



**TENNESSEE CHARTER SCHOOLS  
ANNUAL REPORT TO  
THE TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
As Required in T.C.A. 49-13-120**

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## Executive Summary

Tennessee public charter schools continue to provide necessary and relevant school choice options for parents and students. Although there remain significant obstacles for the Tennessee charter school movement in becoming the robust reform tool outlined in its legislation, this past year has demonstrated several instances in which charter schools and their LEAs worked collaboratively toward common understandings and relation-building. While there is definitely room to grow in this aspect, there is also positive movement toward a broader understanding of the original purpose of the Tennessee charter law:

- Improve learning for all students
- Providing options for parents
- Encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods
- Measure performance of pupils and faculty
- Creating new professional opportunities for teachers
- Allow parents to participate in education process

Utilizing the continued growth of these successful Charter-LEA relationships, can provide Tennessee with an opportunity to continuously broaden its portfolio of schools, address demographic pockets with tailored educational programs, reduce the number of students who are below proficient and ultimately reduce the number of failing schools. Through these proactive and positive methods, Tennessee will be more favorably positioned to provide an education system that does “improve learning for all students.”

This report is intended to provide documentation on the current state of the charter school movement in Tennessee. Several of the most poignant issues have been summarized below:

- The enrollment qualifier, as per T.C.A. 49-13-106 has been recently amended in order to allow a more consistent eligible student population for the public charter schools. (students who fail proficiency in grades 3-8) removes a large potentially eligible pool of students for charter schools during their formative K-2 school years.
- Small numbers of authorized charter schools in the past two years has resulted in USDOE reduction of non-obligated charter school federal funds.
- Charter schools must dedicate an average of 12% of their total BEP for facility costs. However, in order to serve their demographic, some charter school must pay up to 29% of there total BEP for facility costs.
- There were fourteen (14) charter school applications in October 2008 application window. The applications include new territory for Tennessee charter school movement including:
  1. Applications from charter sponsors in LEAs that do not have charter schools
  2. Single-gender charter school
  3. LEA conversion charter school
  4. First “green” charter school

## **Introduction**

Public charter schools are defined in Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) 49-13-104 as “a public school in the state of Tennessee that is established and operating under the terms of a charter agreement and in accordance with this chapter.” These schools must be authorized by the local education agency (LEA), which then enters into a charter agreement with the sponsor of the public charter school to operate for an initial period of five years. State and local education funds follow the charter school students to their respective schools. Charter schools are entitled to any federal education funds that they are eligible to receive. Charter schools must meet the same accountability requirements for achievement as traditional public schools. Failure to do so may result in the LEA revoking the charter school.

Subsequent to the passage of the *Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002*, the state’s first four charter schools opened in the fall of 2003. In the fall of 2004, they were joined by three additional schools. Together, the seven schools served approximately 1,019 students in 2004-05, which more than doubled the previous number of Tennessee children enrolled in charter schools. 2005-06 resulted in another five charter schools. Although, in 2006-07 no new charter schools opened due to the lack of adequate applications, the charter school student enrollment broke through the 2,000 student level. In 2007-08 only one additional charter school became operational, although four (4) new ones were authorized in that same time period.

This report provides information about the current state of charter schools in Tennessee as well as some of the obstacles that continue to inhibit the growth of public charter schools in Tennessee. It is the intention of this report to provide relevant information that will continue to see the collaborative element between public charter schools and the districts that authorize them. It is through a collaborative understanding that charters will be able to fully operationalize the intent of the T.C.A. charter legislation. As an important part of the educational fabric, they will continue to be utilized as an “innovative tool” that is designed to assist and inform “all students” in Tennessee.

## **Public Charter School Applications**

As indicated previously, the growth of Tennessee public charter schools

The current 2008 charter school application window demonstrated several new and unique charter school applications. As Table 1.1 details, there are a total of fourteen charter applicants, from three LEAs, for the 2009-10 school year. Within that cohort there are eleven applications for original (new) charters, two applications for renewal (existing) charters and one application for a series of LEA conversion charter schools.

Additionally, within this group are several innovative charter applications that are new charter initiatives for Tennessee. These “firsts” include:

- “Green” charter school (Ivy Academy/HCDE)
- Single-sex girls charter school (Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy/HCDE)
- Single-sex boys preparatory charter school (City University School Boys Preparatory/MCS and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Preparatory School for Boys/MCS)
- LEA-sponsored conversion charter school (MCS)

Table 1.1 2008 Applications

Name	LEA	Grades	Student Cap	Type
<b>Hamilton County Department of Education</b>				
Ivy Academy	HCDE	9-12	320	Original (Revised)
Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy	HCDE	6-12	325	Original
<b>Memphis City Schools</b>				
STAR Academy	MCS	K-5	244	Renewal
City University School - Boys Preparatory	MCS	6-8	360	Original
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Preparatory School for Boys	MCS	K-6	165	Original
Freedom Preparatory Academy	MCS	6-10	540	Original
The Founders Career Academy of Memphis	MCS	9-12	500	Original
Memphis School of Excellence	MCS	6-12	475	Original
City University School of Liberal Arts	MCS	9-12	550	Renewal
Daughters of Zion	MCS	K-5	200	Original
MCS Prep Schools	MCS	7-12	2500	LEA Conversion
<b>Metro Nashville Public Schools</b>				
Nashville Academy of Science and Technology	MNPS	5-12	480	Original
Smithson Craighead Academy Middle School	MNPS	5-8	320	Original
Nashville Global Academy	MNPS	K-8	720	Original

### **Application Process**

At the time of this report, the time line for the authorization process has not yet completed. As Figure 1.2 illustrates, the charter authorizing process as per T.C.A. 49-13-108 can last up to 160 days (slightly longer as time lines commence “upon receipt of grounds for denial”). As is evident, if all parties exercise the maximal amount of time that they are allotted, the charter authorization process begins in October and continues for a period of 160 days, ending in mid-March (see below). As per T.C.A. 49-13-108 all potential charter schools must apply to the LEA in which they are proposing to operate their charter school and from which they will draw their student enrolments. This process commences when the sponsor of the charter school submits a completed charter school application to the LEA not later than October 1 of the year previous to when the sponsor intends to open the charter school.

### *Planning and Implementation Obstacle*

Due to the length of the authorization process and the time in which it commences (October 1) there is a logistical obstacle and a federal funding obstacle the charter school must address. The logistical hardship revolves around the relatively short amount of time that a school has to plan and implement its design including, contracting administration; faculty; leasing of facility; registering eligible student enrollments; ensuring code regulations and renovations if necessary; purchase of materials and overall infrastructure needs in order to create the school in order to be ready by the following July. While it is prudent to continue the length of the authorizing process, perhaps moving the October 1 date to an earlier point (e.g. July of the year preceding the year in which the school plans to open) would allow for a more appropriate length of time to plan and implement a more comprehensive school.

With regard to the concern of implementing federal funding, the short time line also results in the delivery of funds in a period that is much less than one year. If the application period were

scheduled at an earlier point, the funds could be realized and administered at a rate that allows for the highest efficiency. In lieu of this legislative change, the Department has already made changes in the strategy of the administration of the grant as well as the vehicle of fund delivery. Once a charter applies to become authorized as a charter school, it also submits a grant application for funding through the Department. The grant applications are read and scored. If the charter school becomes authorized, the grant application becomes active and funds are delivered to the charter school through the Department FACTS system and through the local NCLB office. This provides several important derivatives:

1. It allows for a more robust time line for the charter schools as they have submitted their application in October, rather than after they have been authorized (can be as late as March of the year they are to open).
2. Because the funds move through the FACTS system, the charter schools have access to the funds at an earlier stage. This allows for more planning and preparation time for the charter prior to opening (in previous years, charter schools received planning funds with little time to prepare before school commenced).
3. It allows for the LEA to become engaged in the contracting and relationship-building process. It allows for the charter to effectively build a strong relationship with their LEA before they commence operations.

Figure 1.2 Application Process

Sponsoring Agency

Submission no later than October 1

Local Education Agency

60 days to review, deny or approve

Sponsoring Agency

15 days to amend and resubmit

Local Education Agency

15 days to review, deny or approve

Sponsoring Agency

10 days to appeal to SBE

State Board of Education

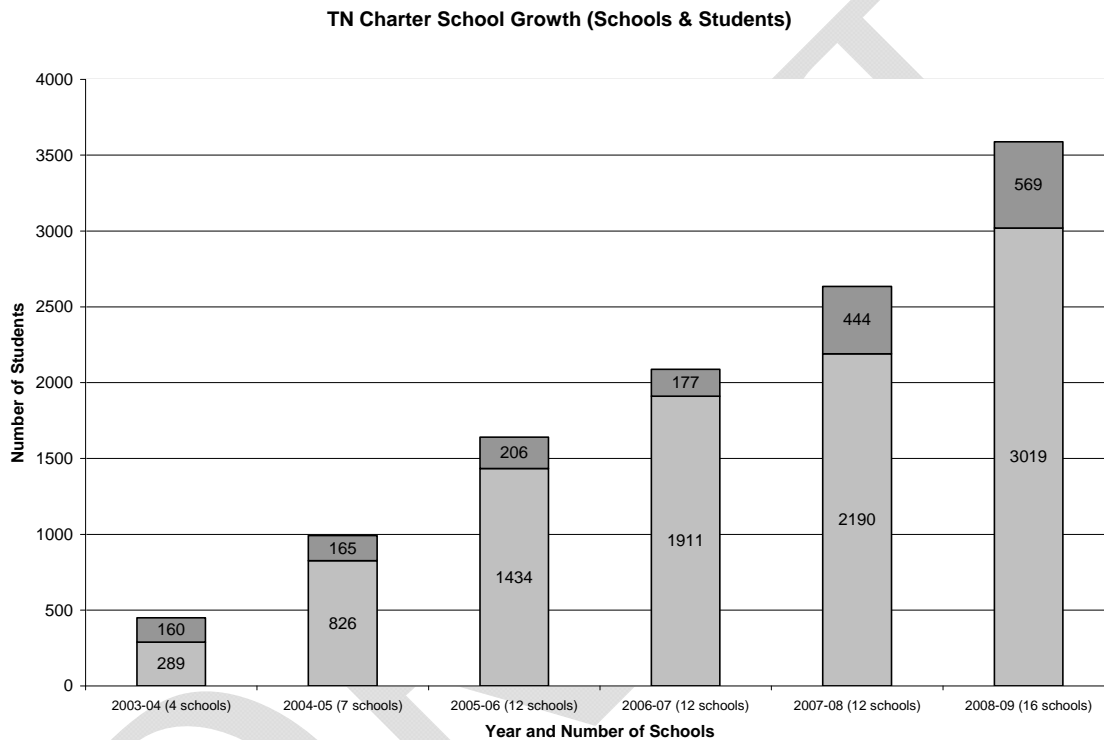
60 days to review and present findings

Total timeline: 160 days (mid-March)

