at a higher rate. From the start-up year, 2011–12, to 2014–15 the percentage of students in Grades 3–8 attending competitively-funded charter schools who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics increased by 9% and 13%, respectively. As a reminder, the 2011–12 sample of schools includes only Cohort I schools and the latter years include the additions of Cohort II (2012–13) and Cohort III (2013–14) schools with the 2013–14 and 2014–15 samples including all three cohorts. The sample of noncompetitively-funded schools, on the other hand, did not exhibit as steep of increase in percentage students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR-Mathematics as in competitively-funded schools, and they demonstrated only minimal gains on STAAR-Reading over time. For high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools, the percentage of Grade 3–8 students who met standard on STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics also rose over time from 2012–13 to 2014–15 by 10% and 7%, respectively (in 2011–12 there were not any competitively-funded charter schools identified as sustaining high performance; thus results are not presented for that year). Most notably by 2014–15, the percentage of students that met standard on STAAR-Reading at high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools had surpassed the percentage of students that met standard at noncompetitively-funded charter schools by 7 percentage points. For STAAR-Mathematics, although the percentage of students that met standard at high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools grew at a higher rate than at noncompetitively-funded schools over time, by 2014–15 they essentially equaled each other.

Figure 5.6. Aggregated Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading, 2011–12 to 2014–15



Source. State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Aggregated Spring Administration, 2011–12 to 2014–15 data.

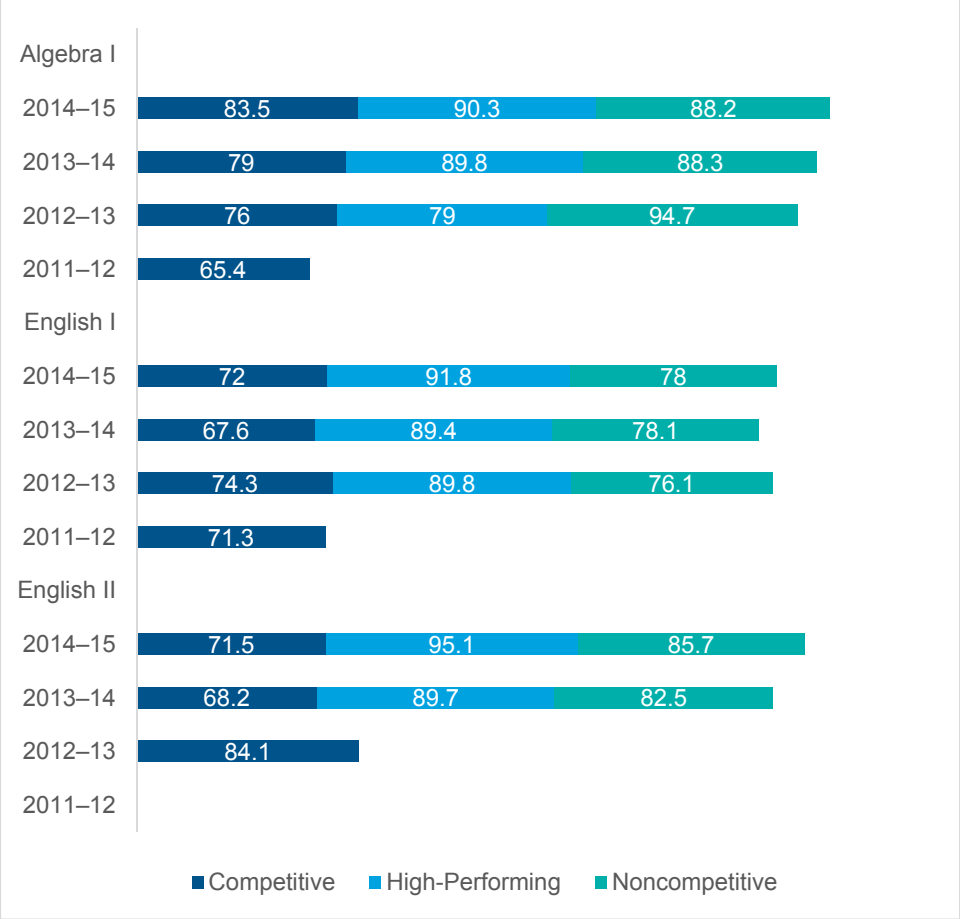
Figure 5.7. Aggregated Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics, 2011–12 to 2014–15



Source. State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Aggregated Spring Administration, 2011–12 to 2014–15 data.

Figure 5.8 and Table F7 in Appendix F display aggregated school-level STAAR data for the students who took the STAAR Algebra I EOC, English I EOC, and English II EOC exams. Considering the small sample of noncompetitively-funded charter schools (fewer than 3 schools) that had students who took the STAAR EOC exams in earlier years as well as the lack of 2011–12 results for the sample of high-performing schools, the school-level trend analyses for STAAR EOC exams were conducted only for the 2012–13 to 2014–15 period. Between 2012–13 and 2014–15, the percentage of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on STAAR Algebra I EOC at competitively-funded and high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools increased by 8% and 11%, respectively, while noncompetitively-funded charter schools had a 7% decline in during this same period. For the STAAR English I and II EOCs, there were neither sharp increases nor decreases in performance observed between 2012–13 and 2014–15 for any group, but high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools had 90% or more of their students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard in both subjects in each year examined.

Figure 5.8. STAAR Aggregated Data, STAAR EOC Exams, 2011–12 to 2014–15



Source. State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Aggregated Spring Administration, 2011–12 to 2014–15 data.
Note. Data were missing for some years (e.g., 2012–13 English II EOC).

In addition, competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools were compared on their overall grade-level retention and attendance rates at the school-level across all grade levels (see Appendix F, Table F8). From 2011–12 to 2013–14, a higher percentage of students from noncompetitively-funded charter schools than at competitively-funded charter schools were retained in grade across all three years; however, by 2013–14 the retention rates were almost equal (3.2% compared to 3.4%) and were both were only slightly above the state rate (3.1%). The overall retention rate for high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools was lower than both other groups in both 2012–13 and 2013–14 and lower (2.4%) than the state rate in 2013–14 (3.1%).

Table F8 also shows the school-level attendance rates for 2011–12 through 2013–14. The overall attendance rate across all grade levels at competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools decreased slightly between 2012–13 and 2013–14 and was lower than at high-performing, competitively-funded charter school in both years. Additionally, the attendance rate remained higher and steady at high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools during this period and was above the state average in both years.

Conclusions

The results of the analyses of student-level and school-level academic achievement show differences between competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools for students in Grades 3–8 on STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics exams. Students in competitively-funded schools performed significantly lower on the 2013–14 STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading exams compared to students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Fewer students in competitively-funded charter schools, on average, also met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the three STAAR EOC exams in Algebra I, English I, and English II. However, the school-level analyses of the STAAR aggregated data revealed that the competitively-funded charter schools increased in the performance rates of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard from 2011–12 to 2014–15 at a higher rate, while the sample of noncompetitively-funded charter schools did not exhibit a steep increase in the percentage of students who met standard on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading over time. Likewise, significant performance differences were also noted in 2014–15 on STAAR-Mathematics, STAAR-Reading, and STAAR EOC exams with competitively-funded charter students performing lower than students in noncompetitively-funded charters.

When comparing the students in high-performing Cohort I and Cohort II competitively-funded charter schools and students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools, scale score differences on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading were smaller in 2013–14 than had been seen when comparing all competitively-funded charter schools with noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Additionally, students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools performed significantly higher on the STAAR English I EOC and the STAAR English II EOC exams. In 2014–15, the students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools demonstrated significantly higher performance on STAAR-Reading, STAAR English I, and English II EOC exams.

The attendance rates of fall enrollees across all grade levels in noncompetitively-funded charter schools were, on average, slightly lower compared to the students attending competitively-

funded charter schools. Also, when compared to students from high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools, all competitively-funded charter schools had a larger number of students attending school in 2013–14 and 2014–15. In addition, both competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools experienced a decrease in their attendance rate from 2012–13 to 2013–14, while high-performing, competitively-funded schools maintained the same attendance rate which was higher than the state average in both years. Lastly, in 2012–13 and 2013–14 the retention rates of students at noncompetitively-funded charter schools were higher than those at competitively-funded charter schools although both were slightly above the state average in 2013–14. The retention rate of students at high-performing charter schools were lower than for students in the other groups in both 2012–13 and 2013–14 but above the state-average in 2012–13 and then below the state average in 2013–14.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to present comprehensive findings for the five-year evaluation of TEA's Public Charter School Start-Up Grant program that concluded July 31, 2015. Findings presented in this report based on data through the 2014–15 school year focused on all Research Questions 1-5 for grantees in Cohorts I-IV. Qualitative and quantitative data had been gathered from multiple sources to document and understand charter school planning, initial implementation, and potential best practices in how grantees used Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds, as well as outcomes. Major findings are highlighted in the following summary, and key takeaways are presented.

Summary of Findings

Use of Public Charter School Start-Up Funds

Research Question 1: In what specific ways do grantees use Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds?

Public Charter School Start-Up Grantees' use of funds for planning and implementation of programs was examined for trends across cohorts and charter types. The findings were based primarily on two data sources—the Expenditure Data and the Expenditure Survey—each of which yielded different types of data. The Expenditure Data provided a broad overview of grantee spending, and the Expenditure Survey was developed to obtain more specific information on products and services within more general expenditure categories where grantees might be spending funds. Grant application amendments were also reviewed and served as a supplementary source.

Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee spending throughout each cohort's respective grant period revealed that needs did not change drastically across cohorts, and charter type did not connote a particular spending pattern for planning and implementation of programs. On the basis of findings from the analysis of the Expenditure Data, no cohort-wide patterns were found in grantee spending in relation to planning and implementation, although some evidence of differences in spending by charter type was apparent.

No cohort-based patterns were found in grantee spending by expenditure category, but Public Charter School Start-Up Grant spending by expenditure category was related to charter school type. An analysis of Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee spending by expenditure category using the Expenditure Data also revealed no cohort-wide patterns. Compared to other charter types, grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to spend grant funds across a wider number of categories.

Analysis of Expenditure Data suggested that a pattern in spending differences across expenditure categories existed based on charter school type. When Public Charter School Start-Up Grant spending across expenditure categories was examined across charter type based on the Expenditure Survey, this analysis mirrored the same patterns that were apparent in findings from the Expenditure Data. Compared to other charter types, grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools spent the highest percentage of grant funds for supplies and materials (43%). Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools and new schools

designated under an existing charter spent about the same percentage of grant funds on payroll costs. Grantees operating campus charters spent the largest percentage on capital outlay.

Patterns in spending on individual products and services may be more attributable to charter type, rather than cohort, adding evidence to the conclusion that grantees with different charter types spent grant funds differently. A closer look at Public Charter School Start-Up Grant spending on individual products and services using Expenditure Survey responses indicated that in terms of school facilities and equipment, at least two-thirds of grantees operating schools under all three types of charters spend funds on classroom furniture. Nearly all grantees in all charter types spent grant funds on at least one product or service related to instructional programs and materials. Grantees operating open-enrollment charter schools were more likely to spend grant funds on school facilities and equipment as grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter or campus charter schools. Grantees operating campus charters were more likely than grantees operating open-enrollment charters and new schools designated under an existing charter to spend grant funds on professional development and on other services. Grantees operating new schools designated under an existing charter were least likely of the three charter types to spend grant funds on professional development and on other services. This is likely due to new schools designated under an existing charter having access to professional development and other services through their larger organization.

Potential Grantee Best Practices

Research Question 2: What best practices can be identified in how grantees use funds?

Six potential best practices of how grantees used funds were identified as a result of data analysis and are listed below. These practices were initially reported in the first comprehensive report and carried through once the analysis of data from site visits to all Cohort III grantees (none of which were considered high-performing based on previously described criteria) were analyzed for this report. Although these best practices are based on preliminary findings from three of the four cohorts in this study (Cohorts I, II, and III), some implications can be drawn.

Spending Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds to establish and support school culture and climate helped foster engagement and ownership. Having a clear vision from the outset of the school culture and climate that will be promoted and then devoting a proportion of funds to making this vision apparent for students, teachers, and others in the school community helped foster engagement and ownership.

Building a diverse support network, specifically to assist with a variety of processes, including finance, business management, and compliance with TEA guidelines, helped with effective start-up implementation. Recognizing aspects of program development and implementation where support might be needed to build a more effective program is crucial. This strategy can make tasks seem less insurmountable, especially if guidance from experts or from those experienced in a particular area allows grantees to focus energy on other key areas that need attention.

Demonstrating flexibility in planning and use of funds throughout the grant period helped grantees with implementation; an important consideration for this practice was

maintaining the overall vision for the charter, while being open to changes. Successful grantees exhibited a degree of flexibility in implementation and in how funds were used to strike a delicate balance between reinforcing a school vision established at the onset and being open to important adjustments that may emerge over time. Of equal importance is the implementation modification process; specifically, who is involved in decision making, and what data are used to prompt changes in implementation. Two aspects of the best practice of flexibility in use of funds were prevalent across grantees. First, budget revisions were carefully considered through deliberate processes such as needs assessments. Second, changes proposed through amendments did not alter, but instead enhanced, the overall vision.

High-performing start-up grantees used evidence to use funds to inform practice, particularly in making decisions about policies, activities, and purchases. Relying on evidence from assessments and other data sources can help inform grantees of what is working and where improvements are needed, thus helping to target instructional and management approaches. This best practice speaks again to a process of continuous improvement and refinement, based on feedback from stakeholders and student needs.

Integrating technology with curriculum and instructional approaches helped grantees address gaps and reinforce their school models. This best practice goes further than simply having technology available. By closely and thoughtfully integrating technology with the overall instructional approach, gaps across subject areas can be addressed and the school model can be reinforced for teachers and students. Implementation of this best practice can have important benefits for low-income students, who may have less access to technology outside of the school environment. In addition, overall student engagement can be improved by appropriate technology integration.

Using funds to create a collaborative relationship among stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and parents helped improve the school culture. Involving teachers and other stakeholders in decision making encourages a collective school culture and buy-in from staff.

Throughout the best practices described, a recurring theme of fostering a collaborative environment is apparent. Being open to feedback from experts, teachers, and parents is important for improvement of processes and better outcomes. By involving stakeholders, a community of individuals invested in the charter school's success is established, and students benefit from an environment shaped to their learning needs.

Outcomes of High-Performing Grantee Charter Schools

Comparing Outcomes Within High-Performing Grantee Charter Schools

Research Question 3: Within high-performing charter schools, to what extent do student outcomes differ by charter school type, mission, or focus?

Student academic achievement outcomes differed to some extent within high-performing charter schools based on charter type, but overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among charter type and academic performance. In 2013–14, students in Grade 3–8 who were enrolled in new schools designated under an existing charter

and open-enrollment charter schools performed significantly higher on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading than the students who attended campus charter schools. On the STAAR EOC exams, students from new schools designated under an existing charter and campus charter schools performed better than students from open-enrollment charter schools, but they did not differ from each other. In 2014–15, there were also differences observed between students from new schools designated under an existing charter and students from campus charter schools, with students from campus charter schools performing higher.

Student academic achievement outcomes differed to some extent within high-performing charter schools based on charter mission, but overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among mission and academic performance. When academic achievement was examined for students attending high-performing charter schools with a generalist focus compared to schools with a specialist focus, it was found that students in Grades 3–8 attending charter schools with a generalist focus performed significantly lower in 2013–14 on the STAAR-Reading test, but had notably higher performances on the EOC exams. Also, in 2014–15 generalist schools performed higher in mathematics than specialist schools. These significant differences in the EOC exams were also observed in 2014–15 with at least 98% of students from schools with a generalist focus meeting the satisfactory performance standards.

Attendance outcomes differed to some extent by charter type, but overall there were no consistent findings to explain the relationship among charter type and attendance. Among the three different types of charter schools, students from open-enrollment charter schools and new schools designated under an existing charter had a significantly higher average daily attendance rate in 2013–14 compared to students from campus charter schools. In 2014–15, the rates of daily attendance among the three groups did not exhibit any differences. In 2013–14, high-performing charter schools with a specialist focus had a significantly higher attendance rate compared to charter schools with a generalist focus. The opposite was observed the following year.

Comparing High-Performing Grantee Charter Schools and Neighborhood Schools

Research Question 4: To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools?

Academic achievement outcomes differed between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools to some extent over time; however, results were inconclusive due to small sample sizes. During 2012–13 to 2014–15, students in Grades 4–8 at high-performing charter schools had, on average, higher scores on the grade-level STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading test than matched students from traditional public schools. The benefits from attending a high-performing charter school in 2012–13, in particular, were most notable in 2013–14 (Year 2) on STAAR-Mathematics and in 2014–15 (Year 3) on STAAR-Reading, with students at high-performing charter schools scoring significantly higher than students attending traditional public schools. Although due to small sample sizes the differences were not statistically examined, students enrolled in high-performing charter schools generally demonstrated lower scores than matched students enrolled in traditional neighborhood public schools on STAAR EOC exams in both 2012–13 (Year 1) and 2013–14 (Year 2) but performed higher in 2014–15 (Year 3).

Attendance and grade-level promotion outcomes differed between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools to some extent over time. When examining attendance data, students attending high-performing charter schools exhibited higher attendance rates in 2013–14 and 2014–15 (Years 2 and 3), but the differences were not statistically significant. Results, however, were significant for grade-level promotion, with significantly fewer charter school student promoted to the next grade level from 2012–13 (Year 1) to 2013–14 (Year 2) than students in traditional neighborhood schools. This difference disappeared between 2013–14 (Year 2) and 2014–15 (Year 3) with charter school students just as likely to be promoted as students in traditional neighborhood schools. This difference may be explained by the various retention policies that were implemented across districts. These district retention policies were not examined as part of this analysis but may have contributed to the findings.

Outcomes of All Competitively-Funded Grantee Charter Schools

Research Question 5: To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between charter schools approved and funded through the 2010–2015 competitive grant process and those approved for noncompetitive funding in 2010–2011?

Academic achievement outcomes differed between students in competitively-funded and students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools to some extent across grade levels, with students in competitively-funded charter schools performing lower than students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Students in Grades 3–8 in competitively-funded schools performed significantly lower on the 2013–14 STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading exams compared to students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Fewer students in competitively-funded charter schools, on average, also met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the three STAAR EOC exams in Algebra I, English I, and English II. Likewise, significant performance differences were also noted in 2014–15 on STAAR-Mathematics, STAAR-Reading, and STAAR EOC exams with competitively-funded charter students performing lower than students in noncompetitively-funded charters.

Students in competitively-funded charter schools exhibited greater rates of increases in academic achievement outcomes over time than students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools. On a whole, competitively-funded charter schools rapidly increased in the performance rates of students who met the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on Grade 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading from 2011–12 to 2014–15, while the sample of noncompetitively-funded charter schools did not exhibit a steep increase in the percentage of students who met standard on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading over time. By 2014–15, competitively-funded charter schools were outperforming noncompetitively-funded charter schools on STAAR-Reading and equaling performance on STAAR-Mathematics.

Academic achievement outcomes of students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools differed significantly as time progressed from those of students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools. When comparing the students in high-performing Cohort I and Cohort II competitively-funded charter schools and students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools, scale score differences on STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading were smaller in 2013–14 than had been seen when comparing all competitively-funded charter

schools with noncompetitively-funded charter schools. Additionally, students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools performed significantly higher on the STAAR English I EOC and the STAAR English II EOC exams than students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools. In 2014–15, the students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools demonstrated significantly higher performance on STAAR-Reading, STAAR English I EOC, and STAAR English II EOC exams.

Attendance outcomes of students in high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools and of students in noncompetitively-funded charter schools differed to some extent, but there were no consistent patterns over time. The attendance rates of fall enrollees across all grade levels in noncompetitively-funded charter schools were, on average, slightly lower compared to the students attending competitively-funded charter schools. On the other hand, when compared to students from high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools, competitively-funded charter schools had a larger number of students attending school in 2013–14 and 2014–15. In addition, both competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools experienced a decrease in their attendance rate from 2012–13 to 2013–14, while high-performing, competitively-funded schools maintained the same attendance rate which was higher than the state average in both years. Lastly, in 2012–13 and 2013–14 the retention rates of students at noncompetitively-funded charter schools were higher than those at competitively-funded charter schools although both were slightly above the state average in 2013–14. The retention rate of students at high-performing charter schools was lower than for students in the other groups in both 2012–13 and 2013–14 but above the state average in 2012–13 and then below the state average in 2013–14.

Limitations

Limitations related to identifying potential best practices were related the selection of grantees on which findings were based and the primary data source used for this analysis. Because of these limitations, the evaluation team sought to identify and describe approaches that successful grantees employed and found promising, rather than providing conclusive evidence that all charter school start-ups should follow these practices in order to be successful.

Sample size played a role in limitations of the outcome analyses conducted for this evaluation. The low number of high-performing grantee charter schools led to an exploratory nature of the analysis of outcomes, as well as the reliance on the coding framework by Renzulli, Barr, & Paino (2015) used to categorize charter schools into charter mission types. Also, when comparing grantee charter schools and neighborhood schools, the students enrolled in studied charter schools were not randomly selected and the pool of comparison students was drawn from neighborhood public schools. As a result of all of these limitations, findings about the outcomes of charter schools presented in this report should be interpreted with caution. Lastly, noncompetitive schools were open longer than the competitive schools, particularly those in Cohort III.

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Appendix A: Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Descriptions

Appendix A: Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Descriptions

Table A1. Description of the 38 Cohorts I–IV Public Charter School Start-up Grant Recipients Included in the Evaluation

Charter School Name and Charter Holder Organization	Target Area for Cohort Year 1	Charter Type	Projected Enrollment and Grades Served in Year 1	Number of Students Served from Schools "In Need of Improvement"[a]	Projected Staff Members in Year 1
Cohort I Grantees (n=11)					
Arrow Academy Leadership Education Foundation	Houston and Bryan areas	Open-enrollment	1,000 students Grades K–12	45 students Grades 6–8	45
Compass Academy Compass Academy	Ector County area	Open-enrollment	476 students Grades K–4	9 students Grades K–2	19
Highland Park Critical Thinking Campus San Antonio ISD	San Antonio area	Campus charter	801 students Grades PreK–5	0 students	80
Infinity Preparatory Middle School Uplift Education	Irving area	New school designation under existing charter	450 students Grades 6–8	0 students	10
Leadership Prep School Leadership Prep School	Frisco area	Open-enrollment	350 students Grades K–6	0 students	15
Newman International Academy of Arlington Newman International Academy	Arlington area	Open-enrollment	750 students Grades PreK–11	190 students Grades PreK–9	28
Pinnacle Preparatory Academy Uplift Education	Dallas area	New school designation under existing charter	286 students Grades K–3	15 students Grades K–1	8
Premier Learning Academy Premier Learning Academy, Inc.	La Marque area	Open-enrollment	560 students Grades K–12	0 students	24

Charter School Name and Charter Holder Organization	Target Area for Cohort Year 1	Charter Type	Projected Enrollment and Grades Served in Year 1	Number of Students Served from Schools "In Need of Improvement"[a]	Projected Staff Members in Year 1
Rhodes Technology and Media Charter School San Antonio ISD	San Antonio area	Campus charter	821 students Grades 6–8	370 students Grades 6–8	80
Travis Early College High School San Antonio ISD	San Antonio area	Campus charter	450 students Grades 9–12	120 students Grades 9–12	18
William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity (WALIPP) Preparatory Academy WALIPP	Houston area	Open-enrollment	550 students Grades 6–10	37 students Grades 6–8	16
Cohort II Grantees (n=14)					
Austin Achieve Public Schools Austin Achieve Public Schools, Inc.	Austin area	Open-enrollment	150 students Grade 6	50 students	10
Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy Fallbrook Community Development Center	Aldine, Klein, and Spring areas	Open-enrollment	452 students Grades K–5	0 students	35
The Founders Classical Academy Responsive Education Solutions	Dallas area	New school designation under existing charter	346 students Grades K–10	92 students	34
Houston Gateway Academy, Elite Academy Houston Gateway Academy, Inc.	Houston area	New school designation under existing charter	600 students Grades PreK–12	600 students	45
UT Tyler Innovation Academy The University of Texas System	Longview, Tyler, and Palestine areas	University charter school	360 students Grades 3–6	36 students	22

Charter School Name and Charter Holder Organization	Target Area for Cohort Year 1	Charter Type	Projected Enrollment and Grades Served in Year 1	Number of Students Served from Schools "In Need of Improvement"[a]	Projected Staff Members in Year 1
KIPP Coastal Village Middle Galveston ISD	Galveston area	Campus charter	175 students Grades 5–7	175 students	10
Laureate Prep. Secondary School Uplift Education	Dallas area	New school designation under existing charter	225 students Grades 6–7, 9	10 students	21
Legacy Preparatory Academy Legacy Preparatory Academy	Dallas, Mesquite, and Richardson areas	Open-enrollment	1,200 students Grades K–4, 7	10 students	48
The Media Arts Academy Responsive Education Solutions	Dallas area	New school designation under existing charter	130 students Grades 9–12	13 students	12
Prime Prep Academy Uplift Fort Worth, CDC	Dallas and Fort Worth areas	Open-enrollment	1,500 students Grades K–12	430 students	66
The REAL Learning Academy Eden Park Academy	Austin, Bastrop, and Del Valle areas	New school designation under existing charter	260 students Grades PreK–2	260 students	25
UME Preparatory Academy UMEP, Inc.	Birdville, Cedar Hill, Dallas, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, and Maypearl areas	Open-enrollment	352 students Grades K–8	211 students	50
Uplift Meridian Preparatory Uplift Education	Fort Worth area	New school designation under existing charter	282 students Grades K–1, 6–7	55 students	27
Uplift Mighty Preparatory Uplift Education	Fort Worth area	New school designation under existing charter	176 students Grades K–2	15 students	21

Charter School Name and Charter Holder Organization	Target Area for Cohort Year 1	Charter Type	Projected Enrollment and Grades Served in Year 1	Number of Students Served from Schools "In Need of Improvement"[a]	Projected Staff Members in Year 1
Cohort III Grantees (n=5)					
Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy Ben Yehuda Academy	San Antonio area	Open-enrollment	250 students Grades K–8	0 students	15
Global Learning Village Hope Academy Inc.	Houston area	Open-enrollment	176 students Grades K–1	10 students	17
Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute Grand Prairie Independent School District	Grand Prairie and Arlington areas	Campus charter	300 students Grades 6–8	155 students	19
Pro-Vision Middle and The Pro-Vision Academy Pro-Vision Educational Services, Inc.	Houston area	Open-enrollment	300 students Grades 5–12	300 students	25
Village Tech School Village Tech Schools	Dallas, Cedar Hill, and Duncanville, areas	Open-enrollment	640 students Grades PreK–8	138 students	45
Cohort IV Grantees (n=8)					
BASIS San Antonio BTX Schools, Inc.	San Antonio area	Open-enrollment	510 students Grades 5–8	32 students	40
Carpe Diem San Antonio Learning Schools of Texas	San Antonio area	Open-enrollment	320 students Grades 6–10	192 students	20
CORE Academy Generations of Life Foundation	Houston area	Open-enrollment	250 students Grades 6–8	190 students	21
El Paso Leadership Academy El Paso Leadership Academy	El Paso area	Open-enrollment	250 students Grades 6–7	146 students	10

Charter School Name and Charter Holder Organization	Target Area for Cohort Year 1	Charter Type	Projected Enrollment and Grades Served in Year 1	Number of Students Served from Schools "In Need of Improvement"[a]	Projected Staff Members in Year 1
Great Hearts Academy San Antonio Great Hearts America - Texas	San Antonio area	Open-enrollment	557 students Grades K–9	280 students	23
Magnolia Montessori for All Montessori for All, Inc.	Austin area	Open-enrollment	300 students Grades PreK–3	163 students	30
Travis Heights Elementary Austin ISD	Austin area	Open-enrollment	530 students Grades PreK–5	530 students	64
UTPB STEM Academy UT at Permian Basin	Odessa area	University charter school	308 students Grades K–6	280 students	20

Source. Texas Education Agency, 2011–2012, 2012–2014, 2013–15, and 2014–16 Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Applications.
Note. Schools identified as "in need of improvement" in their grant applications are those that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress in the same content area for two or more years in a row. Grantees were only asked to list this information for Year 1.

Appendix B: Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Evaluation Methodology

Appendix B: Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Evaluation Methodology

ICF used a mixed methods approach to evaluate the Texas Public Charter School Start-Up Grant. ICF's evaluation activities addressed five research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: In what specific ways do grantees use Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds?
- RQ2: What best practices can be identified in how grantees use funds?
- RQ3: Within high-performing charter schools, to what extent do student outcomes differ by charter school type, mission, or focus?
- RQ4: To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools?
- RQ5: To what extent do student and school outcomes differ between charter schools approved and funded through the 2010–2015 competitive grant process and those approved for noncompetitive funding in 2010–2011?

Data Sources

ICF's approach included quantitative analyses of charter school campus budgets and expenditures, as well as of TEA extant data, and qualitative analyses of data gathered from site visit interviews and focus groups, and analyses of stakeholder surveys.

Charter School Budgets and Budget Amendments

As a part of grantees' application to TEA for Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funding, each grantee provided to TEA a budget detailing how they planned to spend awarded funds. Additionally, TEA allowed grantees to submit amendments to their original budgets up to 90 days before the end of a grant period. Expenditures were explicitly authorized to support the following overarching activities:

- Planning and design of the educational program,
- Professional development of teachers and other staff who will work in the charter school, and
- Initial implementation of the charter.

For the evaluation, TEA provided ICF with copies of the applications from Cohorts I–IV Public Charter School Start-Up grantees and any grant application amendments that were submitted during the grant period. ICF examined the original and any amended grant budgets and summarized how grantees planned to use funds across various expenditure categories.

Charter School Expenditures

ICF's analysis of expenditures consisted of a review of data from two sources:

- **Public Charter School Start-Up Grantee Expenditure Data (Expenditure Data).** Reimbursement requests for the Public Charter School Start-Up grant expenditures are tracked in TEA's grantee expenditure database. These data were used to examine how grantees spent Public Charter School Start-Up grant funds to conduct start-up planning and implementation activities during those time periods. ICF used Expenditure Data for each

cohort accordingly from the time of their grant award to the last day of their award or the latest possible date funds could be spent:

  - Cohort I grantees: April 1, 2011 until November 30, 2012
  - Cohort II grantees: May 1, 2012 until September 30, 2014
  - Cohort III grantees: July 1, 2013 until July 31, 2015
  - Cohort IV grantees: May 1, 2014 until July 31, 2015

- **Public Charter School Start-Up Grant Expenditure Survey (Expenditure Survey).** The Expenditure Survey is administered to grantees once during the life of their Public Charter School Start-Up Grant:

  - Cohort I grantees completed their survey in spring 2012
  - Cohort II grantees completed their survey in spring 2013
  - Cohort III grantees completed their survey in spring 2014
  - Cohort IV grantees completed their survey in spring 2015

  The purpose of the Expenditure Survey was to gain a more detailed understanding of the specific products and services on which charter school campuses spent funds, beyond the broader categories included in the data retrieved from TEA's grantee expenditure database. The survey was designed by ICF as an Excel form and emailed to the administrator at each charter school campus. The administrator was asked to forward the survey to the appropriate staff person (e.g., business manager) for completion.

Surveys

The evaluation team surveyed teachers, administrators, and charter holder board members at each charter school campus. Surveys for each of the three stakeholder groups were developed by the evaluation team. Each charter school campus was asked to complete these surveys once during the life of its Public Charter School Start-Up Grant, in the spring of the school year in which it was first awarded funding.

- Cohort I grantees completed their surveys in spring 2012 (slightly different surveys than other cohorts since they were overhauled after they were administered to Cohort I grantees)
- Cohort II grantees completed their surveys in spring 2013
- Cohort III grantees completed their surveys in spring 2014
- Cohort IV grantees completed their surveys in spring 2015

ICF administered three surveys, which included:

- **Teacher Survey.** Teachers were surveyed to gain insight into the role that they played during the grant period in decision making about their charter school campus facility, school operations, school planning and support, school staffing, teacher professional development, instructional approach and curriculum, and technology. TEA contacted the administrator at each grantee charter school campus and obtained his or her teachers' email addresses. TEA provided this information to the ICF team, and the team then emailed the teachers at each charter school campus, provided them with the survey website address, and requested that they complete the survey.

