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# Effective Charter Schools: An Examination of Operational, Financial, and Governance Practices as it Relates to the Renewal of North Carolina Charter Schools

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EFFECTIVE CHARTER SCHOOLS: AN EXAMINATION OF OPERATIONAL,  
FINANCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AS IT RELATES TO THE  
RENEWAL OF NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOLS

By  
Shaunda R. Cooper

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Gardner-Webb University School of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University  
2020

## Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Shaunda R. Cooper under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Finally, to all the little girls of color who may not believe their dreams can come true, this one is for you. The world is your oyster, so go out there and live your best life.

## **Abstract**

EFFECTIVE CHARTER SCHOOLS: AN EXAMINATION OF OPERATIONAL, FINANCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AS IT RELATES TO THE RENEWAL OF NORTH CAROLINA CHARTER SCHOOLS. Cooper, Shaunda R., 2020: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

North Carolina public charter schools are schools of choice authorized by the State Board of Education. North Carolina has nearly 200 charter schools, which are evaluated for effectiveness annually by a tool called the Performance Framework. However, to date, the evidence collected through the Performance Framework has not been offered to scholars and school leaders as a resource for achieving effective charter schools. Furthermore, research has not been conducted to evaluate a school's performance in relation to its ability to complete a successful charter agreement renewal, which is the vein of a charter school's existence. the study examined operational, governance, and financial factors by utilizing evidence collected through the Performance Framework. I evaluated a sample of 11 schools using the descriptive studies nonexperimental method of research using the Performance Framework as the data source. This research found trends that led to the correlation of literature as reviewed in Chapter 2. School leadership matters. Schools that did not receive a 10-year renewal showed signs of struggle in multiple areas that were examined. This indicates a lack of oversight which is the direct responsibility of school leaders.

*Keywords:* charter school, state board of education, performance framework, charter agreement renewal

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

North Carolina public charter schools are schools of choice authorized by the North Carolina State Board of Education ([NCSBE]; The Office of Charter Schools [OCS], 2019). North Carolina has nearly 200 charters which are evaluated for effectiveness annually by a tool called the Performance Framework. However, to date, the evidence collected through the Performance Framework has not been offered to scholars and school leaders as a resource for recommendations to achieving effective charter schools.

English educator Ray Budde originally conceived the concept of charter schools in the 1970s (Kolderie, 2005). Organizational theory was a curiosity of Budde's; and in 1974, he presented the Society for General Systems Research some ideas on the reorganization of school districts (Kolderie, 2005). His concept of the newly versioned school was to enable teachers to establish contracts in conjunction with their school leaders to come up with new methods and suggestions of instruction in the education sector. The idea was premised on the notion that enlightening and empowering teachers to instruct outside the box, as well as giving them some liberty, would assist them in providing knowledge and skills in a better and more advanced level. Hence, such schools usually enjoy more freedom in terms of curriculum and teaching methods coupled with high anticipation and accountability from the students from the schools (Kolderie, 2005). Budde had a new idea; however, there was no response. Stakeholders did not think there was a significant enough problem in education to require such a reorganization. The mindset then was to develop a new program idea and conduct some in-service training. Budde discontinued his pursuit of the educational idea (Kolderie, 2005).

Restructuring schools became a prevailing thought; and Budde again pursued his idea in the late 1980s, at which time the Northeast Regional Lab published his work (Kolderie, 2005). Ultimately, Al Shanker expanded upon the idea to create what is now known as charter schools (Kolderie, 2005). Charter schools were designed to be legally and financially independent centers of education. As well, they were not to be under the control of any religious body, freely admit students, and charge no fees as in the case of the state of North Carolina (Almond, 2012; NCSBE, n.d.). Charter schools that are successful in fulfilling their purpose through the end of the original approved charter agreement must subsequently begin the reauthorization process to continue being an operational school (NCSBE, n.d.). The reauthorization process may vary depending on the practice of each authorizing state or entity but nonetheless is required (National Association of Charter School Authorizers [NACSA], 2019b).

One factor of being a successful charter school is maintaining enrollment numbers who reflect the community's desire for the school to be an educational choice (South Carolina Policy Council, 2018). Charter schools are considered an alternative to traditional education, one that provides school choice, which means each family chooses a school of choice for their children based on the curriculum provided. Schools of choice provide a valuable alternative to the conventional public school system and avoid much of the red tape that comes with it. Charter schools allow for innovation with novel educational approaches while continuing to be held to the same academic standards to which the public schools are accountable. This degree of flexibility has rapidly expanded the charter school movement (South Carolina Policy Council, 2018).

## **History of Charter Schools**

During the 1970s, the charter school concept was still in its infancy and was not widely known. However, in the 1980s, the charter school movement started gaining much support from Albert Shanker, who was a former leader of the American Federation for Teachers (Mayo, 2016). He contributed to the entrenchment of charters within school curriculums with the first adoption taking place in Minnesota (Mayo, 2016).

Consequently, more states began incorporating the concept in their school curricula, as implemented by Minnesota by the 1990s. The state's implementation strategy was based on three tenets, which entailed giving learners the chance, way, and responsibility of receiving help from the new system. California joined the charter school movement in 1992 through producing legislation that enabled the concept to be legally recognized and entrenched in its education system. Eventually, the concept spread throughout the nation, with more reforms being introduced at various periods to maintain and perfect its benefits to the country (Mayo, 2016).

In 2000, the popularity of the charter system was widespread throughout the entire nation, thus prompting states to channel their resources towards supporting the growth of charter schools; this is apparent in George Bush's advancement of \$219 million towards the development of 1,200 charter schools. Apart from that, another \$50 million was awarded to enable students to change schools under the supervision and approval of their guardians. An extra \$37 million was awarded to allow for such schools to refurbish, rent, and or purchase new facilities that would enable the growth of charter schools. The intent of this award was pushed further by President Obama after George Bush's departure (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003). Obama's contribution was manifested from his strategy of uplifting the disadvantaged public schools to be on par with their charter

school counterparts under the School Improvement Grants Program. Despite governmental financial support, the schools have been compelled to seek funding from other sources due to limited funds. However, the unique and exceptional skills that charter schools offer students have immensely contributed positively in various industries across the nation (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003).

The George Bush administration's legislation made charter schools open and accessible to a high percentage of students in the nation, which contributed to the elimination of entry requirements, tuition fee payments, and flexibility in curriculum formation among states. These legal education reform programs attempted to solve the problem of inequality and racism experienced in the education sector. The legislation also fostered compliance that led to the provision of material as well as technical requirements for success through the Education Code (Horn & Maas, 2013). Schools of choice are independently operated public schools; however, they have considerable autonomy to plan classrooms that are best for the needs of students (Horn & Maas, 2013). Each school of choice operates under a charter agreement with a charter school authorizer, commonly a nonprofit organization, government agency, or university that holds schools responsible for the high standards outlined in the school's agreement (Lin, 2015). Schools of choice maintain a promise for public school innovation. The transformation lies in an unparalleled combination of freedom and accountability (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Backed with public funds and operated independently, schools of choice are free from an array of state laws and district policies specifying what and how they provide instruction, where the school spends funds, and staffing decisions; however, schools of choice are held accountable for their academic

and financial performance (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Charter schools can experiment with instructional and operational practices. These schools have the freedom to set the start and end time for instructional days, combine classes, set dress code requirements, allow teacher representation on the nonprofit board, and offer core classes at a higher percentage (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). These factors make parents partners in adopting instructional practices that build the skills, knowledge, and character traits their students need to succeed in today's world (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

### **History of Charter Schools in North Carolina**

North Carolina's charter schools started operations in 1996 after approval by the General Assembly. General Statute 115C-238.29A states the Charter Act purpose as authorizing a system of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools. On the same note, NCSBE could affirm or disaffirm the approved school (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003). Despite being recognized as independent schools, NCSBE still had the authority of conducting some supervision, such as limiting the maximum number of charter schools in the state to 100. In 1997, 27 charter schools opened in North Carolina. These schools experienced operational difficulties, and their performance was below that of general public schools. Local education agencies (LEAs) were then given the power to offer comments about their school's output and available resources; however, the relationship between the LEAs and charter school boards was frosty. They were not prepared to financially aid schools

(Frankenberg & Lee, 2003).

A change in political power by way of elections in North Carolina allowed lifting the cap of 100 charter schools (Kirst, 2007). The growth and expansion of chartered schools have had mixed reactions and anticipations from policymakers. Opponents of the policy have tried to produce legislation that hampers the success and growth of the concept through the passage of restrictive laws on expansion and funding. Apart from that, opponents believe that supporting charter schools would lead public schools to be overlooked (Kirst, 2007). On the other hand, proponents of the concept have embraced it fully, by passing laws that make it function effectively in North Carolina. Data show that proponents of the charter school concept were more prevalent in states that either had high student dropout cases or were composed of diverse students such as African Americans and Hispanics (Kirst, 2007). The free-market school of thought considers it as an avenue of imparting quality and competitive education. At the same time, cultural conservatives believe it will be used as a means of instilling discipline and communal values through the help of teachers (Kirst, 2007).

### **Charter School Accountability**

School accountability is a topic of complexity due to all the factors that must be considered. The determination as to whether the charter schools result in high performance in terms of educational attainment as well as the individual achievement is believed to be a complex issue because only some schools reflect high levels of achievement. Others are average, while others also do not fully reach the desired standard and are low-performing or continually low-performing schools (Reform of Continually Low-Performing Schools, 2017). These glaring differences can be seen geographically as

well as demographically. Glaring differences include student population, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and factors that can change annually. Success was depicted from the varying percentage of children who were able to graduate, persevere in education, and gain entry to colleges (Berends, 2015).

While the political impact is not a factor of this study, it is undeniable that arguments have been made suggesting the school choice movement has been politically successful but a civil rights failure (The Civil Rights Project, 2010). It has been argued that the United States continues to move increasingly toward segregation and disparity in education for students of color (The Civil Rights Project, 2010). While these schools are reporting low academic achievement and low graduation rates, data suggest that charter schools continue to expand into an even more separated system than the typical public school systems (The Civil Rights Project, 2010).

The state of North Carolina implemented the “weighted lottery” preference as described in General Statute 115C-218.45 in response to the call for more diversity in charter schools (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2018). General Statute 115C-218.45 stipulates that schools of choice are randomly required to accept any students who apply for enrollment. The weighted lottery gives an increased chance for admission to all or a subset of educationally disadvantaged students priority to economically disadvantaged students (NCDPI, 2018).

Various stakeholders are still determining the impact of charter schools despite their growth and advancement over the years (Lake & Hill, 2012). This is due to many factors, such as the competition over financial resources to enhance their survival. The reliance of charter schools on funding from the government and well-wishers who may

fail to keep up with demands fuels the inadequacy of funds (Lake & Hill, 2012). Charter school debates continue. Supporters believe charter schools will produce significant benefits to include a variety of instructive options for scholars, increased innovation by teachers, increased academic achievement, and healthy competition for traditional public schools (Bodilly & Li, 2009). Adversaries believe that schools of choice will cause undesirable effects, like amplified racial and ethnic differentiation and drawing high achieving students away from general public schools. While this is hard to simplify because of the variations among state charter regulations, research on charter schools in several cities and states shows support of this alarming trend (Bodilly & Li, 2009).

### **North Carolina Charter School Renewals**

Every charter school that wishes to continue operating in North Carolina must enter a 2-year process called the renewal process (NCSBE, n.d.). While other states may use the term reauthorization, North Carolina uses the term renewal, as demonstrated in legislation documentation (NCDPI, 2018). Consistent with NCSBE's policy TCS-U-007, NCDPI OCS provides NCSBE with a North Carolina Charter Schools Renewal Report that contains prudent information NCSBE needed to evaluate the status of charter schools (NCSBE, n.d.). According to North Carolina General Statute 115C-218.5(d) and 115C-218.6, NCSBE may grant initial charter agreements for a period not to exceed 5 years. NCSBE shall renew a charter upon the request of the chartering entity for subsequent periods of 10 years unless one of the following applies:

1. The charter school has failed to provide financially sound audits for the immediately preceding 3 years.
2. The charter school's academic outcomes for the immediately preceding 3



years have not been comparable to the academic performance of the local school administrative unit in which the charter is located.

3. The charter school is not, at the time of the request for renewal of the charter, substantially in compliance with state law, federal law, the school's bylaws, or the provisions outlined in its charter granted by NCSBE.

The renewal process requires 2 years and a formal process for completion. During the 2 years, schools are evaluated for compliance in all areas as required per the Performance Framework (NCSBE, n.d.).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Performance Framework is the standard instrument for reporting the effectiveness of a charter school. This framework provides a comprehensive review of the overall operational, governance, and financial wellness of a charter school. To date, the evidence collected through the Performance Framework has not been offered to scholars and school leaders as a resource in developing recommendations for achieving effective charter schools.

The study was purposed to examine operational, governance, and financial factors related to the charter agreement renewal process for North Carolina charter schools. The research also served as a resource to understand how each contributing factor in varying degrees of success affect the outcome of reauthorization terms. Additionally, the purpose of this research was to utilize evidence collected through the Performance Framework and research to provide a resource reflecting characteristics of effective charter schools to school leaders globally.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Each year, the OCS Performance Framework serves as the standard device for sharing progress toward academic, financial, and operational effectiveness of charter schools across the state. The framework gives a combined view of each charter school's ability to uphold the expectations of its charter agreement regarding academic, operational, and financial requirements. The Performance Framework also serves as a standard tool for reporting progress towards achieving Measure 2.4.3 of NCSBE's strategic plan, to provide a consolidated view of charter school performance. NCSBE policy, the charter agreement, and the general statute govern these criteria measures. This research was conducted using the Performance Framework as the foundation of standards, compliance, and effectiveness for each charter school studied. This information collectively determines the success of a charter school's renewal in the state of North Carolina.

## **Research Questions**

1. What factors of operational and governing practices, as defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework, determine a successful charter agreement renewal?
2. What factors of academic performance, as defined by the North Carolina Accountability model, determine a successful charter agreement renewal?
3. What factors of financial standing, as defined by the Local Government Commission and North Carolina Financial Business Services, determine a successful charter agreement renewal?

## **Definition of Terms**

### ***Charter Authorizers***

Refers to the entity responsible for approving and overseeing public charter schools (Lin, 2015).

### ***Charter Schools***

Refers to independent schools that do not charge fees to their students; have a unique curriculum; do not restrict the entry of students; and are not under the control of the government, private entities, or the church (Almond, 2012).

### ***Financial Wellness***

As reviewed by the Local Government Commission, established by G.S. 159-3, the agency delivers aid to local governments and public authorities in North Carolina. The Local Government Commission staff serves the purpose of regulating annual financial reporting by the oversight of the annual audit conducted independently of local governments. Additionally, these audits are set to monitor the fiscal health of local governments by offering broad assistance in financial administration to local governments (North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, 2019).

### ***Free Market Theory***

Refers to the discretion the nation gives states to enable charter schools to develop a varied and unique curriculum that qualitatively and competitively serves the community and the nation. In contrast, institutional theory refers to the control of various schools, whether public, private, or charter, by various interest groups or bodies (Berends, 2015).

### ***Instructional and Governance Compliance***

As determined by NCSBE, Measure 2.4.3 of the strategic plan is to measure the

“Percentage of charter schools meeting or exceeding academic, financial, and operational goals as measured by the Office of Charter School’s performance framework” (OCS, 2019, p. 9).

***Low-Performing School***

Refers to those schools receiving a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of “met expected growth” or “not met expected growth” as defined by G.S. 115C-83.15. (G.S. 115C-105.37[a]; OCS, 2019, p. 10).

***Market Theory***

Refers to the option available to parents as far as their choice of schooling is concerned based on the information on predicting future benefits that accrue based on performances (Berends, 2015).

***North Carolina Accountability Performance***

Per G.S. §115C-174.12(a)(4), “all annual summative assessments of student achievement adopted by the State Board of Education ... and all final exams for courses shall be administered” (North Carolina General Assembly, n.d., p. 1) to all North Carolina public schools.

***North Carolina Charter School Renewal Report***

This report provides NCSBE with a thorough overview of charter school operations for the current charter agreement. NCSBE uses this information to evaluate the progress of each charter school (NCSBE, n.d.).

***Performance Framework***

The North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework reflects key areas of academics, finance, and operations performance. The North Carolina Charter School

Performance Framework should be considered as a tool to track growth and improvement over time (NCSBE, n.d.).

### ***Renewal Cohort***

North Carolina charter schools that are grouped due to the single fact of having the same renewal/reauthorization date.

### ***School Choice***

Refers to the strategies that are put into place to enable parents to determine the kind of school to be attended by their children (Berends, 2015).

### ***NCSBE***

Refers to the North Carolina agency that is mandated to approve charter laws and monitor the implementation of the programs in the charter schools (Kirst, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

While Budde provided the original concept of charter schools in the 1970s, the concept of charter schools has changed tremendously throughout the United States. As of 2016, there were more than 7,000 charter schools, and that number continues to grow (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools [NAPCS], 2017). Currently, there are now more than 3 million students in charter schools across the United States. Specifically, North Carolina has more than 170 schools and over 92,000 students in attendance (NAPCS, 2017).

The critical role public charter school authorizers play in defining the quality of schools of choice is often misunderstood, even by stakeholders and those in power over authorizer practices. Proper authorization is key in opening schools that reflect high quality in school choice (NACSA, 2019b). The state of North Carolina is a single

authorizer of public charter schools. NCSBE is responsible for the approval of nearly 200 public charter schools (NCSBE, n.d.). The North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board assists NCSBE with all processes of charter schools beginning with the application process and eventually the reauthorization of a charter school. The Charter School Advisory Board uses frameworks and general guidelines during all processes.

