

Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools:

A Comparison of the Performance of Charter School Students with Traditional Public School Students



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Improving K-12 Educational Choice Options



About This Report

Section 1002.33(23), Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Department of Education to prepare an annual statewide analysis of student achievement in charter schools versus the achievement of comparable students in traditional public schools. This report of charter school student performance fulfills the statutory requirement for the 2012-13 school year. The analysis examines the average performance of charter school students and traditional public school students using 2012-13 state assessment data from the FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics and Science, and the Algebra end-of-course exams. Only students who were enrolled in a charter school or a traditional public school for an entire school year are included in the analysis. Limiting the analysis to include only full-year students is consistent with the state's school accountability system for awarding school grades. The report compares charter and traditional public schools in terms of proficiency, learning gains and achievement gap. The data included in this report is based on over 3.2 million test scores from the 2012-13 school year, and includes all state assessment test scores reported to the department.

The analysis and production of this report was a coordinated effort between the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice and the Bureau of Accountability Reporting in the Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement. Additional information about charter schools and other school choice options is available on the department's website at:

www.floridaschoolchoice.org.

Section 1002.33(23), Florida Statutes ANALYSIS OF CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.--Upon receipt of the annual report required by paragraph (9)(l), the Department of Education shall provide to the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives an analysis and comparison of the overall performance of charter school students, to include all students whose scores are counted as part of the statewide assessment program, versus comparable public school students in the district as determined by the statewide assessment program currently administered in the school district, and other assessments administered pursuant to s. 1008.22(3).

Student Achievement in Florida's Charter Schools: Key Findings

The data contained in this report, based on over 3.2 million test scores, is derived from student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT 2.0) and Algebra end-of-course exams. This report is designed to allow a comparative analysis of the academic achievement of students attending charter schools versus students attending traditional public schools. Using data from the 2012-13 school year, the report makes 177 comparisons in three areas: proficiency, achievement gaps and learning gains. Each of these areas includes overall as well as sub-group comparisons across subject areas and grade levels.

The FCAT 2.0 and Algebra end-of-course exam proficiency percentages are used to measure both overall rates of proficiency by grade groupings and comparisons of subgroup performance. This section of the report contains 63 separate comparisons of student achievement. In 58 of the 63 comparisons students enrolled in charter schools demonstrated higher proficiency rates. In 5 of the 63 comparisons students enrolled in traditional public schools demonstrated higher proficiency rates.

The achievement gap section of the report contains data that are used to analyze the gap between white students and African American students, and white students and Hispanic students, in reading, mathematics, and science. This section of the report includes 18 separate comparisons of current achievement gaps. The achievement gap was lower for charter school students in 18 of the 18 comparisons.

The learning gains section of the report includes 96 comparisons. The report compares the percentage of students in charter schools making learning gains against the percentage of students in traditional public schools making learning gains, by subject, grade level and subgroup. The percentage of students making learning gains was higher in charter schools in 76 of the 96 comparisons. The percentage of students making learning gains was higher in traditional public schools in 10 of the 96 comparisons. There was no difference in the percentage of students making learning gains in 10 of the 96 comparisons.

Table of Contents

Florida's Charter Schools: A Primer	1
Demographics	2
School Grades	3
FCAT Reading: All and Subgroup Comparisons	4
FCAT Mathematics: All and Subgroup Comparisons	8
FCAT Science: All and Subgroup Comparisons	12
Algebra: All and Subgroup Comparisons.	16
Achievement Gap: Reading.	20
Achievement Gap: Mathematics	21
Achievement Gap: Science	22
Achievement Gap: Algebra	23
Learning Gains Comparison in Reading and Mathematics.	24
FCAT Proficiency Data.	36
FCAT Learning Gains Data	39



FLORIDA'S
CHARTER
Schools



Florida's Charter Schools: A Primer

Charter schools are public schools, operated independently from school districts and created with a singular purpose: autonomy in exchange for accountability. They are schools of choice and have the flexibility to meet the unique needs of individual students, and in return they are held accountable for results. This accountability comes on many levels. Charters hold contracts with school districts, and, just like districts, they must meet the high standards set on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and end-of-course exams. Additionally, the state of Florida, while granting charters the freedom to do their jobs, has given districts the tools necessary to close charter schools that do not deliver. In that spirit, the law that created charter schools in Florida 18 years ago begins with three guiding principles:

- Meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities within the state's public school system;
- Promote enhanced academic success and financial efficiency by aligning responsibility with accountability; and
- Provide parents with sufficient information on whether or not the child gains at least a year's worth of learning for every year spent in the charter school.

During the 2012-13 school year, there were more than 209,000 students enrolled in 578 charter schools in 46 Florida districts. Many of these schools have innovative missions and focus on the arts, science or technology. Others serve special populations of students, such as those at risk of academic failure or students with disabilities. Regardless of mission or focus, all are held to a high standard.

Students Served by Florida Charter Schools

Charter schools provide parents with additional choices for selecting the most effective educational programs for their children and offer creative solutions for improving student achievement in Florida. The charter school movement in Florida began as an avenue to improve student learning, increase parental choice, influence the traditional public school system and foster innovative instructional practices. Charter school enrollment has grown by more than 200 percent over the last decade. As shown below, charter schools served more than 209,000 students in the 2012-13 school year, and these schools have become increasingly diverse.

2012-13 Charter School and Traditional School Student Populations

	Charter	Traditional
Student Membership	209,158	2,774,799
Gender		
Male	49.82%	51.35%
Female	50.18%	48.65%
Race		
White	35.16%	42.33%
African American	22.40%	22.91%
Hispanic	37.17%	28.53%
English Language Program	8.27%	9.19%
Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	47.50%	58.30%
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	8.79%	12.85%

Grading Charter Schools

Like traditional public schools, charter schools are assigned a performance grade if they meet the eligibility criteria and are not an alternative school or Exceptional Student Education (ESE) center that elects to receive a school improvement rating instead of a grade. To receive a school grade a public school (charter or traditional) must have at least 30 full-time students that have two years worth of FCAT performance data in both reading and mathematics.

2012-13 Comparison of Graded or Rated Schools

	Charter	Traditional
Number of schools with membership in tested grades	538	3,136
Number of graded/rated schools	425	2,865
Number of ungraded/unrated schools	113	271
Percent of ungraded/unrated schools	21%	9%

2012-13 School Grades for Charter and Traditional Schools

Grade	Charter		Traditional	
	Number	% Graded	Number	% Graded
A	166	42%	847	31%
B	79	20%	747	27%
C	84	21%	728	27%
D	40	10%	331	12%
F	26	7%	90	3%
Total A-F	395	100%	2,743	100%

Total graded = 3,138

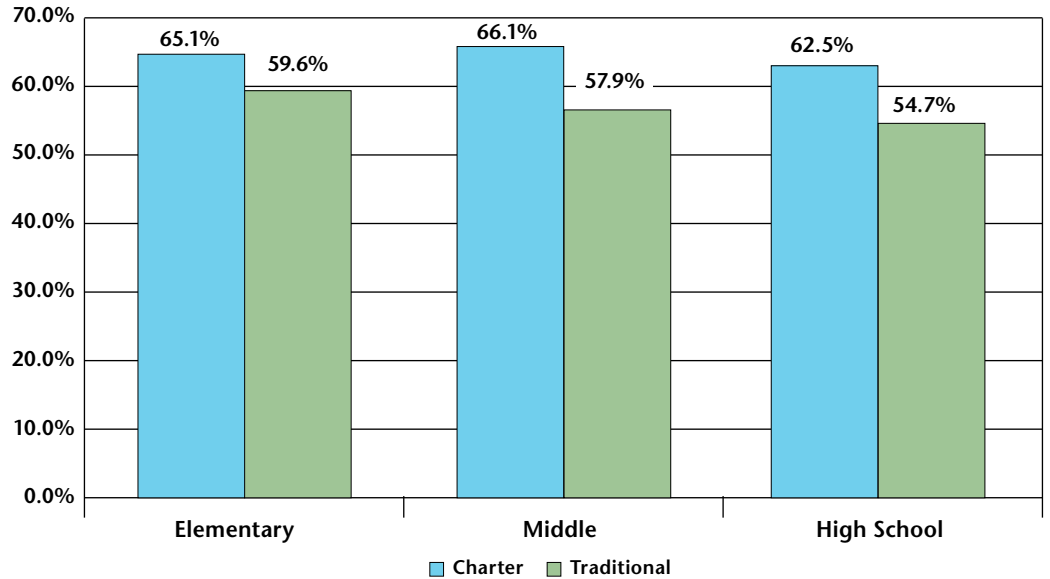
*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Reading

FCAT Reading Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

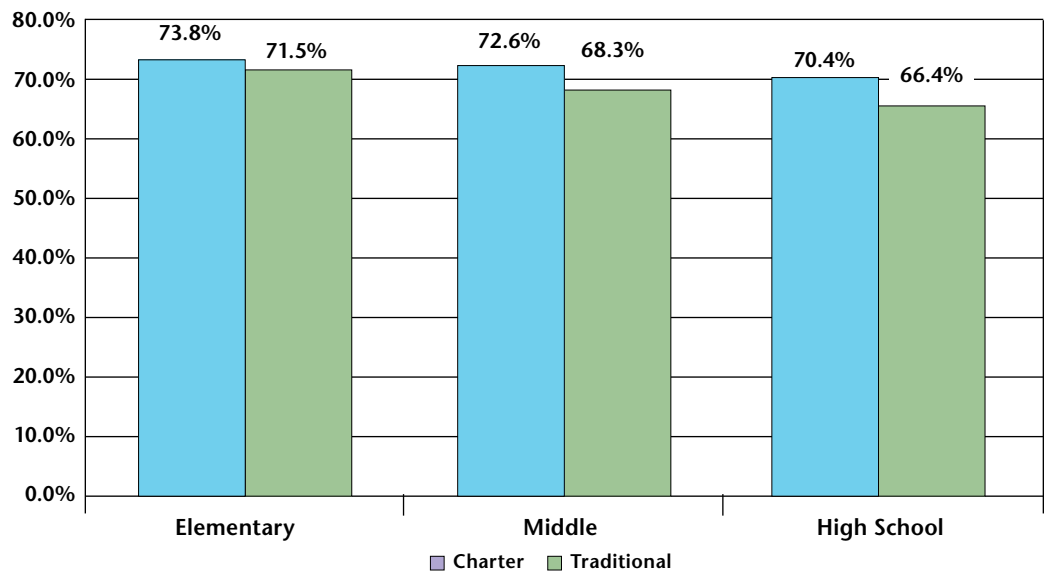
ALL STUDENTS COMPARISONS 2013

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
All Students

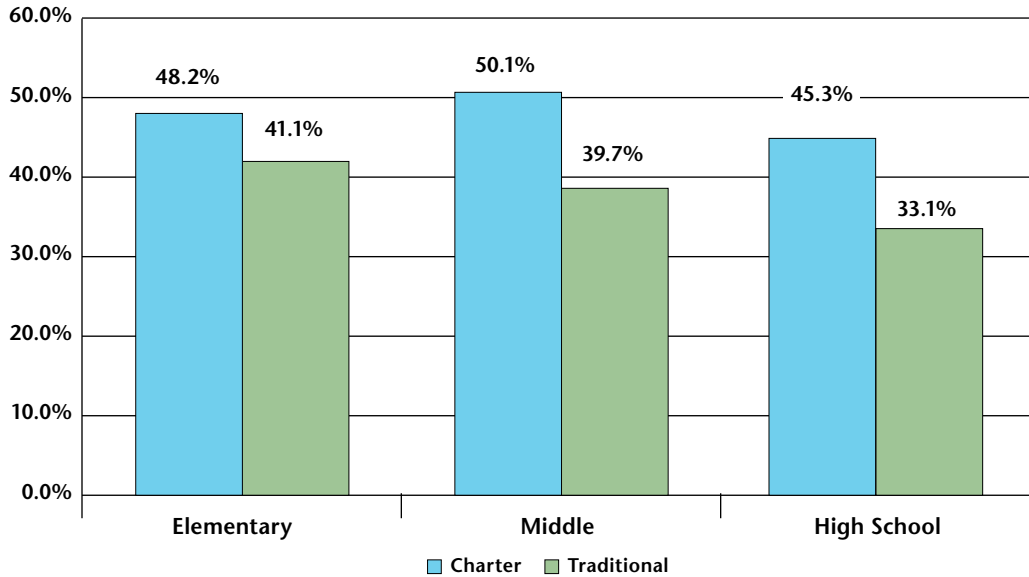


SUBGROUP COMPARISONS 2013

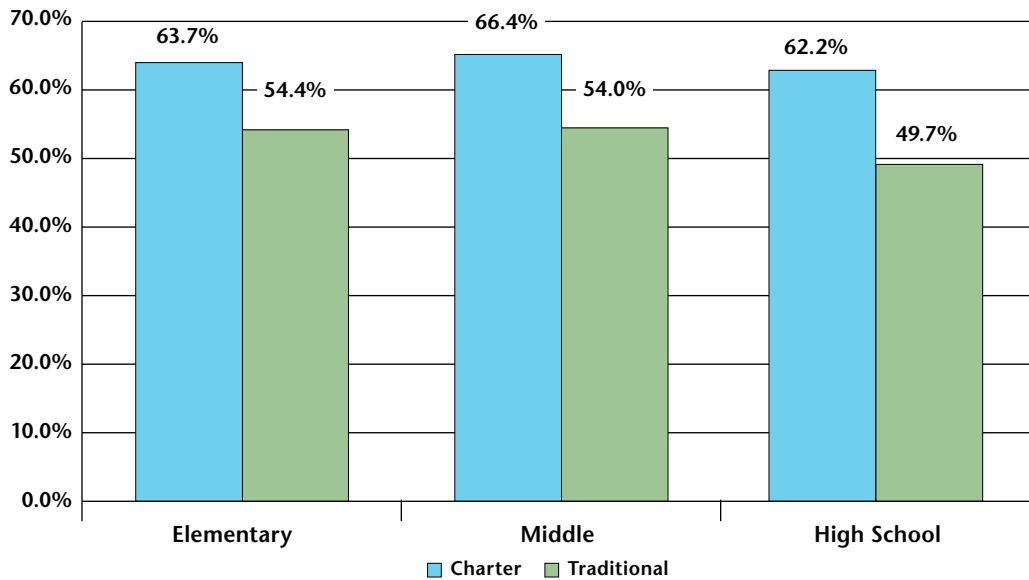
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African American Students**



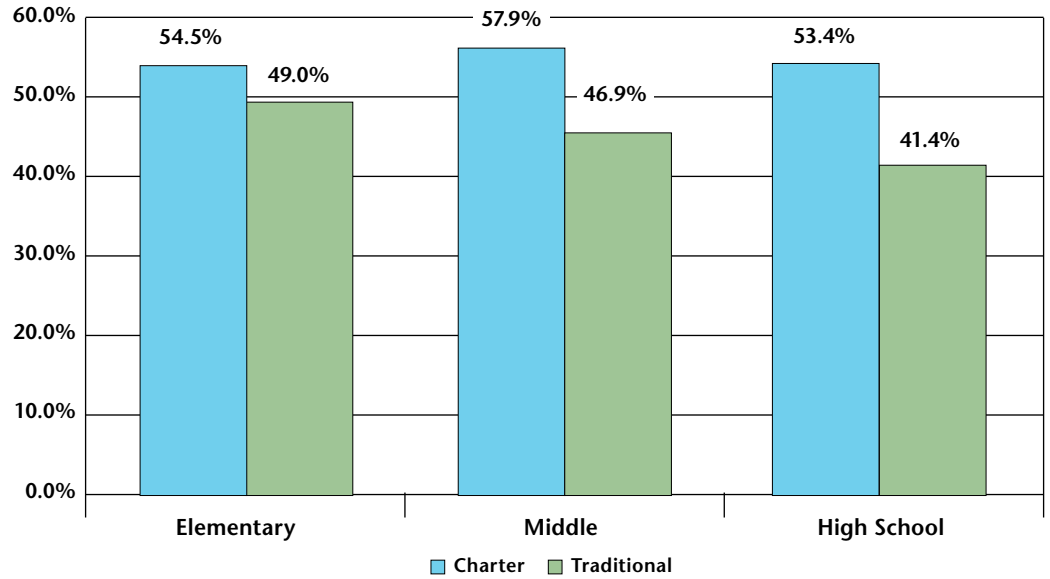
**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students**