## Tennessee Public Charter School Growth

As Figure 1.3 evinces, the 2008-09 school year demonstrated the first time that Tennessee charter schools have enrolled more than 3,500 students. Most of the students are within the MCS system (represented by the light gray portion of the column) as opposed to the MNPS charter population (represented by the dark gray portion of the column) as MCS has thirteen of the sixteen charter schools in Tennessee.

Figure 1.3 MCS and MNPS Charter Growth

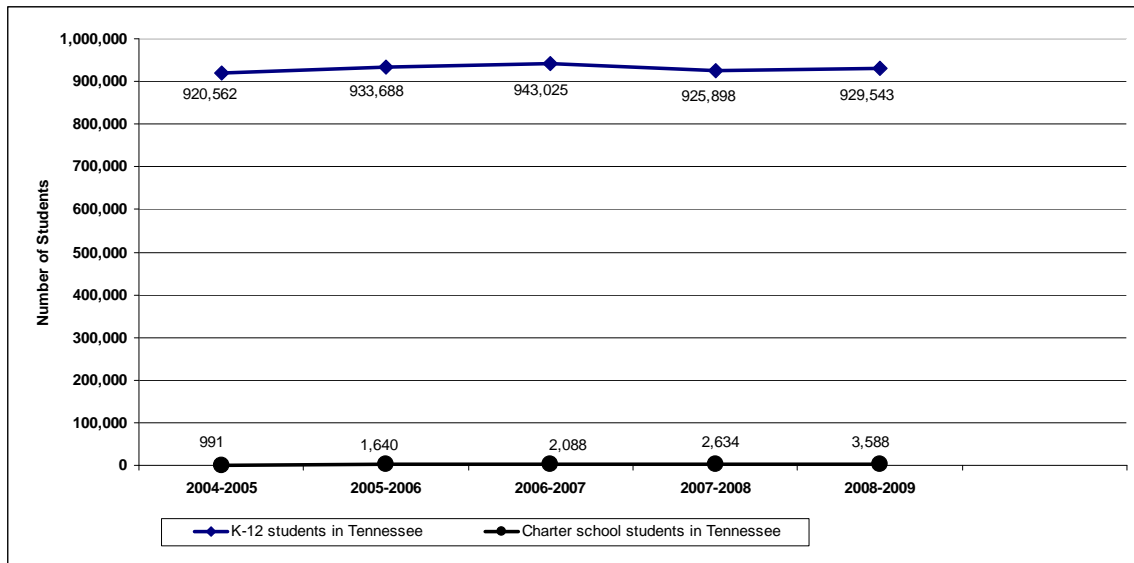


However, as a composite, charter schools in relation to the larger body of Tennessee public school students still remain miniscule as demonstrated in Figure 1.4. As the total public school enrolment of Tennessee nears the one million mark, charter school students occupy less than one half of one percent of the total student population (specifically .0039).

To put this into an image, if all of Tennessee's charter schools students were to gather at the 68,798-seat Tennessee Titans Stadium, in Nashville, the combined charter school students would only occupy 5% of the total seating capacity of one stadium.

Conversely, if all of the Tennessee public school students were to similarly gather, it would take more than fourteen (14) stadiums, filled to 100% capacity in order to accommodate them. Additionally, the comprehensive systemic growth in one year (2007-08) in public school students exceeded the entire enrolment of all Tennessee charter school students.

Figure 1.4 Charter School Growth within Overall TN Public School Growth



### Tennessee Department of Education Support for Charter Schools

During the past year, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDE) expanded its efforts to lend support and technical assistance to these new schools. Support for charter schools is coordinated by the Director of Charter Schools, who is an employee assigned to the Office of Federal Programs in the Division of Teaching and Learning.

The TDE is interested in utilizing public charter schools as a means to increase school choice options for at risk students and ultimately to increase their academic achievement. As such Tennessee charter schools:

- Focus heavily on academic achievement of all students, yet are mindful of the holistic needs of children;
- Are governed responsibly by a dedicated, knowledgeable, capable, and ethical board;
- Are continuously focused on quality and exhibit this by systematically assessing their operations, utilizing data to drive decision making, and ultimately achieving measurable performance outcomes;
- Offer unique learning opportunities based on proven instructional methodologies,
- Have leaders and administrators dedicated to maximizing student success via ethical leadership;
- Are fiscally sound, appropriately expend and account for public funds, and comply with laws and regulations, including an annual audit;
- Employ qualified faculty and staff and provide them with high quality, mission-driven professional development;
- Effectively engage parents, families, and the community in the life of the school; and

- Protect the health, safety, and rights of students.

One new strategy of support for charter schools capable of meeting this quality definition is the formation of a statewide task force by the Office of Research and Accountability as per amended legislation T.C.A. 49-13-129. This task force will be composed of both external and internal stakeholders for the purpose of promoting the charter school concept, increasing dialogue among various charter school stakeholders, providing input and advice regarding charter schools, and framing policy decisions. An initial planning meeting has occurred with follow-up in early 2009.

Many charter schools across the nation struggle with issues related to finance and fiscal management. In order to assist Tennessee charter schools with such matters, TDE fiscal consultants and internal monitors have been assigned to the charter schools in order to provide them with technical assistance. The Department has also designated a part-time staff person to assist with accounting for Federal Charter Schools Program Grants and with the state financial reporting that is required under Tennessee’s charter school law.

### **National Charter School Events**

In the interest of gaining new information and ideas germane to strengthening charter schools in our state, Tennessee has previously participated in multiple national and local charter school events. These meetings have provided a valuable forum for exchanging ideas not only within our state, but with representatives from other states with a longer history of chartering and/or with a charter school law and infrastructure similar to Tennessee’s. However, due to budget constraints and the ensuing travel freeze for TDE personnel, attendance at national conferences has unfortunately been curtailed.

### **Technical Assistance for Charter Schools**

In early March, the TDE inaugurated the first “Tennessee Charter School Summit.” This three-day event was designed to assist newly authorized and not-yet operational charter schools as well as existing charter schools. This event was well attended by charter school operators and their staff, charter authorizers, representatives from LEAs and potential charter applicants. Based upon the success of this event, the TDE will host a larger event in March of 2009. The list of presentations and presenters is included below:

#### **TN Charter School Summit (March, 3-5, 2007)**

Charter School Law	Christy Ballard General Counsel
Charter School Fiscal Responsibilities	Brad Davis Office of Local Finance
Special Education and Charters	Davis Hines Director of Juvenile Services & Charter Schools
Carter Facility Financing	Jane Ellis Director, Charter School Lending Self-Help

TN State Board of Education Master Plan	Rich Haglund General Counsel
Strengthening Charter Schools through Performance Measurement	Mindy Hightower-King Senior Research Associate
State-wide TN Charter School Evaluation Year 4 (06-07) Achievement and Implementation Outcomes	Aaron McDonald Center for Research in Education Policy
Technology-Integration School	Steve Ross & Deborah Lowther Center for Research in Education Policy
Annual Financial Reports	Brad Davis Fiscal Consultant
TN Charter Update	Matt Throckmorton Executive Director
Charter Schools as Effective SES Providers	Rita Fentress SES/Public School Choice
21st Century Community Learning Center Grant Writing 101	Laura Nichols Director, Extended Learning Programs

Despite a curtailed travel agenda, several previously established activities to benefit charter schools continued this past year, including:

- Electronic and written communication to charter school principals, board chairs, grant contacts, and other staff members in order to provide new or clarifying information.
- Inviting charter school faculty and staff members to attend conferences and professional development events sponsored by the Department.
- Providing technical assistance upon request for a variety of topics.
- Meeting as needed with potential charter school organizations.

In addition to working with charter schools, the TDE is working to provide assistance to the local education agencies that authorize them. Staff members have met and communicated as needed with charter school representatives from several districts: Memphis City Schools, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Knox County Schools and Hamilton County Department of Education.

The Department continues to contract with the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis to conduct charter school studies. Information produced in these reports has been valuable in identifying areas of need or concern, so that steps can be taken at the school level and, if appropriate, at the local or state level to address these. (Copies of the most recent CREP reports are submitted with this document.)

