

2005 Annual Report

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

PRESENTED TO

**GOVERNOR MARK R. WARNER
AND THE
VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

September 21, 2005

Office of Program Administration and Accountability
Division of Instruction
Virginia Department of Education



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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September 29, 2005

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The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Members of the General Assembly of Virginia
State Capitol Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Warner and Members of the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Section 22.1-212.15 of the Code of Virginia, I am pleased to submit the *2005 Annual Report on Public Charter Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia*. The report was approved at the September 21, 2005, meeting of the Board of Education.

Section 22.1-212.15 of the Code requires local school boards to 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. Section 22.1-212.11 of the Code requires local school boards to report the number of public charter school applications approved and denied to the Board of Education on an annual basis. Both are included in the annual report.

If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Diane Jay, education specialist, at (804) 225-2905 or Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jo Lynne DeMary".

Jo Lynne DeMary

JLD/dj

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Thomas M. Jackson, Jr., President, Virginia Board of Education

PREFACE

Section 22.1-212.11 of the *Code of Virginia*, as amended, requires local school boards to report annually to the Virginia Board of Education the status of public charter schools. Based on these compliance and performance criteria and other evaluation considerations, the objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- Evaluate charter schools' progress in achieving the goals.
- Evaluate the performance of charter school students versus the performance of other public school populations.
- Evaluate the impact of charter school's activities in terms of contribution to the community and education system, in general.

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 Diane.Jay@doe.virginia.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY REPORT	Page
Executive Summary	iii
Chapter One	1
Purpose	1
Objectives And Scope Of Evaluation	1
Attributes of Report	1
A. Summary Report	1
B. School-Specific Attachments	2
C. Sources	2
D. Structure of the Remaining Chapters of the Summary Report	2
Chapter Two	3
Background and Summary Information	3
A. <i>Code of Virginia</i> as Applied to Charter Schools	3
B. Waivers	3
C. Schools and Student Populations	3
D. Student Populations	4
E. Staff and Professional Development	5
F. Parental and Community Involvement	6
Chapter Three	7
Evaluation of Charter School Student Performance	7
A. Student Selection Criteria	7
B. Comparing Charter School and Traditional School Student Performance	7
C. Student Achievement 2004-2005	8
1. Standards of Learning and Other Quantitative Testing	9
2. Qualitative Measure of Achievement	9
3. Other Measures of Achievement	9
Chapter Four	11
Overall Assessment	11
A. Effectiveness in Meeting the Needs of the Populations Served	11
B. Progress in Achieving Goals	11
C. Benefits Provided to Students	11
D. Factors Influencing the Status of Charter Schools in Virginia	12
ATTACHMENTS	13
Charter Schools Evaluation -- 2005	13
Attachment A1: Albemarle County Schools, Murray High School	14
Attachment A2: Chesterfield County Schools, Chesterfield Community High School	18
Attachment A3: Hampton City Schools, Hampton Harbour Academy	22
Attachment A4: Roanoke City Schools, Blue Ridge Technical Academy	26
Attachment A5: York County Schools, York River Academy	30

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The external evaluation of the public charter schools of Virginia examines the five public charter schools in operation in the state during the 2004-2005 school year. Research Dimensions, Inc., conducted the evaluation for the Virginia Department of Education. All five schools are designed to provide alternative and experiential learning opportunities for students who are at-risk. However, differences among these schools include: the histories of the schools, characteristics of the communities served, characteristics of the students enrolled, size of the student bodies, grade levels served, resources available, and educational approaches and priorities.

Key Observations and Findings

- **Schools.** Of the 94,000 public schools nationally, approximately 3,000 were charter schools, and only five of those were in Virginia. The enrollment for the five charter schools was 555 students as of June 2005 which was less than 0.1 percent of the total Virginia public school population. The majority of Virginia's charter school students, over 80 percent, were in grades 9 through 12. No new charter schools were approved or denied during the 2004-2005 school year. Two of the five schools included in this report will cease operating as charter schools for the 2005-2006 school year.
- **Staff.** The schools reported a total of approximately 86 staff members including principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors. The average student-to-teacher ratio was 8.4 students per teacher. Slightly less than 90 percent of all teacher positions were filled by licensed and endorsed individuals.
- **Progress in Achieving Goals.** Progress reported in terms of improved academic achievement, average daily attendance and decreased dropout rates vary from year to year and among the schools. Three schools achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* for 2005 based on data from 2004-2005. Official accreditation SOL test data for 2004-2005 will be available from the Virginia Department of Education after October 1, 2005. Last year, Murray High School and York River Academy were fully accredited. The overall average daily attendance rate in the charter schools has not improved significantly over the last several years, remaining at 86-88 percent. While dropout rates in the public charter schools have historically been much higher than comparable rates for the divisions in which they are chartered, dropout rates over the last several years for these schools have improved. Official dropout rates for 2004-2005 will be available from the Virginia Department of Education after October 1, 2005.
- **Comparison of Student Performance.** None of the schools report having conducted a comprehensive comparison of the performance of their students and the students in the traditional schools in their division or a longitudinal analysis of year-to-year improvement on a student-by-student basis. Some have self-reported that survey responses by students and parents suggest that the students are generally performing better than if the students had remained in a traditional school.

- Impact on the Community. All of the schools report programs to achieve parental and community involvement. The perceptions of the schools, community awards, other forms of recognition, and parental surveys suggest success in these efforts. Available information suggests that the small size, individualized instruction, and innovative approaches to education found in these schools have had a positive impact on the communities they serve.

CHAPTER ONE

Purpose

This report provides the results of an external evaluation of the public charter schools of Virginia conducted for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) by Research Dimensions, Inc. The evaluation examines the five public charter schools in operation during the 2004-2005 school year. All of these schools serve at-risk students.

Objectives and Scope of Evaluation

The goals of the five charter schools included in this evaluation are similar in that they are all designed to provide alternative and experiential learning opportunities for students who are at-risk. While the general goal is similar, there are also significant differences among these schools such as:

- histories of the schools;
- characteristics of the communities served;
- characteristics of the students enrolled;
- size of the student bodies;
- grade levels served;
- resources available; and
- educational approaches and priorities.

Attributes of Report

To address both the similarities and differences of the public charter schools in Virginia, this report has the following attributes.

A. Summary Report

The summary report focuses on evaluation considerations applicable for all charter schools in the Commonwealth. Section 22.1-212.11 of the *Code of Virginia*, as amended, requires local school boards to report annually to the Virginia Board of Education the status of public charter schools. Various sections of this Code delineate compliance and performance criteria. In that context, the objectives of this external evaluation are as follows:

1. Evaluate charter schools' progress in achieving their goals.
2. Evaluate the performance of charter school students versus the performance of other public school populations.
3. Evaluate the impact of charter schools' activities in terms of their contribution to the community and education system, in general.

B. School-Specific Attachments

Dissimilarities in the characteristics of the five schools and in the data provided by each school and various VDOE sources limit the potential depth of analysis and ability to provide comparable reporting of *charter school performance* at the summary report level. These dissimilarities also preclude capturing in the summary report many of the unique characteristics and accomplishments of the individual schools. Consequently, an attachment is provided for each charter school that includes selected school-specific information for many of the same evaluation areas considered in the summary report.

C. Sources

The information, observations, and findings in both the summary report and the attachments are primarily based on the following sources:

- Information collected by the VDOE through an annual evaluation report and the supplemental information provided with these reports. These reports were submitted to the VDOE in June 2005 for the 2004-2005 school year by the school divisions in which the five public charter schools operated during that period.
- Internal VDOE data used to augment information collected by the VDOE through an annual evaluation report.
- Information collected by the VDOE on the number of charter school applications approved and denied by local school boards through Superintendent's Memorandum, Number 27, Administrative, dated June 3, 2005.
- Relevant information previously published by the VDOE.

