

First Year's Impact of North Carolina Charter Schools
on Local Education Agencies and Their Schools
1997-98

Report II of the Charter Schools Evaluation

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First Year's Impact of North Carolina Charter School on Local School Districts (LEAs)

Rita G. O'Sullivan
Barry Nagle
Kelly Spence
Chris Haynes
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Introduction

Inaugural Charter Schools in North Carolina first welcomed students during the 1997-98 academic year. A year later, this study chronicles the impact charter schools have had on local school districts (also known as local education agencies (LEAs)). Impetus for the study came from the State's desire to understand the interrelationships between charter schools and LEAs. Other states had reported impact of charter schools on LEAs (Rofes, 1998). North Carolina wanted to know the nature and extent of the impact of charter schools in this state.

Methodology

Charter School Directors, School District Superintendents, or their designees provided information for this study. One of the members of the North Carolina Charter School Evaluation Advisory Team identified elements of likely impact, based on available information from other parts of the United States and drafted a copy of the telephone survey protocol. The Evaluation Team reviewed the survey elements for content and clarity. Different surveys were drafted for Charter School Directors and School Superintendents but only minor differences existed between the two.

In August 1998, Directors from the first 34 charter schools and their 24 local School District Superintendents were sent copies of the impact survey questions and given the option to respond by phone, in writing, via mail, or by facsimile. Prior to the study, Charter School Directors and School District Superintendents had received letters alerting them to the State's overall charter school evaluation effort and the impending arrival of the impact survey. The survey directions further advised respondents about the specific purposes of the study. Individuals who did not wish to mail or fax the survey would be asked to complete phone interviews.

Both fixed response and open-ended questions were included on the survey.

Likert-type scales were utilized to gather information about:

- the extent of contact between the charter school and LEA
- the quality of the relationship between the charter school and the LEA
- the extent to which the school district had experienced and expected to experience changes in the distribution of students, programs, parent concerns, and administrative time.
- the changes in school district diversity, focusing on race, at-risk groups, special education students, academically gifted students, and economically disadvantaged students.

For the last two areas, respondents were asked to explain their ratings.

Open-ended questions about the impact of charter schools on LEAs asked about financial impact, district-wide change, program changes, increases in the number of schools of choice, responsiveness to parent concerns, and enhanced public relations. Respondents also were asked about other LEA responses that they may have observed; if they had a contact person at the LEA or the charter school; and, if so, who that person might be.

Initially, non-respondents were contacted and sent a second copy of the survey to promote participation. Subsequently, non-respondents were contacted by phone. One

charter school was no longer in operation as a charter school; thus, reducing the total number of charter schools to 33. Final response rate for charter schools was 91% (30 of 33), while the response rate for LEAs was 100% (24 of 24).

Frequencies for Likert-type questions were calculated and accompanying comments summarized. Responses to open-ended questions were content analyzed with at least two coders agreeing on the coding schema.

Important Note. Some of the comments by LEA administrators and charter school respondents may not represent “facts” accurately. They should be viewed as what they are: perceptions and opinions. All comments are verbatim except rewording to avoid explicit identification of specific charter schools or LEAs.

Results

Contact with School District

The charter school and LEA representatives specified the extent of contact they had had with each other. A four-choice Likert scale was used. The choices were: none, limited contact, moderate contact, and much contact. The entire sample responded to this item. Table 1 lists the frequencies for each response. Both charter schools and LEA representatives most frequently described their level of contact as limited. Twenty-one (70%) charter schools and 14 (58%) school districts described the contact as limited.

Table 1: **Frequency of Perceived Contact between Charter Schools and LEAs**

How would you describe the extent of your contact with the local school district/charter School?									
None		Limited contact		Moderate contact		Much contact		No answer	
CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs
0	6	21	14	8	3	1	1	0	0
0%	25%	70%	58%	27%	13%	3%	4%	0%	0%

* Charter Schools n = 30/ LEAs n = 24

NB: Percentage of responses exclude no answer responses

Quality of the Relationship

Charter School Directors and School District Superintendents were asked, “How would you describe the quality of your relationship with the local school district/charter school?” Table 2 illustrates the perception of the quality of the relationship between charter schools and LEAs. Percentages reported for actual responses exclude number of non-responses; “No Answer” column reflect total responses received. The majority of charter schools consider their relationship with LEAs to be Fair (11 or 38% of respondents) or Good (10 or 34% of respondents). The majority of LEAs consider their relationship with charter schools to be Good (10 or 48% of respondents) to Fair (6 or 29% of respondents).

Table 2: Frequency of Perceived Quality of Relationship between LEA and Charter School

How would you describe the quality of your relationship with the local district/charter school?

Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		No answer	
Charters	LEAs	Charters	LEAs	Charters	LEAs	Charters	LEAs	Charters	LEAs
2	2	10	10	11	6	6	3	1	3
7%	10%	34%	48%	38%	29%	21%	12%	3%	12%

Charter Schools n = 30/ LEAs n = 24

NB: Percentage of responses exclude no answer responses

Respondents also were asked to explain why they gave the rating of quality that they did for the relationship. Table 3 presents the comments by quality rating. Identifying remarks have been removed and replaced with an X to indicate that there was a proper name provided. Not all respondents included comments.

Table 3: Reasons for Quality Rating

EXCELLENT

Charter School Comments

- Very supportive, easy to get along with and non-intrusive. Credit should go to our president who works hard with the school board.
- Non-profit in partnership with public schools.

LEA Comments

- Issues between (with) other schools are worked out collaboratively with one contact person at charter school's school board is well informed of charter school issues.
- We meet monthly with the Executive Director and Principal of the charter school. We offer state test training for their staff. Their students are our students also!