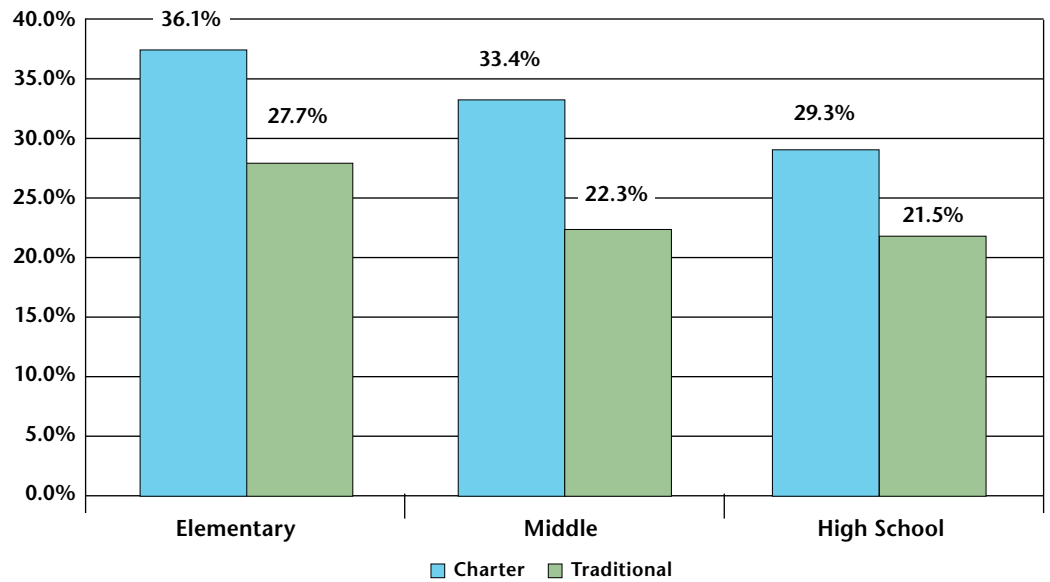
Reading

Reading

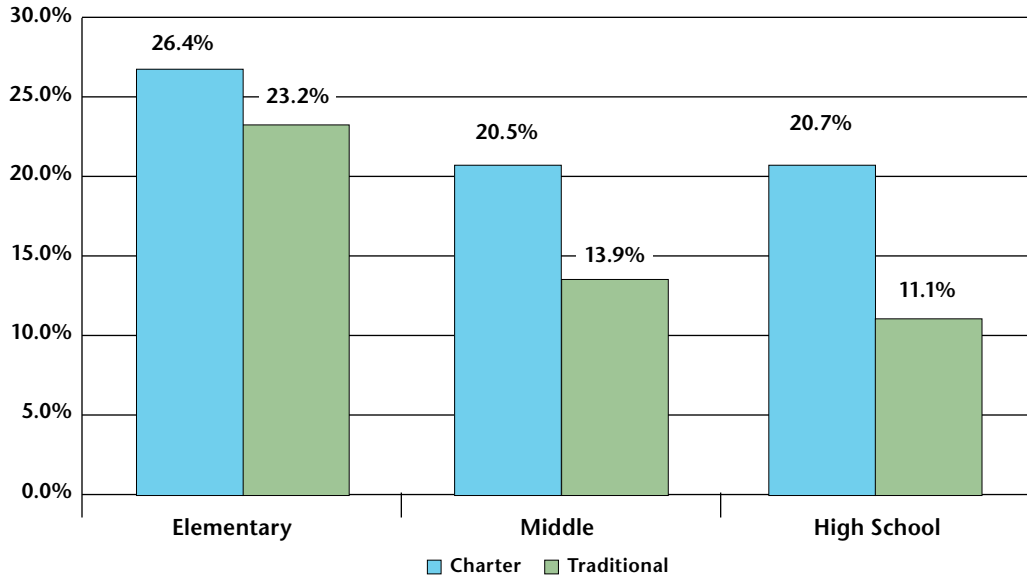
**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Students with Disabilities**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
English Language Learner Students**



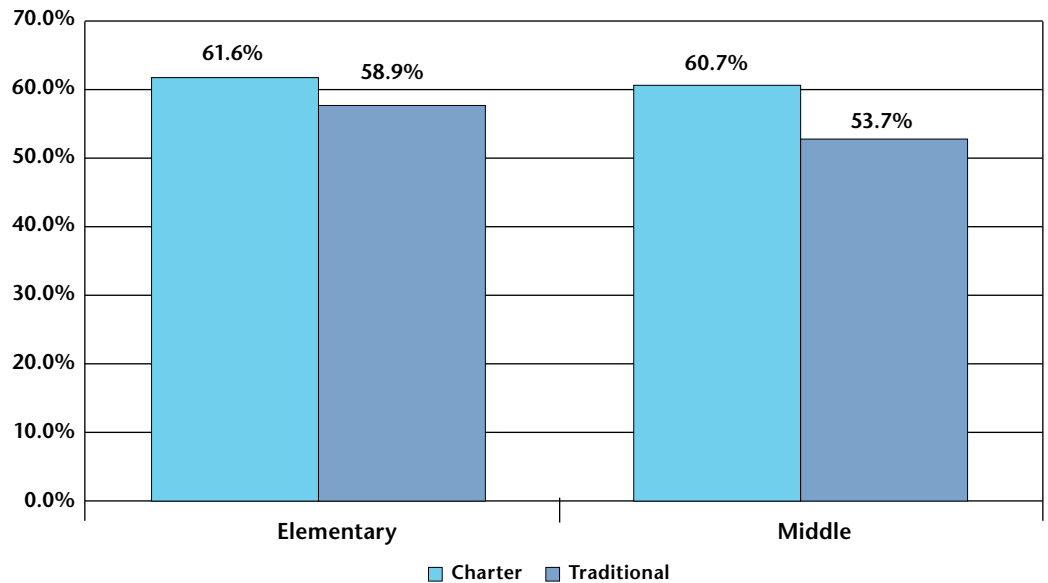
Reading

Mathematics

FCAT Mathematics Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

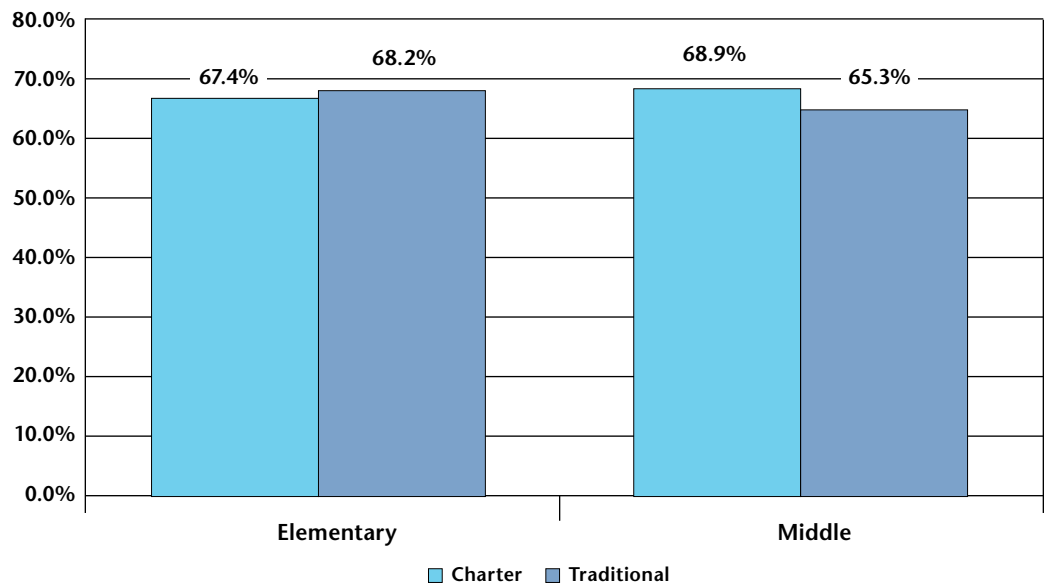
ALL STUDENTS COMPARISONS 2013

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
All Students

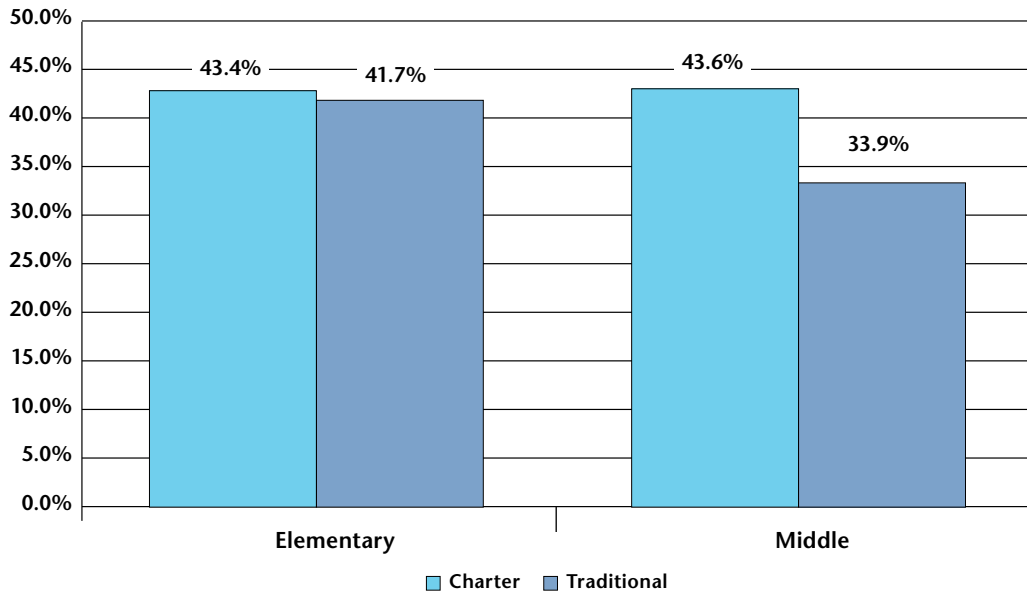


SUBGROUP COMPARISONS 2013

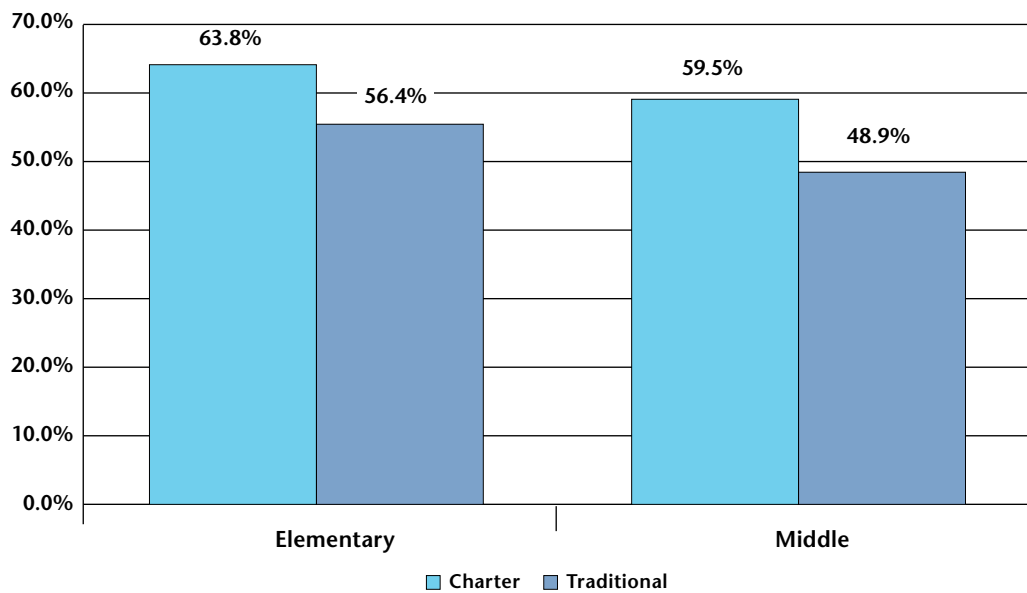
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students



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African American Students**



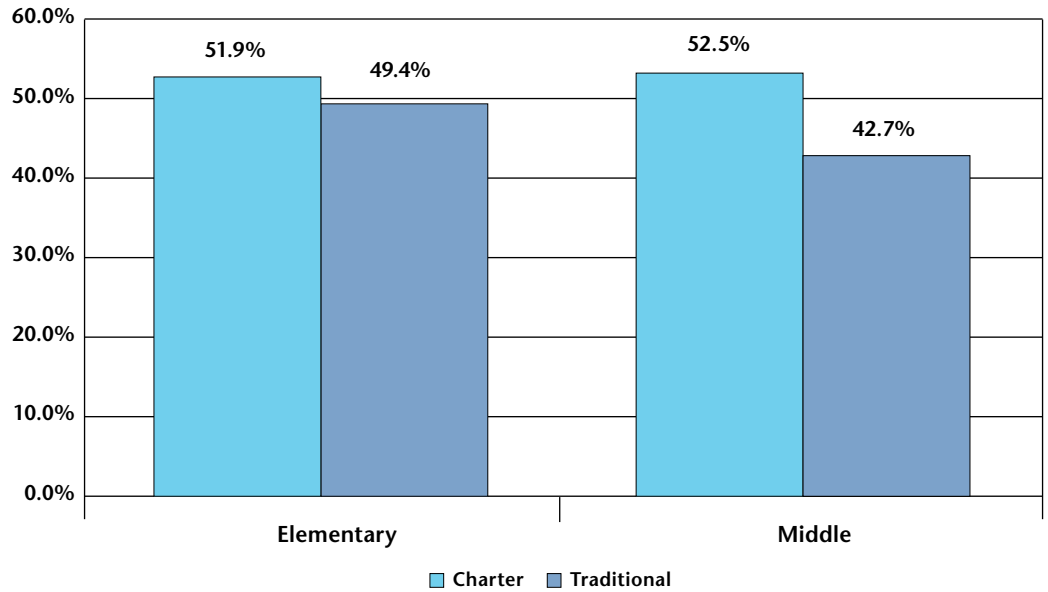
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Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students**



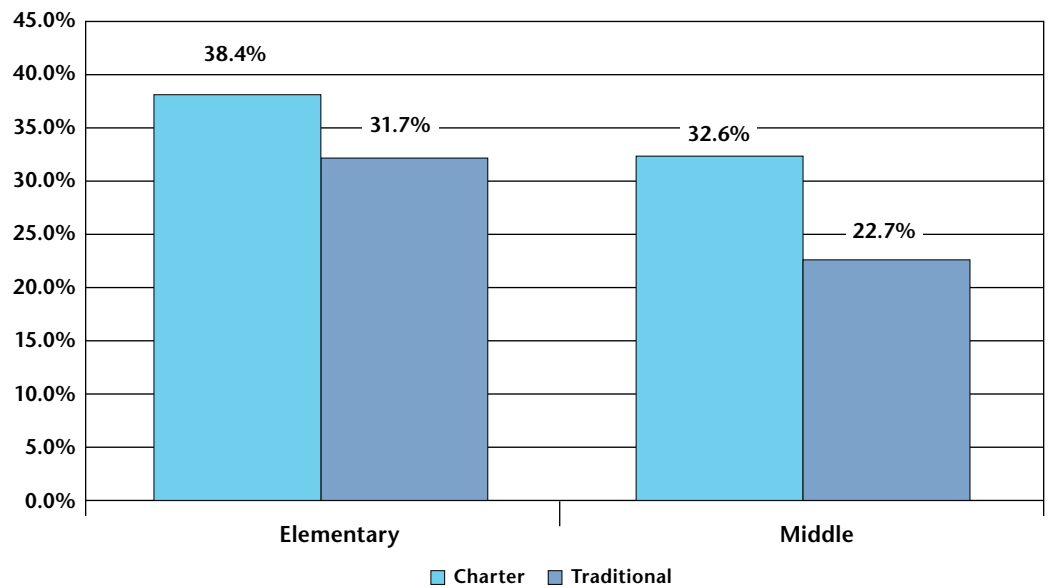
Mathematics

Mathematics

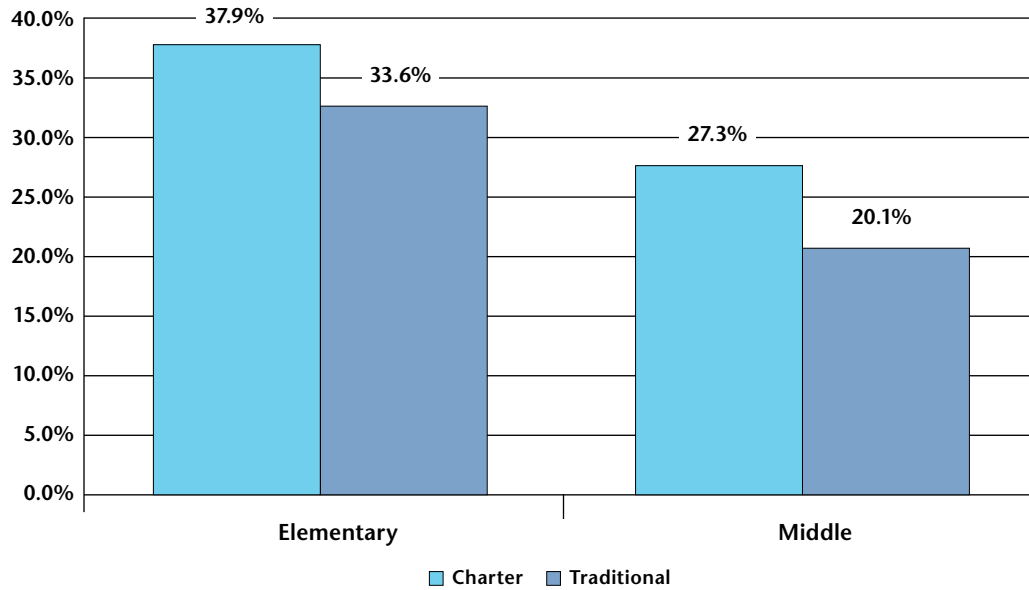
**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Students with Disabilities**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
English Language Learner Student**



