# Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools:

A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools





#### **About This Report**

Section 1002.33(23), Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Department of Education to prepare an annual statewide analysis of student achievement in charter schools versus the achievement of comparable students in traditional public schools. This report of charter school student performance fulfills the statutory requirement for the 2010-11 school year. The analysis examines the average performance of charter school students and traditional public school students using eight years of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading and math scores, as well as the FCAT science test scores that were added to the school grading calculation in 2007-08. Only students who were enrolled in a charter school or a traditional public school for an entire school year are included in the analysis. Limiting the analysis to include only full-year students is consistent with the state's school accountability system for awarding school grades under the A+ Plan. In addition, the report compares charter and traditional public schools in terms of achievement gaps and student learning gains.

The analysis and production of this report was a coordinated effort between the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice and the Bureau of Evaluation and Reporting in the Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement. Additional information about charter schools and other school choice options is available on the Department's website at: www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

**Section 1002.33(23)**, Florida Statutes (23) ANALYSIS OF CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.--Upon receipt of the annual report required by paragraph (9)(k), the Department of Education shall provide to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives an analysis and comparison of the overall performance of charter school students, to include all students whose scores are counted as part of the statewide assessment program, versus comparable public school students in the district as determined by the statewide assessment program currently administered in the school district, and other assessments administered pursuant to s. 1008.22(3).

#### **Key Achievement Findings**

The ultimate proof of success for any charter school is the achievement of its students. The analysis of 2010-11 student achievement data demonstrates that charter schools offer parents and policy makers a viable option for improving education in the state.

The data contained in this report is derived from student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), and is designed to allow a comparative analysis of the academic achievement of students attending charter schools versus students attending traditional public schools. The report contains data spanning eight years of FCAT results. Using data from the 2010-11 school year the report makes 168 comparisons covering three measurements: FCAT proficiency percentages, achievement gaps, and learning gains. Each of these measurement areas is further broken down to offer a more nuanced view of student achievement.

The FCAT proficiency percentages are used to measure both overall rates of proficiency by grade groupings, and comparisons of subgroup performance. This section of the report contains 54 separate comparisons of student achievement. Charter school students outperformed traditional public school students in 50 of the 54 comparisons, with one tie.

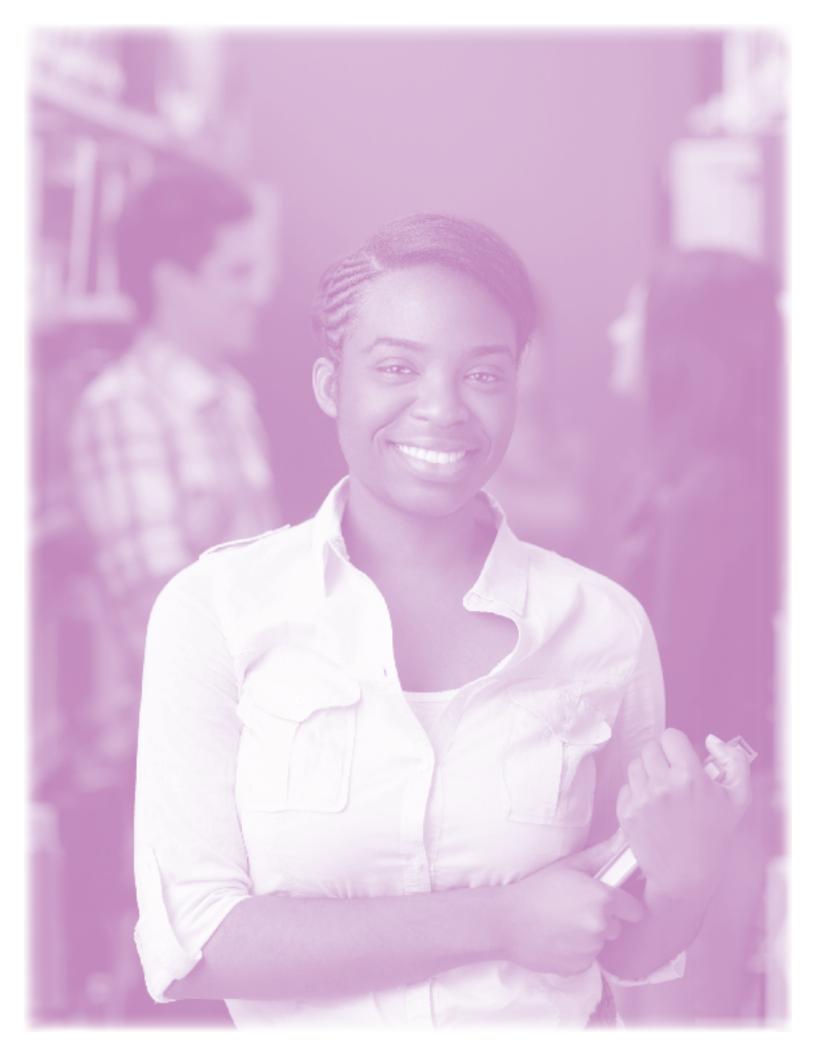
The achievement gap section of the report contains both longitudinal and current data that are used to analyze the gap between white students and African American students and white students and Hispanic students, in reading, math, and science. This section of the report includes 18 separate comparisons of current achievement gaps. The achievement gap was lower for charter school students in 16 of the 18 comparisons.

The learning gains section of the report includes 96 comparisons. The report compares the percentage of students in charter schools making learning gains against the percentage of students in traditional public schools making learning gains, by subject, grade level, and subgroup. The percentage of students making learning gains was higher in charter schools in 79 of the 96 comparisons. The percentage of students making learning gains was higher in traditional public schools in 7 of the 96 comparisons. There was no difference in the percentage of students making learning gains in 10 of the 96 comparisons.

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#### Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: A Comparison with Achievement in Traditional Public Schools

Charter schools are independent public schools created on the basis of an agreement between a group of school organizers and a sponsoring body. Florida's charter schools have been growing by near record numbers since the first five charter schools were opened in 1996. During the 2010-11 school year, 456 operated throughout the state in 43 school districts and at two state universities. While each charter school is unique in its educational approach, charter schools are generally classified as start-up schools, schools managed by educational management organizations, conversion public schools, or University charter lab schools. Each charter school has its own governing board that is responsible for setting policies and procedures. Charter schools have the autonomy and flexibility to provide expanded learning experiences to meet students' individual educational needs. In return, they are held accountable for achieving results. Although provided more freedom than traditional public schools, charter schools are held accountable on multiple levels. The charter contract delineates expectations of the governing board and the sponsor regarding the school's academic and financial performance. As part of their contract, charter schools are held accountable for academic and financial results, embodied in the following three guiding principles:

- Meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities within the state's public school system;
- Promote enhanced academic success and financial efficiency by aligning responsibility with accountability; and
- Provide parents with sufficient information on whether or not the child gains at least a year's worth of learning for every year spent in the charter school.