GOOD

Charter School Comments

- Good exchange of ideas – some of their people have helped us.
- There have been few problems. Both the traditional public and the charter public schools have worked in a professional and timely manner.
- Representatives from the district were helpful and supportive.
- The school system usually supplies us with the things we need.
- This is about where it is
- I believe it to be true.
- Except for the superintendent.
- Initially the relationship was poor; but it is improving.
- (X) contracts with the local school Board of Education for food services. The school board is willing to assist when needed. The (X) County Schools Teacher Resource Center has included the (X) in some of its grant proposals and makes all their resources and material available to the (X) staff.
- We have a solid, positive relationship with our local school district. Our district, however, has not initiated contact to learn more about our program and to investigate potential collaboration.

LEA Comments

- Because it accurately describes our relationship.
- Met with them several times. Discussed issues – offered assistance.
- No problems; cooperation in some areas.
- The contacts have been very good. We just have not had a lot of them recently.
- We make an effort to contact and communicate.
- We established a contract that outlined appropriate procedures, including payment process.
- I had lunch and several contacts with the principal. I visited the school.

Note: In this table and throughout, all comments are verbatim except rewording to avoid explicit identification of a specific charter school. Some of the comments by LEA administrators and charter school respondents may not represent “facts” accurately. They should be viewed as what they are: perceptions and opinions.

Table 3: Reasons for Quality Rating (con't)

FAIR	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At times correspondence was good, typically it depended on contact person or purpose of call. • I feel the relationship could be strengthened. I feel the charter school is not received as a group of educators working to strengthen our country's educational system. The two should be working as a unified force to build the individual lives of the children. • Little support, but not antagonistic. • Some are helpful – still a great deal of negative rhetoric directed towards charter schools • Seems to be a lot of mixed feeling about us. Attitudes was that we were taking their money. An us and them attitude. • Our local LEA is tolerant but basically both unresponsive and unconcerned about our needs and problems. They are cordial when contacted but really do not initiate any action. • Previous principal had good relationship. People are shy of charter schools. Don't want to take risks (transportation problem). • We have tried to be independent instead of relying on LEA. • Initially, they rejected charter-not positive at all. We've had solid relationships with a number of individuals. • It's fine, limited contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication ranges from non-existent to business like. • Charter school officials are poorly informed. I don't have time to do their work for them • Communication with charters is lacking. As the designated contact at the district for charter schools I receive little information from the schools (i.e. location, phone numbers for contact, enrollment changes, etc.)
POOR	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no contact. No support from either system. • The local superintendent has been very publicly negative about our existence • Our school system has not been receptive to the ideas of a charter school from the very beginning. We had difficulty getting records, and local funds at the start, but that was resolved. • The (X) City Schools is threatened by our existence. • The local school system has declined to work with us on various projects, and reports from parents are that our school is constantly maligned by principals and directors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I disapprove of a "white flight" charter school hiding under the guise of a "community school". Things (relations) have gone downhill. They work against us in our efforts for a decent local budget from county comm. Went through – what we're after, more funds, will benefit the charter school. They work hard recruiting AG kids from our school system. • Charter schools have elected to become independent of any supervision of (X) county. They applied directly to the state board.

Table 3: Reasons for Quality Rating (con't)

NO ANSWER	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No dealings with them. Has good working relationship with one woman but they won't give us money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different for each school. Current charter requested no services other than a list of students for local appropriation. Did not request student records

Survey respondents were asked if they had a specific contact in the local school district or charter school. As shown in Table 4, more than half (55%) of the charter schools responded that they did not have a specific person at the school district, whereas 63% of the school district reported that they had a contact person at the charter school.

Table 4: Frequency of Charter Schools and LEAs with Specific Contact Person

Do you have a specific contact(s) in the local school district (Charter School)?					
No		Yes		No Answer	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
16 53%	9 38%	13 45%	15 63%	1 3%	0 0%

Charter Schools n = 30 / LEAs n = 24

Experienced School District Changes

The survey asked Charter School Directors and School District Superintendents, “To your knowledge, what extent has the local school district experienced changes in numbers and distribution of students across grade levels; programs offered; parent concerns; redistribution of administrative time; or other? Table 5 indicates the degree to which respondents reported that the local school districts had experienced changes with the advent of charter schools. It is important to note that many charter schools and school district respondents left these ratings blank. One third of the charter schools left

the redistribution of administrative time blank, and only a very small number of charter schools and LEAs proffered ideas about other experienced changes. The percentages calculated below for the ratings use total number of respondents. That is, non-responses were not counted in the calculation of the percentages for the Likert-type ratings.

Table 5 illustrates that charter schools and LEA perceptions differ most about changes in administrative time. Eight (36%) LEAs perceived more changes in this area compared with one (5%) charter school. Whereas six (22%) charter schools perceived more changes in programs offered than a single (5%) LEA.

Table 5. Frequency of Charter School and LEA Responses Concerning Experienced Changes in the LEA

Area of Potential Change	No change		Some change		Much change		No answer	
	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs
Programs offered	19 70%	20 95%	6 22%	1 5%	2 7%	0 0%	3 10%	3 12.5%
Redistribution of administrative time	19 95%	14 64%	1 5%	8 36%	0 0%	0 0%	10 33%	2 8%
Parent concerns	12 52%	17 77%	10 43%	4 18%	1 4%	1 5%	7 23%	2 8%
Numbers and distribution of students across grade levels	11 44%	5 22%	13 52%	17 74%	1 4%	1 4%	5 17%	1 4%
Other	0 0%	2 50%	2 100%	1 25%	0 0%	1 25%	28 93%	20 83%

Charter Schools n = 30/ LEAs n = 24

NB: Percentage of responses exclude no answer responses

For each rating of experienced change respondents were asked to explain their reason for the rating. In Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 that follow those comments are

provided by level of rating. Note that not all ratings included explanations and recall that non-responses were high in some areas.