The U.S. Department of Education provides a framework for what is considered a successful charter school. Getting off to a good start is a crucial component of a school being successful (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). In the same fashion, North Carolina monitors operations, governance, accountability, and financial compliance through the Performance Framework (NCSBE, n.d.). The Performance Framework is the sole mechanism for reporting progress toward the achievement of these goals (NCDPI, 2019b). The framework offers a combined view of each charter school's performance relative to a list of academic, operational, and financial requirements. The academic elements of the Performance Framework are all standard gauges provided by the North Carolina accountability system (NCDPI, 2018). The operational and financial elements of the Performance Framework are all required by state statute (NCSBE, n.d.). Utilizing the framework in this study ensured that the full spectrum of factors that contribute to the success of charter schools was thoroughly explored.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Historical Development of Charter Schools in the United States**

The charter school network has grown drastically for almost 25 years since its beginnings in Minnesota. Currently, it is reported that more than two and a half million children attend roughly 64,000 schools of choice within the United States, not including eight states that are without charter laws (NACSA, 2019b). An upsurge of public comments has emerged about charter school influence on student academic achievement (Christy et al., 2015). Much of the discussion has been marked by rhetoric, with a dependence on statistics that are, at times, outdated and research that may not utilize rigorous scientific research methods. According to Christy et al. (2015), navigating the opinions about charter schools can be daunting for policymakers who are trying to address charter school needs, parents who are trying to determine whether or not to enroll their child in a charter school, and teachers who are evaluating and considering job options in charter schools.

Charter schools were considered an innovation in the United States because they allowed students in primary and secondary learning institutions to have access to a free education, provided the students take compulsory examinations as mandated by the state (Black, 2013). Compared to general public school counterparts, charter schools have fewer regulations, statutes, and rules but are allocated less funding by the state since a specific amount is disbursed for each student (Buras, 2014). Charter schools can be either for-profit or nonprofit, but only nonprofit schools are eligible to receive donations from external sources. The advancement and development of charter schools in the United States is a vital component of initiatives that can improve the state of public education

(Buras, 2014).

The original concept of charter schools emanated from Professor Ray Budde from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Budde proposed that school districts should be reduced from a 4-tier system that provided educators with the opportunity to petition school boards for charter to form schools (Fabricant & Fine, 2015). The American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker embraced Buddle's concept and worked towards its execution. In 1988, Shanker called for the restructuring of public schools through the establishment of what he termed "schools of choice," which was essentially a public school that had financial and legal autonomy in that it did not charge tuition fees, had no religious affiliations, and was eligible for selective admission of students (Fabricant & Fine, 2015).

As with any private entity, charter schools would operate free from the numerous state laws and regulations and could be pupil oriented, instead of concentrating on processes and inputs as in ordinary public schools (Epple et al., 2016). Minnesota stood as the initial state to permit the establishment of charter schools in the United States in 1991, and California followed in 1992 (Epple et al., 2016). Since the establishment of the first charter school, 42 states have established the model; and the institutions have received billions of dollars over the past 2 decades to support their programs. Governors, legislators, and secretaries of education must inherently support charter school programs, which has significantly contributed to the growth of charter schools across the United States (Epple et al., 2016).

Parents usually choose to enter the lottery and enroll their children in charter schools when schools are oversubscribed. This is mostly because schools of choice are



permitted to control their governing policies, allowing guardians and instructors an opportunity to be active members (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Concerning each of these factors, autonomy allows charter schools the freedom needed to budget, staff personnel, and create educational programs with curriculum, pedagogy, and organizational structures, while involving parents and community members in the process. This autonomy allows charters to have workshops to develop innovative educational practices that can be imitated (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

### **Successful Charter Schools**

The U.S. Department of Education provides a framework for what is considered a successful charter school. Getting off to a good start is a vital component of a school being successful (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

There are several successful charter schools. Teachers with only two classrooms inside a public school that already existed formed KIPP in Houston, Texas (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). A married couple who were educators formed the BASIS School, located in Tucson, Arizona. Other charter schools include the Roxbury Preparatory School in Boston, Massachusetts; the School of Arts and Sciences Tallahassee, Florida; and the Community of Peace Academy is located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Teachers with a dream for the academic alternative to public instruction in a central location to the community started each of these schools of choice (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

The very heart of any charter school is the mission statement (U.S. Department of

Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). A school's mission must be well thought out and have a powerful driving force with a collective educational viewpoint that guides decision-making on various levels (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). The school's mission should even resound in chants, assemblies, and informal conversations (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Innovating across the school program is an essential factor, as it allows charter schools to exercise their freedom and ability to experiment. Effective charter schools reflect missions that drive each function of the school's programs (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). In each of the successful charter schools, the program reflects the school's freedom to experiment to organize creatively regarding scheduling, curriculum, and instruction (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

Curriculum and pedagogy are significant components of a mission-responsive charter school that aims to be responsive. Many charter schools utilize projects and field experiences for scholars to grow and make the connection that exists between classroom knowledge and real-life professions (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). The charter school BASIS reserves the final 10 days of instruction for learning projects. For instance, scholars conceptualized and performed an actual opera in partnership with the Metropolitan Opera Project. Also, scholars within the school visited Mexico to work in a marine biology lab (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Weekly, students in Grades 6-8 at the School of Arts and Sciences work with science professionals in the community (U.S.

Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). There have been many project-based learning assignments at the BASIS School, including DNA studies, robotics, and animal studies with researchers from universities and field professionals (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

Successful charter schools are formed with flexibility relative to operations and structure in mind. These schools are focused on the service of function as it supports the intended school mission (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). The flexibility given to charter schools provides a way for them to fulfill their mission in various ways (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Due to this flexibility, the structure should depend on what the school intends to accomplish; for instance, a school may have a liberal arts curriculum of liberal arts or focus on one or two academic areas. The School of Arts and Sciences has a developmental approach supported by classrooms that incorporate multiple grade levels, allowing each student to progress on their developmental timetable (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). A lead teacher and an assistant teacher work across three grade levels in each classroom (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004); this is just one of many examples of charter school flexibility across the United States.

Charter schools can hire staff who fit their particular programs. Responsive staffing is another crucial element to charter schools being successful. Across the board, successful charter school principals and staff agree that teachers need to have buy-in for the program or find a place of employment that is suitable for them (U.S. Department of

Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). Responsive staffing is an integral part of building a successful school. Hiring and retaining the right personnel plays a considerable role in a school's ability to maintain a supportive environment, which is also an important factor in the success of a charter school (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). A commonality of these schools of choice is a sense of caring that the administration, teachers, and staff show for each other, much as a family does for a child; this creates a feeling of acceptance among students and families. In neighborhoods known for less desirable public schools, these charter schools continue to be a peaceful and safe place that facilitates learning (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004). All successful charter schools have high expectations for all the students and require that they do their best and exhibit positive student behavior (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

### **Characteristics of an Effective Charter School**

The charter school sector in the United States has grown steadily since the first charter school was opened in the early 1990s. According to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES, 2019), as of 2017-2018, the country had more than 7,000 charter schools that served nearly 3.2 million students. In North Carolina alone, there were 184 charter schools serving 109,000 students in 2018. The estimated charter school growth in the state was 3%, with an estimated charter school enrollment growth rate of 13%. Only two charter schools were closed during this period. The National Charter School Resource Center (2016) reported that overall, the performance of charter schools tends to be about the same as that of the traditional public schools within their proximity; however, there is

a variation in the performance and success of charter schools.

Research shows that charter school performance and success varies: Some charter schools outperform nearby public schools in promoting school and student achievement, others do worse in terms of their general efficiency and effectiveness in this regard, and others show no difference at all (Fryer & Dobbie, 2015). Researchers have often questioned this observation: What characteristics distinguish effective charter schools from the rest in the pack?

A review of the literature reveals several policies and practices that are associated with successful charter schools. Mathematica Policy Research, for instance, conducted a meta-analysis research and attempted to identify the characteristics common to high-performing charter schools that make them highly efficient and effective (Gleason, 2016). The literature indicates that the three key characteristics of strong charter schools are the leadership, teachers, and management of governance and finance.

### ***Leadership Challenges***

Robust, contemplative, and visionary leadership and leadership styles at school, local, state, and national levels are essential to the growth, health, and performance of charter schools. This is especially true considering the fact that charter schools represent a vital component of the efforts to reshape public education. NAPCS (2018) reported that approximately 16-17% of parents are willing but not able to enroll their children in charter schools due to demand, location, and capacity. NAPCS (2018) noted that if location and capacity demands are met, enrollment in charter schools is likely to increase to approximately 8-8.5 million students, which is the estimated current national potential capacity.

While demand for charter schools by students and parents remains high, the availability of charter schools has continued to face a myriad of challenges, which have hindered growth by constraining entrance of new schools and the closure of others. These challenges include access to facilities; lack of adequate founding groups, teachers, and leaders; challenges of authorizer capacity; lack of founding groups; lack of funding and funding equity issues; limiting state policies and laws; and political opposition by organizations and various agencies of the government (NAPCS, 2018).

Effective leadership is needed at all levels to address the issues mentioned and remove those barriers that hinder the growth of charter schools and the charter school movement. Effective leadership at the level of authorizers focuses on supporting the success of a charter school including student enrollment, academic success, and compliance (Wells, 2015). Effective and successful schools emerge and thrive when managers and administrators in charge of policy, practice, and operations at both the school and authorizer levels demonstrate strong and visionary leadership. Leaders support the charter school and the charter movement by providing effective systems, setting goals and expectations, and supporting interested groups in overcoming obstacles (Krog, 2019).

Strong authorizers, boards, and school leaders are associated with positive outcomes for charter schools. Empowered leaders who provide effective leadership are also committed to professionalism and institutional capacity building. Effective leaders are dedicated to implementing systems and structures that facilitate creation and replication of high-quality charter schools as well as creating enhanced opportunities for more children to access high-performing charter schools (NAPCS, 2018). Effective

leaders make decisions that drive and achieve positive student outcomes.

In areas where high charter school quality and performance have been sustained, leaders have been observed utilizing certain leadership practices that include building a strong culture of personnel development and engraining practice norms that are deeply rooted in the sole mission of providing and expanding educational opportunities to students and communities (NAPCS, 2018). Effective school leaders make evidence-based decisions to provide support and direction to their stakeholders. Research indicates they build strong and supportive relationships within the charter school including teachers and ensuring their staff is trained in best practices. Effective school leaders develop efficient and valid renewal and pre-opening procedures; are hands-on and transparent in making renewal and pre-opening decisions; and use these processes to build relationships, set expectations, and provide technical support (NAPCS, 2018).

Another best practice promoted by school leaders is the provision of timely monitoring and intervention. An effective leader provides formal and informal feedback to all stakeholders, providing a good understanding of the real situation on the ground relative to stakeholder expectations (Gleason, 2016). High-performing charter schools receive adequate and ongoing monitoring and timely and appropriate intervention and support, when necessary, from leaders who are committed to enhanced educational access opportunities to children and families (Tell, 2016). If a charter school is not meeting policy, practice, and stakeholder expectations, effective authorizing leadership can provide intervention, which may include sharing information on how to improve, sometimes using high-performing charter schools as the case study. Authorizer leadership communicates in a timely manner about any concerns related to underperformance or

high performance before making formal decisions to close, renew, or expand the schools (NAPCS, 2018).

Secondary to the quality of authorizing leaders, the quality of charter school leaders is considered the most important school-based factor affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of charter schools, with high potential to make the schools low performers or high performers. An effective charter school director, supported by a committed, focused, and well-functioning board, is the key to delivering the quality of charter schools that policymakers and other stakeholders, including families and communities, desire. Research literature indicates that high-performing charter schools that serve low-income families tend to have focused and visionary leaders, whose role and significance is placed only second to those of teachers. Effective charter school leadership determines the academic achievement of students (NAPCS, 2018).

Charter schools, unlike public schools that receive leadership and direction from district boards of education, are administered independently by self-governing boards of directors typically drawn from the community being served by the school including teachers, parents, and other professionals whose expertise the school can use (Gawlik, 2018). In North Carolina, the state requires that teachers appointed to the board only serve as nonvoting members. The board has the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the charter school succeeds and operates in compliance with all applicable policies, laws, and practices (NAPCS, 2018).

Some charter schools opt to partner with nonprofit Charter Management Organizations (CMO) and for-profit Educational Management Organizations (EMO) (NAPCS, 2018). High-performing charter schools led by individual boards or



management companies have efficient and effective leadership that facilitates sustained high-quality charter growth, offering effective, efficient, and long-term sustainability for the movement (NAPCS, 2018).

The school's day-to-day activities are run by a principal who may be the director or lead teacher. Successful charter schools have highly effective principals who implement strategies to achieve goals in line with their vision. They ensure a school culture is established and enhanced (Lettre & Campbell, 2016). They ensure the right teachers are hired, an effective education program is established, and teachers are guiding students toward high academic performance and achievement. Reflective school leaders who also help teachers to reflect on their own practice and ensure they have the training they need have a total direct and indirect influence on student performance and achievement (Gawlik, 2018).

Studies have shown that school leaders reach all students collectively, something teachers cannot achieve individually; and when charter schools have high-performing directors, all students in the school are impacted positively. Schools that experience frequent director turnover also tend to experience low student performance and low teacher retention and experience more severe ramifications in low-income and low-performing charter schools (Lettre & Campbell, 2016). Research indicates that high-performing charter schools have a culture of investing significant resources and building robust human resource systems that ensure hiring high-performing principals who demonstrate the ability to deliver holistic, instructional leadership in developing a clear mission, managing an effective curriculum, promoting a school culture, and achieving high expectations (Gawlik, 2018).

### ***Teachers***

Researchers have demonstrated the strong positive relationship between effective teachers and improved student achievement. The influence of teachers on student performance is placed above all other factors including school leadership, parental involvement, curriculum, class size, and funding (Roch & Sai, 2016). Effective charter schools focused on improving performance invest in high-quality and effective teachers. Charter schools operate under flexible conditions and are able to focus on finding teachers who will support and motivate low-income students towards success (Kautz et al., 2014).

Excellent charter schools do not limit teachers to plans and pedagogy that follow certain top-down rules. Instead, they allow for effective flexibility, which accommodates a wider array of unique academic opportunities and offerings for student academic achievement (Jackson, 2018). The flexibility of successful charter schools attracts highly qualified teachers who want to expand their horizons and educate and inspire students without a bureaucratic and restraining climate of the general public school setting. Successful charter schools want passionate, motivated, and experienced teachers who bring in fresh ideas and, just like their students, aspire to learn, grow, and benefit from the charter system (Affolter & Donnor, 2016).

Excellent charter schools have teachers who provide individualized and personalized instruction to learners. This characteristic attracts students and families with special needs, including students with physical and learning disabilities, as well as those looking to nurture their unique strengths and address barriers to achievement as individual learners (Rockoff, 2014). Effective charter school teachers adapt learning

material to address varying levels of learning and provide personalized instruction to help students thrive according to their ability and potential. High-performing charter schools have teachers who focus on and commit to fostering an environment of academic excellence. Such an environment has the potential to motivate students regardless of their educational background, socioeconomic background, or level of learning ability. Effective charter school teachers encourage students to aim at exceeding their own expectations and reaching their highest potential (Kautz et al., 2014).

High-performing charter schools trust and allow their teachers to make important leadership and performance decisions on the ground. Teachers can adjust and adapt to changing circumstances and situations quickly and skillfully. Effective teachers are allowed to create and experiment with various academic and pedagogical ideas. Charter schools in this regard try new administrative operation and organization techniques. Teachers then inform directors about perceived best practices, what is working and what is not, for them to decide what to change, what to scale, and what to replicate (Tell, 2016).

The roles effective teachers have in furthering the effectiveness of charter schools indicate that the success of a charter school is largely dependent on the quality of the teachers it hires and retains. Therefore, high-quality charter schools recruit top talent. Each charter school has its unique vision and mission, and teachers who share the school's values are more likely to help it succeed. Effective teachers seek opportunities to nurture their talents and capacities for professional growth. In return, effective schools ensure that teachers have access to professional development opportunities (Rockoff, 2014). Empowered teachers apply their expertise in the nontraditional educational setting

provided by the charter. Research shows empowered teachers feel they are part of a system that cares about their contribution to student achievement as much as they care about it themselves. They are allowed to brainstorm, share new ideas, and assess student progress and curriculum while expressing their frustrations (Tell, 2016).

Effective teachers provide intense high-quality innovative tutoring, which helps challenged learners enhance their academic achievement and success. Teachers who receive constant training themselves prioritize student tutoring, which helps them exhibit a mission of high performance and success. These teachers set rigorous academic goals for their students and support them to achieve these goals. They adjust instruction and curricula to meet the needs of individual students. They teach students based on their current abilities and not what their abilities should be relative to their age or grade level (Kautz et al., 2014).

Effective teachers monitor and assess their students regularly and immediately address any learning issues that manifest. Interventions may include regrouping students or putting more focus on another area of the curriculum. Effective charter schools have teachers who support the implementation of transparent policies and systems that continuously assess student interests, strengths, and abilities while delivering student-focused instructional programs (Tell, 2016). Students who are placed with highly effective teachers significantly outperform those placed with average or low-performing teachers. Students who have outstanding teachers for a year will remain ahead of others for at least 3 years. Those placed with ineffective teachers may take up to 3 years to be fully remediated (Kautz et al., 2014). Effective charter schools understand that an effective teacher who focuses not only on helping students improve their grades but also

on improving their noncognitive skills is the most effective common denominator in improving school performance and student achievement (Rockoff, 2014).

### ***Management of Governance and Finance***

Management refers to running a charter school, while governance ensures that schools are run properly. Charter school boards and school directors provide professional and pragmatic views, strategic direction, sound guidance, and governance to ensure success. Effective charter schools focus on strengthening governance and utilizing independent boards that provide strong leadership and hard work (Goodall, 2019). Underperforming charter schools most likely have poor governance structures that unfortunately end up shortchanging the children and communities they were created to serve. By law, charter school boards hold the ultimate responsibility to ensure their schools are running effectively and are transparent and accountable (DeJarnatt, 2012).

Effective charter school boards ensure compliance with academic performance as well as with management and governance expectations. Effective charter schools develop a clear mission, vision, and values that reflect their commitment to transparency and accountability. Their mission is manifested through hiring and retaining effective teachers, stable school management, and leadership; succession planning; and effective engagement of students, families, and communities (Wells, 2015). Excellent charter schools emphasize building and strengthening stakeholder relationships. They seek to engage families and communities to partner in supporting the school's programs to succeed and help the students achieve (Angrist et al., 2013).