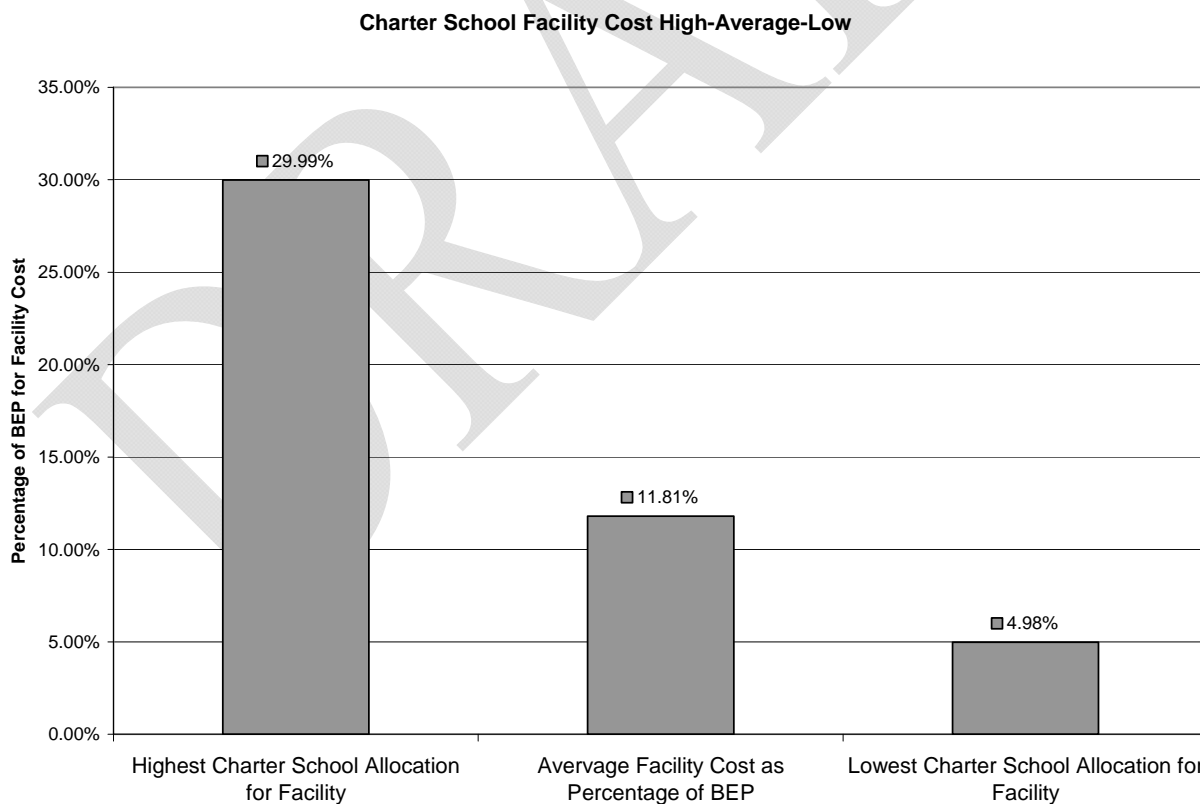
### **Funding and Facility Funding Constraints for Charter Schools**

As is specified in T.C.A. 49-13-112, local boards of education allocate one hundred percent of the state and local education funds to the charter school on the per pupil expenditure of the LEA.

Funds are to be spent according to the budget submitted in the charter agreement, or as otherwise revised by the public charter school governing body. These per pupil funds are the financial backbone of the charter schools and are administered through the LEAs to the charter schools that they have authorized and are within their jurisdiction. Additionally, charter schools also rely heavily upon private and philanthropic sources of funding in order to be able to fully implement their educational program.

Facilities funding is still one of the most critical needs charter schools experience. Lack of access to government funding sources continues to remain a problem. Charter starters note difficulties in securing 20-year bonds to fund charter schools when they are only approved for a window of five-years. Tennessee remains ineligible to apply for federal grant funds under the *State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program* because the State does not have a law authorizing per-pupil facilities aid for charter schools. The amendment regarding Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs) made to T.C.A. 49-13-124 by the General Assembly in 2005, yields little substantive impact to the ability of charter schools to benefit from these bonds, as the chartering authority is usually reluctant to endorse the submission of these bond applications to the local taxing authority. As charter schools themselves have no taxing authority, they cannot take advantage of this opportunity.

Figure 1.6 Charter School Facility Costs



There is new federal funding for facilities that is available through the State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program (CFDA 84.282D). This program is for states with per-pupil aid programs to assist charter schools with their school facility costs. Federal funds are used to

match programs funded with nonfederal dollars that make payments, on a per-pupil basis, to provide charter schools with facilities financing. States pay an increasing share of the cost of the program. Tennessee has not applied for this as a requirement component of this grant is that state legislation include language on per-pupil facility funding for charter school students.

Charter schools may also be funded by grants, gifts, or donations from private sources. This varies by school, but one source of funding of note remains the Hyde Family Foundations, which provides start-up funding to multiple schools. As a result of these constraints, charter schools are forced to allocate a significant portion of their BEP funding toward facility costs. Although this amount varies from school to school, there are extreme situations in which the charter school must allocate 22% - 29.9% of its BEP for facility costs in order to remain true to its approved charter. As is demonstrated in Figure 1.6, facility costs on the low end, place an indirect tax on the charter school at nearly 5% of the total BEP, yet as detailed above, some charter schools face an indirect tax of nearly 30% of their total BEP allocation in order to assist their public school students.

### **Charter School Program Federal Grant**

In addition to state and local funding, charter schools receive federal funds, through the Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant, if they meet the eligibility criteria. Previously the TDE applied for and received a \$7.5 million dollar CSP grant. Through a competitive process, the charter schools applied for planning and implementation funding, and each school received up to \$556,000 over a period of three years. Charter schools that receive these funds are required to conduct an enrollment lottery if they have more students desiring to attend the school than slots available.

In March of 2006 the TDOE submitted a new grant application to the U.S. Department of Education and received an additional \$6.5 million CSP grant. However, there was concern at the USDOE level that TN did not have a robust charter movement that would operationalize these funds. During the 2005 application period, no charter schools had successfully moved through the authorization process. During the following year of the 2007-08 school year, only one charter school opened in Tennessee. Due to the small number of charter schools that were authorized and opened over the past two years, the USDOE has indicated the desire to reduce the amount of Tennessee's existing CSP award and reallocate these funds to states that have more dynamic charter school growth.

In January of 2009, the TDE will submit a grant application for continuation of this funding through the 2009 CSP application window however, due to the nature of the Tennessee charter law, the previous low growth-rate of the charter schools, and federal availability of these funds, these funds cannot be guaranteed for Tennessee.

### **Enrollment Effect upon Charter Schools: 2008 Amendments to Charter Law**

The T.C.A. 49-13-106 enrollment qualifier has been a subject of discussion over the past several legislative sessions. Previous to June 2008, the T.C.A. stipulated that charter school enrollment shall be:

- A) Students who were previously enrolled in a charter school

- B) Students who are assigned to, or were previously enrolled in, a school failing to make adequate early progress, as defined by the states' accountability system, giving priority to at-risk students;
- C) Students who, in the previous school year, failed to test proficient in the subjects of language arts/reading or mathematics in grades three through eight (3-8) on the Tennessee comprehensive assessment program examinations; or
- D) Students who, in the previous school year, failed to test proficient on the gateway examinations in language arts/reading or mathematics.

However, in June 2008, the enrollment eligibility requirement was expanded to include:

- E) Students in grades kindergarten through three (K-3) who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, who may only be enrolled no earlier than August 1; or
- F) Students who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court and who in the court's judgment would benefit from a work experience and career exploration program. The proposed public charter school shall, in addition to complying with the application requirements T.C.A. 49-13-107, apply to the Commissioner of Education for approval of its proposed work experience and career explorations program.

Additionally,

- (2) ...Students enrolled in a charter school under (a)(1)(E) shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) in grades kindergarten through three (K-3). Further, in no event shall more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total school enrollment in grades kindergarten through three (K-3) consist of students who only meet subdivision (a)(1)(E).

The above amendments to the existing eligibility law of 49-13-106 are designed to assist those charter schools that are focused on the early grades. As was previously mentioned in last year's annual report to the general assembly, Promise Academy, a K-4 charter school in Memphis epitomized the shortcomings of the enrollment prior to amendment. When Promise Academy first opened as a charter school, it was surrounded by six failing schools. As the schools dropped off the High Priority list, Promise Academy was faced with closure or relocation as there was no K-2 descriptor for individual eligibility. Promise Academy had but two choices: close as a charter school or relocate to continue their charter agreement to serve at-risk failing elementary public school students. They relocated at considerable cost to their organization and have been successfully operational. The current legislative amendment is designed to allow a school in similar circumstances such as Promise Academy, the flexibility to enroll K-3 students who have not failed. Whether or not twenty-five percent (25%) will be sufficient to circumvent a situation similar to that of Promise Academy should be evidenced in subsequent years.