Table 6: Explanations of Ratings for Experienced Change in School District by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:

Programs Offered

NO CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some programs are being offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They offer the same programs. So few students in current charter; no impact.
SOME CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two changes. Expanded reading instruction to one-hour –matches us. Contract with parents same as our contract They claim elementary foreign language, library and art were discontinued because of us <p>New “alternative” school-several new charter schools Wake County has opened a charter-like school. Wake is also looking to build a full size middle school with connections to our organization. They are setting up charter-like schools. They see the concept as beneficial</p>	<p><i>No comments made by LEAs</i></p>
MUCH CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<p>The charter school program offers a choice in education. Remediation program modeled after charter school</p>	<p><i>No comments made by LEAs</i></p>

Table 7: **Explanations of Ratings for Experienced Change in School District by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:**

Redistribution of Administrative Time

NO CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school works with sexually abused children - estranged from their homes – to date all are from a children’s home. • No administrators from the district are involved by the charter school. • No local administrative changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We treat them as a separate LEA. We informed them that no special time would be set aside. • So few students in current charter; no impact. • Other than having to spend time answering surveys and questions and assessing money for charter schools.
SOME CHANGE	
<p>Charter School Comments</p> <p><i>No comments made by charter schools</i></p>	<p>LEA Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanted time to execute review/payment. • More at the beginning • Individuals have been assigned as the point person for charter schools... • She spends more time on charter schools stuff—but not much district change. • Very limited at this point. Initially, heavy amounts of time.
BLANK	
<p>Charter School Comments</p> <p><i>No comments made by charter schools</i></p>	<p>LEA Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the lawsuit total administrative time was spent dealing with the issues.

Table 8: Explanations of Ratings for Experienced Change in School District by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:

Parent Concerns

NO CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local students in our school • Few parents are missed • We have done nothing to concern these parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So few students in current charter; no impact. • Concerns are always consistent.
SOME CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an added interest regarding educational programs (comparative) • Better communication • Parents now have an option so they are comparing two schools K-8. • Constant reassignment of students is a major parent concern here. • Related to our school-did not recognize problems. Now realize parents are looking for certain things in middle schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents whose kids attend our school system dislike local funding being pulled from their kids to the charter schools. • Increased parent questions about the charter schools and their ability to meet their children’s needs. • More questions about charter schools—mostly informational. • •
MUCH CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of graduation requirements 	<p><i>No comments made by LEAs</i></p>

**Table 9: Explanations of Ratings for Experienced Change in School District
by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:**

Numbers and Distributions of Students across Grade Levels

NO CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEAs Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our students come from all over the state • With only 65-89 students relocated in the district there can hardly be any change across grade levels or numbers. • 60 students from a population of 6,800 means no change • I do not know of any significant changes experienced • We have only a small percentage of students from all over the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So few students in current charter no impact. • They only serve 65 Kindergarten students. • • •
SOME CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 112 out of 4,400 • 300 Fewer kids • CMS continues to grow in numbers by leaps and bounds. • District enrollment continues to grow faster than charter school enrollment • First year much, second year net loss of 7 or 8 students. • We receive many 6th graders due to rigid organization at ed. • They have 95,000 and 1,000 go to charter schools. 320 come here. • We have 300 students the LEA would have had. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We lost a few students to the charter schools. • Approximately 124 students. No idea of 2nd charter school. • 750 of 2900 students are in charter schools. • Lost significant numbers of students from 2-3 middle schools. • Approximately 75 students. • The charter school particularly impacted one school. • 82 students in charter schools. • Student numbers are affected ...drawn students from a limited area. • Fewer children in Public Schools. • 8-10 students, \$40,000 loss for LEA.
MUCH CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within one elementary school. Not in the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We lost 250-280 K-8 kids (12%) of our student population.

Table 10: **Explanations of Ratings for Experienced Change in School District by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:**

Other

SOME CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic programs may have dropped. Combining 2 schools soccer teams. • Cynicism on part of many witnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds in all areas cut (i.e. workforce, EC) thanks to no charter students.
MUCH CHANGE	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<p><i>No comments made by charter schools</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of staff total resulting in (#21) • Charter school community has written many attack letters to local newspapers, also attack ads because our school system does not support the charter schools.

Expected School District Changes

Another question on the survey asked charter school and LEA representatives about the level of change they expected, rather than experienced, in the local school district in response to charter schools. The rating scale offered three choices: no change, some change, and much change. Table 11 lists the frequencies for each response. Percentages reported in the table for actual responses exclude number of non - responses; percentages in “No answer” column reflect total responses received. Note that percentages of no answers for this question are higher than they were for the previous questions about experienced changed.

Of those responding, most charter school and LEA representatives expected no change in programs offered, redistribution of administrative time, and parent concerns. Twelve (60%) charter schools and 17 (85%) LEA representatives expected no change in programs offered. Eleven (65%) charter schools and 15 (68%) LEA representatives

expected no change in the distribution of administrative time. Nine (47%) charter schools and 15 (63%) LEA representatives expected no change in parent concerns.

Some change was expected in the numbers and distribution of students across grade levels. Fifteen (44%) charter school representatives expected some change in this area. Thirteen (54%) LEA representatives expected some change in this area.

Table 11: Expected Changes in School Districts as a Result of Charter Schools

Area of Potential Change	No change		Some change		Much change		No answer	
	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs
Programs offered	12 60%	17 85%	7 35%	2 10%	1 5%	2 10%	10 33%	3 13%
Redistribution of administrative time	11 65%	15 68%	5 29%	6 27%	1 6%	1 5%	13 43%	2 8%
Parent concerns	9 47%	15 79%	8 42%	3 16%	2 11%	1 6%	11 37%	5 21%
Numbers and distribution of students across grade levels	5 24%	6 30%	15 71%	13 65%	1 5%	1 5%	9 30%	4 17%
Other	2 100%	1 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	28 93%	23 96%

Charter Schools n = 30/ LEAs n = 24

NB: Percentage of responses exclude no answer responses

In the survey, each respondent was given the opportunity to explain the reason they did or did not expect a change in the local school district. Tables 12, 13, 14, and 15 list those written responses by level of expected change. In some cases, respondent used the same reason for multiple ratings.