Effective charter boards grow such partnerships through transparency and communicating a shared purpose and intention. They operate in a manner that is

accountable to students, families, and communities the school was created to serve. They are open to internal and external monitoring and evaluation processes by their boards and authorizers and use the outcomes to improve their operations and make future decisions (Lettre & Campbell, 2016). Effective charter schools aim to meet or exceed school performance and student achievement targets and expectations that are applicable to all other charitable or tax-funded schools and are ready to face the same consequences applicable in the traditional education sector. They allow for annual auditing and are willing to post the results publicly (Tell, 2016).

As charter schools are largely funded by taxpayers and donors, effective ones operate openly as would be expected even with the traditional public schools. Instead of appointing governing boards, effective charter schools elect members selected from teachers, parents, and other resourceful individuals from the community (Wells, 2015). They comply with laws that stipulate open meetings with stakeholders. Successful charter schools search for short-term and long-term financial resources and disclose the amounts of charitable contributions they receive (Tell, 2016).

The board has the responsibility of overseeing the financial planning and reporting operations of the charter. Management, operations, and accountability of charter school finances, including paying bills, purchasing items and properties, and paying salaries, lie solely on the shoulders of the board. Authorizers are responsible for monitoring the financial performance and compliance of charter schools (Wells, 2015). Effective charter schools communicate this in their mission and make it clear that if things go terribly wrong and the school is closed, the transfer of property should be transparent. They typically nominate a local school district as the priority beneficiary

during such events. Private entities are not the ideal beneficiaries, as most will tend to go for the bottom line, benefitting from the windfalls from a subsidy that was meant for community benefit (National Charter School Resource Center, 2016).

The governance structures of effective charter school boards share certain common characteristics. First, their board chairs demonstrate focus, commitment, and teamwork. They show passion for governance and are able to inspire others. They are respectful, show integrity, and practice good communication skills. They are strategic and visionary. Board members take ownership of the board's work and aim for hard work and achievement (National Charter School Resource Center, 2016). They work for board development and strive for governance best practices. Effective boards conduct themselves in a manner that upholds legal and ethical standards. The board puts into place proactive succession plans for themselves and the school itself (NCDPI, 2019b). The board of an effective charter school shows effective understanding and commitment to the school and its vision, mission, and values. They promote quality and equity in student enrollment, resource allocation, curriculum development, and community support (Wells, 2015).

### **General Information – Demographics**

Following the increasing popularity and the spreading of charter schools in the United States, the number of students enrolling in these schools has increased significantly over the years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The number of public school students who attended charter schools increased drastically between 2000 and 2016. During the 16 years, students attending charter schools increased from 400,000 in 2000 to 3 million in 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

Additionally, during this period, a large number of the students enrolled in public charter schools were in elementary schools, more than any other level of educational institutions in the country. By 2016, there were 44 jurisdictions with the legislative approval to have public charter schools; and California had the largest number of pupils studying in charter schools. The District of Columbia had 44% of public school students enrolled in charter schools, followed by the state of Arizona, which had 17% of its students in public schools enrolled in charter schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

It is noteworthy that the demographic composition of today's charter schools has changed significantly since its inception, just as the United States has experienced changes in public schools. For instance, between 2000 and 2016, a 14% increase was witnessed in the number of Hispanic students attending charter schools. The percentage of White students decreased by 11%, while the percentage of African-American students reduced by 7%, and the percentage of Native American students reduced by 1% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The median enrollment of students in charter schools has increased in the last 20 years. Charter schools are funded as per the enrollment in the institution by the respective district and state, but outsiders are also eligible to provide funds for charter schools. Charter schools receive an average of \$6,500 per student, which is low when compared to the \$10,000 received by students in a conventional public school district (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

### **United States Charter School Authorizers**

The critical role charter school authorizers play in determining the overall quality of charter schools is frequently misunderstood by many, including those who influence authorizer practices. Effective authorizing should lead to successful charter schools



(NACSA, 2019b). An authorizer is a governing body approved by the state legislature to bring charter schools into existence. Authorizers are the boards that decide who is approved to open a new charter school, set and approve academic and operational standards, and monitor school performance. They also determine if a charter should remain open or if a school should be closed at the end of its contract (NACSA, 2019b). Authorizers can be school boards, state boards of education, or an independent board. Charter school authorizers are responsible for adhering to state and federal accountability requirements (Center for Education Reform, 2011). Just shy of 100% of charter authorizers within the United States are general school boards; however, authorizers can also be state education agencies, self-governing boards, universities, mayors and municipalities, and nonprofit organizations. Various states use multiple authorizers (California, Ohio, Michigan), while others have only one or a few (NACSA, 2019b). See Appendix A.

Higher education institutions are a natural choice as authorizers since they receive their students from a K-12 system (Shen, 2011). These institutions have a stake in making sure quality education for college and career readiness at the K-12 level is available to all students (Shen, 2011). Research indicates the majority of authorizing higher education institutions report authorizing as part of their overall mission to improve K-12 education. Authorizers see this as an opportunity to use their expert knowledge (Shen, 2011). While these authorizers are often involved in K-12 educator preparation, higher education institutions neither have a present school structure concept nor the knowledge about K-12 daily operations that school boards and district authorizers do (Shen, 2011). Additionally, they usually have limited resources and capacity for authorizing responsibilities (Shen,

2011).

Independent chartering boards, also known as state charter commissions or state-wide alternate authorizers, operate as state-wide authorizers (NACSA, 2018). Though an independent chartering board may be connected to the state department of education, it is distinct from the department. Independent chartering boards are not school districts, universities, or nonprofit organizations, which are other forms of alternative authorizers. Independent chartering boards can operate alongside other authorizers; and currently, 18 U.S. states have independent chartering boards (NACSA, 2018).

LEAs may allow school districts to utilize their school boards to serve as charter school authorizers. This is the most common type of authorizer (Charter Asset Management, 2018). Non-educational government entities are municipalities and mayors that work as authorizers. To date, only Oklahoma, Indiana, and Wisconsin have active non-educational government entity authorizers (Charter Asset Management, 2018). nonprofit organization authorizers are not common, as there were only 18 in the country as of 2013. Presently, only Minnesota and Ohio have active independent nonprofit organizations (NACSA, 2019a). State education agencies are usually found within a state's department of education. The purpose of state education agencies is to increase the understanding of the charter school models by purposefully increasing the number of successful charter schools in the country through financial assistance. This is done by developing and executing a plan for schools by conducting a thorough review of the effects of these schools on students, staff, and parents (Charter Asset Management, 2018).

### **Charter Authorizer Functions**

The four primary responsibilities of charter school authorizers consist of (a) reviewing applications, (b) establishing charters or contracts, (c) ensuring compliance, and (d) renewing or not renewing contracts (Shen, 2011). The initial activity in charter school authorization is typically a call for applications. Many authorizers post periodic formal requests for applications, while others reply to applications as they are submitted. At a minimum, charter applications usually include the mission statement of the proposed charter, budgets, and facility plans. Additionally, charter applications may include specific educational goals, the involvement of the nonprofit (management), and all other information relevant to the school's operations (Shen, 2011).

### **Applications**

Conducting a rigorous and comprehensive application and decision-making process is one of the authorizer's key responsibilities. In this role, authorizers establish criteria for school approval and expectations for school performance and act as gatekeepers and stewards of the public trust (NACSA, 2019b). Authorizers are in charge of determining if a proposed charter school is approved to enroll pupils and receive millions of dollars in public funding. A thorough charter application review process is a vital first step in making sure charter schools are likely to be successful academically, financially, and organizationally and are approved to operate and permitted to serve children (NACSA, 2019b).

NACSA's Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing set forth four essential elements for a quality application and decision-making process. The four elements are proposal information, questions and guidance, fairness and

transparency, and quality-focused procedures with rigorous approval criteria (NACSA, 2019a).

### **Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance**

This element may take the form of a request for proposals, charter application packet, or similar documents that invite and guide charter applicants by setting forth the authorizer's requirements and any priorities for charter proposals (NACSA, 2019a). This could include particular types of schools or schools to serve certain communities (NACSA, 2019a).

### **Fair, Transparent, Quality-Focused Procedures**

Another element of a quality charter school application is the level of fairness and transparency that is demonstrated in quality-focused procedures. This means ensuring that all stakeholders—prospective applicants, members of the public, parents, and policymakers—are informed about the application process (NACSA, 2019a). It also means they are granted the opportunity to understand its procedures and requirements and can offer input and feedback. A superior application procedure is well publicized, transparent, and organized within a timeline that is realistic. In many cases, community meetings are held to review the applications (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015).

### **Rigorous Approval Criteria and Rigorous Decision-Making**

Among the previously mentioned elements of a quality application, rigorous criteria approval and decision-making rigor ensure consistent evaluation and set clear, high standards for school approval (NACSA, 2019a). Having demanding approval standards requires applicants to bring forward compelling missions, robust educational

programs and business plans, and intentional governance and management structures and systems (NACSA, 2019a).

### **Contracts**

Authorizers have the responsibility of providing contracts to schools of choice that dictate the obligations of each individual regarding the school's flexibility, funding, administrative oversight, and measures for evaluating success and failure (NACSA, 2019b). This charter contract is a necessary document that establishes the legally binding agreements under which the school will operate and be held accountable (Charter Asset Management, 2018).

It is vital to understand that school of choice contracts are not equal to an accepted application. School choice applications are proposed plans organized by one party for the formation and operation of a new charter school (Cass, 2009). However, a charter contract is a legally binding agreement that is entered into by both parties that specifies each party's rights and responsibilities. Contract discussions between the applicant and its authorizing board must begin directly after a charter school application has been accepted (Cass, 2009).

### **Oversight**

Contracts have very little value without each party actively upholding and enforcing the terms the contracts embody. Authorizer contract implementation requires consistently overseeing school performance compared to the contract terms to drive charter renewal decisions (Cass, 2009). Therefore, states require authorizers to diligently oversee and evaluate each charter school's performance throughout its charter agreement term. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation occur through a range of activities including

sharing requirements, site visits, school inspections, and annual financial audits (Cass, 2009).

### **Reauthorization**

A charter school reauthorization is the summative evaluation that informs the contract decision (Richmond, 2014). The law requires school choice authorizers to focus on upsurges in student performance for all groups of students served by the school of choice as the most significant consideration in deciding to grant a charter renewal (Richmond, 2014). A charter school authorizer may make this determination by examining pupil academic achievement measures under the renewal criteria set by the approving entity (California Department of Education, 2019).

NAPCS suggests there be a concise process for all renewal, nonrenewal, and revocation decisions. NAPCS has created a rating tool that evaluates the effectiveness of each state's renewal process. This renewal process is achieved by evaluating the process to identify the alignment of components identified as essential to the process (NAPCS, 2019). See Appendix B.

### **Evidence of Academic Performance of United States Charter Schools**

A study conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (2017) on the performance of national charter schools reported that charter schools performed better than their conventional counterparts. Using a sample of 144 schools for reading tests and 153 schools for mathematics, charter schools had a better performance average of 43% and 47% for reading and math respectively than students in the conventional public schools in New York. Additionally, the conclusions of the study showed that 61% of students in charter schools have a better academic performance compared to the 39% of

the students in mainstream public schools (Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2017). These findings indicate that charter schools have recorded a better average of academic performance across the United States when compared to the conventional district public schools.

Chabrier et al. (2016) studied the impact of charter school attendance in 113 schools. Chabrier et al. concluded that the impressive academic results posted by the charter schools increased the enrollment of students. The results of the study indicated that the performance of students in mathematics increased by a positive index of 0.08 standard deviation and language arts by 0.04 standard deviation (Chabrier et al., 2016). These findings are in tandem with those of the Center for Research on Education Outcomes, which indicate that the performance of students in charter schools is better than that of public schools. However, in a separate study aimed at assessing the academic achievement of pupils in the new online charter schools, research showed that student academic performance was relatively lower than that of traditional charter schools and mainstream public schools (Ahn & McEachin, 2017).

## **NCDPI**

NCDPI was established following the passing of common law by legislators, which created the principle of combined funds for local districts and the state to help in financing public schools (NCDPI, 2018). A superintendent, who serves as the secretary and chief administrator of the state's board of education, heads the department. Although there have been numerous changes effected by the General Assembly on the roles and powers of NCDPI, the objective of NCDPI has not changed. It is, therefore, upholding its mission of providing free and equal access to education to all students in public schools

(NCDPI, 2018).

Charter schools were established in North Carolina in 1996 to improve access to education, use different and novel teaching techniques, and hold schools responsible for obtaining measurable student results. Initially, the state established a charter school allowance cap of 100 as the number of charter schools in North Carolina. However, this cap was lifted in 2011, and more charter schools were established. NCDPI oversees the establishment and operations of charter schools within the acceptable law. NCDPI manages the welfare of more than 100,000 students, which includes 7% of students who are attending charter schools in North Carolina (NCDPI, 2018).

### **North Carolina State Legislative Development for Charter Schools**

Charter school legislation allowed for the establishment of no more than 100 schools. In 2011, NCSBE moved to lift the cap (NCDPI, 2019a). There are several policies under the strategic systems priority of NCSBE, which include enrollment requests, virtual charters, applications, and approving charters, among other policies. The law that governs the establishment and compliance to charter school laws in North Carolina is under Article 14A of the state laws (Gawlik, 2016). North Carolina charter school law has been amended throughout its existence and will continue to be to suit the current needs of stakeholders (Gawlik, 2016). For instance, the North Carolina legislature passed a controversial law that allowed four majority White towns to create their own charter schools. This law has been brought under sharp criticism, with some arguing that the intent of the law is to cause segregation in charter schools (Strauss, 2018).

### **North Carolina Charter School Movement**

North Carolina charter schools were established in North Carolina to embrace the



diversity of the communities living in the region and help change the education system. Due to the rampant discrimination based on race and social status, schools were deemed the best unifying strategy for the diverse people living in the community. The North Carolina charter schools focused on providing quality education for the students through seeking the services of experienced teachers who could propel the institutions to academic excellence. The institutions hoped to register relatively better academic results compared to conventional public schools in the state (Mead et al., 2015).

The charter school movement also played a huge role in providing an educational opportunity to a high number of economically disadvantaged students (Mead et al., 2015). There are almost 200 schools of choice in the state that attempt to provide unique educational experiences. Mead et al. (2015) reported that the majority of households in the state have low earnings, which explains why most of the families cannot afford an alternative education for their children.

Charter schools were established to create balance and improve education standards in North Carolina. This explains why the schools have admitted 39% African American students, 26% Whites, 6% racially mixed students, and 29% Hispanic students (Wohlstetter et al., 2015).

As charter growth continued in North Carolina, schools began to focus on curriculum that would build the character of students by providing elective courses and field trips that are compulsory for the whole student (Mead et al., 2015). This program of character building is viewed as essential in preparing students to deal with life challenges effectively upon the completion of their education. Lessons learned in community service sessions enable the student to be a responsible person in society (Mead et al., 2015).

Since charter schools enroll students from all communities, there is a good chance of admitting students who require a wide range of educational services. Charter schools provide a support system such as social workers to help in the placement of children in homes and guiding those with psychological challenges. Charters, like traditional schools in many ways, act as the community support system in eradicating poverty and illiteracy (Wohlstetter et al., 2015).

### **The Cap is Lifted and Perception of Quality Weighs In**

With the cap lifted, there has been a high rise of upcoming charter schools, causing the lack of an effective support system for charter schools (Wohlstetter et al., 2015). Some believe the most significant challenge is that charter schools are being turned into commercial entities that are more focused on profiteering rather than serving the initial purpose of raising education standards and equal access to education. Besides, there is limited funding by both the federal and state governments for the schools, which makes it challenging to execute strategies aimed at improving the performance in these schools (Wohlstetter et al., 2015). Although the people of North Carolina were advocating for a lift in the cap, they have not shown as much interest in charter school legislation as they had previously demonstrated. Currently, there are 196 charter schools in the state of North Carolina (Cheng et al., 2017).

The other major challenge faced by North Carolina charter schools is the negative perception that most parents have regarding charter schools, which makes them shun these schools. Moreover, charter schools are registering poor results due to the recruitment of unlicensed teachers, which has resulted in the closure of some of the schools in the state (Cheng et al., 2017). These challenges have prevented some North

Carolina charter schools from living up to their expectations of providing improved academic results for students and providing fair access to education to deserving students (Cheng et al., 2017). The OCS ratio of staff to schools is disproportional. Having many charter schools means the agency staff may find it challenging to monitor all the schools effectively (Walters, 2018).

The law provides that public schools of choice can be approved if they meet the threshold requirements stipulated in the charter school laws. The persons and entities eligible for the founding of a charter school, as per the law, include a collection of 10 or more parents, an assembly of two or more certified teachers, and a nonprofit organization (Mead et al., 2015). The establishment of charter schools can be authorized by the local authority or by the state board. Since there are no standards for a charter school model, there is a stark contrast between charter schools and general public schools (Mead et al., 2015). This explains why charter schools can be developed around various areas of focus such as teaching specific populations, using specific teaching techniques, or having a theme-based curriculum (Mead et al., 2015). Charter schools also must be creative with funding while staying within school law. Some of the common funding strategies for charter schools include state appropriations, debt servicing, and enhancing credit, which are used in running the activities of charter schools (Walters, 2018).

### **The Lifecycle of a North Carolina Charter School**

Each year, nonprofit boards submit applications to start public charter schools in North Carolina. In 2018, 35 applications were submitted with aspirations to open in August 2020 (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). The deadline for charter school application submissions is October 1st of each year. Applications must be submitted

online to the OCS application system (NCSBE, n.d.). Additionally, all charter school applications are required to pay a \$1,000 application fee and conduct criminal background checks on its proposed board members. The application must outline a detailed plan of the proposed school's mission and plan to meet that mission for students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018)

OCS then reviews each application for completeness before forwarding documentation to the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board. The Charter School Advisory Board will use an established structure, including external evaluators and applicant interviews, to review each application. When this process is completed, the Charter School Advisory Board will make recommendations for preapproved applicants to NCSBE for final approval (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Charter school boards that have been granted approved applications by NCSBE are given a planning year in which to prepare for their first school year. This year is referred to as the ready to open or planning year (NCDPI, 2019a). During these 12 months, OCS delivers trainings on vital information pertinent to opening a successful charter school. During the preparation year, OCS also offers practical help and supervision to these charter schools to start them off strong in governance practices (NCDPI, 2019a). See Appendix C.

