

# PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS WITH TRANSPORTATION: INCREASING ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS

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## RESEARCH QUESTION: Is transportation a barrier to economically disadvantaged students' enrollment at charter schools?

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study investigates the role of transportation in low-income student's access to public charter schools. In North Carolina, public charter schools contribute to racial and economic segregation both among themselves and in comparison to traditional public schools.<sup>1</sup> Studies report not only that White and Black charter school students are more likely to attend a racially isolated school than are those in traditional public schools, but also Latino students are more racially isolated in traditional public schools because they are underrepresented in public charter schools.<sup>2</sup> Along with less interracial exposure, students are more isolated by class than in traditional public schools.<sup>3</sup> With recent growth in the number and size of public charter schools, the researchers wonder how this will affect already observed increases in racial and economic segregation. Specifically in regards to low-income students, the researchers wonder what mechanisms lead to this isolation, and if these trends will speed up with continued growth of the charter school population. Scholars and critics have pointed the finger at charter schools without transportation or free and reduced price lunch programs as contributing to this economic imbalance. In the most basic sense, enrollment at a charter school is dependent on one's ability to get there each day. When considering students who qualify for free and reduce-priced lunch, affordable transportation could be a root reason why we observe economic imbalance.

To address these concerns the research team contacted charter schools throughout the state, both in survey and interview form, to discover whether there was evidence that transportation has been a barrier to low-income students' enrollment in public charter schools. During this contact, the researchers sought to understand how and why certain public charter schools provide transportation and what challenges they were faced with. With this information, the researchers recommend a specific policy change designed to support equal access to free transportation. The researchers hope to encourage collaboration between stakeholders, in an effort to ensure that every child's constitutional right to an equal opportunity to a sound basic education of their choice is met.<sup>4,5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H., & Vigdor, J. (2005). Classroom level segregation and resegregation in north carolina. In J. C. Boger & G. Orfield (Eds.), School Resegregation: Must the south turn back? University of North Carolina Press | <sup>2</sup> Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., Wang, J. (2010). Choice without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA; [www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu](http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu). | <sup>3</sup> Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H., & Vigdor, J. (2013). Racial and economic diversity in north carolina's schools: An update. Sanford Working Papers Series, 13(1), Retrieved from <http://research.sanford.duke.edu/papers/SAN13-01.pdf> | <sup>4</sup> NC Constitution, Article I, Section 15 & Article IX Section 2(1) | <sup>5</sup> Leandro v. State of North Carolina 488 S.E.2d 249 (N.C. 1997)



## INTRODUCTION

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Socioeconomic and racial stratification between public charter and traditional public schools is often attributed to the law's failure to require that public charter schools provide transportation or free and reduced price lunch to their students.<sup>6</sup> This, in combination with the requirement to apply to a lottery before families are allowed to complete the standard enrollment paperwork, paints public charter schools as an exclusive option for families who:

1. Know about public charter options before deadlines to complete admissions requirements pass,
2. Can afford to transport their children to school once enrolled and
3. Can afford to buy them lunch every day while they attend these schools.

Recently this argument has gained more support as legislators introduce several bills and amendments to the public charter school law that would require public charter schools to provide this economic support.<sup>7,8,9,10</sup> This growth in opposition follows the removal of the one hundred charter school cap in North Carolina in 2011.<sup>11</sup> At the time, North Carolina ranked 10th nationally<sup>12</sup> in the number of students enrolled at public charter schools. Since then, enrollment has increased by 18.3%.<sup>13</sup> The movement's basic assumption is that removing the cap catalyzed the rapid flight of middle-income families from the traditional public school system. As tax dollars become more divided based on school choice, the opportunity gap between the schools widens by depleting resources that support students in the former system. Controversial revisions to the law in 2013, such as eliminating State Board approval of public charter school grade expansion, worry traditional public school advocates about the impact changes have on traditional public schools' financial capacity to serve students left behind.

### PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN NORTH CAROLINA

The North Carolina public charter school bill was signed into law during the 1995-1996 legislative session.<sup>14</sup> In 17 years, the State Board of Education has approved 177 public charter schools. Of those, 141 opened, 34 closed, and 11 voluntarily relinquished their charters. As of the 2012-2013 school year, 107 currently operate (See Appendix A for openings and closings by year)<sup>15</sup>. Twenty-three more schools are slated to open in



fall 2013.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the Charter School Advisory Council recommended 26 fall 2014 applicants for approval to the State Board, with a call to further consider 6 more applicants.<sup>17</sup> Public charter schools educate 48,795 of North Carolina's students, 3.3% of the public school population.<sup>18</sup> These schools receive per-pupil-based funding in a lump sum payment from the state, local districts, and federal government when applicable (Title I funds). The key difference in the way public charter schools and traditional public schools are funded is that public charter schools are not intended to receive capital funding, only funding for operational costs. Given that the law requires charter school applicants to obtain nonprofit status within 2 years of approval, many also raise funds from private or community sources to meet capital needs.<sup>19</sup> Public charter schools are allowed to allocate public funds as they see fit. As such, while transportation funds are included in the allotment from the state, they have the autonomy to spend that money on costs other than transportation. The basic premise of public charter schools is that they are not required to spend categorical funds on what they are assigned to (though districts recently got more flexibility, similar to that which charter schools have).<sup>20</sup>

### TRANSPORTATION TO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN NC

#### *State Policy Context: North Carolina Public Charter School Law*

When first signed into law, the North Carolina public charter school statute required all charter schools to provide transportation to students residing within the constituent

<sup>6</sup> § 115C-238.29 | <sup>7</sup> Luebke, P., House Bill 1152 Cap on Charter Schools/Durham County. | <sup>8</sup> Luebke, P., House Bill 1153 Standards for Charter Schools/Durham County. | <sup>9</sup> Senate Bill 337 / S.L. 2013-355 <http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2013&BillID=sb+337&submitButton=Go> | <sup>10</sup> Senate Bill 8 / S.L. 2011-164 <http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2011&BillID=sb+8&submitButton=Go> | <sup>11</sup> Geary, B. (2012, February 8). Under pressure, state board of education reviewing charter applications. Independent Weekly. Retrieved from <http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/under-pressure-state-board-of-education-reviewing-charter-applications/Content?oid=2795658> | <sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2010-11, provisional version 2a. | <sup>13</sup> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of School Business: Information Analysis (2013). North Carolina budget highlights 2013. Retrieved from website: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/fbs/resources/data/highlights/2013highlights.pdf> | <sup>14</sup> § 115C-238.29 | <sup>15</sup> NC Highlights | <sup>16</sup> 2013-2014 charter school applications. (2013, March). Retrieved from <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/charterschools/applications/2013-14/> | <sup>17</sup> 2014-2015 charter school applications. (2013, September). Retrieved from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/charterschools/applications/2014-15/> | <sup>18</sup> NC Highlights 2013 | <sup>19</sup> § 115C-238.29E | <sup>20</sup> The LEA Adjustments allows districts to contribute to budget cuts by choosing which dollars to return to the state in order to contribute to statewide budget cuts. More recently those voluntary cuts are simply imposed on districts based on previous trends before money is disbursed in an across the board cut as was done in the 2013-2014 budget passed during the 2013-2014 legislative session.

school district. Legislators updated that language the following year, leaving the decision to provide transportation up to the discretion of charter school administrators. The rationale for this change was that traditional public schools are not required to transport all of their students.<sup>21</sup> Had they not changed this requirement, public charter schools would have an unfair burden to provide a service that traditional public schools do not. Today the statute requires public charter schools to “develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located.”<sup>22</sup> The statute does not provide a specific definition of what constitutes a “transportation plan” or a “barrier.” Many interpret this law to making parent-organized carpools to be sufficient. Others schools for whom carpools are not feasible interpret the statute as requiring bus service. The statute allows local boards of education and public charter schools to make agreements to transport students within the district. However, that language permits local boards to “refuse to provide transportation under this subsection if [they] demonstrate there is no available space on buses it intends to operate during the term of the contract or it would not be practically feasible to provide this transportation.”<sup>23</sup> Again, statute does not define these terms, which is especially problematic in determining what is “practically feasible.”

