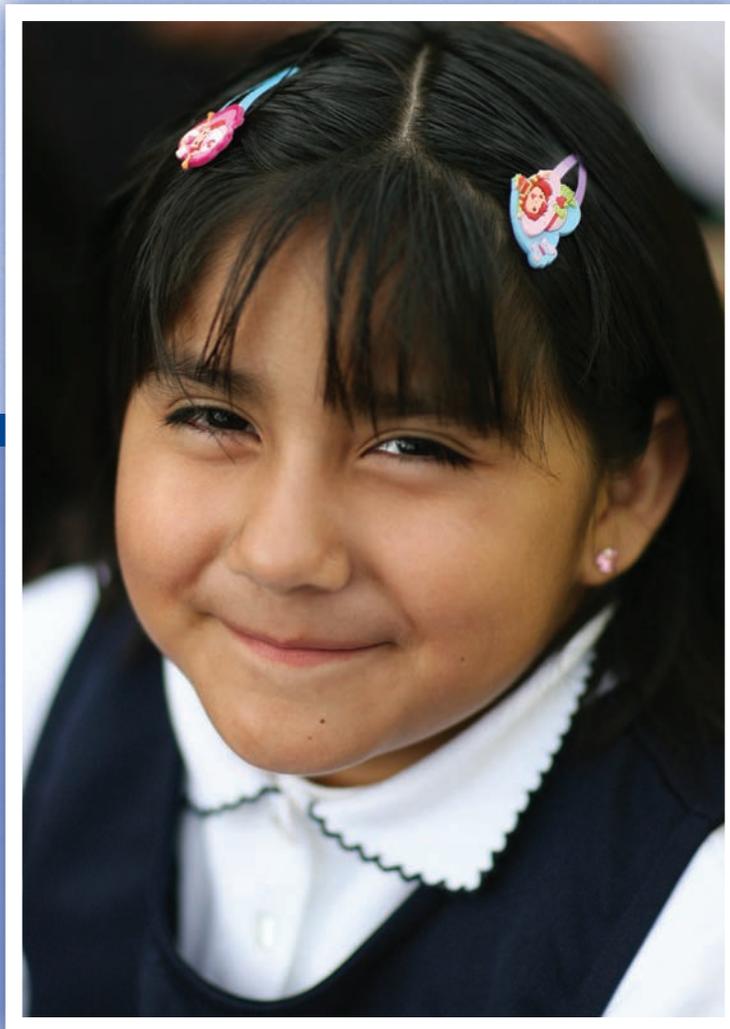


*Charter Schools and Changing Neighborhoods:
Hispanics and English Learners in Chicago*



Charter Schools and Changing Neighborhoods: Hispanics and English Learners in Chicago

BY COLLIN HITT SEPTEMBER 2009

Executive Summary

Chicago's Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Hispanic students will play a major role in determining the city's economic future. Unfortunately, these two critical groups have remained among the lowest-performing in the Chicago Public Schools where current strategies for improvement have shown scant signs of reversing current trends. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that thousands of LEP and Hispanic students are attending overcrowded schools. Indeed, the problem of school overcrowding seems to fall most heavily on Hispanic communities in Chicago, as shown by United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) research. New, high-quality schooling options need to be created to meet the demands and needs of those families.

Public charter schools, meanwhile, have begun to demonstrate impressive improvements for both of these student populations—providing an innovative model for improving schooling conditions for LEP and Hispanic students in Chicago.

This study examines standardized test scores during the 2007-08 school year for charter schools where LEP and Hispanic student populations exceed district averages. Among its findings from schools with available data:

- LEP students at reviewed charter schools outperformed their Chicago Public Schools peers at the same grade level 83.8 percent of the time;
- Hispanic students did so 65.9 percent of the time;
- Charter schools, which are not subject to the same statewide bilingual education requirements as other public schools, utilized a range of approaches to teaching English. The charter schools with the best results teaching LEP students all utilized various Structured English Immersion approaches; and
- In particular, LEP and Hispanic students at charter school campuses operated by the UNO Network of Charter Schools and Chicago International Charter School demonstrated some of the city's strongest standardized test results, routinely performing above district averages.

Details follow.

Introduction

Hispanic students will be the largest ethnic group in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) by 2012 if current enrollment trends continue. In 2008, the district enrolled a record-high percentage of English language learners. Neighborhoods and demographics are changing in Chicago. The city's schools need to change with them.

Across the city, dozens of schools are crowded beyond capacity. This is despite the fact that Chicago Public Schools have seen an enrollment decline of more than 45,000 students over the past eight years. School overcrowding occurs most commonly in neighborhoods that are heavily Hispanic, according to a recent United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) report.¹ Overcrowded schools – like so many schools throughout the district – are often struggling to educate students. Parents in overcrowded schools and underserved neighborhoods are demanding better options.