#### **Students Served by Florida Charter Schools**

Charter schools provide parents with additional choices for selecting the most effective educational programs for their children and offer creative solutions for improving student achievement in Florida. The charter school movement in Florida began as an avenue to improve student learning, increase parental choice, influence the traditional public school system, and foster innovative instructional practices. Charter school enrollment has grown steadily over the last decade. As shown below, charter schools served over 157,000 students in the 2010-11 school year, which translates to more than 6% of Florida's total public school population.

2010-11 Charter School and Traditional School Student Populations

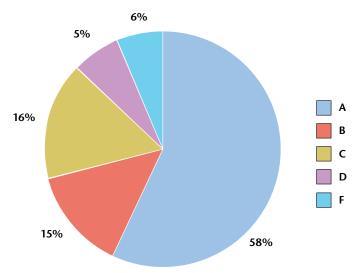
	Charter	Traditional
Student Membership	157,389	2,582,013
Gender		
Male	49.9%	51.5%
Female	50.1%	48.5%
Race		
White	37.2%	43.6%
African American	22.8%	22.9%
Hispanic	35.0%	27.5%
English Language Program	10.4%	11.5%
Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	45.1%	55.2%
<b>Exceptional Student Education</b>	9.9%	13.6%

#### **Grading Charter Schools**

Like traditional public schools, charter schools are assigned a performance grade if they meet the eligibility criteria and are not an alternative school. Changes to the school grade calculations in 2002-03 resulted in an increased number of charter schools receiving performance grades. The percentage of charter schools receiving an "A" has increased from 42% in 2002-03 to a high of 63% in 2008-09 and 58% for the most current year.

YEAR	Α	В	C	D	F
2002-03	42%	11%	18%	13%	16%
2003-04	38%	11%	24%	13%	14%
2004-05	36%	15%	22%	14%	12%
2005-06	50%	20%	21%	6%	3%
2006-07	48%	21%	19%	8%	5%
2007-08	52%	20%	19%	4%	5%
2008-09	63%	16%	12%	6%	3%
2009-10	57%	14%	15%	8%	6%
2010-11	58%	15%	16%	5%	6%

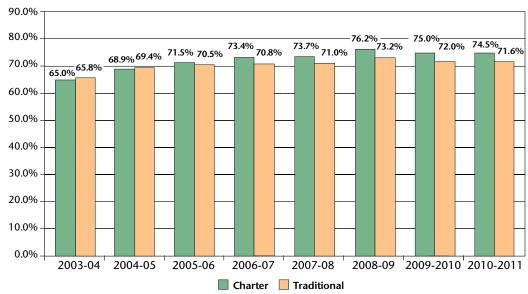
#### **2011 Charter School Performance Grades**



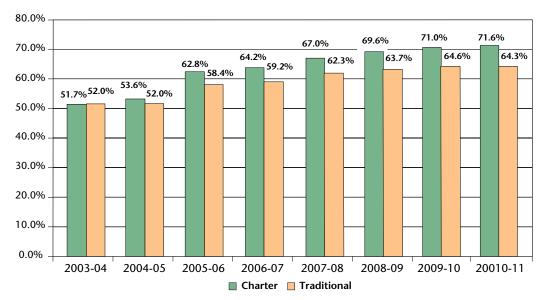
## FCAT Reading Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools 2004-2011

Reading

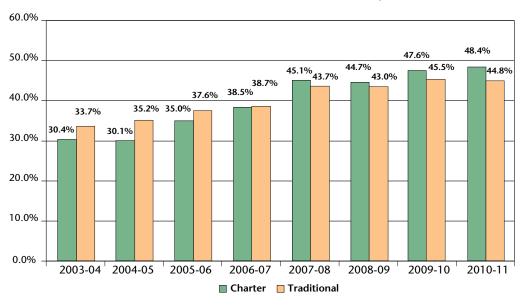
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading Elementary School Grades 3, 4, and 5 Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2004 to 2011



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Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
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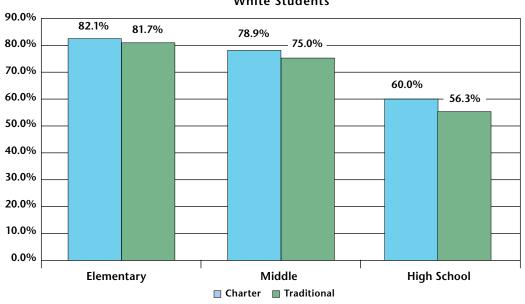


Reading

## FCAT Reading Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

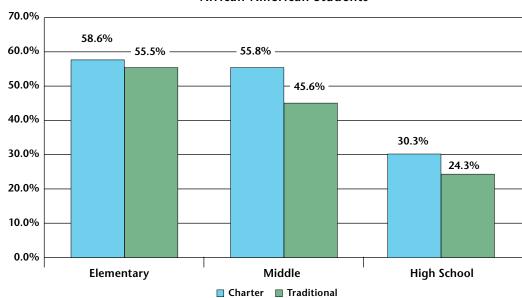
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Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students

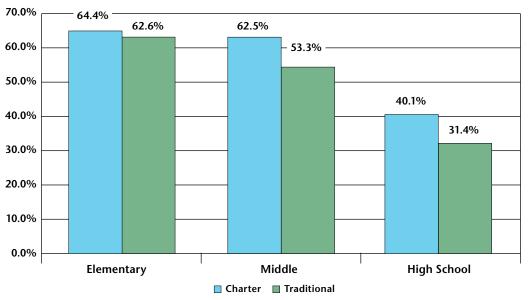


Reading

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools African-American Students

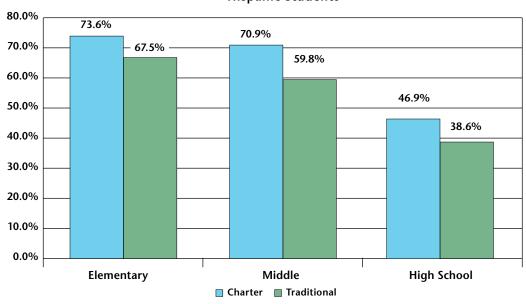


Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)

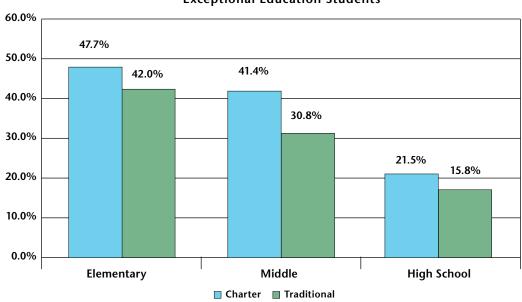


Reading

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Hispanic Students



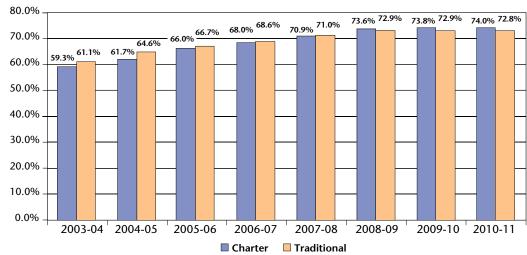
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
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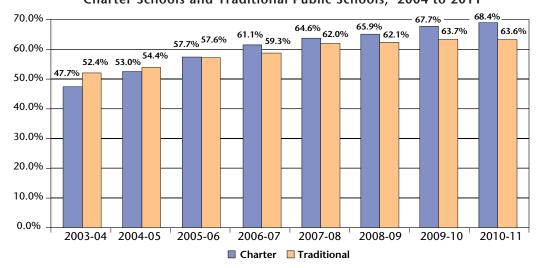
## FCAT Math Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools 2004-2011

