



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

2003 Annual Report

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

PRESENTED TO

**THE HONORABLE MARK R. WARNER
GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA
AND
MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

December 1, 2003

Preface

The session of the 2002 Virginia General Assembly resulted in amendments to previous statutes governing public charter schools. Section 22.1-212.9 of the *Code of Virginia* requires all local school boards to review and act on applications for public charter schools. (Legislation passed in 2000 allowed local school boards the option to review or not to review charter school applications.) Section 22.1-212.11 requires local school boards to report the number of public charter school applications that were approved and denied to the state Board of Education on an annual basis. Section 22.1-212.15 maintains the requirement that local school boards submit annual evaluations of any public charter schools to the Board of Education and that the board report annually its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly.

This report was prepared by staff at the Virginia Department of Education and approved by the Virginia Board of Education on November 19, 2003. The staff member assigned to the preparation of the report was Diane L. Jay, specialist, Office of Program Administration and Accountability, Division of Instruction, Virginia Department of Education, P. O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120. Questions concerning the report should be directed to Ms. Jay at (804) 225-2905 or by e-mail at djay@mail.vak12ed.edu.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	iii
Chapter One	1
Background Information.....	1
Current Status of Charter Schools.....	1
Chapter Two	2
Staff.....	2
Student Achievement	2

Executive Summary

Since the initial state legislation for charter schools was passed in 1998, eight charter schools in eight school divisions have been approved and opened for students. They continue to operate and provide programs designed to increase educational opportunities for at-risk students. Information collected from school division superintendents in August 2003 revealed that no new charter school applications were approved during 2002-2003. Four charter school applications were denied in four school divisions.

The eight charter schools continue to focus on increasing educational opportunities and providing alternative educational programs for students at risk of academic failure. Many of the students, particularly older students enrolled in high school programs, were in danger of dropping out of school. Poor attendance, past academic failure, and other risk factors create many challenges for the schools in raising the academic achievement level of the students. In spite of the challenges, some progress has been reported in improving academic achievement, average daily attendance, parental and community involvement, and decreasing the number of dropouts.

Chapter One

Background Information

The session of the 2002 Virginia General Assembly resulted in amendments to previous statutes governing public charter schools. Section 22.1-212.9 of the *Code of Virginia* requires all local school boards to review and act on applications for public charter schools. (Legislation passed in 2000 allowed local school boards the option to review or not to review charter school applications.) Section 22.1-212.11 requires local school boards to report the number of public charter school applications that were approved and denied to the state Board of Education on an annual basis. Section 22.1-212.15 maintains the requirement that local school boards submit annual evaluations of any public charter schools to the Board of Education and that the board report annually its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The Department of Education collected information on the number of charter school applications approved and denied by local school boards through a Superintendent's Memorandum dated August 8, 2003. Additional information was collected through an annual evaluation report submitted for 2002-2003 by each of the eight public charter schools operating in the state.

Current Status of Charter Schools

Since the initial state legislation for charter schools was passed in 1998, eight charter schools in eight school divisions have been approved. They continue to operate. For the 2002-2003 school year, 685 students were enrolled in charter schools in grades 3 through 12. One school requested and was granted a waiver from state regulations to operate year-round. No other waivers were sought.

Information collected from school division superintendents in August 2003 revealed that no new charter school applications were approved during 2002-2003. Four charter school applications were denied in four school divisions: Alexandria, Norfolk, Prince William, and Richmond City.

Chapter Two

Staff

The number of administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors in the eight charter schools is shown in full-time equivalents (FTEs) on the following chart. In addition to these persons, several of the larger schools employ other personnel such as security officers, nurses, tutors, monitors, parent involvement facilitators, and adjunct teachers.

Category	Number
Principal/Director	7
Teachers	67
Paraprofessionals	13
Guidance Counselors	12

Student Achievement

Information is listed below on each charter school and the Standards of Learning (SOL) pass rates in grades 3, 5, 8, and high school, beginning with the first year that the charter school opened.

Albemarle County – Murray High School

Grades Served: 9-12 Enrollment: 94

Murray High School was established as a nontraditional high school in 1988-1989 and was approved to convert to a charter school in February 2001.

SOL Test	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
English Reading			76	95
English Writing			75	90
Algebra I			86	71
Algebra II			71	66
Geometry			90	83
U. S. History			50	63
World Geography			83	75
World History I			100	100
World History II			75	94
Biology			83	79
Chemistry			*	68
Earth Science			70	85

* No students taking course; test not administered.