## Tennessee Charter School Research Findings

The following section provides a summary of two annual evaluations and assessments on the Tennessee charter schools, that have been collected and analyzed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP), at the University of Memphis. The first study is the “Fifth Year Evaluation of Tennessee Charter Schools: 2007-2008”, by Donald M. Morrison, Steven M. Ross and Aaron J. McDonald. The second study is entitled, “Student-Level Analysis of Year 5 (2007-08) Achievement Outcomes for Tennessee Charter Schools”, by Todd A. Zoblotsky, Steven M. Ross, Haixia Qian, and Aaron J. McDonald. These studies reflect a series of annual reports as CREP has been involved in TN charter school analysis since its inception. The following is a synopsis of the conclusions and recommendations contained within the reports. For a more thorough understanding of the analysis, the complete versions of the reports have been attached as appendices to this report. Following this compiled section are individual reports of the Tennessee charter schools as indicated in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7: Description of Twelve Tennessee Charter Schools (Academic Year 2007-08)

School	Year	Grades	Students	Teachers			Student: Teacher Ratio	School Day (Hrs)	% Non- White	% Poverty
				FT	PT	Para				
Circles of Success Learning Academy	5	K-5	119	6	1	5	20:1	8	100	83.5
Memphis Academy of Health Sciences	5	6-8	286	19	-	-	20:1	8.5	99	81
Memphis Academy of Science & Engineering	5	6-11	649	35	-	-	19:1	10	99	72
Smithson-Craighead Academy (Nashville)	5	K-4	204	11	-	11	20:1	7	99	95
City University School of Liberal Arts	4	9-12	311	16	2	-	17:1	7.25	100	64
Star Academy	4	K-5	231	12	1	4	20:1	8	100	82
KIPP Academy Nashville	4	5-7	151	8	3	1	19:1	9.33	97	85
Memphis Business Academy	3	6-8	204	10	1	1	19:1	7.75	99	80
Promise Academy	3	K-2	175	9	1	6	19:1	9	100	94
Soulsville Charter School	3	6-8	167	10	1	-	17:1	9	100	78
Southern Avenue Charter School for Academic Excellence and Creative Arts	3	K-3	145	8	3	4	18:1	7	100	86
LEAD Academy (Nashville)	1	5-6	89	4	3	3	21:1	9.5	91	85

## **Fifth Year Evaluation of Tennessee Charter Schools (2007-08)**

### *Assessment and Instruction*

- Varieties of assessments used to track student progress.
- All schools pay attention to test scores and make use of data.
- All schools have some systems and processes to identify student at risk of failure and to provide them with extra assistance, especially in reading and math.
- All schools identify specific targets for student performance on State tests.
- All schools make an attempt to ensure that curriculum, instruction and assessment are aligned with the State of Tennessee's content and performance standards.
- Teachers are, for the most part, skillful at classroom management, make good use of instructional time, and are adept at keeping student interested, engaged and on task.
- Hands-on learning, independent research, student discussion and project-based learning were observed to be frequent or extensive.

### *School Climate*

- Principals, teachers, student and parent tended to bring out praise for the climate and culture in all of the charter schools.
- The concept of collaboration was noticeably higher in elementary than in secondary schools.
- The environment of the school received higher marks at the elementary level than at the secondary level as did "expectations", "instruction", "leadership", "order" and "parent and community involvement".

### *Teacher Perceptions*

- Teachers generally supportive of school's mission.
- Overall common belief that educational program was positively impacting student achievement.
- School has sufficient level of self-governance and autonomy.

### *Parental Perceptions*

- Overall perception is highly positive.
- Parental praise for high academic expectation.
- Desire for more extracurricular activities

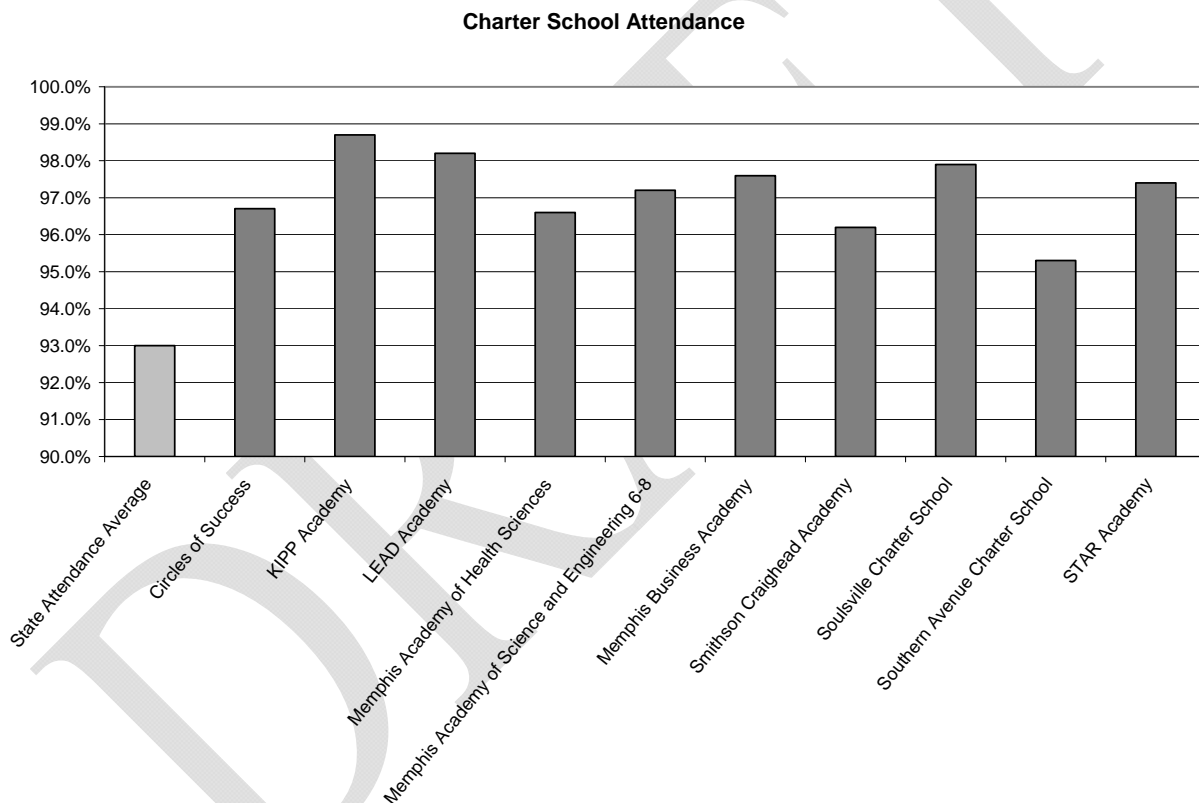
### *Recommendations*

- Adopt a set of more challenged "stretch goals" for student achievement.
- Adopt research-based instructional practices that help students acquire higher-level thinking skills and conceptual understanding.
- Adopt school-wide data-driven differentiated approaches for all students.
- Strengthen opportunities for professional development.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with family and community.
- Continue to monitor policies affecting student discipline and positive behavior.

## Charter School Attendance

For the 2007-08 school year, all of the charter schools for which attendance data is collected, reflected daily attendances that were higher than the state attendance average of 93%. As can be seen in Figure 1.8 below, charter school attendance levels reflect a composite range between 95.3% (Southern Avenue Charter School) to 98.7% (KIPP Academy Charter School). This reflects a charter school attendance measure that is at its lowest, 2.3% higher than the state average; and at its highest is 5.7% greater than the state average.

Figure 1.8 Charter School Attendance and State Average



While attendance is not a categorical descriptor for student engagement, it is a commonly cited predictor when performance indicators are taken into account. As is demonstrated below, all of the charter schools have a higher proficiency rating in both Math and Reading/LA than the state averages.

## **Student Level Analysis of Year 2007-08**

There is caution by CREP to interpret the results cautiously given that (a) this study does not reflect a randomized experimental study; and (b) some grade-level matched-pair sample sizes were small and thus subject to sampling error. In addition to the CREP analysis, data from the 2008 TN Report Card have been included. All TN charter schools must meet TN standardized

annual testing in order to remain viable charter schools. As such, the TN Report Card data is the manner by which TN demonstrates annual progress. In this capacity, the TN charter schools continue to remain at or above state averages in both Math and Reading/LA.

Additionally, T.C.A. 49-13-106 stipulates enrollment for charter schools to only include: 1) students who were previously at a charter school, 2) students in a school failing to make AYP, 3) students who are individually below proficiency in TCAP, 4) student who are individually below proficiency in Gateway, 5) students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (only K-3 and only 25% of total student body). Although charter school student bodies consist largely of students who have previously experience failure (and a correlating high percentage of Economically Challenged students), as the chart below illustrates, all of the charter schools have maintained proficiency levels that exceed the state averages in Math and Reading/LA.

## **Elementary Charter Schools**

### Third-Year Schools

*Promise Academy.* Promise Academy was not included in the analyses as the school only included grades K-2 in 2007-08, and 2007-08 test data for those grades was not available.

*Southern Avenue.* Charter membership had significant influence in Reading/LA where the mean scale score for Southern Avenue students was lower than controls. While not significant, the mean scale score in Math was also lower for Southern Avenue compared to controls.

[**TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, Southern Avenue students in Math were proficient at 89.3% compared with the state average of 45.4%. Additionally, 93% proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 91%. Similarly, in Reading/LA Southern Avenue students were proficient at 85.7% compared to the state average of 46.1%. Additionally, 93% proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 92%.]

### Fourth-Year Schools

*STAR Academy.* The mean scale score for Star Academy was higher than control students for all grades in both subject areas except for 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Math, but charter school membership was not significant.

[**TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, STAR Academy students in Math were proficient at 58.6% compared to the state average of 45.4%. Additionally, 97% proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 91%. Additionally the 2 and 3-year averages were 99% for both periods, compared to the state math 2 and 3-year averages of 91% and 90%, respectively. Similarly in Reading/LA STAR Academy students were proficient at 66.8% compared with the state average of 46.1%. Additionally, 97% proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 92%. The 2 and 3-year averages for STAR Academy were also higher at 98% and 97% compared to the state averages of 91% and 90%, respectively.]

### Fifth-Year Schools

*Circles of Success in Learning Academy (COSLA).* The mean scale score for COSLA students was higher than controls in both subject areas for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and lower than controls in 5<sup>th</sup> grade

for both subjects. While not significant, the mean for COSLA students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade was higher than controls in both subject areas.