### **Federal Policy Context: McKinney-Vento Act**

Beyond the aforementioned clause, the only transportation law relevant to North Carolina public charter schools is the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. While the North Carolina statute does not specifically define transportation requirements, McKinney-Vento is far more explicit. Under this law, any student who becomes homeless after the time of enrollment has the right to continue to attend their school of origin or, a new school of choice proximate to their temporary residence.<sup>24</sup> The school of origin is responsible for securing the student’s transportation to either option. The school of origin may call upon any and all local school districts whose boundaries the student crosses to help transport the child. Since public charter schools serve functionally as their own school district, the district from whose attendance zone the child originates can be called upon to share the cost of transporting the child. To better understand how homeless students access McKinney-Vento transportation services, the research team consulted the North Carolina State Coordinator for Homeless Education as well as several district level Homeless Education Liaisons in districts with either: large populations of identified students, or

who were known to have working relationships with their local public charter schools. From these consultations we learned that there are cases where:

1. A child is bussed to the district of origin’s boundary
2. Met by a bus from the LEA in which the public charter school is located
3. Transported to the traditional public school closest to the public charter school
4. Transported the remaining distance by a public charter school staff member.

This cooperation is facilitated by the Homeless Liaisons at each district and at the school, most often the charter school principal.<sup>25</sup>

This model of cooperation is unique; in no other part of the charter school law are public charter schools and LEAs mandated by law to work together (beyond receiving per pupil funds). In approaching this research project, one basic assumption of the researchers work was that homeless students represent the most vulnerable subset of low-income students, as defined by eligibility for free and reduced price lunch. Eligibility for free and reduced price lunch is measured as families whose income is less than 185% (reduced) or 130% (free) of the federal poverty level, \$23,550 annual income for a family of four.<sup>26</sup> As such, homeless student transportation greatly informed our recommendations for cooperation made at the conclusion of this report.

## **POLICY BACKGROUND & RELEVANT RESEARCH**

Segregation by race and class in America’s public schools is a heavily researched and proven phenomenon. Scholars have shown for decades that the degree of racial segregation in public schools has returned to that which was observed pre-Brown enforcement.<sup>27</sup> Public charter schools are specifically criticized for having a resegregative effect on enrollment, both amongst themselves and in comparison to their traditional public counterparts.<sup>28</sup> While racial resegregation in North Carolina is problematic, socioeconomic segregation is far more pervasive.<sup>29</sup> Many cite residential segregation as the root cause for separation of low-income students in public schools.<sup>30</sup> However, this is not the case in North Carolina.

Recent scholarship found that the state’s public schools are more socioeconomically stratified than can be accounted for by housing segregation alone.<sup>31</sup> In our state, the dynamics that give rise to this stratification are much more nuanced than the

<sup>21</sup> NCGS § 115C-240(b) | <sup>22</sup> NCGS § 115C-238.29(F)(h) | <sup>23</sup> NCGS § 115C-238.29(F)(h) | <sup>24</sup> 42 USC § 11431 | <sup>25</sup> List of North Carolina homeless liaison. (2013, June 11). Retrieved from [http://center.serve.org/hepnc/nc\\_pol.php](http://center.serve.org/hepnc/nc_pol.php) | <sup>26</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (n.d.). Child nutrition programs; income eligibility guidelines (78). Retrieved from Federal Register website: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/notices/iegs/IEG\\_Table-032913.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/notices/iegs/IEG_Table-032913.pdf) | <sup>27</sup> Dorsey, D. N. T. (2013). *Segregation 2.0: The New Generation of School Segregation in the 21st Century*. Education and Urban Society. | <sup>28</sup> Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2013 | <sup>29</sup> Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2013 | <sup>30</sup> *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Sch., 182 F.R.D. 486 (W.D.N.C. 1998)* Bifulco, Robert, Helen F. Ladd, and Stephen L. Ross. “The effects of public school choice on those left behind: Evidence from Durham, North Carolina.” *Peabody Journal of Education* 84.2 (2009): 130-149. | <sup>31</sup> Bifulco, Robert, Helen F. Ladd, and Stephen L. Ross. “The effects of public school choice on those left behind: Evidence from Durham, North Carolina.” *Peabody Journal of Education* 84.2 (2009): 130-149.



“creaming” of desirable students that the charter movement’s political opponents point to.<sup>32</sup> In direct contrast to this claim, many North Carolina public charter schools explicitly seek to serve at-risk, minority, or low-income children. This is evidenced by the 43% of North Carolina public charter schools that qualify for school-wide Title I services ( $\geq 35\%$  low-income students), and the additional 15% that qualify for targeted assistance programs ( $< 35\%$  low-income students).<sup>33</sup> The co-occurrence of both selective and high-poverty public charter schools begs researchers to investigate them further with a narrow focus on access – both practical and theoretical.

In a 2013 study of integration in North Carolina public schools, researchers used an imbalance index to measure the degree to which the racial and economic compositions of a given public school in a district fails to mirror that of the district as a whole. This was measured by the comparative proportions of: students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch vs. those who do not, White vs. nonwhite, White vs. Black, White vs. Latino and Black vs. Latino. The researchers found that while imbalance by race seemed to level off, imbalance by income increased between the 2005-2006 and 2011-2012 school years. Furthermore, stability of racial imbalance is deceiving. The population of Latino students has increased greatly, comparable to the decreased proportion of White students. Interestingly, the racial imbalance calculations were less severe when charter schools were removed from the analysis. The observed increase in economic imbalance existed throughout the state, in public and private schools alike. Economic imbalance is highest in the Piedmont region, which also observed the most dramatic increase in its Latino population. Given the plateau in racial imbalance, the researchers concluded that economic imbalance (between free and reduced price lunch students and other students) is more severe than racial imbalance (between White and nonwhite students). These statistics encourage local school boards and state lawmakers to take greater consideration of income disparities in public schools than they previously have.<sup>34</sup>

With this phenomenon in mind, our research team examined the transportation method by which segregation was originally remedied, but applied to the context of public charter schools. In 1971, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools became the national model for proactive desegregation when it set a county-wide ratio to guide comprehensive bussing plan to reassign students to racially balanced schools.<sup>35</sup> Upheld by the Supreme Court, the limited use of ratios inspired districts across the state to adapt the bussing policy to their own needs. In the wake of

the courts’ move away from using race as a factor in student assignment in the decades following, school districts were compelled to create more innovative assignment plans that would maintain racially unitary districts.<sup>36</sup> Among the most praised was Wake County’s plan, which created ratios based on countywide student achievement and economic data.<sup>37</sup> The local school board repealed this assignment plan, when in 2009, the US Department of Agriculture notified the district that the use of student information in this manner made it too easy to identify low-income students, making them in violation of the Federal Educational Right to Privacy Act.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it was hailed as one of the most effective means of economic integration in the nation and continues to be a model for education policy scholars across many academic disciplines.<sup>39</sup> This idea of purposeful economic integration guided our research as we determined the impact of free transportation on low-income students’ access to public choice options.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of the timely debate over transportation in public charter schools, the research team set out to answer one major research question: Is the absence of free transportation a barrier to low-income students’ access to public charter schools?