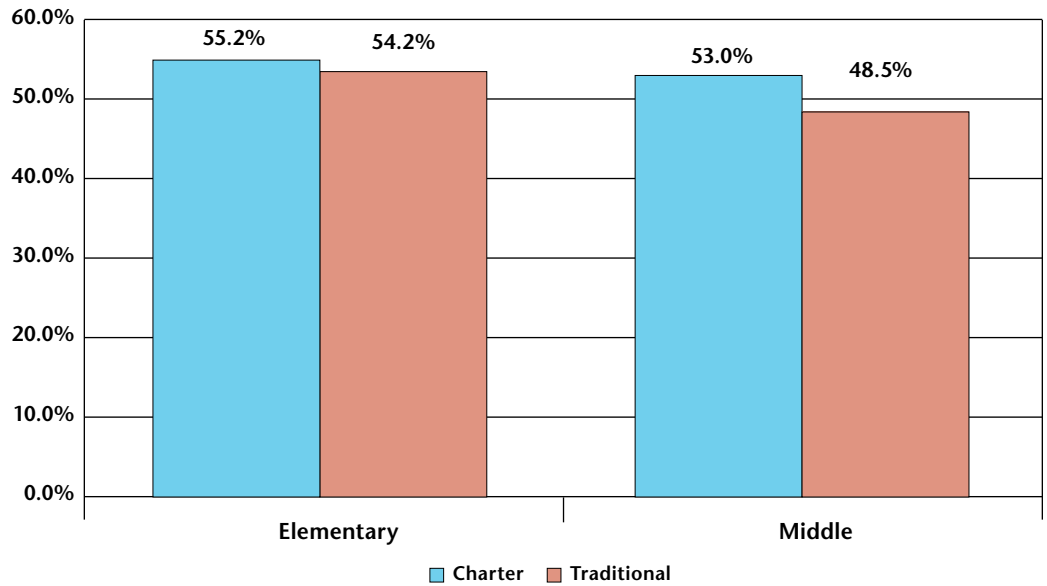
Mathematics

Science

FCAT Science Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

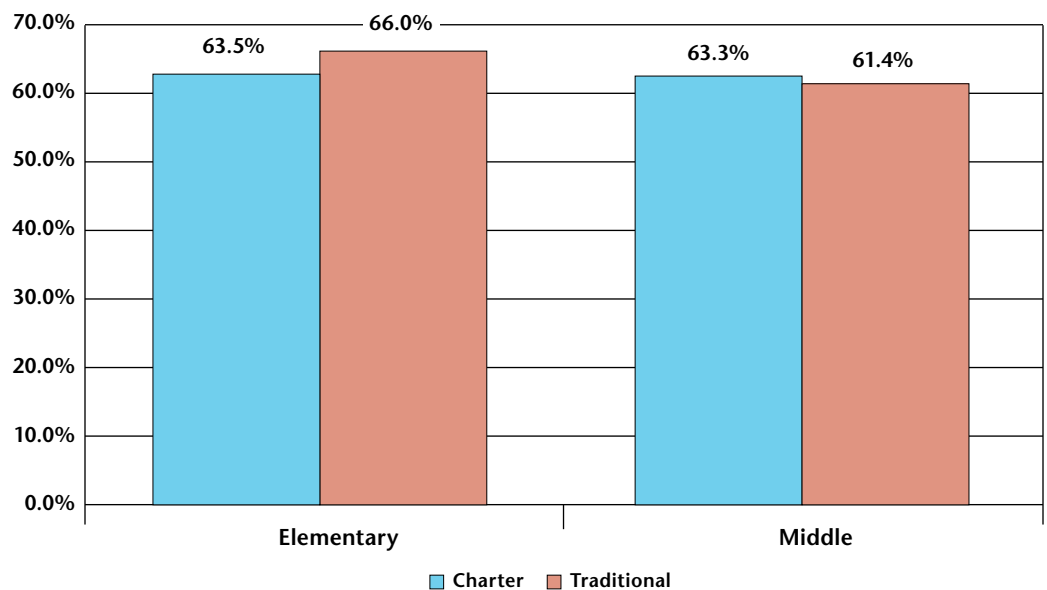
ALL STUDENTS COMPARISONS 2013

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
All Students

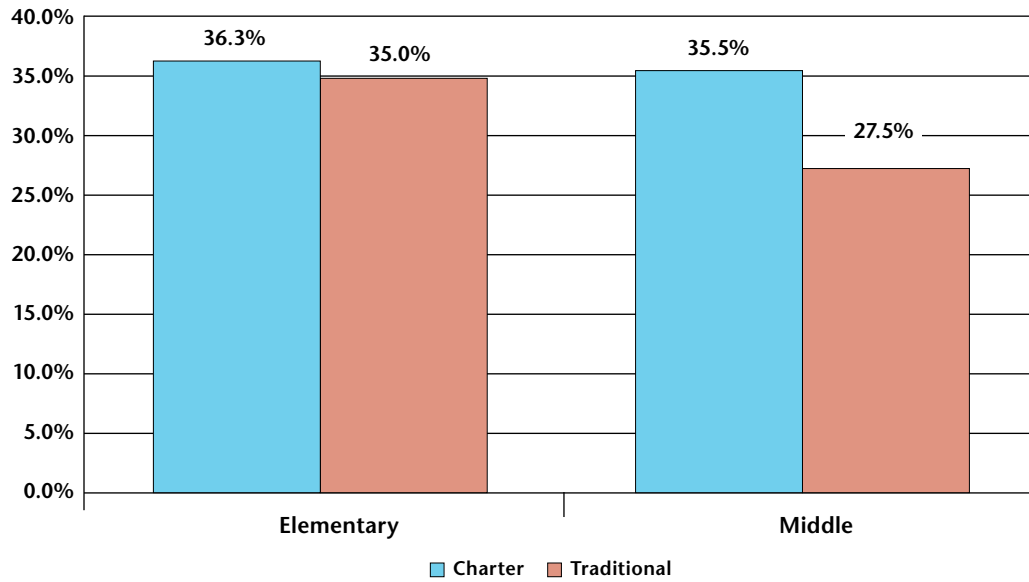


SUBGROUP COMPARISONS 2013

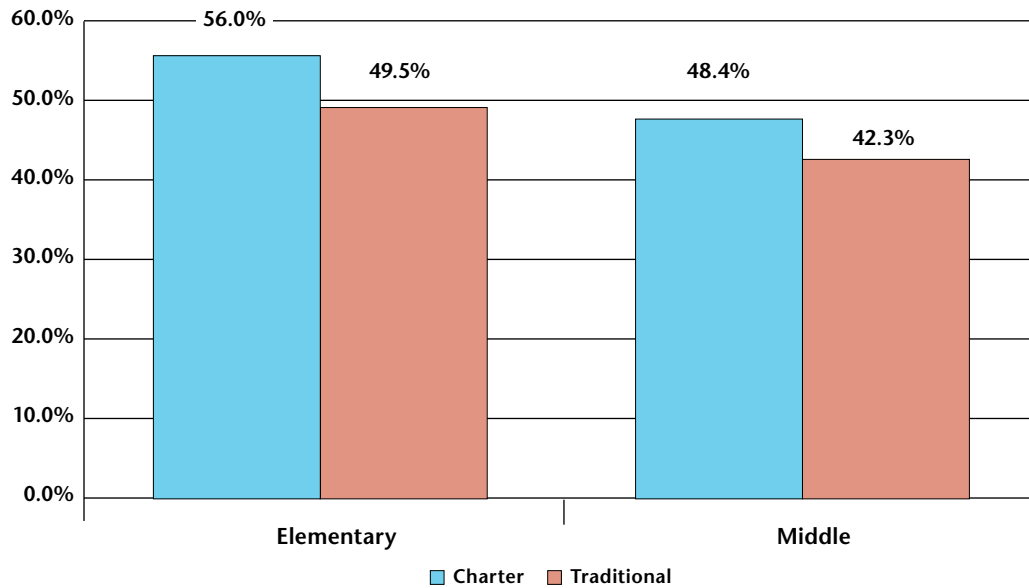
Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
White Students



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African American Students**



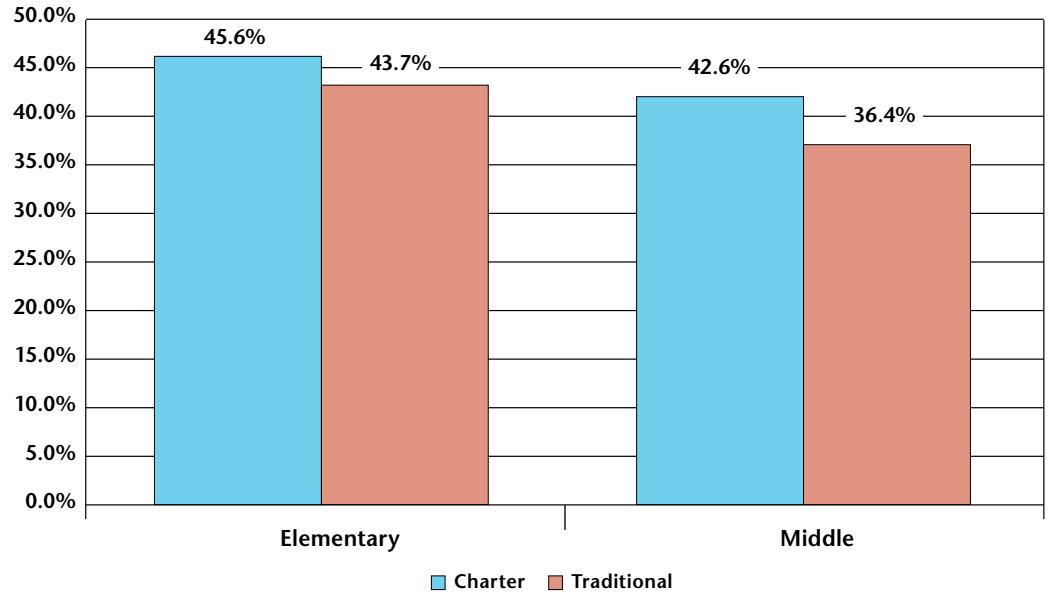
**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students**



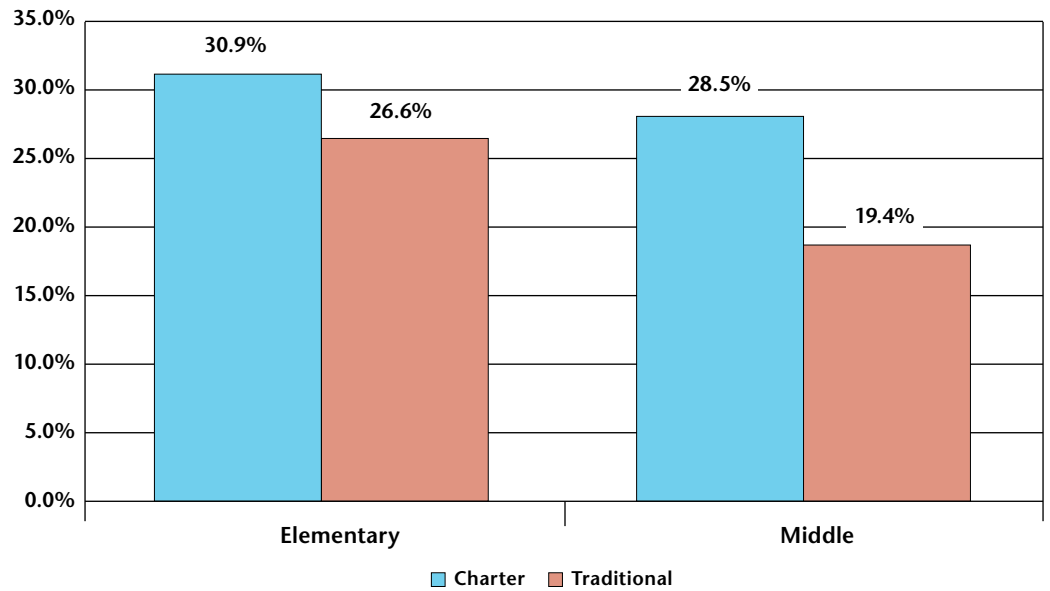
Science

Science

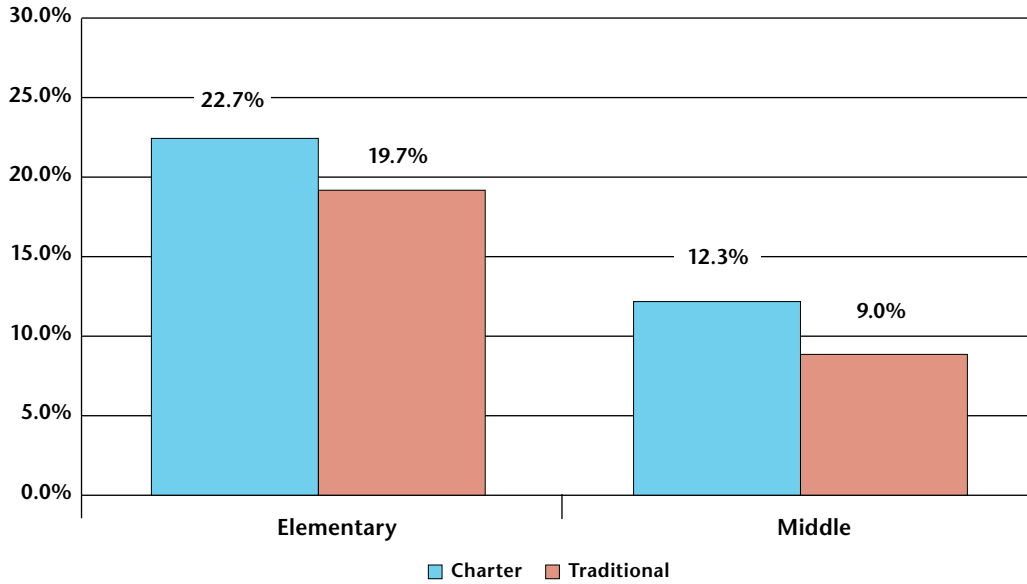
**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
FRL Students**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Students with Disabilities**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on FCAT 2.0 Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
English Language Learner Students**