Public charter schools may provide the answer parents are looking for. Though a relatively small number of charter schools have been permitted to open, parents have responded positively. Many families and community groups are now advocating for new charter schools to be opened in their communities.

Across the city, dozens of existing charter schools have long waiting lists. A review of the academic performance shows why. Many of Chicago's charter schools have successfully improved the quality, and not just the number, of school choices available to the families of many Hispanic students and English language learners.

This report examines the performance of Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Hispanic students at charter schools with higher-than-average enrollments of either group. Charter school campus-level test data – much of it previously unreleased – is compared to district-wide averages for LEP and Hispanic students.

Our findings suggest that charter schools can raise the bar academically in neighborhoods with overcrowded public schools. In direct comparisons of grade-level and subject-level results:

- LEP students at charter schools with higher-than-average LEP enrollments perform above their LEP peers in Chicago Public Schools 83.8 percent of the time; and
- Hispanic students at charter schools with higher-than-average Hispanic enrollments perform above their peers at CPS schools 65.9 percent of the time.

Citywide, dozens of charter school campuses have enrolled high numbers of LEP and Hispanic students. The performance of these schools is relevant to the policy debate over how to alleviate overcrowding and create new schooling options.

What schools do families of LEP or Hispanic students prefer, when they've been given a choice? And, to date, how have LEP and Hispanic students fared at these schools? The answers to these questions should guide policymakers as they approach the challenge of creating new schooling options in Chicago.

Charter Schools in Demand

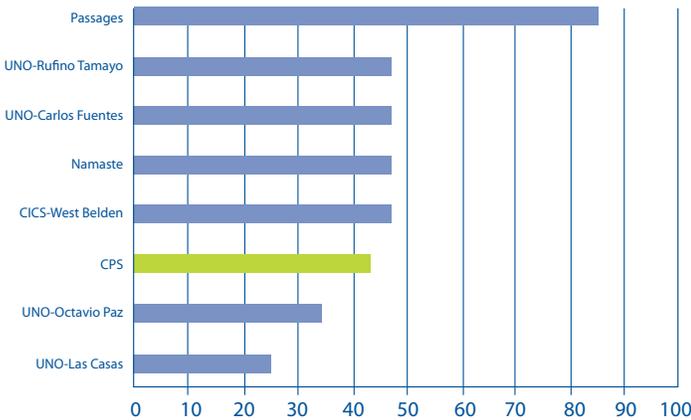
Over the past decade, a new kind of public school has emerged: charter schools. These are unique schools operated by independent community groups and non-profit organizations.

They are open to any student who applies, and enrollment at charter schools is completely voluntary – and, as a result, charter schools must compete for every student that walks through their doors.

There are currently 72 charter school campuses in Chicago enrolling more than 30,000 students. There are nearly 13,000 students waiting to get into these schools. The students on charter school waiting lists and the students at overcrowded schools have something in common – both are in need of new schooling options.

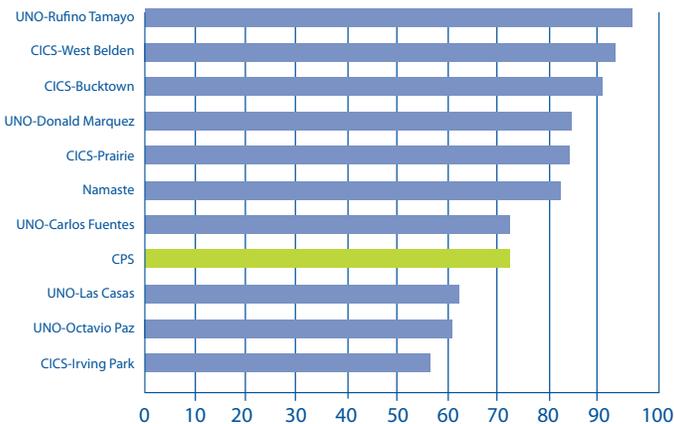
Since the state’s charter school law was created in 1996, charter schools have opened in many of the city’s lowest-income neighborhoods. They have consistently been shown to raise academic performance. While evaluating the performance of students district-wide is important, and while several consecutive studies have shown a positive impact for Chicago’s charter schools as a whole, it is beneficial for policymakers to narrow their focus to a smaller subset of charter schools. Moreover, it is important to know which campuses in particular have succeeded in improving education for Hispanic students and which have not.