In order to answer this larger question the team sought out answers to three more specific questions:

1. How many public charter schools provide transportation despite the absence of a requirement to do so?
2. Why do these public charter schools provide transportation?
3. Is there a difference between the proportion of low-income students at schools that provide transportation and those that do not?

In order to answer these questions our team conducted a statewide survey of public charter schools and in-depth interviews with several schools that provide bus transportation. This report summarizes information gathered from surveys of public charter schools as well as presents the common characteristics of public charter schools with transportation identified during the in-depth interviews. We conclude with recommendations for reform that would allow public charter schools to more easily provide transportation to their students in an effort to economically integrate the public charter school student population.

<sup>32</sup> *Durham People’s Alliance (2012) Expectations for Charter Schools in Durham County* <http://www.durhampa.org/2012/03/expectations-for-charter-schools-in-durham-county/> |

<sup>33</sup> *Charter School low-income percentages came from the 2012 Eligible Schools Report in the Consolidated Federal Data Collection System, the federal database that determines Title I eligibility* | <sup>34</sup> (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2013) | <sup>35</sup> *Swann v. Charlotte–Mecklenburg Bd. of Education*, 402 U.S. 1, 28, 91 S.Ct. 1267, 1282, 28 L.Ed.2d 554. | <sup>36</sup> *Parents Involved in Cmty. Sch. v. Seattle Sch. Dist. No. 1*, 551 U.S. 701, 127 S. Ct. 2738, 168 L. Ed. 2d 508 (2007). | <sup>37</sup> Reardon, S. & Yun, J. (2005). *Integrating neighborhoods, segregating schools: The retreat from school desegregation in the south, 1990-2000*. In J. C. Boger & G. Orfield (Eds.), *School Resegregation: Must the south turn back?* University of North Carolina Press. |

<sup>38</sup> Long, C. *US Department of Agriculture, (2009)*. Correspondence to north carolina department of public instruction. | <sup>39</sup> Siegel-Hawley, G. (2011). *Is class working? Socioeconomic student assignment plans in Wake County, North Carolina and Cambridge, Massachusetts*. In Frankenberg, E. & DeBray, E. (Eds.), *Integrating schools in a changing society: New policies and legal options for a multicultural generation*. University of North Carolina Press.

## METHODS

### PHASE I: PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

The first step in our study was to build a baseline of data of the transportation services available at all North Carolina public charter schools. The research team distributed an online survey to the North Carolina public charter school email listserv. The survey contained 17 items varying between yes-no, rank-order, text-response and select-all responses (See Appendix B for Survey Protocol). We first asked schools to estimate what proportion of students use different methods to get to school (e.g. walking, parent drop off, public transportation, etc.). We then used a broad definition of “transportation support” inclusive of all possible transportation related resources – buses, carpools, student parking lots, bike racks, supervised car drop-off lines, etc. – to understand what, if any, transportation services were available to students at each school. Third, we asked about past, current, and future transportation plans to ascertain the changing demands of their student population; whether they had any partners (LEA, public or private transportation agencies) in providing transportation support; and how much they spend on transportation annually.

The key segment of the survey was the series of questions specifically aimed to gauge public charter schools’ experience with students for whom access to transportation had been a barrier to enrollment. The North Carolina public charter school law specifically prohibits transportation from being a barrier to access, though it does not require that public charter schools provide it. Later analysis of survey results will specify how public charter schools respond to this mandate. Respondents were specifically asked if “any child ever had challenges getting to [their] school” and “how [had they] helped students overcome challenges getting to school in the past.” Last, respondents were asked to rank-order the reasons why students had (if ever) declined lottery admission to their school. Inability to secure transportation was one of fifteen choices provided.

### PHASE II: INTERVIEWS WITH PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION

As a follow-up to the survey portion of data collection, the research team conducted interviews with seven (out of 15 that were contacted) schools that provide transportation. These schools were chosen for their geographic differences (urban vs. rural, state board region), demographic differences (racially diverse, high minority population), differences in size, and differences in their per-pupil funding levels. The schools we interviewed were: Arapahoe Charter School, Alpha Academy, Bethel Hill Charter School, Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge, CIS Academy (Communities in Schools of Robeson County), Maureen Joy Charter School and Rocky Mount Preparatory School. At each school we interviewed either the director or budget director. Each interview was conducted over the phone and semi-structured, with room to elaborate and discuss individual schools’ specific circumstances as

appropriate. Interviewees were asked why they had a bus transportation plan, the size of their fleet and transportation budget, and about the specific population of students who ride the bus vs. those who do not. Specific questions of interest to the researchers were:

1. Do you believe your local district would be interested in sharing buses with you?
2. Would you favor an amendment to the public charter school law requiring that all schools provide transportation?
3. What can the State Board of Education, Department of Public Instruction or the State Legislature do to make it easier for you to provide bus service?

## RESULTS & ANALYSIS

### PHASE I: PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

#### *Summary Statistics*

Of the 107 public charter schools operating in North Carolina in the 2012-2013 school year, 50 responded to our survey – a 46.73% response rate (See Appendix A for survey protocol). Out of the 50 schools that responded, 48% provided bus transportation. 44% had carpools, 14% had both buses and carpools, and 30% did not have either. Of the 28 schools reporting that no students rode school-sponsored buses in 2012-2013:

- 67% of students rode to school each day with their parents
- 2 schools plan to provide bus service in the next three years
- 6 schools do not plan to provide any transportation in the 3 years
- Four schools report providing free or reduced fare on public transit systems

In regards to partnerships, six out of the fifty participating schools report partnering with their local public transit authority to provide transportation. Seven schools reported contracting with local private companies, and only one, CIS Academy in Robeson County, reported partnering with their local district. When asked about instances where a child had challenges getting to school:

- 16 schools (32%) reported that they had never encountered that problem
- 22 schools (44%) helped arrange carpools with other families
- 9 schools (18%) rerouted buses
- 8 schools (16%) had staff pickup and drop-off students for free, and
- 12 schools described that they handled these students on a case-by-case basis

The 12 schools that reported handling these case-by-case scenarios provided a variety of innovative approaches. These solutions included: reimbursing parents for gas at the end of each month, having an annual parent-sponsored fundraiser to collect money to buy gas gift cards for families with need,

reducing before and after school care fees, and assigning an older student to chaperone the student with need on local public transit. Only one school reported using the McKinney-Vento law to partner with their local district to get homeless students to school.