[**TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, COSLA students in Math were proficient at 54.5% compared with the state average of 45.4%. Additionally, students were 93% proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 91%. Additionally, the 2 and 3-year averages were 97% and 98% compared to the state averages of 91% and 90%. In Reading/LA, COSLA students were 56.6% proficient compared to the state average of 46.1%. Finally, students were 95% proficient and advanced compared with the state average of 92%. Similarly, in the 2 and 3-year periods, COSLA averaged 96% and 97% compared to the state averages of 91% and 90%, respectively.]

*Smithson Craighead Academy (SCA).* Charter school membership had significant influence on 2007-08 achievement for 4th grade in both subject areas, with control students having higher scale score means in both cases. While not significant, the mean scale score for Smithson students was lower than controls in both subject areas for 3rd grade as well.

[**TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, SCA students in Math were proficient at 59.5% compared to the state average of 45.4%. In Reading/LA, SCA students were 65.5% proficient compared to the state average of 46.1%.]

## **Middle and Secondary Charter Schools**

### First-Year Schools

*LEAD Academy.* Charter school membership did not have a significant effect in either Reading/LA or Math for students in either 5th or 6th grades.

[**TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 64.3% of LEAD students in Math were proficient compared with the state average of 45.4%. In Reading/LA LEAD students were 56.7% proficient compared with the state average of 46.1%.]

### Third-Year Schools

*KIPP Academy Nashville.* KIPP students significantly outscored controls in both subjects in 7th grade.

[**TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 63.8% of KIPP Academy students in Math compared to the state average of 45.4. Additionally, KIPP students were proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 91%. In Reading/LA, KIPP students were 62.1% proficient compared with the state average of 46.1%.]

*Memphis Business Academy.* MBA students significantly outscored controls in both subjects in 6th grade. In addition, MBA students in 6th grade had a significantly larger percentage of students score Advanced compared to controls.

**[TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 65.8% MBA students were proficient in Math, compared with the 45.4% state average. In addition, 95% of KIPP Academy students in Math were proficient and advanced, compared with the state average of 91%. MBA students equaled the state 2-year average and were 89% as compared to the state average of 90% in the 3-year average of proficient and advanced. In Reading/LA, MBA students averaged 65.3% compared to the state average of 46.1%. MBA students also averaged 97% proficient and advanced compared to the state average of 92%. Additionally, MBA students averaged 93% and 88% compared to the state 2 and 3-year average of 91% and 90%, respectively.]

*The Soulsville Charter School.* In 7th grade for the combined cohorts, Soulsville students significantly outscored controls in both subjects. In 8th grade for the combined cohorts, Soulsville students significantly outscored controls in both subjects for those who took regular 8th grade Math. In addition, 8th grade Soulsville students who took Algebra I (instead of regular 8th grade Math) significantly outscored controls on the Gateway Algebra I exam. Finally, Soulsville students in 7th grade had a significantly larger percentage of students score Advanced in both subjects.

**[TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 51.7% were proficient in Math compared to the state average of 45.4%. In Reading/LA, Soulsville students were proficient at 60.8% compared to the state average of 46.1%. Additionally, Soulsville student were proficient and advanced at 95% compared with the state average of 92%. Finally, the 2 and 3-year comparisons demonstrate that Soulsville students were proficient and advanced at 93% and 90% compared to the state average for the same time periods at 91% and 90%, respectively.]

#### Fourth-Year Schools

*City University School of Liberal Arts.* For the Algebra I and English 10 Gateway test scores analyzed, no major effects or trends were found. However, City U students significantly outscored controls on the 9th grade English 9 EOC.

**[TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 48.9% of City U students were proficient in Math compared to the state average of 36.9%. In Reading/LA City U students were 36.2% proficient compared with the state average of 29.8%. Additionally, City U students were proficient and advanced at the same percentage as the state average (93%). Finally, in the 2 and 3-year comparisons of proficient and advanced, City U students were 95% and 97% compared to the state averages of 92% and 92%, respectively.]

#### Fifth-Year Schools

*Memphis Academy of Health Sciences.* MAHS students outscored controls in Reading/LA for students in both 6th and 7th grades.

**[TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 66.8% of MAHS students were proficient in Math compared to the state average of 45.4%. MAHS students equaled the state average of 91% in proficient and advanced and scored 91% and 91% for the 2 and 3-year averages of proficient and advanced, compared to the state

average of 91% and 90%. In Reading/LA, MAHS students were 60.8% proficient, compared with the state average of 46.1%. Additionally, MAHS students were proficient and advanced at 96% compared with the state average of 92%. Finally, in the 2 and 3-year averages of proficient and advanced, MAHS scored 95% and 93% compared to the state averages of 91% and 90% for the same time periods.]

Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering. MASE 8th grade students in Reading/LA (for students who did not also take Algebra I) significantly outsourced controls. Controls significantly outsourced MASE in 7th grade Math and in 9th grade Algebra I. Controls also had a significantly higher percentage of students score Advanced in 7th grade. For 9th grade students, MASE had a significantly higher percentage of students score Below Proficient, and a significantly lower percentage score Advanced.

**[TN REPORT CARD 2008:** As reported in the 2008 TN Report Card, 65.6% of MAHS middle school students were proficient in Math compared to the state average of 45.4%. In Reading/LA, MAHS middle school students were 65.6% proficient compared to the state average of 46.1%. At the high school level, 57.1% of the Math students were proficient, compared with the state average of 36.9%. In Reading/LA, 41.8% of MAHS students were proficient, compared to 29.8% at the state average. Additionally, 97% of the MAHS students were proficient and advanced, compared to the state average of 93% and 98% were advanced in the 2-year average, compared with the state average of 92% (no MAHS data for the 3-year comparison).]

### **Poverty and Proficiency**

As is illustrated in Figure 1.9, all of the Tennessee charter schools have a student body that is significantly economically disadvantaged. On the low end, the City University student body is 65% economically disadvantaged, while on the high end, Smithson Craighead Academy has a student body that is 95% economically disadvantaged, both higher than the state average of 54.5% as can be seen in Figure 1.9.

Due to the nature of the previously discussed enrollment qualifier in T.C.A. 49-13-106, these percentages are not surprising. However, what must also be considered is that all of the Tennessee charter schools continue to make Annual Yearly Progress with their student populations. Additionally, as is demonstrated in Figure 2.1 and 2.2, all of the charter schools in Tennessee achieved a higher rate of proficiency than the state proficiency average. Finally it must be noted that the state average reflects a composite of all of the public schools in the state, inclusive of magnet, high performing and low performing schools. This is contrasted with the pool of charter schools, which operate with limited budgets, a higher-than-state-average poverty percentage, higher accountability and a restricted enrollment.