D. Structure of the Remaining Chapters of the Summary Report

The Summary Report provides a collective evaluation of all public schools in Virginia. The following sections of this summary report address:

- Chapter Two -- background information related to the *Code of Virginia* as it applies to charter schools as well as summary data related to the charter schools and student populations, waivers, staff, and initiatives to foster parental and community involvement;
- Chapter Three – evaluation of charter school student performance; and
- Chapter Four – the overall impact of charter schools in terms of:
 - effectiveness in meeting the needs of the students served;
 - progress in achieving the schools' goals;
 - benefits to the charter school students; and
 - factors influencing the status of the schools.

CHAPTER TWO

Background and Summary Information

This section provides general information addressed in the *Code of Virginia* as it applies to charter schools as well as general information profiling Virginia's charter schools.

A. *Code of Virginia* as Applied to Charter Schools

As delineated in the *Code of Virginia* (§ 22.1-212.5), public charter schools in Virginia are nonsectarian, nonreligious, or non-home-based alternative schools located within a public school division intended to:

- stimulate the development of innovative educational programs;
- provide opportunities for innovative instruction and assessment;
- provide parents and students with more options within their school divisions;
- provide teachers with a vehicle for establishing schools with alternative innovative instruction and school scheduling, management, and structure;
- encourage the use of performance-based educational programs;
- establish and maintain high standards for both teachers and administrators; and
- develop models for replication in other public schools.

The 2004-2005 Virginia General Assembly session created no amendments to previous statutes governing public charter schools.

B. Waivers

Based on information collected in the annual evaluation report in June 2005, only one waiver was requested. This waiver was requested by, and approved for, the Hampton Harbour Academy to implement a pre-Labor Day start in 2004.

C. Schools and Student Populations

Since the initial state legislation for charter schools was passed in 1998, eight charter schools in eight school divisions have been approved by local school boards. Five of these schools continued to operate during the 2004-2005 school year. All five schools evaluated in this report have operated as charter schools for three or four years. A Virginia public charter currently may be approved or renewed for a period not to exceed five school years, but the school can be granted multiple renewals that permit it to operate for more than a total of five years. Table 1 below provides summary information about these schools.

The Franklin County charter school, New Opportunities for Winning, closed in the fall of 2003 because of insufficient funds to continue operations. Gloucester County's Victory Academy and Greene County's New Directions Academy closed during or after the 2003-2004 school year and were not operational as charter schools during any part of the 2004-2005 school year. Both of these schools reported, at a minimum, financial resource problems. Two additional schools have reported closing as charter schools after the 2004-2005 school year. The Blue Ridge Technical Academy in the Roanoke City Public Schools has closed for financial reasons, but many of the functions of the school will continue within the traditional high schools of the school division. Chesterfield Community High School in

Chesterfield County Public Schools gave up its charter school status reporting a need for greater flexibility in selecting students than is possible within the current charter structure.

No new charter school requests were presented to local school boards for approval in any of the Virginia school divisions during the 2004-2005 period. In July 2005, the United States Education Department (USED) awarded three federal charter school grants for proposed public charter schools in Charlottesville, Richmond, and Norfolk. These new charter schools have been proposed for the 2006-2007 school year, but none of the respective school divisions' boards have approved operation of the schools to date.

Table 1.
Virginia Public Charter Schools -- 2004-2005

Division	School	Year Opened	Grades Served [1]	Enrollment (reported by the school in June 2005)
Albemarle County Public Schools	Murray High School	2001	9-12	95
Chesterfield County Public	Chesterfield Community High School	2002	9-12	195
Hampton City Public Schools	Hampton Harbour Academy	2001	3-12	130
Roanoke City Public Schools	Blue Ridge Technical Academy	2001	9-12	96
York County Public Schools	York River Academy	2002	9-10	39

Note [1]: The grades served data shown is for the 2004-2005 school year; grades served have varied in some of the schools over the years.

D. Student Populations

Virginia's public charter schools serve a variety of grade levels and are relatively small. The schools report a total of 555 students enrolled as of June 2005 in all five charter schools. The majority of these students, approximately 80 percent, were in grades 9 through 12. Virginia's public charter school student population grew steadily from the opening of the first school in 1999 through the 2003-2004 school year. However, the student population declined in 2004-2005 and will further decline next year with the change of charter status for Chesterfield Community High School and the closing of Blue Ridge Technical Academy. Table 2 profiles the growth and decline of the statewide public charter school population over the last five years and estimated data for the 2005-2006 school year.

Table 2.
Trend in Student Populations in Virginia Public Charter Schools

School Year	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Number of Public Charter Schools	1	1	6	8	7	5
Total Student Populations [2]	41	40	440	685	745	555

Note [1]: Student population is based on charter school self-reported data.

E. Staff and Professional Development

Staffing Levels -- The total number of administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and guidance counselors in the five charter schools are shown in terms of full-time equivalent positions (FTE) in Table 3 below. In addition to these staff members, several schools also utilized other personnel such as exceptional education teachers, security officers, nurses, clinic aides, tutors, monitors, parent involvement facilitators, and adjunct teachers. Data are presented for total staff as well as for totals and percentages of those positions filled by licensed and endorsed individuals. A similar summary of staffing is presented for each school in the attachments to this report.

Table 3.
Summary of Charter School Staffing for All Charter Schools in 2004-2005

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director [1] [2]	6.0	5.0	83.3
Teachers [2]	66.1	59.1	89.4
Paraprofessionals [2]	7.3	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors [2]	7.0	5.0	71.4
Totals	86.4	72.4	83.8

Note [1]: Chesterfield Community High reported two principals, one endorsed, one not.

Note [2]: Staffing positions FTE based on charter school self-reported data.

Slightly less than 90 percent of all of the administrator and teacher positions are filled by licensed and endorsed individuals. The average student-to-teacher ratio for all schools is 8.4 students per teacher. This ratio improved relative to last year when it was 10 students per teacher. The number of teachers, like the number of schools and students, has declined since 2003-2004.

Professional Development -- In this year's annual evaluation report, schools provided data relating to several professional development areas. While more detailed descriptions of the professional development programs provided are included in the attachments for each school, in general, the responses related to 2004-2005 charter school staff professional development indicate that:

- a wide variety of professional development programs are provided in all five charter schools;
- most of these schools offer professional development programs customized for charter school personnel;
- the professional development programs provided vary but all schools report 11 or more "activities" (the highest option each school could indicate in their survey response) and "hours provided" ranging from 30 to 1000+ hours;
- schools report that there has been limited, to very limited communication between their school and other charter schools in Virginia or charter schools outside of Virginia; and
- only one school reports sending representatives to one or more national charter schools meetings.

F. Parental and Community Involvement

All five schools report programs to achieve parental and community involvement. Most schools report some form of standing organization comprised of parent and community representatives that supports their initiatives to communicate and interface with the schools constituencies.

Schools describe various types of scheduled and unscheduled activities to involve parents and community organizations. Some of the schools report surveying parents and students concerning their perceptions of parental and community involvement. Generally, the respondents perceive improvement in parental and community involvement and most schools self-report significant success. Some schools report that their parental and community outreach has successfully produced student benefits such as tutoring, mentoring, opportunities for extracurricular activities, programs directed towards needed behavioral modification, post-graduation scholarships, internships, jobs, and job shadowing. Parents and community supporters have provided fund-raising assistance for some schools.

Success in developing parental and community development has varied by school but has been confirmed by community awards and other forms of recognition and by parental surveys. In many cases, schools have been the recipients of a wide variety of community financial support ranging from direct grants to incentives for students.

Some schools have also reported extensive and successful programs to build students' sense of responsibility, character, planning, community, and other personal growth areas not necessarily captured by the core subject area academic performance. This success also is confirmed by community recognition and parental surveys.