**Table 12: Explanations of Ratings for *Expected Change in School District* by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:
Programs Offered**

SOME CHANGE	
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our results pressure schools to respond • No change in classes but lowering teacher-student numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No LEA comments
MUCH CHANGE	
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local paper carried many article proclaiming the expected changes would be dramatic, according to local directors in the school system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New charter high school with manufacturing focus will help supplement career educational opportunities. • Reduction/Impact on staffing.

**Table 13: Explanations of Ratings for *Expected Change in School District* by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:
Redistribution of Administrative Time**

SOME CHANGE	
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial administrators have to send out funds. Checking attendance, systems need built. Change in business office time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New charter being planned as integral part of school district.
MUCH CHANGE	
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local paper carried many article proclaiming the expected changes would be dramatic, according to local directors in the school system 	<i>No LEA comments</i>

**Table 14: Explanations of Ratings for Expected Change in School District
by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:
Parent Concerns**

SOME CHANGE		
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harder questions asked because people have options. 		<i>No LEA comments</i>
MUCH CHANGE		
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local paper carried many article proclaiming the expected changes would be dramatic, according to local directors in the school system 		<i>No LEA comments</i>

**Table 15: Explanations of Ratings for Expected Change in School District
by Type of Change and Rating Concerning:
Distribution of Students across Grade Levels**

SOME CHANGE		
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children drawn out will grow to 500-600. After first year. Enrollment in charter school up 10% 		<i>No LEA comments</i>
MUCH CHANGE		
<u>Charter Schools</u>	<u>LEAs</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local paper carried many article proclaiming the expected changes would be dramatic, according to local directors in the school system 		<i>No LEA comments</i>

Financial Impacts

Survey respondents were asked, “What, if any, financial impacts have charter school had on the local school district?” LEA representatives responded very differently from charter school respondents, although both had about 20% who left the question blank. From the comments, some LEAs clearly view the financial implications of charter schools as serious. This is the one section of the survey where LEAs chose to elaborate. Charter schools, on the other hand, did not express similar concern. Table 16 summarizes the responses from charter schools and LEAs to this question. Comments to this open-ended question were coded as: “No Answer/Don’t Know,” “Little or No Impact,” and “Impact.” If responses were mixed, containing statements that had both impact and no impact interpretations, they were coded into the Impact category. Because of the contrast in responses between the two groups, the small sample size, and the high non-response rate, all comments are shared.

Table 16 shows that charter schools are evenly split between no financial impact and some financial impact. Whereas, two-thirds of the LEAs report impact.

Table 16: **Frequency of Responses to the Financial Impact Question.**

What, if any financial impacts have charter schools had on the local school district?					
Impact		Little or No Impact		No Answer/Don’t Know	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
12 40%	16 67%	12 40%	3 13%	6 20%	5 22%

Comments from the charter schools that were categorized as “Impact” statements are listed below. They have been loosely grouped to show apparent clusters

of responses. As the list progresses negative financial impact appears stronger but does not reflect the serious level of concern expressed by the LEAs in their comments.

Charter Schools Comments about Financial Impact

Factual Responses

- Receive per pupil allotment
- We receive about \$1000 per child for 94 children from local funds.
- \$1,000,000 possibly more comes out of the County budget

No Negative Impact

- The district continues to add new programs - so evidently its not negative overall.

Mixed Responses (Little and Some Impact)

- With such small number of students at the charter school, probably little financial impact on the local school district. The area of most significance to finance would probably be the number of Title I students.
- In this county very little. They do claim they lost some funds. We do have several special needs children which affected their dollars.
- Some, not significant. Depends on superintendent's impression of charter school. If it's for children, they tolerate charter schools.
- Very few to no financial impact. Several individual schools lost teaching positions due to the fact that charter schools pulled enrollment from the schools.

Loss of Funds to District

- The financial impact was approximately \$4500 per student for 117 students spread throughout the county. The increase in student enrollment in the county should easily restore the funds lost. The total cost of those students is about 2% of the budget of the LEA.
- Reduced overall budget
- They have lost money because of the school. They have fewer numbers. A point of contention. Publicity states that we are taking money from the school system.
- The local school district has lost per pupil financing. But we have home school students too. It is not LEAs that draw the money - it is the students. The students would have gotten the money anyway.

The list that follows contains all LEA comments that were categorized as

“Impact.” These comments are much more charged than the charter school comments.

All LEAs report financial loss and argue that there are serious financial implications for the school districts. In two cases, extremely lengthy responses were shortened. After the first few comments (that identify negative impact in rather mild terms), the tenor of the comments intensifies.

LEAs Comments about Financial Impact

Loss of Funds to District

- \$40-50,000 loss
- Nearly \$100,000
- Loss of \$9,000 per month in local money. Most of the children in charter schools would not have been in public school anyway.
- We have lost teaching positions.
- We lost 10 students and 27 staff positions.
- Somewhat of an impact. Has diminished funds. However, we serve 2300 kindergarten students - they got funds for 65 which is minor.
- DPI (Department of Public Instruction) reduced all fund areas regardless if program area appropriate for that grade level or if students qualify for services (i.e., exceptional children).
- We have had to send money to the charter schools—then students return to us—money does not.
- Charter schools have had a significant financial impact that has been the biggest change. the school district has not had to reduce staff. Growth in county has offset the “hit.” They estimate about \$1.8 million in “lost” funds. Even though some students leave a school, the schools overhead costs stay the same but funding is decreased.
- They are taking about one million dollars of resources per year. There are fewer teachers to allocate and larger class sizes.
- ...Because our former students were not concentrated in a single school, the loss of student funding the 35 students was particularly bothersome. Costs were not foregone at any level. Fixed costs remained at the same and even costs commonly considered variable costs were not foregone due to the wide distribution of students....
- We are losing X% of our state and local funds to the charter school. For a small school system like ours, this amount of lost revenue is totally devastating.
- Charter school have had a very negative financial impact in terms of both state and local funding. for 1997-98, we lost almost \$3 million in state funding, \$300,000 more than if the same number of students had moved to California. The legal funding formula failed to take into consideration that some of the LEA funding is not per-pupil based....
- Negative impact, taken money from us. I believe it is immoral. No private charter school should take vocational funds or transportation funds from us when they don't offer these services. Charter schools take special education money and don't serve these children.