### **Charter School Leadership Institute Schedule**

The ready to open year is launched with a Charter School Leadership Institute. Participants of the institute have an opportunity to hear from experts from NCDPI, Department of Health and Human Services, and local charter schools on various topics. Topics include the multi-tiered system of support, school safety, state health

requirements, legal updates, and more (NCDPI, 2019a). School leaders and board members opening charter schools the following school year are required to attend this institute. New administrators and board members at existing charter schools may also attend the institute to stay up to date with current policies (NCDPI, 2019a). See Appendix D.

### **Planning Year Professional Development Schedule**

Each new charter school is provided a planning year professional development schedule at the beginning of the planning year. OCS provides full-day professional training sessions that are vital to the positive opening of a new school of choice. As a new charter candidate, time for preparation is at a premium, and the provided workshops are intended to provide well-versed information and technical assistance to leaders preparing to open new charter schools. It is vital that most of the established board members and any identified or employed school leaders join each session (OCS, 2019). The ready to open process reinforces the idea with school leaders that their commitment to each school's vision, impartially making choices, and the effort made to safeguard a constructive educational experience for scholars influence children's futures and the future of society (OCS, 2019).

Newly opened schools are awarded an initial 5-year charter agreement. They begin the 2-year renewal process at the close of their third school year. Consistent with NCSBE policy CHTR 007, NCDPI OCS will deliver NCSBE a North Carolina Charter Schools Renewal Report. This report is intended to comprise all information NCSBE will require to assess the standing of a charter school (NCDPI, 2018). The North Carolina Charter Schools Renewal Report will refer to data and reports from various NCDPI

divisions including OCS, Financial and Business Services, Accountability, Exceptional Children, Federal Program Monitoring, Child Nutrition, and any other divisions that have information relevant to the assessment of a charter school (NCDPI, 2018). Also, part of this report will be information from the charter renewal self-study that the school's board and school leader is to complete. The self-study encompasses inquiries associated with how the school has fulfilled its mission and education program, including the school goals (NCDPI, 2018).

During the operation of a public school of choice, changes can be made to the agreed-upon practices of a school. These changes are called charter amendments. Schools can submit any suggested changes to OCS (NCSBE, n.d.). OCS has the power to approve some amendments, while other amendments require NCSBE approval. In some situations, like a significant enrollment increase and/or grade expansion, a required approval has to be given by NCSBE. According to NCSBE Policy TCS-U-014, a material adjustment of the requirements of a charter application can be made only upon the approval of NCSBE. Material amendments include enrollment growth beyond the approved percentage outlined in G.S. 115C-218.5 or grade expansion not in the approved charter, moving outside a 5-mile radius or approved LEA, and transferring the charter to another nonprofit entity (NCDPI, 2019a). Additional material changes include altering the mission or targeted student population, employing or dismissing a management company, and changes to the charter application with consideration to the National School Lunch Program (NCDPI, 2019a).

There are projected adjustments to a charter school that may be approved by NCDPI staff without the necessity of board action; moreover, the charter school must

seek approval before implementation of the change. OCS must notify the school board of any approved amendments in the areas of bylaws, the name of the charter school, the articles of incorporation, and relocation within a 5-mile radius or an approved LEA. Additional areas of change to the charter are class sizes, length of the school day and academic year, and curriculum. Changes to the charter application concerning student transportation, food service plan, and 1-year delay requests also require amendment approval (NCDPI, 2019a).

### **The Renewal Process**

Renewal of any school of choice is required to continue operation in North Carolina. This process is mandatory for each school and includes many phases in a 2-year process (OCS, 2019). Per North Carolina General Statutes 115C-218.5(d) and 115C-218.6, NCSBE may grant the initial charter for a period that is to be no more than 10 years. NCSBE shall renew a charter school upon the nonprofit board's request for a subsequent period of 10 years unless one or more of three conditions apply to the school (NCDPI, 2019a). Three circumstances that may cause a nonrenewal are

- The charter was unsuccessful in providing financially sound audits for the most recent 3 years;
- The charter's academic performance for the prior 3 years is not within five points of the academic outcomes of the LEA in which the charter school is located; or
- The charter school is not, at the time of the request for renewal of the charter, considerably in compliance with state law, federal law, the school's bylaws or the provisions outlined in its charter granted by the NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019a).

The renewal process requires school leaders to complete renewal training, a renewal self-study, and an OCS renewal site visit. To fully participate and be considered for renewal, each participating charter school must also submit a nonrefundable renewal fee of \$500.00 (NCDPI, 2018).

During the renewal process, a thorough investigation into the school's operational, governance, and financial practices is conducted by the Education Planning and Development Consultant, who ultimately reports a full spectrum of each school in an annual renewal presentation. This presentation is given to the Charter School Advisory Board in October of each year (NCDPI, 2019a). The purpose of the Renewal Self-Study is to allow school leaders to have a holistic look into the practices of the school. This includes the school's operational, governance, and financial practices (NCDPI, 2019a). As part of this process, school leaders must review any compliance correspondence that has been received from internal agencies and the Performance Framework and include this information in the Renewal Self-Study Report. The North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework's initial version was rolled out in 2014-2015 after being reviewed by the Charter School Advisory Board and shared in regional meetings with charter operators across the state (NCDPI, 2019a). A revised Performance Framework was implemented in 2015-2016 and used through 2018.

Goal 2, Objective 2.4 of the North Carolina State Board's Strategic Plan is to "increase the number of charter schools meeting academic, operational, and financial goals" (NCDPI, 2019a, p. 3). Annually, the OCS Performance Framework serves as the standard mechanism for reporting on progress toward achievement of these goals (NCDPI, 2018). The Framework delivers a combined view of each charter school's



performance relative to a list of academic, operational, and financial requirements. The academic elements of the Framework are all standard indicators provided by the state accountability system (NCDPI, 2018). The operational and financial components of the Framework are obligatory by general statute and the charter agreement. The Performance Framework provides a clear and consistent measure of operational, financial, and academic performance. Additionally, it provides feedback for school operators; transparency for schools, parents, students, and the public; and information regarding school performance over time. OCS must collect various documents annually from each charter school to review the school's operational compliance status for the reporting of Section A and portions of Section B in the Performance Framework (NCDPI, 2019a). Submissions must be submitted annually for review.

The Performance Framework team reviews each submission, well over 3,000 items in total, and determines if the submission meets minimal requirements of the relevant statute, NCSBE policy, and the charter agreement (NCDPI, 2019a). If the submission meets the requirements; the submission is marked compliant. If the evidence provided does not meet the requirements, the submission is returned for correction. The reviewer provides specific feedback directly to school leaders so corrections can be made in a timely manner. If the specific guidance and instructions are not followed after multiple returns, the reviewer may mark the item noncompliant (NCDPI, 2019a). Any items not marked compliant by the due date of June 30th each year are deemed noncompliant in the final report.

After collection of all Performance Framework items, including operational, financial, and academic, OCS delivers a comprehensive report to the Charter School

Advisory Board and NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019a). This report provides an overview of performance as well as noting trends and areas excelling or needing improvement. Schools with no operational or financial issues are determined to be “exceeding” expectations. Schools with less than 100% compliance but more than 80% are considered to have “met” expectations. Schools with less than 80% operational and financial compliance are deemed to have “not met” expectations. NCSBE has set a strategic goal of 90% of charter schools meeting or exceeding expectations each year beyond 2017 (NCDPI, 2019a).

### **Performance Framework**

#### ***Evidence of Academic Performance of North Carolina Charter Schools***

In each of the North Carolina charter schools, academic performance of each student is tracked uniformly and through state testing and the Accountability Department of NCDPI (NCDPI, 2018). Using student data, teachers and administrators can review the performance to determine points of weaknesses and develop effective solutions personalized to meet the needs of the specific student. Like traditional public schools, teachers at charter schools conduct frequent performance analysis that helps them gather accurate information that can be used to advise the parents on how to guide their children to improve their academic performance (Imig et al., 2015). The North Carolina charter school movement aims to be among the most successful charter school systems in the United States by employing the use of exemplary practices (Townsend-Smith, 2014). The schools are focused on creating a learning environment where teachers will start by setting up a plan of what they are targeting to achieve at the end before having an actual teaching lesson (Townsend-Smith, 2014).

Impressive academic performance is at the core of the establishment of charter schools. Section 115C-218 of the charter school law of North Carolina stipulates that charter schools established under this part of the law would be responsible for meeting quantifiable academic achievement for the students and fostering performance-based systems of accountability (Cheng et al., 2017). According to the annual report to the General Assembly on the state of charters schools in North Carolina in 2018, the percentage of charter schools that earned grades of D and F have decreased significantly over the past 5 years (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*School Grades for North Carolina Charter Schools Between 2017 and 2018*

	Charter	
Grade	Number	% of Graded
A	15	8.7%
B	55	31.8%
C	60	34.7%
D	30	17.3%
F	8	4.6%
I	2	1.2%
N/A	N/A	N/A
Alternative	3	1.7%
Total A-F	168	98.3%
Total A and B	70	40.5%

*Note.* NCDPI (2018).

The report indicated that the number of Ds and Fs in charter schools decreased by approximately 24% as compared to the previous years. In the academic year 2017-2018, 41% of North Carolina charter schools earned grades of A or B, which accounts for more than 65% of the schools achieving their expected growth in the same academic year.

Figure 1 contains the school grades between 2017-2018. According to House Bill 242 of 2016, a charter school can be classified as low performing or continually low performing. In that respect, in 2018, 34 registered schools fit the classification of low-performing or continually low-performing schools (NCDPI, 2018). To support these charters, the Charter School Advisory Board requires that these schools appear before them and present their strategy for improving their performance.

Different factors determine the academic performance of charter schools in North Carolina. For instance, the availability of tutoring programs and the existence of strong discipline policies have been shown to influence the performance of individual charter schools in the region (Fellow, 2016). In 2016, more than 50% of the North Carolina charter schools attained the state performance standards. However, there is still more improvement needed on the performance of the students in North Carolina schools, as the state ranks 32nd in the nation (Fellow, 2016).

Renewing charter schools also face the scrutiny of their academic performance related to the LEA in which their physical building resides. Comparability is defined as a proficiency score that is no less than five points of the LEA's grade-level proficiency (GLP) score based on North Carolina Accountability data (California Department of Education, 2019). General renewal guidelines are used to determine renewal recommendations. The Charter School Advisory Board may make an alternate recommendation to NCSBE not included in the general renewal guidelines. In the case of a charter school designated as an alternative school for purposes of accountability under policy CHTR-020, the Charter School Advisory Board shall consider the charter school's performance under the accountability model approved for the school under policy ACCT-

038 (NCDPI, 2018).

### ***Evidence of Governance Compliance***

Public charter schools are governed by a board of directors of a nonprofit organization that is responsible for the charter. These boards govern through its adopted policies and clear evaluative metrics (OCS, 2019). Each board is charged with the primary responsibility of ensuring that academic programs are successful in achieving high student performance. The board also has the responsibility of ensuring the school's operative policies and programs comply with each term of its charter agreement (OCS, 2019). The board has the overall responsibility of ensuring that competent professionals are staffed for daily operations. These professionals include a school leader who should provide a monthly report during board meetings. During each board meeting, the board should discuss the financial status of the school, academic standing, and any governance issues to ensure progress toward the school's renewal (OCS, 2019).

Each year, North Carolina public charter school board directors and principals receive the Performance Framework as a report of compliance status to charter school rules and laws (NCDPI, 2019a). The Performance Framework received is a combination of the internal NCDPI reporting, Department of Health and Human Services, and self-reported evidence by the school. The Performance Framework is used during the renewal process to report governance compliance to the Charter School Advisory Board and NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019a).

### ***Evidence of Financial Compliance***

The Local Government Commission, established by General Statute 159-3, aids local governments and public authorities in North Carolina (North Carolina Department

of State Treasurer, 2019). The Local Government Commission is staffed by the Department of State Treasurer and approves the issuance of debt for all units of local government (North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, 2019). The mission of the Local Government Commission primarily focuses on three areas of accountability and authority. First, the Local Government Commission provides approval before a charter school can borrow money. In studying each proposed borrowing, the Local Government Commission scrutinizes whether the amount being loaned is adequate and reasonable for the projects and is an amount the entity can reasonably afford to repay (North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, 2019). Second, once a borrowing is approved, the Local Government Commission is accountable for selling the debt (or bonds) on the entity's behalf (North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, 2019). Third, the Local Government Commission staff regulates annual financial reporting; this is accomplished by oversight of the annual independent auditing of local governments. The Local Government Commission executes this responsibility by monitoring the fiscal health of local governments (North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, 2019).

Each year, North Carolina public charter schools are responsible for submitting an annual audit to the Local Government Commission no later than the last day of October (North Carolina Financial Business Services, 2019). Schools that will not meet the due date of submission apply for an extension with the Local Government Commission. While extensions are allowed, it is considered late reporting (North Carolina Financial Business Services, 2019).

After the Local Government Commission receives audits from charter schools, the Office of Financial Business Services is notified of receipt. After receipt, the Office

of Financial Business Services reviews the report for financial findings. Having no findings with a positive fund balance is optimal for a charter school in the renewal process (California Department of Education, 2019). Audit findings can result in a charter school being placed on financial noncompliance and will be reviewed during the renewal process (California Department of Education, 2019).

### **Summary**

Charter schools, one of the greatest innovations in education, according to some educators, were meant to provide free education to deserving students. This system of schools differs from conventional public schools because they have limited regulations and are governed by relatively few statutes. Understanding the history of charter schools can help in improving the present and future state of charter schools in North Carolina.

The idea of charters schools originated from Albert Shanker in 1988. Currently, there are more than 3.5 million students attending charters schools around the United States, with 44 jurisdictions passing legislative law to allow for the establishment of these schools. The demographics of charter schools have changed since the inception of charter schools. Today, charter schools in most parts of the United States have students from diverse ethnic backgrounds such as Hispanics, Native Americans, African Americans, and Whites.

In terms of performance, charter schools have registered relatively better performance compared to the conventional public school counterparts, recording an average of 45% and a positive improvement 0.06 standard deviation reported by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes. NCDPI was established to improve access to education and foster the use of novel teaching techniques as well as hold charters

accountable for the measured performance. The North Carolina Charter School Law was passed in 1996 to regulate the establishment and operation of charter schools in North Carolina. Understanding the history of charter schools in North Carolina is beneficial because of the tremendous body of information that can be acquired and put into use by providing practical solutions to the challenges these schools face. By doing so, the future academic potential of charter schools can be explored.



### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to examine operational, governance, and financial factors related to the charter agreement renewal process for North Carolina charter schools. This research also served as a resource about how each contributing factor in varying degrees of success affect the outcome of reauthorization terms. Additionally, the purpose of this research was to utilize evidence collected through the Performance Framework and research to provide a resource reflecting characteristics of effective charter schools to school leaders globally.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What factors of operational and governing practices, as defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework, determine a successful charter agreement renewal?
2. What factors of academic performance, as defined by the North Carolina Accountability model, determine a successful charter agreement renewal?
3. What factors of financial standing, as defined by the Local Government Commission and North Carolina Financial Business Services, determine a successful charter agreement renewal?

Qualitative nonexperimental research is a type of research methodology wherein the practitioner-scholars do not manipulate the variables; rather, they attempt to make descriptive and inferential claims about the patterns, trends, or relationships within the dataset (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Nonexperimental research also lacks the manipulation of an independent variable, random assignment of participants to conditions or orders of conditions, or both. The members of these groups are not randomly assigned,

and an independent variable is not manipulated by the experimenter. Additionally, the conclusion drawn from nonexperimental research is primarily descriptive (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that encompasses multiple methodologies and methods. Qualitative research is nonexperimental because many important variables of interest are not able to be manipulated. Because nonexperimental research is a critical methodology employed by many researchers, it is essential to use a classification system of nonexperimental methods that are highly descriptive of what researchers do and also allow researchers and scholars to communicate effectively in an interdisciplinary research environment (Johnson, 2001).

Practitioner-scholars often use nonexperimental research designs. For this reason, these designs are relatively straightforward (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). These designs allow the practitioner to utilize data they already have access to or that they collect. Given the relative ease with which nonexperimental research designs can be completed, it is far more likely that the practitioner-scholar would undertake a nonexperimental research study versus an experimental research study. Unlike experimental designs, nonexperimental research designs do not require practitioner-scholars to randomly select and assign participants to treatment and control programs (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Over the last 40 years, case study research has undergone substantial methodological development. This evolution has resulted in a pragmatic, flexible research approach capable of providing a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of a diverse range of issues across several disciplines (Harrison et al., 2017). Some of the critical characteristics of case study qualitative methodology include the ability to

describe more than one or two cases in depth, the ability to use multiple data sources, and the offering of a platform for “what” research questions to be answered (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

I utilized the multiple case study design to analyze 11 schools using information that has been gathered through the Performance Framework as required by legislation. This study was conducted using a descriptive nonexperimental method for research. Practitioner-scholars undertake descriptive studies when they wish to describe the characteristics of the data. Such studies are focused on what the characteristics are, rather than why characteristics are as they are (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). An example of a descriptive, nonexperimental study would be downloading recent state assessment data for students and describing their performance across various attributes (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

### **Participants**

In the study, I evaluated a sample of 11 schools using the descriptive studies nonexperimental method of research. The selected group of charter schools entered the reauthorization process during the same year. These groups are referred to as cohorts. Cohorts are grouped based on their charter agreement renewal date. There are no other factors that determine a renewal cohort. Per North Carolina General Statutes 115C-218.5(d) and 115C-218.6, NCSBE may grant the initial charter for a period not to exceed 10 years. NCSBE shall renew a charter upon the request of the chartering entity for subsequent periods of 10 years, unless one or more of three conditions apply to the school (NCDPI, 2019a). The purpose of this study was to examine the operational, governance, and financial standing of each charter school. These three factors were the focus of

research through the use of the Performance Framework, therefore answering the proposed research questions.