- **Administrator Survey.** Administrators were surveyed to obtain their perspective on how decisions were made at their charter school campus during the grant period and, in particular, who the key decision makers were for issues pertaining to the charter school campus facility, school operations, school planning and support, school staffing, teacher professional development, instructional approach and curriculum, and technology. The administrator at each Cohort I–IV charter school campus was sent a link to complete the survey online and a PDF copy of the instrument. One survey was to be returned from each charter school campus, with the survey designed to be completed by an administrator at that campus. However, administrators were instructed that they could obtain input from other school leadership staff as needed, if they did not have all the information they needed to complete the survey.
- **Board Member Survey.** Board members were surveyed to better understand the structure and function of the charter holder board, and its role in decision making and supporting charter school campus functions and operations during the grant period. Each charter school campus administrator received an email that included a link to complete the survey online and a PDF copy of the survey. The administrator was asked to forward the email to the charter holder's board president. One survey was to be returned from each campus. However, board members could collaborate with one another to complete the survey.

Charter School Campus Site Visits and Interviews/Focus Groups

Charter school campus site visits were conducted by a two-person team from ICF. The team scheduled one-day visits to each selected charter school campus, during which they conducted interviews with school administrators and charter school board members, as well as focus groups with teachers. ICF developed interview and focus group protocols for each stakeholder group that were aligned with the four site visit goals:

1. Build upon the evaluation data collected on the selected Public Charter School Start-Up grantees showing early evidence of success on student outcomes to understand how and why these charter school campuses have used start-up grant funds to support their missions;
2. Gain a more detailed understanding of the decision-making processes related to allocating Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds, including how these processes have changed over time;
3. Identify promising and innovative practices in the use of Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funds that contribute to the success of these charter school campuses; and
4. Identify which TEA policies and practices these four charter school campuses have implemented to learn how these policies and practices have supported the creation of high-quality charter school campuses and to determine if TEA could support charter school campuses in other ways.

- **Spring 2014 Site Visits.** Site visits were conducted at four Cohort I and II charter school campuses between May 2 and May 8, 2014. These Cohort I and II charter school campuses were selected on the basis of their identification as showing early evidence of success. Charter school campuses showing early evidence of success were those that

  - received a Met Standard accountability rating from TEA for the 2012–13 school year
  - achieved an attendance rate of 95% or higher, and
  - obtained at least one academic achievement distinction or had a System Safeguard score of 100% in the 2013 accountability ratings.

  Nine charter school campuses met these criteria. Purposive sampling was conducted among these nine charter school campuses to select four to participate in the site visit. The purposive sample was designed so that a diverse sample of charter school campuses could be visited (i.e., different charter types, grade levels, demographics). The group of site visit charter school campuses comprised of one Cohort I grantee and three Cohort II grantees.

- **Spring 2015 Site Visits.** Site visits were conducted at six Cohort III charter schools from five grantees between May 18 and May 22, 2015. This included all Cohort III grantee charter school campuses, as none of these were showing early evidence of success using the same criteria as the spring 2014 site visits.

During the site visit to each of the schools in each round of visits, the ICF team collected data from three sources, which included:

- **Teacher Focus Groups.** The charter school campus administrator was asked to identify teachers to participate in the focus groups. Although all teachers employed at the charter school campus were eligible to participate, the school contact was asked to intentionally invite teachers who were active in the early stages of charter school campus planning and start-up. The length of each focus group was between 45 and 60 minutes, and at the start of each session, teachers were asked to sign an informed consent statement.
- **Administrator Interviews.** One or more administrators were interviewed at each charter school campus, including the administrator who completed the administrator survey (see Analysis of Survey Data section). The interview with this administrator occurred prior to any other site visit activities. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and administrators were asked to sign an informed consent statement prior to the start of the interview.
- **Board Representative Interviews.** One or more charter holder board representatives were interviewed at each charter school campus, including the representative who completed the board member survey (see Analysis of Survey Data section). Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and board representatives were asked to provide informed consent prior to the start of the interview.

Appendix C:
Grantee Dashboards

Appendix C: Grantee Dashboards

ICF created one-page summaries, or dashboards, that describe key features of each of the Public Charter School Start-Up grantees, including the year the charter school campus was opened, grade levels served, geographic areas served, demographics of student population, financial data, and student achievement data. One dashboard was prepared for each grantee, so in cases where a grantee opened multiple charter school campuses (e.g., Arrow Academy), these data were combined across all its charter school campuses.

A brief overview of each section of the dashboard and its associated data sources is provided here.

Grantee Overview Information. This section includes the year in which the charter school campus was opened, the grades served, the geographic areas served, the charter holder and the grantee's relationship with that charter holder, and a summary of the school mission/vision. This information was obtained from a review of each grantee's application and also a review of charter school campus websites.

Grantee Demographic Information. This section includes actual student enrollment numbers for the first two school years the school had been opened and was serving students. It also includes demographic data, such as the percentage of students who are a part of a number of racial/ethnic groups and the percentage of students who are identified or classified into one or more student groups (e.g., economically disadvantaged, English language learners, special education, at-risk). All data in this section were obtained from the 2012–13 TEA School Report Cards (https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport//src/2013/campus.srch.html).

Grantee Achievement Data. This section provides a chart that compares the percentage of students who the Level II Phase-in 1 standard on the STAAR in reading and mathematics in a particular charter school campus to statewide numbers. These data are provided for the first two school years the school had been opened and was serving students. All data in this section were obtained from the 2011–12 and 2012–13 TEA School Report Cards. Because STAAR is not administered to students below Grade 3, charter school campuses that had students only in kindergarten through Grade 2 do not have this information on their dashboards (e.g., Compass Academy, Pinnacle Preparatory Academy, Uplift Meridian Preparatory).

Grantee Financial Data. This section provides information on a grantee's budgets and expenditures. Each grantee's original budget for grant funds was obtained from its application to the TEA for Public Charter School Start-Up Grant funding. Grantee final expenditure data were obtained from TEA's grantee expenditure data, provided to ICF by TEA.

Cohort I

Arrow Academy (AA)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: K–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: Brazosport, Bryan, Dallas, and Houston areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Leadership Education Foundation

Relationship with Charter Holder: The campus reports to the charter holder, but retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To give all students the opportunity to access knowledge and acquire the skills to become contributing, responsible citizens within our society. All students should develop the passion to be a lifelong learner.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	574	K–8
2012–13:	656	K–8

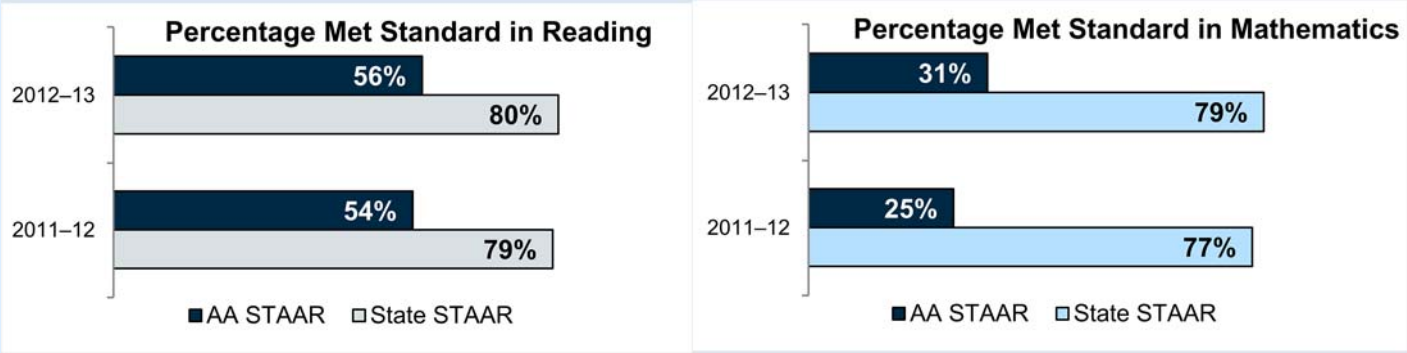
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	75%
English Language Learners:	4%
Special Education:	5%

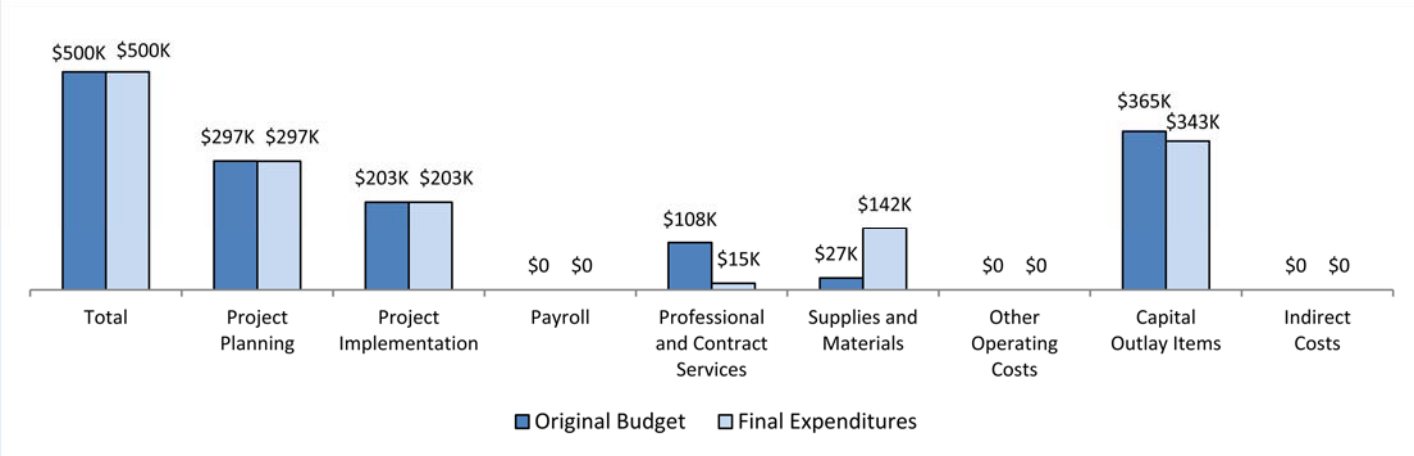
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	<1%	White:	3%
Black:	81%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	15%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. AA



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Compass Academy (CA)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: K–3

Geographic Area(s) Served: Ector County and Midland areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Compass Academy

Relationship with Charter Holder: The campus reports to the charter holder, but retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To prepare all students to be college-work-life leaders through developing rigorous and relevant curriculum based on positive relationships and innovative learning opportunities.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	250	K–2
2012–13:	373	K–3

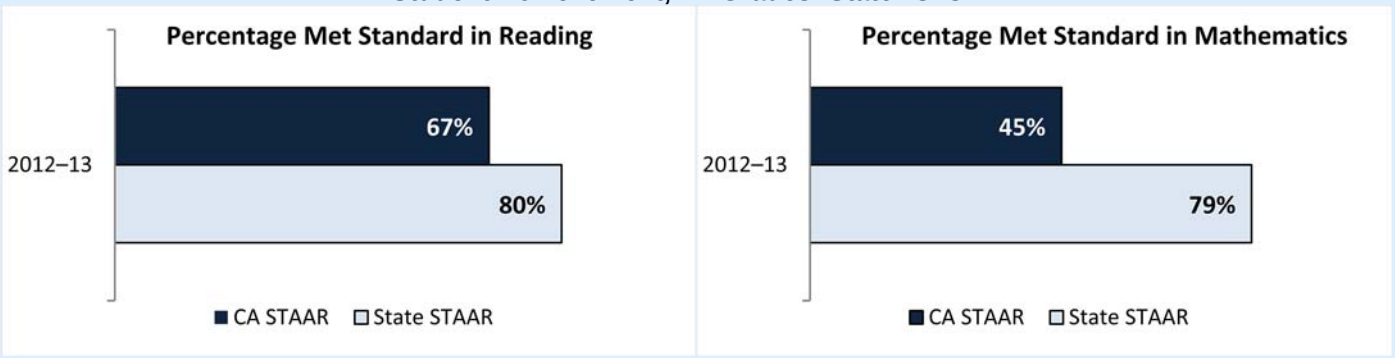
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	30%
English Language Learners:	<1%
Special Education:	4%

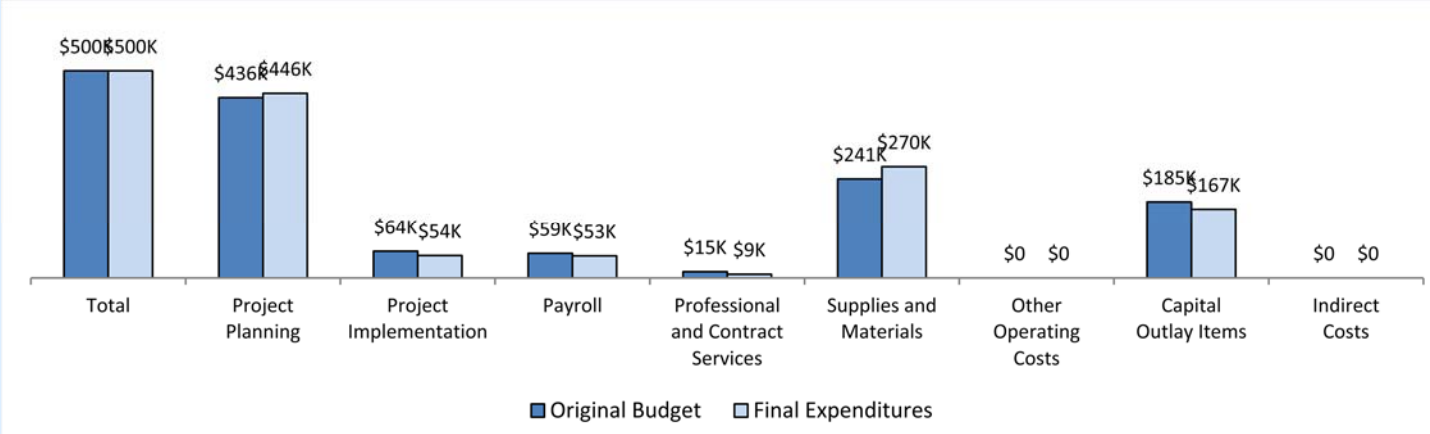
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	<1%	White:	64%
Black:	2%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	32%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. CA**



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures***



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Compass Academy does not have student achievement data for the 2011–12 School Year as students in grades K–2 do not participate in the state assessments (STAAR).
***Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Highland Park Critical Thinking Campus (HPCTC)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: PK–5

Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area

Charter Type: Campus Charter

Charter Holder: San Antonio ISD (SAISD)

Relationship with Charter Holder: SAISD has overall policy-setting and enforcing authority. The Campus Leadership Team makes day-to-day decisions.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To transform SAISD into a national model urban school district where every child graduates and is educated so that he or she is prepared to be a contributing member of the community.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	760	PK–5
2012–13:	715	PK–5

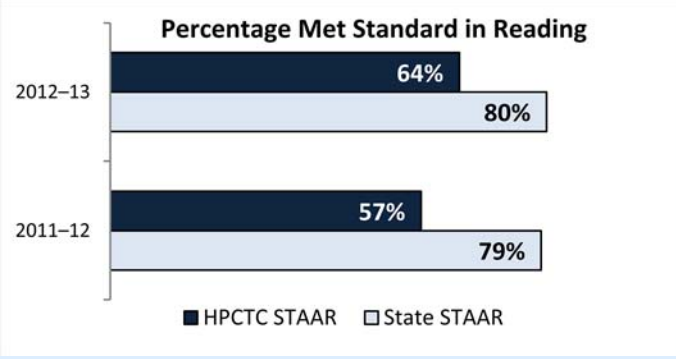
Special Categories

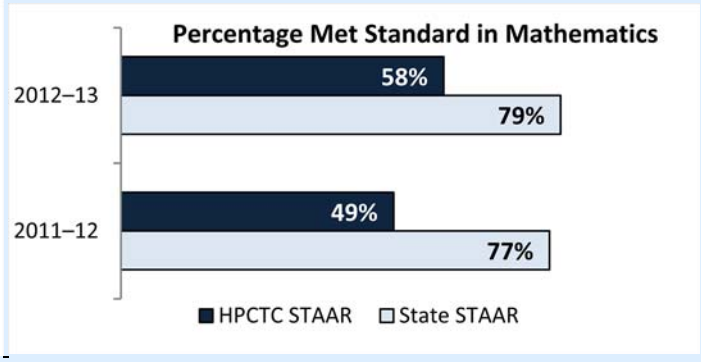
Economically Disadvantaged:	96%
English Language Learners:	20%
Special Education:	7%

Race/Ethnicity*

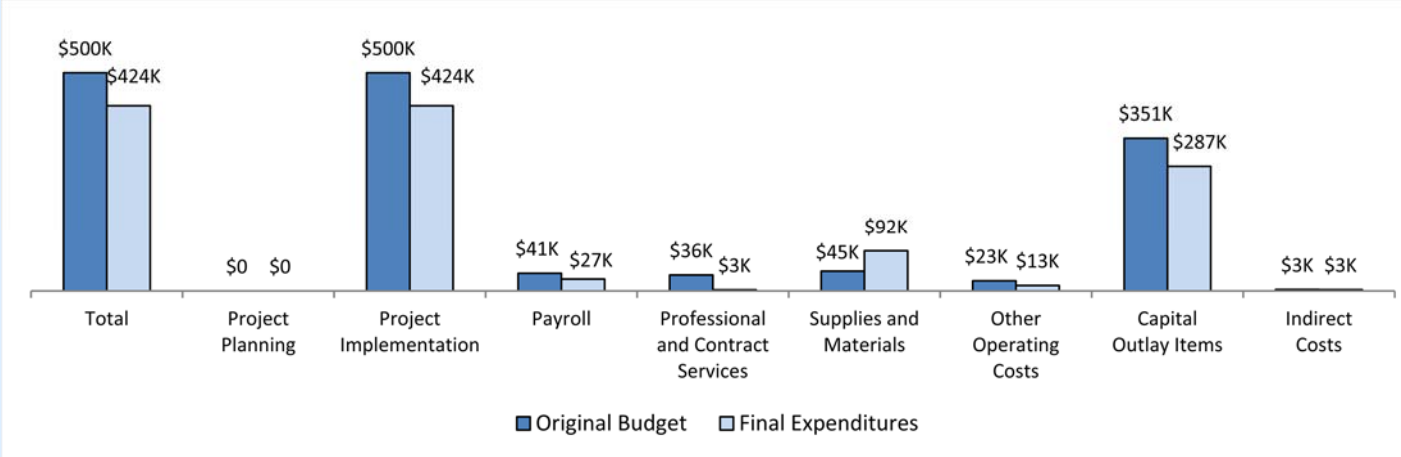
Asian:	0%	White:	2%
Black:	2%	Other:	<1%
Hispanic:	95%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. HPCTC





Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Infinity Preparatory Middle School (IPMS)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Current Grades: 6–7

Charter Holder: Uplift Education

Geographic Area(s) Served: Irving area

Relationship with Charter Holder: The campus reports to the charter holder, but retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To empower students to reach their highest potential and inspire a lifelong love of learning, achievement, service, and responsible citizenship. Our goal is to close the achievement gap and ensure 100% of students graduate and enroll in college.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	123	6
2012–13:	269	6–7

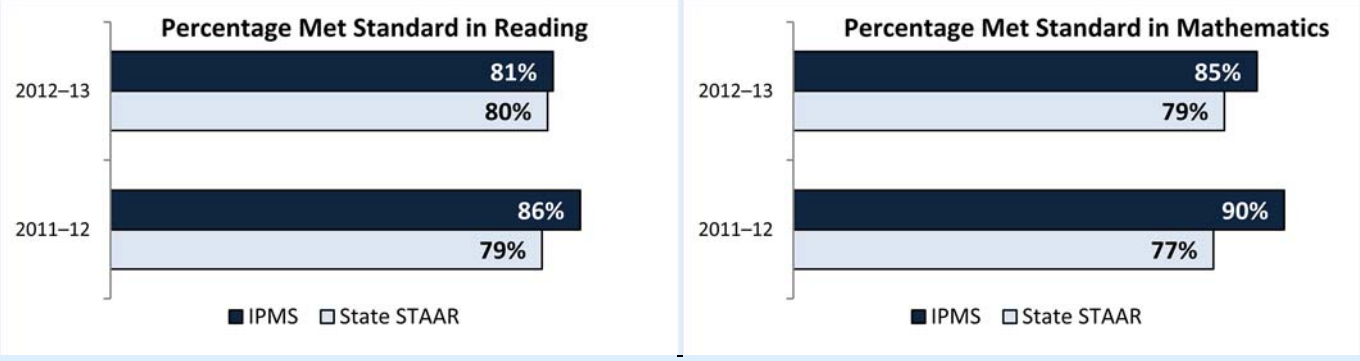
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	79%
Limited English Proficient:	37%
Special Education:	5%

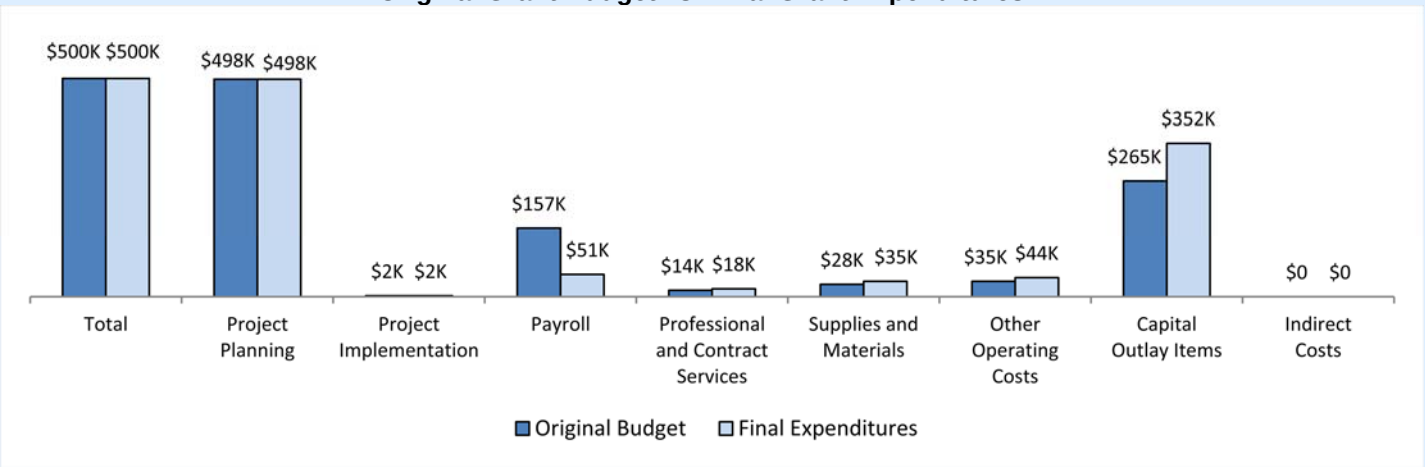
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	3%	White:	8%
Black:	2%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	85%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. IPMS



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Leadership Prep School (LPS)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: K–5

Geographic Area(s) Served: Frisco area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Leadership Prep School

Relationship with Charter Holder: LPS is its own Local Education Agency.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To focus on five key areas: parent partnership, leadership development, academics, creativity, and excellence.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	250	K–4
2012–13:	350	K–5

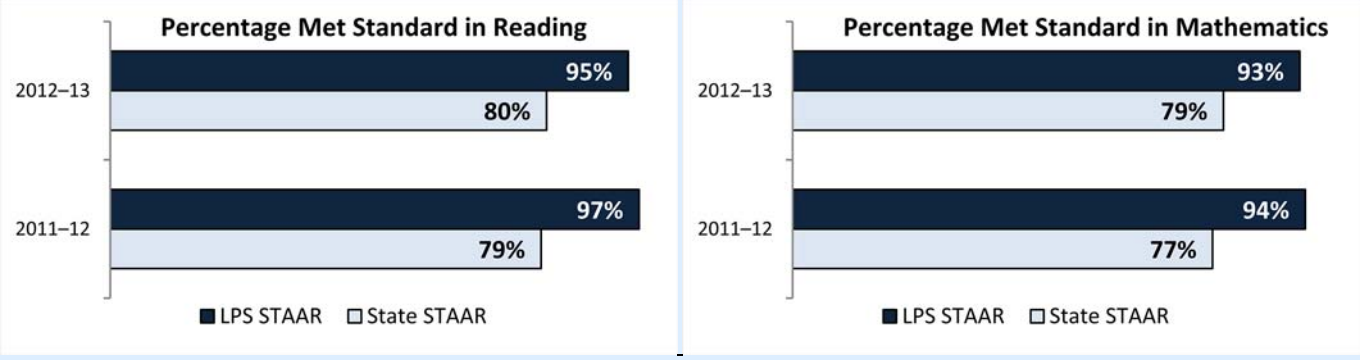
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	5%
English Language Learners:	10%
Special Education:	2%

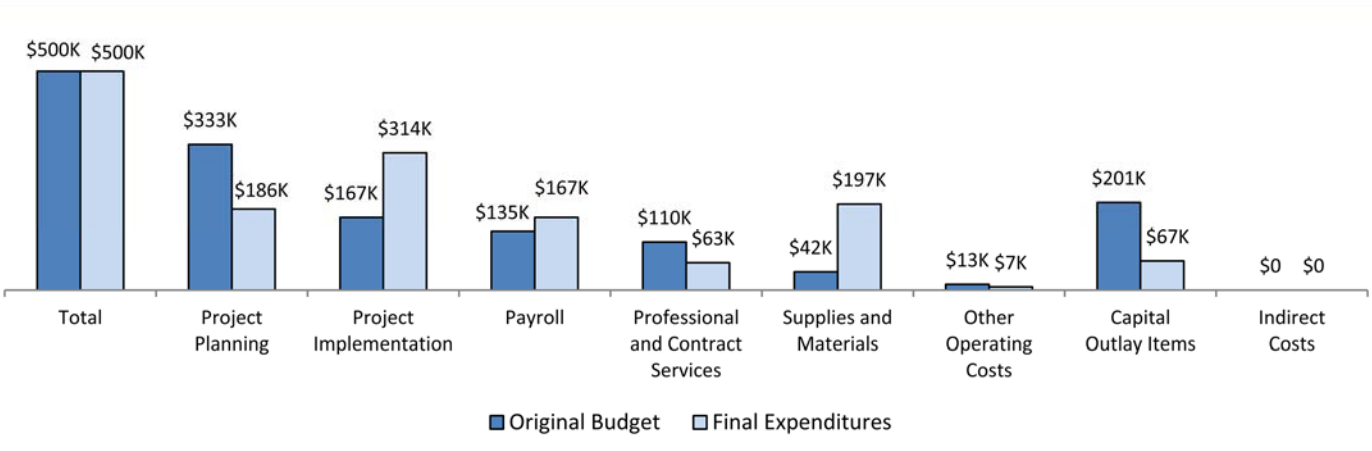
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	45%	White:	34%
Black:	7%	Other:	4%
Hispanic:	10%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. LPS



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Newman International Academy of Arlington (NIA) 2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: PK–10

Geographic Area(s) Served: Fort Worth, Arlington, Lancaster, Everman, Duncanville, Carrolton-Farmers Branch, and Dallas areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Newman International Academy

Relationship with Charter Holder: The campus reports to the charter holder, but retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To deliver personalized educational experiences in a disciplined, nurturing, and character-building environment facilitated by partnerships between faculty, students, parents, and community.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	330	PK–9
2012–13:	475	PK–10

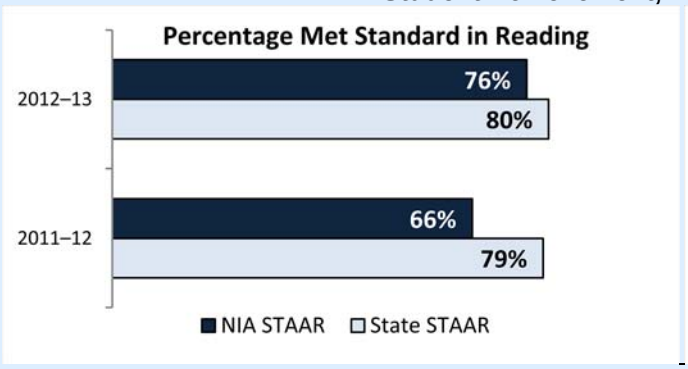
Special Categories

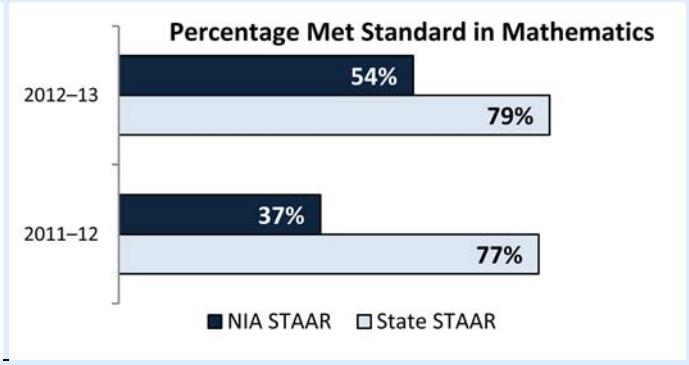
Economically Disadvantaged:	55%
English Language Learners:	3%
Special Education:	6%

Race/Ethnicity*

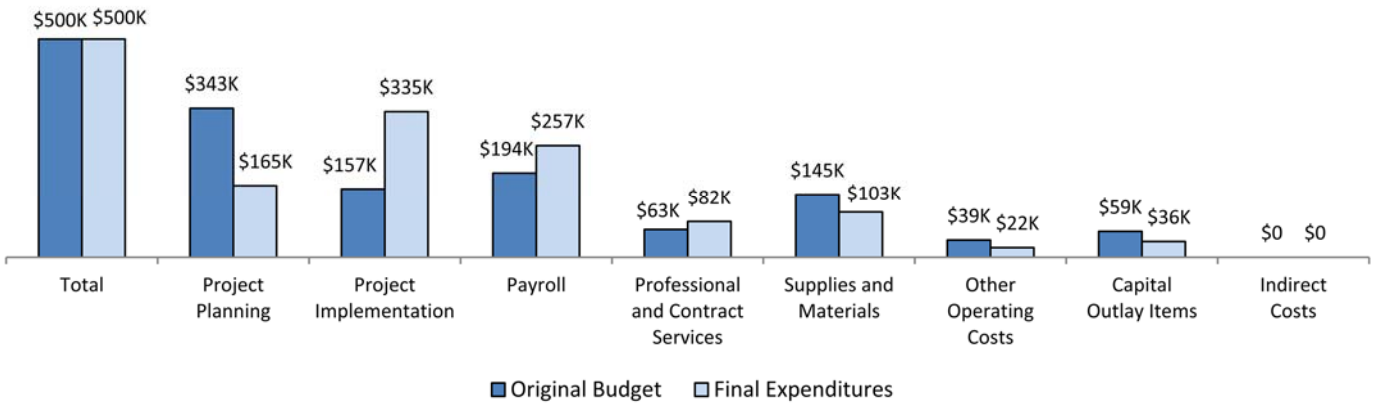
Asian:	5%	White:	36%
Black:	35%	Other:	4%
Hispanic:	20%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. NIA





Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Premier Learning Academy (PLA)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Current Grades: K–12

Charter Holder: Premier Learning Academy, Inc.