Science

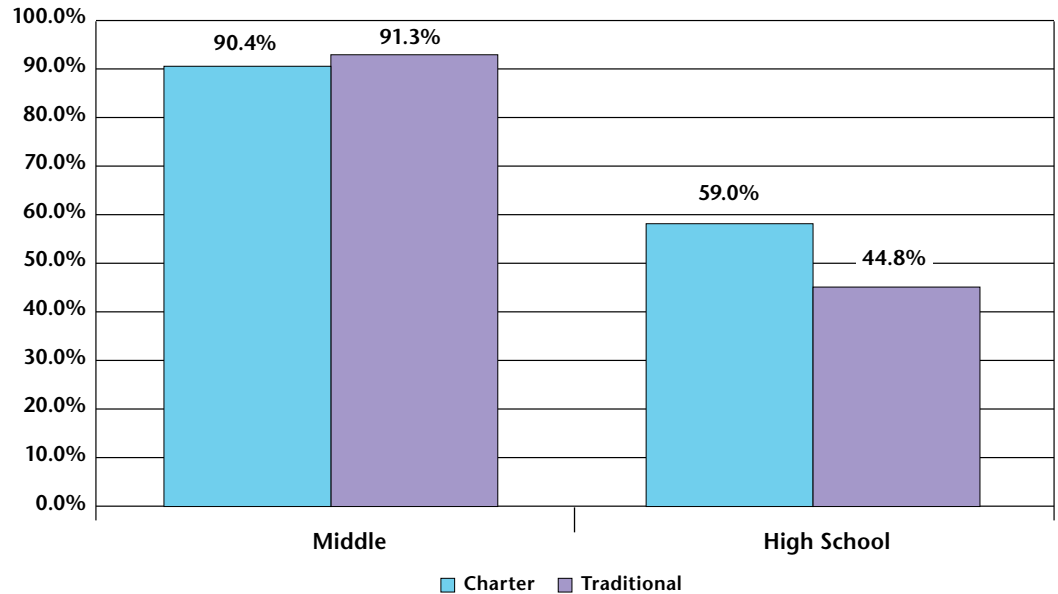
Algebra

Algebra End-of-Course Exam Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

ALL STUDENTS COMPARISONS 2013

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools

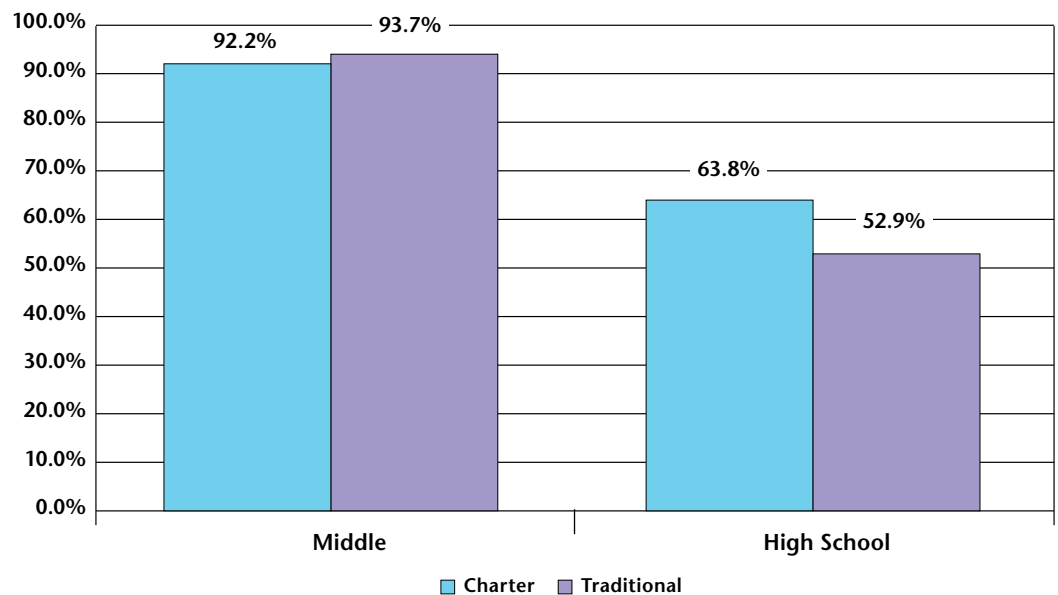
All Students



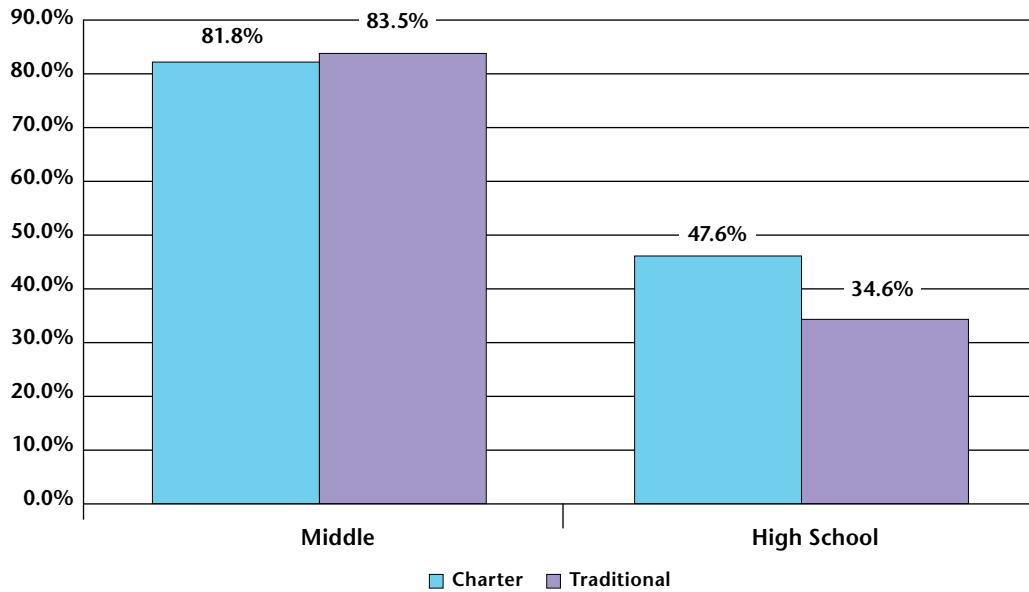
SUBGROUP COMPARISONS 2013

Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools

White Students

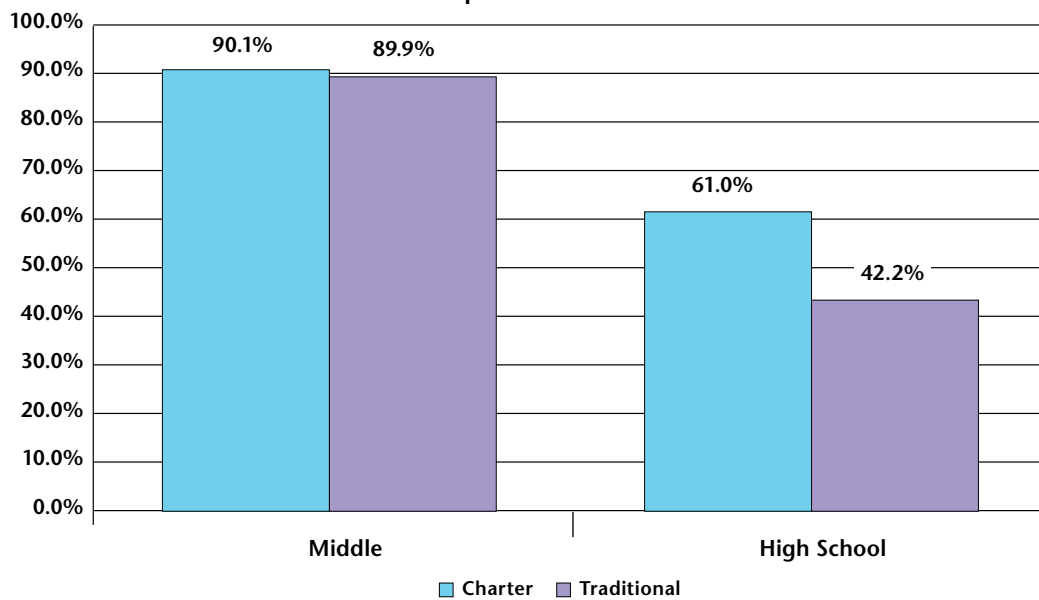


**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African American Students**



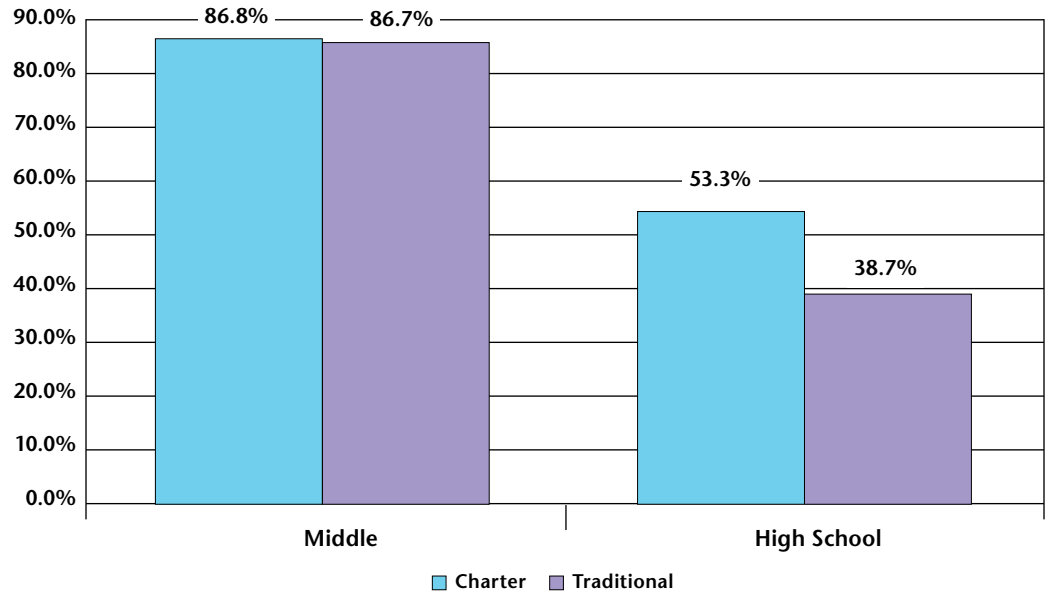
Algebra

**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic Students**

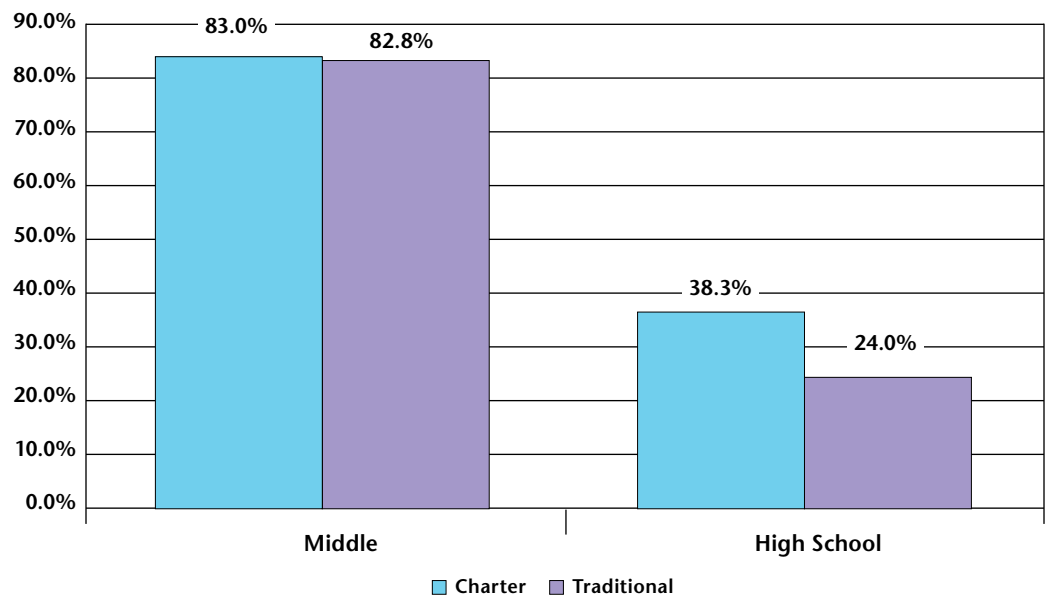


Algebra

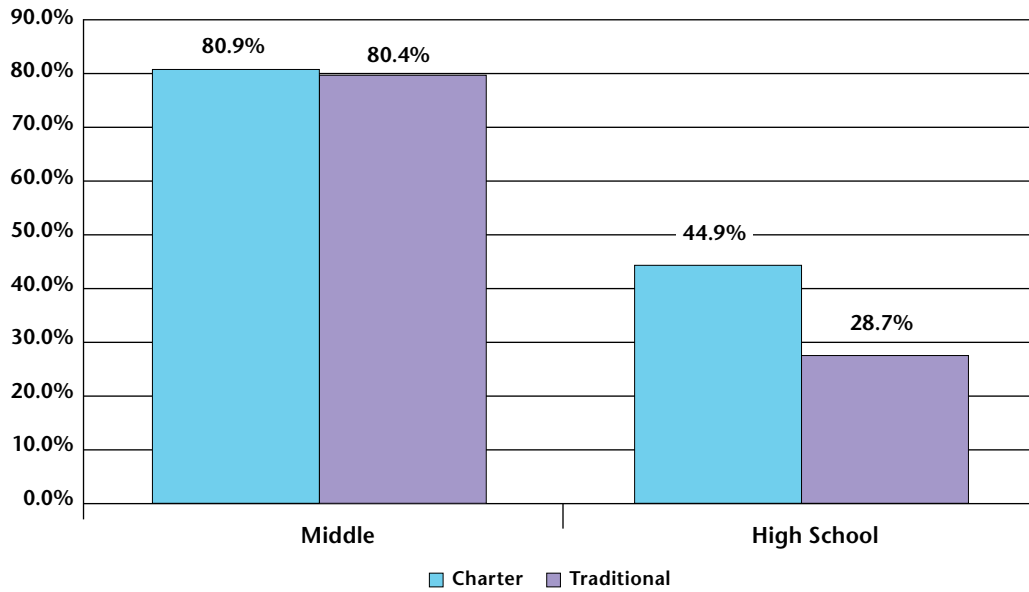
**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
FRL Students**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Students with Disabilities**



**Percent of Students Scoring a Level 3 or Above on Algebra End-of-Course Exam
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
English Language Learner Students**

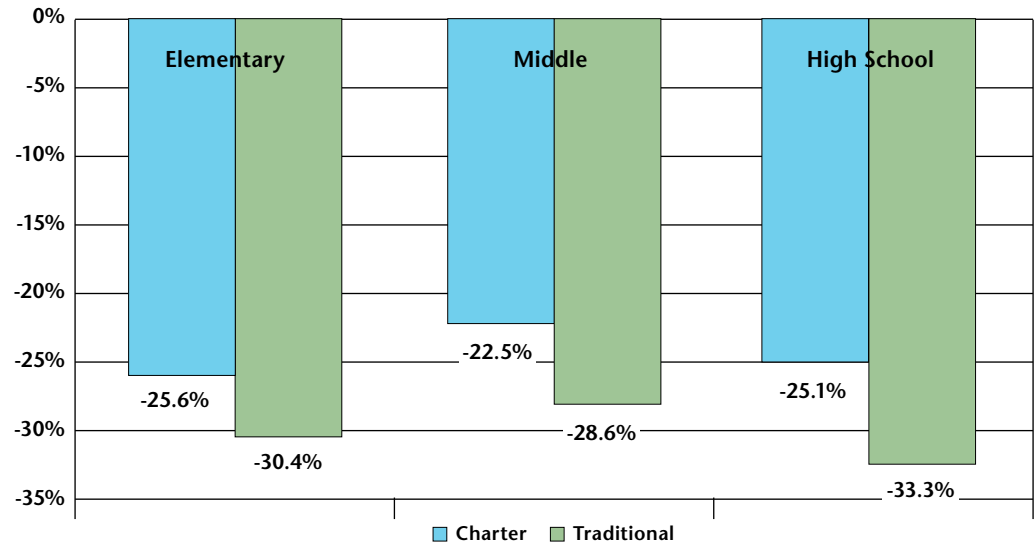


Algebra

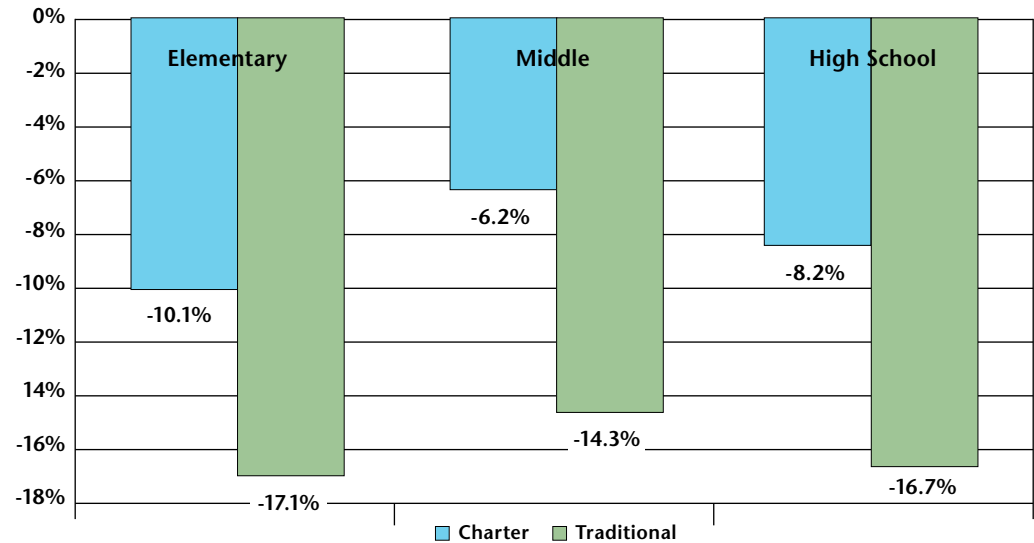
Reading

Achievement Gap Summary Data 2012-13 School Year

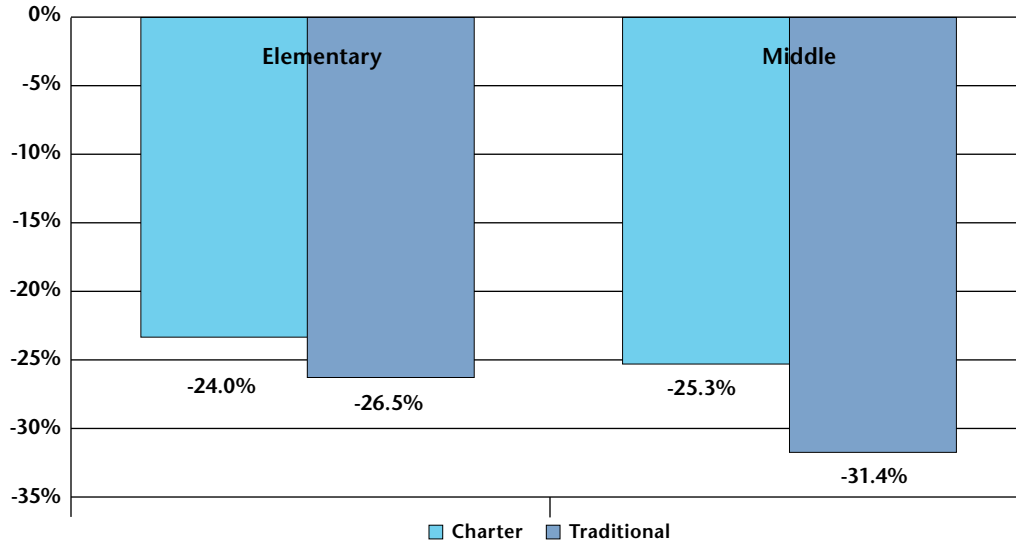
Achievement Gap in Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African American and White Students