Third Grade Reading: Percent of LEP Students Meeting/Exceeding State Standards on ISAT

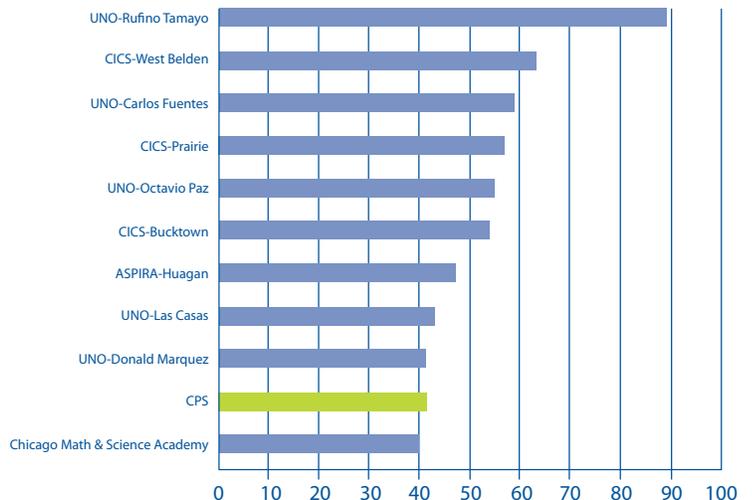


Of 67 charter campuses open in Chicago during the 2007-08 school year, 20 enrolled a higher percentage of Hispanic students than the district-wide average. Ten campuses had higher-than-average LEP enrollments.² Those schools are the subjects of this review (a full explanation of methodology is provided in Appendix A).

Fourth Grade Math: Percent of Hispanic Students Meeting/Exceeding State Standards on ISAT



Sixth Grade Writing: Percent of Hispanic Students Meeting/Exceeding State Standards on ISAT



LEP Student Performance

Students who know little or no English present a challenge to educators. As a group, they have never performed well in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), as standardized test scores and extremely low transition rates have consistently demonstrated.

The failure to educate LEP students falls particularly hard upon Hispanic families. Statewide, Spanish is the native language for 81.3 percent of LEP students. That number climbs to 84.2 percent in Chicago.

Many educators and local policymakers are hoping to create new schooling options in Chicago's Hispanic neighborhoods, many of which are replete with underperforming, overcrowded schools. New schools in these communities are bound to enroll a high percentage of Hispanic students. They are also likely to enroll significant numbers of LEP students.

The most successful charter schools described in this report employ structured English immersion models, rather than bilingual education.

Within Chicago, LEP students represent 14.8 percent of the student population. Of the city's charter school campuses, only 10 campuses enroll an above-average percentage of LEP students. Listed in Table 2, these campuses have an average LEP enrollment of 28.3 percent – nearly twice the average of district schools.

**High-LEP Charters
Grade-by-Grade Comparison**

% of Cases Above CPS Average	
CICS - West Belden	100
UNO - Carlos Fuentes	92.9
UNO - Rufino Tamayo	92.9
UNO - Las Casas	85.7
UNO - Octavio Paz	85.7
Namaste	71.4
Passages	71.4
ASPIRA - Haugen	0.0
Overall	79.8

Where campus-level data were available at the individual grade level, the performance of LEP students at selected charter campuses was compared to district averages in each subject tested. LEP students at charter schools representing a larger share of the overall student population than the CPS average will be referred to as "high-LEP" charter schools for the purposes of this report. These students consistently performed above the norm for LEP students district-wide in 83.8 percent of available comparisons. In each content area of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, LEP students at charter schools routinely performed above the average of LEP students at district schools in grades 3 through 8.

The performance of LEP students at high-LEP charter schools was above the district-wide average of LEP students at the same grade levels as follows³:

- In Reading, in 85.4 percent of all cases;
- In Math, in 79.4 percent of all cases; and
- In Science, in 91.7 percent of all cases.

The available performance data was confined to grades 3 through 8 for high-LEP charters.⁴

At both the primary and middle school levels, LEP students at high-LEP charter schools routinely performed above the district norm for LEP students, in all subjects :

- In Grades 3 through 5, high-LEP charter students performed above district-wide averages for LEP students 86.7 percent of the time; and
- In Grades 6 through 8, they outperformed district-wide averages 80.0 percent of the time.

The record of success in charter school campuses with high LEP enrollments is consistently stronger than that of district schools. This should be welcome news to parents, policymakers, educators and district officials alike. These charter school campuses – if not all charter schools – have a record of success that, if replicated, could change the course of public education in Chicago. Fortunately, most campuses with a demonstrated success in educating LEP students are managed by organizations that excel not only at teaching LEP students, but also replicating their success by opening new campuses. Their stories are discussed later in this paper.

Hispanic Student Performance

Simply put, Illinois's economic future depends upon the successful education of Hispanic students. Over the last decade, the Hispanic student population has grown by 50 percent. One in five students statewide – and two out of five students in Chicago – are Hispanic.