Changes in School District Diversity

Charter school and LEA representatives were asked to identify what changes, if any, they had observed for school district diversity. Specifically, they were asked about: race, at-risk groups, special education groups, academically gifted students, and economically disadvantaged students; an “Other” category also was included. The survey asked them to rate the degree of change for each of these areas as “No Change,” “Some Change,” or “Much Change.” Table 17 provides frequencies for the observed changes in school district diversity. Percentages for no answer were calculated using the entire sample; percentages for the ratings are based on the actual number people responding. For this questions all but one of the LEAs responded with 20-23% of the charter schools not responding.

Table 17: **Frequency’s of Changes in School District Diversity**

To your knowledge, what changes in school district diversity have been observed for:								
Category of Student	No change		Some change		Much change		No answer	
	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs	CS	LEAs
Academically gifted students	21 88%	20 87%	3 12%	1 4%	0 0%	2 9%	7 23%	1 4%
Race	19 79%	18 78%	4 17%	5 22%	1 4%	0 0%	6 20%	1 4%
Special education students	16 67%	19 83%	8 33%	3 13%	0 0%	1 4%	6 20%	1 4%
At-risk groups	15 63%	18 79%	7 29%	4 17%	2 8%	1 4%	6 20%	1 4%
Economically disadvantaged students	15 63%	17 74%	9 37%	6 26%	0 0%	0 0%	6 20%	1 4%
Other	4 100%	1 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	26 86%	23 85%

Charter Schools n = 30/ LEAs n = 24

NB: Percentage of responses exclude no answer responses

Of those responding the vast majority (between 36-88%) of both charter schools and LEAs had not observed any changes in the diversity of academically gifted students, race, at-risk groups, or economically disadvantaged students. It is interesting to note that for special education and at-risk students, eight (33%) of the charter schools and three (13%) of the LEAs observed some change in the diversity. Additionally, seven (29%) of charter schools and four (17%) of LEAs noticed some change in diversity for at risk groups.

As respondents rated each of the areas for this survey question, they were asked to explain their rating. Table 18 lists all the comments provided for their ratings, except when the comments indicated no change at all. In some instances, respondents used the same comment to justify multiple ratings. Only one comment was received by a respondent using the “Other” option. This charter school observed, “We have noticed an increase in students who have been expelled or unable to return to school coming in to fill in applications for admission.”

Table 18: Explanations of Ratings for Changes in School District Diversity for:

Race	
<p><u>Charter School Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our population is about 25% minority now; therefore we are getting very close to the LEA. • 99% black in school. Vast majority of charter schools have black children. Parents feel they have no influence in public schools. True in 13 of 30 charters. Public schools need to ask what they need to do. • LEA seems to be trying to accommodate special students more openly. • Most charter students are black and Hispanic. 	<p><u>LEA Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district’s size would require a larger number of students to be at charter schools to show a difference. • It is almost 100% minority charter school. We have a small number of minority students anyway so there is some impact. • We have more minority students. They do not have minority students. • Charter school serves less minorities. • 80% or so minority enrollment in charter school while traditional public was about 37%
Special Education Students	
<p><u>Charter School Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our EC population is over 15%. this is near the state levels and should be close to LEA percentages. • We don’t label kids. In public school, a kid is “LD,” here a kid is just a kid. • Two students sent back into public system. • A few more students in the Exceptional Children program. • LEA seems to be trying to accommodate special students more openly • We have children labeled “spec. ed.” because of lack of reading and taught them to read. • 20+ students (EC) served by charter school 	<p><u>LEA Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in charter school were typically in at risk category. • We have a high percentage. • Charter schools serve less special education students. • The charter schools don’t serve this population. • The special education students presently being served at charter schools is small and they are mostly LD or low needs students. • Students are returning less prepared.

Table 18 (con't)::

At-Risk Groups	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At-risk kids do well in charter schools. Why are at-risk leaving public schools? • Put more emphasis on trying to keep them in the local schools • EC parents have tried charter schools. • LEA seems to be trying to accommodate special students more openly • Several charter school have focused on students who are not doing well. School districts realizing they need to do better. • Our small enrollment has some of the at-risk students. • Half charter students are below grade level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in charter school were typically in at risk category • The students in the charter schools are at risk or economically disadvantaged. • All students in charter school are at risk. • Charter school serves less at risk students. • Students are returning less prepared.
Economically Disadvantaged Students	
<u>Charter School Comments</u>	<u>LEA Comments</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The charter school allowed these students to have a choice that only private schools (which was not affordable) offered. • 80% of our kids are on welfare. Only 300 out of 30,000. • They want to do more for the students because of the fear of losing \$. • More voice. Sense of more power. • Charter schools have disproportionate enrollment from this groups. • LEA seems to be trying to accommodate special students more openly • 75% of our students are on free/reduced lunches • 75% of charter students receive free/reduced meals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students in the charter schools are at risk or economically disadvantaged. • Charter school serves less economically disadvantaged students • All students in charter school are at risk. • Lost some Title I money • Students are returning less prepared.

Charter Schools as a Vehicle for District-Wide Change

Survey respondents were asked, “How, if at all, have charter schools been used as a vehicle for district wide change? “ LEA representatives responded very differently

from charter school respondents, although both had between 13 - 17% who left the question blank. Charter Schools (53%) reported some type of impact on the school district to promote change, compared with 21% LEAs. Table 19 summarizes the responses from charter schools and LEAs to this question. Comments to this open-ended question were coded as: “No Answer/Don’t Know,” “Little or No Impact,” and “Impact.” If responses were mixed, that is they contained statements that had both impact and no impact interpretations, they were coded into the Impact category. Because of the contrast in responses between the two groups, the small sample size, and the high non-response rate, all comments are shared.