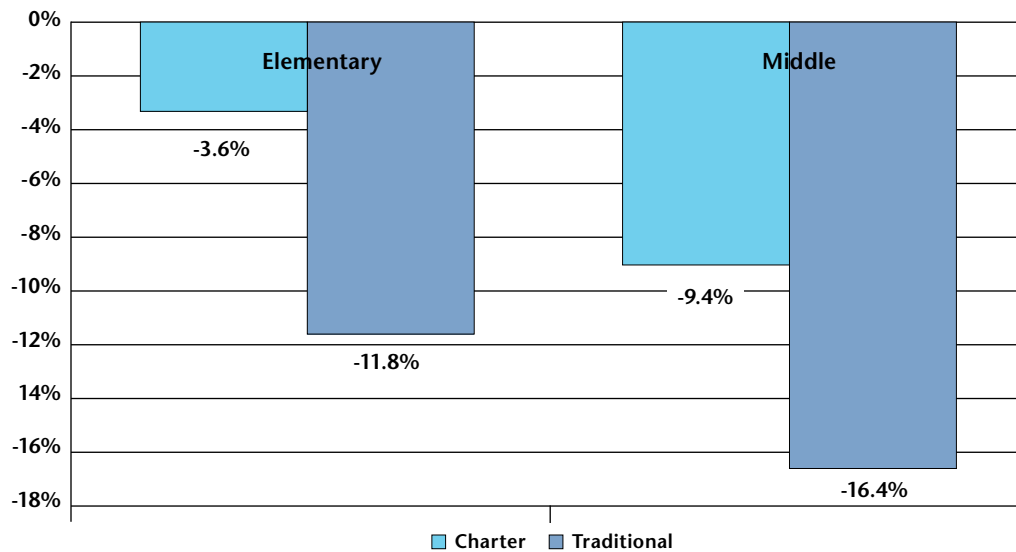
Achievement Gap in Reading
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic and White Students



Achievement Gap in Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African American and White Students



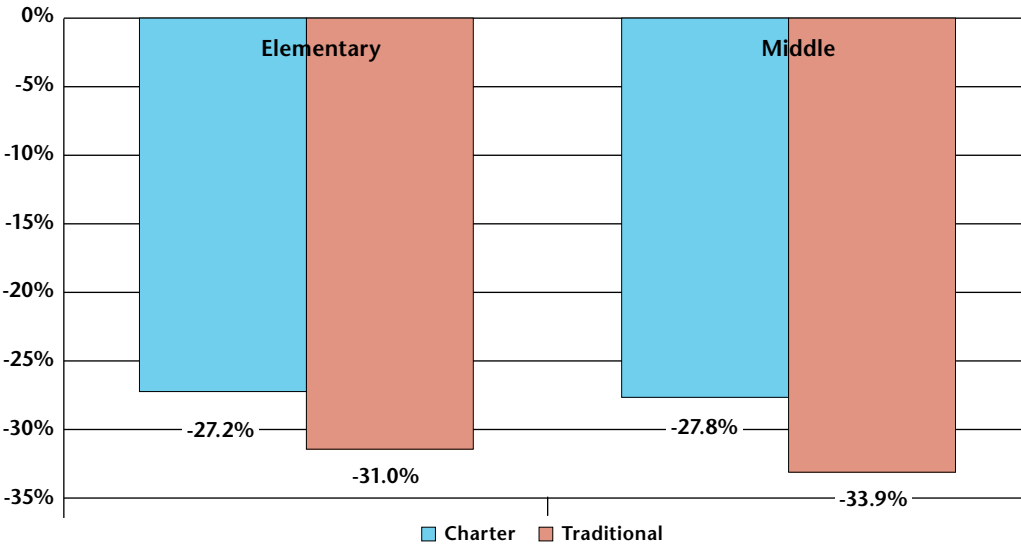
Achievement Gap in Mathematics
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic and White Students



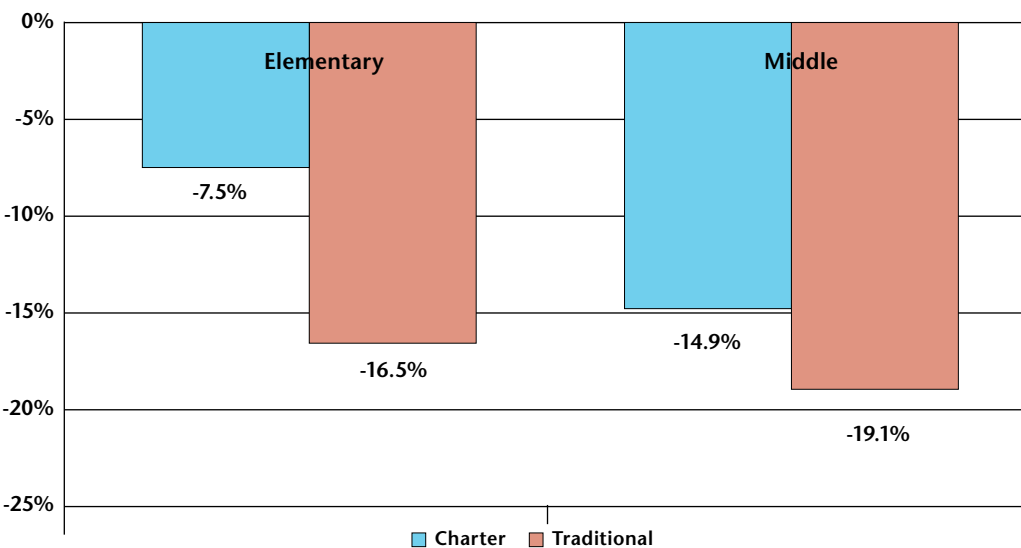
Mathematics

Science

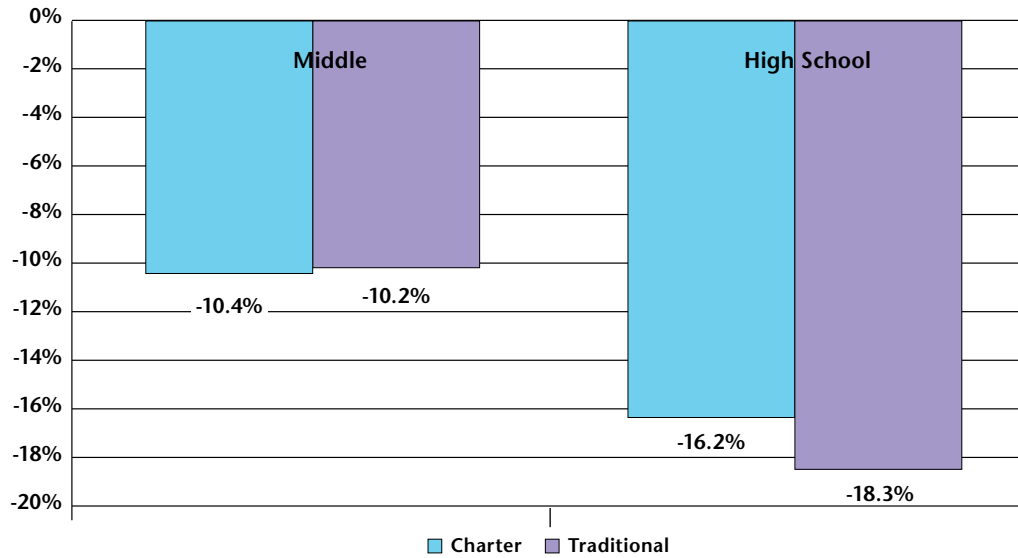
Achievement Gap in Science
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African American and White Students



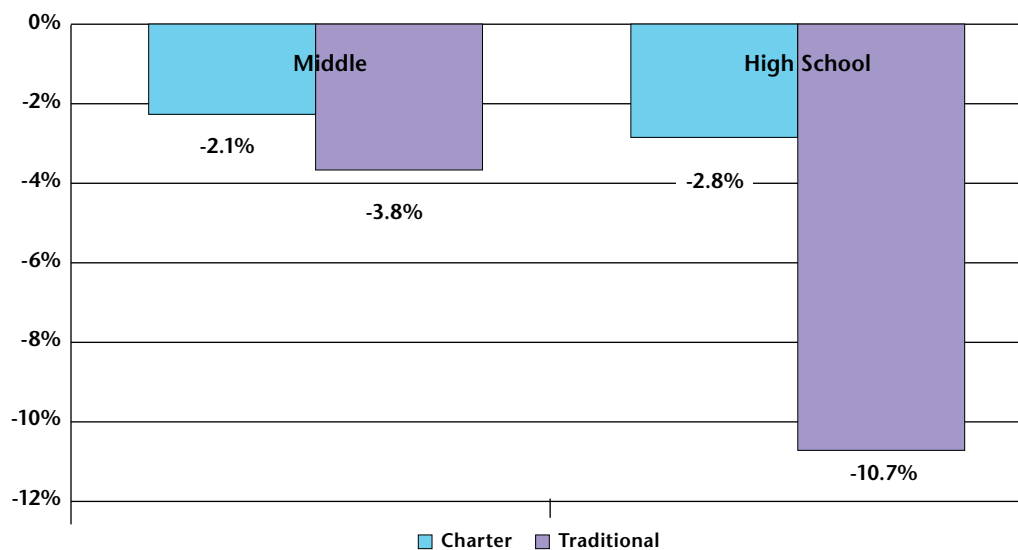
Achievement Gap in Science
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic and White Students



Achievement Gap in Algebra
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
African American and White Students



Achievement Gap in Algebra
Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools
Hispanic and White Students

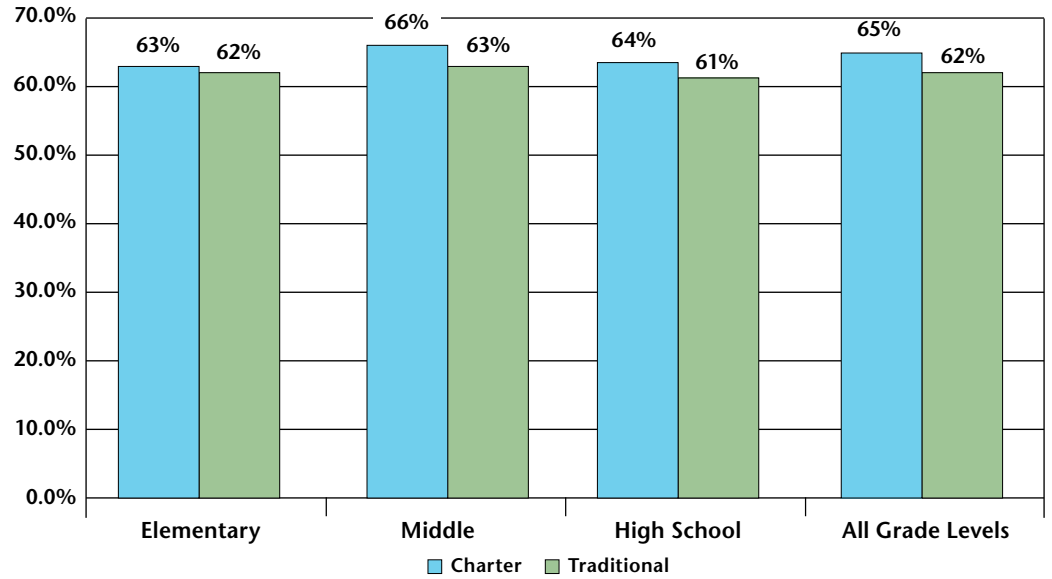


Algebra

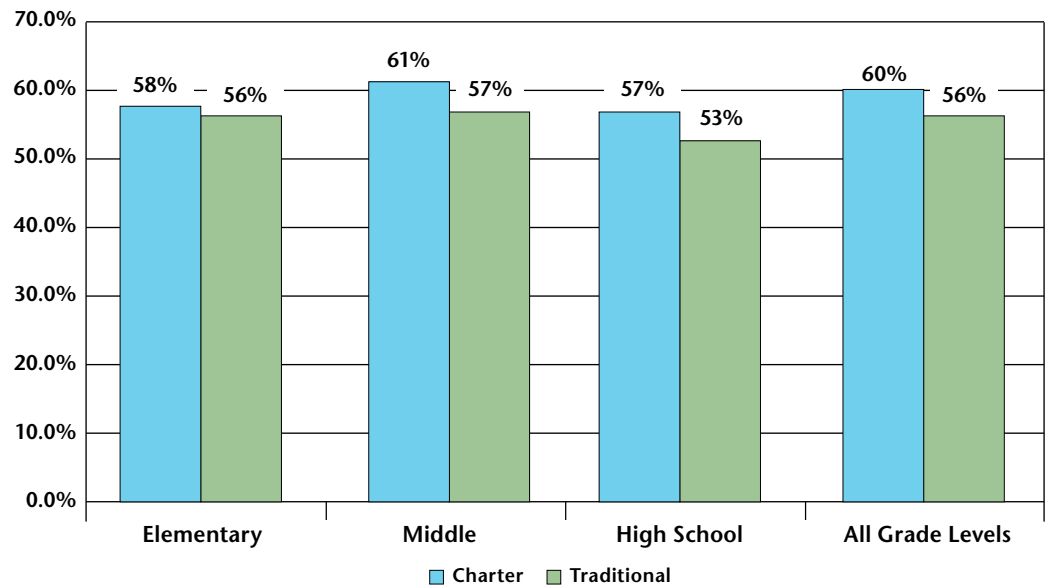
Reading

Learning Gains Comparison 2012-2013 School Year

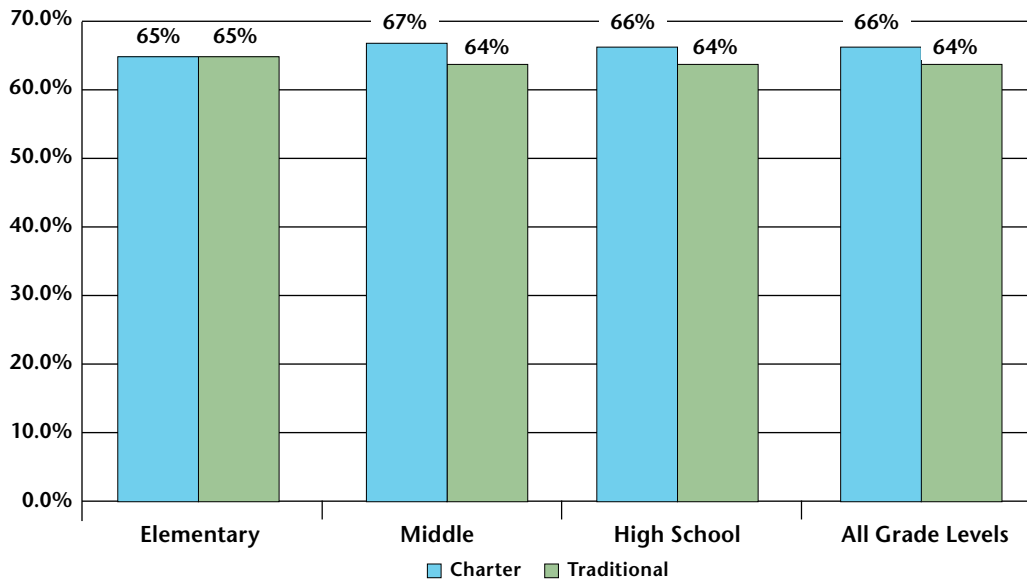
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Reading
All Students