UNO's research shows school crowding occurs more commonly in heavily-Latino neighborhoods.

It is no secret that Hispanic children have, as a group, not fared well in Illinois schools. *Education Week* recently reported that Illinois's high school graduation rate for Hispanic students was 56.7 percent – almost 20 points below the statewide average for all students. That number likely falls even lower in Chicago, where the graduation rate for all students is a reported 49.6 percent.

Twenty-one Chicago charter school campuses had higher Hispanic enrollments than the district average. Of those, 17 had subgroup-specific, campus-level testing data available for the 2007-08 school year (the others were too small to provide detailed testing information or were too new and did not yet enroll students in the grades during which standardized tests are administered).

A vast majority (15 out of 17) of these charter school campuses have Hispanic enrollments exceeding 50 percent. For this analysis, these will be described as “high-Hispanic” schools. Indeed, the average Hispanic enrollment at these select campuses was 76.7 percent, compared to a district-wide average of 39.7 percent.

**High-Hispanic Charters
Grade-by-Grade Comparison on ISAT**

% of Cases Above CPS Average	
CICS - Bucktown	100
Namaste	100
Noble Street - College Prep	100
Erie Elementary	100
CICS - West Belden	82.4
UNO - Carlos Fuentes	76.5
UNO - Rufino Tamayo	76.5
UNO - Donald Marquez	64.7
UNO - Las Casas	58.8
UNO - Octavio Paz	58.8
Chicago Math & Science Academy	53.8
CICS - Prairie	52.9
CICS - Northtown	50.0
CICS - Irving Park	40.0
ASPIRA - Haugan	11.1
ASPIRA - Mirta Ramirez	0.0
Overall	65.9

Altogether, charter school campuses with heavy Hispanic enrollments fared very well compared to district averages. On a grade-by-grade, subject-by-subject comparison, Hispanic students at charter school campuses performed above district-wide averages in 65.9 percent of available comparisons. In each content area, Hispanic students at these charter schools scored above their district peers at the same grade level a majority of the time:

- In Reading, in 66.7 percent of cases;
- In Math, in 66.7 percent of cases;
- In Science, in 66.7 percent of cases; and
- In Writing, in 62.5 percent of cases.

At each level of schooling – elementary school, middle school and high school – Hispanic students at high-Hispanic charter campuses performed above district averages for Hispanic students at the same grade levels in a clear majority of comparisons:

- In grades 3 through 5, they outperformed CPS averages 65.7 percent of the time;
- In grades 6 through 8, they did so 66.7 percent of the time; and
- In high school, where students are tested during only grade 11, Hispanic students outperformed CPS averages 62.5 percent of the time.

UNO Charter Schools

The United Neighborhood Organization is a Chicago-based grassroots organization that focuses on policy initiatives for the city's Hispanic community. The group opened its first charter school in 1998, which has since grown into a nine-campus network across Chicago. The charter network's mission, simply put, is to "transform" Hispanic communities "by challenging them to achieve their full potential through learning. UNO Charter Schools bring a 'no excuses' philosophy to public education that couples with its vision and understanding of Latino families."⁵

UNO operates a network of charter schools that have proven extremely popular with Hispanic students. There were nearly 1,000 students on waiting lists to get into one of UNO's charter school campuses during the 2007-08 school year.



"Meticulous attention to detail and discipline"

A visit to UNO's Officer Donald Marquez School shows meticulous attention to detail and discipline. The school is located in a shining facility that UNO hopes to replicate many times over. UNO has recently secured significant state support for a major expansion of its campuses, and the

organization has formally proposed to open six new campuses by 2011. As policymakers weigh whether to approve this expansion, they should consider the following question: has UNO succeeded in successfully educating its target population, LEP and Hispanic students?

UNO's campus-level data, recently made available, shows that LEP students demonstrated remarkable improvements at UNO charter schools compared with the Chicago Public Schools. Performance data from the UNO campuses studied showed that their LEP students performed above CPS averages for the same grade levels:

- In Reading, 91.7 percent of the time;
- In Math, 83.3 percent of the time; and
- In Science, 100 percent of the time.

UNO's approach to LEP students is perhaps unique amongst schools in Chicago. Rather than attempt bilingual education for Spanish-speaking youngsters, "All students attending an UNO Charter School are immersed in English through our core curriculum, which has been specifically modified to support [LEP] students." This is in stark contrast to the predominant approach of district-run public schools, which are required to hire bilingual teachers and offer a highly state-prescribed curriculum.