Table 19: Frequency of Responses to the Vehicle for District-Wide Change Question

How, if at all, have charter schools been used as a vehicle for district-wide change?					
Impact		Little or No Impact		No Answer/Don't Know	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
16 53%	5 21%	9 30%	16 67%	5 17%	3 13%

LEA Comments about District-Wide Change

- What we hope with new charter High School
- Have created much animosity within our county. I know of no district wide changes that have come about.
- Have not used them at all for change.
- There has been a real desire to move toward greater flexibility for traditional public schools. The same flexibility that has been afforded to charter schools, as it relates to public school laws.
- If public schools had the same flexibility, they could make some potential changes.

Charter School Comments about District-Wide Change

- Issue of choice. Competition for students. Public schools will improve programs to prevent attrition.
- Superintendent sees the charter school concept as something the district can profit from. Wants to replicate things in the public schools.
- There has been a greater effect to resist the charter school movement than to attempt to change the traditional program to hold students.

- The start up of this charter school has been an eye opener for some parents in the community. Parents now see that smaller classrooms, individualized instruction and parent involvement are essential to the child's educational development. Parents expect more from the schools.
- District school advise discipline problems to try charter schools.
- They do make referrals to parents that have students who may be better suited for our program.
- Helped improve scores of schools on end of grade testing. Charters have attracted students that test poorly.
- Issue of choice. Competition for students. Public schools will improve programs to prevent attrition.
- Not in any organized way, but parents report that children in the regular schools are treated better.
- Districts are reactive. Their numbers are lower which is good for everybody.
- Conversion public school. Yes, if being used by the school district, it is not evident. Used by the charter schools.
- The local school district has seemed to focus more on the needs of special ed. students and on family involvement which our school first implemented.
- LEA made an attempt to obtain interest from parents in year round program and arts based curriculum. Used survey last year to hear from parents.
- Research and development of contiguous systems has changed.
- They have not been used. We have only just completed our first year. charter schools need a year or two to set up before they can be expected to be a vehicle for change.
- I believe leaders in the district still have a "wait & see" attitude toward us and charter schools in general. I do not believe we have yet been a vehicle for system wide change.

Program Changes Made by LEA

The survey asked charter school and LEA representatives, "What, if any, program changes has the local school district made?" LEA representatives responded somewhat differently from charter school respondents, including the fact that only 8% of the LEAs left this question blank, compared with 23% of charter schools. Charter schools (33%) reported some type of impact on school district programs, compared with only 16% of LEAs. Table 20 summarizes the responses from charter schools and LEAs to this question. Comments to this open-ended question were coded as: "No Answer/Don't Know," "Little or No Impact," and "Impact." If responses were mixed,

that is they contained statements that had both impact and no impact interpretations, they were coded into the Impact category. Because of the contrast in responses between the two groups, the small sample size, and the high no-impact assessment, all comments are shared.

Table 20: Frequency of Responses to Program Changes Made by School District Question

What, if any, program changes has the local school district made?					
Impact		Little or No Impact		No Answer/Don't Know	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
10 33%	4 16%	13 43%	18 75%	7 23%	2 8%

LEA Comments about District-Wide Change

- We have stronger PR program than ever before. We will have to start recruiting white students who are AG to counteract charter school recruitment.
- The district decided to implement a K-2 program with a similar philosophy as the charter school concept. The idea was to give the school as much flexibility as possible but still operates as a X County school.
- We have focused more on the standard course of study to make sure we are covering the objectives for “all of our students.”
- There is one XYZ project school Parents select into the school.

Charter School Comments about District-Wide Change

- Two-reading program and parent contract
- Charter schools in our area were the first to initiate school uniforms. Now the public school is in full support of all students wearing uniforms.
- Test strategies. Unaware of specifics.
- The district has now instituted an International Baccalaureate program. They are also experimenting with flexible instructional grouping in elementary schools.
- Started alternative school within system for at-risk students. But not as direct result of charter school law.
- Expanded remediation program dramatically including late hours transportation. Hold harmless money-X County got \$800,000 for the lost students.
- More open and flexible
- The charter-like schools. They have a K-2 school that is charter like.
- More programs and meetings involving parents, to encourage their children to remain in the local district.

Schools of Choice Impact

The survey asked charter school and LEA representatives, “In what ways, if any, have the number of schools of choice increased?” LEA representatives responded similarly to charter school respondents, with 13% of LEAs and 20% of charter schools leaving this question blank. Charter Schools (36%) reported some type of impact on school district programs, compared with 46% of LEAs. Table 21 summarizes the responses from charter schools and LEAs to this question. Comments to this open-ended question were coded as: “No Answer/Don’t Know,” “Little or No Impact,” and “Impact.” If responses were mixed, that is they contained statements that had both impact and no impact interpretations, they were coded into the Impact category. Because of the contrast in responses between the two groups, the small sample size, and the relatively high no-impact assessment, all comments are shared.

Table 21: **Frequency of Responses to Increase in Schools of Choice Question**

In what ways, if any, have the number of schools of choice increased?					
Impact		Little or No Impact		No Answer/Don’t Know	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
11 36%	11 46%	13 43%	10 42%	6 20%	3 13%

LEA Comments about Changes in School of Choice

- Maybe some since school is 100% minority—it has had an impact on that.
- New charter high school—first school of choice attempted by school district.
- There is one other school opening but the other school is a private school.
- The charter school is an option for children who need a smaller setting.
- Three more will come on line this year.
- District adopted a school choice policy prior to enactment of the Charter School Law.
- None - except charter schools
- For the 1997-98 school year, one charter school existed. For the 1998-99, two additional charters have been approved with another large charter approved to begin 1999-2000.