### **Data Sources**

The North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework's revised version was implemented in 2015 and remains the current tool of evaluation for North Carolina charter schools as required by NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019a). Specifically, the Performance Framework reports compliance in the areas of operational, financial, and academic requirements.

An explanation of each measure of the Performance Framework was provided to offer a deeper understanding of the parameters of each criterion. Each research question was paired to an appropriate measure and criteria, as identified by the framework.

#### ***Research Question 1: "What Factors of Operational and Governing Practices as Defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework Determine a Successful Charter Agreement Renewal?"***

The Performance Framework measures a charter school's operational and governance practices annually by measuring multiple areas as prescribed by specific criteria. Each charter school must meet the state of North Carolina's minimum requirements of each standard. Also, the charter school must remain in alignment with their approved charter application or application amendments (NCDPI, 2019a). An amendment or change to a charter application may be approved with the oversight of OCS and NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019a).

Measure A2 of the Performance Framework reviewed the school's process regarding the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS). This review

included making sure there was an assigned administrator for the EVAAS system as required by the state. Measure A3 reviewed the school's policy regarding instructional hours or days following state law. Measure A5 reviewed the school's ability to implement mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements. These programs fall in the areas of Title I, Title II, Exceptional Children, School Nutrition, and English Language Learner programs. Measure A6 reviewed the school's ability to follow student admissions and lottery requirements, as stated in North Carolina General Statutes, NCSBE policy, and the signed charter agreement. Measure A7 monitored the school's enrollment, which is referred to as their average daily membership (ADM). Performance Framework Measure A8 reviewed the nonprofit board grievance policy to ensure that it was current and available for public review. Measure A9 reviewed the nonprofit board's current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15 (effective March 1, 2016). Measure A10 of the Performance Framework reviewed the nonprofit board's current nepotism policy. Measure A11 reviewed the board meeting minutes to ensure a quorum of the nonprofit board of directors met no less than eight times a year, including an annual meeting. Measure A12 reviewed the nonprofit board's composite to ensure that the majority of the nonprofit board members were primary residents in North Carolina, meaning 50% residency in North Carolina or greater. Measure A13 reviewed the school's current fire inspection to ensure that the school had been cleared of safety hazards. Measure A14 reviewed the school's viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization. Measure A15 reviewed the nonprofit board holding of a current, active civil and liability insurance policy with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement. Measure A16 reviewed the nonprofit board's criminal

history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located. Measure A17 reviewed the school's compliance with all student health and safety requirements as defined in general statutes, NCSBE policy, or the signed charter agreement. Measure A18 reviewed the school's compliance with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year under NCSBE policy. Measure A19 reviewed the charter school's compliance with the annual EMO/CMO public records request. Measure A20 of the Performance Framework reviewed the charter school's compliance with maintaining the required dissolution funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100. Performance Framework Measure A21 reviewed the school's compliance with the implementation of a school improvement plan submitted through NC Star.

Measure B1, which starts the set of operational renewal monitoring criteria, was a review of the charter school's graduation requirements. These requirements must not only meet the minimum graduation standard of the state of North Carolina but must also be reflective of the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments. Measure B2 was a review of the school's student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments. Measure B3 related to the school's ability to consistently implement the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments. Measure B4 was a review of the charter school's nonprofit board composition and its operations per the approved charter application bylaws or approved charter application amended bylaws. Measure B5 reviewed the charter school's nonprofit board about compliance with open meeting laws. Measure B6 reviewed the nonprofit

board's compliance with public record requests. Last, Measure B7 reviewed the school's discipline policy, which must comply with state and federal law and be consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.

***Research Question 2: “What Factors of Academic Performance as Defined by the North Carolina Accountability Model Determine a Successful Charter Agreement Renewal?”***

Measure A1 of the Performance Framework measured a charter school's academic performance as defined accountability. Additionally, the framework reviewed the school's consistency with displaying the North Carolina report card and letter grade prominently on the school's website. Schools earning a letter grade of D or F must notify parents and maintain a record of communication. Measure A4 reviewed the charter school's adherence to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments. Measure D1 reviewed the charter school's school performance grade with “goal met” representing a C or better. Measure D2 reviewed the charter school's academic performance to identify growth as met or exceeded expected growth. Measure D3 reviewed the charter school's academic performance to identify low-performing schools as designated by the state. Measure D4 reviewed the charter school's academic performance to identify continually low-performing schools. Measure D5 reviewed the charter school's performance composite GLP to determine its comparability to the LEA in which the school was located. Measure D6 reviewed the charter school's performance composite college career readiness to determine its comparability to the LEA in which it resided. Performance Framework Measures D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, and D12, identified the GLP of the female subgroup, male subgroup, Black subgroup, White subgroup,

Hispanic subgroup, and American Indian subgroup for each charter school. Performance Framework Measures D13, D14, D15, D16, and D17 were measures of the economically disadvantaged subgroup GLP, exceptional children subgroup GLP, the school's reading performance grade, math performance grade, and the alternative accountability model results respectively, when applicable.

***Research Question 3: “What Factors of Financial Standing, as Defined by the Local Government Commission and North Carolina Financial Business Services, Determine a Successful Charter Agreement Renewal?”***

Measure C1 reflected the requirements of the State Board policy TCS-U-006, which outlined charter school noncompliance levels. This policy detailed the three levels of financial noncompliance under which a charter school was placed by the Division of School Business.

In addition to the data collected through the Performance Framework, academic data were collected for each reauthorizing school. The academic data were approved by NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019a) and released for public viewing on the North Carolina Financial Business Services website.

It was appropriate, at this point, to explain Measure D5, the charter school's performance composite GLP as comparable to the LEA. This measure was a focal point of the renewal guidelines. As it was stated in General Statute 115C-218.6, comparable was defined as a proficiency score that was no less than five points of the LEA's GLP score based on North Carolina accountability data (NCDPI, 2019a). Comparability data were reviewed as a factor of D5 (OCS, 2019). Table 1 contains the needs to be titled relative to each question.



**Table 1***Research Questions Aligned with Performance Framework Standards*

Research questions	Measure
What factors of operational and governing practices, as defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework, determine a successful Charter Agreement Reauthorization?	A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7
What factors of academic performance, as defined by the North Carolina Accountability model, determine a successful Charter Agreement Reauthorization?	A1, A4, D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14, D15, D16, D17
What factors of financial standing, as defined by the Local Government Commission and North Carolina Financial Business Services, determine a successful Charter Agreement Reauthorization?	C1

**Ethical Considerations**

The nature of this research lends itself to ethical practices. All data collected were identified by a measure within the Performance Framework. Additionally, each measure had criteria that had been fully established and approved as an authority to support the renewal policy (NCDPI, 2019a).

**Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations**

Practitioner-scholars often used nonexperimental research designs. For this reason, these designs are relatively straightforward and allow the practitioner to utilize data to which they already have access or that they collect (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). During the case study, research data utilized had been collected and verified according to state and federal law (NCDPI, 2019a). This fact alone removed room for assumptions of the study because of the lack of manipulation of the data. Of 11 schools within the cohort, it was assumed that 70% of schools met operational and governance compliance. It was

also assumed that of 11 schools, 85% or more met accountability comparability measures as required by legislation. Last, it was assumed that more than 60% of the cohort met financial compliance as required by Financial Business Services and the state of North Carolina. In the same way, renewal cohorts, as described, were self-selected based on each school's reauthorization date. The sample size of 11 was ample for this body of research. However, sampling was a nonfactor due to the chosen type of methodology for the study.

## **Conclusion**

Charter schools have evolved over the last half of the preceding century. Schools of choice have become more diverse than ever and a focal point of discussion for proponents and those against their existence. However, charter schools are increasing in number and by all accounts appear to be around for the long term. The need for accountability is present. Charter schools are under great scrutiny to show that they, too, have sound operations and governance, solid financial practices, and positive academic outcomes for students in the charter system. This research study provided insight into the process of evaluating charter schools of choice, therefore showing both sides of the charter argument that there was a process of evaluation for charters. Through a case study, I identified effective charter schools using the Performance Framework, the legislative evaluative tool that was used for charter schools across the state of North Carolina.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the case study findings on the operational, governance, and financial factors related to successful charter agreement renewal for charter schools in North Carolina. The case studies include a sample of 11 charter schools that have a recent history of successful renewal application. Data and information for these schools are contained in their respective Charter School Performance Framework reports. The report and analysis detailed in this chapter aim to provide concerned stakeholders interested in charter schools with the necessary evidence-based information they may find useful while operating their schools and when making charter renewal applications.

North Carolina has a rigorous 2-year charter school renewal process involving many steps. The steps include renewal school visits by OCS, self-studies by the charters, interviews, and reviews by the Charter School Advisory Board. Recommendations are then made to NCSBE (NCDPI, 2019b). Renewal and closure decisions are made by NCSBE which bases its decisions on reviews, considerations, and recommendations made by all mandated agencies and concerned stakeholders (John Locke Foundation, 2019). An analysis of the factors that determine successful charter agreement reauthorization in the compliance areas of operational and governance practices, academic performance, and financial standing is conducted in the sections that follow.

The data used in the study were provided by the Performance Framework, a required monitoring tool by NCDPI. NCDPI collects information from valid and reliable sources of documentation throughout the agency including the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board, North Carolina General Assembly, OCS, and Financial Business

Services.

### **Operational Performance and Compliance**

This section addresses Research Question 1. Two measurement categories of the Charter School Performance Framework – A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria (measured against 21 criteria/measures) and B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria (measured against seven criteria/measures), totaling 28 – were used to report on the operational compliance statuses of the selected case studies.

Table 2 shows the research question and the Operational Performance Framework measures that were utilized in the study.

**Table 2**

#### *Research Question 1 – Measures*

Research question	Category	Measure
1. What factors of operational and governing practices as defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework determine a successful charter agreement reauthorization?	A. Operational annual monitoring criteria	A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21
	B. Operational renewal monitoring criteria	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7

The 28 measures selected from the Performance Framework helped to determine whether the 11 charter schools sampled as case studies for the purposes of this study were operationally and organizationally effective and well-managed by their relevant governing structures in compliance with the federal, state, authorizer, and school's mission-specific operational standards and terms. This includes policy, ethical, accountability, and legal requirements of governance and public interest obligations, as

detailed in the provisions of the charter agreement.

Those 28 measures provided, for each operational, organizational, and governing performance indicator, a criterion by which to evaluate whether or not the sampled charter schools met the operational and organizational practice and performance standards and expectations outlined in their charter contract terms and therefore whether or not they qualified for renewal. Evaluation criteria used established data metrics and targets. Each measure received a performance or compliance rating based on the outcome of the results achieved from an evaluation of the established Performance Framework metrics (NACSA, 2013).







It is, however, important to note at this point that not all of the 28 measures as outlined in Table 2 applied to every charter school considered for this study. Also, some measures did not yield data points for some schools. Where measures did not yield data points, an “NR=Not Reported” was returned; and where measures did not apply, an “N/A=Not Applicable” return was made.

### **Case Study Analysis – Classification and Rating**

As schools were judged by whether they were in compliance or out of compliance with the operational performance standards dictated by laws and charter agreements, they were given a “compliant” or “not compliant” rating (NCDPI, 2019b).

Figure 2 shows the rating framework used in describing the operational performance and compliance status of the case study schools.

**Figure 2***Operational Performance and Compliance Rating Framework*

Operational Performance Targets and Rating Categories			
Status	Level of Performance	Target	Rating
 Compliant	100%	 Exceeds Standard	N/A
	80-99%	 Meets Standard	School materially meets the operational goal or expectation outlined in the Charter School Performance Framework
 Not Compliant	60-79%	 Does Not Meet Standard	School, at any point during the evaluation period, materially fails to meet the operational goal or expectation outlined in the Charter School Performance Framework, but Board has instituted successful or satisfactory compliance remedies
	<60%	 Falls Far Below Standard	School, chronically throughout the evaluation period, materially failed to meet the operational goal or expectation outlined in the Charter School Performance Framework, but Board has failed to institute successful or satisfactory compliance remedies

*Note.* Adapted from NACSA (2013).

The metrics shown in Figure 2 refer to the accountability percentages for charter school operational outcomes. The compliance percentage metric is an expectation or target set forth and used by the authorizer in evaluating a measure. It is obtained by calculating, for each measure, the number of areas where the school met the standard divided by the total number of standards that must be met for each measure.

A measure scoring 80% or above is in compliance with the standard prescribed in the Operational Performance Framework, while a measure scoring 79% and below is out of compliance and has not met the standard established by laws, policies, and provisions of the charter agreement. Operational performance is typically not measured on the “exceeded standard” rating; a charter school is either in or out of compliance (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

### **Case Study Analysis – Indicators**

Operational performance and compliance criteria are measured on the basis of various indicators recommended by NACSA and adapted by NCSBE and NCDPI OCS.

Six indicators are used to evaluate a charter school's operational, organizational, and governance performance and compliance. Most of the indicators informed the development of the measures prescribed in the North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework. Some were not used completely (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Charter schools should generally comply with applicable laws, policies, and provisions of the charter agreement relating to 1) implementing their educational programs: (i) implementing the material terms of their education program, (ii) fulfilling their applicable educational requirements, and (iii) protecting the rights of students with disabilities and English Language Learners; and 2) complying with applicable financial management and oversight expectations: (i) fulfilling their financial compliance and reporting requirements and (ii) following the generally accepted accounting principles requirements and expectations (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

They should also materially comply with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the performance of and compliance with the charter agreement relative to operational and organizational requirements relating to 3) complying with governance and reporting standards: (i) meeting board governance requirements; (ii) meeting school management and accountability requirements; and (iv) fulfilling their reporting requirements to the authorizer, North Carolina State Education Agency, NCDPI, and other relevant authorities at district, state, and federal levels (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Another requirement has to do with operational performance and compliance of charter schools relating to laws, rules, regulations, and charter agreement provisions in

terms of 4) meeting operational requirements and standards for student and employee treatment and management: (i) fulfillment of student rights including policies, practices and rights related to student admissions, lottery, waiting lists, enrollment, student information protection, discipline and suspension; (ii) complying with attendance goals; (iii) complying with staff and teacher credentialing requirements; (iv) respecting employee human and labor rights; and (v) and complying with employee background check requirements (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Charter schools should also comply with applicable laws, policies, and charter agreements standards relating to 5) the expected charter school environment requirements set forth in the Performance Framework: (i) the expected facilities and transportation requirements including fire inspections and related records, student transportation, viable certificate of occupancy, and building use authorization; (ii) provision of safety, food, and health-related services; and (iii) appropriate information management and distribution including secure handling of student-level data and records and compliance with data/information transfer, access and public transparency standards and requirements; and 6) compliance with relevant and significant additional obligations such as implementation of the school improvement plan submitted through NC Star (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

### **Case Study Analysis – All Schools**

Figure 3 shows the summary of results for the 11 schools, indicating whether they were “compliant” or “not compliant” with the operational performance goals and standards as measured by the OCS Performance Framework, regarding Research Question 1.



**Figure 3***Operational Performance and Compliance: All Schools*

Operational Performance and Compliance																												
	Measures/Status																											
School Name	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20	A21	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7
School A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School B	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	N/A	C	C	C	C	C	C
School D	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School E	C	C	C	C	NC	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	N/A	C	C	C	C	C	C
School F	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School G	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School H	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	NR
School I	C	C	C	C	C	C	NC	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School J	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	NC	C	C	C	C	C	C
School K	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
<div><div>C</div> Compliant<div>NC</div> Not Compliant<div>N/A</div> Not Applicable<div>NR</div> Not Reported</div>																												

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

The results indicate that the 11 schools complied with most of the standards set forth by the Performance Framework in evaluating charter school operational compliance per given measure. School E did not meet the standard set forth in Measure A5 and was therefore out of compliance. Likewise, School I did not meet the standard set forth in Measure A7 and was therefore not compliant. School J posted a similar result and rating on Measure B1. Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points for all schools, similar to Measure B7 for School H. Measure A19 was not applicable to all schools. Measure B1 was not applicable to School C and School E. There were no reportable data points for Measures A20 and A21 in all the case study schools or for Measure B7 in School H.

### Case Study Analysis – Individual Schools

A school-by-school analysis of the case studies sampled for the purposes of this study was conducted using the Operational Performance Framework as follows.

#### *Charter School A*

Figure 4 shows the operational performance status of School A indicating whether the school was in or out of compliance with a given operational measure.

**Figure 4***Operational Performance and Compliance: School A*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School A <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: N/A	
	Title II Status: N/A	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: N/A	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	Compliant
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School A <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School A complied with 18 of 21 of the measured criteria in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measured criteria in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to

operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School B***Figure 5***Operational Performance and Compliance: School B*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School B <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: Compliant	
	Title II Status: Compliant	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: N/A	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	Compliant
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School B <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	Compliant
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School B complied with 19 of 21 of the measured criteria in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measures in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as

contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School C*

**Figure 6**

*Operational Performance and Compliance: School C*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School C <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: N/A	
	Title II Status: N/A	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: N/A	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	Compliant
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter	Compliant



<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School C <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	agreement.	
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	N/A
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School C complied with 18 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the period. The school also complied with six of seven of the measures in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. Measure B1 did not apply. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy

regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its Charter Agreement.

*Charter School D***Figure 7***Operational Performance and Compliance: School D*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School D <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>A1</b>	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
<b>A2</b>	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
<b>A3</b>	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
<b>A4</b>	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
<b>A5</b>	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: Compliant	
	Title II Status: N/A	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: N/A	
<b>A6</b>	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
<b>A7</b>	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
<b>A8</b>	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
<b>A9</b>	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
<b>A10</b>	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
<b>A11</b>	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
<b>A12</b>	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
<b>A13</b>	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
<b>A14</b>	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
<b>A15</b>	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
<b>A16</b>	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	Compliant
<b>A17</b>	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School D <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School D complied with 18 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measures in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational,

organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School E***Figure 8***Operational Performance and Compliance: School E*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School E <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Not Compliant
	Title I Status: Compliant	
	Title II Status: Compliant	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: Compliant	
	ELL Status: Not Compliant	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	Compliant
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School E <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	agreement.	
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	N/A
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School E complied with 17 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. The school did not meet the standard set, therefore did not comply with, measured criterion A5. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points. The school also complied with six of seven of the measured criteria in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. Measure B1 did not apply. These results indicate that generally, the school

materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.