The results also show that UNO has raised the bar significantly for Hispanic students, who outperformed CPS averages at the same grade level:

- In Reading, 76.7 percent of the time;
- In Math, 63.3 percent of the time;
- In Science, 70.0 percent of the time; and
- In Writing, 60.0 percent of the time.

Altogether, Hispanic students at UNO charter campuses tested above the district-wide average of their peers in 68.5 percent of available grade-by-grade comparisons. The performance of LEP students at UNO charter campuses is also impressive, exceeding the district average for LEP students 89.3 percent of the time.

The curriculum at UNO schools is identical across campuses. In addition to its approach to English language acquisition, the school employs a Saxon Math curriculum and direct instruction in Reading. UNO has used its flexibility to develop a unique network of schools. Its performance numbers suggest that, if permitted to move forward with its aggressive expansion plans, UNO will improve the quality of education in Chicago's Hispanic neighborhoods.



Chicago International Charter School

Opened in 1997, Chicago International Charter School (CICS) is the largest charter school in Illinois, operating 13 campuses across the city. Enrolling nearly 7,000 students, the CICS network is larger than most school districts in Illinois. But CICS is no bureaucratic behemoth. A defining characteristic of the school is its decentralized management model, which has allowed it to open and successfully operate a high number of campuses with diverse enrollments.

Five CICS campuses have Hispanic enrollments above the district average, and two campuses have higher-than-average LEP enrollments. CICS campuses Bucktown, Irving Park and Northtown all have above-average Hispanic enrollments, while the Prairie and West Belden campuses both have higher-than-average enrollments of

LEP and Hispanic students. The performance at these schools has been impressive. Hispanic students at these campuses performed above district-wide averages in 73.3 percent of direct matchups of grade-level performance, and LEP students at CICS West Belden performed above district-wide averages in all five available matchups of grade-level performance. (Grade-level test results were not available for CICS Prairie.)

The success of Hispanic students at CICS campuses was consistent across subjects, who outperformed Chicago Public Schools averages for the same grade levels:

- In Reading, 66.7 percent of the time;
- In Math, 85.7 percent of the time;
- In Science, 62.5 percent of the time; and
- In Writing, 70.0 percent of the time.

CICS's management model is unique, and it is one of the reasons why the school has been able to maintain a stable growth in the number of campuses that the school operates. Operational decisions at CICS schools are largely made at the campus level by management organizations that are hired by the central office. These firms are often called EMOs, short for education management organizations.

The twelve campuses in the CICS network are operated by four different EMOs. One firm is a non-profit, called American Quality Schools (AQS). Two are for-profit entities, Edison Learning and Victory Schools. And one is a wholly owned subsidiary of CICS, called Civitas. Of the campuses reviewed in this paper, Bucktown, Prairie and West Belden are managed by AQS, Irving Park is managed by Victory Schools, and Northtown is managed by Civitas.

CICS's management model allows the central office to hold campus-level decision makers accountable. An EMO that fails to produce results can quickly be replaced. Moreover, by fielding proposals from a variety of EMOs on a campus-by-campus basis, CICS officials can choose from a wide variety of service providers with various strengths and specialties. This has been a winning recipe for opening successful schools with high Hispanic enrollments, as the analysis above shows.

Chicago International Charter School, unlike the United Neighborhood Organization, is not identified with a particular ethnic constituency or historical cause. Yet, when asked to open a school assured to have heavy Hispanic enrollments, CICS has done so, and with great success – a track record which should assure it strong consideration for future schools. Nevertheless, its success with LEP and Hispanic students should not be overlooked.

Passages and Other Single Campus Operators

A majority of the campuses reviewed in this paper are operated by either UNO or CICS. But those two networks are certainly not the only schools in Chicago with strong records of success with LEP and Hispanic students.

That said, several promising charter schools that enroll higher-than-average percentages of LEP or Hispanic students are single-campus charter schools: Chicago Math & Science Academy, Erie Elementary, Namaste and Passages. Each has a unique mission, curriculum and management style. Until recently, these schools had been prevented from expanding because state law had prevented Chicago Public Schools from issuing any additional charters. That has now changed, and Chicago Public Schools can now issue as many as 45 new charters.

Passages Charter School, for one, has seized upon the new opportunity to apply for charters. The school asked to be issued a second charter, in order to open a new Passages Charter School in the Edgewater community. Known for its ethnic diversity, Edgewater is different from many of the communities served by UNO or the CICS campuses.

Indeed, Passages Charter School is the only school included in the above analysis of LEP student performance that is not also included in the analysis of Hispanic student performance. Passages enrolls a relatively low number of Hispanic students, but a very high percentage of LEP students. The school's existing campus is one of the most diverse schools in the city, which is understandable once one reads its mission statement: "Focused specifically on the needs of immigrant and refugee students."⁶

LEP students at Passages exceeded the district-wide average in every available comparison of grade-level academic performance.

