RAND EDUCATION

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
LAW AND BUSINESS
NATIONAL SECURITY
POPULATION AND AGING
PUBLIC SAFETY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: Jump to Page 1

Support RAND

Browse Reports & Bookstore

Make a charitable contribution

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore RAND Education

View document details

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see RAND Permissions.

This product is part of the RAND Corporation technical report series. Reports may include research findings on a specific topic that is limited in scope; present discussions of the methodology employed in research; provide literature reviews, survey instruments, modeling exercises, guidelines for practitioners and research professionals, and supporting documentation; or deliver preliminary findings. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure that they meet high standards for research quality and objectivity.

REPORT

The Transformation of a School System

Principal, Teacher, and Parent Perceptions of Charter and Traditional Schools in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Jennifer L. Steele, Georges Vernez,
Michael A. Gottfried, Michael Schwam-Baird

Prepared for the Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University

RAND EDUCATION

This work was prepared for the Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University. The research was conducted in RAND Education, a unit of the RAND Corporation.

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

RAND® is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2011 RAND Corporation

Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Copies may not be duplicated for commercial purposes. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please visit the RAND permissions page (http://www.rand.org/publications/permissions.html).

Published 2011 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
RAND URL: http://www.rand.org
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: order@rand.org

Preface

When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, it brought massive disruption to a school system that was already struggling with poor student outcomes and financial mismanagement. The storm left behind approximately $800 million in school property damages, in addition to displacing 64,000 students from the public school system operated by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB). Given the scale of the destruction, Hurricane Katrina also set the stage for a major educational transformation. Since the storm, the city of New Orleans has drastically reformed its public education system. This reform initiative, unprecedented in the United States in its scope and pace, entirely dismantled a struggling public school system and replaced it with a decentralized, choice-based system of both charter and district-run schools. As a consequence, the landscape of schooling in the city has changed dramatically, presenting both new choices and new challenges for the city's educators, families, and children.

In light of these changes, Tulane University's Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives asked RAND to partner with it in using a U.S. Department of Education grant to understand the differences in policies and practices between traditional and charter schools in post-Katrina New Orleans. This two-year study, conducted between October 2008 and September 2010, examined several aspects of school policies and practices in the city, including governance and operations, educational contexts, educator quality and mobility, and parental choice and involvement. This study includes the results of surveys administered to principals, teachers, and parents in both traditional and charter schools in New Orleans during the 2008–09 academic year. The result of the study should interest policymakers, practitioners, and researchers involved in designing, implementing, or studying urban school district reform.

This research was conducted by RAND Education, a unit of the RAND Corporation, in collaboration with the Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives.

Contents

Preface iii
Figures vii
Tables ix
Summary xiii
Acknowledgments xxiii
Abbreviations xxv

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction 1
Research Context 1
Brief Summary of the Evidence on Charter Schools 3
Purpose and Organization of This Report 5

CHAPTER TWO
Research Design 9
Data Sources 9
Survey Sample and Administration 9
Survey Response Sample 10
School Participation Patterns 12
Survey Response Patterns 14
School Characteristics and Performance Data 17
Data Analysis 18
Limitations of the Study 19

CHAPTER THREE
Governance and Operations 21
Autonomy 21
Governance and Opportunities for Planning 22
Operational Services 23
Student Support Services 24

CHAPTER FOUR
Educational Contexts 25
Allocation of Instructional Time 25
Additional Academic Offerings 26
School Climate 28

Classroom Environment and Practices 29
Homework 31
Use of Test Results 32
Challenges to Improving Student Performance 33

CHAPTER FIVE
Educator Qualifications and Mobility 39
Staffing Practices 39
Hiring Needs and Priorities 40
Teacher Qualifications and Experience 41
Salaries and Financial Incentives 44
Professional Development 45
Teacher Mobility 49
Principals' Background and Qualifications 50
Principals' Professional Development 50

CHAPTER SIX
Parental Choice and Involvement 53
Application and Admission Requirements 53
Parental Choice 55
Parents' Choice Rationales 57
School Communication and Outreach 58
Parental Involvement 63
Parental Satisfaction 64