Math

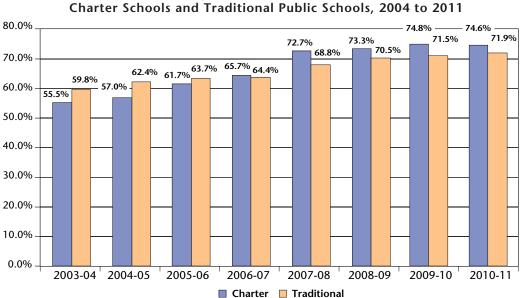
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Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math Middle School Grades 6, 7, and 8 Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2004 to 2011



Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math
High School Grades 9 and 10
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools 2004 to 2011

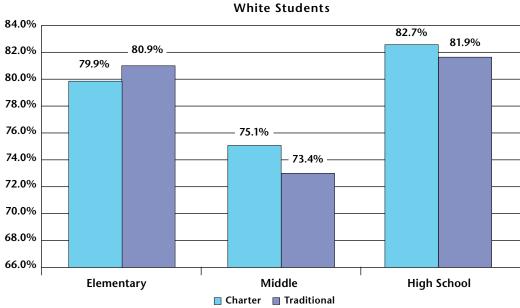


Math

## FCAT Math Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

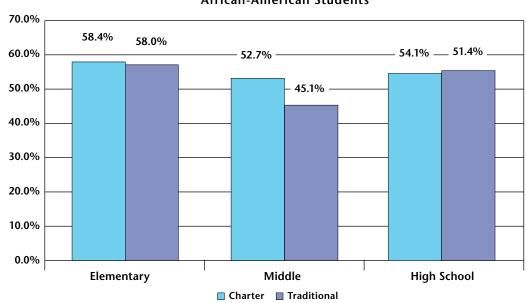
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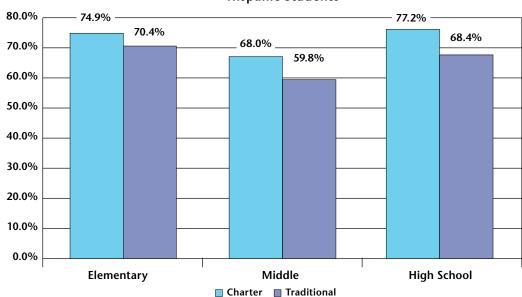


#### Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools African-American Students

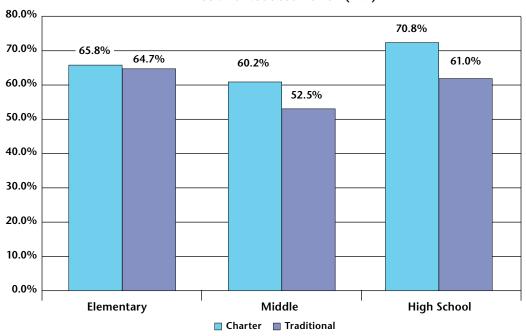
Math



Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Hispanic Students

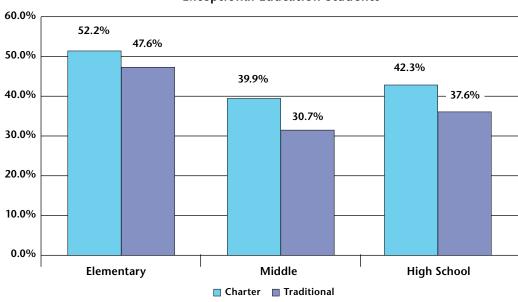


### Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Math Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)



Math

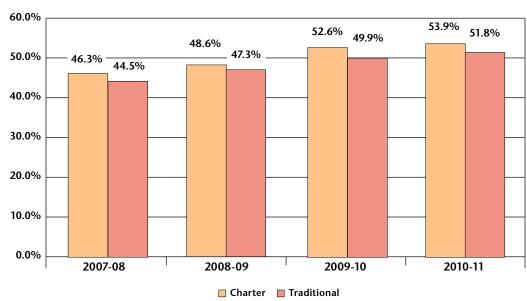
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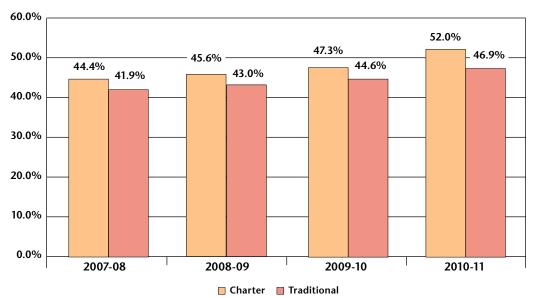
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Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science **Elementary School Grade 5** 

Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2008 to 2011

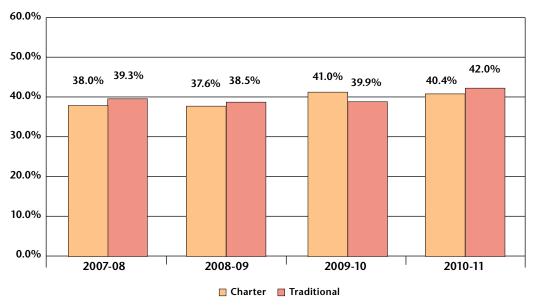


Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science Middle School Grade 8 Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools, 2008 to 2011



Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science High School Grade 10

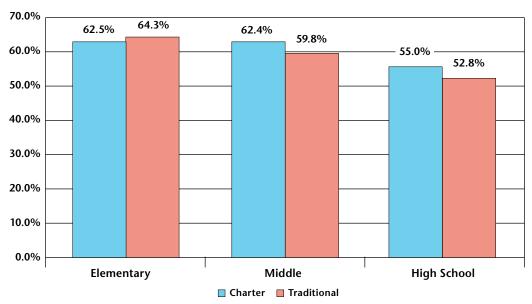




#### **FCAT Science Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools**

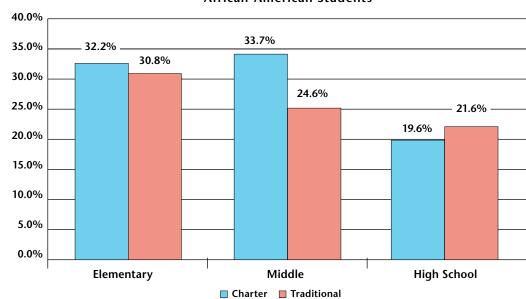
SUB-GROUP COMPARISONS 2011

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science **Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools** White Students