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas area

Relationship with Charter Holder: PLA, Inc. is its own Local Education Agency.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide a nurturing educational experience with a strong emphasis on technology-based learning, real world experiences, and character development.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	357	K–12
2012–13:	362	K–12

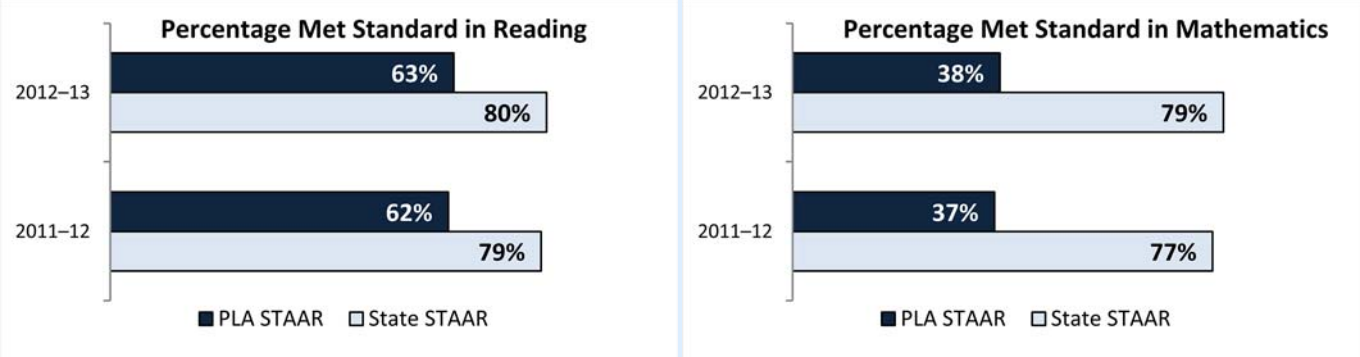
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	73%
English Language Learners	7%
Special Education:	8%

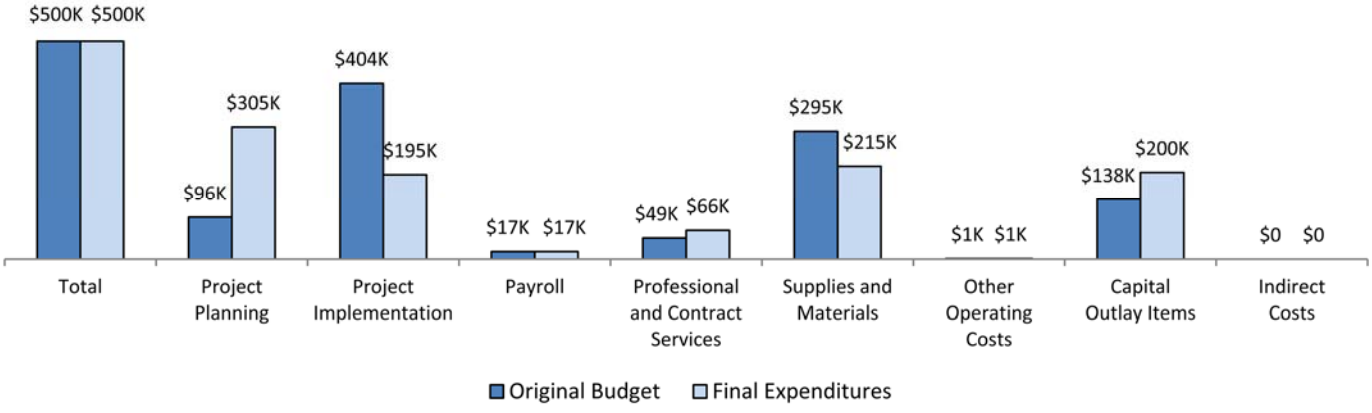
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	<1%	White:	22%
Black:	49%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	26%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. PLA



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Pinnacle Preparatory Academy (PPA)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: K–2

Geographic Area(s) Served: LaMarque area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Uplift Education

Relationship with Charter Holder: The campus reports to the charter holder, but retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To offer a learning environment that encourages high expectations for success. At its core, the school is safe, embraces, diversity, and expects high ethical standards.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	98	K–1
2012–13:	259	K–2

Special Categories

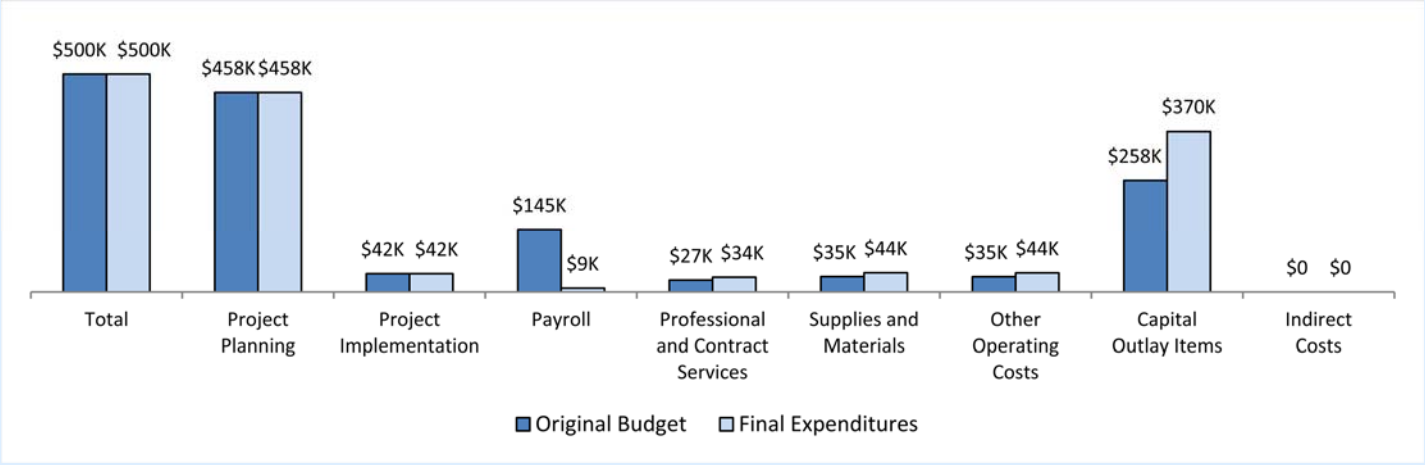
Economically Disadvantaged:	86%
Limited English Proficient:	24%
Special Education:	5%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	<1%	White:	1%
Black:	34%	Other:	<1%
Hispanic:	64%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. PPA**

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures***



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Pinnacle Preparatory Academy does not have student achievement data for the 2011–12 or 2012–13 School Years as students in grades K–2 do not participate in the state assessments (STAAR).
***Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Rhodes Technology and Media Charter School (RTM) 2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year
Current Grades: 6–8
Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area
Charter Type: Campus Charter
Charter Holder: San Antonio ISD (SAISD)
Relationship with Charter Holder: SAISD has overall policy-setting and enforcing authority. The Campus Leadership Team makes day-to-day decisions.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide a technology-based, interdisciplinary learning experience that prepares students with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to further their education and succeed in future careers.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	778	6–8
2012–13:	808	6–8

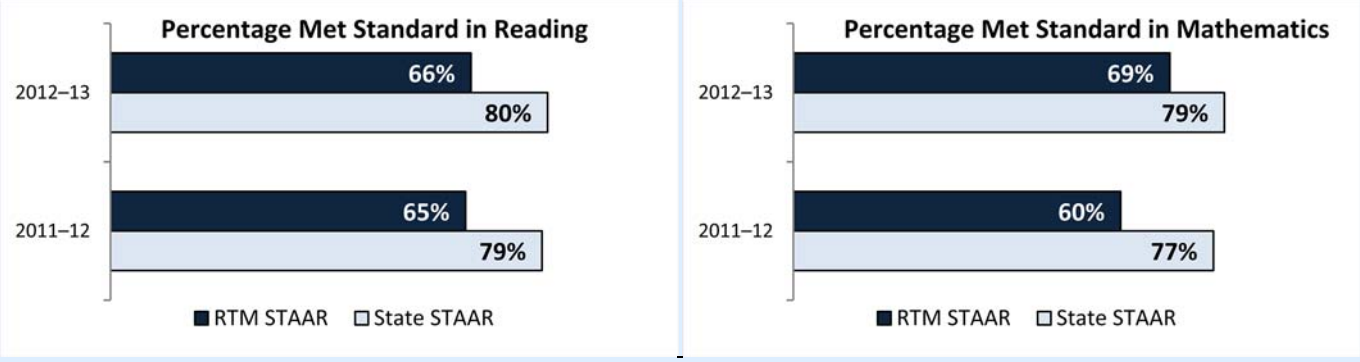
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	93%
English Language Learners:	10%
Special Education:	9%

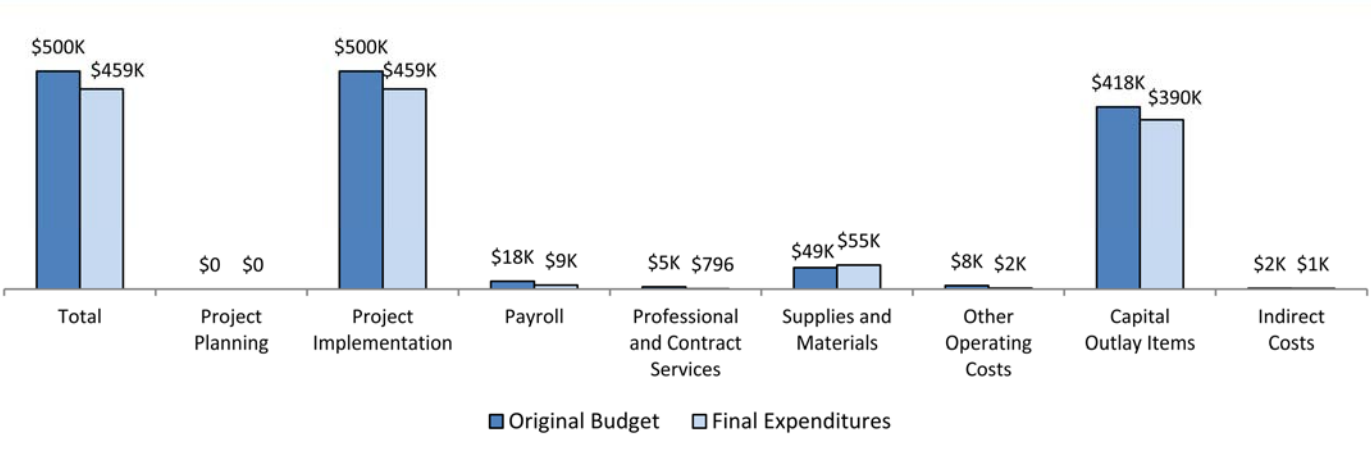
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	2%
Black:	2%	Other:	0%
Hispanic:	97%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. RTM



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Travis Early College High School (TECHS)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: 9–12

Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area

Charter Type: Campus Charter

Charter Holder: San Antonio ISD (SAISD)

Relationship with Charter Holder: SAISD has overall policy-setting and enforcing authority. The Campus Leadership Team makes day-to-day decisions.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To graduate all students and improve their lives through a quality education that prepares students for success in higher education.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	351	9–12
2012–13:	335	9–12

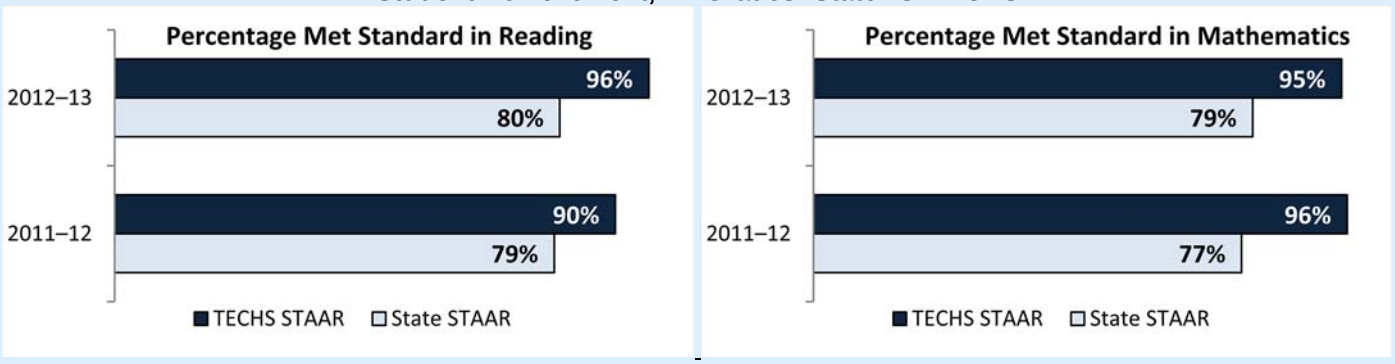
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	74%
English Language Learners:	3%
Special Education:	0%

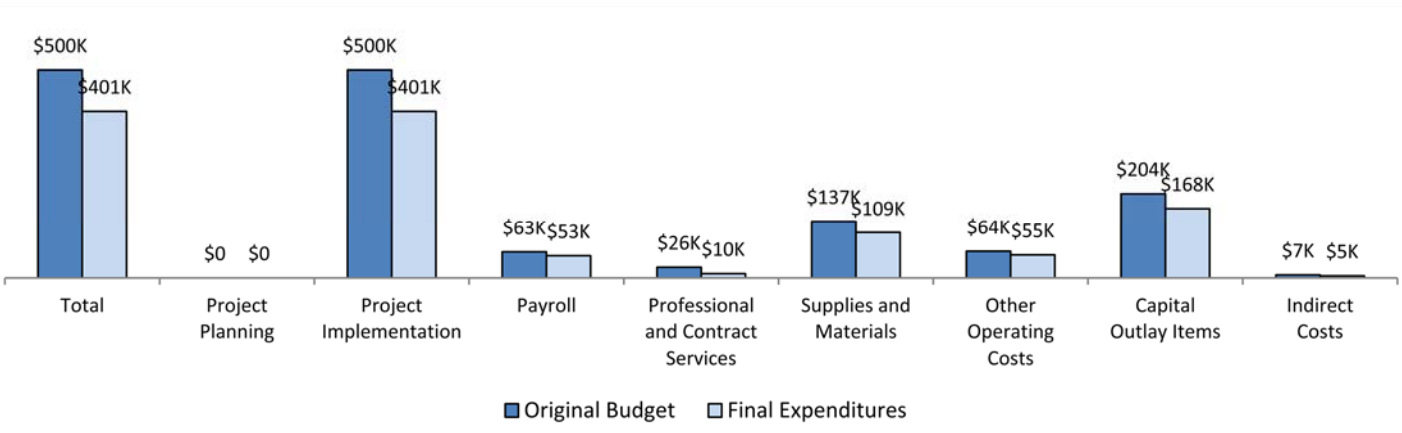
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	<1%	White:	3%
Black:	1%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	95%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. TECHS



Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity Preparatory Academy (WALIPP)

2011–12 and 2012–13 School Years

Year Opened: 2011–12 school year

Current Grades: 6–9

Geographic Area(s) Served: Houston area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: WALIPP

Relationship with Charter Holder: The campus reports to the charter holder, but retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide a rigorous, energy-infused curriculum incorporating project-based learning, technology, and social development. Students will have the tools needed to succeed in college and society. Each student is recognized as an individual with unique abilities, needs, and interests.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2011–12:	276	6–8
2012–13:	229	6–8

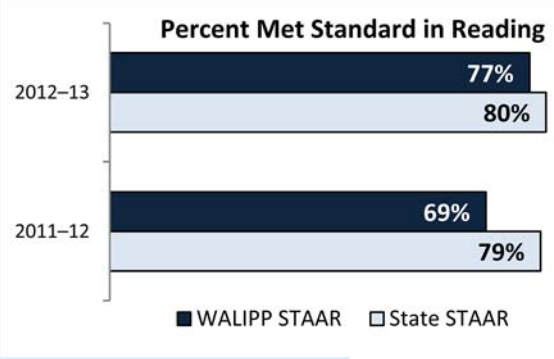
Special Categories

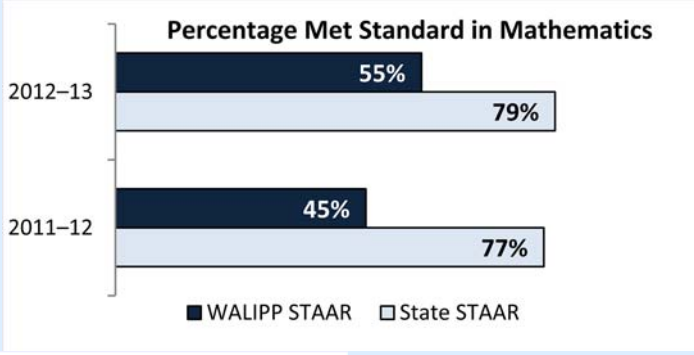
Economically Disadvantaged:	64%
English Language Learners:	4%
Special Education:	6%

Race/Ethnicity*

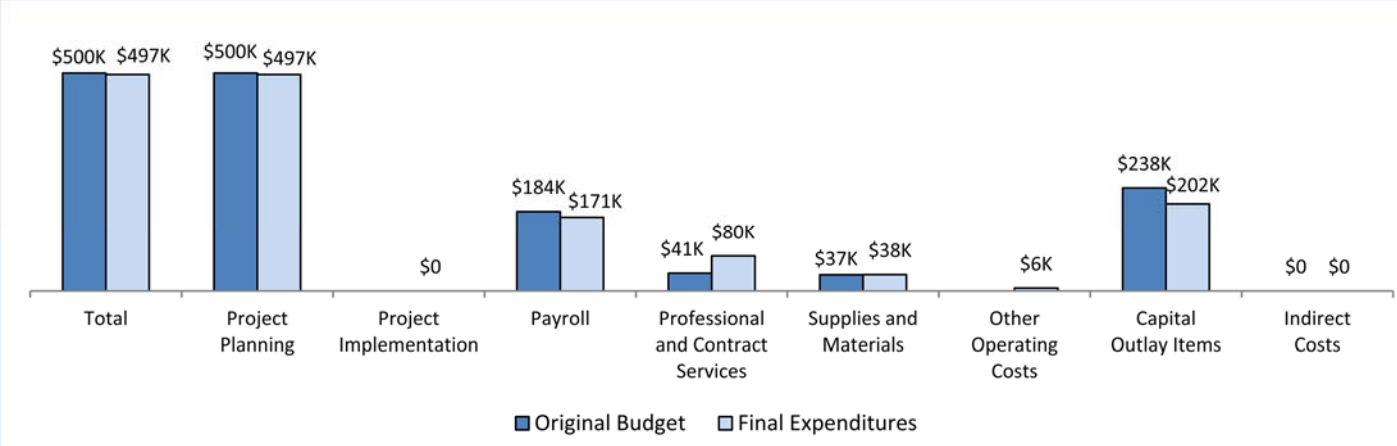
Asian:	0%	White:	<1%
Black:	92%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	7%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. WALIPP





Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Cohort II

Austin Achieve Public Schools (AAPS)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 6

Geographic Area(s) Served: Austin area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Austin Achieve Public Schools Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: Austin Achieve Pubic Schools is its own LEA.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To set high standards of achievement; to provide a rigorous academic curriculum, interventions, and supports; to prepare students to attend and excel at the nation's top colleges; and to become a model for reform by leveraging success and innovation.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	118	6
2013–14:	278	6–7

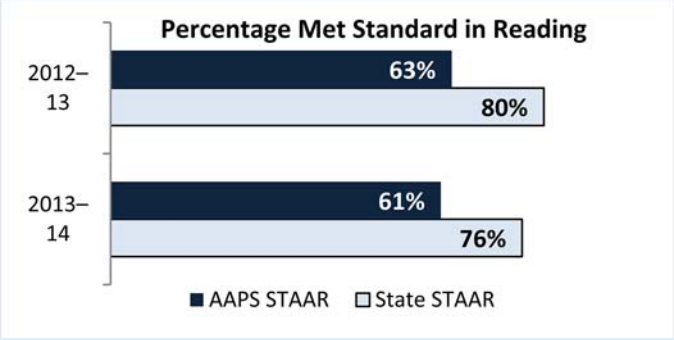
Special Categories

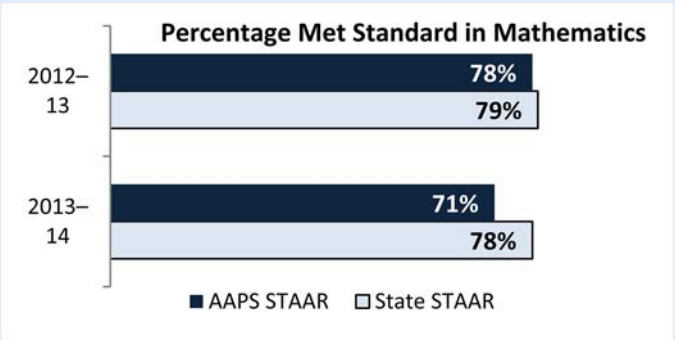
Economically Disadvantaged:	30%
English Language Learners:	50%
Special Education:	7%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	89%
Black:	8%	Other:	<1%
Hispanic:	3%		

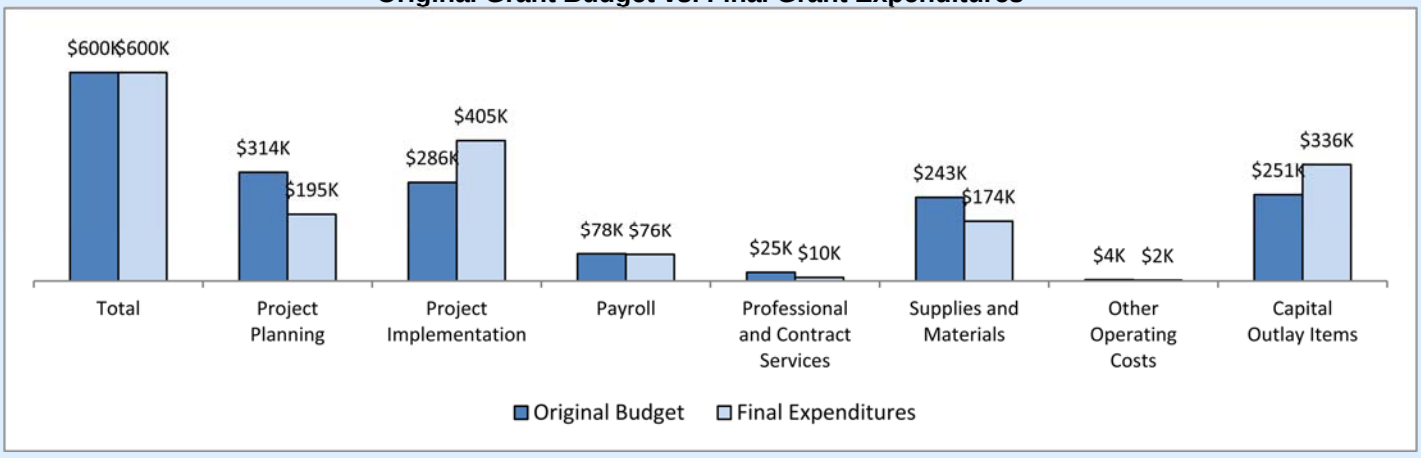
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. AAPS





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy (FCPA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–5

Geographic Area(s) Served: Aldine, Klein, Houston, and Spring areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Fallbrook Community Development Center

Relationship with Charter Holder: Fallbrook College Preparatory Academy is its own LEA.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide a college preparatory, full spectrum education that integrates literacy, science, technology, math, and fine arts, and to target students who have traditionally been under-supported, overlooked, or under-challenged.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	352	K–5
2013–14:	642	K–8

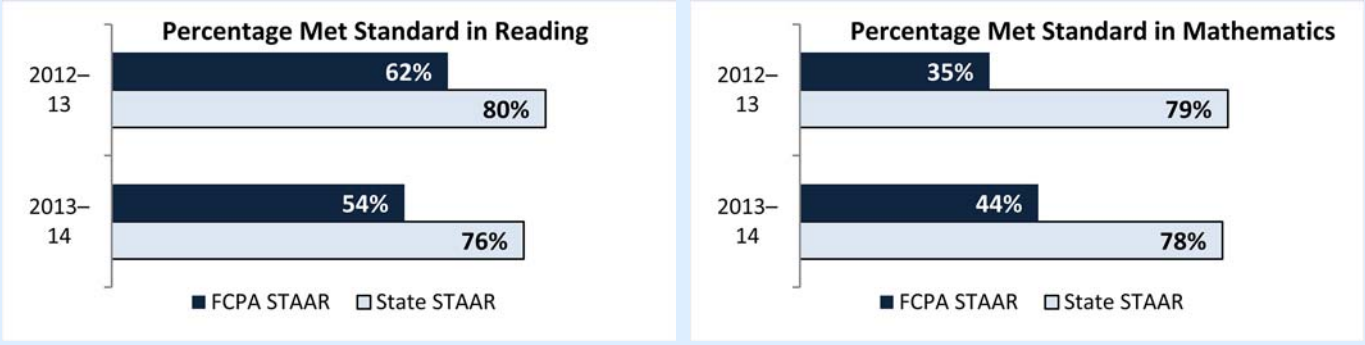
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	57%
English Language Learners:	0%
Special Education:	4%

Race/Ethnicity*

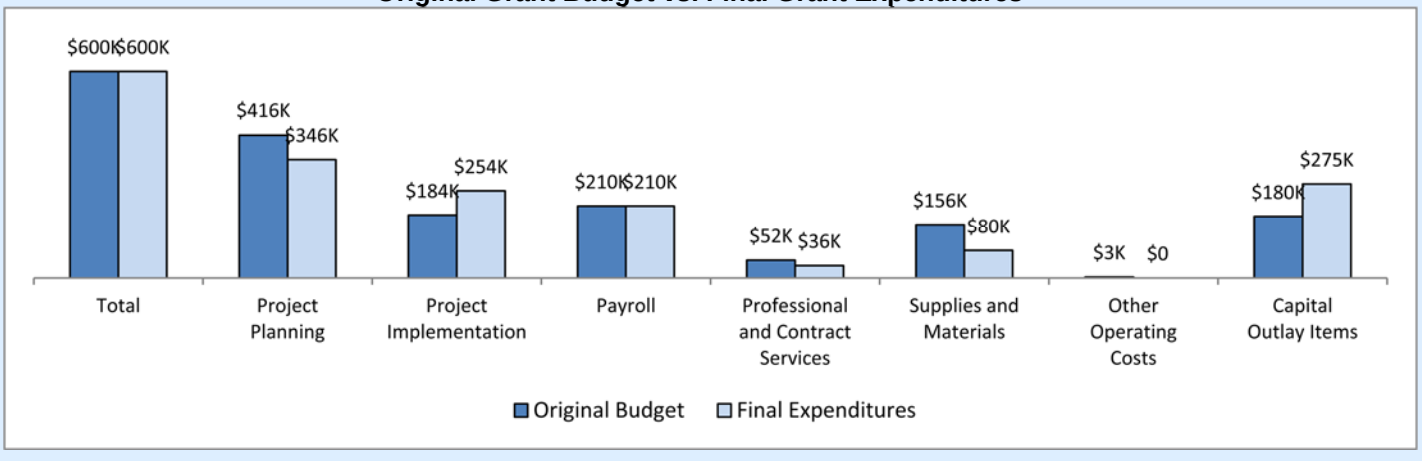
Asian:	1%	White:	4%
Black:	93%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	<1%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. FCPA



NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Houston Gateway Academy, Bowie Campus (HGAB)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: PK–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: Houston area

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Charter Holder: Houston Gateway Academy, Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder has final authority, provides oversight, and works closely with the superintendent and leadership team.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To enable all children to reach their height of academic achievement by fostering a self-directed, innovative environment that caters to high-risk, underserved, impoverished students.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	403	PK–7
2013–14:	398	PK–7

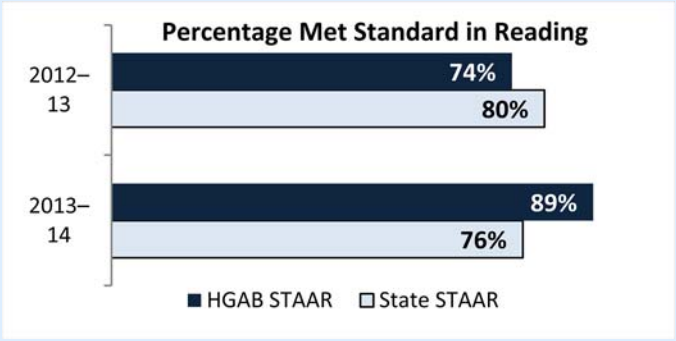
Special Categories

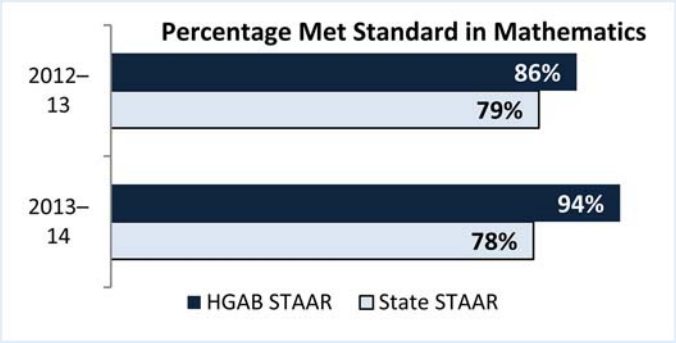
Economically Disadvantaged:	92
English Language Learners:	39%
Special Education:	2%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	97%
Black:	2%	Other:	<1%
Hispanic:	<1%		

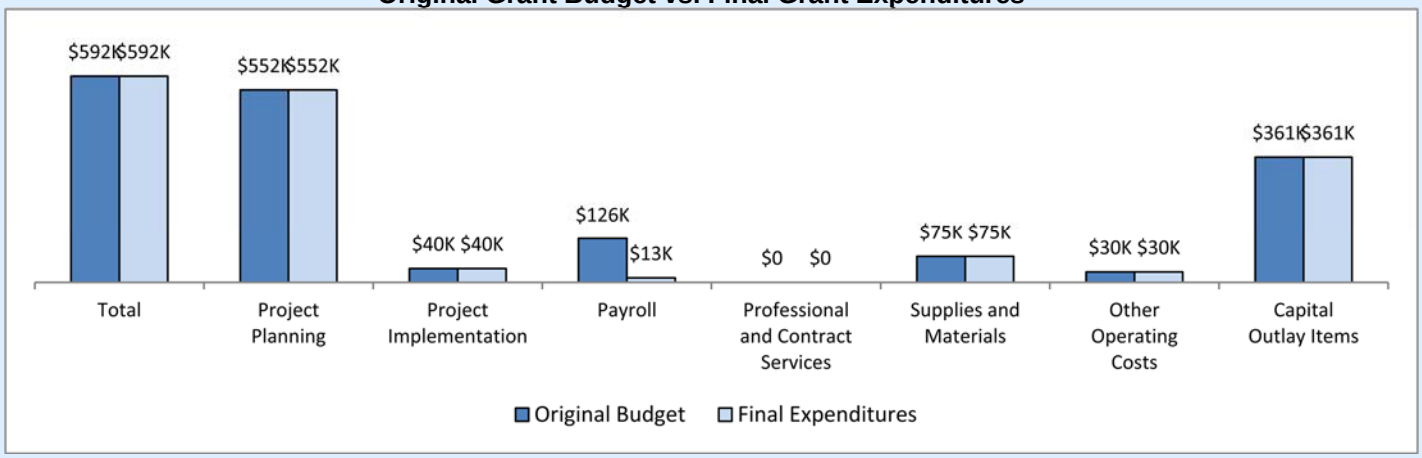
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. HGAB





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

KIPP Coastal Village Middle (KIPPCMS)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 5–7

Geographic Area(s) Served: Galveston area

Charter Type: Campus Charter

Charter Holder: Galveston ISD

Relationship with Charter Holder: Galveston ISD has overall policy-setting and enforcement authority, and will serve as the fiscal agent for the school.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To develop in underserved students the academic skills, intellectual habits, and qualities of character necessary to succeed at all levels of education and in the competitive world beyond. We are building and educating the compassionate leaders of tomorrow.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	158	5–7
2013–14:	224	5–8

