

Catalyst Chicago
“Charters, comparison schools gaining ground”
By Staff
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<http://www.catalyst-chicago.org>

Popular with parents, charter schools have multiplied under Renaissance 2010. State law caps Chicago charters at 30, but the district’s 27 licensed operators are currently running 47 schools. President Bush is asking Congress to allow districts to usurp state limits on charters in cases where they can replace chronically failing schools that are slated for “restructuring.”

Chicago charters enroll a higher share of African-American students compared to the district average, and while they are public schools, they do have an advantage in that students must apply to be admitted. That means charters tend to attract more motivated students, which has an impact on student performance.

Even so, charters are outperforming neighborhood schools where their students would likely have landed if the charter didn’t exist. Graduation rates were especially high and dropout rates especially low, according to a Catalyst Chicago analysis of 2006 performance data. Gains on the ISAT, however, were smaller in charters than they were in the comparison schools.

CHARTERS V. COMPARISON SCHOOLS			
Top-performing charters on ISAT			
<small>(% meeting/exceeding standards)</small>			
	ISAT	Comp.	Difference
KIPP Ascend	74%	42%	+32
Shabazz	78%	48%	+30
LEARN	77%	47%	+30
Out-performed by regular schools			
<small>(% meeting/exceeding standards)</small>			
ASPIRA-Haugan	60%	69%	-9
CICS-Wrightwood	46%	54%	-8
Galapagos	43%	44%	-1