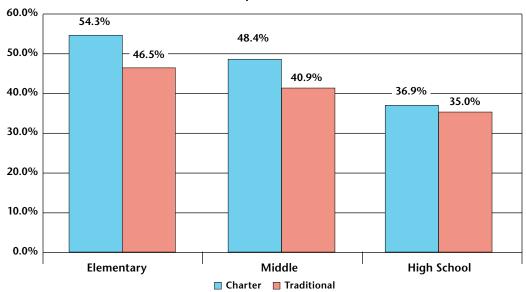


Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools African-American Students

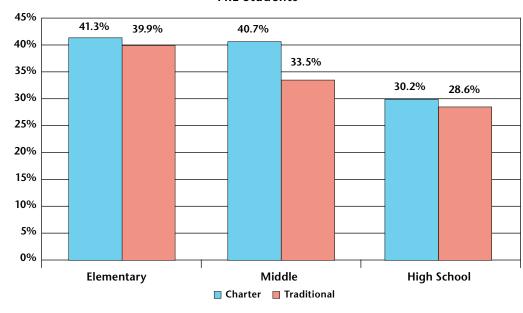
Science



Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Hispanic Students

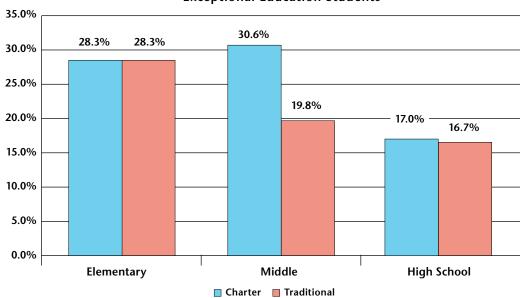


#### Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools FRL Students



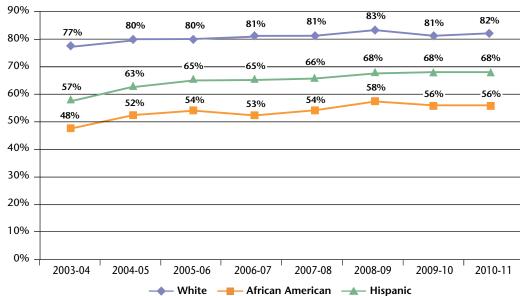
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#### Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT Science Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Exceptional Education Students

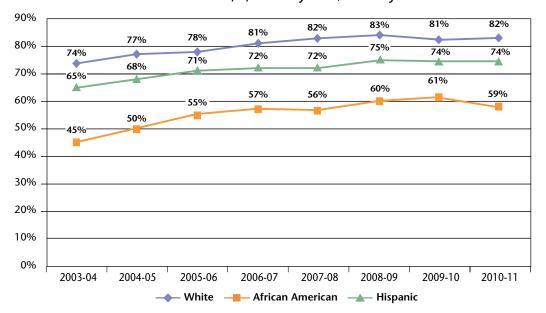


#### **Closing the Achievement Gap in Reading Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools** 2004-2011

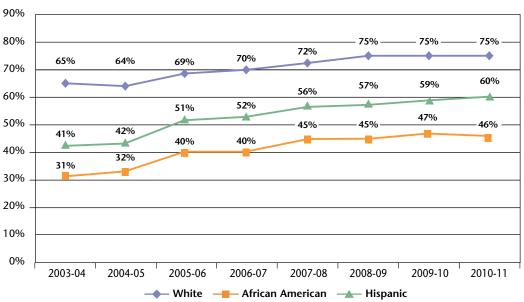
**Traditional Public Elementary Schools FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above** Grades 3, 4, and 5 by Race/Ethnicity



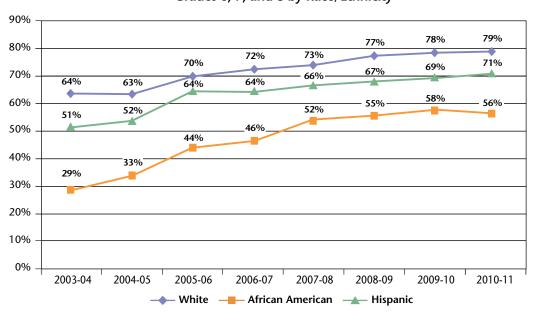
**Charter Elementary Schools FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above** Grades 3, 4, and 5 by Race/Ethnicity



#### **Traditional Public Middle Schools FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above** Grades 6, 7, and 8 by Race/Ethnicity

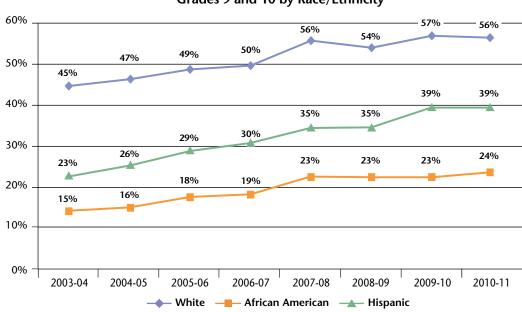


#### **Charter Middle Schools FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above** Grades 6, 7, and 8 by Race/Ethnicity

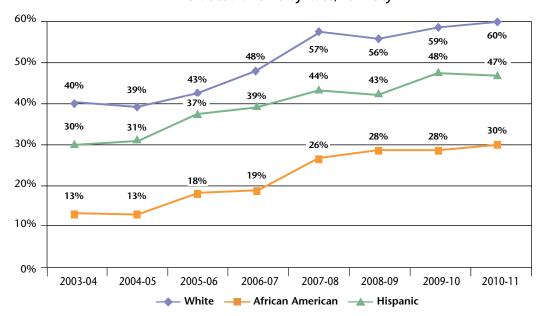


## Traditional Public High Schools FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 9 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity



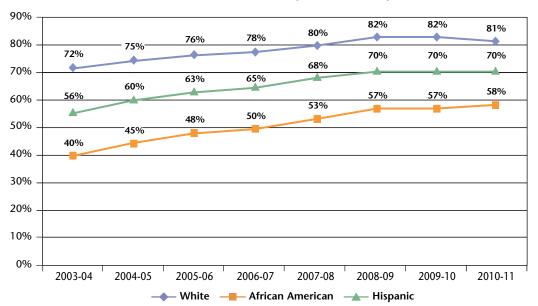


## Charter High Schools FCAT Reading Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 9 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity

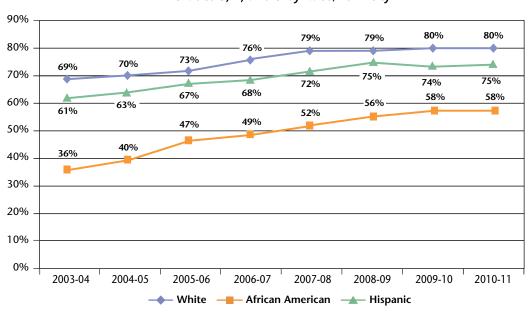


#### Closing the Achievement Gap in Math Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools 2004-2011

Traditional Public Elementary Schools FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 3, 4, and 5 by Race/Ethnicity