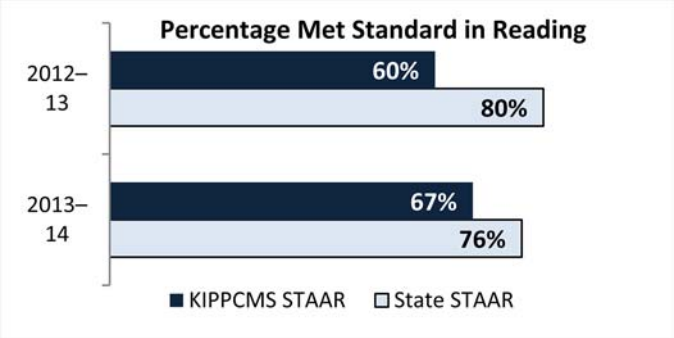
Special Categories

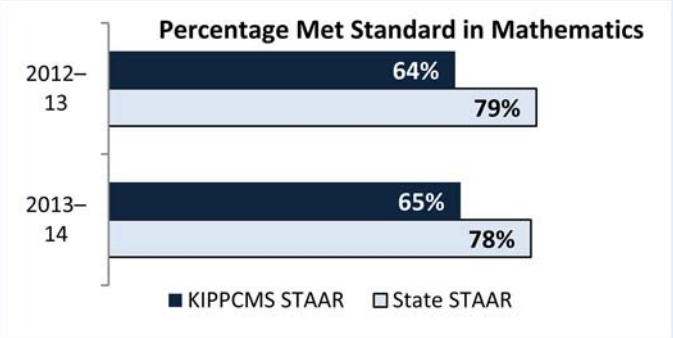
Economically Disadvantaged:	87%
English Language Learners:	6%
Special Education:	<1%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	1%	White:	37%
Black:	35%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	24%		

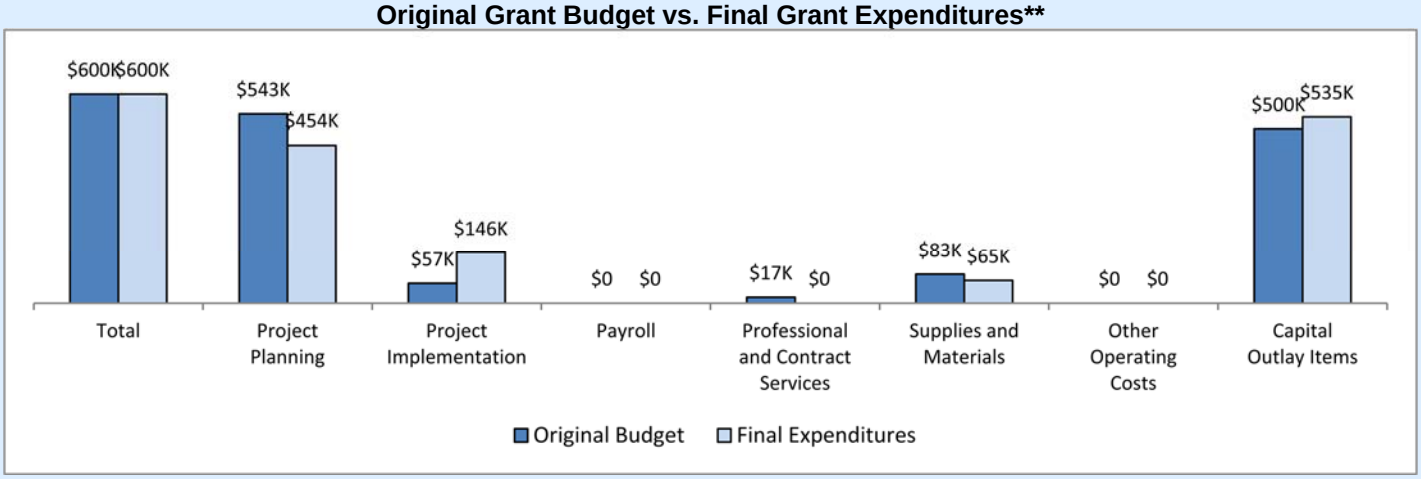
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. KIPPCMS





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Legacy Preparatory Academy (LPA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–7

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas, Mesquite, and Richardson areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Legacy Preparatory Academy

Relationship with Charter Holder: Legacy Preparatory Academy is its own LEA.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To serve as a model school of excellence, address the needs of all school community stakeholders, and prepare all students to be college- and career-ready by giving them ownership of their learning and instilling the values needed to become successful 21st century leaders.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	820	K–7
2013–14:	367	K–8

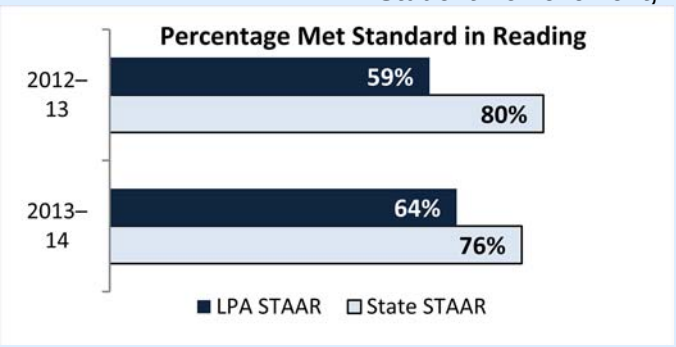
Special Categories

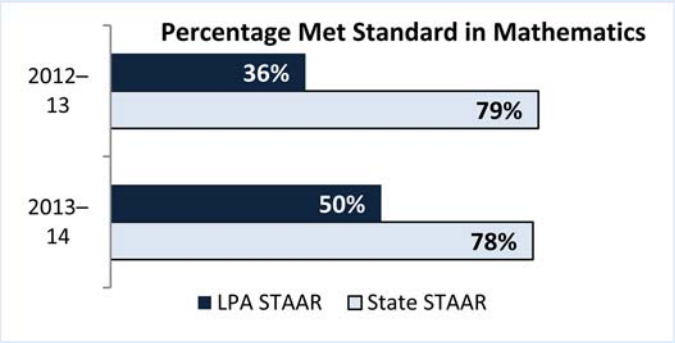
Economically Disadvantaged:	81%
English Language Learners:	24%
Special Education:	0%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	70%
Black:	26%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	4%		

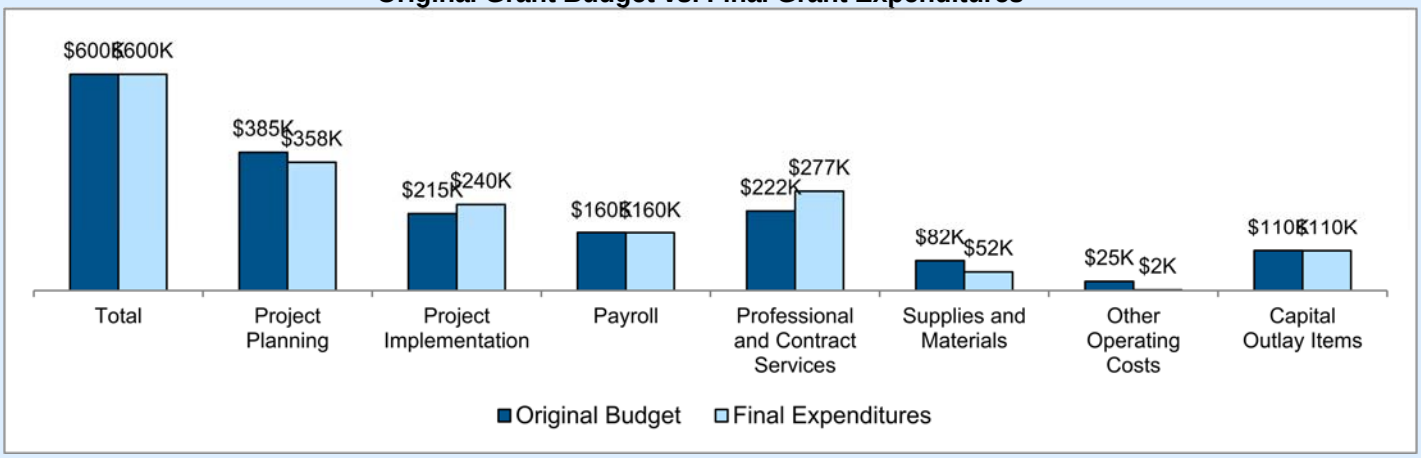
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. LPA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Luna Prep. Secondary School (LPSS)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 6–9

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas area

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Charter Holder: Uplift Education

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder Board of Directors is the governing body with legal responsibility over accountability and performance.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To prepare scholars, at an early stage, for college and to become respectful independent thinkers and individual leaders. It's all about learning.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	242	6–9
2013–14:	413	6–10

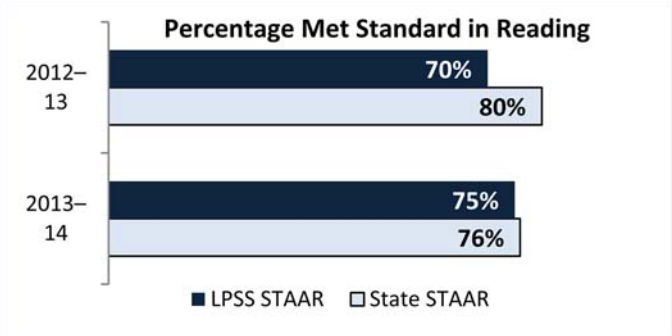
Special Categories

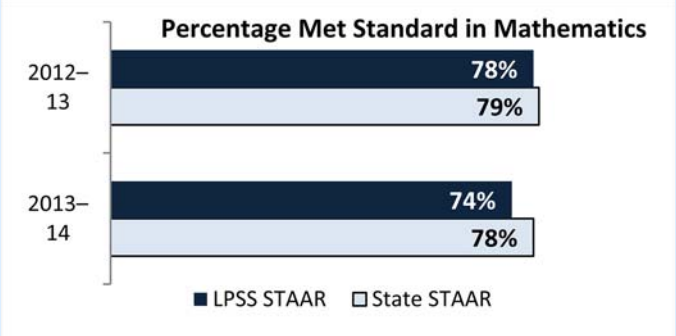
Economically Disadvantaged:	71%
English Language Learners:	26%
Special Education:	11%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	1%	White:	71%
Black:	21%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	5%		

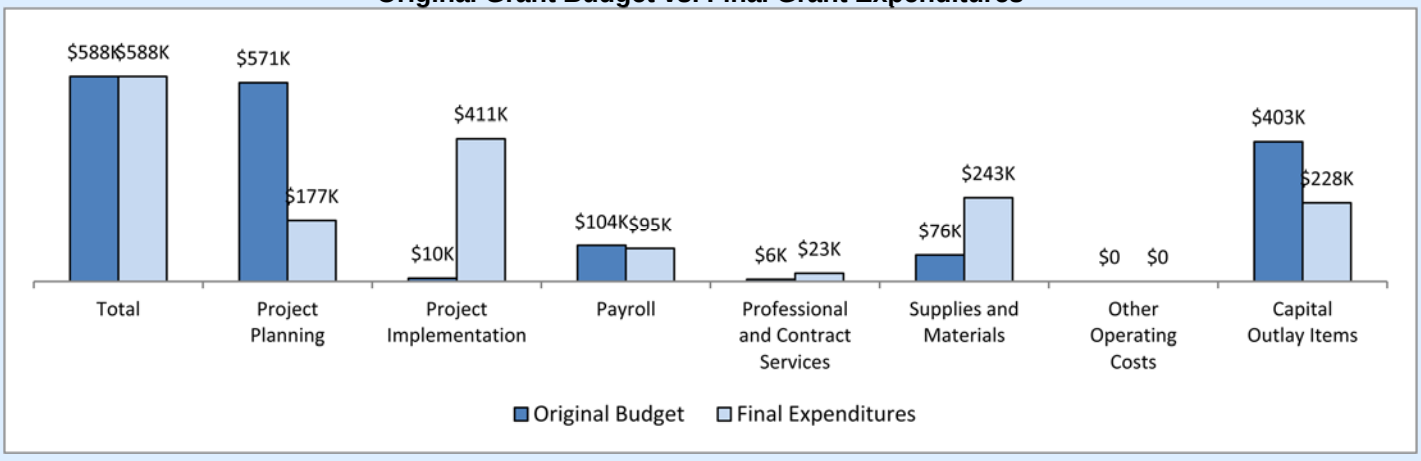
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. LPSS





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

The Media Arts Academy (MAA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 8–12

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas area

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Charter Holder: Responsive Education Solutions

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder has final authority and provides administrative support. The campus director retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide an individualized approach to education that includes intellectual and moral learning, and to make learning an enjoyable part of students' lives.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	112	8–12
2013–14:	88	9–12

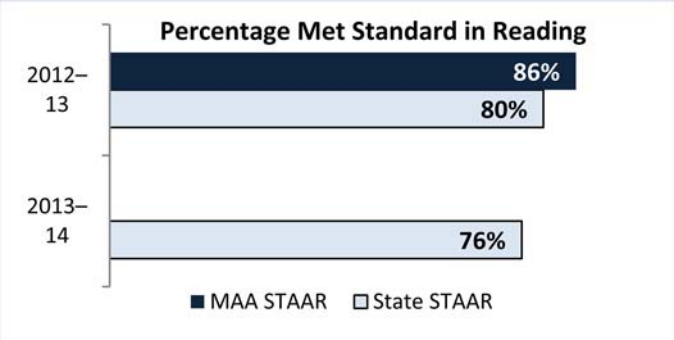
Special Categories

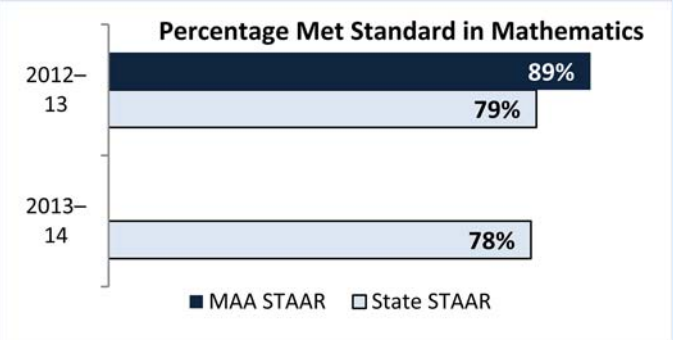
Economically Disadvantaged:	11%
English Language Learners:	3%
Special Education:	14%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	13%
Black:	3%	Other:	7%
Hispanic:	76%		

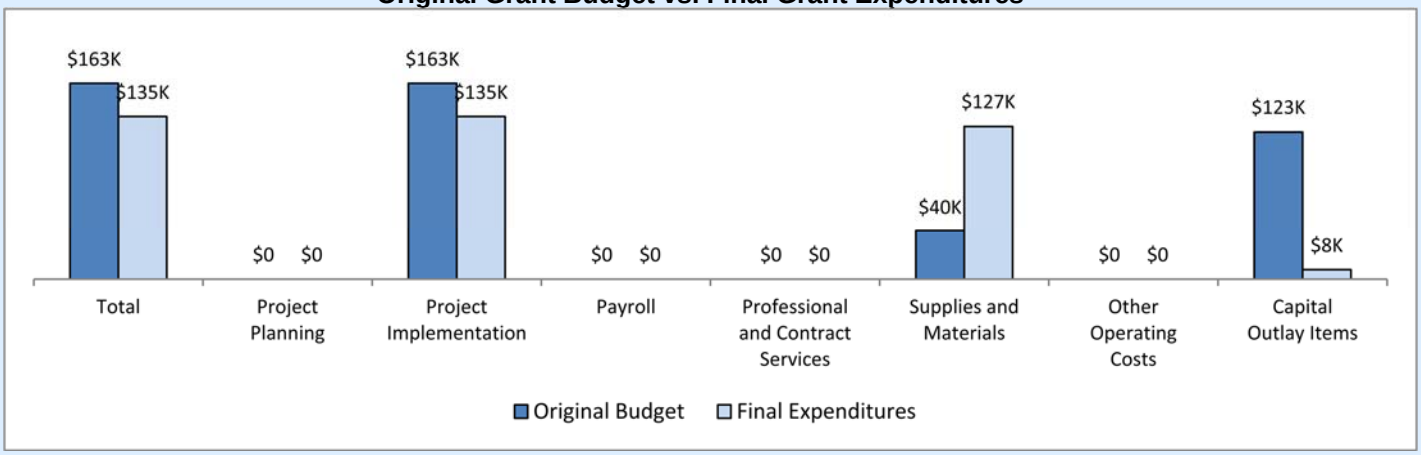
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. MAA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Prime Prep Academy (PPA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–12

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas and Fort Worth areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Uplift Fort Worth CDC

Relationship with Charter Holder: Prime Prep Academy is its own LEA.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To transform the lives of every student by providing a quality education that fosters creativity, collaboration, and character. We will prepare students for collegiate success and surround them with positive role models.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	577	K–12
2013–14:	347	K–6

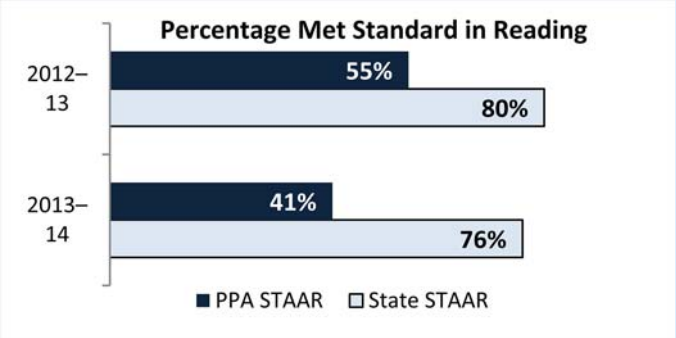
Special Categories

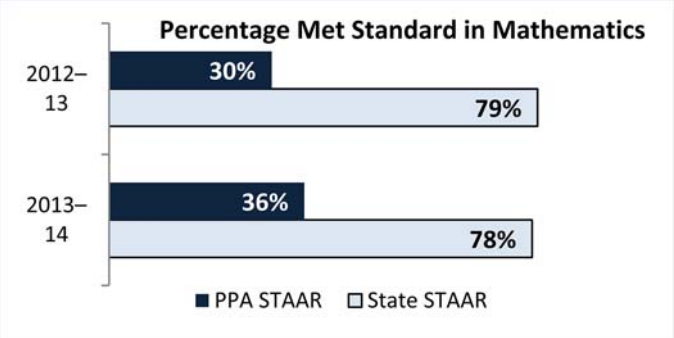
Economically Disadvantaged:	82%
English Language Learners:	0%
Special Education:	8%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	7%
Black:	90%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	1%		

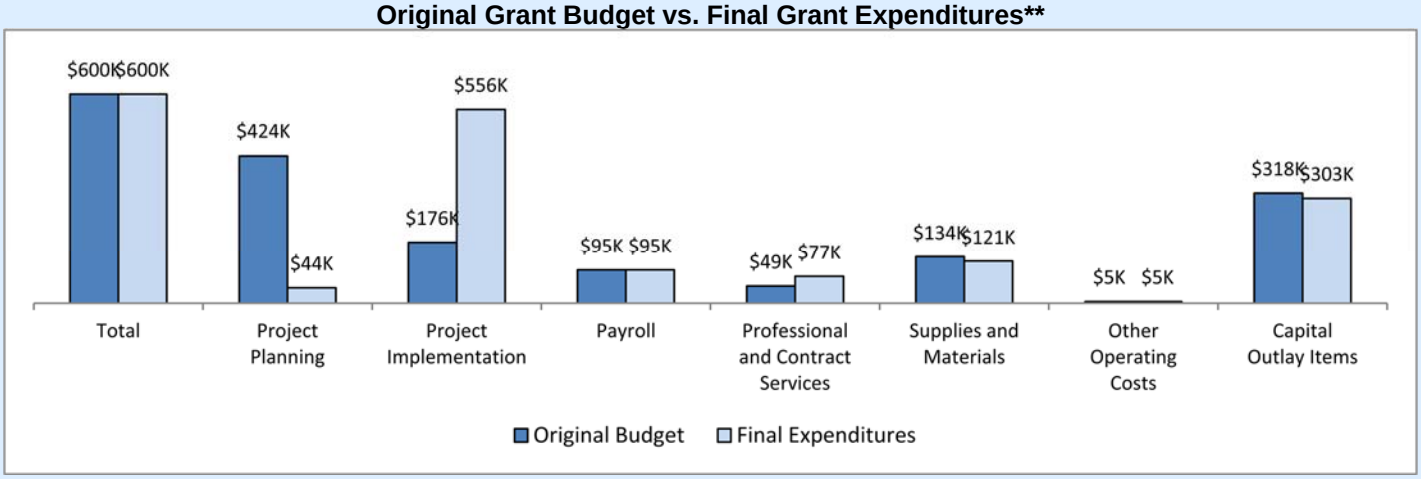
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. PPA





NOTE: “Met standard” indicates “At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard” on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

The REAL Learning Academy (REAL)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Grade(s) at Opening: PK–3

Charter Holder: Eden Park Academy

Geographic Area(s) Served: Austin, Bastrop, and Del Valle areas

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder is its own LEA. The REAL Learning Academy operates as a campus under that charter.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To develop competent, confident, productive, and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills, and attitudes needed to succeed; to achieve a balance between the individual and the group, the quality of outcome and the process, and the need for work and play.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	312	PK–3
2013–14:	368	PK–6

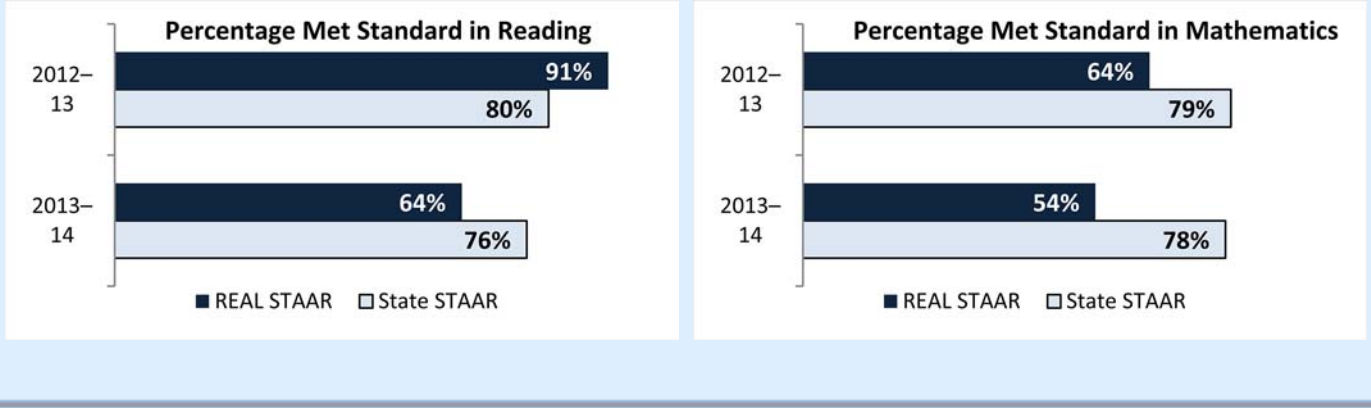
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	35%
English Language Learners:	5%
Special Education:	6%

Race/Ethnicity*

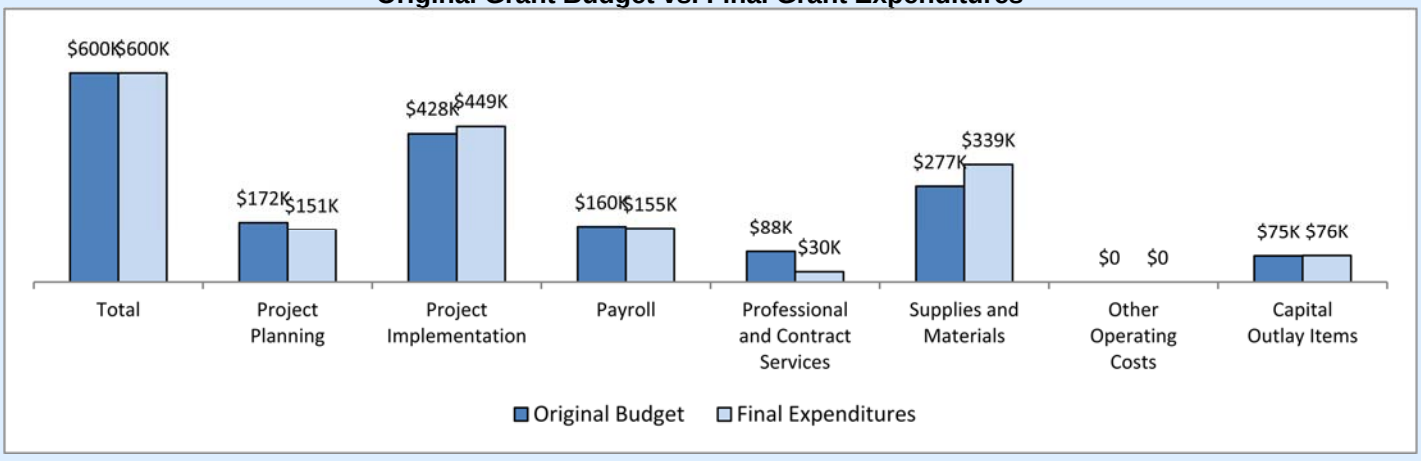
Asian:	3%	White:	37%
Black:	5%	Other:	7%
Hispanic:	48%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. REAL



NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

The Founders Classical Academy (TFCA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Grade(s) at Opening: K–10

Charter Holder: Responsive Education Solutions

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas area

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder has final authority and provides administrative support. The campus director retains day-to-day decision-making authority.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide an individualized approach to classical education that includes character building and moral guidance, and to make learning an enjoyable part of students' lives.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	462	K–10
2013–14:	718	K–11

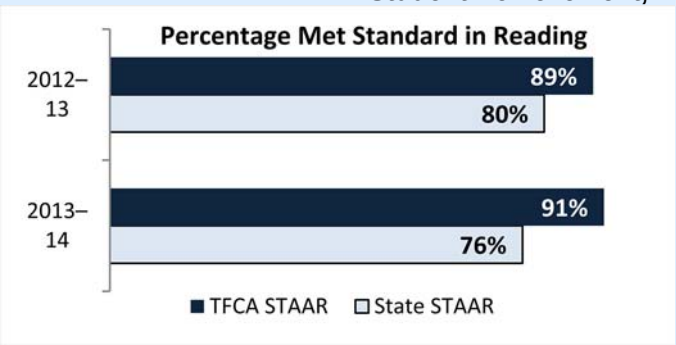
Special Categories

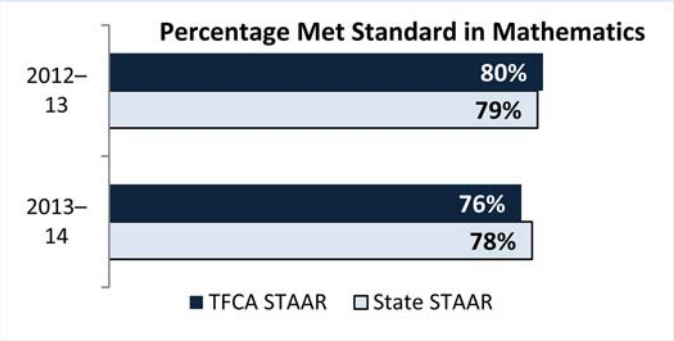
Economically Disadvantaged:	17%
English Language Learners:	2%
Special Education:	6%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	9%	White:	15%
Black:	6%	Other:	5%
Hispanic:	64%		

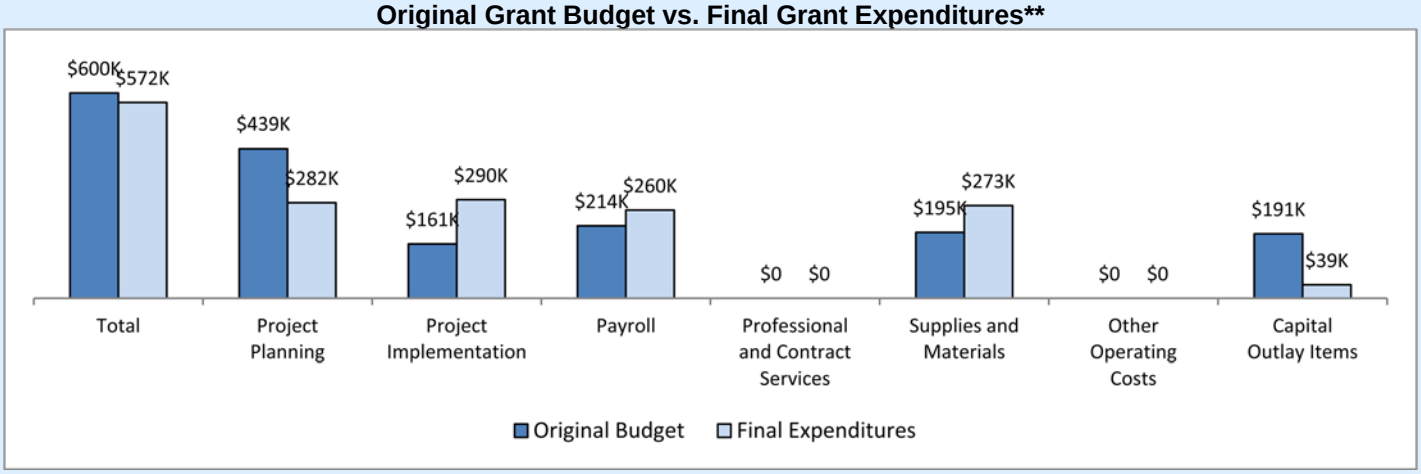
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. TFCA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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UME Preparatory Academy (UMEPA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: Birdville, Cedar Hill, Dallas, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, and Maypearl areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: UMEP Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: UME Preparatory Academy is its own LEA.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide a rigorous, college-preparatory program that gives parents more time to strengthen their relationships with their children and influence their character, faith, and values; to produce wholesome, competent men and women who make a positive impact.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	337	K–8
2013–14:	392	K–9

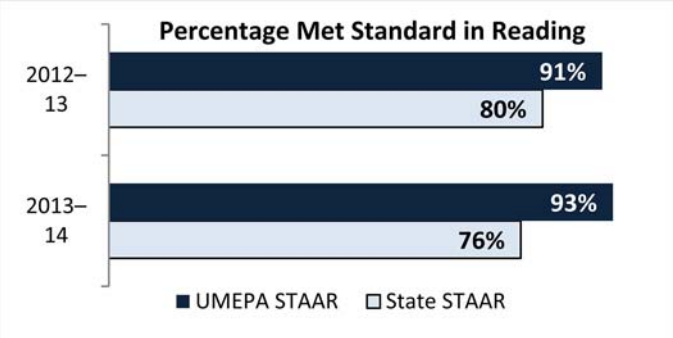
Special Categories

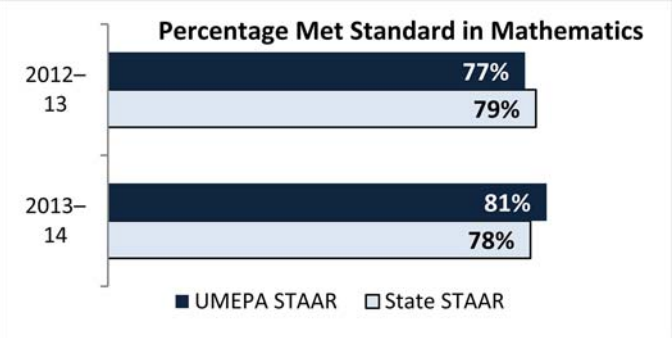
Economically Disadvantaged:	17%
English Language Learners:	2%
Special Education:	10%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	8%	White:	19%
Black:	6%	Other:	3%
Hispanic:	63%		