Last, seventeen schools ranked the inability to secure transportation as a top 5 reason why students who were admitted through the lottery turned down their spot. This was the seventh-highest ranked answer, after chose to enroll in a

1. Traditional public school
2. Private school
3. Magnet school
4. Another public charter school
5. Home school

The sixth ranked reason for why students who were admitted through the lottery turned down their spot was because the student's sibling was not admitted. While the charter school law states that siblings of students enrolled at a public charter school can have a preference in the admission lottery, that priority only applies to siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the public charter school in a previous year.<sup>40</sup>

Transportation budgets for schools with buses ranged from \$2,000 to \$223,606.34. The researchers expect that this number varied both depending on the size of the school but significantly due to respondents' definition of "transportation budget" and whether they included personnel costs, which was discovered during the interview phase of the study. For instance, Rocky Mount Prep originally reported a budget of \$150,000 on their survey but when they included bus drivers and the transportation supervisor's salaries and benefits during their interview this amount rose to \$300,000.

Though not explicitly asked, the most often cited reason for not providing traditional bus transportation was funding and affordability. Many public charter schools report that they do not receive funding from state or local sources for transportation. In the words of one respondent: "[we] decided to put that money directly into classrooms." Four schools stated that they do not provide transportation in order to ensure parental involvement and commitment saying: "parents must commit to the mission of our school and be committed to getting their children here," and that being responsible for getting their children to school "shows their level of commitment to the school and the rigors of the education we provide." Many other schools cited parental involvement as why they arrange for carpools or as a way for parents to fulfill their monthly volunteer requirement.

## **PHASE II: INTERVIEWS WITH PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION**

Of the 50 respondents to the survey, our research team contacted 15 to discuss their transportation plans in more detail. Eight of those schools responded to the invitation and 7 were interviewed. The schools were: Arapahoe Charter School, Alpha Academy, Bethel Hill Charter School, Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge, CIS Academy (Communities in Schools of Robeson County), and Rocky Mount Preparatory School. These schools vary in their student demographics, geographic location (urban vs. rural, city vs. town), size of their student body, age, income diversity and in their state and local funding levels (See Appendix C). Overall the schools reported remarkably consistent information about why they provide transportation, which students are served by the buses, the challenges they face, and the recommendations they have for the state government.

### ***Why do you provide bus transportation when the law does not require it?***

All of the interviewees shared the belief that the students who are served by their buses would not otherwise be able to attend their school if not for the service. Many cited their mission statements and original charters as reasons why they provide transportation. These schools are all chartered to serve their immediate communities, many of which are economically depressed. Three of the schools have a specific mission to serve at-risk students. Many schools also cited financial viability as a reason why they provide transportation. They found that in their communities, often the more rural ones, they simply would not be able to fill seats at the school if they did not have buses. They described families as unable to afford to get their children to school because of the cost, time, and distance. For these schools, transportation was a basic necessity to promote access, without which they would not have the per-pupil funds to be able to afford to keep their doors open.

### ***Do you think your LEA would be interested in sharing buses? Would you?***

One of the more pointed questions the research team asked the schools was to describe their relationship with their district and give their opinion on whether they would be willing to share buses with them. All but one school described that they never explored the option, did not believe their district would be open to it, or knew their board would not accept the terms of the contract required. One school even went so far as to say that the relationship had been hostile enough over the years that they did not anticipate their district ever seeking to collaborate on a joint effort of any kind. One school described that while they were open to the idea, they believed the district was as strapped for resources as they were and probably could not

<sup>40</sup> § 115C-238.29F (g) (5)

afford the expense. One of the reasons the schools said they would like to partner with districts was because they simply would rather not handle transportation in-house. Many would also consider contracting with a private company, but the need for an on-campus liaison to parents and the lack of available service providers prevented them from pursuing that option. One school described that in order to secure transportation from the local district that they would have to have a contract and a fee set by the district, and their board had not desired to enter into that agreement.

The only school, both in the survey and interviews, that indicated that they partnered with their district to provide transportation was CIS Academy in Robeson County. Every other day, Robeson County Public Schools sends a fuel truck to the CIS Academy campus to fill their buses. CIS Academy reimburses the district for this service. From the interview with CIS Academy the research team learned that some of their board members also sit on the Robeson County school board, thus facilitating a cooperative relationship between the two.

***What can DPI, the State Board of Education, or state legislators do to make it easier for you to provide transportation?***

All of the schools we spoke with stressed the need for newer, more reliable, and more cost effective buses. Every school reported that they did not have the initial funds to buy new buses from the state or private sources. One school described that they had financed a few new buses that would be paid off in a couple years, but the vast majority had been bought used. Every school stated that the maintenance costs were much higher than the initial cost of a used bus: they required more gas because they were less efficient than newer models; they often broke down and would cause them to suspend service or rely on an even older backup bus; and that there were many unforeseen costs that continue to dig into their pockets. Many schools described how their buses “died” after a short period of time. One school described how they had bought a used bus the previous school year, only for it to break down a few weeks later. What had initially been a few thousand-dollar investment in the end cost them \$11,000 to fix.

The consistent theme across all of the interviews was the financial viability of a charter school transportation program. Many schools emphasized the perceived inequity in transportation funding as a root cause of their inability to afford better transportation (or any at all in the case of many of the schools that participated in the survey). Many surveyed schools believed they did not get any sort of transportation funds from the state. However among those interviewed, one school suggested they might be able to afford their extensive program because they simply have more dollars per student at their disposal. This interviewee advised that there ought to be a closer “look at the state and local funds that they get because that

varies from county to county... our county is a small rural, lower socioeconomic county so our per child local current expense dollars are less than what a lot of other schools get but our state dollars are more...”

***Do you support a state law that would require all public charter schools to provide transportation?***

When asked about a potential transportation mandate, not one school was in favor of the change. Interviewees described the potential law as an “unfunded mandate” that should only be taken on by public charters schools that deem it necessary according to their mission. One school stated that they would not “wish for other schools to have the burden [they] already have.” This question sparked some participants to offer other changes to the law including the transportation language itself and the funding mechanism behind it. In line with many of the comments made throughout all of the interviews, interviewees called for the state government to “strengthen the language of providing transportation to keep children from low-income and from rural areas from being left out of the opportunity to attend charter schools.” One director echoed this sentiment when he suggested that there ought to be a monetary penalty for failing to provide transportation because it is a direct issue of access and social justice. One director stated that they travel a great distance to ensure that transportation is not a barrier to students’ enrollment at their school; that they extend the life of buses that the districts and state have discarded and should be recognized for their efforts. The overwhelming consensus amongst all of the interviewees was that transportation cannot be separated from the fundamental issue of access and schools that do not provide transportation cannot meet a mission to serve low-income students.

