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## Fact Sheet

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### Charter Schools

- ✓ Charter schools are tuition-free, independent public schools exempt from some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools in exchange for accountability for improving student achievement. In North Carolina, the goal of charter schools is to provide increased choice and learning opportunities (with a special emphasis on students who are identified as at risk of academic failure or academically gifted), to encourage creative teaching methods, and to offer new professional opportunities for educators.
- ✓ North Carolina law limits the number of charters to 100. The initial charter is granted for up to 10 years with a 5 year review. North Carolina currently has 97 charter schools serving about 38,000 students. Charter schools have open enrollment but may have a cap on the number of students served. If there are more applicants than open slots, a lottery must be used to fill the remaining spots.
- ✓ Wake County has the highest concentration of charter schools in the State, with 13 schools serving about 6,000 students.
- ✓ There are currently about 5,000 public charter schools in 39 states and the District of Columbia, serving 1.6 million students.
- ✓ Ten of the 13 charter schools in Wake County are racially identifiable schools—seven of the 13 have a student population that is 75 percent or higher White; three of the 13 schools have student populations that are 90 percent or more Black.
- ✓ A recent study conducted by Stanford University found that 17 percent of charter schools reported academic gains that were significantly better than traditional public schools; 46 percent showed no difference from public schools; and 37 percent were significantly worse than their traditional public school counterparts. (Source: “Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States,” Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2009, <http://credo.stanford.edu>.)
- ✓ In North Carolina charter schools, the Stanford study found that reading gains were significantly higher and math gains significantly lower in charter school students compared to traditional public school students. For low-income students, charter schools had a larger, positive effect on reading and no difference in math compared to their traditional public school peers. African-American students performed significantly below their traditional public school counterparts in math, with no real difference in reading. (Source: [http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/NC\\_CHARTEr%20SCHOOL%20REPORT\\_CREDO\\_2009.pdf](http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/NC_CHARTEr%20SCHOOL%20REPORT_CREDO_2009.pdf))

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