CHAPTER THREE

Evaluation of Charter School Student Performance

Measuring student performance is a complex process in any education setting. Since all of Virginia's public charter schools focus on increasing educational opportunities and providing alternative educational programs for students who are potentially at some risk of academic failure, this population is not a representative subset of the traditional school student population. Assessing student performance using metrics such as Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores is valid and provides some insight toward performance gains, but for the charter school population, there are cautions that should be observed and other metrics that also should be considered.

Many of the students, particularly older students enrolled in high school programs, were in danger of dropping out of school prior to attending the charter schools. Poor attendance, past academic failure, and other risk factors create many challenges for the schools in raising the academic achievement level of these students, graduating them, and preparing them to be productive members of society. Despite the challenges, progress has been demonstrated and reported in terms of improved academic achievement, improved average daily attendance, and a decrease in the dropout rates. However, the quantitative results that support this trend vary from year to year and among schools.

A. Student Selection Criteria

Because the five schools evaluated have different educational models and objectives, they have different student populations. However, many of the criteria used to select students are similar. These include selecting students who:

- have been unsuccessful in a traditional school setting and who would benefit academically from a smaller, nontraditional school environment;
- are at risk for leaving school or graduating below potential;
- are over age for grade level for a variety of reasons (e.g., dropped out, failed grade(s), medical reasons); and/or
- have chronic problems of attendance and/or discipline.

These criteria establish a different threshold and potentially different considerations for evaluating student performance than might be expected in the general school population. Other selection criteria such as student career interests, and student willingness to commit to school policies and objectives vary considerably. The local selection process and considerations also vary among schools.

B. Comparing Charter School and Traditional School Student Performance

Since the objective of Virginia's charter schools is to provide an alternative educational approach and environment to improve educational results for students who experienced failure or poor performance in the traditional schools, the issue of comparative performance is one of determining whether each individual student would perform, or has performed, better in a traditional or charter school. There are very limited data to support these types of longitudinal analyses and only one school reports conducting research that might permit this type of comparison.

None of the five charter schools report having conducted a comprehensive comparison of the performance of their students with students in the traditional schools in their division. Given the dissimilarities in the student populations and objectives of the schools, defining “comparable” student populations and “comparative approaches” for comparison purposes is difficult and would probably differ from school to school.

C. Student Achievement 2004-2005

Measuring student achievement for the charter school student population presents many challenges. The charter school student populations are small and lack continuity from year-to-year. Given the at-risk profile of these students, modest testing results may reflect significant improvement and may represent only a small portion of the actual educational achievement realized. Ideally, achievement would be described using both quantitative and qualitative metrics of improvement in areas such as academic performance, graduation and completion rates, communication skills, attitude, behavior, and discipline. However, consistent quantitative data do not exist, and resources needed to produce and analyze such data are generally not available.

1. Standards of Learning and Other Quantitative Testing. Standards of Learning (SOL) accreditation results will not be available for the 2004-2005 school year until October 2005. However, a history of SOL test scores is provided in the attachment for each school. In general, SOL test results reflect variability by year, grade level, and test and have varied considerably from school to school, ranging from comparable or superior to the scores in the school division in which the school is chartered to significantly poorer than overall school division scores. Since many of the students admitted to these charter schools have exhibited poor academic performance in previous schools, the SOL test history and expectations of these students are weak. Given these caveats, the following three charter schools included in this evaluation met their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives – Blue Ridge Technical Academy (now closed), Murray High School (charter renewed), and York River Academy (charter renewed). Chesterfield Community High School (gave up its charter school status) and Hampton Harbour Academy (charter renewed) did not make their AYP objectives. Historically, Murray High School, York River Academy, and Blue Ridge Technical Academy have produced SOL test scores that were comparable to or superior to the overall scores from their divisions. Chesterfield Community High School and Hampton Harbour Academy student scores have been consistently below the overall scores from their divisions.

Some schools included in this report have used, in addition to SOL test data, numerous other quantitative approaches to measure improvement; i.e., Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), reading assessments, Brigance Test, Test of Adult Basic Education, mean gain per grade level assessments, and core subject grades. Over the last two years, only three schools have reported demonstrating academic improvement: 1) one by tracking SOL test score improvement; 2) one in using other multiple measurement tools; and 3) one by using core subject grades combined with other measurement tools. One school has begun a formal longitudinal study to track student performance.

In summary, efforts to demonstrate public charter school student achievement using quantitative testing results are limited in scope. In general, available SOL test data have provided results that suggest at least some student academic performance improvement. Schools reporting the use of other quantitative measurement approaches state that they also show improved student performance.

2. Qualitative Measures of Achievement. Several schools conduct surveys that address student attitudes about the school experience, desire to attend school, and the learning climate. These surveys also try to measure increases in the student personal ethics, collaboration and cooperation. Some schools survey parents as to the perceptions of their children’s attitudes and observable changes. Schools report that this qualitative and other anecdotal feedback suggests additional evidence of student improvement in the charter school setting.

3. Other Measures of Achievement. Many of the at-risk students attending charter schools have a history of discipline, attitude, peer relationship, poor study habits, and communications issues. These characteristics lead to, or are correlated with, low attendance levels and high dropout rates.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Rate – Chronic attendance problems are one of the selection criteria leading some students to charter schools. Also, some students with medical problems that can result in collateral attendance problems are placed in charter schools. Consequently, public charter schools in Virginia generally have student populations that have lower ADA rates than the traditional public student population.

Overall, charter school and comparable division ADA rate data since 2001 are presented in Table 3, below. Average daily attendance rates for the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years involved only one charter school and are not included. Complete ADA histories for each of the evaluated schools and their division are provided in that school’s attachment.

The overall average daily attendance rate in the charter schools has not improved significantly over the last several years, remaining at about 86 to 88 percent, or about 90 percent of the overall division rates. However, two of the three schools remaining operational as charter schools next year have historically had ADA rates comparable to, or better than, their overall division ADA rates.

**Table 4
Average Daily Attendance – Charter Schools and Their Divisions**

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002 [1]	2002-2003 [2]	2003-2004 [2]	2004-2005[1]
Charter Schools [3]	86.87%	86.15%	88.71%	87.78%
Divisions [3]	95.10%	95.18%	95.19%	95.36%

Note [1]: Includes five charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [2]: Includes seven charter schools and the divisions in which they were chartered.

Note [3]: Based on data provided by the VDOE.

Dropout Rate – Another of the criteria used to select students for charter school placement is “their risk of leaving school.” Consequently, charter schools in Virginia generally have student populations that would predictably have higher dropout rates than the overall student population.

Overall charter school and comparable division dropout rate data for the previous three years are presented in Table 4, below. Official dropout rates for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005. Dropout rates for the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 involved only one charter school and were not included. Complete dropout histories for each evaluated school and their division are provided in that school’s attachment.

Dropout rate data vary significantly from school to school and over time for each charter school. In 2003-2004, they ranged from near zero percent to near 20 percent, based on preliminary data. As indicated by the data in Table 4, dropout rates in Virginia public charter schools have historically been much higher than comparable rates for the divisions in which they are chartered. Dropout rates over the last several years also have improved significantly. While overall dropout rates in the charter schools over the past several years have improved, they are still greater than overall school division dropout rates.

Table 5.
Dropout Rates – Charter Schools and Their School Divisions

Dropout Rates	2001-2002 [1]	2002-2003 [2]	2003-2004 [3]	2004-2005[4]
Charter Schools [5]	18.01%	12.90%	6.72%	TBD
School Divisions [5]	2.60%	1.66%	1.45%	TBD

- Note [1]: Includes five charter schools and the school divisions in which they were chartered.
- Note [2]: Includes seven charter schools and the school divisions in which they were chartered.
- Note [3]: Includes seven charter schools and the school divisions in which they were chartered.
- Note [4]: Official dropout rates for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.
- Note [5]: Based on data provided by the VDOE.