*Charter School F***Figure 9***Operational Performance and Compliance: School F*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School F <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> 05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: N/A	
	Title II Status: N/A	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: Compliant	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	Compliant
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School F <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> 05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	agreement.	
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School F complied with 18 of 21 of the measured criteria in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measures in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy

regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School G*

**Figure 10**

*Operational Performance and Compliance: School G*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School G <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: N/A	
	Title II Status: Compliant	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: Compliant	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School G <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	the LEA in which the school is located.	
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School G complied with 18 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measures in the category of Operational

Renewal Monitoring Criteria. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School H***Figure 11***Operational Performance and Compliance: School H*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School H <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: Compliant	
	Title II Status: N/A	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: N/A	
	ELL Status: Compliant	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School H <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	the LEA in which the school is located.	
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	NR

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School H complied with 18 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with six of seven of the measures in the category of Operational Renewal



Monitoring Criteria. Measure B7 did not yield data. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School I***Figure 12***Operational Performance and Compliance: School I*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School I <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: Compliant	
	Title II Status: Compliant	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: Compliant	
	ELL Status: Compliant	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Not Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School I <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	the LEA in which the school is located.	
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	N/A
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School I complied with 17 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. The school did not comply with Measure A7. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with six of seven of the measures

in the category of Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. Measure B1 did not apply.

These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School J***Figure 13***Operational Performance and Compliance: School J*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School J <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>A1</b>	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
<b>A2</b>	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
<b>A3</b>	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
<b>A4</b>	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
<b>A5</b>	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: Compliant	
	Title II Status: Compliant	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: Compliant	
	ELL Status: Compliant	
<b>A6</b>	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
<b>A7</b>	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
<b>A8</b>	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
<b>A9</b>	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
<b>A10</b>	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
<b>A11</b>	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
<b>A12</b>	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
<b>A13</b>	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
<b>A14</b>	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
<b>A15</b>	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
<b>A16</b>	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors	Compliant

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School J <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	the LEA in which the school is located.	
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Not Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School J complied with 18 of 21 of the measured criteria in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measures in the category of Operational

Renewal Monitoring Criteria. It did not comply on Measure B1. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

*Charter School K***Figure 14***Operational Performance and Compliance: School K*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School K <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	Compliant
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	Compliant
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	Compliant
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	Compliant
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	Compliant
	Title I Status: N/A	
	Title II Status: N/A	
	EC Status: Compliant	
	School Nutrition Status: Compliant	
	ELL Status: N/A	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	Compliant
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	Compliant
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	Compliant
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	Compliant
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	Compliant
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	Compliant
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	Compliant
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	Compliant
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors	Compliant



<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School K <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
	the LEA in which the school is located.	
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	Compliant
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	Compliant
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	N/A
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	NR
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	NR
<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
B1	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B2	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B3	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	Compliant
B4	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	Compliant
B5	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	Compliant
B6	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	Compliant
B7	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	Compliant

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School K complied with 18 of 21 of the measures in the category of Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria. Measure A19 did not apply, while Measures A20 and A21 did not yield data points during the evaluation period. The school also complied with all (seven of seven) of the measures in the category of Operational

Renewal Monitoring Criteria. These results indicate that generally, the school materially complied with applicable state and federal laws, authorizer rules, applicable policy regulations, and the school's mission-specific targets relating to operational, organizational, and governance performance standards as contained in the provisions of its charter agreement.

### **Academic Performance and Compliance**

This section addresses Research Question 2. One measurement category of the Charter School Performance Framework, D. Education Outcomes (measured against 17 criteria/measures), was used to report on the academic performance and accountability statuses of the selected case studies.

Table 3 shows the research question and the Academic Performance Framework measures that were utilized in the study.

**Table 3**

#### *Research Question 2 – Measures*

Research question	Category	Measure
2. What factors of academic performance as defined by North Carolina accountability model determine a successful charter agreement reauthorization?	D. Academic Outcomes	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14, D15, D16, D17

The 17 measures selected from the Performance Framework helped to determine whether the 11 charter schools sampled as case studies for the purposes of this study achieved the expected standards of academic performance. The Academic Performance Framework purposefully measured academic performance of students quantitatively to inform high stake decisions. The 17 measures contained in the framework provided

criteria for determining whether or not the charter school's educational program is a success, in terms of academic performance, student achievement and growth, and accountability in the context of their communities (NACSA, 2013).

Those 17 measures provided for each academic performance indicator a criterion by which to evaluate whether or not the sampled charter schools met the educational standards and expectations outlined in their charter agreement terms and therefore whether or not they qualified for renewal. The evaluation criteria used established data metrics and targets. Each measure received a performance or compliance rating based on the outcome of the results achieved from an evaluation of the established Performance Framework metrics (NACSA, 2013).

An important note to make is that the 17 measured criteria were not all applicable to each of the case study schools. Applicability depended on whether or not there were reportable data points for subgroup and school grades, performance and growth. Where measures did not yield data points, an "NR=Not Reported" rating was given; and where measures did not apply, an "N/A=Not Applicable" rating was given.








### **Case Study Analysis – Classification and Rating**

For each measured criterion, targets establishing four different categories of performance were set against which actual academic performance was rated. Schools were rated based on whether they exceeded, met, failed to meet, or fell far below the expected standard for academic performance. Renewal, nonrenewal, revocation, assumption, or replication recommendations and decisions are made based on whether or not a charter meets the expected standards for academic performance and to what performance and duration extent they do so (NCDPI, 2019b).

Figure 15 shows the rating framework used in describing the academic performance targets and rating categories set forth in the Academic Performance Framework.

**Figure 15**

*Academic Performance and Compliance Rating Framework*

Academic Performance Targets and Rating Categories			
Status	Level of Performance	Target	Rating
 Exceeded	100%	 Exceeds Standard	School has exceeded expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards
 Met	80-99%	 Meets Standard	School has met the minimum expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards
 Not Met	60-79%	 Does Not Meet Standard	School has failed to meet the minimum expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards
	<60%	 Falls Far Below Standard	School is performing well below the expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards

*Note.* Adapted from NACSA (2013).

The metrics shown in Figure 15 refer to the accountability percentages for charter school academic outcomes. A measure score of 80% or above is in compliance with the standard prescribed in the Academic Performance Framework and has “met” the requirements, while a measure scoring 79% and below is out of compliance, and has “not met” the standard set forth by the authorizer and captured in the charter agreement (Public Schools First NC, 2019c).

### **Case Study Analysis – Indicators**

Overall academic performance and compliance is evaluated on the basis of five indicators developed and recommended by NACSA and adapted by NCSBE and NCDPI OCS. Most of the indicators informed the development of the measures prescribed in the North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework. Some were not used completely. Academic outcomes are provided by NCDPI Accountability (NACSA, 2013;

NCDPI, 2019b).

Indicator 1's, State and Federal Accountability, initial objectives and targets measure whether (a) the school is meeting acceptable standards set forth as a minimum in the North Carolina state rating or grading systems; (b) the school is meeting the annual measurable objective expectations and targets prescribed in state and federal accountability systems; (c) the school is meeting the state designation – “reward,” “focus,” “priority” – expectations and targets prescribed by state and federal accountability systems, and (d) the school is meeting the expected adequate yearly progress standards (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Indicator 2, Student Growth and Progress, over time, measures how much students have learned and improved throughout the school year in relation to whether (a) students are meeting sufficient academic growth to achieve expected proficiency according to the standard criteria set forth by the authorizer, (b) students are making the expected annual academic growth compared to their academic peers using normed standards set forth by the authorizer, and (c) the school is increasing academic performance and growth eligible subgroups over time to the expected proficiency standards (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Indicator 3 measures Status of Student Achievement. A charter school must demonstrate its ability to bring students up to and beyond a grade in addition to demonstrating its ability to increase student performance and growth toward proficiency. This indicator measures whether (a) students are achieving proficiency on state level examinations as per the expected standards, (b) students in demographic subgroups are meeting expected proficiency standards on state examinations compared to state

subgroups, (c) students are performing well compared to schools serving similar demographics on state examinations, and (d) student performance on state examinations meets expected standards in comparison to the traditional district schools they might otherwise attend (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Indicator 4 measures Postsecondary Readiness, measuring the ability of the school to prepare students for college, whether (a) student performance on ACT and SAT meets standards for college enrollment in relation to national averages; (b) students participated in ACT or SAT; (c) students are graduating from high school and at what rates; (d) students graduating from high school are enrolled in postsecondary institution in the fall following graduation; (e) high-school graduates who did not enroll in postsecondary institutions are employed, including in military service, in the fall following graduation; and (f) high school graduates are well prepared for academic success in postsecondary education (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Indicator 5, Mission-Specific Academic Goals, reflects charter schools' unique school-specific mission for student achievement, growth, and success. These targets are agreed upon by a school and its authorizer and must be valid, reliable, measurable, and quantifiable (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

### **Case Study Analysis – All Schools**

Figure 16 shows the summary of results for the 11 schools, indicating whether they exceeded, met, or did not meet the academic outcome goals as measured by the OCS Performance Framework, in regard to Research Question 2.

**Figure 16***Academic Performance and Compliance: All Schools*

Academic Performance and Compliance																	
	Measures/Status																
School Name	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	D13	D14	D15	D16	D17
School A	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School B	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School C	M	E	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School D	M	E	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School E	NM	M	N/A	N/A	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NR	M	NR	M	NM	N/A	N/A	NR
School F	M	E	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School G	M	NM	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School H	M	NM	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School I	NM	M	N/A	N/A	NM	NM	NM	NM	M	NM	NM	NR	NM	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School J	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School K	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	NM	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR

E

 Exceeded

M

 Met

NM

 Not Met

N/A

 Not Applicable

NR

 Not Reported

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

The results indicate that most of the case study schools complied with most of the standards set forth by the Academic Performance Framework in evaluating charter school academic performance and compliance per given measure. Schools E and I did not meet the standard set forth in Measure D1. Likewise, Schools G and H did not meet the standard set in Measure D2. School E did not meet the standards prescribed in measured criteria D5, D6, D7, D8, and D9. A similar observation was made in School I which did not meet the standards for Measures D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, and D13. School K did not meet the measurement standard set forth in criteria D12. Measures D3, D4, D15, and D16 were not applicable in all the case study schools. There were no reportable data points for Measures D10 and D12 in School E, for Measure D12 in School I, or for Measure D17 in any of the case study schools.

Figure 17 shows the metric that was used in determining the rating status in Figure 16.

**Figure 17**

*Charter School Performance Data*

Academic Performance - Statistical Summary of Results																
	Measures/Data															
School Name	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	D13	D14	D15	D17
School A	B	-0.91	N	N	69	58	71	67	*	70	56	*	61	33	B	C
School B	B	4.46	N	N	77.9	67	80	76	73	79	67	*	67	36	B	N/R
School C	A	2.4	N	N	92.6	87	94	92	91	93	91	*	79	65	A	N/R
School D	B	3.65	N	N	78.6	69	78	79	65	79	72	*	75	36	B	N/R
School E	F	0.22	Y	Y	28.6	20	30	27	27		35		29	6.1	F	N/R
School F	A	8.49	N	N	84.5	77	85	84	70	86	85	*	76	43	B	N/R
School G	B	-4.77	N	N	81.2	71	82	81	74	83	64	*	66	55	B	N/R
School H	C	-3.06	N	N	65.4	54	65	66	61	67	46	58.3	60	33	B	N/R
School I	D	1.16	Y	Y	32.3	21	38	27	34	*	*		33	19	F	N/R
School J	B	0.9	N	N	68.1	53	70	66	62	85	65	*	63	35	B	N/R
School K	A+NG	-0.09	N	N	91.7	87	93	91	66	94	>95	*	81	71	A	N/R

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

The school performance grade scale for all North Carolina schools, both traditional district schools and charters, is shown by performance grade and performance score as follows: A = 85-100, B = 70-84, C = 55-69, D = 40-54, F = 0-39, I = Insufficient Data, and ALT = Alternative School (Public Schools First NC, 2019a). The school achievement (SA) score is set at 80% [SG (.8)] and school growth (SG) score at 20% [SG (.2)]. The SA is based on test scores/results (80% of the weight), while the SG is based on school growth measured by EVAAS (NCDPI, 2019b). A school performance score is obtained by combining SA with SG [SA (.8) +SG (.2)]. EVAAS growth is based on school index values which are converted to school growth scores and school growth statuses.

A school that scored a D or F for at least 2 of 3 consecutive years is designated as a continually low-performing school (NCDPI, 2019b). The Charter School Advisory



Board requires that low-performing and continually low-performing charters (with a D/F rating) must notify parents and must also appear before them and present a comprehensive plan for school improvement (National Charter School Resource Center, 2016). Along with evaluating proficiency scores (Measure D1) to determine if the charter school is low performing (Measure D3) or continually low performing (Measure D4), NCSBE sets goals, measures, and targets to be met and frameworks to be followed in monitoring and tracking performance trends.

OCS identifies and analyzes charter school performance trends and uses the outcomes to offer evidence-based programmatic support and professional development interventions. NCDPI has set Measure D2 that takes into account whether or not the charter school, based on its proficiency on state tests, met, did not meet, or exceeded expected growth from the previous year. A status score of  $\geq 2.00$  indicates the outcome exceeds growth, 1.99 to -2.00 meets growth, and  $< -2.00$  does not meet growth (Public Schools First NC, 2019b).

The percentages presented as  $>95$  indicate they are greater than 95, while those displayed as  $<5$  are less than 5. Charter schools with an A+NG do not have a gap: They have enough data for analysis of achievements and graduation gaps. A+NG schools are denoted by a Y when a gap compared analysis is conducted. Charter schools with an A that do not have sufficient data and have a gap are denoted by N. Similar schools (with an A) that lack sufficient data for the analysis are denoted by “insufficient” when stating the gap compared status (NCDPI, 2019b).

Charter school academic performance is compared to district schools. Comparable is given as a proficiency score that is equal to or exceeds 5 points of the LEA’s GLP

score which is provided on the North Carolina Accountability data. LEA is the Local Education Agency, referring to traditional district public schools. LEA-compared measures on the Performance Framework (D5 and D6) indicate how charters are performing academically compared to district public schools in which they are located (NCDPI, 2019b).

### **Case Study Analysis – Individual Schools**

A school-by-school analysis of the case studies sampled for the purposes of this study was conducted using the Academic Performance Framework as follows.

**Charter School A****Figure 18***Academic Performance and Compliance: School A*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School A <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	B
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Met	-0.91
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	69
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	58.4
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	70.6
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	67
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	69.7
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	55.6
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	60.7
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	33.3
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	C
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School A met the standards set forth in 12 of the 17 measured criteria

(D1, D2, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points.

**Charter School B****Figure 19***Academic Performance and Compliance: School B*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School B			
<b>LEA CODE:</b>			
<b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12			
<b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	B
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Met	4.46
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	77.9
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	66.5
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	79.6
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	76.1
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	72.6
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	78.8
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	67.1
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	66.5
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	35.7
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School B met the standards set forth in 12 of the 17 measured criteria

(D1, D2, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points.

*Charter School C***Figure 20***Academic Performance and Compliance: School C*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School C <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	A
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Exceeded	2.4
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	92.6
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	87.2
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	93.7
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	91.6
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	90.5
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	93.2
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	90.5
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	79
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	64.6
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	A
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	A
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

Note. NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School C achieved the highest possible rating on one measured criteria (D2) where it exceeded expected academic growth. The school met the standards set forth in 11 of the 17 measured criteria (D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points.



**Charter School D****Figure 21***Academic Performance and Compliance: School D*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School D			
<b>LEA CODE:</b>			
<b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12			
<b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	B
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Exceeded	3.65
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	78.6
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	68.8
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	78.2
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	78.9
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	65.1
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	79.1
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	72
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	74.7
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	35.8
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School D achieved the highest possible rating on one measured criteria

(D2) where it exceeded expected academic growth. The school met the standards set forth in 11 of the 17 measured criteria (D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points.

**Charter School E****Figure 22***Academic Performance and Compliance: School E*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School E <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
D1	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Not Met	F
D2	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Met	0.22
D3	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	Y
D4	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	Y
D5	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Not Met	28.6
D6	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Not Met	19.5
D7	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	29.8
D8	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	27.1
D9	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	27.4
D10	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	NR	
D11	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	35.3
D12	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	NR	
D13	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	28.6
D14	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	6.1
D15	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	F
D16	Math Performance Grade	N/A	F
D17	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School E met the standards set forth in three of the 17 measured criteria (D2, D11, D13); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one

measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points. The school did not meet the expected standards set forth in seven of the measured criteria (D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D14).

**Charter School F****Figure 23***Academic Performance and Compliance: School F*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School F <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> 05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	A
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Exceeded	8.49
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	84.5
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	77.4
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	85.3
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	83.6
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	70.4
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	85.7
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	84.7
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	75.8
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	42.6
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

Note. NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School F achieved the highest possible rating on one measured criteria

(D2) where it exceeded expected academic growth. The school met the standards set forth in 11 of the 17 measured criteria (D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points.

**Charter School G****Figure 24***Academic Performance and Compliance: School G*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School G			
<b>LEA CODE:</b>			
<b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12			
<b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	B
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Not Met	-4.77
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	81.2
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	71.2
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	81.7
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	80.5
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	73.8
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	82.8
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	64.2
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	66.1
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	55.4
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

Note. NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School G met the standards set forth in 11 of the 17 measured criteria (D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points. The school did not meet the expected standard prescribed in measured criteria (D2) indicating that students did not meet the expected academic growth standard to achieve proficiency.