English language proficiency is very low during the beginning grades at Passages. However, due to the overwhelming variety of languages spoken by students entering the school, native language instruction is simply not viable. Thus, according to the school's website, "Passages offers a tailored educational program focused on high academic standards, for students from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. As an English Immersion program, our entire staff is trained in English as a Second Language strategies."

This English immersion approach has led to success. LEP students at Passages exceeded the district-wide average in every available comparison of grade-level academic performance. In the district's review of school-wide measures of academic performance, Chicago Public Schools compared Passages to the public schools that its students would have likely attended otherwise, and found that Passages students scored higher on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

Passages is managed by American Quality Schools, the same non-profit management firm that operates several of the CICS campuses that have proven so successful with Hispanic and LEP students.⁷ Each of these campuses use the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model developed at California State University and the Center for Applied Linguistics to teach English and raise academic performance for LEP students.

In Chicago, schools managed by AQS have hosted an impressive track record of educating LEP and Hispanic students. At AQS-managed campuses covered in this report (Passages as well as the Bucktown, Prairie and West Belden campuses of CICS) Hispanic students exceeded district-wide averages in 80.3 percent of matchups and LEP students did so 100 percent of the time.





Growing Appeal for Latinos

In response to shifting demographics and school conditions in Illinois communities, new school choices need to be created. A fundamental question for educators and policymakers in Chicago and throughout Illinois will be “what kinds of schools do parents in these communities want?” Public polling provides insight on this matter, as do the actions of parents who are able to exercise choice.

In a citywide study of school overcrowding, UNO found that a “majority of overcrowded schools were predominantly Hispanic...The shortage of ‘seats’ is 16,552, the equivalent of 552 classrooms, or approximately 28 schools. When this is distributed proportionally to the ethnic make-up of students enrolled at these schools,

the Hispanic share is 79.4 percent.”⁸ As policymakers attempt to tackle the problems of overcrowding, they not only need to know what kinds of schools are demanded by families in general, but by Hispanic families in particular.

In December 2007, the Illinois Policy Institute co-sponsored a public opinion poll of 1,500 registered voters. A key question was, “If it was your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?” Charter schools were the most popular choice among public school options (which was comprised of traditional public schools, virtual schools and charter schools).⁹

Of Hispanic respondents who selected a public school option as their top choice, a 51 percent majority said that they would most prefer to send their children to charter schools. Similarly, of Chicago residents who preferred public schools, 51 percent selected charter schools as their top choice. Other polls also show strong support for charter schools, especially when a definition of charter schools (as public schools) is provided.¹⁰

By looking at which charter schools have proven popular with Hispanic families in particular, policymakers can discover which schools might be well received if expanded into heavily Hispanic neighborhoods.

The report by UNO shows that charter schools are often absent from many of Chicago’s most heavily Hispanic neighborhoods – which happen to be the very same neighborhoods with intense overcrowding in their public schools. UNO has called upon policymakers to expand the number of charter schools in those communities. Indeed, as an operator of several charter school campuses across Chicago, UNO makes a strong case to allow them to open new campuses in areas where school overcrowding is the worst.

Finding successful and innovative ways to educate Hispanic students should be a central goal of policymakers in Chicago and throughout the state.

Recommendations for Policymakers

The charter school campuses examined in this report have consistently posted higher standardized test scores for LEP and Hispanic students than traditional public schools. These results lead to the following conclusions and policy recommendations:

- With English language learners enjoying higher levels of success in charter schools than in traditional public schools in Chicago, charters represent an extremely attractive option for parents and policymakers seeking to improve academic results for this critical group of students.
- Charter schools are an appropriate mechanism for alleviating overcrowding and improving education in many of Chicago's neighborhoods that are home to high numbers of Hispanic children and English language learners. Therefore, district officials should approve and authorize new charter schools and allow the expansion of current operations in order to provide better options to students in Chicago's overcrowded schools.
- The most successful charter schools described in this report employ structured English immersion models for teaching Limited English Proficient children. Such approaches have demonstrated strong results teaching this critical population, and their expanded use should be strongly considered, in both public charter schools and traditional public schools.
- Hispanic neighborhoods with overcrowded schools are not the only Chicago communities in need of better schools, and there is strong reason to believe that more high-quality charter schools could bring substantial educational benefits for African-American and other minority populations currently attending traditional public schools facing similar problems.





Conclusion

Families from all corners of Chicago are eager for better schools. Many Hispanic neighborhoods in particular are in need of higher quality and a greater number of school choices – research by the United Neighborhood Organization has found that struggling schools in these communities are often also overcrowded.