- One charter school in the County.
- Charter schools have shown a minimal increase in the choice of schools in our county. The programs for most of these schools are available within our present system.
- Two years ago there were none—now the county has 3.5 schools. (0.5 is split with another county)

Charter School Comments about Changes in School of Choice

- The school increased choices in education for the people in the county in 1997-1998.
- Charter schools have doubled in one year. Looks like 30 more for next year.
- More middle schools are now available.
- Schools of choice/charters have grown from 1 in 97-98 to 3 in 98-99 with one additional chartered but delaying opening.
- Increased from none to three in the county
- Several new schools have been opened in district and counties surrounding district
- The County has a good amount of school choice in their extensive magnet system. Charter schools greatly enhance the diversity of school programs offered to parents and students.
- There are more charter schools in the County this year.
- We have two additional charter schools in our county, created solely to compete with our established school.
- Increased by 1

Responsiveness to Parent Concerns

The survey asked charter school and LEA representatives, “To what extent is the local school district more responsive to parent concerns?” LEA responses were very different from those of charter schools. Ten LEAs (42%) commented that they had always been responsive to parent concerns; by inference, they could not be more responsive to parent concerns. Whereas eight charter schools commented that the school districts were more responsive to parents concerns, although two charter schools did observe that their LEAs were aware of parental concerns. Overall, Charter Schools (40%) reported more responsiveness to parent concerns by the school district, compared with only one (4%) LEA. Table 22 summarizes the responses from charter schools and LEAs to this question. Comments to this open-ended question were coded as: “No Answer/Don’t Know,” “Same,” and “More.” Because of the contrast in responses

between the two groups, the small sample size, and the relatively high no-change assessment, all comments are shared.

Table 22: Frequency of Responses to Parent Responsiveness Question

To what extent is the local school district more responsive to parent concerns?					
More		Same		No Answer/Don't Know	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
12 40%	1 4%	6 20%	21 88%	12 40%	2 8%

LEA Comments about Responsiveness of School District to Parent Concerns

- Only reason we are doing it. Also school district has been working for a year with business community to identify their needs and charter school seems a great opportunity to implement the program we needed.

Charter Schools Comments about Responsiveness of School District to Parent Concerns

- Greatly
- To a greater extent
- From all observations, more responsive than prior to our school opening
- I have heard and rumors are flowing that the number of in school suspensions is down. The local school board is definitely more responsive to parent concerns.
- They have set up more forums for parent concerns.
- Probably somewhat more responsive, but no evidence of significant change.
- Just a guess - more competitive environment so they are more responsive
- When students leave their school in 8th grade then where do they go. How will they do in a public high school.

Enhanced Public Relations Efforts and Media Coverage

The survey asked charter school and LEA representatives, “To what extent has the local school district enhanced public relations efforts and media coverage?” The majority of LEAs (58%) and 33% of charter schools believed that there had been little or no change in public relations or media since the advent of charter schools. Similar percentages of LEA representatives (33%) and charter school respondents (30%) answered that school districts had enhanced the public relations and media efforts as a result of charter schools.

Table 23 summarizes the responses from charter schools and LEAs to this question. Comments to this open-ended question were coded as: “No Answer/Don’t Know,” “Little or No Impact,” and “Impact.” If responses were mixed, that is they contained statements that had both impact and no impact interpretations, they were coded into the “Impact” category. Because of the contrast in responses between the two groups, the small sample size, and the relatively high no-impact assessment, all comments are shared.

Table 23: **Enhanced School District Public Relations and Media Coverage**

To what extent has the local school district enhanced public relations efforts and media coverage?					
Impact		Little or No Impact		No Answer/Don’t Know	
Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs	Charter Schools	LEAs
9 30%	8 33%	10 33%	14 58%	9 30%	2 8%

LEA Comments about Enhanced School District Public Relations and Media Coverage

- It can be argued that there has been an increase in positive media related to student achievement but not because of charter schools.
- Become more aware of the need.
- Greatly enhanced public relations efforts and media coverage.
- We are strongly service oriented to all our public.
- Yes, news articles features on planning of schools.
- marketing but did this before charter schools. We’ve always tried to let the public know what we do.
- They are working on that independent of charter schools
- Advertising through XYZ Project.

Charter School Comments about Enhanced School District Public Relations and Media Coverage

- Greatly
- This has been good in the county.
- The LEA has done well with the ABC accountability model. They have shown growth in a community with diverse student population. These achievements have been well publicized – as they should.
- There has been recent effort on the part of the district to improve media relations
- There is more publicity about the public school activities than previously covered.
- More aware of the need for PR. Publicize themselves more than they have in the past.
- Appears to be more extensive. Have backed off criticism of charter schools.
- Most has been negative
- Trying to become more sensitive

Other Responses to Charter Schools by LEAs

In the survey, respondents were asked, “What other responses by the local school district have occurred?” Six (20%) charter school representatives and five (20%) LEAs made suggestions for other responses to charter schools. These responses follow:

LEA Comments about Other LEA Responses to Charter Schools

- Loss of funds in areas such as fuel, janitorial, electricity, and transportation.
- We plan to compete through the ABC’s and, in spite of different demographics, we plan to out score the charter schools on End of Grade testing.
- We have encouraged our principles and guidance counselors to use this resource more effectively.
- The district has responded to charter schools by participating in the review process of new applications. We also continue to meet with other individual districts and legislators to determine the impact of charter schools and to seek changes in the law in support of traditional public schools.
- There has been heightened concern for all children.

Charter School Comments about Other LEA Responses to Charter Schools

- We did contract for school lunches from the local school district.
- During first year, negative response. More receptive to the school now. More willing to work towards goals, involve us in school board meetings, keeping us informed, future planning.
- We are beginning to make departmental connections on a very small scale with people to people contact. The district is now contracted with us to provide our hot lunches and we are negotiating for the purchasing of surplus bus and possible bus parking space. One-on-one we are not treated wrongly.

- Initially overt hostility. Once damage inflicted, covert campaign to undermine effort.
- Terminated contracts of the two top administrators
- The major response has been to dissuade parents from enrolling students unless it is a severe discipline problem. The local school system has used us as a “dumping ground” for those that have a bad effect on their system.

Other Survey Comments

Finally, LEA and charter school representatives were asked, “Is there anything else we should know about the impact of charter schools on the local school district?” Eleven (46%) LEAs and 21 (70%) charter schools offered comments. Only two of the LEA comments expressed positive, collaborative relationships with charter schools. A few charter school comments clustered together (e.g. hard to determine impact of charter in large school district), but most of the comments are unique. The comments, therefore, were grouped when possible and are presented in their entirety.