Figure 1.9 Charter School Poverty and State Average

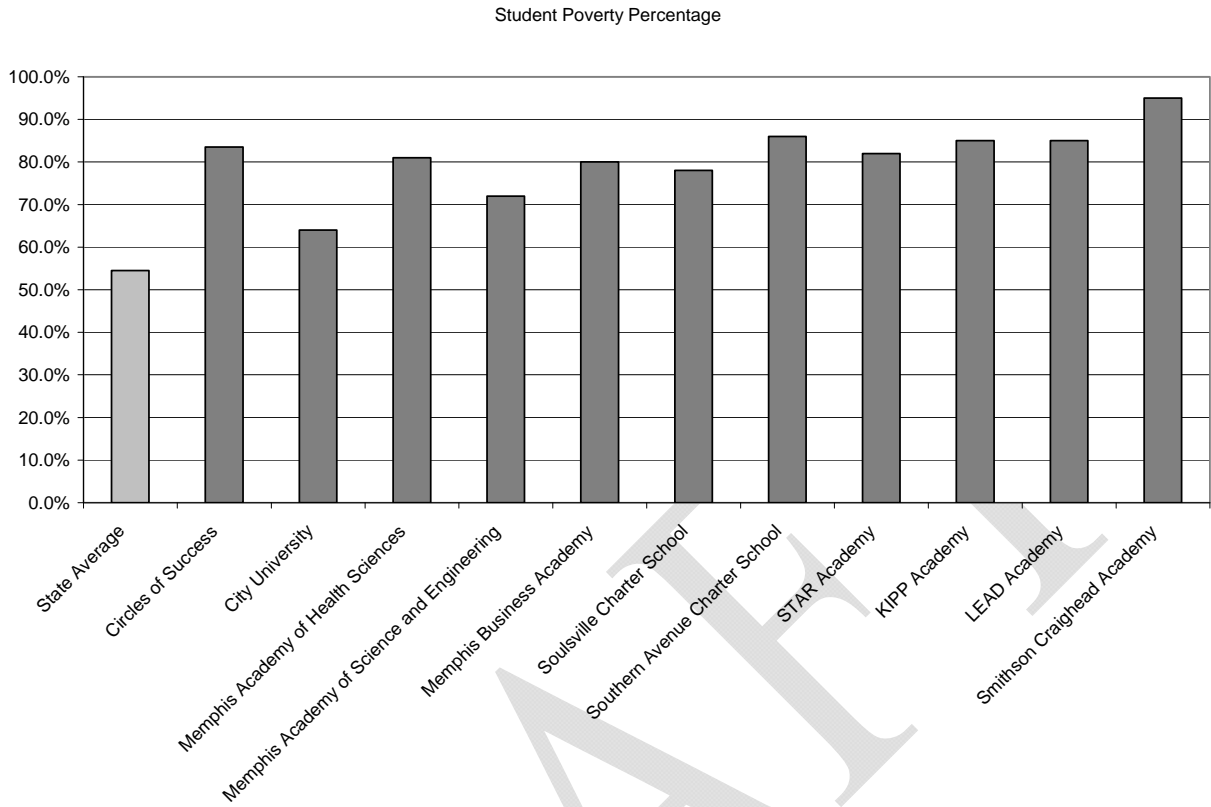


Figure 2.1 Charter School and State Averages for Elementary Proficiency

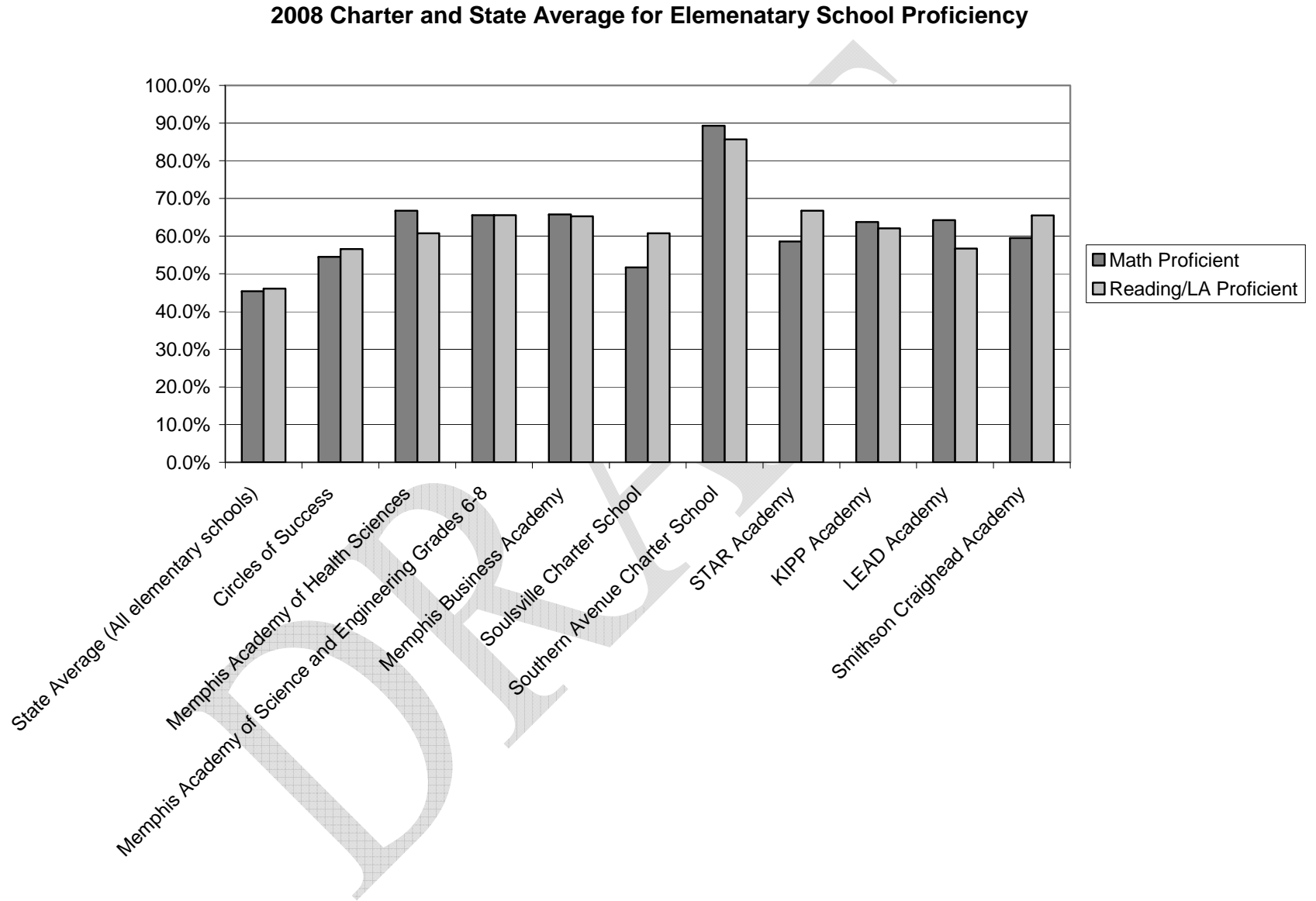
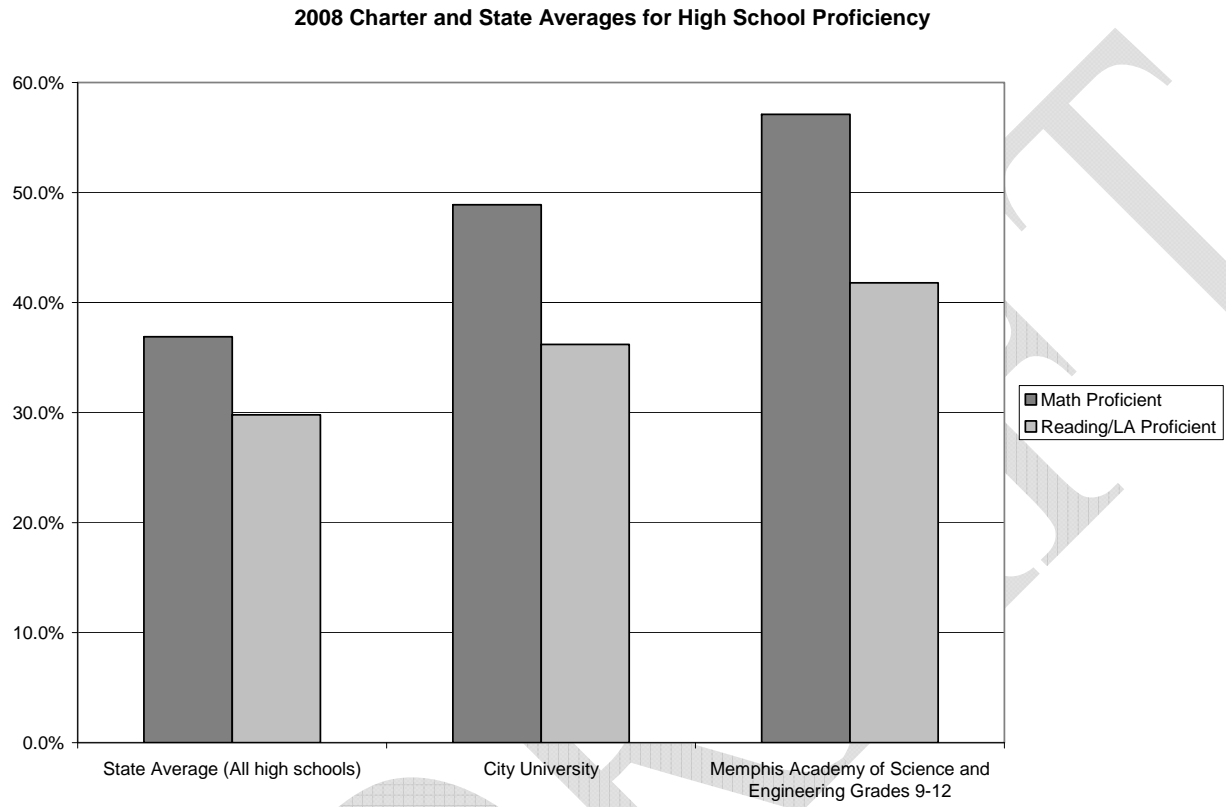


Figure 2.2 Charter School and State Averages for Secondary Proficiency



# Circles of Success Learning Academy

867 S. Parkway, E.

Memphis, TN 38106

Phone: 901-322-7978

Fax: 901-322-7993

Website: [www.circlesofsuccess.org](http://www.circlesofsuccess.org)

**Opened:** 2003

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** The Works, Inc.

**Principal:** Sheri Catron

## Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: K-5

Student Enrollment: 114

Full-time teachers: 6

Part-time teachers: 1

Paraprofessionals: 5

Student-Teacher Ratio: 20:1

School Day: 8 hours

Non-white: 100 %

Poverty: 83.5 %

## AYP Historicals

<b>Report Card 2004 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2005 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2006 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2007 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2008 Listing</b>
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<b>Not Listed</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>
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**School and Community Characteristics:** Circles of Success Learning Academy (COSLA) is an urban school located in south Memphis and housed in the Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church. The community in which the school is located has been identified as a target zone for city improvement because of its large number of low-income families, poor housing conditions, high rate of public assistance, and low levels of student academic achievement. The school utilizes the *Success for All* reading program and emphasizes cross curricular integration of reading and writing. COSLA was started as the result of planning done by Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church to identify alternatives for helping children at risk of failing in traditional school settings to improve their academic achievement. It was determined that an entire school rather than a summer or after-school program could best address identified needs.

**Mission:** The mission of the school is to educate the whole child to function productively at the middle and secondary school levels; to holistically encircle the child with the models, methods, and academic means of success. The school will provide an alternative route to academic and social success for K-5 students who are at risk of failing to reach their full potential in traditional school settings.

## Memphis Academy of Health Sciences

3925 Chelsea Extended

Memphis, TN 38108

Phone: 901-382-1441

Fax: 901-382-1944

Website: [www.mahsmemphis.com](http://www.mahsmemphis.com)

**Opened:** 2003

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** 100 Black Men of Memphis

**Principal:** Mr. Curtis Weathers

### Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: 6-8

Student Enrollment: 279

Full-time teachers: 19

Part-time teachers: 0

Paraprofessionals: 0

Student-Teacher Ratio: 20:1

School Day: 8.5 hours

Non-white: 99 %

Poverty: 81 %

### AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card</u> <u>2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card</u> <u>2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card</u> <u>2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card</u> <u>2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card</u> <u>2008 Listing</u>
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**Good  
Standing**

**Not  
Listed**

**Good  
Standing**

**Good  
Standing**

**Good  
Standing**

**School and Community Characteristics:** Memphis Academy of Health Sciences (MAHS) is located north of downtown Memphis in an old, high poverty area of the city and is housed in Caldwell Elementary School. The community around the school is changing as families exit the neighborhood. The curriculum at MAHS is standards-based, interdisciplinary and focuses on a health sciences theme. Interest in starting a charter school such as MAHS began a decade ago. Parties to the discussion about starting a school realized that the charter school movement would grow, and the billion dollar expansion of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital caused them to recognize the need for health care professionals. Due to their interest in the educational future of the city, 100 Black Men of Memphis, Inc. assumed the role of sponsor for the school.