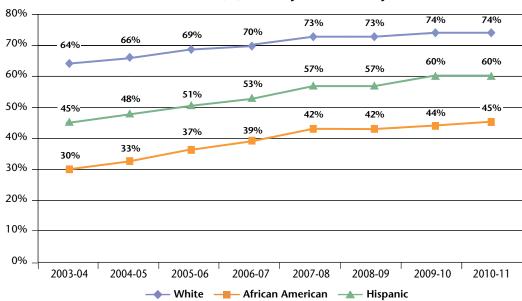
#### Charter Elementary Schools FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 3, 4, and 5 by Race/Ethnicity



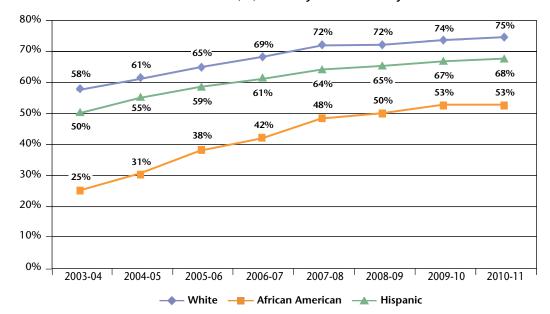
Math

Traditional Public Middle Schools FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 6, 7, and 8 by Race/Ethnicity

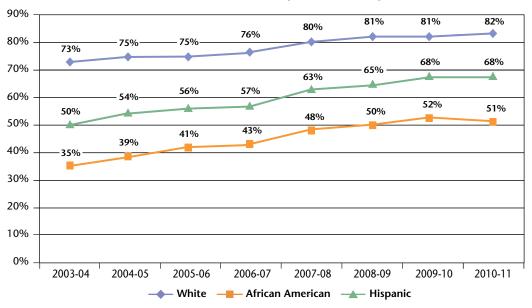
Math



Charter Middle Schools
FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above
Grades 6, 7, and 8 by Race/Ethnicity

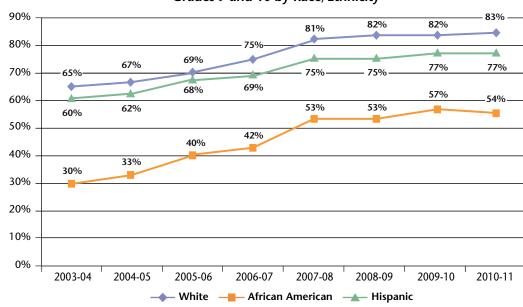


#### Traditional Public High Schools FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 9 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity



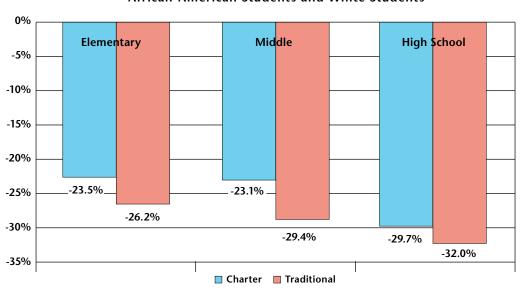
Math

## Charter High Schools FCAT Math Achievement Level 3 and Above Grades 9 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity

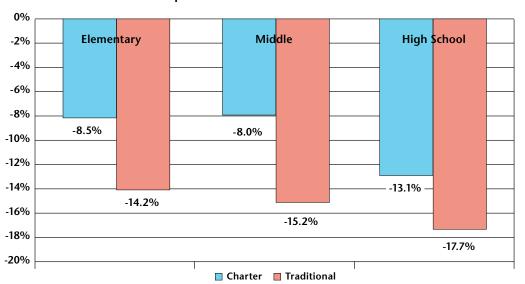


#### Achievement Gap Summary Data 2010-11 School Year

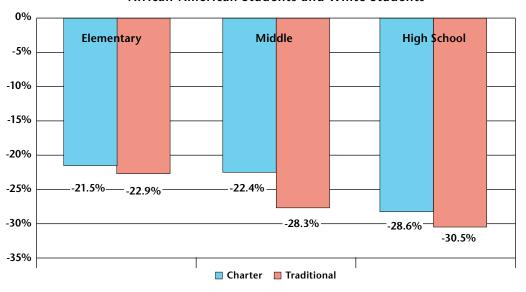
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Achievement Gap in Reading Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Hispanic Students and White Students

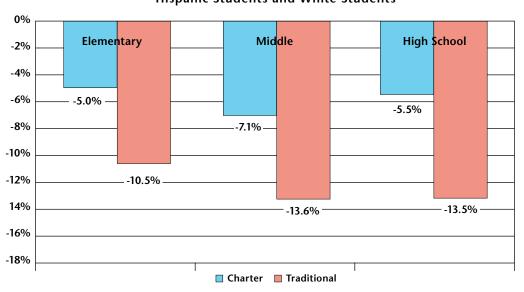


Achievement Gap in Math
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African-American Students and White Students



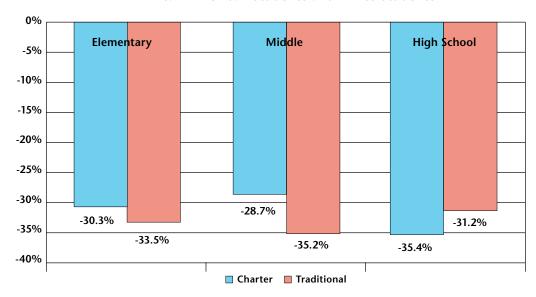
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Achievement Gap in Math Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Hispanic Students and White Students

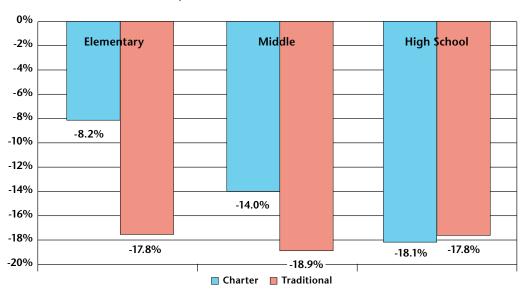


#### Achievement Gap in Science Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools African-American Students and White Students

Science

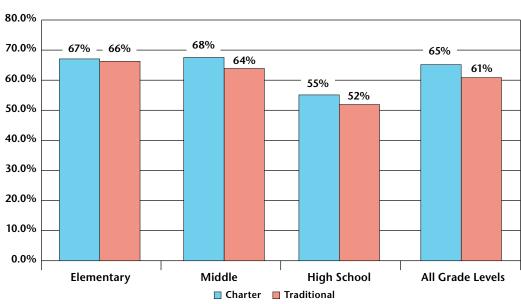


Achievement Gap in Science Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools Hispanic Students and White Students



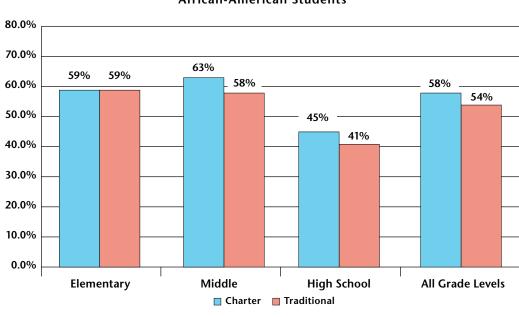
## Learning Gains Comparison 2010-2011 School Year

#### Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading All Students



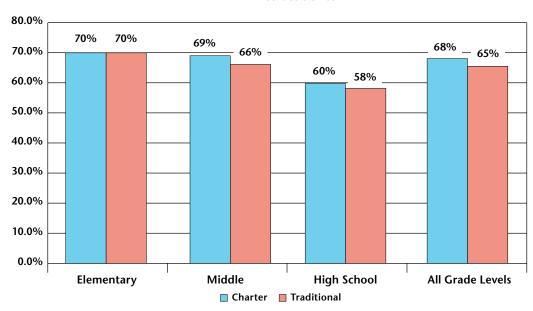
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#### Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading African-American Students

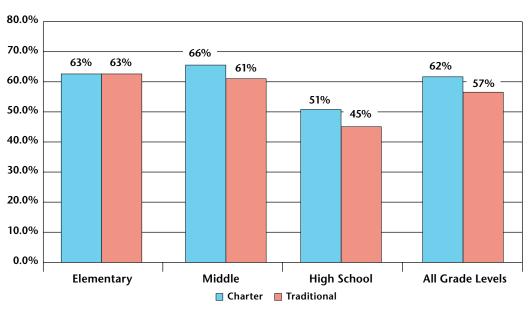


Reading

Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading White Students

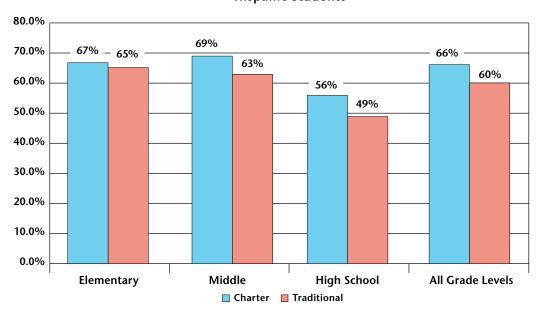


Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading FRL Students

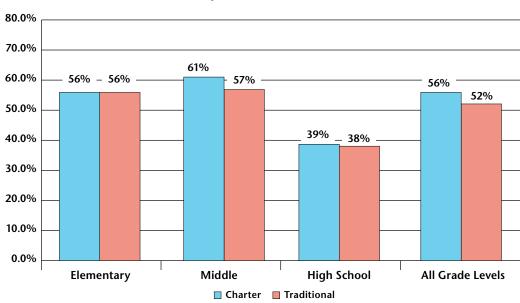


Reading

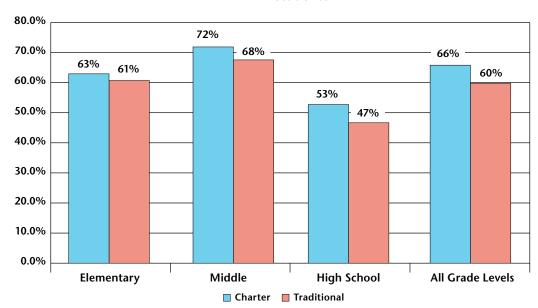
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading Hispanic Students



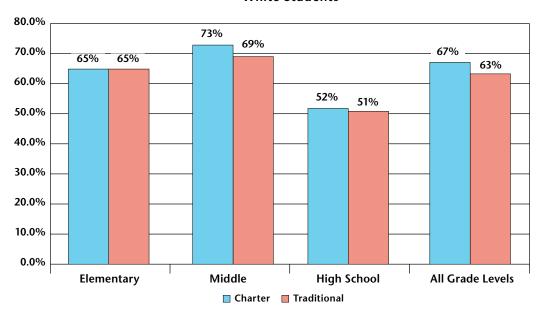
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading
Exceptional Education Students



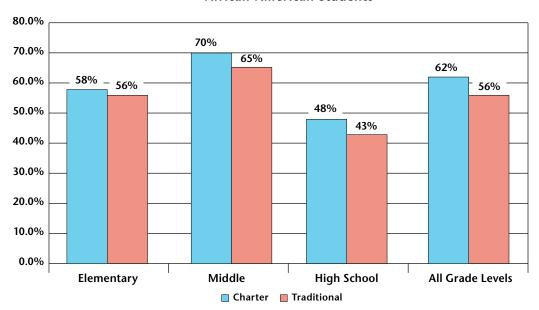
Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading **All Students** 



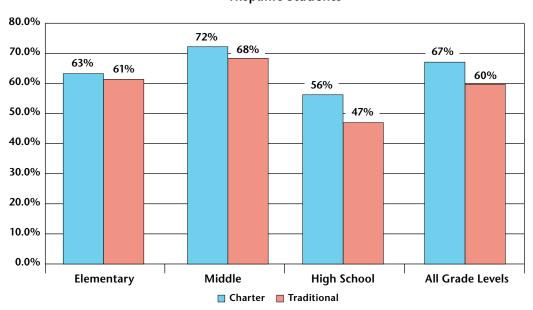
Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading White Students



Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading **African-American Students** 

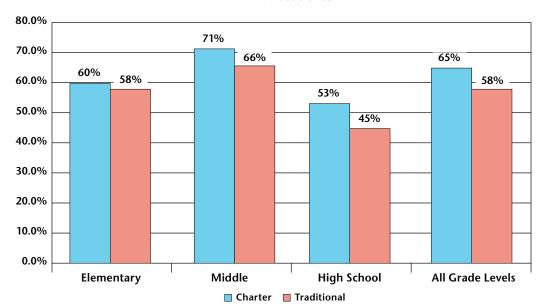


Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading Hispanic Students

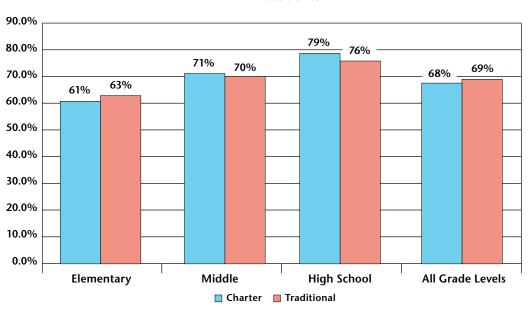


Reading

Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading FRL Students

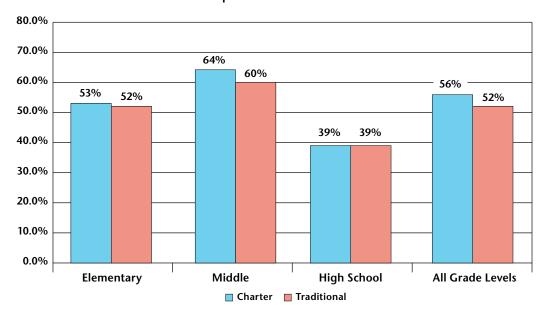


Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math All Students

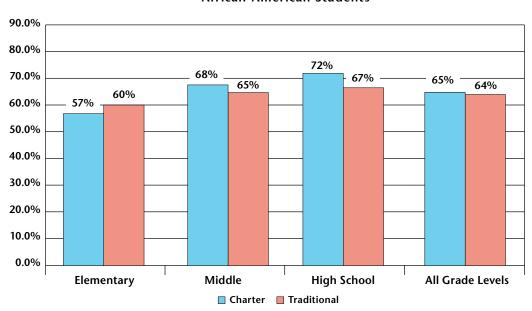


Math

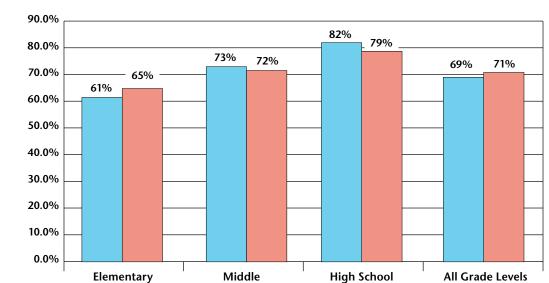
Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Reading Exceptional Education Students