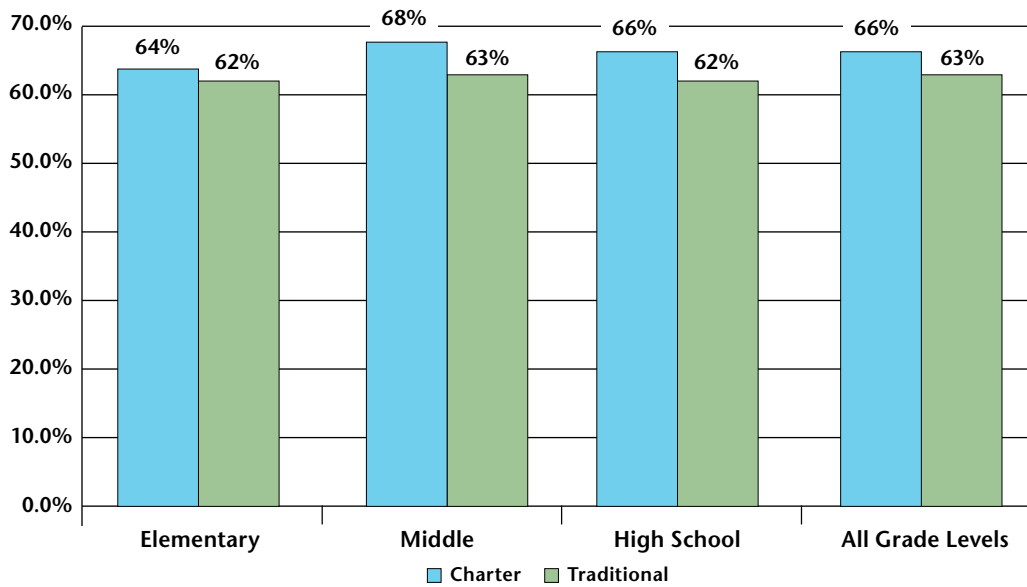
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Reading
African American Students



**Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Reading
White Students**



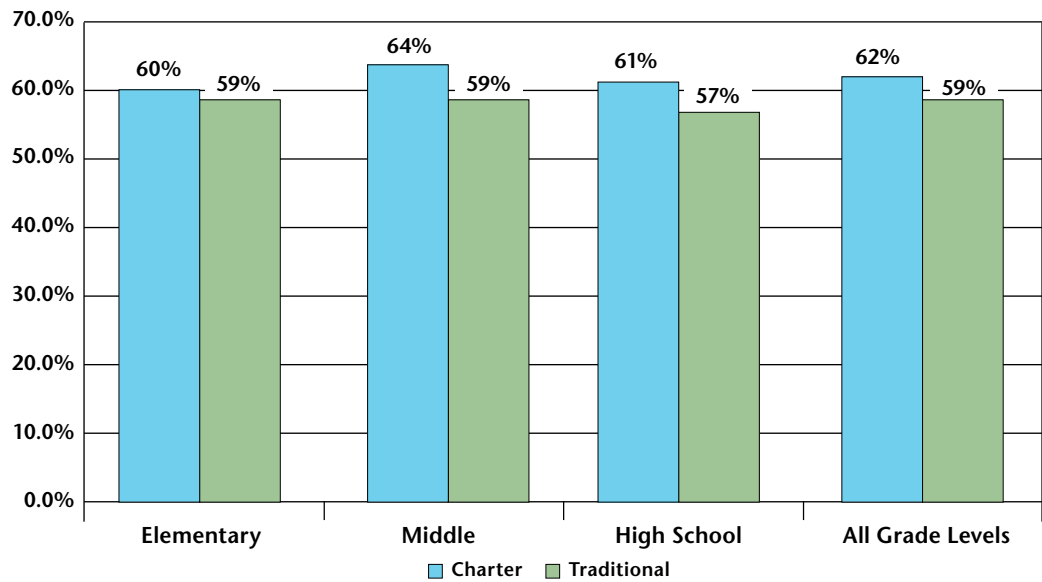
**Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Reading
Hispanic Students**



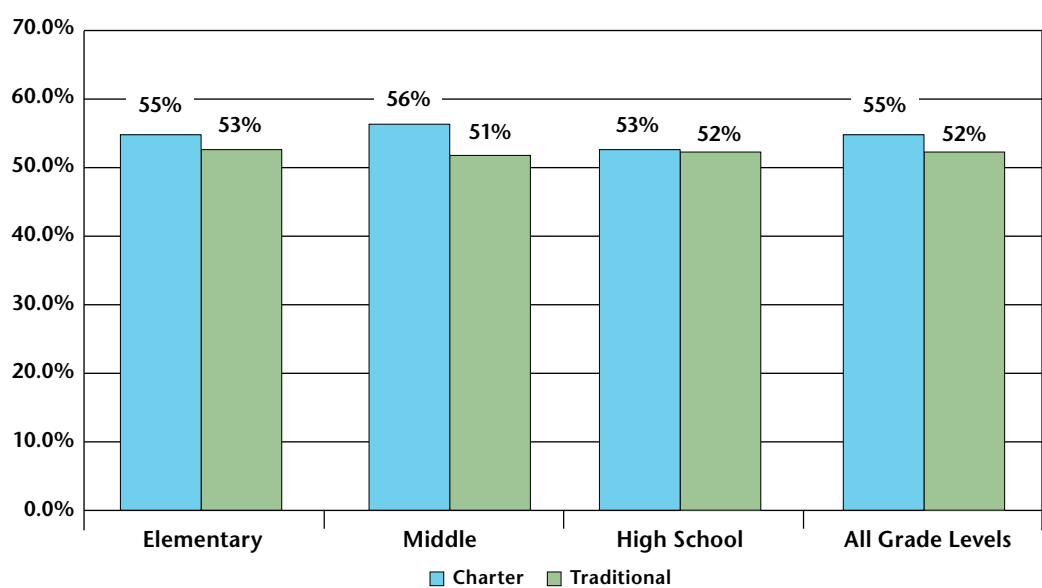
Reading

Reading

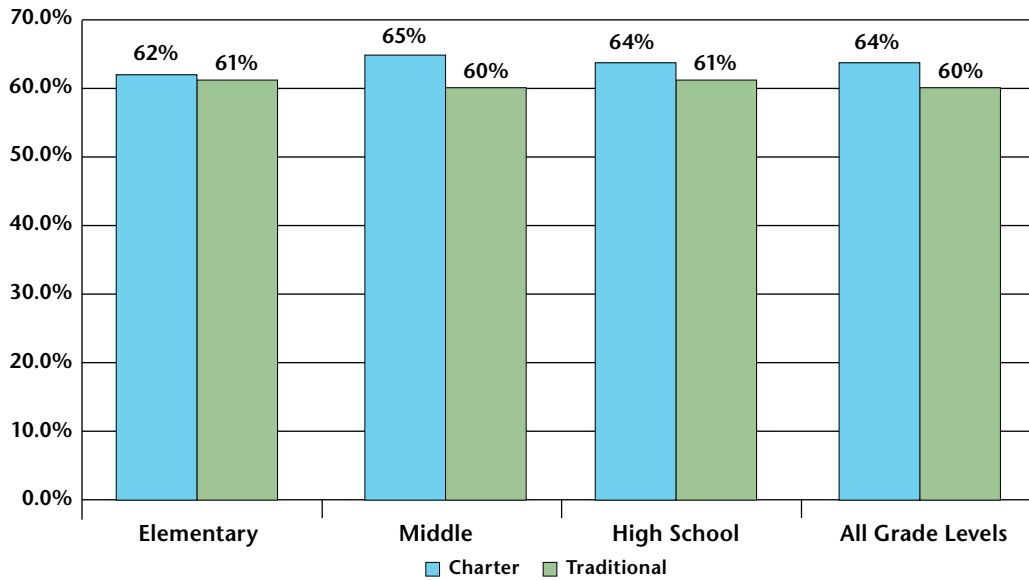
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Reading
FRL Students



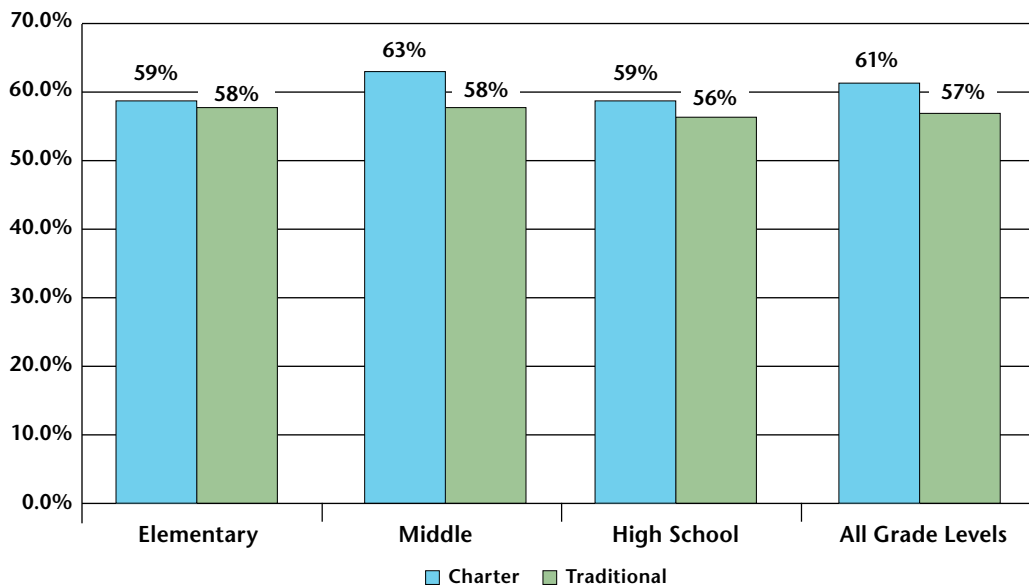
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Reading
Students with Disabilities



**Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile
Making Learning Gains in Reading
All Students**



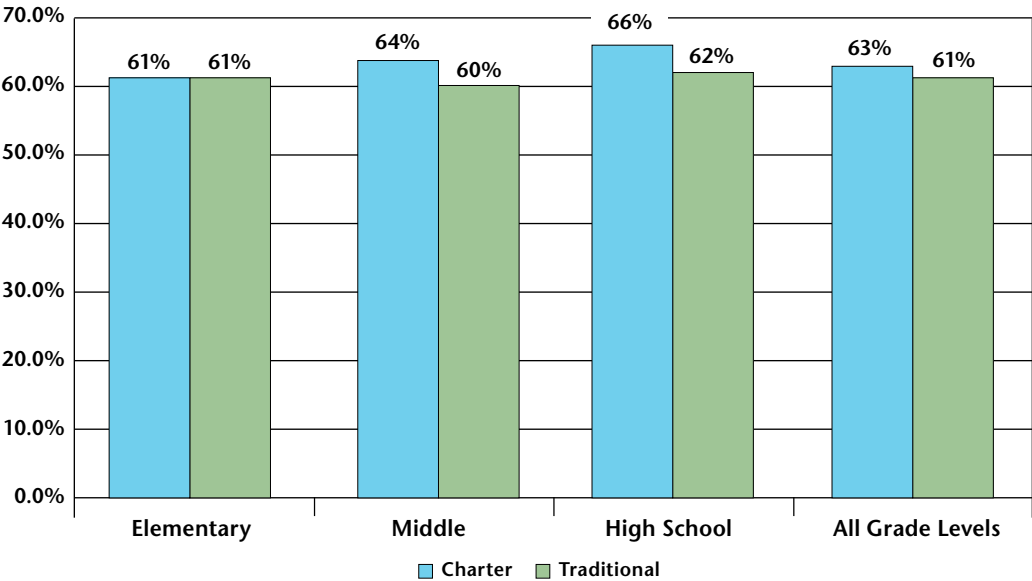
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Making Learning Gains in Reading
African American Students**



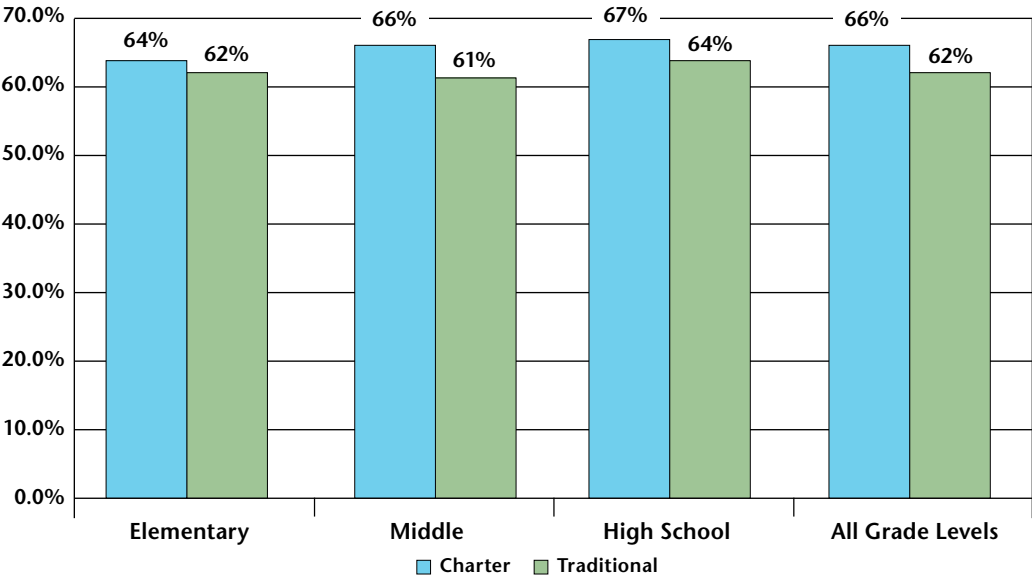
Reading

Reading

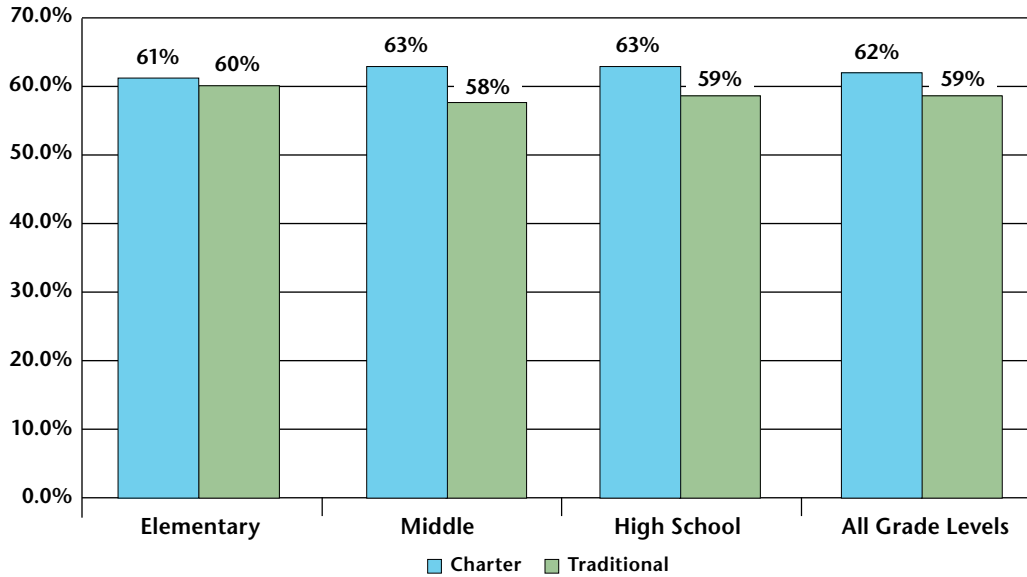
Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Reading
White Students