CHAPTER FOUR

Overall Assessment

The charter schools state they have all made progress towards the goals and objectives as stated in their charters. They all report that they have achieved their goals. Moreover, they perceive that they have contributed positively toward the educational experience and lives of their students and the communities they serve. For most of these schools, available quantitative data support these perceptions. Qualitative and anecdotal data reinforce these perspectives.

A. Effectiveness in Meeting the Needs of the Populations Served

Most of the schools identify their effectiveness as a school in terms of the school meeting the “special needs” of their students. In general, they perceive that the student populations served need a more individualized, nurturing, and safe educational environment to benefit from their education and to increase their opportunity beyond school. Metrics of success cited by the schools include return rates, graduation rates, parental support and feedback, community support, and school division support. Two schools cite demonstrated academic improvement, success on SOL tests, and other metrics of further academic success. One school reports demonstrated workforce development skills and other vocational metrics of success.

B. Progress in Achieving Goals

The five public charter schools evaluated in this report expressed their progress very differently but, in general, stated their goals as:

- achieving state accreditation;
- assuring graduation, completion, promotion, and other certifications;
- stabilizing or growing their student bodies;
- facilitating student access to postsecondary education and training opportunities;
- helping students transition into postsecondary educational, workforce, or military opportunities; and
- increasing parental and community involvement.

All of these schools report progress towards meeting some of these goals. However, goals varied from school to school and progress was mixed. Three schools achieved their AYP goals; two did not. School and student body stability varied among the schools as did success with parental and community involvement initiatives. Available data do not support further conclusions.

C. Benefits Provided to Students

All five schools report that a primary benefit they provide their students is an educational environment (1) in which the students can be comfortable and competitive; (2) more suited to providing post-graduation opportunities for these specific students; and (3) more supportive of the special individual needs of these students. The most noteworthy metric of

these benefits is reflected by the dropout rate that has decreased from slightly less than 20 percent for the 2001-2002 school year to slightly above 6.7 percent in the 2003-2004 school year. These types of results reflect educational successes that translate into direct benefits for the charter school students. They also translate into significant long-term benefit potential for the broader communities being served.

D. Factors Influencing the Status of Charter Schools in Virginia

Schools provided mixed responses as to what factors have contributed to their present status. Reported perceptions related to support (i.e., school system, community, and parental support), funding, facilities, student selection, and staffing varied to both extremes. In general, the schools that achieved their adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals seemed to have much more focused academic programs and smaller, more manageable student bodies. These schools also report more demonstrated success in facilitating student access to postsecondary education and training opportunities and student transition into postsecondary educational, workforce, or military opportunities.

ATTACHMENTS

Charter Schools Evaluation – 2005

The five charter schools in Virginia included in this evaluation are very different. These differences limit the ability to generalize charter school performance and impact. Consequently, the information, observations, and conclusions reflected in the summary report do not reflect many of the unique characteristics and accomplishments of these schools.

The following sections provide an attachment for each individual school that is included in the summary report. Each attachment includes school-specific information, to the extent available, for evaluation areas considered in the summary report. Specifically, the following attachments provide:

- School-specific 2004-2005 general school information;
- School-specific historical student performance Standards of Learning (SOL) test results;
- School-specific historical and 2004-2005 attendance data;
- School-specific historical dropout data;
- School-specific 2004-2005 professional development information;
- School-specific 2004-2005 staffing data and information;
- School-specific perceptions of parental and community involvement; and
- School-specific 2004-2005 perceptions of their overall performance.

The data shown in these attachments are a combination of school self-reported information and information derived from Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) data sources.

Attachment A1

Albemarle County Schools, Murray High School

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2004-2005:	9-12
Enrollment 2004-2005:	95
School designed to serve students considered to be at-risk:	Yes
Operation as a charter school during the 2005-2006 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement. Murray High School SOL test results generally improved over their first three years as a charter school and compared favorably with, or exceeded, overall division and Virginia SOL test results, as depicted in the following table. The 2004-2005 SOL test results will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Table A1.1.
SOL Pass Rates for Murray High School

SOL End of Course	School	School	School	Division	School
Test Results [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2003-2004	2004-2005
English Reading	71%	100%	96%	91%	[2]
English Writing	67%	93%	92%	91%	[2]
Algebra I	100%	75%	75%	89%	[2]
Algebra II	71%	N/A	73%	83%	[2]
Geometry	90%	83%	90%	86%	[2]
World Geography	63%	60%	100%	56%	[2]
World History I	N/A	100%	N/A	83%	[2]
World History II	75%	89%	100%	89%	[2]
U. S. History	57%	68%	93%	83%	[2]
Earth Science	70%	N/A	93%	73%	[2]
Biology	100%	75%	100%	89%	[2]

Note [1]: SOL test results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE in terms of Passing Rates (%).

Note [2]: SOL test results for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A1.2 provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for Murray High School and the school division in which it is chartered. Average daily attendance has improved slightly since becoming a charter school in 2001 and approaches overall attendance rates for the division.

Table A1.2.
Average Daily Attendance for Murray High School

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Murray High School	90.53%	93.28%	93.84%	92.82%
Albemarle County Public Schools	95.86%	95.76%	95.89%	96.11%

Dropout Rates. The following table summarizes dropout rates for Murray High School and the school division in which it is chartered. Dropout rates have been low and have historically been roughly comparable to the division results. The 2004-2005 rate results will not be officially available until October 1, 2005. Murray High School reported no dropouts during the 2004-2005 school year.

Table A1.3.
Dropout Rates for Murray High School

Dropout Rates [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Murray High School	0%	1.18%	2.25%	[2]
Albemarle County Public Schools	0.83%	0.60%	1.37%	[2]

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE.

Note [2]: Dropout results for the 2004-2005 school year will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Professional Development. In response to 2005 survey questions concerning the types of professional development offered at school, how it supported the goals and objectives of the school, and its overall effectiveness, the school's response was:

Professional development is offered through the Albemarle County Public Schools. Teachers have access to hundreds of high-quality workshops as well as graduate courses sponsored by the county and offered by University of Virginia. Teachers, in consultation with the principal, develop a professional development plan each year. The plan is focused on supporting individual, school, and division goals.

In response to structured survey questions concerning the school's professional development opportunities, the school responded as follows.

Professional development customized for charter school personnel only:	No
Professional development hours provided:	Over 1,000
Types of professional development activities provided:	11 or more
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia:	Some
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia:	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools:	No

Staff. The 2004-2005 staffing data indicates one Murray High School teacher per 10.6 students enrolled. The school reported that all teachers were licensed and endorsed. Staffing data for Murray High School are summarized in Table A1.4, below.

Table A1.4.
Staffing for Murray High School

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	9.0	9.0	100
Paraprofessionals	0.33	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Parental and Community Involvement. In response to survey questions related to the school’s progress in the level of parental and community involvement and community perceptions towards the charter school, the school reported the following (school’s perceptions/responses provided in italics).

The perception of our parents is very positive. At our recent graduation, parents had the opportunity to address the audience as they presented their child's diplomas. They, without exception, said how they valued the programs and people at Murray High School. Applause to these comments was immediate and sustained. We are continuing to improve our outreach to the community and mailed informational brochures to the families of all county students in grades 9-11. Parents recently solicited donations to support a field trip that students are taking to Texas this summer and were happy that the community willingly supported our school. We still have work to do in the area of community education as there is still a notion that, as an alternative school, we only have "the bad kids." (We share our building with another alternative program, the Enterprise Center that is designed for students who have been placed in the program by their principals or by the school board because of serious discipline issues.) As a part of the larger community, our students have presented to prospective teachers in university classes at University of Virginia and Longwood University. These presentations, because of their quality, have been requested every year. The perception by these university faculties is that our school offers prospective teachers valuable information about being successful with at-risk students. We also have staff and students who have been invited to present information about Choice Theory, Quality Schools and how these concepts support Murray High School. The presentation will be in the form of a three-day workshop for the faculty of a new high school of over 2,000 students in San Antonio, Texas in July.