Chesterfield County – *Chesterfield Community High School*

Grades Served: 9-12

Enrollment: 250

Chesterfield Community High School was approved to convert to a charter school in October 2001. It opened as a charter school in September 2002. The Standards of Learning data were available for 2002-2003 only.

SOL Test	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
English Reading				92.50
English Writing				65.15
Algebra I				35.00
Geometry				34.04
U.S. History				71.43
World History I				63.27
Biology				58.49
Earth Science				38.78

Franklin County – *New Opportunity for Winning*

Grades Served: 7

Enrollment: 25

The New Opportunity for Winning charter school was developed as a new school and opened in August 2001. There is no SOL testing in the seventh grade. Other assessment measures included unit tests, locally prepared end-of-grade tests, and grades for the seventh grade curriculum. The school reported that 75 percent of the students passed the seventh grade in 2001-2002, and 84 percent passed in 2002-2003.

Gloucester County – Victory Academy

Grades Served: 8-9

Enrollment: 44

Victory Academy was approved to convert to a charter school in January 2000. It was the first charter school approved in Virginia.

	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
SOL Test	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Grade 8 English Reading	21.05	20.00	45.00	27.27
Grade 8 English Writing	10.53	25.00	40.00	18.18
Grade 8 Mathematics	10.53	0.00	30.00	27.27
World Geography	40.00	23.81	70.00	41.93
	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
SOL Test	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Earth Science	40.00	63.16	21.05	26.92
Science	47.37	47.37	73.68	38.09
Technology	45.00	50.00	47.37	N/A

Greene County – New Directions Academy

Grades Served: 6-12

Enrollment: 24

New Directions Academy was developed as a charter school by combining two alternative education programs into one school. It opened to students in September 2001.

	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
SOL Test	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Grade 8 English Reading			0.0	57.1
Grade 8 English Writing			*	42.8
Grade 8 Mathematics			0.0	16.6
Grade 8 History/Social Science			*	00.0
Grade 8 Science			0.0	42.8
<i>High School:</i>				
English Reading			50.0	100.0
English Writing			*	42.8
Algebra I			*	00.0
U. S. History			50.0	100.0
World Geography			80.0	25.0
World History I			*	42.8
World History II			*	00.0
Biology			20.0	33.0
Earth Science			25.0	100.0

* No students taking course; test not administered.

Hampton City – Hampton Harbour Academy

Grades Served: 3-12

Enrollment: 196

Hampton Harbour Academy, formerly an alternative education school called Bradford Hall, was approved to convert to a charter school in April 2001.

SOL Test	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Grade 3 English			10.0	9.09
Grade 3 Mathematics			11.0	100.0
Grade 3 History/Social Science			25.0	18.8
Grade 3 Science			22.0	30.0
Grade 5 English Reading			40.0	75.0
Grade 5 English Writing			55.6	33.0
Grade 5 Mathematics			30.0	17.0
Grade 5 History/Social Science			33.0	33.0
Grade 5 Science			55.6	50.0
Grade 8 English Reading			28.0	28.0
Grade 8 English Writing			22.6	22.5
Grade 8 Mathematics			8.3	16.2
Grade 8 History/Social Science			21.7	37.8
Grade 8 Science			40.9	44.4
English Reading			58.3	92.0
English Writing			60.0	69.0
Algebra I			11.4	10.3
Geometry			40.0	38.8
U. S. History			10.0	30.7
World Geography			25.0	25.0
Biology			35.0	40.0
Earth Science			14.0	35.0

Roanoke City – Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Grades Served: 10-12

Enrollment: 31

The Blue Ridge Technical Academy was developed as a new charter school and opened to students in September 2000. The SOL tests for the core areas other than mathematics were administered and reported at the students’ home high school for 2001-2002. The data for 2002-2003 are recorded below.

SOL Test	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
English Reading				89
English Writing				89
Algebra I			100	71
Algebra II			100	67
Geometry			100	*
U. S. History				46
World History I				29
Biology				45
Chemistry				50

* No students taking course; test not administered.

York County – York River Academy

Grades Served: 9-10

Enrollment: 21

The York River Academy was developed as a new charter school and opened to students in September 2002. The Standards of Learning data were available only for 2002-2003.

SOL Test	Pass Rates (Percentage)			
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
English Reading				100
English Writing				0
Algebra I				40
World Geography				90
Earth Science				100