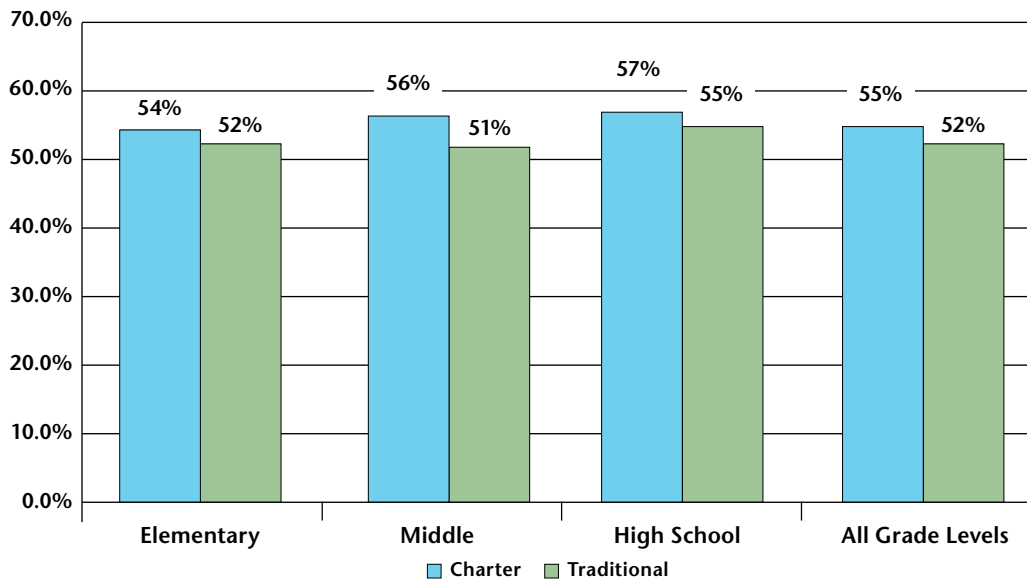
Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Reading
Hispanic Students



**Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile
Making Learning Gains in Reading
FRL Students**



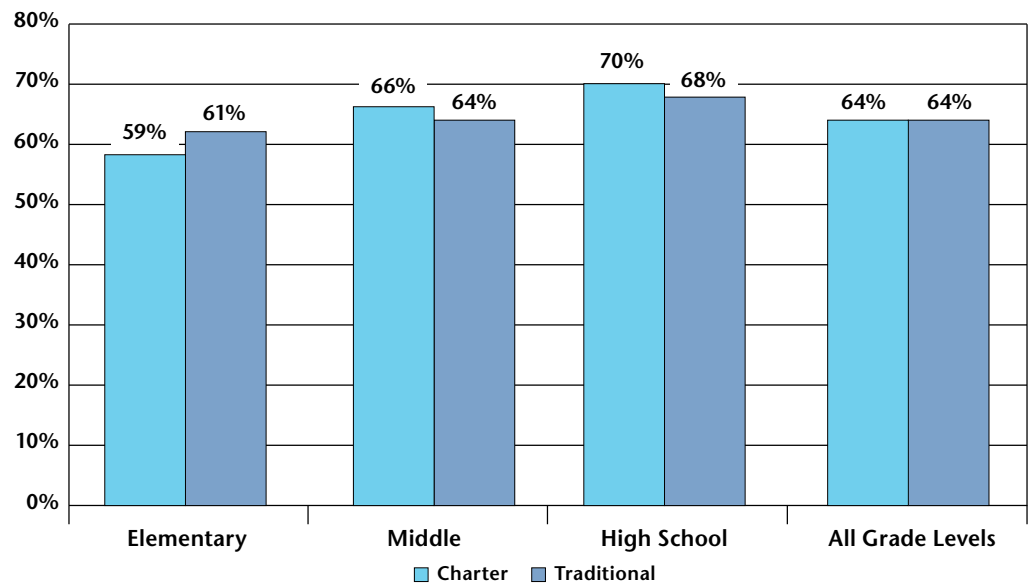
**Percent of Students in Lowest Quartile
Making Learning Gains in Reading
Students with Disabilities**



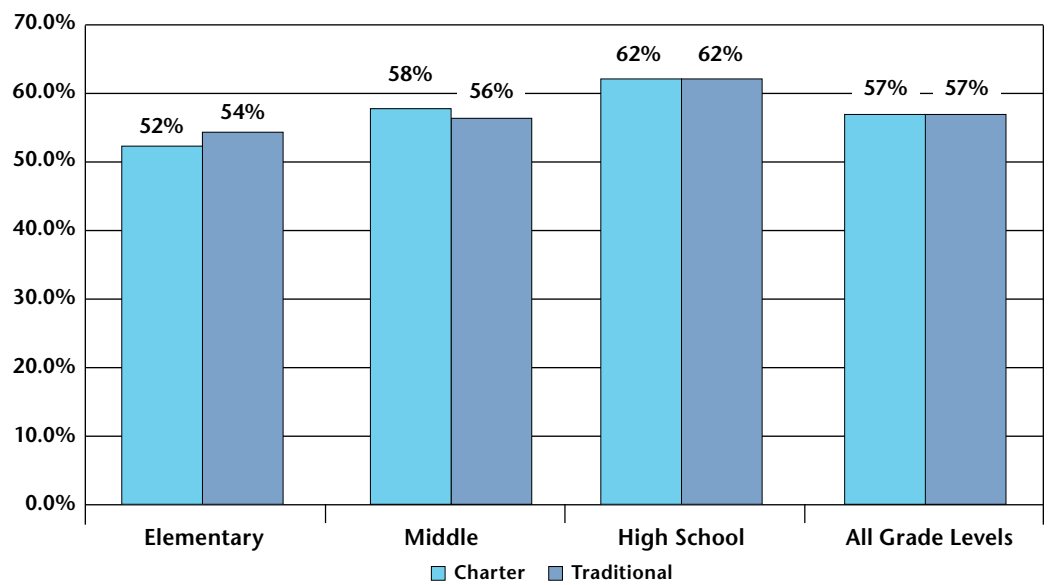
Reading

Mathematics

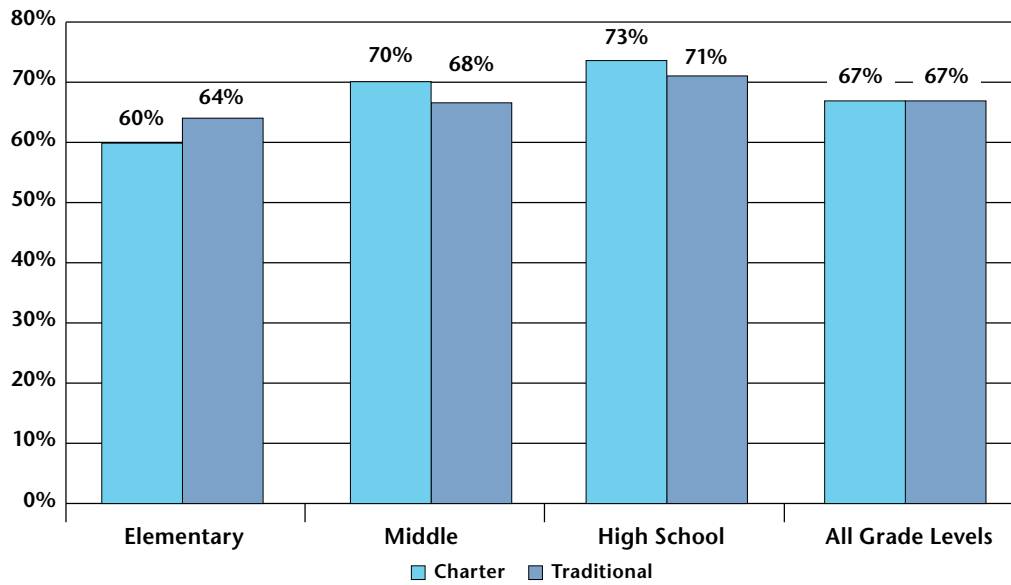
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
All Students



Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
African American Students

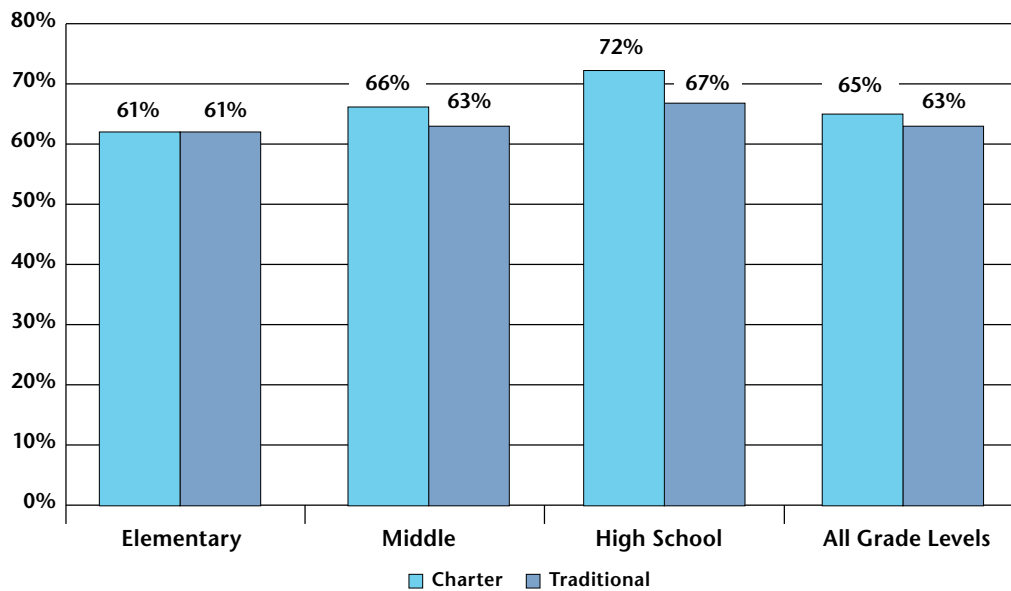


**Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
White Students**



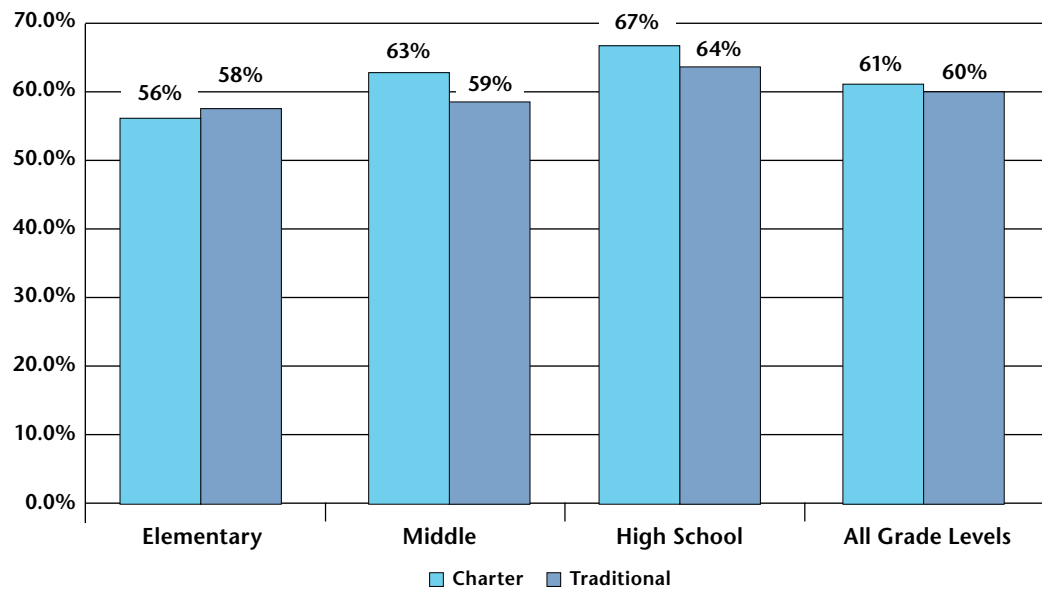
Mathematics

**Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
Hispanic Students**

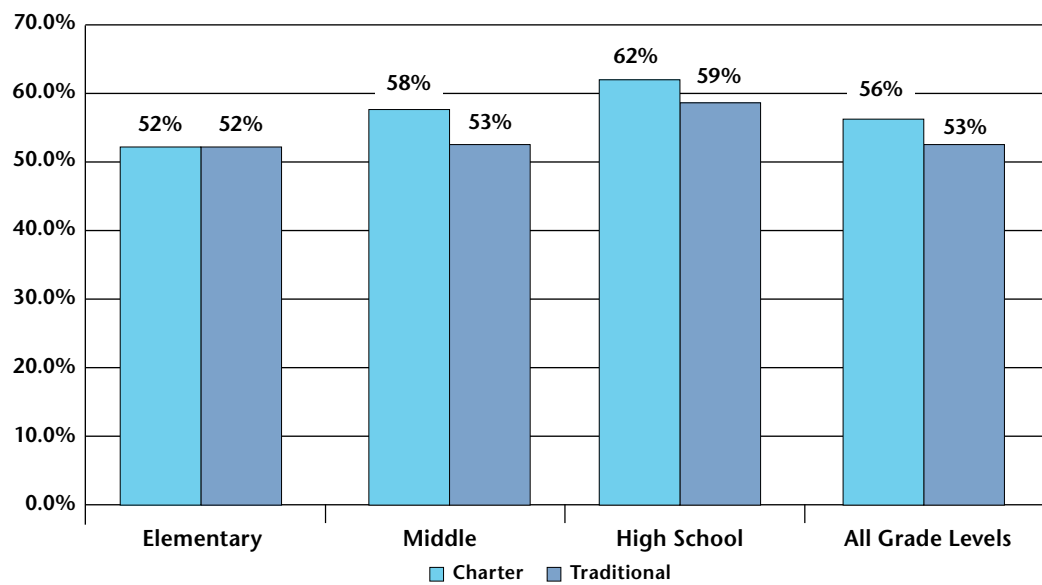


Mathematics

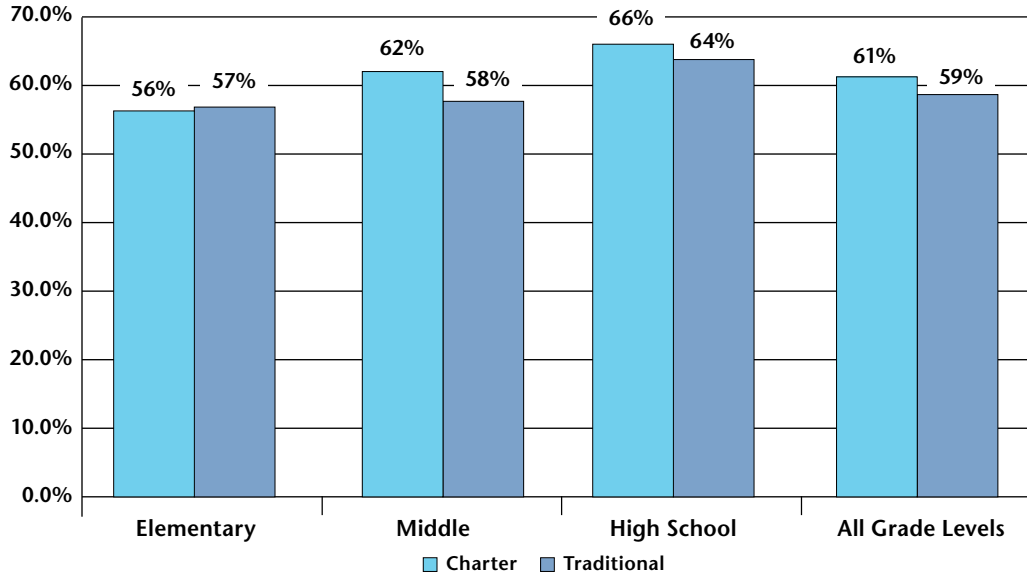
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
FRL Students