Overall Assessment (School’s perceptions/responses provided in italics)

Effectiveness -- *We believe that we continue to be very effective. Our Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores are comparable or exceed the rest of the school division despite the fact that we serve at-risk students. We also have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past two years. Our students are pursuing college, the military, and/or employment after graduation. Students who, by their own admission, did not believe that they could or would graduate are doing so. Over 90 percent of our students are eligible to return to Murray in 2005-2006 and are choosing to do so.*

Progress -- *The SOL tests are one measure of achievement. Preliminary results for 2004-2005 suggest that we continue to demonstrate success in this area similar to the other high schools. Other measures of progress include our graduation and completion rates. All but one of our students seeking a diploma were successful. The student who did not receive a diploma is continuing to work on completing his diploma requirements. On June 7, 2005, 34 students graduated from Murray; this is the largest graduating class since the school opened. Three students earned an advanced studies diploma, 30 earned a standard diploma, and one earned a special diploma. Of the 34 graduates, 26 plan to continue their education at places such as Radford University, Christopher Newport University, Virginia Commonwealth University, State University of New York, Ferrum College, Longwood University, Sweetbriar College, and Piedmont Virginia Community College. Two students joined the armed services (Marines Corps and Air Force) immediately after graduation. The remaining graduates are entering the workforce. In addition, over 90 percent of the current students met the criteria to be invited back to Murray for 2005-2006 by virtue of their meeting their RAMPS (Respect Ourselves, Each Other, and Our Environment; Attend Regularly; Mediate When Necessary; Participate Actively; Share our Gifts with the Community) commitments and earning a minimum of five credits. All seniors completed a portfolio describing how they had achieved quality work while at Murray. Again the only challenge we have had is hiring teachers who are highly qualified (according to No Child Left Behind) to teach in multiple disciplines.*

Benefits to the Students -- *We believe that the major benefit of Murray High School is that we offered a program to meet the individual needs of each student. Students are encouraged and supported to do quality work in a safe, nurturing environment. We enjoy excellent support by parents, students, staff, the superintendent, and school board. In fact, other schools in the division are now exploring how to implement some of the programs we use, such as our schedule and mastery learning model. The school board recently appropriated additional funding for Murray High School for 2005-2006 so that we may expand our enrollment from 90 to 110 students.*

Factors Influencing Status of School -- *What has contributed most to our success are the quality and dedication of our staff. Another significant factor is that we converted to charter status and gained the flexibility we needed without losing the advantages of being a school in an excellent school division that supports the needs of every student. We did not start from the "ground up." Also, funding remained the same after we became a charter school. We continued to take advantage of the excellent support systems offered by the Albemarle County Public Schools (personnel/Human Resources, staff development, finance, transportation, technology, building services support). Funding is only an issue to the extent it is an issue for any small school in our division. The biggest problem we are facing at this time is being able to get teachers who are "highly qualified" in three or four disciplines.*

Attachment A2

Chesterfield County Schools, Chesterfield Community High School

Year opened as a charter school:	2002
Grades served in 2004-2005:	9-12
Enrollment 2004-2005:	295
School designed to serve students considered to be at-risk:	Yes
Operation as a charter school during the 2005-2006 school year:	No

Student Achievement. As depicted in Table A2.1, Chesterfield Community High School Standards of Learning (SOL) test results have been weak relative to the overall Chesterfield County Public Schools SOL test scores, and there has been no clear pattern. The 2004-2005 SOL test results will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Table A2.1.
SOL Pass Rates for Chesterfield Community High School

SOL End of Course Test Results [1]	School	School	Division	School
	2002-2003	2003-2004	2003-2004	2004-2005
English Reading	92%	69%	91%	[2]
English Writing	66%	47%	85%	[2]
Algebra I	35%	30%	81%	[2]
Geometry	34%	18%	83%	[2]
World History I	63%	32%	83%	[2]
U. S. History	71%	83%	86%	[2]
Earth Science	39%	50%	70%	[2]
Biology	58%	32%	84%	[2]

Note [1]: SOL test results for 2002-2004 were provided by VDOE in terms of Passing Rates (%).

Note [2]: SOL test results for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A2.2 provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for Chesterfield Community High School and the school division in which it is chartered. Average daily attendance rates for the school have been under 90 percent, which is significantly lower than for the division ADA rates.

Table A2.2.
Average Daily Attendance for Chesterfield Community High School

Average Daily Attendance [1]	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Chesterfield Community High School	83.16%	87.15%	85.95%
Chesterfield County Public Schools	95.26%	95.17%	95.21%

Dropout Rates. Table A2.3 summarizes dropout rates for Chesterfield Community High School and the school division in which it is chartered. Dropout rates for the school historically have been high and much higher than the division results. The 2004-2005 dropout rate results will not be officially available until after October 1, 2005. Chesterfield Community High School reported 64 dropouts through May 2005.

**Table A2.3.
Dropout Rates for Chesterfield Community High School**

Dropout Rates [1]	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Chesterfield Community High School	20.59%	5.52%	[2]
Chesterfield County Public Schools	1.44%	0.96%	[2]

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE.

Note [2]: Dropout results for the 2004-2005 school year will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Professional Development. In response to questions concerning the types of professional development offered at school, how it supported the goals and objectives of the school, and its overall effectiveness, the school’s responses included approximately 30 different professional development activities ranging from gang awareness to lap top training. In response to structured survey questions concerning the school’s professional development opportunities, the school responded as follows.

Professional development customized for charter school personnel only:	Yes
Professional development hours provided:	Over 29
Types of professional development activities provided:	11 or more
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia:	Some
Amount of communication with other charter schools within Virginia:	Very little
Opportunity to attend national meeting(s) regarding charter schools:	No

Staff. For the 2004-2005 school year Chesterfield Community High School reported approximately one teacher per nine students enrolled. The school reported that the percentage of core academic teachers meeting federal definition of highly qualified has increased over its history as a charter school as follows: in 2002-2003, 42.2 percent; in 2003-2004, 75.3 percent; in 2004-2005, 95.65 percent. Staffing data for Chesterfield Community High School are summarized in Table A1.4, below.

**Table A2.4.
Staffing for Chesterfield Community High School**

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	2.0	1.0	50
Teachers	21.6	19.6	90.7
Paraprofessionals	3.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Parental and Community Involvement. In response to survey questions related to the school's progress in the level of parental and community involvement and community perceptions towards the charter school, the school reported the following (school's perceptions/responses provided in italics).

The Charter Management Committee met monthly during the 2004-2005 school year. The committee is comprised of seven staff members and six community members, one of whom is a parent.

Chesterfield Community High School is supported by Communities in Schools of Chesterfield (CIS) and as such receives a great amount of community support through the public/private partnerships developed by CIS. Communities in Schools in Chesterfield was developed to enhance the potential for youth to complete high school and become contributing members of society.

Chesterfield Community High School (CIS) provides an extensive array of services to meet its goals, including health and human services through the Student Assistance Team, career exploration through job shadowing with community volunteers, groups to address anger management, teen parenting, and healthy lifestyles. Volunteers work one-on-one with students as mentors and tutors to provide supportive educational services to students. Additional staff is also provided through partnerships with CIS, including a CIS Site Coordinator, a repositioned Department of Social Services worker, a consultant from the adolescent substance abuse unit of Chesterfield Mental Health, and a representative from a private agency that provides services to adolescents and families in crisis (Family Lifeline/Safe Place). Also represented on the Student Assistance Team are the school social worker, school attendance social worker, school psychologist, school health nurse, guidance counselor, and exceptional education coordinator.