After reviewing the performance record of charter school campuses with heavy Hispanic enrollments, we found that the LEP students at these charter schools perform above their peers in district-run schools 83.8 percent of the time, and Hispanic students do so 65.9 percent of the time.

Perhaps most heartening about the success of these charter school campuses is that most of them are operated or managed by home-grown, Chicago-based organizations that have the ability to scale up operations: namely, United Neighborhood Organization, Chicago International Charter School and American Quality Schools. These operators have the capacity to move quickly into underserved neighborhoods and, at last, give parents a better choice of schools.

The demonstrated success of charter schools should give district officials the confidence to allow these operators to expand. Schools like UNO and CICS could replicate under their current charters; others such as Passages would need to be issued separate charters if they hope to expand.

But there is little reason to believe that new charter school operators could not also meet with similar success. For example, should nationally-known organizations such as the KIPP network of schools or the National Council of La Raza, with strong track records of educating poor minority and LEP students, open charter school campuses in Chicago, the city's students could surely expect to enjoy the educational benefits. Entirely new operators should be welcomed into the fold as well – after all, Passages and UNO and CICS all first existed as mere concepts in the minds of innovative educators.

Charter school campuses examined in this report have established a pattern of success. LEP and Hispanic students at these schools have consistently performed above their peers at traditional Chicago Public Schools. These successes should pave the way not only for the expansion of existing charter schools in Chicago, but for relative newcomers as well. More choices and more competition will bring further success, and charter schools will raise the bar for what a growing number of students can achieve in the classroom. The future of Illinois's economy, and the future of many of Chicago's changing neighborhoods, depends upon the successful education of English language learners and Hispanic students. Charter schools represent an important future option for ensuring these students' success.

Appendix A: Report Methodology

This report focuses on a small number of charter schools with higher-than-average enrollments of Hispanic and LEP students, and examines how those students perform at those charter schools. By determining which kinds of schools parents want, and by assessing whether these schools have been successful, policymakers can better know how to approach the problems of school overcrowding in Chicago and the challenges of educating Hispanic students and English language learners in Illinois.

Methods

Two companion analyses are contained in the report above. One focuses on the grade-level performance of Hispanic students at charter school campuses in Chicago that have enrolled an above-average percentage of Hispanic students. The other focuses on the grade-level performance of LEP students at charter campuses that have enrolled an above average percentage of LEP students. Identified in Tables 2 and 3 are the charter school campuses that will be examined below. In each instance where campus-level data was available, grade-level test scores in each content area are compared to district averages. Data was unavailable in instances where, at particular campuses, a subgroup had fewer than 10 students in a particular grade; for student privacy purposes these data are not made public. Data was also unavailable from new campuses that had yet to enroll students in the grades in which state tests are offered.

Data Collection

Data from single-campus charter schools and ASPIRA charter schools (who administered tests at only one elementary campus and one high school campus during the 2007-2008 school year) were collected from the Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC). Campus-level data from multi-campus charter schools was provided directly to the author from staffs at those schools; this report makes that data publicly available for the first time. As discussed below, the campus-level performance of the Hispanic and LEP subgroups on standardized tests was then compared to district-wide averages.

Historically, at multi-campus charter schools, campus-level performance data for student subgroups has not been made available. Because the multi-campus charter schools are technically parts of a single school operating under a single charter, their scores have been aggregated and then reported as such on the IIRC. The data published on the IIRC does not make it possible to discern campus-level performance of Hispanic and LEP at two large multi-campus charter schools that, at many of their campuses, have heavy Hispanic and LEP enrollments. Those two schools, Chicago International Charter School and the UNO Network of Charter Schools, voluntarily made campus-level available for this report.

Comparing Performance

Students in Illinois's public schools are given the Illinois Standards Achievement Test in grades 3 through 8 and the Prairie State Assessment Examination in grade 11. In each of those grades, students are tested in Reading and Math. They are tested in Science during grades 4, 7 and 11. And they are tested in Writing during grades 5, 6, 8 and 11.

The Illinois State Board of Education, as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, has laid out performance benchmarks for each test. From lowest to highest, those benchmarks are: Academic Warning, Below Standards, Meets Standards, and Exceeds Standards. This report compares the district and campus-level averages of the percentage of students who meet/exceed standards in each subject tested, on a grade-by-grade basis. For example, the percentage of Hispanic students at every select charter campus who meet or exceed standards in grade 3 reading is compared to the performance of grade 3 Hispanic students district-wide.