Final LEA Comments

- We did not have a charter school in our district but we did lose students to the charter school in the adjacent district.
- Two different approaches, original charter school pretty much divorced itself from the LEA...even though the LEA approved its initial charter.
- Under the statute we are both considered to be public schools but they have flexibility we do not have.
- We did not expect the charter schools to increase enrollment by 10%. Our initial understanding was for 72 students. There has been no positive effort. We have lost \$190,000 in funding for 35 students We don't gain that much; we gain students on a per student basis. It seems unfair.
- While our school system is indeed being more responsive to parents, enhancing public relations efforts, and looking at choices for parents, the charter school is not responsible for those changes.
- If the goal of the charter school legislation is to foster innovation, it has failed in its first year.
- It has been hell! We are very small - we have an excellent school system and have been definitely offering programs due to the high losses (drain) in funding.
- The relationship was not cooperative.
- Charter schools concern the district in that they are lacking in diversity racially, socially.... And special education students. The school system maintains diversity goals and the issue with charter schools appears to be an overall lack of diversity in

many areas of our student population. There is also a concern about the oversight and accountability of these schools for the education of children.

- Yes, there is a charter school with only about 30 students. The students we referred through the court system, and the school meets the special needs of these students. The district has a collaborative relationship with this school and is thankful for it. However, unless a charter school is specifically geared to “special” students, usually those students are encouraged to return to the traditional public school. There is no as much diversity in charter schools.
- We have had a good relationship and the charter school has been successful. They have targeted the diversity within the community. There are things that we are subject to learn from their success.

Final Charter School Comments

- Parental demand for an alternative has increased. The population of at-risk students is high in our county. Parents are not informed of their alternative by local school system.
- It has provided a choice for parents of students who have not been able to survive in the regular public school system.
- Charter schools for special student populations like ours - are very important. Allows the state to meet its educational requirements for these NC State students - in a special needs setting. Therapeutic work and education can and do exist together.
- My personal belief is that we are not in a competitive struggle. The language and metaphors that dominate the concept of competition are also those that dominate the metaphor of war. War and competition speak to the issue of winning and losing. No educational process should be considered a losing proposition.
- Again, district leaders seem to have a “wait & see” attitude toward us. I think all the above questions will be more relevant at the end of 98/99 school year after the second year in the education marketplace.
- Districts need help planning for impact of charters - help in seeing that charter school students are public school students too, and therefore should be embraced, not seen as a treat or “those children.”
- The public school system is re-thinking the education process and is trying to ensure that the kids are more competitive in the working world.
- The public not pays more attention to what is going on in schools.
- Our school is very small. With a total enrollment of less than 75 students, it has little effect on a school systems with an enrollment of over 29,000 students.
- The district is so large responsiveness to change is slow. It’s hard to assess at this time.
- I’m sorry but I think this was a waste of my time. I have no way of knowing what goes on in my county public schools other that hearsay. I would be happy to fill out anything else of which I have knowledge.
- They are not as adversarial as they have been towards us.
- Things are getting better. There is a rapport.

- We have a unique program-classical music program. Child-teacher ratio is something charter schools need to be proactive about. Charter schools benefits - kids are known better, more relaxed atmosphere.
 - It will reinforce established interests and status quo and harm genuine community efforts become involved in innovation.
 - The school has had an impact. Kept from having crowded classrooms.
- Our system (school is located contiguous to three counties. One county has been very helpful, one cooperative and one has tried to tolerate us.
- We have had visitors from NCDPI, Schools of Education, the NC legislature, principals and teachers from across NC, school staff from around the country. We have been asked to present at school conferences in Pittsburgh, Newark and Atlanta. We were selected to speak at the 1998 model schools conference. Our program is being published in Hand to Hand, the Journal of the Association of Youth Museums, Technos, the Newsletter of the NC Geographic Alliance, and Facilitating Learning authored by Bill Dagget and Sam Houston. Please note that we have had very little contact with our local school district. It is a large school district and we have no way of knowing how our school of 112 students had impacted the system. Our school has three purposes. 1. School of excellence, 2. Laboratory for educational programs, 3. Demonstration site for other educators. Dissemination of best practices is core to our school charter.
 - The impact our charter school has on the community is that children who have dropped out of school can return to our school no matter why they quit school in the first place. Children who are incarcerated attend school daily taking courses which follow standard course of study, take end of course tests and competency tests. Class time plus grades should transfer to LEA. We feel our school reduces drop out rates and allows students to be promoted to the next grade.
 - The local paper carried many articles proclaiming the expected changes would be dramatic, according to local directors in the county schools system.
 - LEA has contract with charter school to provide transportation this year. A significant long term saving to charter school budget.

Summary

All 24 LEAs with first-year, inaugural charter schools in North Carolina and 30 of 33 (91%) of the inaugural charter schools responded to a survey about the impact of charter schools on local school districts (LEAs). Results of the survey, in most instances, reveal that impact, after the first year of implementation, is inconclusive. The majority of both LEAs and charter schools reported no experienced or expected changes in: programs offered, redistribution of administrative time, or parent concerns. They did report some change for numbers and distribution of students across grade level.

Similarly, a majority of LEAs and charter schools report no impact is reported for school district diversity concerning academically gifted students, race, special education students, at-risk groups, or economically disadvantaged students. The same is true for program changes made by the school district.

Some initial impact has been observed by the LEAs and charter schools. Financial impact has been reported, by more than half of the LEAs and charter schools responding, with LEAs expressing a serious concern about the financial implications. A majority of charter schools believe that they are a vehicle for district-wide change, whereas LEAs are less convinced. Both LEAs and charter schools believe that charter schools have increased the number of schools of choice in the school districts and enhanced school district public relations. Charter schools have observed more responsiveness to parents by the school districts, but school districts report their continued vigilance in that area.