Parental involvement continues to be an area needing improvement. There is no formal parent group, such as a parent teacher association, although there is parent representation on the Success Ownership Attendance Respect (SOAR) Committee that promotes positive behavior, academic achievement and good attendance.

The program acknowledges students for exhibiting positive behaviors and meeting school expectations through a reward system that can be redeemed for student selected items in the "SOAR Store." School staff and community volunteers are involved in running the school store and in soliciting items to be made available to students. Parents are also involved in the athletic programs at Chesterfield Community High School and work as volunteers at games and other athletic events.

As the alternative high school for a large county, the management committee and staff worked hard to create a positive image for both the school and its students. Through partnerships with community groups and other volunteers, community members have become involved with students and staff and developed positive relationships with both. There is also a new partnership with Salisbury Presbyterian Church which has donated a piano and \$1000 toward the establishment of a music program at Chesterfield Community High School. The choir director has also donated hours of time to work with students who have volunteered to participate in the music program. This new partnership came through the efforts of a community member of the Charter Management Committee.

Overall Assessment (Chesterfield Community High School perceptions provided in italics)

Effectiveness -- *The charter school serves an at-risk population identified by home-school administrators and counselors, as well as by parents and students themselves, who would benefit from an alternative school setting with smaller classes and academic interventions and programs designed to meet the needs of academic underachievers. To this end, the charter school has been effective in providing an opportunity for identified students to remain in school and work toward completing graduation requirements. During the previous school year (2003-2004), 242 students were promoted or graduated. We are not able to provide promotion*

rates at this time, but to date thirty (30) students completed requirements for graduation in January and eighty three (83) additional students graduated in June 2005.

Progress -- *Our goals for the students in the charter school include meeting the Standards of Learning test criteria and passing the tests necessary to meet graduation requirements. There has been progress toward these goals, although not the progress needed to meet accreditation standards. The charter school continues to be under academic review for mathematics, and there was a downward trend in science and social studies during the previous year. We are beginning to see a trend upward in mathematics due to changes in instructional strategies and intensive in-service training for teachers.*

While all applicants met the basic criteria, the lottery system required by the charter made it difficult to select students who could best benefit from the program offered. Staffing had to be altered to address large numbers of ninth graders and students with disabilities who were admitted by the lottery system. Prior to becoming a charter school, each student and family were interviewed to ascertain the level of commitment to achieving personal and school goals. The interview could not be used under the lottery system to identify those students most committed to taking advantage of the program offered.

Benefits to the Students -- *The major benefits the charter school has provided its students have been smaller class size, a caring faculty, and individualized instruction. The charter school has also been able to provide extensive supportive services through its partnership with Communities In Schools of Chesterfield. We have also continued to expand our use of technology through collaboration with the Chesterfield Technical Center which provided the charter school with funding for an Information Technology Foundations lab. The partnership with the Tech Center has also enabled us to expand vocational offerings to our students, most of who will go directly into the work force, rather than to college.*

Factors Influencing Status of School -- *Factors that have contributed to the present status of the charter school include an increase in the number of students who are educationally challenged with lower reading levels and skill gaps in mathematics and science. An increase in the number of students who need exceptional education services has also contributed to the limited progress we have made toward the goals we established in our charter application. We continue to accept students who have serious behavioral problems and have tried to provide services to meet those needs. At times, providing the needed services is in conflict with time the students need to be in class, and it is necessary to choose academics over the provision of supportive services.*

Staffing has also been a factor in the present status of the charter school, as our staffing is usually based on student numbers rather than an identified need. We are currently requesting a reading teacher to meet the needs of our students with lower reading levels, but approval has not been given to date.

Funding has not been a major issue for the charter school. The initial start-up grant allowed us to upgrade technology, purchase needed equipment, and provide for teacher training. Since we were a conversion school, our school division has provided most of the funding necessary to maintain our school, including teacher salaries, transportation, building and building maintenance, as well as other needs. Our funding from Communities In Schools of Chesterfield provides for additional needs including student incentives, scholarships, and supportive services through a variety of partnerships.

Decision to Relinquish Charter Status – *The reasons reported for the school relinquishing its charter status are: (1) the inability to appropriately screen students in a manner that permits accepting only students committed to the charter school concept, (2) the inability to properly service the special needs of some of the student population, and (3) staffing needs. A more detailed description of factors leading to the decision to cease operating as a charter school are addressed above in the “Progress” and “Factors Influencing Status of School” sections of the “Overall Assessment.”*

Attachment A3

Hampton City Schools, Hampton Harbour Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2004-2005:	3-8
Enrollment 2004-2005:	130
School designed to serve students considered to be at-risk:	Yes
Operation as a charter school during the 2005-2006 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement. Hampton Harbour Academy student Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores reflect substantial variability by year, grade level, and test. Although the school's results have been significantly lower than division results, the data in the following table suggests that significant gains have been made in many subject areas. The 2004-2005 SOL results will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Table A3.1.
SOL Pass Rates for Hampton Harbour Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results [1]	School 2001-2002	School 2002-2003	School 2003-2004	Division 2003-2004	School 2004-2005
Grades 9-12					
English Reading	58%	92%	80%	87%	[2]
English Writing	60%	69%	86%	84%	[2]
Algebra I	11%	10%	42%	76%	[2]
Geometry	40%	39%	71%	76%	[2]
World Geography	25%	25%	16%	70%	[2]
U. S. History	10%	31%	33%	82%	[2]
Earth Science	14%	35%	46%	62%	[2]
Biology	35%	40%	80%	77%	[2]
Grade 8					
English: Writing	23%	23%	48%	76%	[2]
English: Reading	28%	26%	32%	70%	[2]
Mathematics	8%	16%	45%	80%	[2]
History/Social Science	22%	38%	76%	79%	[2]
Science	41%	44%	82%	85%	[2]

Note [1]: SOL test results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE in terms of Passing Rates (%).
Note [2]: SOL test results for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Table A3.1 (continued).
SOL Pass Rates for Hampton Harbour Academy

SOL End of Course	School	School	School	Division	School
Test Results [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2003-2004	2004-2005
Grade 5					
English: Writing	56%	33%	64%	86%	[2]
English: Reading	40%	75%	30%	83%	[2]
Mathematics	30%	17%	40%	72%	[2]
History/Social Science	30%	33%	40%	83%	[2]
Science	56%	50%	30%	80%	[2]
Grade 3					
English	10%	9%	14%	64%	[2]
Mathematics	11%	100%	43%	83%	[2]
History/Social Science	25%	19%	33%	87%	[2]
Science	22%	30%	14%	79%	[2]

Note [1]: SOL test results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE in terms of Passing Rates (%).

Note [2]: SOL test results for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A3.2 provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for Hampton Harbour Academy and the division in which it is chartered. The school's ADA has not improved since becoming a charter school in 2001 and remains significantly below overall attendance rates for the school division.

Table A3.2.
Average Daily Attendance for Hampton Harbour Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Hampton Harbour Academy	85.16%	83.07%	84.99%	82.10%
Hampton City Public Schools	94.77%	94.48%	94.76%	95.24%

Dropout Rates. The following table summarizes dropout rates for Hampton Harbour Academy and the school division in which it is chartered. Dropout rates have historically been much higher than the division dropout rate. The 2004-2005 dropout rate results will not be officially available until after October 1, 2005. The school reported only three dropouts during the 2004-2005 school year.

Table A3.3.
Dropout Rates for Hampton Harbour Academy

Dropout Rates [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Hampton Harbour Academy	34.27%	9.15%	9.72%	[2]
Hampton City Public Schools	2.68%	2.17%	2.18%	[2]

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE.