## ENROLLMENT DATA ANALYSIS

The final step of our analysis was to compare enrollment data of low-income students, those who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL), between charter schools and their respective LEAs. Overall, the statewide average FRL student enrollment in public charter schools is 20.21 percentage points less than the state’s percentage of low-income students. Among the schools we surveyed, low-income students represented 35.02% (23.34% points below average) of the total population. Broken down that percentage was 45.71% (11.69% points below average) in schools with buses, 19.41% (37.99 points below average) in schools with carpools and 29.72% (27.68 points below average) in schools with neither. The lowest percentage was observed in schools that opened in the 2012-2013 school year, those who applied for charters after the cap was lifted, 18.18% (41.69 points below average). Among schools we interviewed, low-income students made up 68.35% of the student population, 10.95 percentage points above the state average.



## DISCUSSION

### TRANSPORTATION FUNDING NC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Overwhelmingly, responses to the survey and interviews referenced funding as the root issue in building capacity to provide transportation. Schools that provide transportation said they needed more funds to sustain the service. Schools that do not provide transportation said there were not enough funds in the first place. Many explicitly said that they do not get transportation funds. One interviewee who was aware that public charter schools do not receive capital lottery funds stated that if their school was eligible it would receive an additional \$30,000 per year, equivalent to newer and more reliable bus. Many cited the variable costs, especially in regards to maintenance and fuel, as a reason why budgeting for a transportation service is almost impossible. In some cases schools stated that they invested more than four times the purchase price into maintaining vehicles not including fuel or personnel costs. In this discussion the research team explains the transportation funding structure for public charter schools, offers recommendations on how to amend that structure, and points to future directions of research that should be considered to get a statewide picture on the effect of transportation on enrollment for all populations of students.

In the 2013 fiscal year the North Carolina state legislature appropriated a \$423,853,724 categorical allotment to public school transportation. That year the allotted average daily membership (the average total number of students in membership in traditional and public charter schools on which all state allocations are based - ADM) was 1,492,793 students. When divided by the ADM, the state grants approximately \$284 in transportation funds for every child; this amount is accounted for in allotments to LEAs as well as public charter schools. Based on these figures and the allotted ADM for all public charter schools in NC during the 2012-2013 school year, approximately \$13.9M in categorical transportation funds were transferred to North Carolina's 107 public charter schools. Every student is funded for transportation. Public charter schools are simply not mandated to provide transportation despite receiving equal funding.<sup>41</sup>

The categorical program for transportation is allocated equally between charter schools and LEAs. However, LEAs have a very simple advantage in their size to have the funds to create the infrastructure to support a large fleet of buses (maintenance garage, fuel trucks, etc.) There are a few pools of money that public charter schools do not have access to (capital, lottery and facilities funding) but the School Bus Replacement Program

is a special case. In the 2012-2013 fiscal/school year, the North Carolina State Legislature allocated \$36,851,619 to the School Bus Replacement Program. The way this program currently works is:

1. LEA buys a brand new bus from the state contract, \$86,007 in fiscal year 2013.
2. LEA runs bus only for to-from school transportation. If they use it for instructional activities, they reimburse the state on a per mile basis for that use.
3. LEA is not allowed to use bus for athletics or other non-instructional purposes.
4. When the bus hits 20 years of age or 250,000 miles, then the state will replace the bus.

Public charter schools have not been in a position to follow steps 1-3 and, therefore, have not been able to benefit from the program in step 4. All of the schools the researchers interviewed stressed the fact that they bought used buses, often the least expensive available, because of their inability to afford the upfront cost of slightly newer or brand new buses. Public charter schools overwhelmingly buy their buses from LEAs' surplus through the Department of Public Instruction website. While the \$86K price for a new bus can be financed over four years, the one school we spoke to that had bought a new bus before chose to buy it from a private company because the financing was more appealing. That school noted that their size afforded them that opportunity (over 1200 students with \$9 million budget). Schools not in a position to finance could buy 6 used buses for the amount spent in one year of financing. As the program stands now, by selling replacement eligible buses to public charter schools LEAs are both able to earn some of the money back that they allocated to public charter schools through the bus sale, and able maintain eligibility for a new bus from the state. From their descriptions of costs and capacity the researchers conclude the public charter schools are unable to share in the benefits of the School Bus Replacement program because they are functionally ineligible by virtue of the size of their budget.

In a legislative position paper published in February of 2012, the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association (NCPTA) made three recommendations to the state legislature in response to a pattern of funding cuts to public school transportation. The first of these recommendations was in response to the 2011-2012 budget bill that originally cut all funds for the School Bus Replacement program in SY 2012-2013. The funds were eventually restored in a later version of the budget passed after this position paper, but only after a \$20 million cut from the funding level of SY 2011-2012. In their position paper, the

**TABLE 1: 2012-2013 TRANSPORTATION ALLOCATIONS TO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS**

FUNDING LEVEL	Transportation Allocation	Average Daily Membership	Divided by Student
State	\$423,853,724	1,492,793	\$284
All Public Charter Schools	\$13,854,528	48,795	\$284

<sup>41</sup> NC Highlights 2013



NCPTA specifically references the retirement bus age as being one of the highest in the nation (at the time 20 years or 200K miles).<sup>42</sup> Given that many public charter schools that provide transportation buy their buses from districts' surplus retirement inventory, any extension of the 20 years/200K mile requirement would cause public charter schools to buy even older and potentially less reliable, "money guzzling" buses and deplete an already small market for surplus buses by keeping over 1,000 set for replacement in 2013-2014 on the road.<sup>43</sup> The changes made to the School Bus replacement legislation in the 2013-2014 legislative session have left Transportation directors across the state weary about the implications of keeping older buses on the road, despite incentives.<sup>44</sup> After compiling data from the 2013 fuel reimbursement survey administered by the DPI Transportation Section, we found that on average, public charter school buses were 7.05 years older than traditional public school buses.<sup>45</sup> Changing the requirement or cutting the budget for the School Bus Replacement program would only widen this age gap, the ramifications of which would cause the investment in surplus buses to be even more expensive given higher maintenance needs and lower fuel efficiency public charter schools have reportedly experienced with increased age.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Since granting access to capital and lottery funds would require an act by the state legislature, the recommendations we offer are for the LEAs and DPI. In late 2013 the North Carolina State Legislature moved forward with several changes to School Bus Replacement program eligibility. Among the changes was raising the mileage requirement to 250,000, removing all buses with less than 150,000 miles from eligibility if it has met the 20 year requirement, and requiring 300,000 miles to replace any bus less than 15 years old. Legislators made these changes to save the state \$185 million over the next five years, money that would have been spent replacing these buses. Now that LEAs are out this money, our research team offers an alternative path to replacement eligibility that could be of use not only to charter schools, but to the districts as well.

1. LEA makes an in-kind donation of a formerly replacement-eligible bus to a public charter school.
2. Public charter school runs bus only for to-from school transportation. If they use it for instructional activities, they reimburse the state on a per mile basis for that use.
3. Public charter school is not allowed to use it for athletics or other non-instructional purposes.
4. Public charter school extends the life of formerly replacement-eligible bus until it qualifies for replacement, per the recent changes.