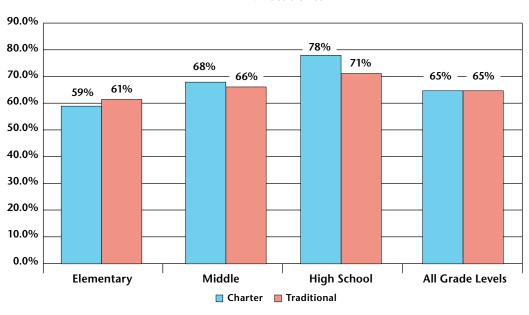
#### Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math African-American Students



Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math White Students



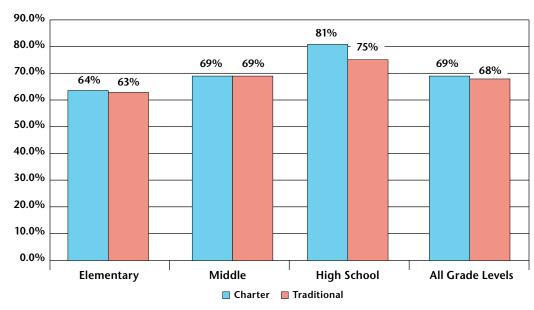
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math FRL Students



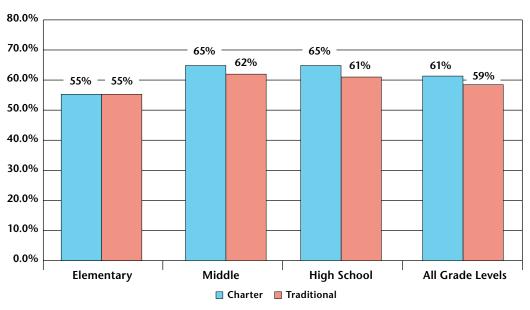
Math

Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math Hispanic Students

Charter Traditional

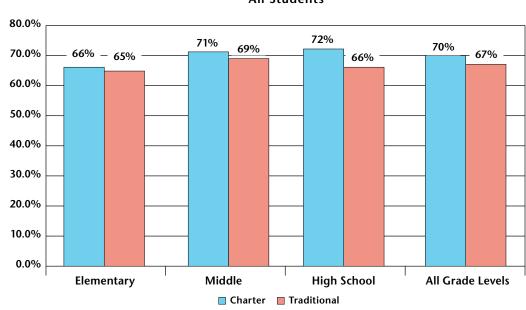


#### Percent of Students Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math Exceptional Education Students

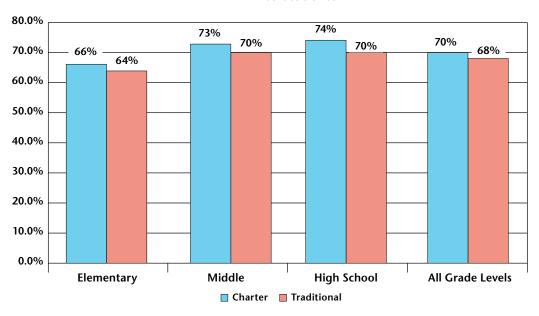


Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math All Students



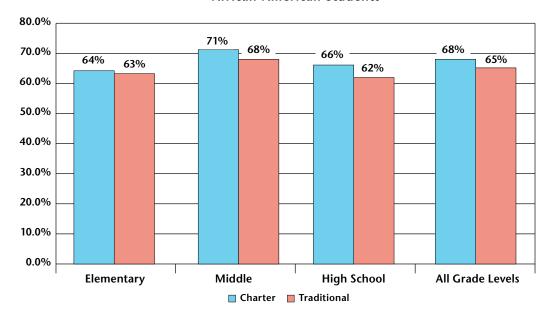


Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math White Students

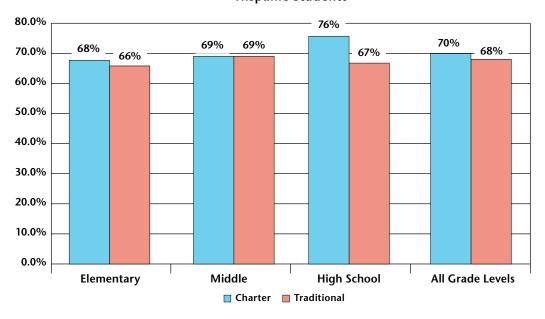


Math

#### Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math African-American Students

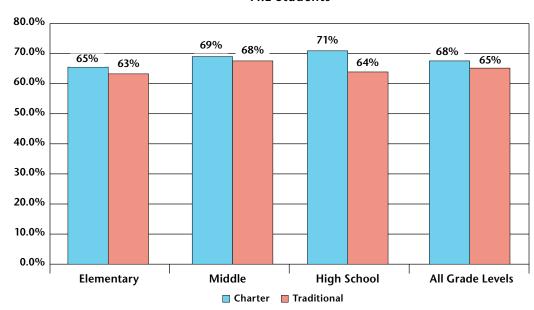


#### Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math Hispanic Students

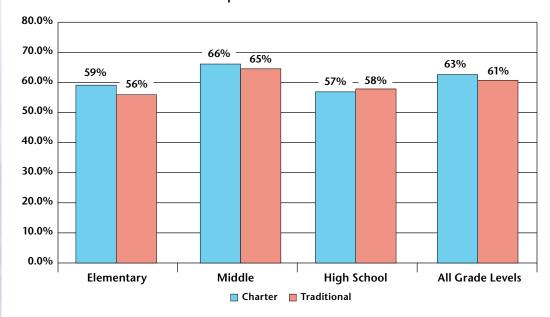


Math

#### Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math FRL Students



#### Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains on FCAT Math Exceptional Education Students