Note [2]: Dropout results for the 2004-2005 school year will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Staff. For the 2004-2005 school year, Hampton Harbour Academy reports slightly more than one teacher per seven students enrolled. The school also reports that during the 2003-2004 school year, only 57 percent of the staff members were licensed/endorsed in their content areas, but that for the 2004-2005 school year, 89 percent of the staff members were certified/highly qualified and that there has been a 32 percent increase over the last three years. Staffing data for Hampton Harbour Academy are summarized in Table A3.4, below.

Table A3.4.
Staffing for Hampton Harbour Academy

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	19.0	17.0	89.5
Paraprofessionals	3.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	3.0	1.0	100

Parental and Community Involvement. In response to survey questions related to the school’s progress in the level of parental and community involvement and community perceptions towards the charter school, the school reported the following (school’s perceptions/responses provided in italics).

During the 2003 school year, Hampton City Public Schools provided Hampton Harbour with a Parent Involvement Facilitator. Her primary responsibility is to secure parent involvement in the life of the student body. Activities are scheduled throughout the year to make parents more aware of the daily operation of the school and help them take a more active role in their children's education. We had improved parental involvement this school year, but would like to see still more growth in this area. The Parent Involvement Facilitator has also been instrumental in getting several community groups and organizations to provide services and resources for our student body. Many community members still view charter schools as private institutions. We have worked diligently to inform all stakeholders of our mission at Hampton Harbour Academy and our status as a public school.

Overall Assessment (Hampton Harbour Academy perceptions provided in italics)

Effectiveness -- *The charter school is effective in meeting the needs of the students who attend there. It offers them a "safe haven" where their over age status and skill deficits are not a source of embarrassment or reluctance to engage in the educational process. The school offers many adjunct services in addition, including an after-school program and individual counseling offered on site. Over 50 percent of students choose to remain at Hampton Harbour Academy for a second or third year, a testament to the inviting climate of the school.*

Progress -- *Because Hampton Harbour Academy serves only students who have experienced school failure, it has been under academic review since its inception. As a result, the single goal of the school is to meet accreditation standards. The school has made progress in this area but has not shown consistent growth because outcomes are often dictated by the skill levels of the entering cohort. Each year, there has been growth in test scores in some SOL test subjects and decline in others, due to the fluctuation in student population. The charter itself has not presented challenges.*

Benefits to the Students -- *The major benefit the charter school offers to students is a comfortable learning environment to students who feel out of place and reluctant to participate in their home school. Working in small class groups with students who have similar issues provides a safe place for them to ask questions and engage in instructional activities without embarrassment. Many students thrive in the environment and post significant gains in both reading and math skills. Unfortunately, this growth is not an acceptable accountability measure. Therefore, the school will have to meet accreditation standards in order to continue offering services to students.*

Factors Influencing Status of School -- *We have not had any funding issues. The local school division is an advocate and source of support for the school. Our present status is dominated by concerns about accountability measures and efforts to meet state requirements.*

Attachment A4

Roanoke City Schools, Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2001
Grades served in 2003-2004:	9-12
Enrollment 2003-2004:	96
School designed to serve students considered to be at-risk:	Yes
Operation as a charter school during the 2004-2005 school year:	No

Student Achievement. Blue Ridge Technical Academy Standards of Learning (SOL) test results reflect substantial variability by year and testing area, but the results have generally improved over their first three years as a charter school and, in some areas, compare favorably with overall school division SOL results, as depicted in the following table. The 2004-2005 SOL test results will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Table A4.1.
SOL Test Results for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

SOL End of Course	School	School	School	Division	School
Test Results [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2003-2004	2004-2005
English Reading	N/A	89%	100%	94%	[2]
English Writing	N/A	89%	100%	92%	[2]
Algebra I	100%	71%	78%	82%	[2]
Algebra II	100%	67%	N/A	84%	[2]
Geometry	100%	N/A	83%	86%	[2]
World Geography	N/A	N/A	N/A	84%	[2]
World History I	N/A	29%	87%	90%	[2]
U. S. History	N/A	46%	88%	90%	[2]
Earth Science	N/A	N/A	66%	86%	[2]
Biology	N/A	45%	65%	89%	[2]
Chemistry	N/A	50%	N/A	91%	[2]

Note [1]: SOL test results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE in terms of Passing Rates (%).

Note [2]: SOL test results for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A4.2 provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for Blue Ridge Technical Academy. The school's ADA rates have remained much lower than the school division in which it is chartered.

Table A4.2.
Average Daily Attendance for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Average Daily Attendance	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Blue Ridge Technical Academy	90.55%	86.24%	87.62%	91.36%
Roanoke City Public Schools	90.64%	94.50%	94.46%	94.59%

Dropout Rates. The following table summarizes dropout rates for Blue Ridge Technical Academy and the school division in which it is chartered. The school’s dropout rate has historically been much higher than the division dropout rate. The 2004-2005 dropout rate results will not be officially available until after October 1, 2005, but the school reported 14 dropouts during the 2004-2005 school year.

Table A4.3.
Dropout Rates for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Dropout Rates [1]	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Blue Ridge Technical Academy	33.33%	29.41%	17.24%	[2]
Roanoke City Public Schools	4.67%	3.99%	3.40%	[2]

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE.

Note [2]: Dropout results for the 2004-2005 school year will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Staff. For the 2004-2005 school year, Blue Ridge Technical Academy reports slightly less than one teacher per eight students enrolled and that the percentage of licensed/endorsed staff members has remained nearly the same over the last several years. Staffing data for the school are summarized in Table A4.4, below.

Table A4.4.
Staffing for Blue Ridge Technical Academy

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	11.5	8.5	74
Paraprofessionals	1.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Parental and Community Involvement. In response to survey questions related to the school’s progress in the level of parental and community involvement and community perceptions towards the charter school, the school reported the following (school’s perceptions/responses provided in italics).

Parent involvement has increased this year for multiple reasons. An official Blue Ridge Technical Academy (BRTA) parent organization was implemented with the assistance of a core group of parents. Meetings were held in the fall to discuss how to organize and encourage involvement. Theme nights and specialty programs that involved student participation were offered to increase attendance at the meetings. A phone tree was utilized by the staff to notify all parents about upcoming events and to encourage them to attend. The parent organization has also been instrumental in lobbying the Roanoke City School Board and other governmental agencies to continue funding for BRTA for 2005-2006 and also has sought outside funding from local businesses.

Community involvement is apparent and based on the support received from the BRTA General Advisory Council, made up primarily of local business people from the health care, automated manufacturing, and information technology industries, as well as members from post-secondary and higher education institutions. Their support has been instrumental in validating the health careers and Information Technology (IT) curriculum as well as developing the automated manufacturing program of studies. Advisory council members have also served as internship and job shadowing sites, guest speakers, and volunteers within the school.

Blue Ridge Technical Academy has frequently been in the news during spring 2005 because of a lack of school board funding for 2005-2006. As a whole, community members, parents, and businesses have verbalized that the BRTA concept of focusing on career and technical education is a valid one in light of employment needs in the area. Although the physical location of the school is closing, the career and technical education concept that is core of the mission at Blue Ridge Technical Academy will be continued at one of the comprehensive high schools in the Roanoke City Public Schools.