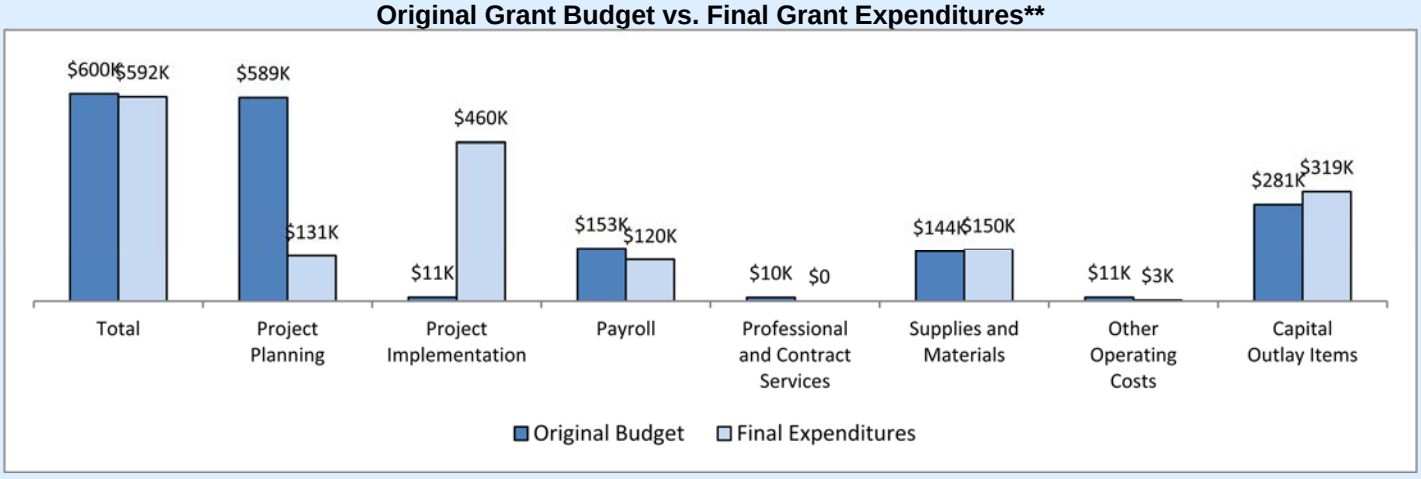
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. UMEPA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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Uplift Mighty Preparatory (UMiP)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Grade(s) at Opening: K–7

Charter Holder: Uplift Education

Geographic Area(s) Served: Fort Worth area

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder Board of Directors is the governing body with legal responsibility over accountability and performance.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To prepare scholars for college at an early stage through rigorous academics. Caring and enthusiastic teachers and staff will focus on individualized learning to help the student achieve the advanced mastery of grade level material.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	348	K–7
2013–14:	553	K–8

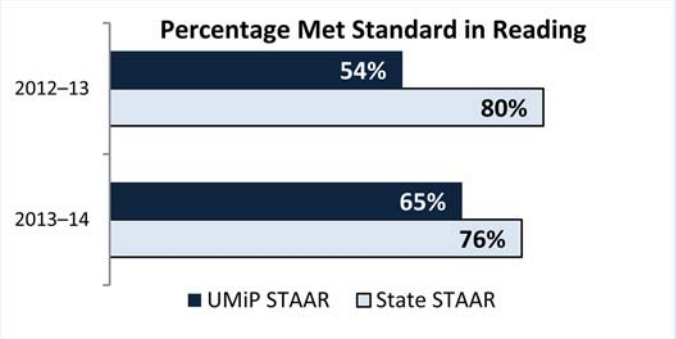
Special Categories

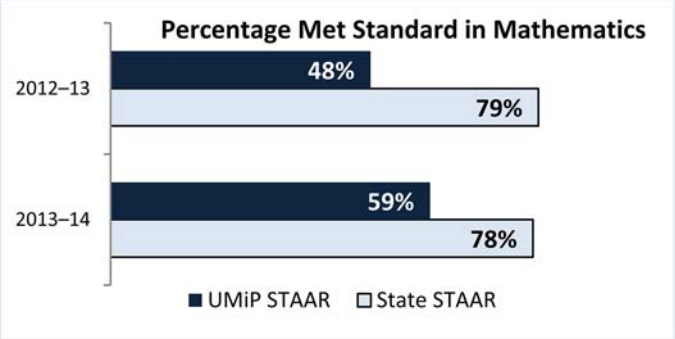
Economically Disadvantaged:	86%
English Language Learners:	34%
Special Education:	2%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	64%
Black:	32%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	3%		

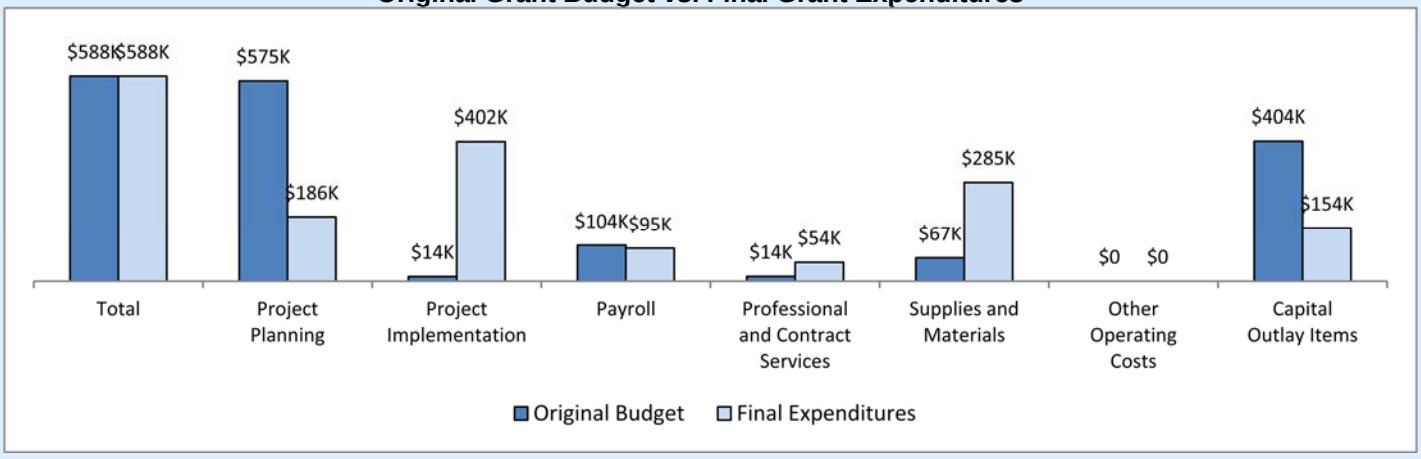
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. UMiP





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Uplift Meridian Preparatory (UMP)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Charter Type: New School Designated Under an Existing Charter

Grade(s) at Opening: K–1

Charter Holder: Uplift Education

Geographic Area(s) Served: Fort Worth area

Relationship with Charter Holder: The charter holder Board of Directors is the governing body with legal responsibility over accountability and performance.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To prepare scholars for college at an early stage through rigorous academics. Caring and enthusiastic teachers and staff will focus on individualized learning to help the student achieve the advanced mastery of grade level material.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	120	K–1
2013–14:	232	K–2

Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	88%
English Language Learners:	32%
Special Education:	5%

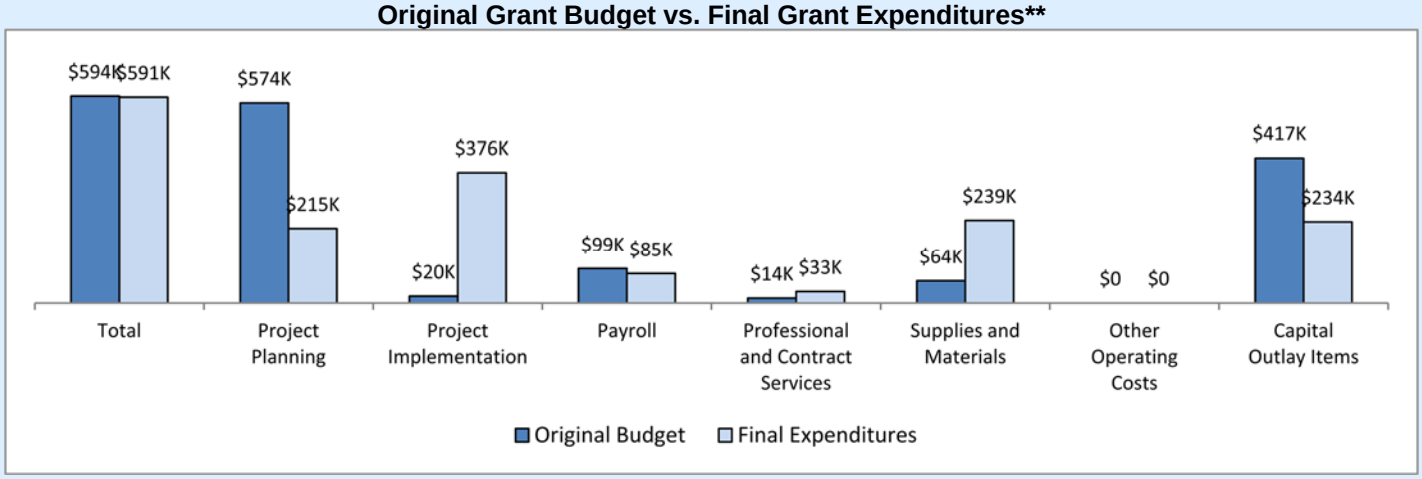
Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	1%	White:	63%
Black:	29%	Other:	3%
Hispanic:	4%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. UMP

Only Grades K–2; no achievement data

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

UT Tyler Innovation Academy (UTTIA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 3–6

Geographic Area(s) Served: Longview, Tyler, and Palestine areas

Charter Type: University charter school

Charter Holder: The University of Texas System

Relationship with Charter Holder: The school is governed by the University of Texas System Board of Regents.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To develop, implement and disseminate new and promising practices in education.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	278	3–6
2013–14:	211	3–7

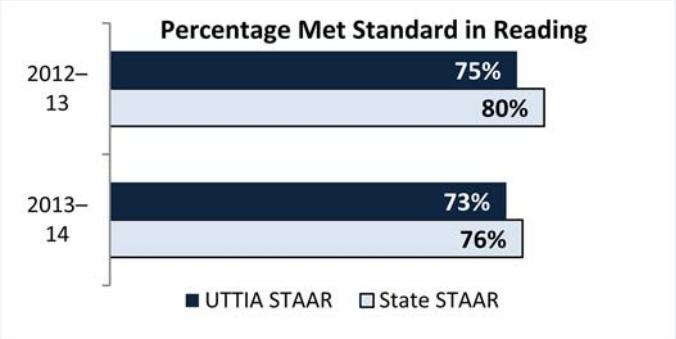
Special Categories

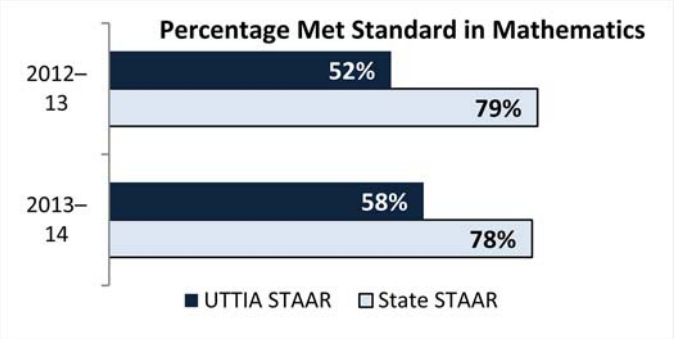
Economically Disadvantaged:	15%
English Language Learners:	0%
Special Education:	0%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	2%	White:	10%
Black:	5%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	80%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. UTTIA





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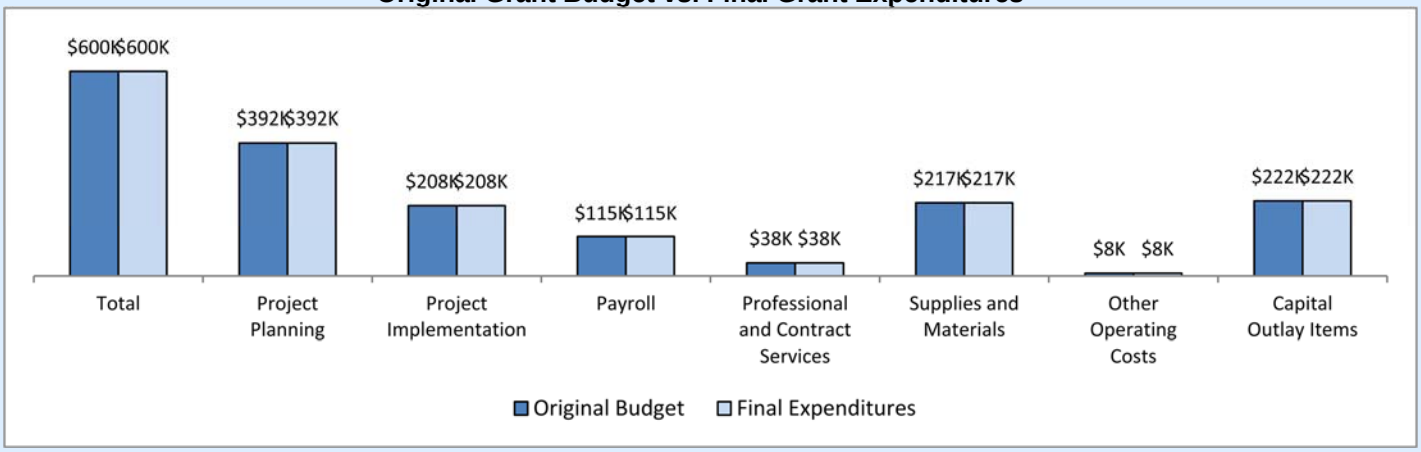
Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
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Cohort III

Eleanor Kolitz Hebrew Language Academy (EKHLA)

2013–14 and 2014–15 School Years

Year Opened: 2013–14 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Ben Yehuda Academy

Relationship with Charter Holder: Ben Yehuda Academy is a Local Education Agency (LEA).

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To maximize the personal, intellectual and spiritual development of each student by providing the highest quality secular and Judaic education in a nurturing Jewish environment that emphasizes mutual respect and the unity of the Jewish people (K'lal Yisrael).

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2013–14:	196	K–8
2014–15:	258	K–8

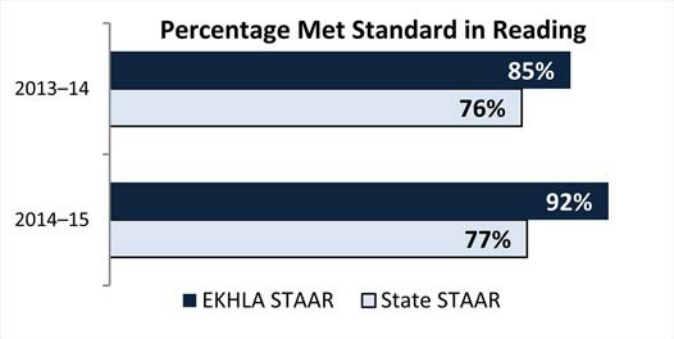
Special Categories

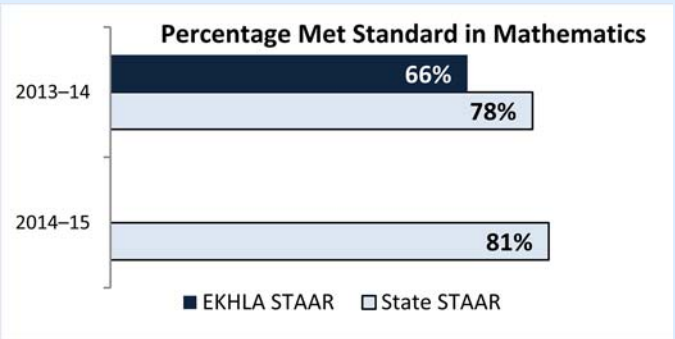
Economically Disadvantaged:	19%
English Language Learners:	3%
Special Education:	3%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	2%	White:	5%
Black:	1%	Other:	4%
Hispanic:	43%		

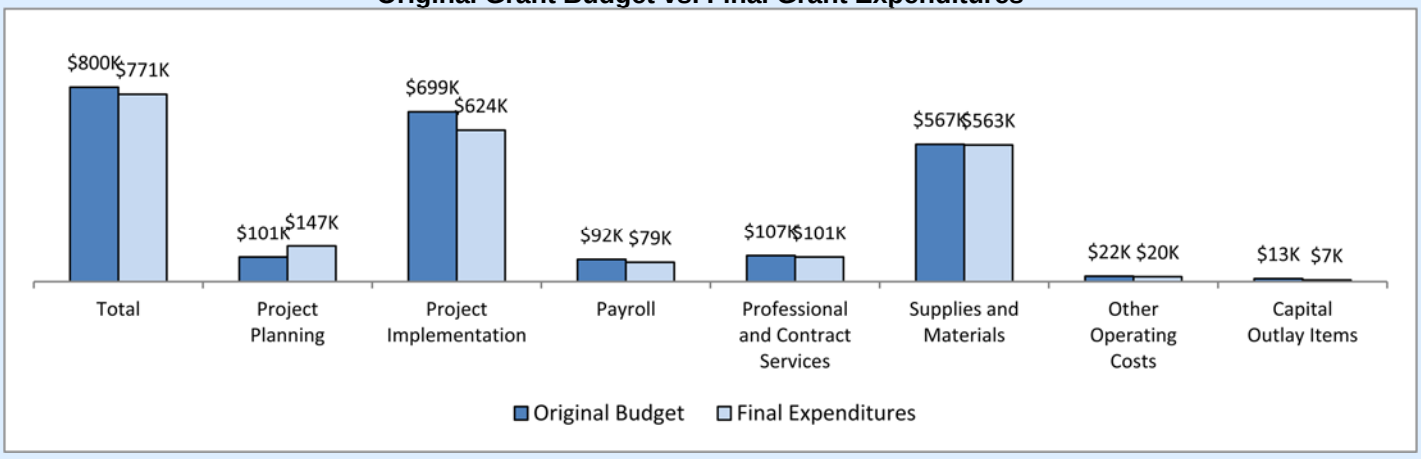
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. EKHLA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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Global Learning Village (GLV)

2013–14 and 2014–15 School Years

Year Opened: 2013–14 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–1

Geographic Area(s) Served: Houston area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Hope Academy Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: Global Learning Village is a Local Education Agency (LEA)

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To equip students to become creative, critical thinking, multilingual students in order to become positive, contributing members of the global community.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2013–14:	44	K–1
2014–15:	69	K–2

Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	38%
English Language Learners:	0%
Special Education:	0%

Race/Ethnicity*

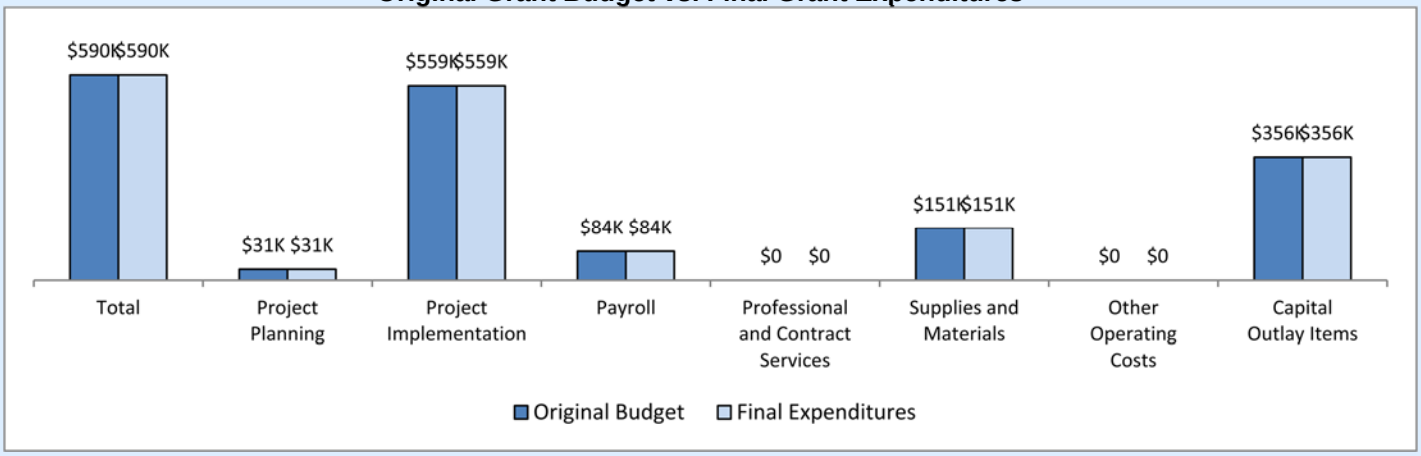
Asian:	0%	White:	3%
Black:	97%	Other:	0%
Hispanic:	0%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. GLV

Only Grades K–2; no achievement data

NOTE: “Met standard” indicates “At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard” on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute (GPCI)

2013–14 and 2014–15 School Years

Year Opened: 2013–14 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 6–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: Grand Prairie and Arlington areas

Charter Type: Campus Charter

Charter Holder: Grand Prairie Independent School District

Relationship with Charter Holder: Grand Prairie ISD has overall policy-setting and enforcement authority, and serves as the fiscal agent for the school.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To develop 21st Century, scholarly leaders by providing a rigorous STEM and college readiness environment that promotes lifelong learning and success by giving scholars in Grades 6–12 access to courses in advanced academics, dual credit, career and technical education, and Advanced Placement.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2013–14:	88	6–8
2014–15:	121	6–9

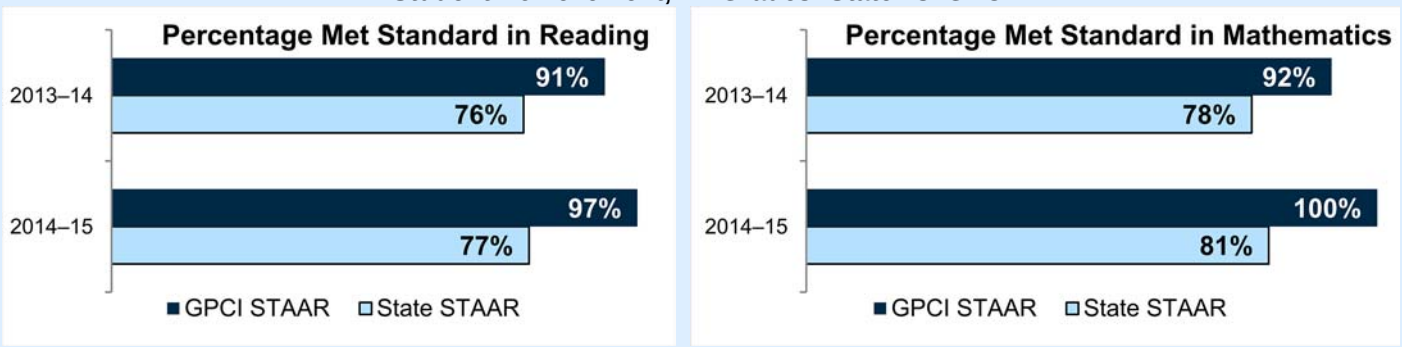
Special Categories

Economically Disadvantaged:	64%
English Language Learners:	11%
Special Education:	0%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	2%	White:	62%
Black:	16%	Other:	4%
Hispanic:	17%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. GPCI



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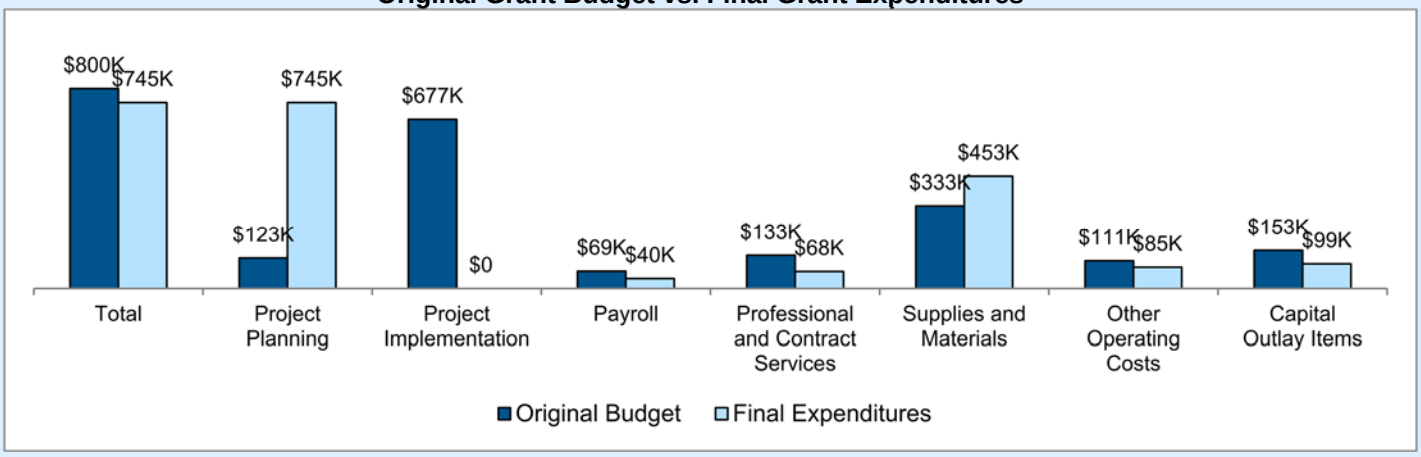
Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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Pro-Vision Middle and The Pro-Vision Academy (PV)

2013–14 and 2014–15 School Years

Year Opened: 2013–14 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 5–12

Geographic Area(s) Served: Houston area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Pro-Vision Educational Services, Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: Pro-Vision Educational Services, Inc. is led by a CEO and Superintendent.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To inspire hope and purpose by improving the lives of young men and women, and their families in some of Houston's most underserved neighborhoods.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2013–14:	263	5–12
2014–15:	356	5–12

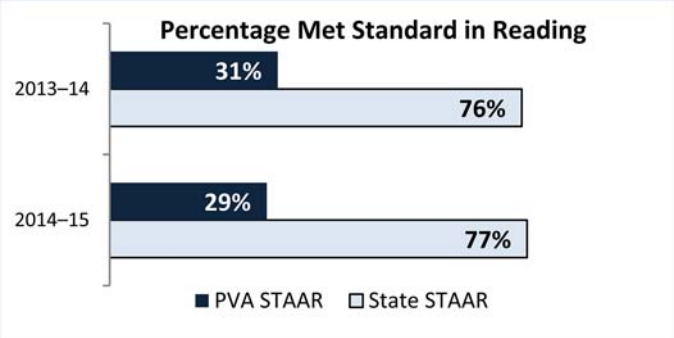
Special Categories

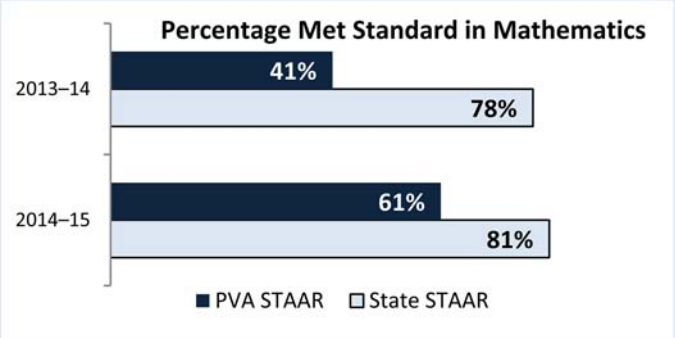
Economically Disadvantaged:	94%
English Language Learners:	1%
Special Education:	17%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	1%
Black:	9%	Other:	<1%
Hispanic:	0%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. PVA





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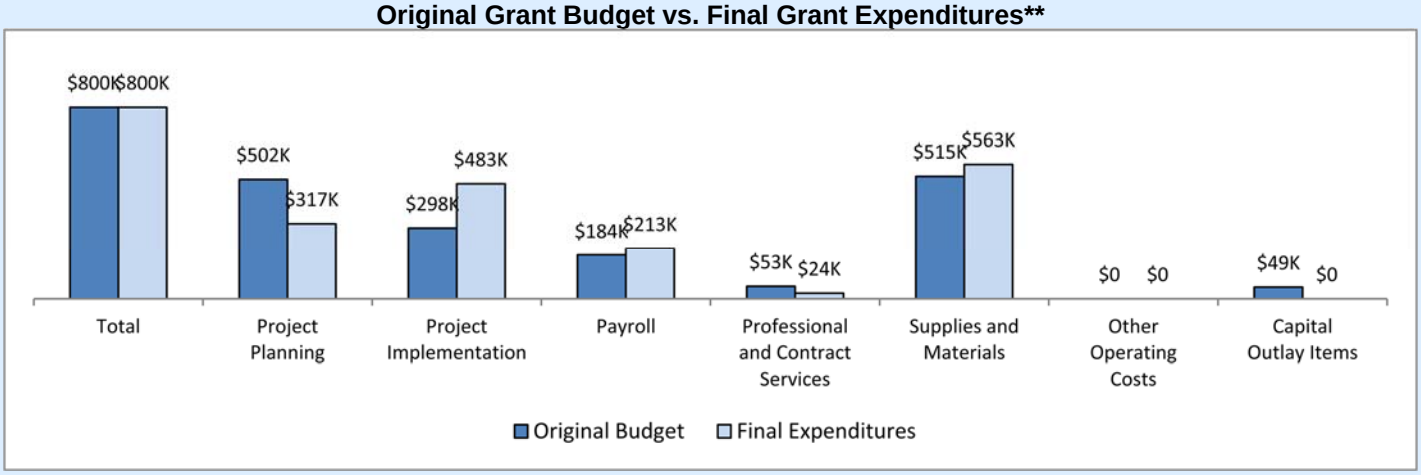
Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Village Tech Schools (VTS)

2013–14 and 2014–15 School Years

Year Opened: 2013–14 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: PK–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: Dallas, Cedar Hill, and Duncanville, areas

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Village Tech Schools

Relationship with Charter Holder: Village Tech Schools is a Local Education Agency (LEA).

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To provide students with great teachers who cultivate character, design new challenges, and establish authentic community by igniting our communities to demand innovation in education.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2013–14:	636	PK–8
2014–15:	727	PK–9

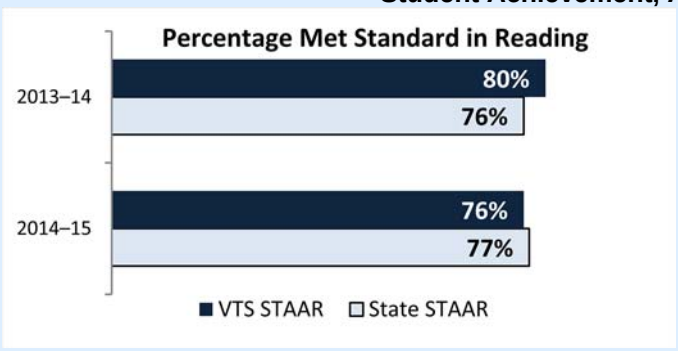
Special Categories

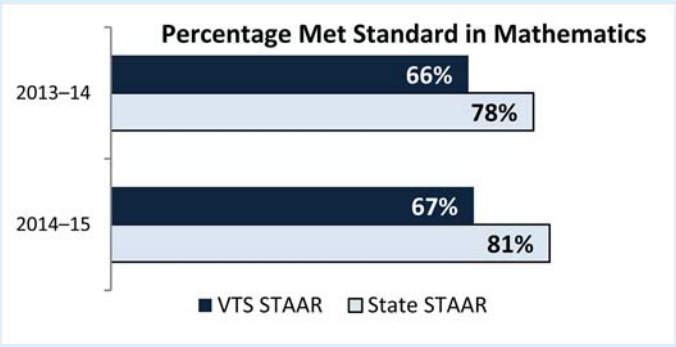
Economically Disadvantaged:	32%
English Language Learners:	2%
Special Education:	3%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	2%	White:	32%
Black:	31%	Other:	6%
Hispanic:	29%		

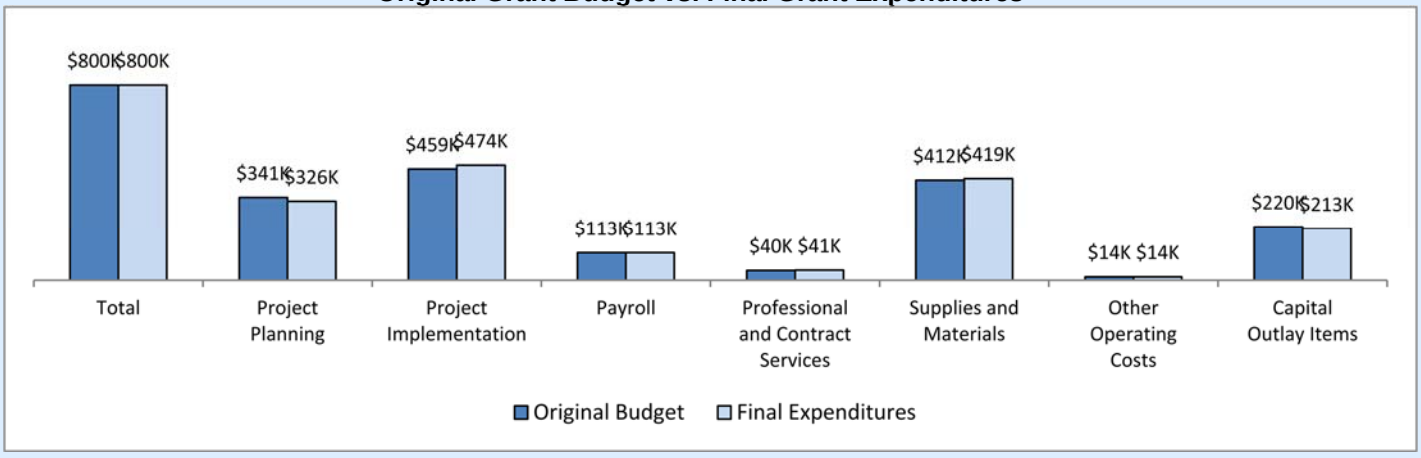
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. VTS





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



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Cohort IV

BASIS San Antonio (BSA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 5–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: BTX Schools, Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: BTX Schools, Inc. is a Local Education Agency (LEA).