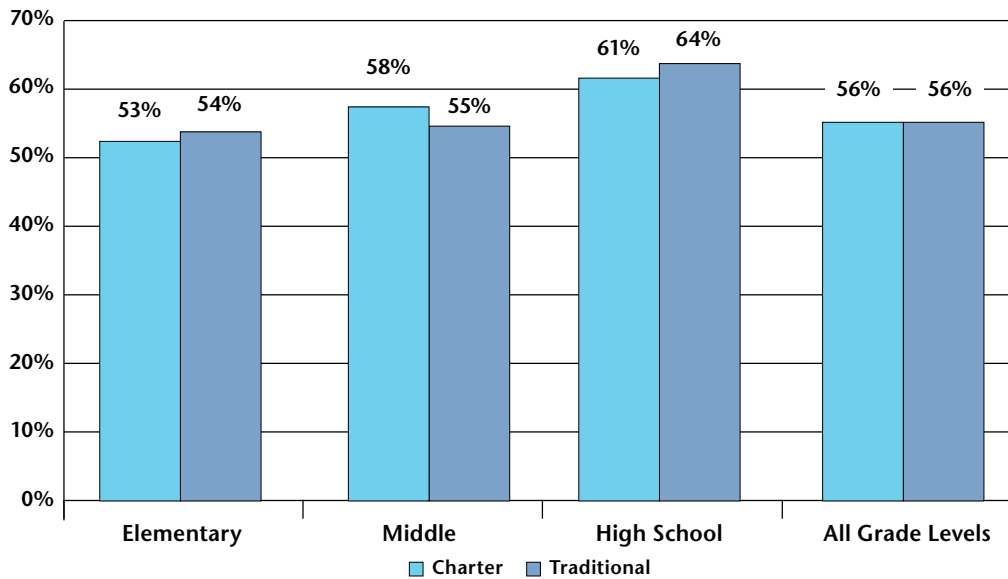
Percent of Students Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
Students with Disabilities



**Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
All Students**



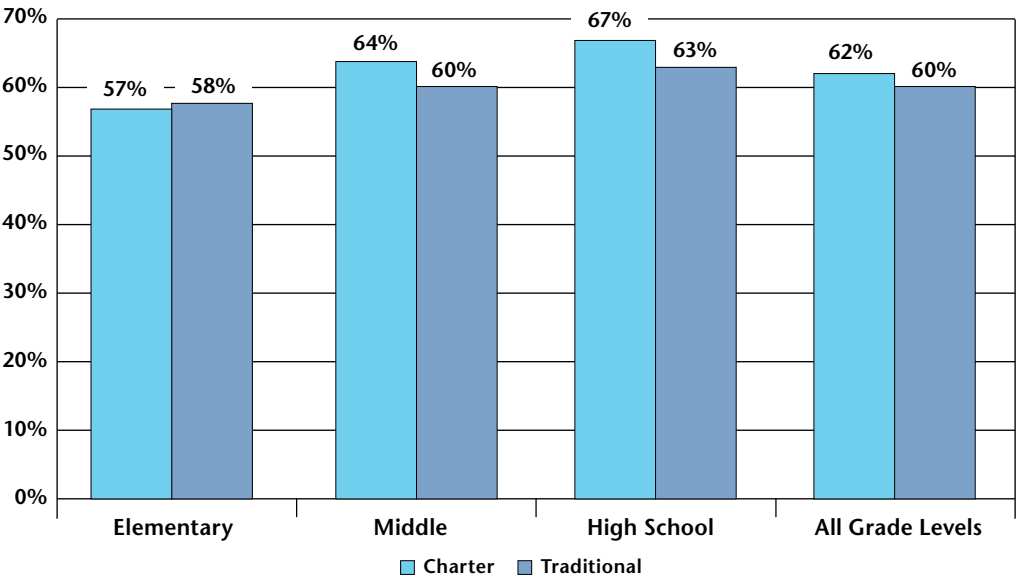
**Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
African American Students**



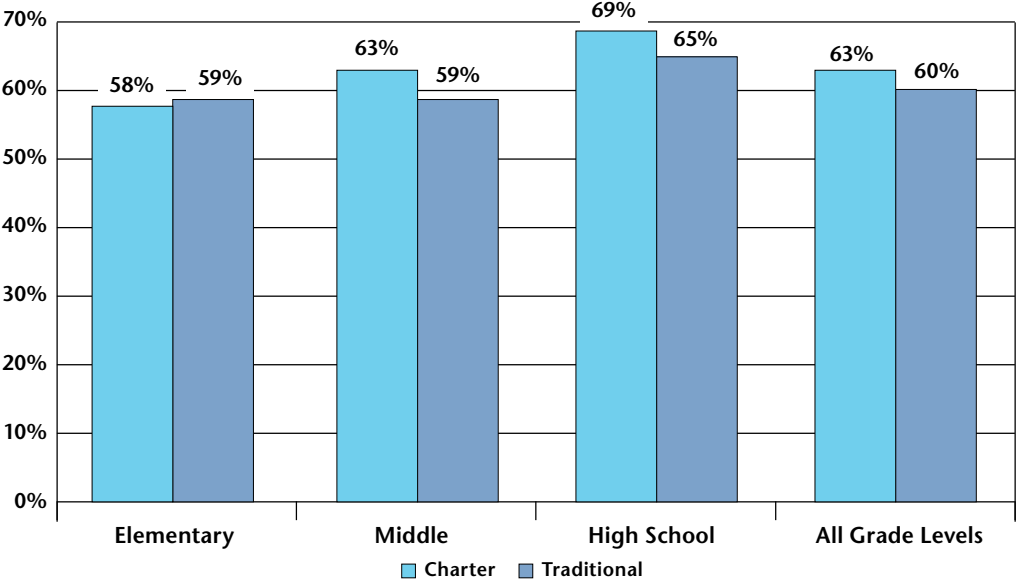
Mathematics

Mathematics

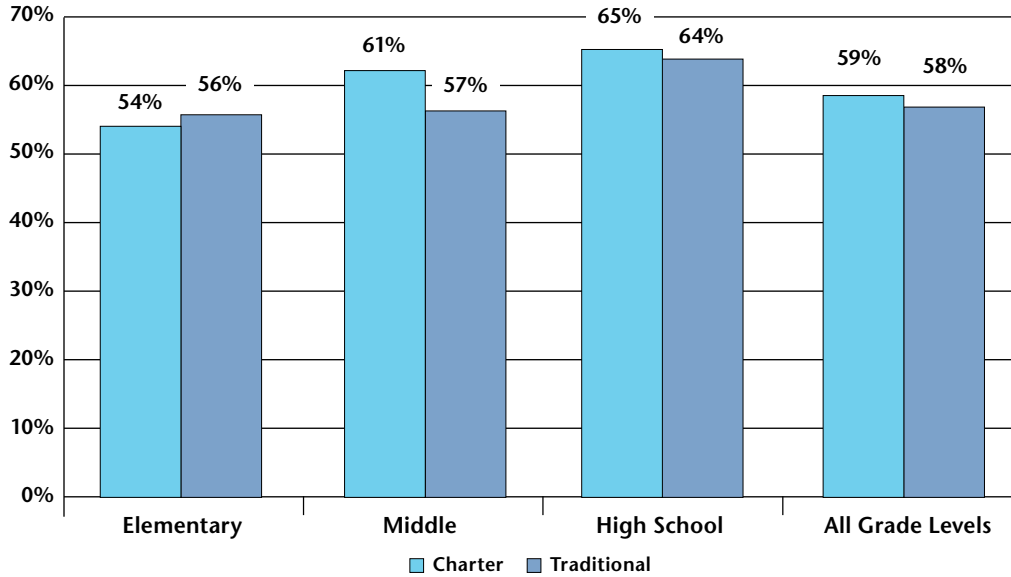
Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
White Students



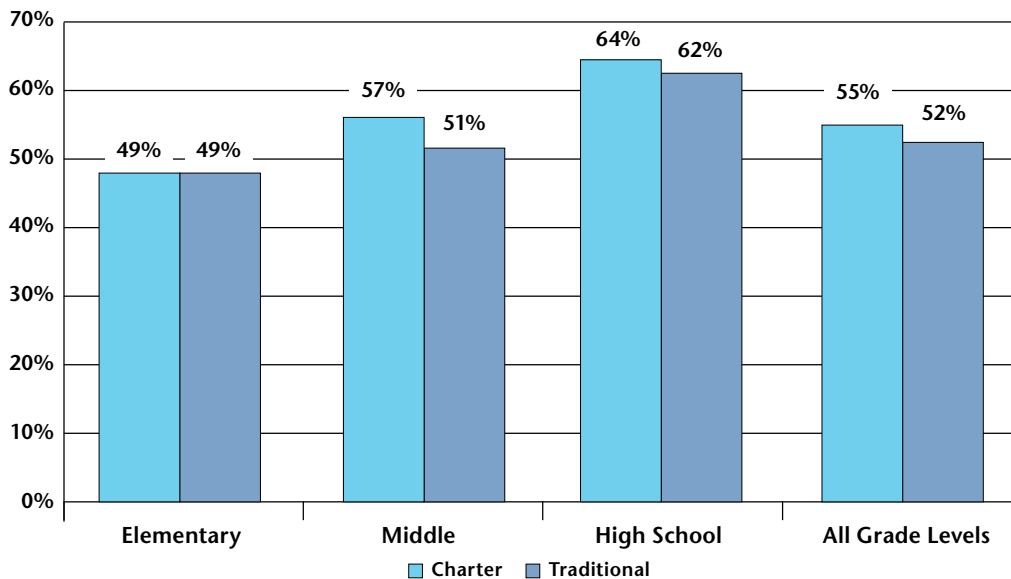
Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
Hispanic Students



**Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
FRL Students**



**Percent of Students In Lowest Quartile Making Learning Gains in Mathematics
Students with Disabilities**



Mathematics

Data

FCAT PROFICIENCY DATA 2012-2013		Charter	Traditional
Total # of Students with FCAT results	Reading	110,550	1,377,774
	Mathematics	91,014	1,006,244
	Science	28,070	341,153
	Algebra	14,013	233,739

Total % Proficient					
	Reading	%	Total Students	%	Total Students
	Elem	65.1	45,081	59.6	518,250
	Mid	66.1	48,995	57.9	514,017
	High	62.5	16,474	54.7	345,507
	Mathematics				
	Elem	61.6	45,089	58.9	517,949
	Mid	60.7	45,925	53.7	488,295
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science				
	Elem	55.2	14,275	54.2	170,965
	Mid	53.0	13,795	48.5	170,188
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	90.4	6,078	91.3	67,699
	High	59.0	7,935	44.8	166,040

Total % Proficient by Race					
White Students	Reading - White				
	Elem	73.8	16,864	71.5	215,821
	Mid	72.6	18,210	68.3	221,124
	High	70.4	5,836	66.4	155,279
	Mathematics - White				
	Elem	67.4	16,860	68.2	215,633
	Mid	68.9	17,495	65.3	210,208
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science - White				
	Elem	63.5	5,422	66.0	72,183
	Mid	63.3	5,391	61.4	74,425
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra - White				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	92.2	2,520	93.7	33,934
	High	63.8	2,613	52.9	63,370

Data

African American Students	Reading - African Am.				
	Elem	48.2	8,876	41.1	114,656
	Mid	50.1	9,036	39.7	114,198
	High	45.3	2,727	33.1	73,664
	Mathematics - African Am.				
	Elem	43.4	8,877	41.7	114,581
	Mid	43.6	8,677	33.9	110,832
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science - African Am.				
	Elem	36.3	2,820	35.0	37,630
	Mid	35.5	2,435	27.5	37,375
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra - African Am.				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	81.8	659	83.5	10,098
	High	47.6	1,632	34.6	44,097

Hispanic Students	Reading - Hispanic				
	Elem	63.7	16,520	54.4	153,659
	Mid	66.4	19,127	54.0	146,559
	High	62.2	7,245	49.7	95,355
	Mathematics - Hispanic				
	Elem	63.8	16,525	56.4	153,622
	Mid	59.5	17,261	48.9	137,279
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science - Hispanic				
	Elem	56.0	5,127	49.5	50,124
	Mid	48.4	5,259	42.3	48,203
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra - Hispanic				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	90.1	2,504	89.9	17,716
	High	61.0	3,419	42.2	50,829

		Charter		Traditional	
Total % Proficient by Free and Reduced Lunch					
	Reading				
	Elem	54.5	22,802	49.0	333,607
	Mid	57.9	25,392	46.9	315,162
	High	53.4	7,767	41.4	182,663
	Mathematics				
	Elem	51.9	22,808	49.4	333,382
	Mid	52.5	23,880	42.7	304,476
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science				
	Elem	45.6	7,180	43.7	108,563
	Mid	42.6	6,872	36.4	101,105
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	86.8	2,493	86.7	30,110
	High	53.3	4,232	38.7	105,962

Total % Proficient by Students with Disabilities					
	Reading				
	Elem	36.1	3,516	27.7	64,997
	Mid	33.4	3,669	22.3	58,007
	High	29.3	1,111	21.5	35,047
	Mathematics				
	Elem	38.4	3,516	31.7	64,839
	Mid	32.6	3,604	22.7	57,542
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science				
	Elem	30.9	1,140	26.6	21,109
	Mid	28.5	1,003	19.4	18,747
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	83.0	165	82.8	2,019
	High	38.3	749	24.0	22,471

Total % Proficient by ELL					
	Reading				
	Elem	26.4	3,261	23.2	53,138
	Mid	20.5	2,171	13.9	27,692
	High	20.7	648	11.1	16,269
	Mathematics				
	Elem	37.9	3,271	33.6	53,216
	Mid	27.3	2,133	20.1	27,542
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Science				
	Elem	22.7	825	19.7	15,197
	Mid	12.3	521	9.0	8,563
	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Algebra				
	Elem	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Mid	80.9	68	80.4	830
	High	44.9	468	28.7	12,532

LEARNING GAINS DATA

Reading	All Students % who made learning gains	African American % who made learning gains	White % who made learning gains	Hispanic % who made learning gains	FRL % who made learning gains	SWD % who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	63	58	65	64	60	55
Grades 6, 7 and 8	66	61	67	68	64	56
Grades 9 and 10	64	57	66	66	61	53
All Grade levels	65	60	66	66	62	55
Traditional Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	62	56	65	62	59	53
Grades 6, 7 and 8	63	57	64	63	59	51
Grades 9 and 10	61	53	64	62	57	52
All Grade levels	62	56	64	63	59	52

LEARNING GAINS OF THE LOWEST QUARTILE

Reading	All Students % in the low 25% who made learning gains	African American % in the low 25% who made learning gains	White % in the low 25% who made learning gains	Hispanic % in the low 25% who made learning gains	FRL % in the low 25% who made learning gains	SWD % in the low 25% who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	62	59	61	64	61	54
Grades 6, 7 and 8	65	63	64	66	63	56
Grades 9 and 10	64	59	66	67	63	57
All Grade levels	64	61	63	66	62	55
Traditional Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	61	58	61	62	60	52
Grades 6, 7 and 8	60	58	60	61	58	51
Grades 9 and 10	61	56	62	64	59	55
All Grade levels	60	57	61	62	59	52

Note: Retained 3rd grade students eligible for gains therefore included with grades 4 and 5.

LEARNING GAINS DATA

Mathematics	All Students % who made learning gains	African American % who made learning gains	White % who made learning gains	Hispanic % who made learning gains	FRL % who made learning gains	SWD % who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	59	52	60	61	56	52
Grades 6, 7 and 8	66	58	70	66	63	58
Grades 9 and 10	70	62	73	72	67	62
All Grade levels	64	57	67	65	61	56
Traditional Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	61	54	64	61	58	52
Grades 6, 7 and 8	64	56	68	63	59	53
Grades 9 and 10	68	62	71	67	64	59
All Grade levels	64	57	67	63	60	53

LEARNING GAINS OF THE LOWEST QUARTILE

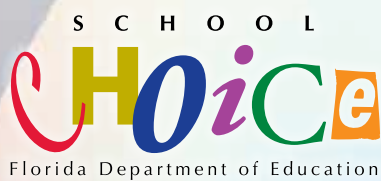
Mathematics	All Students % in the low 25% who made learning gains	African American % in the low 25% who made learning gains	White % in the low 25% who made learning gains	Hispanic % in the low 25% who made learning gains	FRL % in the low 25% who made learning gains	SWD % in the low 25% who made learning gains
Charter Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	56	53	57	58	54	49
Grades 6, 7 and 8	62	58	64	63	61	57
Grades 9 and 10	66	61	67	69	65	64
All Grade levels	61	56	62	63	59	55
Traditional Schools						
Grades 4 and 5	57	54	58	59	56	49
Grades 6, 7 and 8	58	55	60	59	57	51
Grades 9 and 10	64	64	63	65	64	62
All Grade levels	59	56	60	60	58	52

Note: Retained third-grade students eligible for gains therefore included with grades 4 and 5.





Florida Department of Education
Pam Stewart, Commissioner
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