5. State replaces bus.
6. LEA and public charter share bus on a route that serves both of their needs.

This model is mutually beneficial to the state, LEAs and the public charter schools. First, the LEAs benefit from saving the maintenance and storages costs by passing them along to the public charter schools. The public charter schools that were already anticipating that level of investment (had the bus been retired and sold as usual) benefit from saving the used price. This frees up cash to invest in the bus in the event of a costly breakdown (approximately \$3750<sup>46</sup>). The LEAs are not losing money from giving the bus away because the bus itself will still hit retirement. The public charter schools are not losing money because if and when the bus "dies" it can be replaced. LEAs are responsible for the upfront investment (buying the bus from the state) and public charter schools are responsible for the back end. The state still saves the money from delaying replacement, the goal of the new legislation. Finally, the LEAs and public charter schools are incentivized to cooperate through the deal and sharing the new bus later, perhaps leading to more efficiency of routes and resources, as well as benefiting the environment by having more children on fewer buses. The proposed alternative would save money for all parties involved all while increasing access to public charters schools for low-income students across the state.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While this report focused specifically on low-income students' access to public charter schools, next steps should include analyses of language minority and exceptional children's access. A particular emphasis could be on access for students with physical disabilities who would require accessible transportation vehicles. Only one out of the seven schools interviewed reported that they currently had an accessible vehicle. All of the schools stated that they would invest in the additional vehicle should a need arise but it is difficult to capture the extent to which parents of students with physical disabilities do not consider charter schools, with or without transportation, because of perceptions that they do not have the resources required to accommodate their children (accessible vehicles, wheelchair ramps, elevators). Another more difficult question is homeless students' access to public charter schools. While they are hard to identify, it may be interesting to find a proxy measure for students who are at risk of becoming homeless, perhaps students whose families report income below the federal poverty level since free and reduced price lunch eligibility is measured as more than that (135% and 185% respectively).

<sup>42</sup> McDowell, C., & Denton, G. S. North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association, (2012). Replacement of school buses. Retrieved from website: <http://www.ncbussafety.org/NCPTA/PositionPapers/index.html> | <sup>43</sup> McDowell, C., & Denton, G. S. North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association, (2012). Replacement of school buses. Retrieved from website: <http://www.ncbussafety.org/NCPTA/PositionPapers/index.html> | <sup>44</sup> SB 402/S.L. 2013-360 <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/Senate/PDF/S402v7.pdf> | <sup>45</sup> The data on which this table is based is self-report information from the 2013 Fuel Allotment Survey, administered by DPI to public charter schools that provide bus transportation in order to reimburse them for fuel costs based on the miles driven. Not all public charter schools that provide transportation completed the survey and not all schools that completed the survey provided complete data on the ages of all buses in their fleet. The calculations below are based on available model year data on 130 of the known 526 buses operated by NC public charter schools as reported to DPI in April 2013. | <sup>46</sup> Based on <http://ncschoolbussales.dpi.state.nc.us/> as of 7/12/13

Future studies of charter school transportation should dig deeper into the data collected to determine differences in transportation plans between rural and urban environments, high and low-wealth counties, small and large counties, areas with and without public transportation and the physical environment of the school e.g.: no sidewalks leading to school. The researchers would also like to analyze the budgets of individual public charter schools that do and do not provide transportation. Another worthy comparison is between charter schools within the same LEA to figure out where the difference in resources – the transportation budget at one school vs. that same amount of money at another – is invested e.g.: teacher salaries and extracurricular programs. It would be important to frame this analysis in dollars per student, for instance: “\$X out of the \$Y per pupil allotment is invested in the state retirement plan for teachers instead of a new bus.” A further step could compare performance indicators between the two groups as well as comparing students to their district-assigned schools. This could determine if there is an advantage to attending a charter school over the assigned traditional public school, and if that difference is larger or smaller when funds are invested in transportation vs. other resources. Finally, an analysis should be conducted that determines the real cost of buying used buses, including but not limited to: initial purchase, fuel, fuel efficiency (miles/gallon), routine maintenance, incidental maintenance, personnel, and personnel benefits (if applicable). As one school stated in their interview: “the transportation budget [was] equal to the per pupil allotment for 27 kids, thus making transportation worth the investment.” Framing transportation costs in per pupil allotments and determining what additional resources would be necessary, for example more teachers to accommodate the number of students it would take to pay for a transportation program.

## LIMITATIONS

Since public charter schools are by definition unique, it would be inappropriate to extrapolate any of these statistics to all of the public charter schools in the state. In order to do so, further study would have to include every single public charter school in its analysis. The richest data came from interviews with school administration. Given more time the researchers would have liked to conduct a more comprehensive study that included interviews with every public charter school director, and also include parents to gauge their impressions of these different approaches to transportation. This would be the best approach to understand why transportation is and is not offered and how successful the programs are on an individual basis. This comprehensive study may yield results to inform recommendations based on geographic location (urban vs. rural, SBE regions), demographic makeup (areas with high concentrations of Latino populations), or differences in the schools’ expressed mission (e.g. at risk vs. academically gifted students).

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall our study found that funding is a barrier to public charter schools’ capacity to provide free transportation to their students. The lack of transportation coincides with lower enrollment of low-income students. In the cases of the schools we interviewed, we found that in economically depressed areas, bus transportation is required to get the target population to school. In some cases, transportation is so important for the schools’ population that without it, one might not have enough funding to operate. The 20.21 point difference in proportions of low-income students between charter schools and their constituent districts is concerning, but the 41.69 point gap among post-cap charters is alarming. As we examine the current and future expansion of charter school options in North Carolina – a nearly 60% increase in three years – state lawmakers need to consider the impact that the transportation policy has on practical access to opportunity for all children. With these conclusions, the researchers beg the question: If transportation is a barrier to low-income students’ enrollment at the schools in our study such that they find it necessary to incur the cost – are schools without transportation inaccessible by default and as a result breaking the law? State lawmakers must consider whether they are upholding every child’s constitutional right to free public education when transportation is not always free.

As public charter options continue to multiply and the schools themselves have freedom to expand to as many grades as they want, we must consider the potential for a second system of schooling to emerge. The State Board of Education made the first step towards economic integration of public schools when it acknowledged resegregation in their vision statement, adopted in October of 2012. The next step is to create and implement a specific remedy that will bring about substantive and expedient change. Our recommendation to amend the school bus replacement program could be that step, not only to dismantle segregation, but also to institutionalize cooperation between the formerly rival traditional public and public charter schools.