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To educate students at an internationally competitive level, with BASIS students ready to compete with their top-performing peers in Finland, Korea, or China.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	606	5–9
2013–14:	583	5–9

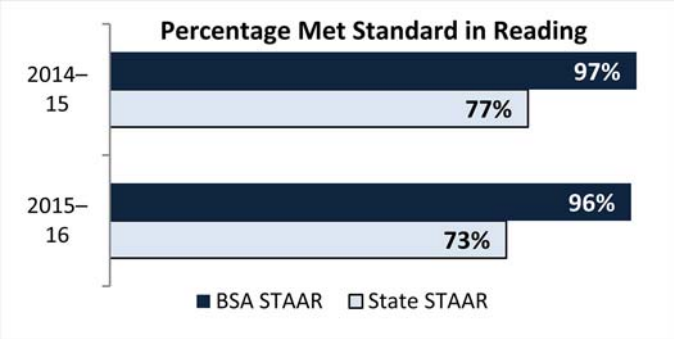
Special Categories

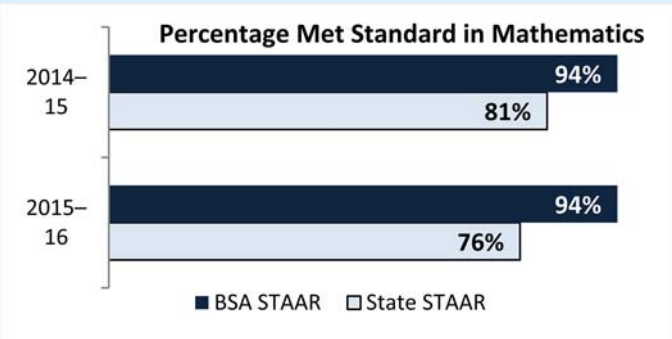
Economically Disadvantaged:	7%
English Language Learners:	0%
Special Education:	1%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	20%	White:	36%
Black:	5%	Other:	5%
Hispanic:	34%		

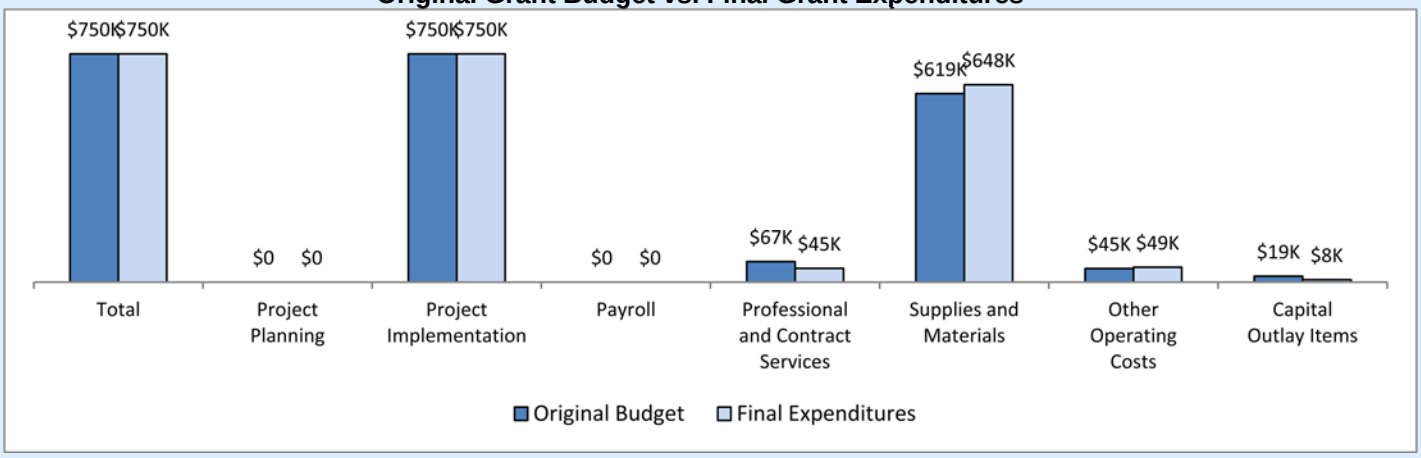
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. BSA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Carpe Diem San Antonio (CDSA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 6–10

Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Learning Schools of Texas

Relationship with Charter Holder: Learning Schools of Texas was granted an open-enrollment charter to open up to 5 campuses.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To educate, empower, and equip students for success in life by creating education-changing innovations.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	NA	NA
2013–14:	244	6–10

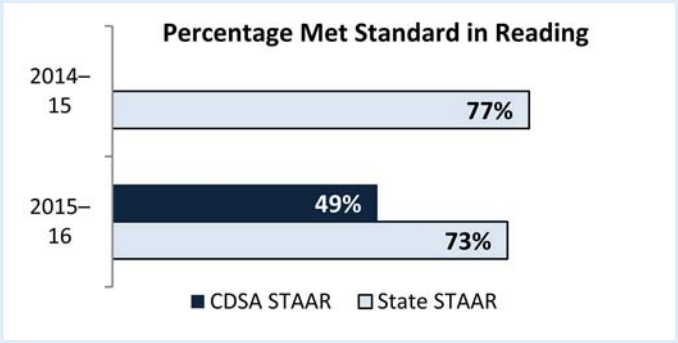
Special Categories

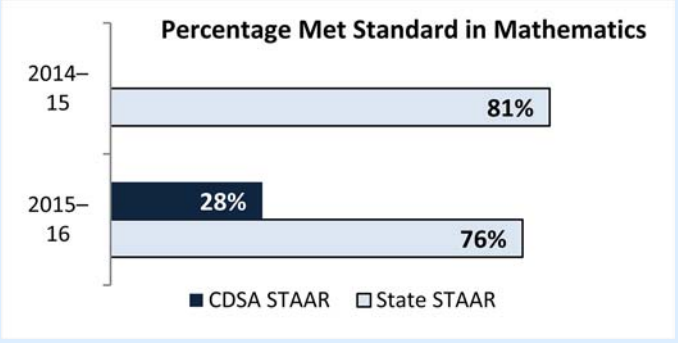
Economically Disadvantaged:	62%
English Language Learners:	3%
Special Education:	0%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	78%
Black:	5%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	16%		

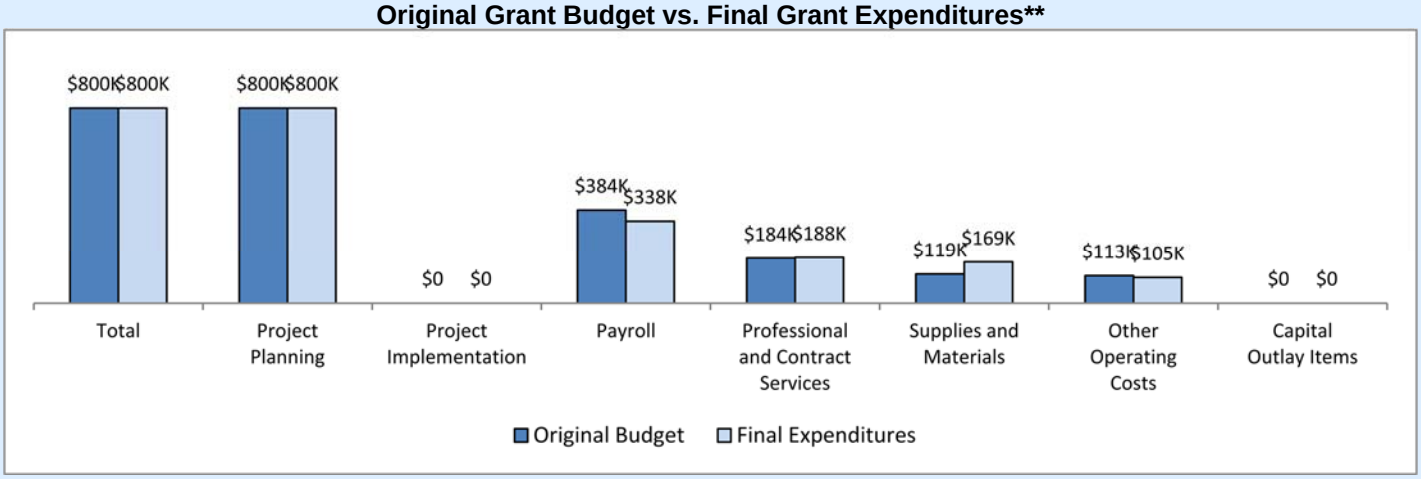
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. CDSA





NOTE: “Met standard” indicates “At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard” on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

CORE Academy (COREA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 6–8

Geographic Area(s) Served: Houston area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Generations of Life Foundation

Relationship with Charter Holder: CORE Academy is under the sponsorship of Generations of Life Foundation, a Houston area non-profit organization.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To strengthen and revitalize communities by providing life impacting services that assist, educate, and empower underserved individuals and families.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	343	3–9
2013–14:	509	K–10

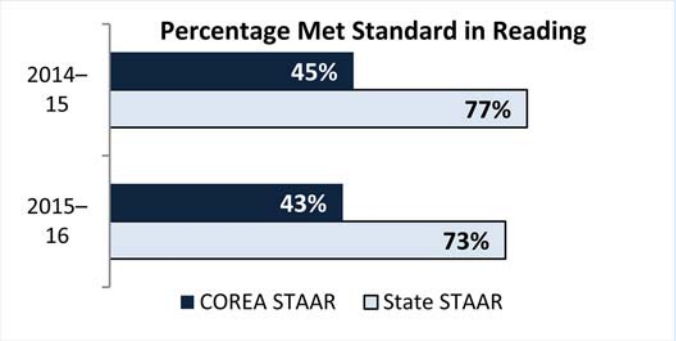
Special Categories

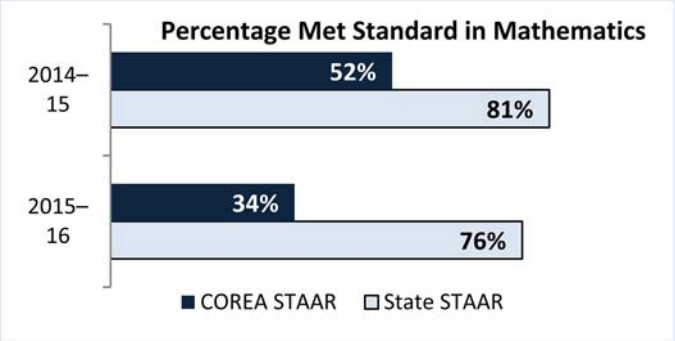
Economically Disadvantaged:	89%
English Language Learners:	1%
Special Education:	9%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	6%
Black:	93%	Other:	<1%
Hispanic:	1%		

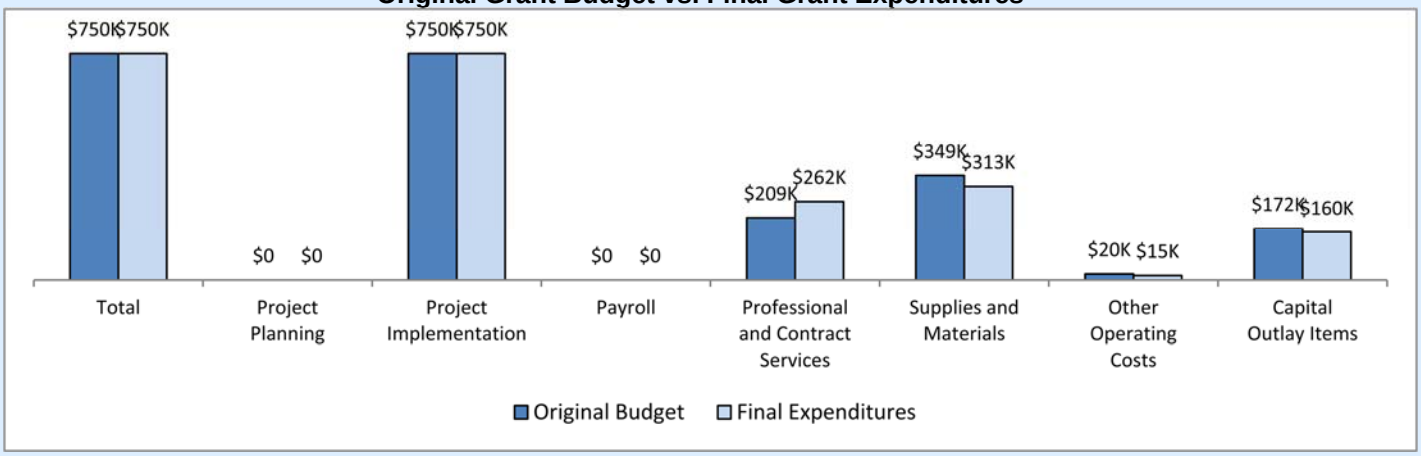
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. COREA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: 6–7

Geographic Area(s) Served: El Paso area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: El Paso Leadership Academy

Relationship with Charter Holder: El Paso Leadership Academy (EPLA) is a Texas Subchapter D charter school.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To prepare students to obtain a four-year college degree and become engaged leaders in their community.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	77	6
2013–14:	181	6–7

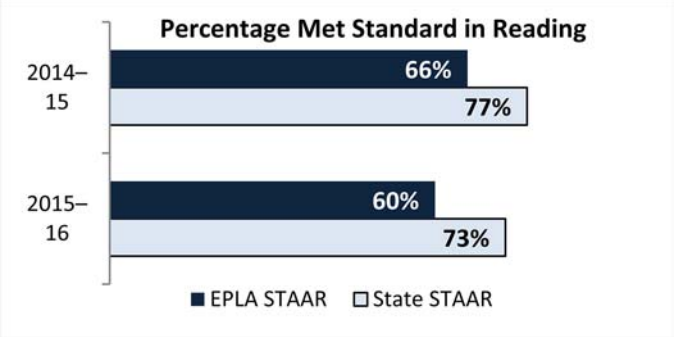
Special Categories

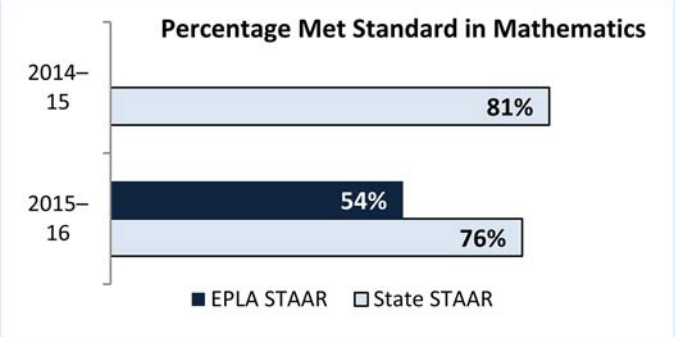
Economically Disadvantaged:	75%
English Language Learners:	9%
Special Education:	9%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	1%	White:	91%
Black:	2%	Other:	1%
Hispanic:	4%		

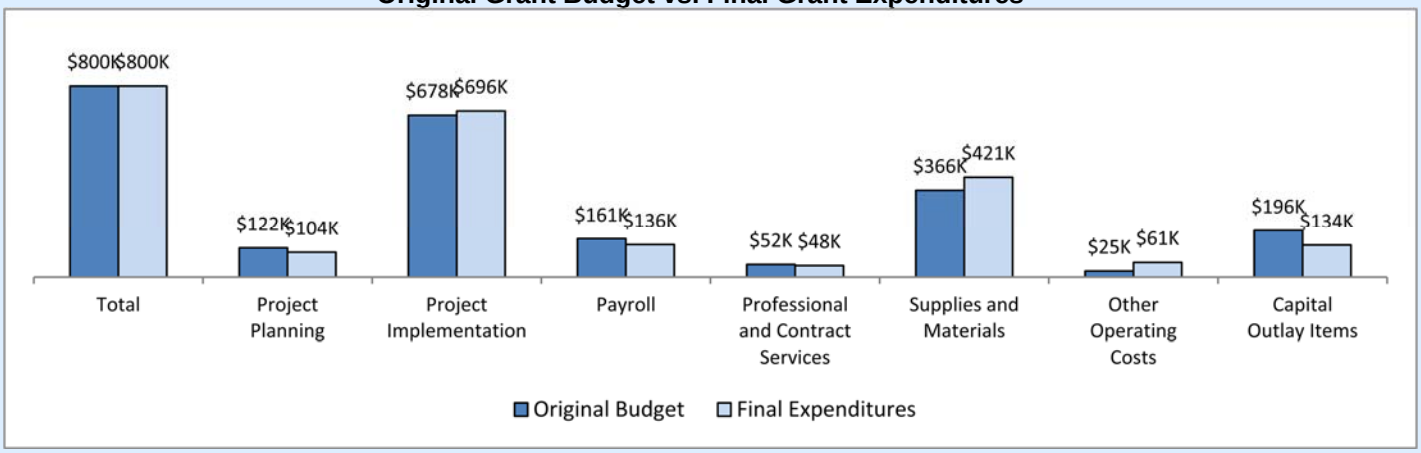
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. EPLA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



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Great Hearts Academy San Antonio (Monte Vista) (GHASA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–9

Geographic Area(s) Served: San Antonio area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Great Hearts America - Texas

Relationship with Charter Holder: Great Hearts of America - Texas is a Local Education Agency (LEA).

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To graduate "great-hearted" young men and women who possess a sense of destiny and purpose that is directed to the service of the greater good by engaging in an intense and formative dialogue with the Great Books and Ideas of Western Culture and by conversing with peers and teachers who also seek the truth.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	408	K–5
2013–14:	415	K–5

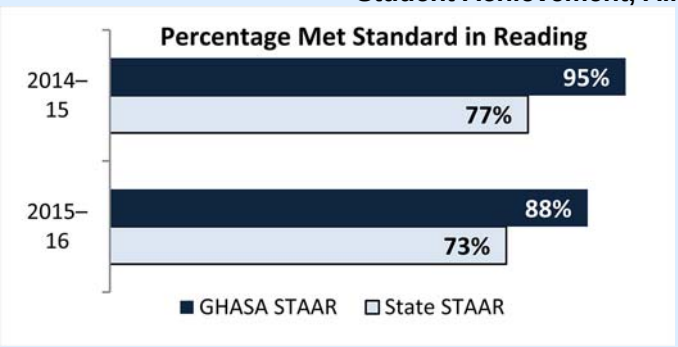
Special Categories

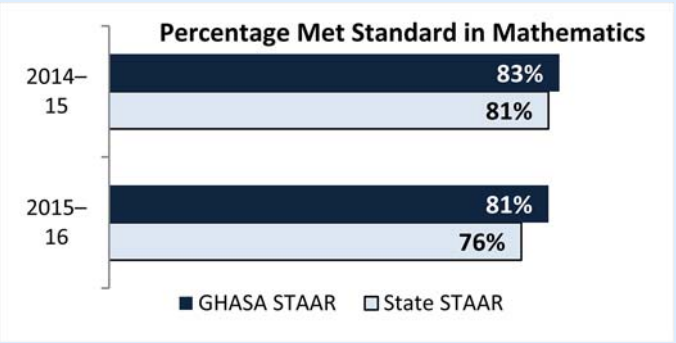
Economically Disadvantaged:	18%
English Language Learners:	3%
Special Education:	5%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	5%	White:	43%
Black:	2%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	48%		

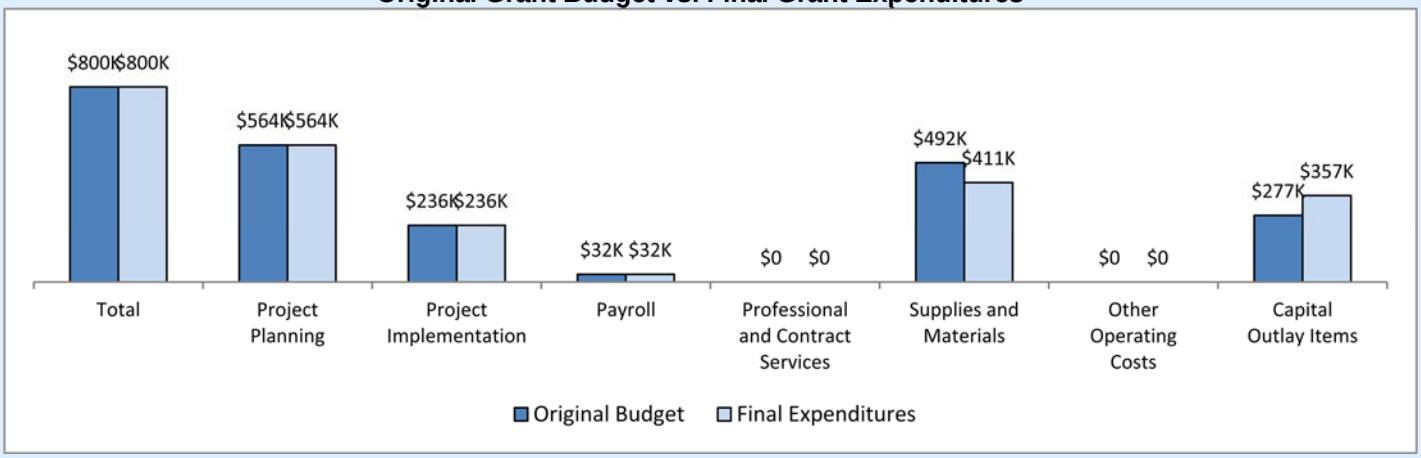
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. GHASA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Magnolia Montessori for All (MMA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: PK–3

Geographic Area(s) Served: Austin area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Montessori for All, Inc.

Relationship with Charter Holder: Magnolia Montessori For All is its own Local Education Agency (LEA).

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To help the whole child reach their enormous potential academically and intellectually, socially and emotionally, creatively, and physically by implementing six pillars.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	276	PK–3
2013–14:	332	PK–4

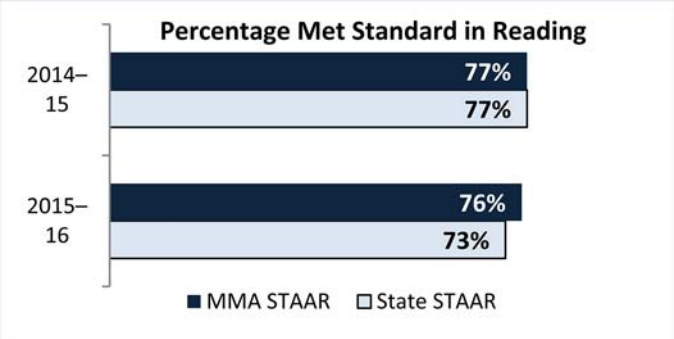
Special Categories

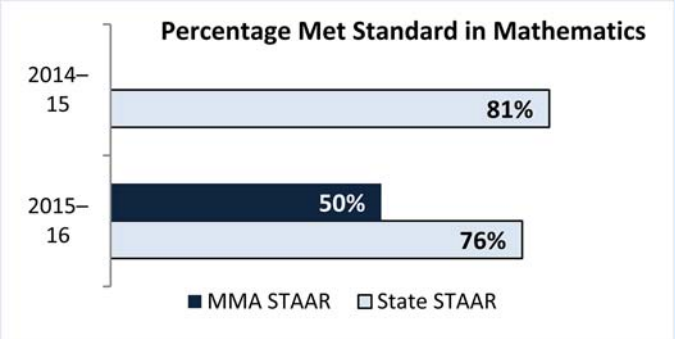
Economically Disadvantaged:	46%
English Language Learners:	26%
Special Education:	6%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	2%	White:	41%
Black:	10%	Other:	4%
Hispanic:	43%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. MMA





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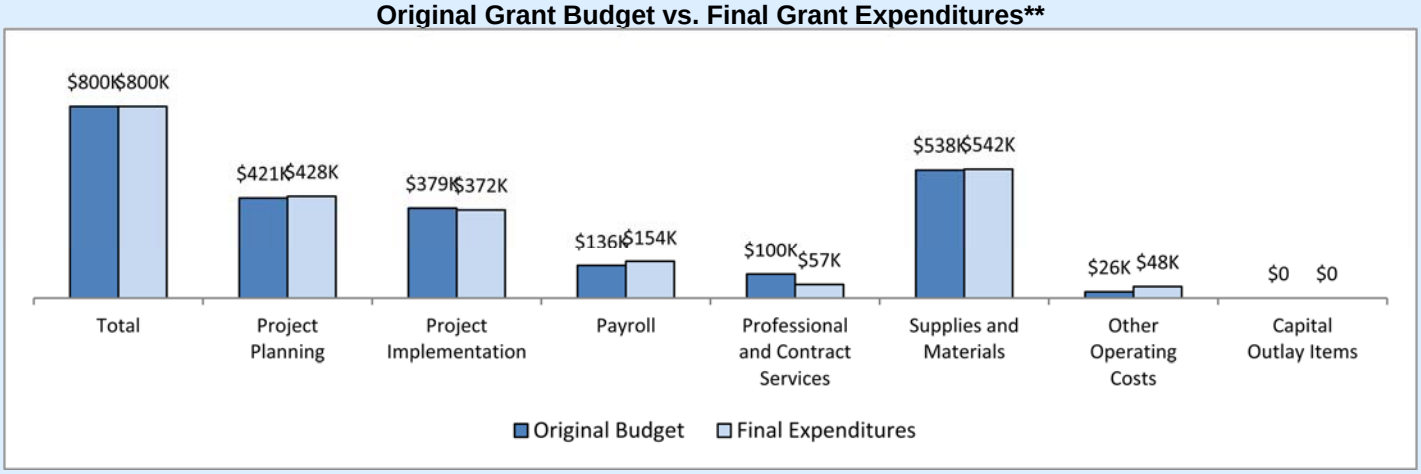
Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

Travis Heights Elementary (THES)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: PK–5

Geographic Area(s) Served: Austin area

Charter Type: Open-enrollment Charter

Charter Holder: Austin ISD

Relationship with Charter Holder: The Austin ISD Board of Trustees is the authorizing entity of this in-district charter school initiative.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To cultivate inquisitive learning that ensures students are prepared to successfully pursue the education of their choice in preparation for living in a dynamic and increasingly diverse environment.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	496	PK–5
2013–14:	521	PK–5

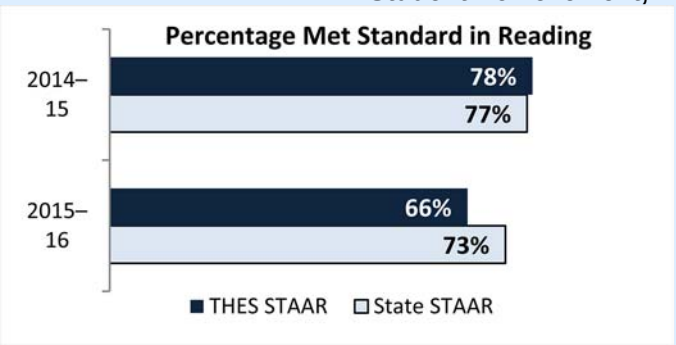
Special Categories

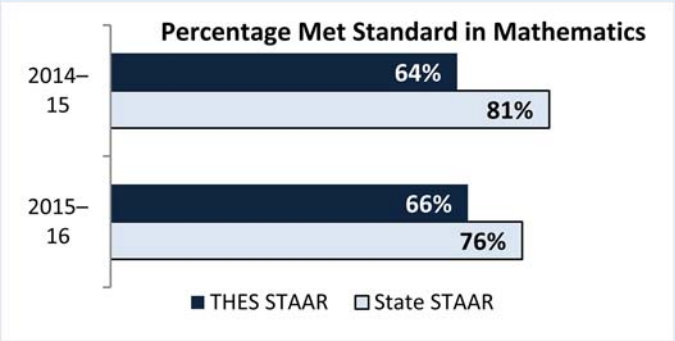
Economically Disadvantaged:	67%
English Language Learners:	25%
Special Education:	13%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	2%	White:	66%
Black:	8%	Other:	2%
Hispanic:	22%		

Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. THES





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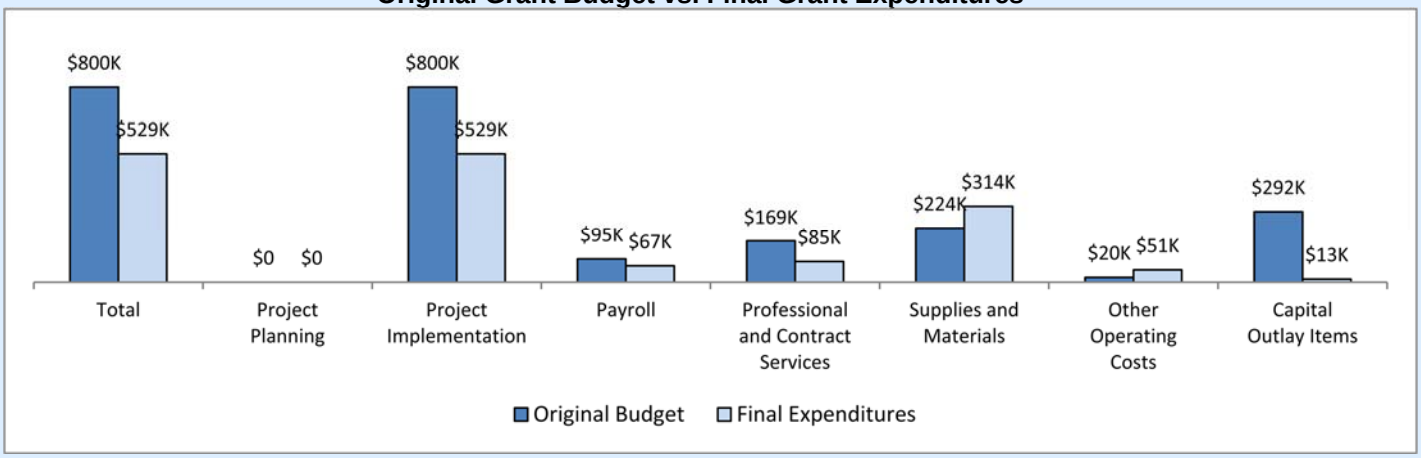
Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Under this grant, schools were allowed to amend their original budgets within certain guidelines. All differences shown between the original school budget and school expenditures were allowable by the grant.

UTPB STEM Academy (UTPBSA)

2012–13 and 2013–14 School Years

Year Opened: 2012–13 school year

Grade(s) at Opening: K–6

Geographic Area(s) Served: Odessa area

Charter Type: University charter school

Charter Holder: UT at Permian Basin

Relationship with Charter Holder: The relationship between UTPB STEM Academy charter school and the Start-Up Grant project is collaborative.

Summary of School Mission/Vision: To implement the newest and most promising practices in education with an emphasis in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) so that learning is both engaging and social.