**Charter School H****Figure 25***Academic Performance and Compliance: School H*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School H <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	C
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Not Met	-3.06
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	65.4
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	53.7
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	65.1
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	65.6
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	60.8
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	67.1
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	45.5
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	58.3
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	59.8
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	33
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	C
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School H met the standards set forth in 11 of the 17 measured criteria

(D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points. The school did not meet the standard prescribed in one measured criteria (D2). The result in D2 indicated that for School H, fewer students than the prescribed minimum made sufficient growth to achieve proficiency.

**Charter School I****Figure 26***Academic Performance and Compliance: School I*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School I <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Not Met	D
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Met	1.16
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	Y
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	Y
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Not Met	32.3
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Not Met	20.5
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	38.1
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	26.6
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	33.9
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	*
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	*
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	NR	
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	33.3
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	18.5
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	F
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	F
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School I met the standards set forth in only three of the 17 measured

criteria (D2, D9, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points. The school did not meet the expected standards set in eight of the 17 measured criteria (D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D10, D11, D13).

**Charter School J****Figure 27***Academic Performance and Compliance: School J*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School J <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	B
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Met	0.9
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	68.1
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	52.8
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	70.3
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	66.2
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	62.2
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	84.7
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	64.7
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	62.9
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	34.9
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	B
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	C
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

Note. NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School J met the standards set forth in 12 of the 17 measured criteria

(D1, D2, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points.

**Charter School K****Figure 28***Academic Performance and Compliance: School K*

<b>SCHOOL CODE:</b> School K			
<b>LEA CODE:</b>			
<b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12			
<b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>	Met	A+NG
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.	Met	-0.09
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.	N/A	N
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	91.7
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.	Met	87.3
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	92.8
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	90.8
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	65.9
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	93.9
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	>95
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Not Met	*
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	80.6
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency	Met	71.1
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade	N/A	A
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade	N/A	A
<b>D17</b>	Alternative Accountability Model Results <sup>3</sup>	NR	NR
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			
<sup>3</sup> In accordance with SBE policy ACCT-038, these schools have selected Option C in the Alternative Accountability Model. Each school determines its status based on the submitted Alternative Accountability Plan approved by SBE.			

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School K met the standards set forth in 11 of the 17 measured criteria

(D1, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12, D13, D14); four measures were not applicable (D3, D4, D15, D16); and one measure (D17) was not reported as it did not yield data points. The school did not meet the expected standard prescribed in one measured criterion (D12).

### **Financial Performance and Compliance**

This section addresses Research Question 3. One measurement category of the Charter School Performance Framework, C. Financial Compliance (measured against one criterion), was used to report on the financial performance and compliance statuses of the selected case studies.

Table 4 shows the research question and the Financial Performance Framework measures that were utilized in the study.

**Table 4**

#### *Research Question 3 – Measures*

Research question	Category	Measure
3. What factors of financial standing as defined by the Local Government Commission and North Carolina Financial Business Services determine a successful charter agreement reauthorization?	C. Financial outcomes	C1

The one measured criterion selected from the Performance Framework helped to determine whether or not the 11 case study schools achieved the expected standards of financial performance. The measure contained in the Financial Performance Framework provides criteria for determining whether the charter school is financially viable and is meeting the standards and expectations outlined in their charter agreement and therefore whether or not they qualify for renewal (NACSA, 2013).









## Case Study Analysis – Classification and Rating

Based on evaluation of the established metrics in the Financial Performance Framework, the case study schools received one of the following ratings measured against the single criterion for financial performance. The schools were either “compliant” or “not compliant” based on whether they met, did not meet, or fell far below the standards (NCDPI, 2019b).

Figure 29 shows the rating framework used in describing the financial performance targets and rating categories set forth in the framework.

**Figure 29**

### *Financial Performance and Compliance Rating Framework*

Financial Performance Targets and Rating Categories			
Status	Level of Performance	Target	Rating
 Compliant	100%	 Exceeds Standard	N/A
	80-99%	 Meets Standard	The school's performance on this component does not signal a financial risk to the school and meets the authorizer's standard
 Not Compliant	60-79%	 Does Not Meet Standard	The school's performance on this component signals a potential financial risk to the school and does not meet the authorizer's expectation
	<60%	 Falls Far Below Standard	The school's performance on this component signals a significant financial risk to the school and does not meet the authorizer's expectation

*Note.* Adapted from NACSA (2013).

The metrics shown in Figure 29 refer to the accountability percentages for charter school financial outcomes. The compliance percentage metric is an expectation or target set forth and used by the authorizer in evaluating a measure. It is obtained by calculating, for each measure, the number of areas where the school met the standard divided by the total number of standards that must be met for each measure (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

A measure scoring 80% or above is in compliance with the standard prescribed in

the Financial Performance Framework, while a measure scoring 79% and below is out of compliance and has not met the standard established by laws, policies, and provisions of the charter agreement. Financial performance is typically not measured on the “exceeded standard” rating; a charter school is either in or out of compliance (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

### **Case Study Analysis – Indicators**

Financial performance and compliance were evaluated on the basis of two indicators. Most of the indicators informed the development of the measures prescribed in the North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework. Some were not used completely. The first indicator evaluates a school’s near-term financial viability, position, and health in the upcoming year. A school meets, hence is in compliance with, the desired financial standards when it demonstrates a low risk of financial danger, difficulty, or hardship in the near term. It meets the standard if it registers a positive 1-year trend (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b). The second indicator evaluates a school’s financial sustainability in the longer term. A school that meets the sustainability standard demonstrates a low risk of hardship in the future in relation to its financial viability and health. The school meets the standard if it registers a positive 2- to 3-year trend (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

The Financial Performance Framework evaluates a school’s financial viability and health based on eight measures that include those for Indicator 1: Near-Term Measures: (a) Current Ratio (school’s ability to meet its financial obligations over the next 1 year), (b) Unrestricted Days Cash (number of days a school can pay for its operations without another cash inflow), (c) Enrollment Variance (whether a school is

meeting its enrollment projections in relation to budgeting), and (d) Debt Default (whether a school is meeting its debt obligations or covenants; NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

Measures on Indicator 2, Sustainability Measures, include (a) Total Margin (whether or not school is living within its means and resources), (b) Debt to Asset Ratio (what a school owes in terms of liabilities versus what it owns in terms of assets), (c) Cash Flow (long-term trend in the school's cash balance in light of uncertainty of funding), and (d) Debt Service Coverage Ratio (school's ability to pay all its debt obligations in the current year; NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

### **Case Study Analysis – All Schools**

Figure 30 provides a summary of financial performance and compliance results for the 11 case study schools in regard to Research Question 1, indicating their compliance status as prescribed in the Financial Performance Framework.

**Figure 30***Financial Compliance: All Schools*

<b>Financial Performance and Compliance - Summary of Results</b>		
<b>School Name</b>	<b>C1</b>	
	<b>Status</b>	<b>Data</b>
School A	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School B	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School C	Resolved	(C) Probationary - Continued Late Reporting: EDDIE
School D	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School E	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School F	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School G	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School H	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School I	Current	(C) Cautionary - Prior Year's Declining and Low Enrollment
School J	Resolved	(C) Cautionary DUAL - Late Reporting: Audit and CSADM
School K	Resolved	(C) Cautionary DUAL - Late Reporting: Audit and CSADM

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

Compliance was measured against one criterion in the framework (C1) that was aligned to NCSBE Policy TCS-U-006 relating to charter school financial noncompliance, upon which schools were rated as “cautionary,” “probationary,” or “disciplinary” depending on whether they achieved a “compliant” or “not compliant” outcome in their financial evaluation and audit (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

A compliant charter school is considered for renewal and a noncompliant charter may not be renewed. Noncompliant schools may receive a financial warning and risk funds being frozen for (a) delaying, failing to report, or inaccurately reporting the required Uniform Education Reporting System data; (b) failing to respond to requests for data; (c) the NCDPI Division of School Business superintendent and chief financial

officer (CFO) determining that it may be having financial insolvency or weakness; (d) having nonsufficient funds as notified to the Office of State Treasurer; (e) violating or failing to meet financial conditions set forth in the school’s charter agreement, state law, NCSBE policy, and/or generally accepted accounting principles and practices; and (f) failing to send its staff for the required financial training (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

A charter school is placed in financial “cautionary” status (Noncompliance Level 1) upon receiving a financial warning. The school is required to correct, within 30 calendar days, the exceptions for which it was given the financial warning, upon which they are “resolved” and the school removed from the “cautionary” status. The financial warning status is sustained by the NCDPI Division of School Business superintendent or CFO if violation or noncompliance of the financial standards and requirements by the charter school remain “unresolved” for 30 days; upon which it is placed in the financial “probationary” status (Noncompliance Level 2) where it stays for 30 days only receiving monthly portions of the financial allotment at the discretion of the NCDPI superintendent or CFO, until the exceptions are “resolved” (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

The charter school is placed in the financial “disciplinary” status (Noncompliance Level 3) if it fails the exceptions that put it in probationary status within 30 days. A charter school that receives an accumulation of three or more warnings for violating any of the financial warning exceptions or has a repeat of the same or similar violations of the compliance conditions may be placed directly into the “disciplinary” status without being given the opportunity to complete either the “cautionary” or “probationary” status periods. A charter school facing “disciplinary” measures continues receiving monthly

portions of the financial allotment at the discretion of the NCDPI Division of School Business superintendent or CFO but must immediately, within 10 business days from the date of notification, correct and resolve all the financial warning exceptions; failure to do so will cause further action to be taken regarding renewal decisions of its charter (NACSA, 2013; NCDPI, 2019b).

As shown in Figure 30, case study School C was “not compliant” with the financial standards and requirements set in the NCDPI Financial Performance Framework after which it was placed in financial warning Level 1, financial “cautionary” status, and later in financial warning Level 2, financial “probationary” status, when it failed to correct the exceptions that placed it in Level 1 in the first instance which was continued late reporting. School C, however, correcting those exceptions and its financial noncompliance was changed to “resolved” status.

Case study Schools J and K corrected the exceptions that put them in financial warning Level 1, financial “cautionary” status (which were late reporting), and their reports indicated the “resolved” status. School I was still in the cautionary period for not meeting and hence complying with the enrollment variance commitments contained in its charter agreement. Case study Schools A, B, D, E, F, G, and H met, and were therefore compliant with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards. This evidence is provided in the Finance Performance Framework data which show the schools were not placed on any level of noncompliance, whether cautionary, probationary, or disciplinary, in which case they would receive financial warnings.

## Case Study Analysis – Individual Schools

### *Charter School A*

**Figure 31**

#### *Financial Compliance: School A*

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School A <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School A was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set in the Charter Agreement, State Board Policy, or Federal and State Law.

### *Charter School B*

**Figure 32**

#### *Financial Compliance: School B*

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School B <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School B was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

### ***Charter School C***

**Figure 33**

#### ***Financial Compliance: School C***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School C <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>C1</b>	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	Resolved	(C) Probationary - Continued Late Reporting: EDDIE

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School C was placed in the “probationary” level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it did not meet, hence was not compliant with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law. The school did not correct, therefore resolve, the exceptions that caused it to be placed in the “cautionary” level of noncompliance for 30 days, leading to Level 2 of noncompliance.



***Charter School D*****Figure 34*****Financial Compliance: School D***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School D <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School D was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

***Charter School E*****Figure 35*****Financial Compliance: School E***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School E <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School E was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

***Charter School F***

**Figure 36**

***Financial Compliance: School F***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School F <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> 05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>C1</b>	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School F was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

***Charter School G*****Figure 37*****Financial Compliance: School G***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School G <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School G was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

***Charter School H*****Figure 38*****Financial Compliance: School H***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School H <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	N/A	(C) None - N/A

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School H was not placed in any level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it met, hence complied with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

***Charter School I***

**Figure 39**

***Financial Compliance: School I***

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School I <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
C1	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	Current	(C) Cautionary - Prior Year's Declining and Low Enrollment

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School I was placed in the “cautionary” level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it did not meet, hence was not compliant with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law. The school did not comply with the enrollment variance expectations set in its charter agreement.

*Charter School J***Figure 40***Financial Compliance: School J*

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School J <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>C1</b>	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	Resolved	(C) Cautionary DUAL - Late Reporting: Audit and CSADM

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School J was placed in the “cautionary” level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it did not meet, hence was not compliant with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

*Charter School K***Figure 41***Financial Compliance: School K*

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> School K <b>LEA CODE:</b> <b>GRADE SPAN:</b> KG:01:02:03:04:05:06:07:08:09:10:11:12 <b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS	DATA
<b>C1</b>	The State Board policy TCS-U-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.	Resolved	(C) Cautionary DUAL - Late Reporting: Audit and CSADM

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

As shown, School K was placed in the “cautionary” level of noncompliance by the Division of School Business, indicating that it did not meet, hence was not compliant with, the financial performance and compliance requirements and standards set forth in the charter agreement, state board policy, or federal and state law.

**Summary**

The results provided in this chapter are based on the 2017 North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework Report provided by NCDPI Accountability. The results are focused on Goal 2, “Every student has personalized education,” and Objective 2.4, “Increase the number of schools meeting academic, operational, and financial goals” (NCDPI, 2019b). The results provided a consolidated report on the performance, compliance, and progress of 11 case study charter schools in North Carolina as measured against the list of operational, academic, and financial expectations and requirements set forth by the NCDPI OCS Annual Performance Framework (NCDPI, 2019b). Due to the nature of the study, there were no limitations presented during research. This study did

not require human subject participation, and case study information was readily available to conduct research.

The measured standards for academic performance and compliance in the Performance Framework are standards provided by the NCDPI accountability system, while the operational and financial performance and compliance standards are set forth by state board policy, the charter agreement, and/or by federal and state laws. The results have shown which schools, and where schools, exceeded, met, did not meet, complied, or did not comply with the measured standards set forth by these agencies. Nine case study charter schools including Schools A, B, C, D, F, G, H, J, and K successfully applied for 10-year renewals, while two case study charter schools including Schools E and I were given 3-year renewals with stipulations (NCDPI, 2019b).

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative nonexperimental study was to examine operational, academic, and financial factors related to the process of charter school renewal in North Carolina. The study aimed at serving as a resource to understanding how different measured factors and indicators relating to the operations, academics, and finance affect the outcome of renewal terms and processes. Data used in the study were collected from the 2017 North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework.

This Performance Framework details factors associated with charter school improvement. The study also aimed at providing recommendations that can help charter schools, OCS, and other concerned stakeholders in developing operational, academic, and financial improvement plans for those schools seeking renewal and, to an equally important extent, new charter schools seeking to apply for a charter contract.

This chapter includes a discussion of major findings as related to the examination of the factors related to the operational, governance, and financial factors involved in the charter agreement renewal process for North Carolina charter schools. The results and discussions are based on data provided in the North Carolina Charter School Operational, Academic, and Financial Performance Frameworks. The data used in the study relate to an examination and analysis of the integrated performance and compliance of 11 charter schools selected as sample case studies.

Also included in this chapter is a summary, interpretation, and analysis of the connection the results in this study have with various theories, policies, frameworks, and practices relating to charter school renewal processes in North Carolina. The chapter



concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study; implications and recommendations for theory, practice, and future research; and a brief summary. The discussion contained in this chapter helps in answering the following questions:

1. What factors of operational and governing practices as defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework determine a successful charter agreement renewal?
2. What factors of academic performance as defined by the North Carolina Accountability model determine a successful charter agreement renewal?
3. What factors of financial standing as defined by the Local Government Commission and North Carolina Financial Business Services determine a successful charter agreement renewal?

### **Summary of Results**

NCSBE provides goals, indicators, and measures that help monitor, track, and evaluate performance and compliance of public charter schools. The results and outcomes for each charter school based on those NCSBE goals and measures provide an opportunity for OCS to identify and analyze the performance and compliance status, trends, and progress of individual charter schools so that they can further develop and offer targeted programmatic and professional interventions and support to low-performance schools and recommend scaling and replication of the practices of high-performance ones (NCDPI, 2019b).

The results provided in this study included a more in-depth analysis that rated performance and compliance of 11 sampled case study renewal charter schools in relation to their achievement of each NCSBE measure target as measured by the NCDPI OCS

Performance Framework. Under Goal 2 of the NCSBE measures, charter schools have the responsibility of ensuring that every student has a personalized education. Objective 2.4 under this goal requires charters to meet the operational, academic, and financial goals (NCDPI, 2019b).

Two of the measured criteria elements of the Performance Framework, the Operational Performance Framework and the Financial Performance Framework, measured a charter school's performance and compliance in relation to NCDPI OCS requirements and measures set forth in state and federal general statutes, NCSBE policies, and the charter agreement. One of the measured criteria elements, the Academic Performance Framework, measured OCS requirements and measures aligned with the NCSBE strategic plan and the Charter School Advisory Board's requirements for comparing equivalent measures with the LEA (NCDPI, 2019b).

The data used in this study constituted a consolidated view of the performance and compliance of the sampled schools in relation to their operational, academic, and financial elements. The information and data provided for each case study included outcomes for measures of accountability, performance, and compliance in relation to those three elements which were further grouped into four measurement categories: operational, renewal, financial, and academic criteria and requirements (NCDPI, 2019b).

The Performance Framework reported on 46 different indicators and measured criteria around the four measurement categories mentioned that measured a charter school's operational, academic, and financial outcomes in relation to its renewal application process. However, some of those measured criteria for each element (operational, academic, and financial) and for each measured category (operational,

renewal, financial, and academic) contained in those elements were not applicable to some schools, while others simply did not yield data points. All the sampled case study schools were in a renewal year (NCDPI, 2019b). A summary of the analysis of the Performance Framework follows.







### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 focused on examining the factors of operational and governing practices, as defined by the North Carolina Performance Framework, that determine a successful charter agreement renewal. This question was informed by NCSBE Goal 2, Objective 2.4, and Measure 2.4.3: “Percentage of the case study charter schools that were meeting or exceeding all operational standards and expectations as measured by the NCDPI OCS Charter School Performance Framework” (NCDPI, 2019b, p. 3).

