

Request for Analysis and Report to the Board

The Board requests an analysis with regards to the systemic impact that charter schools have had on the system. Given that the district is about to have 20 charter schools as part of its system, it is time to evaluate the systemic impact as well as our future vision for continuing to open charter schools. The analysis should include the following:

1. Programmatic impact to neighborhood schools that surround a charter school (e.g. ability to provide full time staff for music, p.e. art, ability to purchase curriculum resources, sufficient special education and mental health support staff). How much impact is due to declining enrollment of students enrolling in a charter vs. open enrolling in other neighborhood schools vs. natural attrition of an aging community.
2. Overall financial impact to the system. The majority of elementary charter school students graduate to neighborhood secondary schools. Is there a spend difference for a student who matriculates through a K – 12 neighborhood school vs. a student who attends a charter school during elementary years and then transfers to a neighborhood secondary school.

Bond programs typically fund new buildings not PPR. Charter schools are required to use more PPR to support building needs. Is less money going to a charter student's instructional resources than a student in a neighborhood school?

Because of this building need, charter schools receive 100% of PPR. PPR that is distributed to neighborhood schools SBBs is differentiated by level (e.g. middle and high school receive more per student SBB funding than elementary). The 100% PPR that is given to elementary charter schools is not differentiated. Therefore, is a charter school student's K – 12 education expensed at a higher cost?

3. Overall impact on delivering special education services to all students. Given that charters have been used to accommodate growth, have magnet/center-based programs been equally distributed for equitable access throughout the district? How many charters house intensive programs that meet the needs of students identified as SSN? Hearing impaired? ESL?

4. The main philosophy of the 1993 Charter Schools Act was to provide, "smaller environments to experiment with educational programs and develop innovative ways to educate at-risk students." (C.R.S. 22-30.5-101 et.seq). In 1996-1998 revisions were made to include the following purposes: To increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving," and "To encourage diverse approaches to learning and education, and the use of different, innovative research-based, or proven teaching methods." Are we still aligned to carrying out this philosophy and purpose in our continued opening of charters?