Overall Assessment (Blue Ridge Technical Academy perceptions provided in italics)

Effectiveness -- *Due to a small number of graduates thus far (four in 2004; four in 2005), it is more difficult to measure how effective BRTA has been in preparing its students for a career and technical occupation. Each of these graduates is either employed in the career area for which they prepared or is seeking further education through four-year, technical, or community colleges. In terms of underclassmen, parents and students both articulated to the school board, city council, government officials, and the media that BRTA is meeting their needs academically, socially, and emotionally.*

Progress -- *The following are the goals approved by the Roanoke City School Board as part of the charter school renewal for 2004-2005:*

- A. *Students will achieve the following pass rates on SOL tests: English – 85 percent; Social Studies/History – 85 percent; Science – 70 percent; Mathematics – 80 percent; General Educational Development (GED) certificate – 80 percent. This objective is unable to be measured until SOL test results are received.*
- B. *All students eligible for graduation will complete appropriate career and technical education competencies. All students have completed a course in computer applications and were enrolled in a career and technical course either in Health Careers or Information Technology. Some of these courses are geared towards providing students the opportunity to take industry-recognized certification exams. In addition, the opportunity for job shadowing and internships were available to juniors and seniors. Career and technical student organizations (Future Business Leaders of America and Health Occupations Student Association) were established to enhance the curriculum.*
- C. *Enrollment in the SOL test and GED programs remain above 75 students for all subsequent years. For 2004-2005, enrollment has been 96 students.*

- D. *Facilitate student access to postsecondary education and/or training opportunities. Dual enrollment courses were offered to students in Computer Maintenance, First Aid/ Safety, and Study Skills through Virginia Western Community College. A partnership was established with Jefferson College of Health Sciences to be implemented in 2005-2006.*
- E. *Increase parent involvement. As stated in II.E, a parent organization was established this year and has assisted with student activities.*

Benefits to the Students -- *Blue Ridge Technical Academy has provided opportunities for industry-recognized certifications, dual enrollment courses with Virginia Western Community College and the Jefferson College of Health Sciences, internships, job shadowing, development of portfolios, exposure to a variety of careers, individualized instruction, smaller class sizes, availability of technology, and a safe learning environment. In order to continue to sustain this program, grants and funding from business partners would be needed.*

Factors Influencing Status of School -- *Funding has been the primary issue leading to the reconstruction of BRTA as a career and technical academy at one of the other high schools in the Roanoke City Public Schools. For the past two years, the school has been funded primarily by the local school board. Although a development plan was in progress and outside funding had been sought in recent months, there were not enough funds available to continue BRTA as a separate charter school for 2005-2006.*

Decision to Close – The primary reason reported for Blue Ridge Technical Academy not continuing to operate as a charter school was financial. The “Factors Influencing Status of School” section of the “Overall Assessment” above provides additional insight.

Attachment A5

York County Schools, York River Academy

Year opened as a charter school:	2002
Grades served in 2004-2005:	9-10
Enrollment 2004-2005:	39
School designed to serve students considered to be at-risk:	Yes
Operation as a charter school during the 2005-2006 school year:	Yes

Student Achievement. As depicted in Table A5.1, the York River Academy Standards of Learning (SOL) test results improved in 2003-2004 and became generally comparable to or exceeded division SOL test scores. The 2004-2005 SOL results will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Table A5.1.
SOL Pass Rates for York River Academy

SOL End of Course Test Results [1]	School	School	Division	School
	2002-2003	2003-2004	2003-2004	2004-2005
English Reading	100%		96%	[2]
English Writing	0%		91%	[2]
Algebra I	40%	89%	79%	[2]
Algebra II			90%	[2]
Geometry			95%	[2]
World Geography	90%	85%	80%	[2]
World History I		100%	87%	[2]
U. S. History			94%	[2]
Earth Science	100%	71%	71%	[2]
Biology			93%	[2]
Chemistry			95%	[2]

Note [1]: SOL test results for 2002-2004 were provided by VDOE in terms of Passing Rates (%).

Note [2]: SOL test results for 2004-2005 will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Table A5.2 provides a summary of average daily attendance rates for York River Academy and the school division in which it is chartered. Average daily attendance rates for the school have been comparable to the school division ADA rates.

Dropout Rates. The following table summarizes dropout rates for York River Academy and the school division in which it is chartered. Dropout rates for the school historically have been comparable to school division and state results. The 2004-2005 dropout rate results will not be officially available until after October 1, 2005. York River Academy reported no dropouts through May 2005.

Table A5.3.
Dropout Rates for York River Academy

Dropout Rates [1]	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
York River Academy	0%	2.14%	[2]
York County Public Schools	0.86%	0.15%	[2]

Note [1]: Dropout results for 2001-2004 were provided by VDOE.

Note [2]: Dropout results for the 2004-2005 school year will not be available until after October 1, 2005.

Staff. For the 2004-2005 school year, York River Academy reports more than one teacher per eight students enrolled. Staffing data for the school are summarized in Table A5.4, below.

Table A5.4.
Staffing for York River Academy

Category	Total Number of Staff (FTE)	Positions Filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals (FTE)	Percent filled by Licensed and Endorsed Individuals
Principal/Director	1.0	1.0	100
Teachers	5.0	5.0	100
Paraprofessionals	0.0	N/A	N/A
Guidance Counselors	1.0	1.0	100

Parental and Community Involvement. In response to survey questions related to the school’s progress in the level of parental and community involvement and community perceptions towards the charter school, the school reported the following (school’s perceptions/responses provided in italics).

Since its inception, York River Academy (YRA) developed and maintained an innovative parental program spanning seven evenings over the course of the year. During these Parent Partnership Nights, parents and caregivers and their students participate in a research-based program to develop protective factors and relationships between each other and the school. Funded by outside grants of up to \$12,000 a year, families enjoy a catered meal, child care for pre-teens to toddlers, and – new this year – an opportunity to celebrate authentic assessment academic efforts by their charter student. End-of-the-year parental surveys continue to demonstrate significant satisfaction and happiness with YRA – especially when compared to their traditional public school education that preceded their enrollment.

Unlike most charter schools across the country, there is no apparent animosity between supporters of traditional public education and York River Academy. However, one of the dilemmas YRA has faced and continues to face with the community is their perception that only troubled, chronically disruptive students attend the school. This perception stems from the fact that York River Academy is housed on the same campus where the previous alternative school existed for chronically disruptive students. The fact that the previous school shared a similar name (York River Regional School) also contributes to the community's negative, lasting perceptions. Even the current Governing Board's parent representative shared with us his trepidation about letting his son apply to the school (even though he and his wife are presently thrilled with his son's two years of enrollment!).

Overall Assessment (York River Academy perceptions provided in italics)

Effectiveness -- *York River Academy can demonstrate genuine effectiveness by comparing the SOL test passing rate of students before their enrollment against their SOL test passing rate after their arrival (63 percent before, and 83 percent after). In addition, every student can demonstrate workforce development skills in the information technology field via either digital portfolios, multimedia service learning projects for external, authentic clients, or professional certification exams. More than 90 percent of all students earn higher grade point averages than before their arrival and more than half earn more credits than their non-at-risk peers in the school division's traditional schools. Lastly, annual student and parent surveys provide data that demonstrates our effectiveness in meeting the needs of our targeted student population*

Progress -- *Last year, York River Academy met each of its charter goals and objectives including becoming fully accredited as measured by SOL test success.*

Benefits to the Students -- *York River Academy provides its students with a focused information technology curriculum delivered via highly compelling instructional strategies in classes with terrific teacher-student ratios not found in traditional education. I believe that the most significant way one could expand these benefits is by addressing the perennial challenge charter schools face across the country: obtaining facilities that match the dynamic education provided. Grants, matching funds, and/or low-interest loans would go a long way in addressing this perennial challenge.*

Factors Influencing Status of School – *The York County Public Schools has continued to demonstrate leadership in its full and positive support of York River Academy. The class teacher-to-student ratio of 1:12 would be difficult to maintain even with the \$350,000 worth of grants, partnerships, and gifts YRA has procured over the last three years. The governing board is supportive and visionary. In short, the relationship between York County Public Schools and York River Academy is as healthy as one could enjoy.*