Student Enrollment

Year	# of Students	Grades
2012–13:	301	K–6
2013–14:	323	K–7

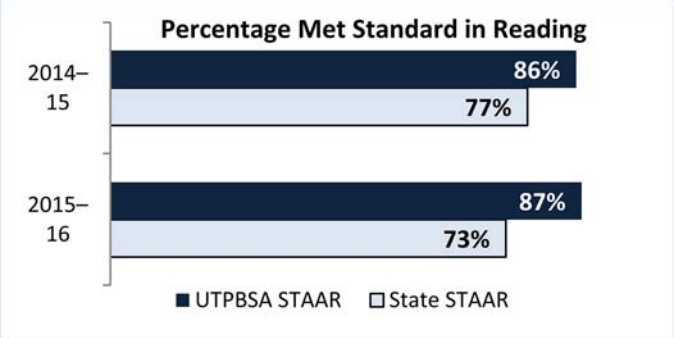
Special Categories

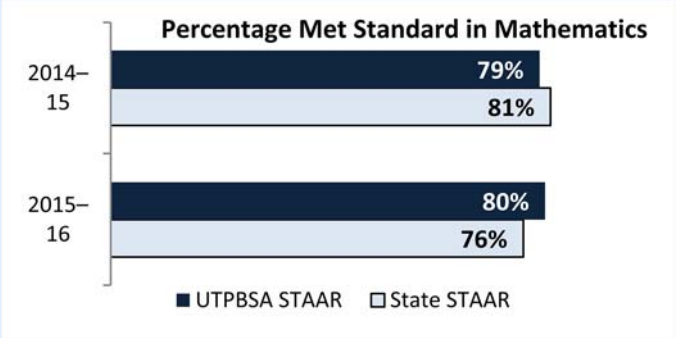
Economically Disadvantaged:	10%
English Language Learners:	<1%
Special Education:	5%

Race/Ethnicity*

Asian:	0%	White:	29%
Black:	3%	Other:	3%
Hispanic:	65%		

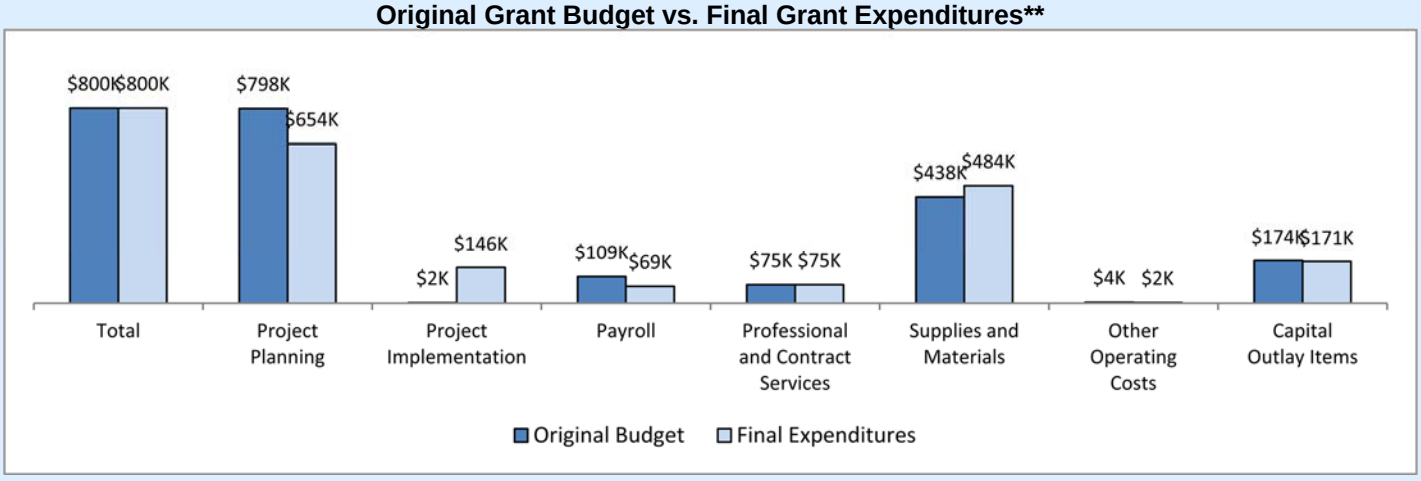
Student Achievement, All Grades: State vs. UTPBSA





NOTE: "Met standard" indicates "At or above the Level II Phase-in 1 standard" on STAAR

Original Grant Budget vs. Final Grant Expenditures**



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

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Appendix D: Additional Results from Chapters 3 and 4

Appendix D: Additional Results from Chapters 3 and 4

Tables D1 through D8 include additional results from Chapters 3 and 4.

Table D1. Student Demographic Characteristics by Charter School Type, Fall 2013

Characteristic/Group		CC (n=2 schools)		OEC (n=2 schools)		NSD (n=3 schools)	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Grades	Grades PreK–2	0	0.0%	523	45.7%	383	25.5%
	Grades 3–8	224	35.9%	535	46.8%	993	66.1%
	Grades 9–10	400	64.1%	86	7.5%	127	8.4%
Gender	Female	342	54.8%	568	49.7%	806	53.6%
	Male	282	45.2%	576	50.3%	697	46.4%
Race/	Asian	3	0.5%	229	20.0%	82	5.5%
Ethnicity	African American	87	13.9%	265	23.2%	58	3.9%
	Hispanic	454	72.8%	203	17.7%	812	54.0%
	American Indian	2	0.3%	5	0.4%	3	0.2%
	Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.2%
	Two or More Races	7	1.1%	41	3.6%	49	3.3%
	White	71	11.4%	401	35.1%	496	33.0%
Economically Disadvantaged		495	79.3%	382	33.4%	774	51.5%
Gifted		94	15.1%	33	2.9%	0	0.0%
Special Education		23	3.7%	65	5.7%	55	3.7%
English Language Learners		27	4.3%	80	7.0%	265	17.6%
At Risk		213	34.1%	119	10.4%	514	34.2%

Source. Public Education Information Management System, 2013–14.
Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; CC = campus

Table D2. Student Demographic Characteristics by Mission/Focus of Charter School, Fall 2013

Characteristic/Group		Generalist (n=3 schools)		Specialist (n=4 schools)	
		Count	%	Count	%
Grade	Grades PreK–2	200	19.6%	706	31.4%
	Grades 3–8	422	41.3%	1330	59.1%
	Grades 9–12	400	39.1%	213	9.5%
Gender	Female	545	53.3%	1171	52.1%
	Male	477	46.7%	1078	47.9%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	3	0.3%	311	13.8%
	African American	93	9.1%	317	14.1%
	Hispanic	841	82.3%	628	27.9%
	American Indian	2	0.2%	8	0.4%
	Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
	Two or More Races	8	0.8%	89	4.0%
	White	75	7.3%	893	39.7%
Economically Disadvantaged		859	84.1%	792	35.2%
Gifted		94	9.2%	33	1.5%
Special Education		29	2.8%	114	5.1%
English Language Learners		184	18.0%	188	8.4%
At Risk		483	47.3%	363	16.1%

Source. Public Education Information Management System, 2013–14.
Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table D3. Student Demographic Characteristics by Charter School Type, Fall 2014

Characteristic/Group		CC (n=1 school)		OEC (n=2 schools)		NSD (n=3 schools)	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Grades	Grades PreK–2	0	0.0%	534	38.6%	492	26.2%
	Grades 3–8	0	0.0%	705	50.9%	1061	56.5%
	Grades 9–10	402	100.0%	145	10.5%	325	17.3%
Gender	Female	240	59.7%	707	51.1%	984	52.4%
	Male	162	40.3%	677	48.9%	894	47.6%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	0	0.0%	254	18.4%	108	5.8%
	African American	8	2.0%	322	23.3%	77	4.1%
	Hispanic	369	91.8%	260	18.8%	1062	56.5%
	American Indian	0	0.0%	3	0.2%	2	0.1%
	Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
	Two or More Races	1	0.2%	49	3.5%	58	3.1%
	White	24	6.0%	496	35.8%	569	30.3%
Economically Disadvantaged		279	69.4%	443	32.0%	947	50.4%
Gifted		86	21.4%	57	4.1%	0	0.0%
Special Education		1	0.2%	101	7.3%	77	4.1%
English Language Learners		11	2.7%	124	9.0%	381	20.3%
At Risk		106	26.4%	169	12.2%	721	38.4%

Source. Public Education Information Management System, 2014–15.
Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; CC = campus

Table D4. Student Demographic Characteristics by Mission/Focus of Charter School, Fall 2014

Characteristic/Group		Generalist (n=2 schools)		Specialist (n=4 schools)	
		Count	%	Count	%
Grade	Grades PreK–2	309	32.1%	717	26.5%
	Grades 3–8	252	26.2%	1514	56.1%
	Grades 9–12	402	41.7%	470	17.4%
Gender	Female	508	52.8%	1423	52.7%
	Male	455	47.2%	1278	47.3%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	2	0.2%	360	13.3%
	African American	30	3.1%	377	14.0%
	Hispanic	898	93.3%	793	29.4%
	American Indian	0	0.0%	5	0.2%
	Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
	Two or More Races	2	0.2%	106	3.9%
	White	31	3.2%	1058	39.2%
Economically Disadvantaged		785	81.5%	884	32.7%
Gifted		86	8.9%	57	2.1%
Special Education		17	1.8%	162	6.0%
English Language Learners		230	23.9%	286	10.6%
At Risk		496	51.5%	500	18.5%

Source. Public Education Information Management System, 2014–15.
Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table D5. Analytic Samples of Students with STAAR and Attendance Data by Charter School Type, 2013–14

	Charter School Type			Unadjusted Differences (Sig.)		
	CC (n=2 schools)	OEC (n=2 schools)	NSD (n=3 schools)	CC vs. OEC	CC vs. NSD	OEC vs. NSD
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics						
# of Students Tested	210	510	812			
Mean	1550.7	1602.4	1620.6	-51.7***	-69.9***	-18.2
(St. Dev)	(124.7)	(165.3)	(168.9)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	52.9	78.0	78.1	-25.1***	-25.2***	0.1
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading						
# of Students Tested	210	509	973			
Mean	1536.0	1583.2	1617.3	-47.2***	-81.3***	-34.1
(St. Dev)	(123.8)	(136.4)	(148.5)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	59.1	87.0	85.5	-28.0***	-26.5***	1.5
STAAR Algebra I EOC						
# of Students Tested	75	30	186			
Mean	3924.1	3655.3	3983.1	268.8***	-59.1	-327.8***
(St. Dev)	(311.2)	(278.3)	(395.9)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	93.1	64.5	100.0	24.7***	4.3	-20.3***
STAAR English I EOC						
# of Students Tested	132	33	58			
Mean	4274.7	3845.9	4340.1	428.8***	-65.5	-494.2***
(St. Dev)	(487.6)	(426.0)	(364.1)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	92.4	57.6	100.0	34.8***	-7.6	-42.4***
STAAR English II EOC						
# of Students Tested	102	31	37			
Mean	4301.5	3855.0	4438.5	446.6***	137.6	-583.6***
(St. Dev)	(368.3)	(370.3)	(438.3)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	94.7	70.0	90.3	28.6***	-6.9	-35.5***

	Charter School Type			Unadjusted Differences (Sig.)		
	CC (n=2 schools)	OEC (n=2 schools)	NSD (n=3 schools)	CC vs. OEC	CC vs. NSD	OEC vs. NSD
Attendance						
# of Students	623	1,143	1,501			
Mean	96.0	97.0	96.9	-1.0***	-0.9***	0.1**
(St. Dev)	(4.6)	(2.9)	(3.5)			
% Above State Average	65.3	77.5	72.6	-12.2**	-7.3***	4.9*

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2013–14.
Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; CC = campus charter. The STAAR analytic samples per content area include all students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). The pairwise comparisons of means including groups with small sample sizes (of 100 cases and below) were statistically tested without controlling for student characteristics. Attendance rate (percentage of days attended) was calculated by dividing the total number of Days Present by the total number of Days Member. Two models were run with attendance rate untransformed (as percentage) and transformed (arcsine-transformation). Results across both models did not differ and the untransformed rates are presented here. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$.

Table D6. Analytic Samples of Students with STAAR and Attendance Data by Mission/Focus of Charter School, 2013–14

	Mission/Focus of Charter School		Unadjusted Differences (Sig.)
	Generalist (n=3 schools)	Specialist (n=4 schools)	Generalist vs. Specialist
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics			
# of Students Tested	405	1,127	
Mean	1603.5	1605.5	-.02
(St. Dev)	(161.3)	(164.9)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	71.4	75.8	-.4.4
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading			
# of Students Tested	405	1,287	
Mean	1544.6	1613.4	-68.8***
(St. Dev)	(132.4)	(144.4)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	71.9	86.1	-14.2**
STAAR Algebra I EOC			
# of Students Tested	75	216	
Mean	3924.1	3937.6	-13.5
(St. Dev)	(311.2)	(397.8)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	94.6	87.5	+7.1
STAAR English I EOC			
# of Students Tested	132	91	
Mean	4274.7	4160.9	+113.8**
(St. Dev)	(487.6)	(453.4)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	92.4	84.6	+7.8**
STAAR English II EOC			
# of Students Tested	102	68	
Mean	4301.1	4172.5	+128.6**
(St. Dev)	(368.4)	(500.3)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	93.1	83.8	+9.3**
Attendance			
# of Students	1,019	2,248	
Mean	96.4	96.9	-0.5*
(St. Dev)	(4.1)	(3.4)	
% Above State Average	68.3	75.0	-6.7

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2013–14.
Note. The STAAR analytic samples per content area include all students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). The pairwise comparisons of means including groups with small sample sizes (of 100 cases and below) were statistically tested without controlling for student characteristics.
Attendance rate (percentage of days attended) was calculated by dividing the total number of Days Present by the total number of Days Member. Two models were run with attendance rate untransformed (as percentage) and transformed (arcsine-transformation). Results across both models did not differ and the untransformed rates are presented here. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$.

Table D7. Analytic Samples of Students with STAAR and Attendance Data by Charter School Type, 2014–15

	Charter School Type			Unadjusted Differences (Sig.)		
	CC (n=1 school)	OEC (n=2 schools)	NSD (n=3 schools)	CC vs. OEC	CC vs. NSD	OEC vs. NSD
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics						
Number of Students Tested	-	645	871	-	-	
Mean	-	1595.8	1621.2	-	-	-25.4*
(St. Dev)		(145.7)	(150.2)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	-	79.1	80.9	-	-	-1.8
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading						
Number of Students Tested	-	645	1,050	-	-	
Mean	-	1598.4	1623.3	-	-	-24.9*
(St. Dev)		(139.3)	(139.7)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	-	88.1	87.3	-	-	+0.8
STAAR Algebra I EOC						
Number of Students Tested	57	55	220			
Mean	4361.0	3769.3	3955.1	591.7***	405.9***	-185.8
(St. Dev)	(464.4)	(291.3)	(388.9)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	98.3	80.0	90.0	18.3**	8.3	-10.0
STAAR English I EOC						
Number of Students Tested	99	48	193			
Mean	4865.7	4032.3	4243.3	833.4***	622.7***	-211.0*
(St. Dev)	(521.2)	(383.9)	(416.9)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	100.0	79.2	91.2	20.8**	8.2	-12.0
STAAR English II EOC						
Number of Students Tested	122	39	64			
Mean	4529.9	3974.4	4393.9	555.5***	136.0	-419.5***
(St. Dev)	(474.9)	(413.4)	(394.9)			
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	98.3	76.9	100.0	21.4**	-1.7	-23.1**
Attendance						
Number of Students Tested	402	1,383	1,874			
Mean	96.6	96.7	96.7	0.1	0.1	0.0
(St. Dev)	(3.5)	(3.3)	(3.5)			
% Above State Average	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2014–15.

Note. OEC = open-enrollment charter; NSD = new school designated under an existing charter; CC = campus charter.

The STAAR analytic samples per content area include all students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). The pairwise comparisons of means including groups with small sample sizes (of 100 cases and below) were statistically tested

without controlling for student characteristics. Attendance rate (percentage of days attended) was calculated by dividing the total number of Days Present by the total number of Days Member. Two models were run with attendance rate untransformed (as percentage) and transformed (arcsine-transformation). Results across both models did not differ and the untransformed rates are presented here. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$. The data on state average was not available for this report.

Table D8. Analytic Samples of Students with STAAR and Attendance Data by Mission/Focus of Charter School, 2014–15

	Mission/Focus of Charter School		Unadjusted Differences (Sig.)
	Generalist (n=2 schools)	Specialist (n=4 schools)	Generalist vs. Specialist
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics			
Number of Students Tested	252	1,264	
Mean	1690.0	1594.5	95.5***
(St. Dev)	(149.5)	(143.5)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	94.8	77.2	17.6***
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading			
Number of Students Tested	252	1,443	
Mean	1607.1	1615.0	-7.9
(St. Dev)	(124.0)	(142.6)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	90.9	87.0	3.9
STAAR Algebra I EOC			
Number of Students Tested	57	270	
Mean	4361.0	3920.7	440.3***
(St. Dev)	(464.4)	(379.2)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	98.3	88.2	10.1*
STAAR English I EOC			
Number of Students Tested	99	241	
Mean	4867.5	4201.3	666.2***
(St. Dev)	(521.1)	(418.4)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	100.0	88.9	11.1*
STAAR English II EOC			
Number of Students Tested	122	103	
Mean	4529.8	4235.0	294.8***
(St. Dev)	(474.4)	(449.3)	
% Met the Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	98.4	91.3	7.1**
Attendance			
Number of Students Tested	959	2,700	
Mean	96.9	96.7	0.2**
(St. Dev)	(3.1)	(3.5)	
% Above State Average	-	-	-

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2014–15.

Note. The STAAR analytic samples per content area include all students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). The pairwise comparisons of means including groups with small sample sizes (of 100 cases and below) were statistically tested without controlling for student characteristics. Attendance rate (percentage of days attended) was calculated by dividing the total number of Days Present by the total number of Days Member. Two models were run with attendance rate untransformed (as percentage) and transformed (arcsine-transformation). Results across both models did not differ and the untransformed rates are presented here. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$. The data on state average was not available for this report.

Appendix E: Technical Considerations for Propensity Score Matching

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Appendix E: Technical Considerations for Propensity Score Matching

The evaluation examined to what extent student outcomes differ between high-performing Cohort I and II charter schools and traditional neighborhood schools in the context of a non-experimental study. To satisfactorily answer Research Question (RQ) 4, we considered the timing of when students attended new charter schools across cohorts and the data available. High-performing charter schools from Cohort I and Cohort II were the best viable options for this analysis because enough years have passed in order to establish evidence of success. Cohort I grantee schools started serving students in 2011–12 and Cohort II grantee schools operated in 2012–13. The grant period in which Cohort I and Cohort II new charter schools first served students was 18 months, and many of the grantee charter schools added students and grades during their Year 2. Both cohorts also had baseline and three subsequent years of academic and non-academic data to analyze and report student outcome differences between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood public schools.

The analysis focused on five high-performing schools and the students who were first time enrollees in 2012–13 in Cohort I and II high-performing schools (refer to Table E1 for the original samples of all 2012–13 Cohort I and Cohort II enrollees). Although studying students who started in the first year of operation for Cohort I schools would have been a viable option, there were not enough students from the three Cohort I high-performing schools to form a sizeable group needed to draw influential results from Year 1 to Year 3. Mixing this group of students with the students who were first time enrollees in 2012–13 was not a viable option in the context of a quasi-experimental design given their different baseline years. Therefore, within the Cohort I charter schools we excluded the students enrolled in the first year of operation who were also attending in 2012–13, and selected Cohort I students who started in the second year and first-time Cohort II enrollees who had the same baseline year. In other words, regardless of cohort membership, 2012–13 students starting a new Cohort I school in Year 1 and students starting a Cohort I school in Year 2 are similar. While it would be expected that Cohort I and Cohort II high-performing schools would have differences, cohort membership was controlled for in the student matching and further explored in the later school outcomes analysis.

Although the evaluation team aimed to answer the school outcomes portion of this question, a school-level matching was not a viable option because the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided initial start-up funding to newly operating charter schools that have never received Public Charter School Program Start-Up Grant funds. As a result, in absence of baseline school level information for the funded charter schools, a school-level matching design to identify comparable traditional neighborhood public schools was not a viable option to pursue.

Therefore, RQ 4 could be partially answered examining to what extent student outcomes differ between high-performing charter schools and traditional neighborhood public schools. For that reason, two distinct sets of charter school students were matched to students from a pool of neighborhood non-charter traditional public school campuses as determined by a TEA Public Education Information Management System data variable: a) Cohort I students from high-performing charters who began their second year of operation in 2012–13 and students from a

matching pool of traditional public school neighborhood campuses, and b) first-time enrolled Cohort II students from high- performing charters who began their first year of operation in 2012–13 and students from a matching pool of comparison students from traditional public school neighborhood campuses. Table E1 displays the samples of the two distinct sets of 2012–13 charter students qualified for matching based on their complete 2011–12 PEIMS and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) data including student demographics, 2011–12 academic achievement, and attendance. Similar information is presented for the sample of students from traditional neighborhood public schools. It should be noted that the last two rows of Table E1 depict the actual counts of students enrolled in Grades 3– 9 in 2011–12 at baseline (note: there were also 2012–13 students enrolled in PreK, Kindergarten, Early Education, and Grades 1–3 but they did not qualify for matching in absence of baseline STAAR achievement data). Moreover, there were no students attending Grades 11 and 12 in the identified Cohort I and Cohort II high-performing charter schools in 2012–13.

Table E1. Number of Students Enrolled in 2012–13 and Before-Matching Samples of Students with 2011–12 Baseline Information

	Cohort I (n=3 schools)	Cohort II (n=2 schools)	Neighborhood (n=390 schools)
All 2012–13 enrollees (PreK–10)	1,094	864	
First-time 2012–13 enrollees (PreK–10)	587	864	
Pre-matched samples with 2011–12 PEIMS & STAAR info (Baseline Grades 3–9)	268	305	142,560

Source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS Fall, 2011–12 and 2012–13) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR, 2011–12). STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

A matched comparison group of students in traditional neighborhood public schools was identified for the entire sample of students enrolled for the first time at high-performing Cohort I and II charter school campuses in 2012–13 through a precise computer-based algorithm called *MatchIt* (Ho, Imai, King, & Stuart, 2007[19]). The default nearest neighbor matching method in *MatchIt* is 'greedy' matching, where the closest comparison match for each treated unit is chosen one at a time starting from the largest value of a distance measure to the smallest. Due to a large sample of comparison students the distance measure used to perform 1-to-1 matching was Mahalanobis distance on the selected continuous achievement (STAAR-Mathematics and Reading) and attendance variables with a caliper of 0.1. 2012–13 students enrolled Grades 4 to 9 as of the PEIMS fall snapshot date were matched on their baseline (Grades 3–8) 2011–12 STAAR-Mathematics and STAAR-Reading achievement data; Grade 10 high school students were matched on their Grade 9 2011–12 STAAR English I end-of-course (EOC) and STAAR Algebra I EOC achievement data. In addition, nearest neighbor matching was enhanced with exact matching on 2011–12 PEIMS student demographic information

[19] Daniel Ho, Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Elizabeth Stuart. 2007. "Matching as Nonparametric Preprocessing for Reducing Model Dependence in Parametric Causal Inference." Political Analysis, 15: 199–236. Downloaded from http://gking.harvard.edu/files/matchp.pdf

(gender, ethnicity, economically disadvantaged status, at-risk status, participation in special education or gifted/talented programs, and limited English proficiency indicator), on student 2011–12 grade level placement, on the version of the 2011–12 tested exams (STAAR, STAAR-Modified, STAAR-L), and on the 2011–12 Level II Phase-in 1 and above STAAR performance standards (Satisfactory Academic Performance standard and Satisfactory Academic Performance at the Recommended standard). The list of 2011–12 baseline matching variables used to identify comparison students from traditional neighborhood public schools that had similar likelihoods of attending a high-performing charter school but they did not attend is presented in Figure E1 below.

Figure E1. 2011–12 Variables for Student-Level Matching

Cohort membership

PEIMS (Grades 3–9)

- Grade-level
- Ethnicity
- At-risk status
- Economically disadvantaged status
- Gender
- Special education status
- Gifted and talented
- English language learner

Attendance (Grades 3–9)

- Attendance rate

STAAR (Grades 3–8)

- STAAR-Reading test version
- STAAR-Reading achievement score
- STAAR-Reading performance level standards
- STAAR-Mathematics test version
- STAAR Mathematics achievement score
- STAAR Mathematics performance level standards

STAAR EOC

- STAAR English I EOC test version
- STAAR English I EOC achievement score
- STAAR English I EOC performance level standards
- STAAR Algebra I EOC test version
- STAAR Algebra I EOC achievement score
- STAAR Algebra I EOC performance level standards

The application of nearest neighbor matching using Mahalanobis distance and exact matching on distinct student and test characteristics was performed for each grade level separately. Table E2 summarizes the sample characteristics of the charter students and comparison students from traditional neighborhood public schools before and after matching and their standardized mean differences as balance diagnostics, as well as it shows the sample characteristics of the unmatched students. Table E2 is accompanied by Table E3 and Table E4 displaying the balance diagnostic results of the matched samples for baseline grade levels (Grades 3–8) combined and Grade 9 level respectively.

Before the application of the individual matching, several variables were not balanced between the students from high-performing charters and comparison students (Table E2). The variables with the largest imbalances were students' ethnicity (50.9% and 9.8% of charter students were Hispanic and African American versus 42.3% and 20.6% of comparison students), student participation in special education (6.8% of participants versus 9.7% of comparison were in special education), and percent of students taking the regular STAAR assessment (98.3% of charter vs. 95.3% of comparisons took a regular STAAR Mathematics/Algebra I assessment combined, 98.1% of charter vs. 96.3% of comparisons took a regular STAAR Reading/English I assessment combined). In addition, the pre-matched sample of charter students had a larger number of Grade 5 students (42.3% vs. 16.9% of comparison students); on the other hand, the pre-matched sample of comparison students had a higher representation of middle (Grades 7 and 8) and high school (Grade 9) students (17.7%, 6.7% and 6.4%) than the pre-matched sample of charter students (5.9%, 3.8% and 1.9%). The standardized mean differences on these variables were greater than 0.1. With the application of the case-by-case matching the distribution of these variables were balanced for a matched sample of 553 individuals in each group meeting the decision criterion of standardized mean differences below, yet close to 0.10. Table E3 and Table E4 display separate covariate balance results on baseline Grades 3–8 and high school (Grade 9) student characteristics before and after matching with standardized mean differences.

After identifying a comparable group of students from traditional neighborhood public schools for 96.5% of the students that were enrolled for the first time in 2012–13 in Cohort I and II high-performing schools in the six high-performing schools, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) models were fit for all continuous student outcomes and logistic regression models for the dichotomous student outcomes. The continuous variables examined were STAAR Reading and Mathematics scale scores and attendance. The dichotomous outcomes included the indicators of whether or not a student: a) achieved at or above Level II phase-in standard (Satisfactory or Recommended) in STAAR Reading/ and Mathematics, b) had an attendance rate at or above the state average, and c) was promoted to the next grade level. The STAAR-Reading and STAAR-Mathematics achievement analyses included data combined across STAAR Grades 4–8; the attendance and grade promotion analyses included all grade-level students.

The statistical model for the Analysis of Covariance presented in regression analysis notation was the following: $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treatment + \beta_2 Pretest + \beta_3 Cohort + \ldots + e_i$

where

- Postscript *i* index student unit,
- β's are parameters to be estimated,
- *Pretest* represents a prior year score,
- *Treatment* is a binary indicator of a student's group membership,
- *Cohort* is a binary indicator distinguishing Cohort I from Cohort II charter students and their matched pairs,
- *"…"* indicates that the model will include multiple predictors and corresponding parameters, and
- e_i is the residuals for the student unit.

The logistic regression model can then be written as follows:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treatment + \beta_2 Pretest + \beta_3 Cohort + \ldots + \beta_i x_i$$

where

- p is the probability of the occurrence of a dichotomous outcome
- β's are parameters to be estimated,
- *Pretest* represents a prior year score,
- *Treatment* is a binary indicator of a student's group membership,
- *Cohort* is a binary indicator distinguishing Cohort I from Cohort II charter students and their matched pairs,
- *"…"* indicates that the model will include multiple predictors x_i and corresponding parameters β_i

Table E2. Covariate Balance Results from Pre-Matched and Matched Samples of 2012–13 Charter School Students and Neighborhood School Students with Standardized Mean Differences (Cohen's d) and Characteristics of Sample of Unmatched 2012–13 Charter School Students

Grades 3–9 (2011–12)	Pre Matched Samples			Matched Samples			Not Matched
	Charter (n=573)	Public (n=142,560)	Cohen's d	Charter (n=553)	Public (n=553)	Cohen's d	Charter (n=20)
Demographics							
Cohort I	46.7%	54.3%	0.168	46.3%	46.3%	0.000	60%
Cohort II	53.3%	45.7%		53.7%	53.7%	0.000	40%
African-American	9.8%	20.6%	0.479	9.6%	9.6%	0.000	15%
Asian	6.1%	5.9%	0.019	5.6%	5.6%	0.000	20%
Hispanic	50.9%	42.3%	0.191	51.9%	51.9%	0.000	20%
White	30.5%	28.8%	0.045	30.6%	30.6%	0.000	30%
Other	2.8%	2.4%	0.087	2.4%	2.4%	0.000	15%
Male	50.0%	51.3%	0.029	49.4%	49.4%	0.000	65%
Female	50.0%	48.7%	0.090	50.6%	50.6%	0.000	35%
Economically Disadvantaged	58.4%	59.1%	0.016	59.1%	59.1%	0.000	35%
At-Risk	37.5%	41.4%	0.016	37.3%	37.3%	0.000	80%
ELL	22.8%	20.2%	0.088	22.6%	22.6%	0.000	25%
Special Education	6.8%	9.7%	0.213	5.8%	5.8%	0.000	35%
Gifted	12.0%	11.2%	0.043	11.8%	11.8%	0.000	20%
Grade 3	13.9%	18.1%	0.173	13.7%	13.7%	0.000	20%
Grade 4	16.2%	16.3%	0.004	16.3%	16.3%	0.000	15%
Grade 5	42.3%	16.9%	0.707	42.3%	42.3%	0.000	40%
Grade 6	15.9%	18.0%	0.082	15.9%	15.9%	0.000	15%
Grade 7	5.9%	17.7%	0.679	6.0%	6.0%	0.000	5%
Grade 8	3.8%	6.7%	0.329	4.0%	4.0%	0.000	0%
Grade 9	1.9%	6.4%	0.695	1.8%	1.8%	0.000	5%
STAAR-Mathematics (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)							
Grade 3	1463 (267.1)	1500 (274.4)	0.135	1467 (272.6)	1466 (291.6)	0.004	1393 (116.5)
Grade 4	1625 (321.7)	1583 (277.2)	0.151	1625 (323.2)	1622 (342.3)	0.009	1628 (335.5)
Grade 5	1591 (175.3)	1633 (302.7)	0.139	1594 (177.1)	1589 (159.5)	0.029	1491 (82.3)
Grade 6	1665 (290.2)	1672 (290.6)	0.024	1657 (285.3)	1653 (272.4)	0.014	1884 (418.2)
Grade 7	1639 (116.6)	1684 (278.1)	0.162	1639 (118.4)	1649 (120.6)	0.084	1635
Grade 8	1722 (154.5)	1723 (273.7)	0.004	1722 (154.5)	1725 (141.1)	0.020	na
STAAR Algebra I (Grade 9*)	3710 (267.7)	3765 (436.8)	0.204	3706 (281.8)	3683 (283.8)	0.086	3,750