FCAT PROFICIENCY DATA	A 2010-2011	C	Charter	Tra	aditional	
	Reading	8	86,308		1,394,118	
Total # of Students with	Math		79,117	1,	216,849	
FCAT results	Science	27,538		495,472		
Total % Proficient						
	Reading	%	<b>Total Students</b>	%	Total Students	
	Elem	74.5	25,479	71.6	382,831	
	Mid	71.6	27,630	64.3	331,521	
	High	48.4	6,533	44.8	154,379	
	Math					
	Elem	74.0	25,333	72.8	389,107	
	Mid	68.4	26,366	63.6	327,458	
	High	74.6	4,742	71.9	120,594	
	Science					
	Elem	53.9	5,940	51.8	91,659	
	Mid	52.0	5,810	46.9	80,575	
	High	40.4	2,155	42.0	61,707	
Total % Proficient by Race						
	Reading - Whi	te				
	Elem	82.1	11,940	81.7	197,136	
	Mid	78.9	12,483	75.0	180,898	
	High	60.0	2,853	56.3	94,429	
	Math - White					
	Elem	79.9	11,623	80.9	195,121	
	Mid	75.1	11,854	73.4	176,927	
	High	82.7	1,861	81.9	67,143	
	Science - Whit				1	
	Elem	62.5	2,993	64.3	52,158	
	Mid	62.4	2,933	59.8	48,408	
	High	55.0	1,107	52.8	39,307	
	Reading - Afric				1	
	Elem	58.6	4,080	55.5	67,143	
	Mid	55.8	4,071	45.6	51,899	
	High	30.3	852	24.3	17,926	
	Math - African				1	
	Elem	58.4	4,072	58.0	70,154	
	Mid	52.7	3,836	45.1	51,286	
	High	54.1	719	51.4	18,325	
	Science - Afric					
	Elem	32.2	691	30.8	12,142	
	Mid	33.7	680	24.6	9,209	
	High	19.6	228	21.6	6,459	
	Reading - Hisp				1	
	Elem	73.6	8,613	67.5	103,029	
	Mid	70.9	10,268	59.8	84,618	
	High	46.9	2,641	38.6	34,931	
	Math - Hispan		0.76	70 /	107.510	
	Elem	74.9	8,764	70.4	107,562	
	Mid	68.0	9,838	59.8	84,457	
	High	77.2	2,036	68.4	29,908	
	Science - Hispa				1	
	Elem	54.3	2,044	46.5	23,278	
	Mid	48.4	2,019	40.9	19,136	
	High	36.9	755	35.0	12,961	





		Charter Tradition		ditional	
Total % Proficient by Free					
and Reduced Lunch					
	Reading				
	Elem	64.4	10,747	62.6	208,300
	Mid	62.5	11,745	53.3	159,900
	High	40.1	2,543	31.4	53,870
	Math				
	Elem	65.8	10,974	64.7	215,366
	Mid	60.2	11,296	52.5	157,416
	High	70.8	1,993	61.0	49,322
	Science				
	Elem	41.3	2,166	39.9	43,026
	Mid	40.7	2,157	33.5	32,289
	High	30.2	685	28.6	18,730
Total % Proficient by ESE					
	Reading				
	Elem	47.7	1,452	42.0	30,268
	Mid	41.4	1,269	30.8	19,265
	High	21.5	225	15.8	5,907
	Math				
	Elem	52.2	1,588	47.6	34,269
	Mid	39.9	1,220	30.7	19,169
	High	42.3	219	37.6	6,491
	Science				
	Elem	28.3	265	28.3	6,692
	Mid	30.6	265	19.8	3,962
	High	17.0	60	16.7	2,005
Total % Proficient by ELL	_				
	Reading				
	Elem	38.5	756	37.7	18,552
	Mid	27.0	387	17.4	4,455
	High	10.5	63	5.6	932
	Math				
	Elem	52.7	1,036	49.9	24,636
	Mid	35.3	507	27.0	6,918
	High	46.6	123	33.8	2,737
	Science				
	Elem	14.2	64	15.2	1,906
	Mid	11.7	45	7.0	574
	High	6.3	12	4.5	302

\*NOTE: High school math only includes 10th grade FCAT math for 2010-11. In 2011-12, FCAT math will no longer be administered in 10th grade.

#### FCAT LEARNING GAINS DATA

READING	All Students  % who made learning gains	African American % who made learning gains	White % who made learning gains	<b>Hispanic</b> % who made learning gains	FRL % who made learning gains	<b>SWD</b> % who made learning gains
Charter Schools				<u></u>		
Grades 4 and 5	67	59	70	67	63	56
Grades 6, 7 and 8	68	63	69	69	66	61
Grades 9 and 10	55	45	60	56	51	39
All Grade levels	65	58	68	66	62	56
Traditional Schoo	ls					
Grades 4 and 5	66	59	70	65	63	56
Grades 6, 7 and 8	64	58	66	63	61	57
Grades 9 and 10	52	41	58	49	45	38
All Grade levels	61	54	65	60	57	52

#### FCAT LEARNING GAINS OF THE LOW 25%

READING	% in the low 25% who made learning gains	African American % in the low 25% who made learning gains	White % in the low 25% who made learning gains	Hispanic % in the low 25% who made learning gains	FRL % in the low 25% who made learning gains	% in the low 25% who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	63	58	65	63	60	53
Grades 6, 7 and 8	72	70	73	72	71	64
Grades 9 and 10	53	48	52	56	53	39
All Grade levels	66	62	67	67	65	56
Traditional Schoo	ls					
Grades 4 and 5	61	56	65	61	58	52
Grades 6, 7 and 8	68	65	69	68	66	60
Grades 9 and 10	47	43	51	47	45	39
All Grade levels	60	56	63	60	58	52

Note: Retained 3rd grade students eligible for gains therefore included with grades 4 and 5.

#### FCAT LEARNING GAINS DATA

MATH	All Students  % who made learning gains	African American % who made learning gains	White % who made learning gains	<b>Hispanic</b> % who made learning gains	FRL % who made learning gains	<b>SWD</b> % who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	61	57	61	64	59	55
Grades 6, 7 and 8	71	68	73	69	68	65
Grades 9 and 10	79	72	82	81	78	65
All Grade levels	68	65	69	69	65	61
Traditional Schoo	ls					
Grades 4 and 5	63	60	65	63	61	55
Grades 6, 7 and 8	70	65	72	69	66	62
Grades 9 and 10	76	67	79	75	71	61
All Grade levels	69	64	71	68	65	59

#### FCAT LEARNING GAINS OF THE LOW 25%

MATH	% in the low 25% who made learning gains	African American % in the low 25% who made learning gains	White % in the low 25% who made learning gains	Hispanic % in the low 25% who made learning gains	FRL % in the low 25% who made learning gains	% in the low 25% who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	66	64	66	68	65	59
Grades 6, 7 and 8	71	71	73	69	69	66
Grades 9 and 10	72	66	74	76	71	57
All Grade levels	70	68	70	70	68	63
Traditional Schoo	ls					
Grades 4 and 5	65	63	64	66	63	56
Grades 6, 7 and 8	69	68	70	69	68	65
Grades 9 and 10	66	62	70	67	64	58
All Grade levels	67	65	68	68	65	61

Note: Retained 3rd grade students eligible for gains therefore included with grades 4 and 5.





#### Florida Department of Education Gerard Robinson, Commissioner www.fldoe.org

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1044 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400 850/245-0502 www.floridaschoolchoice.org

> Bureau of Evaluation and Reporting 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 844 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400 850/245-0429 www.fldoe.org/evaluation/

> > March 2012