**Mission:** The Memphis Academy for Health Sciences will equip students with the necessary skills to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our students will demonstrate the ability to read, write, speak and calculate with clarity and precision. Successful transition to high school will be a primary goal for all. The Academy's structured yet caring environment will help to instill in our students a desire to participate passionately and responsibly in their own learning and growth, their families, and the life of their communities.

# Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering

20 S. Dudley St.

Memphis, TN 38103

Phone: 901-448-6273

Fax: 901-448-6266

Website: <http://www.discovermase.org>

**Opened:** 2003

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** Memphis Bioworks Foundation

**Principal:** Mr. Tommie Henderson

## Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: 6-11

Student Enrollment: 598

Full-time teachers: 35

Part-time teachers: 0

Paraprofessionals: 0

Student-Teacher Ratio: 19:1

School Day: 10 hours

Non-white: 99%

Poverty: 72%

## AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card 2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2008 Listing</u>
<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>

**School and Community Characteristics:** Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering (MASE) is located in downtown Memphis in space on the former campus of Baptist Hospital and another ancillary campus located several blocks away. It is in the heart of the medical center district and is a part of the Bioscience Education Center, a component of the new UT/Baptist Research Park, which is to play a critical role in economic development. The curriculum at the school emphasizes math, science, and technology. MASE originated as the visions of Dr. Steve Bares, President of the Memphis Biotech Foundation, and Mr. Tommie Henderson, then a teacher at East High School and now MASE principal, converged. Mr. Henderson had a desire to expand a concept of steering a cohort group of inner-city youth through a rigorous science program into postsecondary education, and Dr. Bares was seeking to start a school that would serve as the centerpiece of a revitalized biomedical research center.

**Mission:** The mission of the Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering is to produce lifelong learners, critical thinkers, effective communicators, and productive members of the global community through focus on state and national standards, strong industrial partnerships, numerous research opportunities, continuous technological improvements, and a staff committed to social awareness, excellence, and personal responsibility. Students will be committed to the idea that success in any form is the result of hard work, self-respect, and perseverance.

# Smithson Craighead Academy

3307 Brick Church Pike.

Nashville, TN 37207

Phone: 615-228-9886

Fax: 615-228-9799

Website: <http://www.smithsoncraighead.org/index.html>

**Opened:** 2003

**Authorized by:** Metro Nashville Public Schools

**Sponsored by:** Project Reflect

**Principal:** Ms. Janelle Glover

## Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: K-4  
Student Enrollment: 204  
Full-time teachers: 11  
Part-time teachers: 0  
Paraprofessionals: 11  
Student-Teacher Ratio: 20:1  
School Day: 7 hours  
Non-white: 99%  
Poverty: 95%

## AYP Historicals

<b>Report Card 2004 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2005 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2006 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2007 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2008 Listing</b>
<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>

**School and Community Characteristics:** Smithson Craighead Academy (SCA) is an urban school located in Nashville. It is housed in a freestanding traditional looking school building that previously housed a Seventh Day Adventist School. The school seeks to provide students with a strong foundation in basic academic skills that will enable their success throughout their school career. SCA originated from the result of work done by founder Sister Sandra Smithson through Project Reflect, an organization working with at-risk children in Nashville in order provide early intervention, values education, and basic instruction.

**Mission:** The mission of Smithson-Craighead Academy is to build basic academic skills as a foundation for the ongoing success of every child.

# City University School of Liberal Arts

4748 Winchester Rd.

Memphis, TN 38118

Phone: 901-368-9890

Fax: 901-368-9894

Website: <http://www.cityuniversitieschool.org>

**Opened:** 2004

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** The Influence1 Foundation

**Principal:** T.J. Graham (Interim)

## Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: 9-12

Student Enrollment: 309

Full-time teachers: 16

Part-time teachers: 2

Paraprofessionals: 0

Student-Teacher Ratio: 17:1

School Day: 7.25 hours

Non-white: 100%

Poverty: 64%

## AYP Historicals

<b>Report Card 2004 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2005 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2006 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2007 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2008 Listing</b>
<b>No Charter Status</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>

**School and Community Characteristics:** City University School of Liberal Arts is located at Greater Middle Baptist Church. The school targets students who have completed the terminal grade at a low performing middle school or who transfer from a low performing high school. CUSLA collaborates with the College Board in order to provide students with the curricular foundation needed to succeed in post secondary education. The schools college-oriented focus is reinforced by references to teachers as “professors” and students as “scholars.”

**Mission:** The City University School of Liberal Arts will prepare its students with the necessary skills to be twenty-first century scholars and citizens. A college preparatory high school with a liberal arts core and operated as a Center of Excellence for Student Development, CUSLA will provide academically rigorous and socially enriching educational opportunities for its students. Upon graduation, these scholars will be better prepared to enter college as intellectually sophisticated citizens with a vigor for learning.

## Soaring Toward Academic Readiness (STAR) Academy

3260 James Rd.

Memphis, TN 38128

Phone: 901-387-5050

Fax: 901-387-0798

Website: <http://www.staracademycharter.com>

**Note:** STAR Academy received the “2007 Distinguished School Award” which recognizes outstanding Title I schools.

**Opened:** 2004

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** Golden Gate Development Corporation

**Principal:** Dr. Kia Tate

### Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: K-5

Student Enrollment: 231

Full-time teachers: 12

Part-time teachers: 1

Paraprofessionals: 4

Student-Teacher Ratio: 20:1

School Day: 8 hours

Non-white: 100%

Poverty: 82%

### AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card 2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2008 Listing</u>
No Charter Status	Not Listed	Good Standing	Good Standing	Good Standing

**School and Community Characteristics:** Star Academy is located in northeast Memphis. The school is housed in a former preschool building on the grounds of a Baptist church. In its second year of operation, the school served 154 students in kindergarten through third grade. The student population was predominantly African American (98%), with approximately 90% qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. The school maintained a staff of seven full-time teachers, two part-time teachers, and three paraprofessionals. The student to full-time teacher ratio was 22:1. The primary focus of Star Academy is “back to basics,” with an emphasis on literacy and mathematical competencies. Additional programs include character education, exploratory lessons in visual and creative arts (varies according to grade level), music, technology (third grade), and physical education.

**Mission:** The mission of STAR Academy is to become a beacon in the community as a school of excellence that offers a balanced, coherent and academically rich curriculum in an atmosphere that is family-oriented, community supported, developmentally appropriate, safe and nurturing for kindergarten through fifth grade children from low-performing schools in Memphis, so that they may become productive human beings who strive for greatness and make meaningful contributions to society.

## **KIPP Academy**

123 Douglas Avenue

Nashville, TN 37207

Phone: 615-226-4484

Fax: 615-226-4401

Website: [www.kippacademynashville.org](http://www.kippacademynashville.org)

**Opened:** 2005

**Authorized by:** Metro Nashville Public Schools

**Sponsored by:** KIPP Foundation

**Principal:** Randy Dowell

### **Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors**

Grades Served: 5-7

Student Enrollment: 151

Full-time teachers: 8

Part-time teachers: 3

Paraprofessionals: 1

Student-Teacher Ratio: 19:1

School Day: 9.33 hours

Non-white: 97%

Poverty: 85%

### **AYP Historicals**

<b>Report Card 2004 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2005 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2006 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2007 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2008 Listing</b>
<b>No Charter Status</b>	<b>No Charter Status</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>	<b>Good Standing</b>

**School and Community Characteristics:** KIPP Academy is located in a high-poverty section of east Nashville in a previously abandoned building owned by the Metropolitan Nashville Public School System. During its first year of operation, the school served 57 fifth grade students. Most (93%) of these students were African American and 88% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The school maintained a staff of two full-time teachers, five part-time teachers and one paraprofessional. The principal also taught for part of the day. The student to teacher ratio as reported by the KIPP Academy was 15:1. The school was chartered as a Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) school and lists its school motto as "Work Hard," "Be Nice," and "Be Honest." The school is distinguished by several extensions to the typical school calendar: extended school hours, Saturday school held two weeks out of each month, and an extended school year with a two-week summer program.

**Mission:** The KIPP program is based on the belief that with hard work, all students can learn. To accomplish our goal of preparing our students for the best high schools and colleges and the competitive world beyond, KIPPsters attend school approximately 40 percent more time than most MNPS students. More time on task, in the form of an extended school day, Saturday school as well as a two-week summer session, provide KIPPsters a rigorous college-preparatory education that is balanced by extracurricular activities and experiential field lessons. This combination has yielded, on average, two years of academic growth in the first years of the program.

# Memphis Business Academy

3333 Old Brownsville Rd.

Memphis, TN 38134

Phone: 901-380-8176

Fax: 901-380-8179

**Opened:** 2005

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** Memphis Business Academy, Inc.

**Principal:** Menthia Clark

## Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: 6-8

Student Enrollment: 180

Full-time teachers: 10

Part-time teachers: 1

Paraprofessionals: 1

Student-Teacher Ratio: 19:1

School Day: 7.75 hours

Non-white: 99%

Poverty: 80%

## AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card 2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2008 Listing</u>
No Charter Status	No Charter Status	Good Standing	Good Standing	Good Standing

**School and Community Characteristics:** Memphis Business Academy is located in the business district in downtown Memphis. Housed in the basement of a church, this charter school's facility is small and unconventional in comparison to a traditional school setting. In its first year of operation, the school served 62 sixth grade students. Almost all of the students (98%) were African American, and 75% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The school employed six full-time teachers, two part-time teachers, and one paraprofessional. The student to teacher ratio was 17:1. The school incorporates business education, entrepreneurship and financial responsibilities into the core curriculum.