Grades 3–9 (2011–12)	Pre Matched Samples Charter (n=573)	Pre Matched Samples Public (n=142,560)	Cohen's d	Matched Samples Charter (n=553)	Matched Samples Public (n=553)	Cohen's d	Not Matched Charter (n=20)
Level II Phase-in 1 (Grades 3–9)	72.6%	72.6%	0.000	73.2%	73.2%	0.000	52.6%
Phase 1 Recommended (Grades 3–9)	36.8%	34.3%	0.060	37.6%	37.6%	0.000	15.8%
Phase 1 Advanced (Grades 3–9)	16.2%	14.5%	0.072	16.3%	16.3%	0.000	5.3%
Test Version: S (Grades 3–9)	98.3%	95.3%	0.578	98.4%	98.4%	0.000	95%
Test Version: M (Grades 3–9)	1.7%	3.6%	0.424	1.6%	1.6%	0.000	5%
Test Version: L (Grades 3–9)	-	1.1%	na	0.0%	0.0%	0.000	0%
STAAR-Reading (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)							
Grade 3	1454 (282.4)	1476 (294.2)	0.075	1454 (288.9)	1449 (285.1)	0.017	1,460 (113.9)
Grade 4	1605 (297.3)	1569 (284.6)	0.127	1606 (302.1)	1605 (308.6)	0.002	1,607 (75.4)
Grade 5	1550 (172.6)	1603 (313.5)	0.170	1553 (174.2)	1552 (169.2)	0.006	1,489 (122.9)
Grade 6	1629 (271.6)	1645 (289.2)	0.055	1616 (244.2)	1614 (258.8)	0.008	2,025 (693.2)
Grade 7	1668 (94.7)	1686 (265.3)	0.068	1666 (94.9)	1667 (89.2)	0.011	1,753
Grade 8	1740 (134.9)	1719 (261.3)	0.080	1740 (134.9)	1735 (132.6)	0.037	na
STAAR English I (Grade 9*)	1931 (226.2)	1934 (220.2)	0.014	1938 (237.2)	1919 (213.9)	0.085	1,862
Level II Phase-in 1 (Grades 3–9)	77.2%	75.9%	0.040	77.0%	77.0%	0.000	84.2%
Phase 1 Recommended (Grades 3–9)	40.7%	40.8%	0.002	40.3%	40.3%	0.000	52.6%
Phase 1 Advanced (Grades 3–9)	18.3%	17.8%	0.019	18.6%	18.6%	0.000	15.8%
Test Version: S (Grades 3–9)	98.1%	96.3%	0.377	98.2%	98.2%	0.000	95%
Test Version: M (Grades 3–9)	1.9%	3.7%	0.238	1.8%	1.8%	0.000	5%
Attendance (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)							
Attendance rate	97.2 (3.7)	96.9 (3.6)	0.0833	97.2 (3.8)	97.4 (2.9)	0.069	97.9 (1.8)

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

* Refer to Table E3 and Table E4 for the sample sizes used in the estimation of the standardized mean differences. Effect Size Calculator: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD1.php

Table E3. Covariate Balance Results of Grades 4–9 2012–13 Students Before and After Matching with Standardized Mean Differences (Cohen's d)

Grades 3–8 (2011–12)	Pre-Matched Samples		Cohen's d	Matched Samples		Cohen's d
	Charter (n=562)	Public (n=133,450)		Charter (n=543)	Public (n=543)	
Demographics						
Cohort I	46.5%	54.3%	0.172	46%	46%	0.000
Cohort II	53.5%	45.7%		54%	54%	0.000
African-American	9.7%	20.5%	0.360	9.6%	9.6%	0.000
Asian	6.1%	6.0%	0.003	5.7%	5.7%	0.000
Hispanic	50.6%	42.8%	0.171	51.7%	51.7%	0.000
White	30.7%	28.5%	0.058	30.7%	30.7%	0.000
Other	2.8%	2.4%	0.029	2.4%	2.4%	0.000
Male	50.6%	48.8%	0.036	51.1%	51.1%	0.000
Female	49.4%	51.2%		48.9%	48.9%	0.000
Economically Disadvantaged	59.0%	59.6%	0.009	60%	60%	0.000
At-Risk	37.5%	41.2%	0.013	37.3%	37.3%	0.000
ELL	23.3%	20.9%	0.056	23%	23%	0.000
Special Education	6.6%	9.6%	0.123	6%	6%	0.000
Gifted	12.1%	11.7%	0.013	12%	12%	0.000
Grade 3	14.2%	19.3%	0.203	14%	14%	0.000
Grade 4	16.5%	17.4%	0.035	16.5%	16.5%	0.000
Grade 5	43.2%	18.0%	0.685	43.2	43.2	0.000
Grade 6	16.2%	19.3%	0.117	16.2%	16.2%	0.000
Grade 7	6.0%	18.9%	0.714	6.1%	6.1%	0.000
Grade 8	3.9%	7.1%	0.349	4.0%	4.0%	0.000
STAAR-Mathematics (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)						
Grade 3	1463 (267.1)	1500 (274.4)	0.135	1467 (272.6)	1466 (291.6)	0.004
Grade 4	1625 (321.7)	1583 (277.2)	0.151	1625 (323.2)	1622 (342.3)	0.009
Grade 5	1591 (175.3)	1633 (302.7)	0.139	1594 (177.1)	1589 (159.5)	0.029
Grade 6	1665 (290.2)	1672 (290.6)	0.024	1657 (285.3)	1653 (272.4)	0.014
Grade 7	1639 (116.6)	1684 (278.1)	0.162	1639 (118.4)	1649 (120.6)	0.084
Grade 8	1722 (154.5)	1723 (273.7)	0.004	1722 (154.5)	1725 (141.1)	0.020
Level II Phase-in 1	72.6%	72.3%	0.088	73.0%	73.0%	0.000
Phase 1 Recommended	37.1%	34.7%	0.049	38.0%	38.0%	0.000
Phase 1 Advanced	16.5%	14.9%	0.067	17.0%	17.0%	0.000
Test Version: S	98.2%	95.4%	0.216	98.3%	98.3%	0.000
Test Version: M	1.8%	3.6%	0.137	1.7%	1.7%	0.000

Grades 3–8 (2011–12)	Pre-Matched Samples		Cohen's d	Matched Samples		Cohen's d
	Charter (n=562)	Public (n=133,450)		Charter (n=543)	Public (n=543)	
Test Version: L	0.0%	1.0%	na			
STAAR-Reading (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)						
Grade 3	1454 (282.4)	1476 (294.2)	0.075	1454 (288.9)	1449 (285.1)	0.017
Grade 4	1605 (297.3)	1569 (284.6)	0.127	1606 (302.1)	1605 (308.6)	0.002
Grade 5	1550 (172.6)	1603 (313.5)	0.170	1553 (174.2)	1552 (169.2)	0.006
Grade 6	1629 (271.6)	1645 (289.2)	0.055	1616 (244.2)	1614 (258.8)	0.008
Grade 7	1668 (94.7)	1686 (265.3)	0.068	1666 (94.9)	1667 (89.2)	0.011
Grade 8	1740 (134.9)	1719 (261.3)	0.080	1740 (134.9)	1735 (132.6)	0.037
Level II Phase-in 1	77.5%	76.7%	0.021	78.0%	78.0%	0.000
Phase 1 Recommended	40.7%	40.8%	0.002	40.0%	40.0%	0.000
Phase 1 Advanced	18.5%	18.7%	0.007	19.0%	19.0%	0.000
Test Version: S	98.0%	96.3%	0.127	98.2%	98.2%	0.000
Test Version: M	2.0%	3.7%	0.127	1.8%	1.8%	0.000
Attendance (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)						
Attendance	97.2 (3.4)	96.9 (3.5)	0.084	97.3 (3.4)	97.5 (3.2)	0.066

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.
Effect Size Calculator: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD1.php

Table E4. Covariate Balance Results of Grade 10 2012–13 Students Before and After Matching

Grade 9 (2011–12)	Pre Matched Samples		Cohen's d	Matched Samples		Cohen's d
	Charter (n=11)	Public (n=9,110)		Charter (n=10)	Public (n=10)	
Demographics						
Cohort I	54.5%	54.3%	0.005	50%	50%	0.000
Cohort II	45.5%	45.7%	0.005	50%	50%	0.000
African American	9.1%	22.3%	0.439	10%	10%	0.000
Asian	9.1%	5.1%	0.132	0%	0%	0.000
Hispanic	63.6%	36.1%	0.546	70%	70%	0.000
White	18.2%	34.1%	0.393	20%	20%	0.000
Other	0%	2.4%	na	0%	0%	na
Male	81.8%	53.1%	0.711	80%	80%	0.000
Female	18.2%	46.9%		20%	20%	0.000
Economically Disadvantaged	27.3%	50.6%	0.500	30%	30%	0.000
At-Risk	36.4%	44.5%	0.331	40%	40%	0.000
ELL	0.0%	10.2%	na	0%	0%	na
Special Education	18.2%	10.3%	0.195	20%	20%	0.000
Gifted	9.1%	5.1%	0.133	10%	10%	0.000
STAAR-Mathematics (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)						
Algebra I	3710 (267.7)	3765 (436.8)	0.204	3706 (281.8)	3683 (283.8)	0.086
Level II Phase-in 1	72.7%	77.3%	0.098	70%	70%	0.000
Phase 1 Recommended	18.2%	28.4%	0.253	20%	20%	0.000
Phase 1 Advanced	0%	9.6%	na	0%	0%	na
Test Version: S	100%	94.9%	na	100%	100%	0.000
Test Version: M	0%	3.8%	na	0%	0%	na
Test Version: L	0%	1.3%	na	0%	0%	na
STAAR-Reading (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)						
English I	1931 (226.2)	1934 (220.2)	0.014	1938 (237.2)	1919 (213.9)	0.085
Level II Phase-in 1	63.6%	65.8%	0.042	70%	70%	0.000
Phase 1 Recommended	45.5%	41.3%	0.094	40%	40%	0.000
Phase 1 Advanced	9.1%	5%	0.354	10%	10%	0.000
Test Version: S	100%	96.7%	na	100%	100%	0.000
Test Version: M	0%	3.3%	na	0%	0%	na
Attendance (numbers in parenthesis refer to standard deviation)						
Attendance	92.6 (11.7)	95.9 (4.6)	0.715	92.2 (12.2)	92.9 (10.9)	0.064

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam. Effect Size Calculator: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD1.php

Table E5. Distribution of Matched Students with PEIMS Data in 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15 by Charter, Traditional versus Other Campus Membership

	Attending Charter/Traditional Campus		Attending Other Campus		Attending Non-Competitive Charter		Total of Matched Pairs[d]	
	Fall	EOY	Fall	EOY	Fall	EOY	Fall	EOY
2012–13								
Charter	553	524	0	29[a]	0	0	553	553
Traditional	553	553	0	0	0	0	553	553
2013–14								
Charter	340	332	186	199[b]	0	0	526	531
Traditional	526	531	0	0	0	0	526	531
2014–15								
Charter	282	280	221	230[c]	1	1c	504	511
Traditional	504	511	0	0	0	0	504	511

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), 2012–13 to 2014–15.
Note a. In 2013 PEIMS EOY 29 of the matched Charter School students were identified being registered in a school other than the Public Charter School Start-Up school they were found attending in the 2012 PEIMS Fall data. None of the matched Traditional students were found attending a Public Charter School Start-grantee.
Note b. In 2014 PEIMS EOY 199 of the paired matched Charter School students were identified being registered in a school other than a Public Charter School Start-Up school. None of the paired matched Traditional students were found attending a Public Charter School Start-grantee in 2013–14.
Note c. In 2014 PEIMS EOY 231 of the paired matched Charter School students were identified being registered in a school other than a Public Charter School Start-Up school. None of the paired matched Traditional students were found attending a Public Charter School Start-grantee in 2014–15.
Note d. Samples of matched 2012–13 students with 2012–13, 2013–14 and 2014–15 PEIMS Fall or PEIMS EOY data include students with valid data in each year.

Table E6. Baseline Equivalence Results on 2011–12 Achievement and Attendance of the 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15 Analytic Samples of Matched Pairs of Students with STAAR Data on Grades 4–8

Year of Analysis	Group	Analytic Sample	Count	Baseline STAAR-Mathematics		Baseline STAAR-Reading		Baseline Attendance	
				Mean (St. Dev)	Cohen's d	Mean (St. Dev)	Cohen's d	Mean (St. Dev)	Cohen's d
Year 1 2012–13	Charter	STAAR-Mathematics	475	1571 (164.6)	0.017	1541 (153.5)	0.011	97.3 (3.4)	0.010
	Traditional		475	1568 (162.4)		1539 (157.4)		97.6 (2.6)	
	Charter	STAAR-Reading	490	1576 (166.4)	0.018	1544 (153.1)	0.0116	97.3 (3.5)	0.066
	Traditional		490	1573 (164.6)		1542 (156.8)		97.5 (2.5)	
Year 2 2013–14	Charter	STAAR-Mathematics	355	1560 (191.4)	0.017	1528 (178.1)	0.029	97.4 (3.6)	0.095
	Traditional		355	1557 (179.7)		1523 (170.6)		97.7 (2.6)	
	Charter	STAAR-Reading	442	1582 (199.7)	0.019	1545 (185.0)	0.008	97.4 (3.4)	0.067
	Traditional		442	1578 (192.8)		1543 (186.2)		97.6 (2.5)	
Year 3 2014–15	Charter	STAAR-Mathematics	209	1506 (165.7)	0.011	1491 (167.3)	0.017	97.6 (3.1)	0.072
	Traditional		209	1504 (165.2)		1488 (164.4)		97.8 (2.4)	
	Charter	STAAR-Reading	323	1562 (174.6)	0.030	1523 (159.8)	0.016	97.7 (2.8)	0.078
	Traditional		323	1557 (168.3)		1520 (155.5)		97.9 (2.3)	

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Notes. The analytic samples of matched pairs of students in the 2012–13, 2013–14 & 2014–15 analyses include students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, TAKS, and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). Analytic samples include the pairs of matched 2012–13 students with valid data in a given year and achievement data from the prior year.

Effect Size Calculator: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD1.php

Table E7. Baseline Equivalence Results on 2011–12 Achievement & Attendance of the 2012–13, 2013–14 & 2014–15 Analytic Samples of Matched Pairs of Students with Attendance Data

Year	Group	Count	Baseline STAAR Grades 3–8 /STAAR EOC Baseline Grades	Mathematics* Mean (St. Dev)	Mathematics* Cohen's d	Reading* Mean (St. Dev)	Reading* Cohen's d	Baseline Attendance (All Grades) Count	Baseline Attendance (All Grades) Mean (St. Dev)	Baseline Attendance (All Grades) Cohen's d
2012–13	Charter	543	Grades 3–8	1600 (243.8)	0.012	1572 (233.7)	0.005	553	97.2 (3.8)	0.069
	Traditional	543		1597 (243.4)		1571 (235.4)		553	97.4 (2.9)	
	Charter	10	HS*	3706 (281.8)	0.086	1938 (237.2)	0.089			
	Traditional	10		3683 (283.8)		1919 (213.9)				
2013–14	Charter	522	Grades 3–8	1601 (246.8)	0.011	1572 (237.6)	0.007	531	97.2 (3.8)	0.058
	Traditional	522		1598 (246.2)		1571 (239.1)		531	97.4 (3.0)	
	Charter	9	HS*	3746 (267.2)	0.094	1988 (188.1)	0.181			
	Traditional	9		3721 (273.6)		1953 (195.5)				
2014–15	Charter	503	Grades 3–8	1600 (249.2)	0.012	1573 (239.6)	0.007	511	97.3 (3.4)	0.066
	Traditional	503		1604 (249.2)		1572 (241.5)		511	97.5 (2.6)	
	Charter	8	HS*	3781 (262.8)	0.011	2030 (149.3)	0.201			
	Traditional	8		3778 (226.8)		1999 (149.1)				

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Notes. The asterisk (*) denotes that the 2012–13 high school matched students were included in the analytic attendance samples; the pairs of matched HS students were tested on their baseline Algebra I and English I STAAR EOC differences. Also, the analytic samples in the 2012–13, 2013–14 & 2014–15 attendance analyses include the pairs of matched 2012–13 students with valid data in a given year and attendance data from the prior year.

Effect Size Calculator: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD1.php

Table E8. Baseline Equivalence Results on 2011–12 Achievement & Attendance of the Analytic Samples of Matched Pairs of Students with 2012–13, 2013–14, and 2014–15 PEIMS EOY Data

Period	Group	Count	Baseline Grades	Baseline STAAR Grades 3–8/STAAR EOC Mathematics* Mean (St. Dev)	Mathematics* Cohen's d	Reading* Mean (St. Dev)	Reading* Cohen's d	Baseline Attendance (All Grades) Count	Attendance Mean (St. Dev)	Attendance Cohen's d
End of 2013 to End of 2014	Charter	521	Grades 3–8	1601 (246.9)	0.012	1573 (237.8)	0.008	530	97.2 (3.8)	0.058
	Traditional	521		1598 (246.4)		1571 (239.2)		530	97.4 (3.0)	
	Charter	9	HS*	3746 (267.2)	0.094	1988 (188.1)	0.181			
	Traditional	9		3721 (273.6)		1953 (195.5)				
End of 2014 to End of 2015	Charter	498	Grades 3–8	1605 (249.9)	0.012	1574 (240.7)	0.007	506	97.3 (3.4)	0.066
	Traditional	498		1602 (249.9)		1572 (242.6)		506	97.5 (2.6)	
	Charter	8	HS*	3781 (262.8)	0.011	2030 (149.3)	0.201			
	Traditional	8		3778 (226.8)		1999 (149.1)				

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2011–12 data. STAAR data includes the English test version of the first administration of the regular STAAR exam.

Notes. Each reporting period tracks students appearing in the PEIMS End of Year of one year to the PEIMS Fall school-start window and the PEIMS End of Year of the following year. The asterisk (*) denotes that the 2012–13 high school matched students were included in the analytic samples; the pairs of matched HS students were tested on their baseline Algebra I and English I STAAR EOC differences. Effect Size Calculator: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/escalc/html/EffectSizeCalculator-SMD1.php

Appendix F:
Additional Results from Chapter 5

Appendix F: Additional Results from Chapter 5

Tables F1 through F8 include additional results from Chapter 5.

Table F1. Student Demographics of Fall 2013 Enrollees

Demographic Characteristic	Competitive								Noncompetitive	
	Cohort I		Cohort II		Cohort III		All Cohorts			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Grades PreK–2	1,927	34.9	2,149	32.6	307	25.9	4,383	33.0	1,193	28.9
Grades 3–8	3,018	54.7	3,919	59.5	763	64.4	7,700	57.9	2,398	58.2
Grades 9–12	570	10.3	523	7.9	114	9.6	1,207	9.1	532	12.9
Female	2,713	49.2	3,296	50.0	509	43.0	6,518	49.0	2,227	54.0
Male	2,802	50.8	3,295	50.0	675	57.0	6,772	51.0	1,896	46.0
Asian	261	4.7	160	2.4	14	1.2	435	3.3	548	13.3
African American	1,320	23.9	1,942	29.5	454	38.3	3,716	28.0	816	19.8
Hispanic	2,983	54.1	2,810	42.6	368	31.1	6,161	46.4	1,392	33.8
American Indian	8	0.1	18	0.3	1	0.1	27	0.2	22	0.5
Pacific Islander	4	0.1	4	0.1	1	0.1	9	0.1	4	0.1
Two or More Races	81	1.5	148	2.2	52	4.4	281	2.1	105	2.5
White	858	15.6	1,509	22.9	294	24.8	2,661	20.0	1,236	30.0
Economically Disadvantaged	3,845	69.7	4,043	61.3	523	44.2	8,411	63.3	1,745	42.3
Gifted	302	5.5	37	0.6	23	1.9	362	2.7	29	0.7
Special Education	343	6.2	355	5.4	57	4.8	755	5.7	205	5.0
English Language Learners	601	10.9	1,080	16.4	19	1.6	1,700	12.8	358	8.7
At Risk	2,541	46.1	2,741	41.6	134	11.3	5,416	40.8	1,153	28.0

Source. Public Education Information Management System, Fall 2013 enrollment data.
Note. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table F2. Student Demographics of 2014 Fall Enrollees

Demographic Characteristic	Competitive								Noncompetitive	
	Cohort I		Cohort II		Cohort III		Cohorts I–III			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Grades PreK–2	1,828	31.5	2,267	31.9	319	21.8	4,414	30.7	1,236	27.6
Grades 3–8	3,218	55.4	4,129	58.1	846	57.9	8,193	57.0	2,539	56.6
Grades 9–12	764	13.1	714	10.0	297	20.3	1,775	12.3	707	15.8
Female	2,916	50.2	3,533	49.7	649	44.4	7,098	49.4	2,402	53.6
Male	2,894	49.8	3,577	50.3	813	55.6	7,284	50.6	2,080	46.4
Asian	294	5.1	165	2.3	22	1.5	481	3.3	616	13.7
African American	1,142	19.7	1,712	24.1	563	38.5	3,417	23.8	814	18.2
Hispanic	3,226	55.5	3,409	47.9	473	32.4	7,108	49.4	1,615	36.0
American Indian	6	0.1	12	0.2	1	0.1	19	0.1	27	0.6
Pacific Islander	3	0.1	7	0.1	2	0.1	12	0.1	8	0.2
Two or More Races	98	1.7	161	2.3	57	3.9	316	2.2	123	2.7
White	1,041	17.9	1,644	23.1	344	23.5	3,029	21.1	1,279	28.5
Economically Disadvantaged	3,801	65.4	4,511	63.4	679	46.4	8,991	62.5	1,930	43.1
Gifted	348	6.0	23	0.3	37	2.5	408	2.8	47	1.0
Special Education	401	6.9	428	6.0	89	6.1	918	6.4	233	5.2
English Language Learners	703	12.1	1,416	19.9	38	2.6	2,157	15.0	451	10.1
At Risk	2,656	45.7	3,606	50.7	374	25.6	6,636	46.1	1,233	27.5

Source. Public Education Information Management System, Fall 2014 enrollment data.
Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table F3. Analytic Samples of Students with 2013–14 STAAR Data by Subject

	STAAR Exam	Number of Students Tested	Unadjusted Differences			Diff. from Noncompetitive	
			Mean	St. Dev	% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	Mean STAAR Score	% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard
Cohort I	Grades 3–8 STAAR Mathematics	2,700	1543.8	161.6	60.1	-68.3***	-19.7***
Cohort II		3,522	1532.2	152.7	57.2	-79.9***	-22.6***
Cohort III		651	1542.9	143.1	59.8	-69.1***	-20.1***
All Cohorts		6,873	1537.7	155.5	58.6	-74.3***	-21.2***
High-performing		1,532	1604.9	163.9	74.6	-7.1*	-5.2**
Noncompetitive		2,066	1612.1	148.9	79.8		
Cohort I	Grades 3–8 STAAR Reading	2,818	1540.5	155.2	69.1	-72.1***	-15.4***
Cohort II		3,653	1533.8	150.8	67.5	-78.8***	-16.9***
Cohort III		653	1555.3	133.6	72.7	-57.3***	-11.7***
All Cohorts		7,124	1538.4	151.2	68.6	-74.2***	-15.8***
High-performing		1,692	1596.9	144.6	82.7	-15.7***	-1.8
Noncompetitive		2,308	1612.6	144.9	84.4		
Cohort I	STAAR Algebra I EOC	338	3900.6	369.2	87.3	-93.5*	-0.9
Cohort II		341	3895.9	459.9	80.6	-98.2*	-7.6*
Cohort III		142	3714.0	407.6	71.1	-280.1***	-17.1***
All Cohorts		821	3866.3	420.9	81.7	-127.7***	-6.5***
High-performing		291	3934.1	376.9	89.3	-60.0**	1.1
Noncompetitive		339	3994.1	449.4	88.2		
Cohort I	STAAR English I EOC	203	4109.9	499.3	78.8	4.0	1.2
Cohort II		275	3966.2	400.9	73.8	-139.7***	-3.8
Cohort III		143	3702.8	407.3	50.3	-403.1***	-27.3***
All Cohorts		621	3952.5	461.3	70.0	-153.3***	-7.6*
High-performing		223	4228.2	476.2	89.2	122.4**	11.6
Noncompetitive		277	4105.9	549.1	77.6		
Cohort I	STAAR English II EOC	158	4135.9	433.8	82.3	-65.1	0.2
Cohort II		152	4014.2	482.5	75.0	-186.8*	-7.1
Cohort III		37	3381.5	297.7	5.4	(-819.5)	(-76.7)
All Cohorts		347	4002.2	495.6	70.9	-198.9***	-11.2*
High-performing		170	4249.9	429.4	89.4	48.9***	7.3
Noncompetitive		145	4201.0	545.4	82.1		

Source. Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2013–14.

Note. The analytic 2014–15 samples per content area include all students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). The individual comparisons including one or two groups with small sample sizes (of 100 cases and below) are in parentheses and their mean differences were not statistically tested. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$.

Table F4. Analytic Samples of Students with 2014–15 STAAR Data by Subject

	STAAR Exam	Number of Students Tested	Unadjusted Differences			Diff. from Noncompetitive	
			Mean	St. Dev	% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	Mean STAAR Score	% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard
Cohort I	Grades 3–8 STAAR Mathematics	2,724	1549.1	145.8	65.1	-64.3***	-14.8***
Cohort II		3,510	1544.6	151.1	64.1	-68.8***	-15.8***
Cohort III		709	1546.5	146.1	56.6	-66.9***	-23.3***
All Cohorts		6,943	1546.6	148.5	63.7	-66.8***	-16.1***
High-performing		1,516	1610.4	148.8	80.1	-3.0***	0.3
Noncompetitive		2,192	1613.4	147.0	79.9		
Cohort I	Grades 3–8 STAAR Reading	2,883	1549.4	151.8	72.8	-55.5***	-7.9
Cohort II		3,758	1548.9	156.1	70.9	-55.9***	-9.8
Cohort III		730	1571.8	155.4	72.5	-33.0	-8.3
All Cohorts		7,371	1551.3	154.5	71.8	-53.5***	-8.9
High-performing		1,695	1613.8	140.0	87.6	9.0*	6.8*
Noncompetitive		2,457	1604.8	155.7	80.7		
Cohort I	STAAR Algebra I EOC	295	4063.3	538.7	86.4	-3.1	-0.8
Cohort II		477	3947.7	447.8	85.3	-118.7	-1.9
Cohort III		224	3790.4	505.6	71.0	-275.9***	-16.3**
All Cohorts		996	3946.5	498.5	82.4	-119.8	-4.8
High-performing		327	3997.4	428.6	89.9	-68.9	2.6
Noncompetitive		369	4066.4	482.7	87.3		
Cohort I	STAAR English I EOC	294	4380.9	581.0	88.1	181.1***	10.0**
Cohort II		330	3953.7	438.5	67.9	-246.1***	-10.2**
Cohort III		220	3759.6	478.4	47.7	-440.2***	-30.4***
All Cohorts		844	4051.9	561.8	69.7	-147.9**	-8.4
High-performing		340	4394.8	542.0	92.1	195.0***	13.9**
Noncompetitive		297	4199.8	601.7	78.1		
Cohort I	STAAR English II EOC	192	4295.1	544.9	87.0	121.2**	1.5
Cohort II		181	4115.5	463.3	84.0	-58.4**	-1.5
Cohort III		168	3660.0	443.2	41.1	-513.9***	-44.4***
All Cohorts		541	4037.8	554.3	71.7	-136.1**	-13.7***
High-performing		225	4394.9	484.9	95.1	221.0***	9.6*
Noncompetitive		227	4173.9	476.0	85.5		

Source: Public Education Information Management System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), 2014–15.

Note. The analytic 2014–15 samples per content area include all students who took the English test version of the regular STAAR exam (STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and TAKS Accommodated assessments were excluded), and had a valid SCODE score (SCODE='S'). Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$.

Table F5. Analytic Samples of PreK–12 Students with Attendance Data by Year

	School Year	Number of Students Tested	Unadjusted Differences			Diff. from Noncompetitive	
			Mean	St. Dev	% Above State Average	Mean	% Above State Average
Cohort I	2013–14	5,514	96.2	4.5	67.7	+0.1***	-1.6
Cohort II		6,583	95.6	5.9	63.4	-0.5***	-5.9***
Cohort III		1,178	95.5	6.3	63.9	-0.6***	-5.4**
All Cohorts		13,275	95.8	5.4	65.2	-0.3	-4.1
High-performing		3,267	96.8	3.6	72.9	+0.7***	+3.6***
Noncompetitive		4,106	96.1	5.2	69.3		
Cohort I	2014–15	5,805	96.2	4.0	-	+0.1***	-
Cohort II		7,066	95.5	5.9	-	-0.6***	-
Cohort III		1,460	95.6	5.5	-	-0.5***	-
All Cohorts		14,331	95.8	5.2	-	-0.3	-
High-performing		3,659	96.7	3.4	-	+0.6***	-
Noncompetitive		4,473	96.1	4.9	-		-

Source. Public Education Information Management System, 2013–14 and 2014–15.

Note. Attendance rate (percentage of days attended) was calculated by dividing the total number of Days Present by the total number of Days Member. Two models were run with attendance rate untransformed (as percentage) and transformed (arcsine-transformation). Results across both models did not differ and the untransformed rates are presented here. Statistically significant results are denoted as follows: *significant at $p<0.05$; **significant at $p<0.01$; ***significant at $p<0.001$.

Table F6. School STAAR Aggregated Mathematics and STAAR-Reading Data, Grades 3–8 Summed, 2013–14 and 2014–15

	Competitive (All Cohorts)			High-performing (Cohort I & II)			Noncompetitive		
	Count		% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	Count		% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	Count		% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard
	Schools	Tested Students		Schools	Tested Students		Schools	Tested Students	
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Reading									
2011–12	11	2,067	63.2%	na	-	-	6	1,302	79.6%
2012–13	29	4,865	66.6%	6	1,114	78.0%	7	2,170	84.0%
2013–14	34	7,079	68.9%	6	1,681	82.9%	7	2,311	85.0%
2014–15	31	7,217	72.1%	5	1,703	87.8%	7	2,504	81.0%
Grades 3–8 STAAR-Mathematics									
2011–12	11	2,035	50.7%	na	-	-	6	1,259	72.6%
2012–13	29	4,708	52.8%	6	1,045	72.9%	7	1,895	75.1%
2013–14	34	6,839	58.9%	6	1,522	75.0%	7	2,063	80.1%
2014–15	31	6,781	64.1%	5	1,517	80.2%	7	2,228	80.1%

Source. State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Aggregated Spring Administration http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/aggregate/ (data includes all students who took the English version of the regular STAAR exams at Grades 3–8 regardless of their Public Education Information Management System "snapshot" enrollment status.)

Table F7. School Aggregated Data, STAAR EOC Exams, 2013–14 and 2014–15

	Competitive (All Cohorts)			High-performing (Cohort I & II)			Noncompetitive		
	Count		% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	Count		% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard	Count		% Met Level II Phase-in 1 Standard
	Schools	Tested Students		Schools	Tested Students		Schools	Tested Students	
STAAR Algebra I EOC									
2011–12	4	104	65.4%	na	-	-		2	-
2012–13	9	254	76.0%	4	124	79.0%	5	333	94.7%
2013–14	14	649	79.0%	4	254	89.8%	6	303	88.3%
2014–15	19	806	83.5%	4	299	90.3%	6	330	88.2%
STAAR English I EOC									
2011–12	3	82	71.3%	na	-	-	1	-	-
2012–13	6	185	74.3%	3	123	89.8%	3	112	76.1%
2013–14	12	425	67.6%	3	193	89.4%	4	217	78.1%
2014–15	15	575	72.0%	4	315	91.8%	4	230	78.0%
STAAR English II EOC									
2011–12	1	-	-	na	-	-	0	-	-
2012–13	4	138	84.1%	2	-	-	1	-	-
2013–14	8	232	68.2%	3	148	89.7%	4	113	82.5%
2014–15	11	364	71.5%	3	215	95.1%	4	186	85.7%

Source. State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Aggregated Spring Administration http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/aggregate/ (including all students who took the regular STAAR EOC exams regardless of their Public Education Information Management System "snapshot" enrollment status).

Notes. For high-performing, competitively-funded charter schools, 2011–12 school level results for Cohort I schools are not present given there was not enough evidence established about their high performance. For competitively-funded and noncompetitively-funded charter schools, results are not present for sample sizes below 3 schools.

Table F8. School Grade Retention and Annual Attendance Data, 2011–12 to 2014–15

	Competitive (All Cohorts)		High-Performing (Cohorts I & II)		Noncompetitive		State Average
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%
Retention							
2011–12	14	1.7	na	-	6	6.4	3.2
2012–13	33	3.8	7	3.7	7	5.4	3.3
2013–14	38	3.2	7	2.4	7	3.4	3.1
Attendance							
2011–12	14	96.2	na	-	6	95.2	95.9
2012–13	33	96.2	7	96.7	6	95.5	95.8
2013–14	36	95.6	7	96.7	7	95.1	95.9

Source. Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) on attendance and Accountability Research reports on grade-level retention.

Notes. Attendance rates reported in the TAPR are based on student attendance for the entire school year at Grades 1–12. The grade-level retention rate is the percentage of students who are retained in grade from one year (in spring) to the next (in fall) in grades K–12.