To address this question, 28 measured criteria contained in the Operational Performance Framework component of the Charter School Performance Framework were applied. The Operational Performance Framework contained two measurement categories which included A: Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria and B: Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria. Section A contained 21 measured criteria (A1-A21), while Section B contained seven measured criteria (B1-B7), totaling 28 (NCDPI, 2019b).

Figure 42 shows the summary of how the case study charter schools achieved various levels of accountability and compliance as related to whether they were in or out of compliance with the operational performance goals and expectations set forth in general statutes, NCSBE policies, and the charter agreement. Figure 42 illustrates the rating classification used.

**Figure 42***Operational Performance Classification and Rating*

Operational Performance Targets and Rating Categories			
Status	Level of Performance	Target	Rating
 Compliant	100%	 Exceeds Standard	N/A
	80-99%	 Meets Standard	School materially meets the operational goal or expectation outlined in the Charter School Performance Framework
 Not Compliant	60-79%	 Does Not Meet Standard	School, at any point during the evaluation period, materially fails to meet the operational goal or expectation outlined in the Charter School Performance Framework, but Board has instituted successful or satisfactory compliance remedies
	<60%	 Falls Far Below Standard	School, chronically throughout the evaluation period, materially failed to meet the operational goal or expectation outlined in the Charter School Performance Framework, but Board has failed to institute successful or satisfactory compliance remedies

*Note.* Adapted from NACSA (2013).

**Figure 43***Operational Performance Results Summary*

Operational Performance and Compliance																												
School Name	Measures/Status																											
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20	A21	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7
School A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School B	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	N/A	C	C	C	C	C	C
School D	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School E	C	C	C	C	NC	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	N/A	C	C	C	C	C	C
School F	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School G	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School H	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	NR
School I	C	C	C	C	C	C	NC	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
School J	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	NC	C	C	C	C	C	C
School K	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	N/A	NR	NR	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
<div><div>C</div> Compliant<div>NC</div> Not Compliant<div>N/A</div> Not Applicable<div>NR</div> Not Reported</div>																												

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.








**Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 focused on examining the factors of academic performance, as defined by the Charter School Performance Framework, that determine a successful charter agreement renewal. To address this question, 17 measured criteria contained in the Academic Performance Framework component of the Charter School Performance

Framework were applied. The Operational Performance Framework contained one measurement category which was D: Academic Outcomes, detailed in Measures D1-D17 (NCDPI, 2019b). Figure 44 shows the summary of how the case study charter schools achieved various levels of accountability and compliance as related to whether or not their performance exceeded, met, or did not meet the expected standards aligning with the goals outlined in the NCSBE strategic plan and the Charter School Advisory Board requirements outlining comparable measures to the LEA. Figure 44 illustrates the rating classification used.

**Figure 44**

*Academic Performance Classification and Rating*

Academic Performance Targets and Rating Categories			
Status	Level of Performance	Target	Rating
 Exceeded	100%	 Exceeds Standard	School has exceeded expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards
 Met	80-99%	 Meets Standard	School has met the minimum expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards
 Not Met	60-79%	 Does Not Meet Standard	School has failed to meet the minimum expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards
	<60%	 Falls Far Below Standard	School is performing well below the expectations set forth by the authorizer in relation to acceptable academic performance standards

*Note.* Adapted from NACSA (2013).

**Figure 45***Academic Performance Results Summary*

Academic Performance and Compliance																	
	Measures/Status																
School Name	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	D13	D14	D15	D16	D17
School A	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School B	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School C	M	E	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School D	M	E	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School E	NM	M	N/A	N/A	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NR	M	NR	M	NM	N/A	N/A	NR
School F	M	E	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School G	M	NM	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School H	M	NM	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School I	NM	M	N/A	N/A	NM	NM	NM	NM	M	NM	NM	NR	NM	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School J	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR
School K	M	M	N/A	N/A	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	NM	M	M	N/A	N/A	NR

E

 Exceeded

M

 Met

NM

 Not Met

N/A

 Not Applicable

NR

 Not Reported

*Note.* NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

**Research Question 3**







Research Question 3 focused on examining the factors of financial standing, as defined by the North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework, that determine a successful charter agreement renewal. To address this question, one measured criterion contained in the Financial Performance Framework component of the North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework was applied. The Financial Performance Framework contained one measurement category which was C: Financial Compliance, detailed in Measure C1 (NCDPI, 2019b).

Figure 46 shows the summary of how the case study charter schools achieved various levels of accountability and compliance as related to whether they were in or out of compliance (and what level of noncompliance they fell into) with the financial performance goals and expectations set forth in general statutes, NCSBE policies, and the

charter agreement. Figure 46 illustrates the rating classification used.

**Figure 46**

*Financial Performance Classification and Rating*

Financial Performance Targets and Rating Categories			
Status	Level of Performance	Target	Rating
 Compliant	100%	 Exceeds Standard	N/A
	80-99%	 Meets Standard	The school's performance on this component does not signal a financial risk to the school and meets the authorizer's standard
 Not Compliant	60-79%	 Does Not Meet Standard	The school's performance on this component signals a potential financial risk to the school and does not meet the authorizer's expectation
	<60%	 Falls Far Below Standard	The school's performance on this component signals a significant financial risk to the school and does not meet the authorizer's expectation
NB: Levels of financial non-compliance include: i) <i>Cautionary</i> (Non-compliant school receives a Financial Warning); ii) <i>Probationary</i> (Non-compliant school has not corrected/resolved exceptions in level one within 30 days; and iii) <i>Disciplinary</i> (Non-compliant school has not corrected/resolved exceptions in level two within 30 days, or has accumulated more than 3 financial warnings, or has repeat financial violations. The financial non-compliance status remains resolved or unresolved depending on whether or not the non-compliant school has corrected the exceptions for which it received financial warning. N/A means school is not placed under any non-compliance level			

Note. Adapted from NACSA (2013).

**Figure 47**

*Financial Performance Results Summary*

Financial Performance and Compliance		
	C1	
School Name	Status	Data
School A	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School B	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School C	Resolved	(C) Probationary - Continued Late Reporting: EDDIE
School D	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School E	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School F	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School G	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School H	N/A	(C) None - N/A
School I	Current	(C) Cautionary - Prior Year's Declining and Low Enrollment
School J	Resolved	(C) Cautionary DUAL - Late Reporting: Audit and CSADM
School K	Resolved	(C) Cautionary DUAL - Late Reporting: Audit and CSADM

Note. NCDPI (2019b) Performance Framework School Reports.

## Charter Renewal

The 11 case study charter schools were considered for renewal per the policies

and frameworks approved by NCSBE. The decision to renew the schools is arrived at after a 2-year process consisting of a self-study by the charter school seeking renewal, a school renewal visit by NCDPI OCS, interviews, a review by the Charter School Advisory Board, and recommendations to NCSBE. Authorizers, under the auspices of NACSA, develop Charter School Performance Frameworks which are adopted or adapted by state education agencies to institute and maintain high standards for charter school accountability and performance (NCDPI, 2019a).

NCDPI OCS has adapted from NACSA a Charter School Performance Framework against which it measures a charter school's: (a) operational performance (whether the charter will run its operational, organizational, and governance structures as per the expected standards); (b) academic performance (whether the charter's educational program is successfully meeting its obligations and expectations); and (c) financial performance (whether the charter is meeting financial viability standards; NCDPI, 2019a). Of the 11 case study charter schools, nine (Schools A, B, C, D, F, G, H, J, and K) were recommended by the Charter School Advisory Board for 10-year renewals, while two (Schools E and I) were recommended by the Charter School Advisory Board for 3-year renewals with stipulations. NCSBE approved the renewal recommendations for all the schools as provided (NCDPI, 2019a).

## **Summary**

The North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework provided measures against which the case study schools were evaluated to determine whether or not they qualified for renewal. Schools that would not meet the standards and measured criteria outlined in the Performance Framework would risk nonrenewal or revocation. The



decision to grant the case study charter schools the authority to continue operating was determined by the extent to which the schools complied with or met the standards and requirements set forth in the state general statutes, NCSBE policies, and the signed charter agreement (NACSA, 2019b).

The measures set forth in the North Carolina Charter School Performance Framework describe the factors affecting and determining the outcomes of charter school renewal recommendations and decisions made by the Charter School Advisory Board and NCSBE respectively. The North Carolina Performance Framework employed NACSA recommendations that charter performance should be evaluated by their performance in regard to operational, academic, and financial criteria. However, NACSA does not advocate for any one, or combination of, criteria to be weighted more than any other, or combination of, criteria. (NACSA, 2013).

The law that establishes charter schools in North Carolina (N.C. General Statute § 115C-218) lists the purposes charter schools serve as improving student learning, increasing learning opportunities for all children, enhancing innovative teaching and professional opportunities for teachers, expanding educational opportunities and choices for parents and students, and holding charters accountable for achieving measurable performance according to set standards. These purposes explain the very existence and performance of a charter in and of itself (North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research, 2019).

As already indicated, operational compliance, academic performance, and financial viability were the three most important attributes of a successful charter school that were visibly considered by the Charter School Advisory Board and NCSBE in

making renewal decisions. In this regard, the three research questions formulated in this study sought to examine how these three attributes accounted for the outcomes of the Charter School Advisory Board's recommendations and NCSBE's decisions on renewal of the 11 case study charter schools in North Carolina (NCDPI, 2019a).

The material presented in the Performance Framework contained both qualitative and quantitative data regarding a charter's performance in relation to those three attributes. Those data for this study were drawn from the records maintained by NCDPI OCS. The measured criteria set forth in the Performance Framework also provided other information on the demographics served by the charter (NCDPI, 2019a). In this study, an analysis of the charter renewal recommendations and decisions made by the Charter School Advisory Board and NCSBE in relation to the selected case study charter schools was done to determine which factors were considered in determining whether or not to renew a charter for a 10-year renewal, a 7-year renewal, or a 3-year renewal with stipulations, or deny renewal (NCDPI, 2019a).

Charters reviewed as case studies for this study included those that were considered for renewal in the 2016-2017 school year. Per N.C. General Statute § 115C-218, charters become eligible for the 10-year renewal if they have no current compliance issues in their operations, demonstrate sound financial viability as shown by the last 3 years of audits, and have for the last 3 years exceeded growth or have achieved academic performance levels comparable to LEAs. A charter school is eligible for a 7-year renewal if it has achieved operational compliance in the last 2 years, has maintained sound financial audits in the same period, and has academic outcomes comparable to the LEA or exceeded growth in the last 2 of 3 years (NCDPI, 2019a).

A charter school is eligible for a 3-year renewal if it demonstrates operational compliance issues for more than a year creating a trend or pattern but has sound financial audits within at least 1 of the last 3 years and has registered academic outcomes comparable to the LEA for at least 1 of the last 3 years or met growth for 2 of the last 3 years. Three-year renewal schools are slapped with stipulations and are only eligible for a 3-year renewal once (NCDPI, 2019a).

A school receives a no renewal verdict if it has current and persistent operational compliance issues, registers unsound financial audits in the period of the last 2 years, and academic outcomes have not been comparable to the LEA or has not met growth in (any of) the last 2 years. NCSBE Policy CHTR 010 can revoke renewal. Comparable meant that proficiency scores in end-of-grade or end-of-course exams were not less than 5 points of the composite score posted by the LEA (NCDPI, 2019a).

Table 5 shows the outcome of NCSBE decisions regarding renewal of the 11 case study charter schools.

**Table 5**

*Outcomes of the Charter School Advisory Board Recommendations and NCSBE Charter Renewal Decisions*

Renewal status	Schools
10-year renewal (without stipulations)	A, B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K
7-year renewal (without stipulations)	None
3-year renewal (with stipulations)	E, I
No renewal	None

A charter school's renewal status constituted the qualitative dependent variable that reflected NCSBE's decision and action. The qualitative independent variables were

the three attributes of operational compliance, financial viability, and academic performance specified by North Carolina General Statute § 115C-218 (Goodall, 2019).

While completing this research, there were clear trends that led to the correlation of literature as reviewed in Chapter 2. School leadership matters. School leaders are the guiding source for each of the researched areas. Finances, accountability of academics, and governance are all areas that play a key role in the health and longevity of a charter school.

Schools that did not receive a 10-year renewal showed signs of struggle in multiple areas. This indicates a lack of oversight which is the direct responsibility of a school leader. If a charter school wants to have a life of longevity and good health, it would be wise to hire well-trained leaders. These leaders should be trained in fiscal management and be able to maintain and balance an annual budget, specifically a budget that creates a surplus.

Charter school leaders being considered for employment should also be trained in instructional support. It is not enough to fill teaching positions and put students in classrooms. A school leader must be able to monitor, support, and set a standard in the school building for instructional excellence. This leader must also be able to understand outcomes of the instructional program being provided in their building. Understanding data and utilizing data to inform instructional decisions are extremely important for reaching academic accountability goals. As seen through this research, low academic performance has a direct impact on the longevity of a charter agreement.

Last, charter school leaders must understand the importance of meeting governance requirements. A school leader must be competent and understand local, state,

and federal requirements. Missed deadlines, inaccurate filings, and failure to comply with specific requirements are indicative of the school's failure to achieve stability. In some cases, missed deadlines affect the school's ability to receive available resources which are essential for the successful charter school.

Effective charter schools have effective leaders. These leaders can oversee, manage, and execute annual plans that ensure financial, academic, and governance well-being. Ineffective leadership results in shorter charter agreement terms and an overall subpar educational experience for students. It is in the best interest of all stakeholders to hire school leaders with a skillset that is suited for success in management.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

It is my recommendation that research be continued with a focus on the hiring practices of charter school leaders. I think it would be particularly beneficial to gather data on leadership hiring practices of low-performing and continually low-performing charter schools across the state of North Carolina. Low-performing and continually low-performing schools in North Carolina share the common issue of academic failure. Academic failure can be viewed as directly proportional to poor leadership and lack of quality instruction. Understanding the school leader's qualifications and experience could provide insight on what should be considered good or bad hiring practices.

Most schools that are currently on the low performing and continually low performing lists educate an underserved population of African American and/or Latino students. I have no doubt that race, equity, inequality, and lack of resources will become a part of this future research as these topics remain consistent roadblocks to greater success for students of color.

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Appendix A

Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria

NC Charter School Performance Framework		
SCHOOL NAME:		
LEA CODE:		GRADE SPAN:
A. Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria		
MEASURE	CRITERIA	STATUS
A1	The NC Report Card and Letter Grade are prominently displayed on the school's website and schools with D/F have sent letter to notify parents.	
A2	The school has an assigned administrator in the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS).	
A3	The school meets the required number of instructional hours or days in accordance with State law.	
A4	The school adheres to all testing and accountability policies for state assessments.	
A5	The school implements mandated programming as a result of state or federal requirements.	
	Title I	
	Title II	
	EC	
	School Nutrition	
	ELL	
A6	The school follows student admissions and lottery requirements as stated in North Carolina General Statute, State Board of Education Policy, and the signed charter agreement.	
A7	The school's official funded ADM is within 10% of the projected ADM.	
A8	The non-profit board has a current grievance policy.	
A9	The non-profit board has a current conflict of interest policy that complies with G.S. 115C-218.15.	
A10	The non-profit board has a current nepotism policy.	
A11	A quorum of the non-profit board of directors meets no less than 8 times a year (including annual meeting).	
A12	The majority of the non-profit board members have primary residence in North Carolina.	
A13	There is evidence of current fire inspections and related records.	
A14	The school has a viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization.	
A15	The non-profit board holds current, active civil and liability insurance with the minimum coverage as defined in the signed charter agreement.	
A16	The non-profit board has a criminal history check policy that mirrors the LEA in which the school is located.	
A17	The school is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in General Statute, SBE Policy, or the signed charter agreement.	
A18	The school is compliant with teacher licensure percentage requirements by maintaining at least 50% of teachers licensed from December 31 through the end of the school calendar year in accordance with SBE Policy.	
A19	The charter school is compliant with the annual EMO/CMO public records request.	
A20	The charter school is compliant with maintaining the required dissolutions funds as required by G.S. 115C- 218.100.	
A21	The school is compliant with the implementation of a School Improvement Plan submitted through NC Star.	

## Appendix B

### Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria

<b>B. Operational Renewal Monitoring Criteria</b>		
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>B1</b>	The school has graduation requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	
<b>B2</b>	The school has student promotion requirements that match the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	
<b>B3</b>	The school is consistently implementing the mission and educational program in the approved charter application or approved charter application amendments.	
<b>B4</b>	The non-profit board operates in accordance with the approved charter application by-laws or approved charter application amended by-laws.	
<b>B5</b>	The non-profit board is compliant with Open Meetings Law.	
<b>B6</b>	The non-profit board is compliant with Public Records Requests.	
<b>B7</b>	The school maintains a discipline policy that is compliant with state and federal law and that is consistent with the approved charter application and approved charter application amendments.	

Appendix C

Financial Compliance

<b>C. Financial Compliance</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>C1</b>	The State Board policy CHTR-006 outlines the charter school noncompliance levels. This policy details the following three levels of financial non-compliance under which a charter school may be placed by the Division of School Business.		

## Appendix D

### Academic Outcome

<b>D. Academic Outcomes</b>			
<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>D1</b>	The charter school has a School Performance Grade (SPG) of a C or better. <sup>1</sup>		
<b>D2</b>	The charter school met or exceeded expected growth.		
<b>D3</b>	The charter school is identified as a Low-Performing school.		
<b>D4</b>	The charter school is identified as a Continually Low-Performing school.		
<b>D5</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite GLP is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.		
<b>D6</b>	The charter school's Performance Composite CCR is comparable <sup>2</sup> to the LEA.		
<b>D7</b>	Female Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D8</b>	Male Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D9</b>	Black Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D10</b>	White Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D11</b>	Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D12</b>	American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D13</b>	Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D14</b>	Exceptional Children Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency		
<b>D15</b>	Reading Performance Grade		
<b>D16</b>	Math Performance Grade		
<sup>1</sup> Schools receiving a D or F rating are at-risk of Low Performing designation and must notify parents of School Performance Grade.			
<sup>2</sup> Comparable as defined by the Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) as being no more than 5% below the LEA on proficiency ratings.			