Table 1. High Hispanic Charter Schools: Percentage of Hispanic Students Meeting/Exceeding State Standards on the ISAT

	3R	3M	4R	4M	4S	5R	5M	5W	6R	6M	6W	7R	7M	7S	8R	8M	8W
ASPIRA - Haugan									63	61	47	54	47	40	60	51	24
CICS - Bucktown	90	90	70	90	80	77	85	49	97	100	54	95	85	82	89	85	62
CICS - Irving Park	86	86	50	56	50												
CICS - Prairie	38	44	53	84	47	57	86	33	55	100	57	43	79	64	78	94	58
CICS - West Belden	53	86	84	93	84	67	89	29	78	94	63	84	91	87	86	92	47
Chicago Math & Science Academy									67	73	40	61	77	77	62	57	57
Namaste	63	94	70	82	76												
UNO - Las Casas	38	71	48	62	76	46	75	50	54	75	43	79	82	68	77	81	65
UNO - Carlos Fuentes	67	80	62	72	62	64	76	41	71	75	59	84	77	73	83	71	62
UNO - Donald Marquez	60	79	72	84	62	60	79	20	56	75	41	71	75	51	78	65	57
UNO - Octavio Paz	47	81	43	61	43	57	70	36	70	84	55	76	83	76	80	73	63
UNO - Rufino Tamayo	58	76	78	96	81	56	67	33	83	93	89	74	78	63	79	83	54
CPS	53	74	57	72	57	55	70	47	68	75	41	69	74	66	76	75	56

Table 2. High Hispanic Charter Schools: Percentage of Hispanic Students Meeting/Exceeding State Standards on the Prairie State Achievement Exam

	11R	11M	11S	11W
ASPIRA - Mirta Ramirez	19	26	18	33
CICS - Northtown	28	22	25	82
Chicago Math & Science Academy	57	62	48	67
Noble Street - College Prep	38	36	34	66
CPS	28	30	24	38

Legend:

- Exceeded CPS
- Same as CPS
- Below CPS

Table 3. High LEP Charter Schools: Percentage of LEP Students Meeting/Exceeding State Standards on the ISAT

	3R	3M	4R	4M	4S	5R	5M	6R	6M	7R	7M	7S	8R	8M
ASPIRA - Haugan								26	28	19	23	17	21	12
CICS - Prairie	N/A													
CICS - West Belden	47	82	75	94	69	44	78	N/A						
Erie Elementary	N/A	N/A												
Namaste	47	91	47	67	67									
Passages	85	85	90	100	82									
UNO - Las Casas	25	67	37	58	68	36	73	53	74	67	75	42	71	71
UNO - Carlos Fuentes	47	68	47	70	53	65	74	45	55	71	75	50	73	63
UNO - Octavio Paz	34	71	41	52	38	48	52	40	60	75	88	75	50	75
UNO - Rufino Tamayo	47	67	69	94	69	38	50	80	93	60	60	60	60	60
CPS	43	69	30	52	32	22	44	28	47	27	42	28	34	44

Endnotes

- 1 "School Overcrowding: Limiting Hispanic Potential," published by the United Neighborhood Organization: <http://uno.bluefieldsound.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/SRO.5.1.pdf>
- 2 "2007-08 Annual Performance Report, Charter Schools," published by Chicago Public Schools' Office of New Schools: https://www.cps.edu/News/Press_releases/2009/Documents/CPSONSperfreport.pdf
- 3 At most campuses writing results were unavailable for LEP subgroups, due to the small numbers of students enrolled in each class. Writing results were able to be reported by UNO charter schools and Chicago International Charter School; independent analyses of the writing performance of students at those charter schools are contained in a following section.
- 4 High school results were unavailable for LEP students. This is partially a result of the low number of charter high school campuses in neighborhoods with large numbers of LEP students, and partially a result of the fact that, given the results above, charter schools likely have been successful at reclassifying LEP students as proficient in English, which in turn diminishes the sample of LEP students in the latter grades.
- 5 United Neighborhood Organization marketing collateral, provided to the author by UNO staff.
- 6 From the website of Passages Charter School: <http://www.passagescharterschool.org/>
- 7 AQS is a Chicago-based firm co-founded by former state comptroller and state superintendent Michael Bakalis. The group has proven adept at running successful schools throughout Chicago, each of which has unique challenges, enrollments, and missions. It has now attracted the attention of school reformers in St. Louis, who have partnered with AQS to manage a college prep campus and a performing arts school.
- 8 UNO, "School Overcrowding." Op.cit.
- 9 DiPerna, Paul. 2007. "Illinois' Opinion on K-12 Education and School Choice," published by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and co-sponsored by the Illinois Policy Institute: <http://www.friedmanfoundation.org/research/ShowResearchItem.do?id=10086>
- 10 Computations made using data from previous calculations from "Illinois' Opinion on K-12 Education and School Choice," published by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and co-sponsored by the Illinois Policy Institute.



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