**Mission:** To prepare students to be academically successful in high school. To ensure that the school makes adequate yearly progress. To provide additional academic support for all students who are not yet meeting achievement benchmarks. To provide teachers with ongoing, high-quality professional development. To establish a positive school environment that meets the social and emotional needs of students and faculty. To grow partnerships with families and the community to support student academic success. To maintain high levels of organizational accountability in the areas of student achievement, faculty performance, and fiscal management.

## Promise Academy

1346 Bryan St.  
Memphis, TN 38108  
Phone: 901-416-4860

**Opened:** 2005

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** Promise Academy, Inc.

**Principal:** Dr. Blakley Wallace

### Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: K-2  
Student Enrollment: 173  
Full-time teachers: 9  
Part-time teachers: 1  
Paraprofessionals: 6  
Student-Teacher Ratio: 19:1  
School Day: 9 hours  
Non-white: 100%  
Poverty: 94%

### AYP Historicals

<b>Report Card 2004 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2005 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2006 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2007 Listing</b>	<b>Report Card 2008 Listing</b>
<b>No Charter Status</b>	<b>No Charter Status</b>	<b>No Charter Status</b>	<b>Safe School</b>	<b>Safe School</b>

**School and Community Characteristics:** Promise Academy is located in Memphis and until recently was housed in St. Paul's Episcopal Church. This past summer, Promise Academy completed a move into one of the MCS buildings, through a leasing arrangement with MCS. More information on Promise Academy may be found in the case study on page 11 of this report. Of the 120 kindergarten-grade one students served during the first year, 99% were African American and 89% were eligible for free or reduced price lunches. Three full-time teachers, one part-time teacher and two paraprofessionals were employed by the school. The student to teacher ratio was 18:1.

**Mission:** The school's mission is "to prepare children to excel in the nation's most rigorous high schools. Our central and only work is to teach and inspire the mind, body and spirit of our children so that they can succeed in any academic or cultural setting." The educators at Promise Academy want their students to learn and excel and want to provide that opportunity in a unique atmosphere that the students would not experience in most elementary schools.

# Southern Avenue Charter School of Academic Excellence and Creative Arts

3310 Kimball Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38111  
Phone: 901-743-7335  
Fax: 901-743-7677

**Opened:** 2005

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** Children’s Care & Development Center, Inc.

**Principal:** Mr. Van Snyder

## Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: K-3  
Student Enrollment: 144  
Full-time teachers: 8  
Part-time teachers: 3  
Paraprofessionals: 4  
Student-Teacher Ratio: 18:1  
School Day: 7 hours  
Non-white: 100%  
Poverty: 86%

## AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card 2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2008 Listing</u>
No Charter Status	No Charter Status	Safe School	Safe School	Good Standing

**School and Community Characteristics:** Southern Avenue Charter School for Academic Excellence is located in Memphis and housed at Greenwood Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, near the University of Memphis campus. During its first year of operation, 65 kindergarten and first grade students were served. In addition to the basic curriculum, “kaleidoscope” activities such as art, music, ballet and tae kwon do were offered. The school also offers Spanish once a week. The school calendar and school days are extended at Southern Avenue, with “kaleidoscope” classes beginning at 3:00 in the afternoon. The school supplements the students’ education with Reading and Math tutorials during an after school program, which runs from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

**Mission:** The mission of the school is to educate the whole child to experience academic and social successes through a variety of researched-based, data-driven teaching methods and cognitive developing activities. Southern Avenue Charter School of Academic Excellence and Creative Arts provides an alternative route to success for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who are failing to reach full potential in traditional school settings. Our school is committed to increasing the child’s learning capacity forever by providing an exciting research-based, data-driven, comprehensive program of excellence in academics, creative arts, social, and cultural development.

## Soulsville Charter School (formerly Stax Music Academy)

926 E. McLemore Ave.

Memphis, TN 38106

Phone: 901-946-2535

Fax: 901-507-1460

**Opened:** 2005

**Authorized by:** Memphis City Schools

**Sponsored by:** Stax Music Academy Charter School, LLC

**Principal:** Dr. David Hill, School Director

### Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: 6-8

Student Enrollment: 162

Full-time teachers: 10

Part-time teachers: 1

Paraprofessionals: 0

Student-Teacher Ratio: 17:1

School Day: 9 hours

Non-white: 100%

Poverty: 78%

### AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card 2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2008 Listing</u>
No Charter Status	No Charter Status	Good Standing	Good Standing	Good Standing

**School and Community Characteristics:** The Soulsville Charter School, formerly known as Stax Music Academy, is located in a lower socio-economic urban area in Memphis. It is housed on the same property as the historic Stax Museum of American Soul Music, known as *Soulsville, USA*. The school adopted its new name in the 2006-07 school year. In the school's second year of operation, the 2006-07 school year, 117 sixth and seventh grade students were served. All students were African American, and 82% qualified for free or reduced price lunch.

**Mission:** The mission of Soulsville, is to provide music education and exciting performance opportunities designed to enhance our students' musical abilities and their academic and leadership skills so they may become prosperous citizens and facilitators for community change. The school incorporates a concentration on orchestra and musical skills development into the core curriculum developed by Memphis City Schools. The school's plan includes extended school days and half-day Saturday classes.

## LEAD Academy

1704 Heiman Street  
Nashville, TN 37208  
Phone: 615-327-5422  
Fax: 615-327-5425

**Opened:** 2007

**Authorized by:** Metro Nashville Public Schools

**Sponsored by:** LEAD Academy

**Principal:** Jeremy Kane, School Director

### Academic Year 2007-08 School Descriptors

Grades Served: 5-6  
Student Enrollment: 89  
Full-time teachers: 4  
Part-time teachers: 3  
Paraprofessionals: 3  
Student-Teacher Ratio: 21:1  
School Day: 9.5 hours  
Non-white: 91%  
Poverty: 85%

### AYP Historicals

<u>Report Card 2004 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2005 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2006 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2007 Listing</u>	<u>Report Card 2008 Listing</u>
No Charter Status	No Charter Status	No Charter Status	No Charter Status	Good Standing

**School and Community Characteristics:** During the academic year 2007-2008, the first year of operation, the school served 89 students in grades 5-6. Students were 88% African-American, 9% White, 2% Asian, and 1% Hispanic. A large percentage (85%) were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The school employed 4 full-time teachers, 3 part-time teachers and 3 paraprofessionals. LEAD Academy is a member of the Expeditionary Learning school reform network and intends to combine an emphasis on college preparation with “learning expeditions.” The plan is to add one grade a year, up through grade 12. The school begins three weeks before regular Nashville public schools, has an extended day (7:30 AM to 5:00 PM), and offers a Saturday school.

**Mission:** LEAD Academy exists to support, train, and educate the next generation of responsible citizens. LEAD academy prepares all its students to graduate from high school by offering a college-preparatory academic curriculum and supplementing it with creative and engaging learning expeditions, service-learning opportunities, a unique Responsible Living Program, and a 7-year college-counseling and preparation program.

## Conclusion

In Tennessee, as is similar to the rest of the country with charter school legislation, the charter school movement continues to grow, albeit slower than other states. As the following Table 2.2 illustrates, Tennessee charter schools opened in the Fall of 2003. Other than Fall of 2006 and 2007, the TN Charter School movement has demonstrated slow and sustained growth with the addition of approximately 3 new schools per year. As Table 1.1 on page 4 demonstrates, the most recent application window resulted in

Table 2.2

<b>Cohort 1 Schools Opened Fall 2003</b>	
Circles of Success Learning Academy	Memphis City Schools
Memphis Academy of Health Sciences	Memphis City Schools
Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering	Memphis City Schools
Smithson Craighead Academy	Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
<b>Cohort 2 Schools Opened Fall 2004</b>	
City University School of Liberal Arts	Memphis City Schools
STAR Academy	Memphis City Schools
Yo! Academy	Memphis City Schools
<b>Cohort 3 Schools Opened Fall 2005</b>	
Promise	Memphis City Schools
Memphis Business Academy	Memphis City Schools
Southern Avenue Charter School	Memphis City Schools
Soulsville Charter School (formerly STAX)	Memphis City Schools
KIPP Academy	Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
<b>Cohort 4 Schools Opened Fall 2006</b>	
<b>Cohort 5 Schools Opened Fall 2007</b>	
LEAD Academy	Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
<b>Cohort 6 Schools Opened Fall 2008</b>	
KIPP Diamond	Memphis City Schools
Memphis Academy of Health Sciences-High School	Memphis City Schools
Memphis Business Academy-High School	Memphis City Schools
Power Center Academy	Memphis City Schools

14 charter applications. As indicated earlier, of that total, there are some significant innovative charter applications, including initiatives for a “green” charter school (Ivy Academy/HCDE), single-sex girls charter school (Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy/HCDE), single-sex boys preparatory charter school (City University School Boys Preparatory/MCS and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Preparatory School for Boys/MCS), and a plan for a LEA-sponsored conversion charter school (MCS). These applications represent several interesting charter applications that are designed to uniquely address a demographic of students with an educational program and design that is meant to create further success.

The Department of Education is committed to providing the resources and services necessary in assuring that all students receive an education that will promote them to their highest levels. Whether Tennessee children are enrolled in charter schools or non-charter schools, they are still “our children” and deserve the highest quality public education possible. As the number of charter schools continues to grow, staff members will partner with charter school stakeholders and continue to build the infrastructure necessary to meet this goal within the context of creating and supporting high quality charter schools.