## APPENDIX A: CHARTER SCHOOL STATUS REPORT 1997-2013

Year	Approved	Opened	Closed	Relinq w/o Opening	Total in Operation	Planning Allotted ADM	% of Total ADM	Total State Funds Allotted
1996-1997	34	0	0	0	0			
1997-1998	31	34	1	0	33	4106	0.3	16559947
1998-1999	28	26	3	0	56	5572	0.4	32143691
1999-2000	17	23	4	4	75	10257	0.8	50104210
2000-2001	9	15	4	3	86	14230	1.1	64213491
2001-2002	3	8	3	2	91	19492	1.5	77177902
2002-2003	2	5	3	1	93	19832	1.5	87233744
2003-2004	4	2	2	0	93	21578	1.6	94286726
2004-2005	2	4	0	0	97	24784	1.8	110888050
2005-2006	1	2	3	0	96	28733	2.1	132089910
2006-2007	7	1	4	0	93	29170	2.0	144299621
2007-2008	2	7	2	0	98	30892	2.1	169871326
2008-2009	0	2	3	0	97	34694	2.3	191751412
2009-2010	3	0	1	0	96	38449	2.6	187726898
2010-2011	1	3	0	0	99	41314	2.8	200058046
2011-2012	9	1	0	0	100	44829	3.0	228291552
2012-2013	24	8	1	1	107	48795	3.3	255396318
	177	141	34	11				

\*As of 1/17/2013: 26 schools have been recommended for approval by the Charter School Advisory Council to open in fall 2014, another 6 schools are recommended for reconsideration

## APPENDIX B: CHARTER SCHOOL SURVEY PROTOCOL

- Describe your mission statement.
- Describe your transportation plan and how it matches your mission.
- How do your students get to school? Estimate percentage of students who use each method.
  - Individual Parent Drop-Off
  - Charter School Operated Bus/Van-pool
  - Local District Operated Bus/Van-pool
  - Parent Operated Bus/Van-pool
  - Parent Organized Carpool
  - Charter School Organized Carpool
  - Public Transportation
  - Taxi
  - Walking
  - Biking
  - Other

\*Make sure the percentages above add up to 100
- If you answered "Other" please describe:
- Does your school offer transportation support of any kind? Check all that apply.
  - Bus
  - Van-pool
  - Carpool
  - Taxis
  - Crossing Guard
  - Bus Stop Monitors
  - Student Parking Lot
  - Supervised Car Drop-Off Line
  - Public Transit Passes/Discounted Fares
  - Bike Racks
  - Gas Reimbursement for Carpool Drivers
  - Insurance Reimbursement for Carpool Drivers
- Bus Chaperones (Other Than Drivers)
- Other
- We do not provide transportation support
- If you answered "Other" please describe:
- Did your school offer any kind of transportation support in the past of? Check all that apply.
  - Bus
  - Van-pool
  - Carpool
  - Taxis
  - Crossing Guard
  - Bus Stop Monitors
  - Student Parking Lot
  - Supervised Car Drop-Off Line
  - Public Transit Passes/Discounted Fares
  - Bike Racks
  - Gas Reimbursement for Carpool Drivers
  - Insurance Reimbursement for Carpool Drivers
  - Bus Chaperones (Other Than Drivers)
  - Other
  - We have never provided transportation support
- If you answered "Other" please describe:
- Does your school plan to offer transportation support of any kind in the next three years? Check all that apply.
  - Bus
  - Van-pool
  - Carpool
  - Taxis
  - Crossing Guard
  - Bus Stop Monitors
  - Student Parking Lot

- Supervised Car Drop-Off Line
  - Public Transit Passes/Discounted Fares
  - Bike Racks
  - Gas Reimbursement for Carpool Drivers
  - Insurance Reimbursement for Carpool Drivers
  - Bus Chaperones (Other Than Drivers)
  - Other
  - We do not plan to provide transportation support
10. Does your school work with any partners to provide transportation support?
- LEA
  - Private Transportation Company
  - Public Transportation Agency
  - Other
  - No
11. How much money does your school spend on transportation support per year?
12. Has any child ever had challenges getting to your school?
- Yes
  - No
13. How have you helped students overcome challenges getting to school in the past?
14. What do you think are the most common reasons families decline admission to your school? (Rank the following options in order of frequency)
- Accepted admission at another charter school
  - Accepted admission at a private school
  - Accepted admission at a magnet school
  - Parents decided to home school
  - Enrolled in traditional public school
  - Enrolled in virtual online school
  - Could not secure transportation to school
  - Parents cannot fulfill parental involvement expectations
  - Parent concerns about school diversity (e.g. race, ethnicity, language, religion, family structure, etc.)
  - Need for before and/or after care services
  - Siblings not admitted through lottery
  - School calendar and hours did not match other children's schools' calendar and hours
  - Disagree with school policies and/or procedures (e.g. homework, discipline, etc.)
  - No one has ever declined admission to our school
  - Other (please describe)
15. If you answered "Other" please describe:

## APPENDIX C: SCHOOL PROFILES (INTERVIEWS)

### ALPHA ACADEMY, FAYETTEVILLE NC

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 2000	90.59% Free & Reduced Lunch	Transportation Budget (gas): 3500/month
SBE Region IV	1.73% American Indian	42.35% Ridership
Cumberland County	1.08% Asian	1 LEA served by buses
City, Midsize	10.15% Hispanic	Own 4 Buses
School Wide Title I	59.61% Black	45 min one way commute
4 LEAs in student body	20.09% White	Community Pick-ups/Drop Offs
K-8, 425 Students	6.48% Multiracial	
	0.86% Pacific Islander	

### ARAPAHOE CHARTER SCHOOL, ARAPAHOE, NC

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 1997	64.92% Free & Reduced Lunch	Transportation Budget: \$233,606.34 (5.24%)
SBE Region II	0% American Indian	80.87% Ridership
Pamlico County	0.46% Asian	3 LEA served by buses
Rural, Distant	12.44% Hispanic	Own 17 Buses
School Wide Title I	8.29% Black	45 min. one-way commute
4 LEAs in student body	72.58% White	Door-to-door (Pamlico), Community Stops
K-9, 382 Students	5.76% Multiracial	
	0.46% Pacific Islander	

### BETHEL HILL CHARTER SCHOOL, ROXBORO, NC

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 2000	32.98%	Transportation Budget: ~\$120,000 (4%)
SBE Region V	1.33% American Indian	88.31% Ridership
Person County	0% Asian	1 LEA served by buses
Rural, Distant	4.77% Hispanic	Own 11 Buses
Targeted Assistance Title I	10.61% Black	45 min. one-way commute
4 LEAs in student body	81.43% White	Community Stops
K-6, 376 students	1.86% Multiracial	
	0% Pacific Islander	



**CARTER G. WOODSON SCHOOL OF CHALLENGE, WINSTON-SALEM, NC**

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 1997	94.8% Free & Reduced Lunch	Transportation Budget: ~\$100,000+ (15%)
SBE Region V	0.82% American Indian	84.84% Ridership
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County	0% Asian	1 LEA served by buses
City, Midsize	48.45% Hispanic	Own 8 Buses
School Wide Title I	48.66% Black	60 min one-way commute
K-12, 423 students	0.21% White	Community Stops
1 LEA in student body	1.86% Multiracial	
	0% Pacific Islander	

**CIS ACADEMY, PEMBROKE, NC**

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 1997	93.78% Free & Reduced Lunch	Transportation Budget :-\$106,000 (11%)
SBE Region IV	86.92% American Indian	~80% Ridership
Robeson County	0% Asian	2 LEAs served by buses
Town, Distant	0.93% Hispanic	Own 6 Buses
School Wide Title I	3.74% Black	1hr 45 min one-way max commute
6-8, 111 students	0.21% White	Community Stops
2 LEAs in student body	1.86% Multiracial	
	0% Pacific Islander	

**MAUREEN JOY CHARTER, DURHAM, NC**

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 1997	Free & Reduced Lunch	Transportation Budget:
SBE Region III	0.01% American Indian	% Ridership
Durham County	>0.01% Asian	1 LEA served by buses
City, Midsize	29% Hispanic	Own Buses
School Wide Title I	67% Black	min one-way commute
K-8, 346 students	1.6% White	Community Stops
2 LEAs in student body	1.6% Multiracial	
	0% Pacific Islander	

**ROCKY MOUNT PREPARATORY**

SCHOOL PROFILE	DEMOGRAPHICS	TRANSPORTATION DATA
Opened Fall 1997	74.92% Free & Reduced Lunch	Transportation Budget: ~\$300,000 (3%)
SBE Region III	3.84% American Indian	~65-70% Ridership
Nash-Rocky Mount County	1.2% Asian	3 LEAs served by buses
Rural, Fringe	3.93% Hispanic	Own 20 Buses
School Wide Title I	60.12% Black	45 min one-way commute
K-12, 1069 students	27.75% White	Community Stops
8 LEAs in student body	3.16% Multiracial	
	0% Pacific Islander	

## APPENDIX C: AVERAGE BUS AGE\*

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL NAME	AVERAGE BUS AGE	NUMBER OF BUSES $\geq$ 20 YEARS OLD	AVERAGE AGE OF BUSES FOR CORRESPONDING LEA
Clover Garden	18.75	3	9.61
Woods Charter	15	0	9.45
<b>Alpha Academy</b>	18	0	10.08
<b>Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge</b>	13.62	0	6.1
Arts Based Elementary	14	0	6.1
College Prep High Point	8	0	7.14
Children's Village Academy	24	2	9.92
Bear Grass	8	0	10.86
Sugar Creek Charter	5.92	0	4.78
<b>Rocky Mount Preparatory</b>	12.22	0	9.58
Wilmington Preparatory	19.5	1	8.71
Gaston College Prep	17.1	3	8.92
Orange Charter	21.33	2	9.13
<b>Bethel Hill Charter</b>	24.33	2	9.05
<b>CIS Academy</b>	20.5	1	10.63
Bethany Community Middle	19	0	9.36
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	18.07	1	10.02
Mountain Discovery Charter	15.67	1	8.62
Henderson Collegiate	15.5	0	9.44
Average (All participating schools*)	16.24	0	9.19

\*The data on which this table is based is self-report information from the 2013 Fuel Allotment Survey, administered by DPI to public charter schools that provide bus transportation in order to reimburse them for fuel costs based on the miles driven. Not all public charter schools that provide transportation completed the survey and not all schools that completed the survey provided complete data on the ages of all buses in their fleet. The calculations are based on available model year data on 130 of the known 526 buses operated by NC public charter schools as reported to DPI in April 2013.

## APPENDIX D: DIFFERENCES IN LOW-INCOME STUDENT PERCENTAGES BETWEEN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS AND CORRESPONDING LEAS<sup>\*47</sup>

SCHOOL NAME	% LOW-INCOME	LEA	% LOW-INCOME STUDENTS	DEVIATION FROM LEA (STATE*)
Alpha Academy	72.05	Cumberland	36.92	35.13
American Renaissance School	20.12	Iredell-Statesville	43.54	-23.42
Arapahoe Charter School	61.18	Pamlico	64.23	-3.05
ArtSpace Charter	30.83	Buncombe	56.24	-25.41
Bear Grass*	8.14	Martin	73.22	-65.08
Bethany Community Middle	5.56	Rockingham	60	-54.44
Bethel Hill Charter	34.62	Person	63.9	-29.28
Brevard Academy	31.79	Transylvania	58.82	-27.03
Bridges Charter School	81.63	Wilkes	65.93	15.7
Cape Fear Center for Inquiry	14.86	New	51.95	-37.09
Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge	84.62	Winston-Salem/	55.1	29.52
Casa Esperanza Montessori	10.12	Wake	38.57	-28.45
Charlotte Secondary	20	Charlotte	53.98	-33.98
Chatham Charter	15.86	Chatham	69.57	-53.71
Children's Village Academy	95.45	Lenoir	76.92	18.53

CIS Academy	80.53	Robeson	83.79	-3.26
Clover Garden	36.49	Alamance	55.62	-19.13
College Prep and Leadership Academy*	75.22	Guilford	58.69	16.53
Community School of Davidson	3.72	Charlotte	53.98	-50.26
Cornerstone Academy*	0	Guilford	58.69	-58.69
Crosscreek Charter School	20.79	Franklin	61.29	-40.5
Dillard Academy	97.37	Wayne	66.34	31.03
East Wake Academy	17.29	Wake	38.57	-21.28
Francine Delany New School	44.44	Asheville	50.8	-6.36
Gray Stone Day	2.86	Stanly	56.04	-53.18
Greensboro Academy	3.19	Guilford	58.69	-55.5
Guilford Preparatory Academy	91.46	Guilford	58.69	32.77
KIPP: Charlotte	71.08	Charlotte - Mecklenburg	53.98	17.1
Lake Norman Charter	1.12	Charlotte - Mecklenburg	53.98	-52.86
Lincoln Charter School	1.56	Lincoln	49.51	-47.95
Maureen Joy Charter School	86.97	Durham	63.56	23.41
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	2.59	Charlotte - Mecklenburg	53.98	-51.39
Millennium Charter Academy	15	Mount Airy City	60.94	-45.94
Mountain Island Charter	0.83	Gaston	98.19	-97.36
North East Carolina Prep*	35.46	Edgecombe	84.96	-49.5
Orange Charter	18.37	Orange	41.55	-23.18
PACE Academy	27.85	Chapel Hill - Carrboro	26.41	1.44
Piedmont Community Charter School, CFA	17.79	Gaston	98.19	-80.4
Quality Education Academy	99.32	Winston-Salem/	55.1	44.22
Raleigh Charter High School	0	Wake	38.57	-38.57
Research Triangle Charter	39.01	Durham	63.56	-24.55
Research Triangle High*	20	Durham	63.56	-43.56
Rocky Mount Preparatory	58.51	Nash - Rocky Mount	69.62	-11.11
Roxboro Community School	12.24	Person	63.9	-51.66
Success Institute Charter	83.33	Iredell-Statesville	43.54	39.79
The Learning Center	62.86	Cherokee	68.31	-5.45
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	8.08	Rutherford	70.6	-62.52
Triangle Math and Science Academy*	6.62	Wake	38.57	-31.95
Two Rivers Community School	20	Watauga	41.33	-21.33
Voyager Academy	5	Durham	63.56	-58.56
Water's Edge Village School*	0	Currituck	47.32	-47.32
Wilmington Preparatory Academy	67.05	New Hanover	51.95	15.1
Participating Schools' Average	35.02			-23.34
Participating Schools' w/Buses*	45.71			-11.69
Participating Schools' w/Carpools	19.41			-37.99
Participating Schools w/o Transportation	29.72			-27.68
Interviewed Schools Average	68.35			10.95
New 2012-2013 Schools Average	18.18			-41.69
Statewide Average	37.86		57.4	-20.21

\*Low-Income Data for the districts in SY 2012-2013 was not available at the time this report was published, researchers compared enrollment data for new schools to data from previous school year



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