CHAPTER SEVEN
School Performance in Relation to School Characteristics 67
School Accountability in Louisiana 67
School Performance in the Survey Year 69
School Performance Growth in the Survey Year 70
Predicting School Performance Levels 71
Predicting School Performance Growth 74
Do Teacher Practices and Experiences Help Explain School Performance Growth? 74

CHAPTER EIGHT
Conclusion 79
Review of Findings 79
Future Directions 81

APPENDIX
A. Statistical Models Used in the Analyses 83
B. 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals 85
C. 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers 107
D. 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents 125

References 135

Figures

2.1. Overlap of Schools Represented Among Principal, Teacher, and Parent Survey Respondents 11
4.1. Number of Hours of Instruction per Week in Grade 4, by Academic Subject and School Type 26
4.2. Principals Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance 34
4.3. Teachers Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance 35
4.4. Charter School Principals and Teachers Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance in the Schools They Have in Common 36
4.5. Traditional School Principals and Teachers Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance in the Schools They Have in Common 37
7.1. Distribution of School Performance Scores in New Orleans Schools, by School Type and District, for Base Year 2008–09 70
7.2. Mean Change in School Performance Scores from the Base 2007–08 Score to the Growth 2008–09 Score, by School Type and District 71

Tables

1.1. Number of New Orleans Public Schools, by District and School Type, as of Spring 2010 2
2.1. Response Rates (and Raw Numbers of Respondents) to Principal, Teacher, and Parent Surveys 10
2.2. Characteristics of Schools Represented by Principal Respondents and Nonrespondents, by School Type 12
2.3. Characteristics of Schools That Did and Did Not Provide Teacher Rosters, by School Type 13
2.4. Characteristics of Schools That Did and Did Not Provide Parent Rosters, by School Type 14
2.5. School Characteristics of Teacher Survey Respondents and Nonrespondents, by School Type 15
2.6. School Characteristics of Parent Survey Respondents and Nonrespondents, by School Type 16
2.7. Self-Reported Mean Demographic Characteristics of Parent Survey Respondents and Average Student Demographics in New Orleans During the Survey Year, 2008–09, by School Type 17
3.1. Principals' Mean Levels of Control Over and Perceived Importance of Controlling Various Policy Domains, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type 21
3.2. School Service Providers, by Service Category and School Type 23
3.3. Number of Schools That Offered Student Support Services, by Service Type, School Type, and Provider 24
4.1. Schools That Provided Additional Academic Programs, by Program Type and School Type 27
4.2 Parents Who Reported That Their Child's School Offered Before- or After-School Programs and Student Participation in These Programs, by Program Type and School Type 27
4.3. Teachers' Assessment of School Climate, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type 28
4.4. Principal-Reported Indicators of Classroom Assignment Practices, by School Type 29
4.5. Teacher-Reported Indicators of Classroom Environment and Practices, by School Type 29
4.6. Teacher-Reported Practices on Homework Assignments and Help, by School Type 31
4.7. Parent-Reported Practices on Homework Assignments and Help, by School Type 32
4.8. Teacher-Reported Access to and Use of Test Score Data, by School Type 33
5.1. 2008–09 Newly Hired Teachers from Each Source, by School Type 40
5.2. Principals' Mean Ratings of the Importance of Various Teacher Criteria in Hiring Decisions, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type 41

5.3. Teachers Who Reported Receiving Each Type of Teacher Preparation, by School Type 42
5.4. Highest Degrees Held by Teachers in Charter and Traditional Schools, by School Type 43
5.5. Teachers Who Reported Holding a Bachelor's Degree or Higher in the Listed Subjects, by School Type 43
5.6. Teachers Who Reported That Particular Financial Incentives Were Offered at Their Schools and, If Offered, Whether They Expected to Receive Such Incentives in the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type 44
5.7. Reported Hours of Teacher Professional Development During Summer 2008 and the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type 46
5.8. Teachers Who Participated in Each Type of Professional Development and Mean Usefulness Ratings by Participants, Based on a Three-Point Scale, by School Type 47
5.9. Teachers Who Reported That Particular Types of Professional Development Opportunities Were Offered at Their Schools and, If Offered, Whether They Expected to Participate in the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type 48
5.10. Teacher-Reported Availability of and Satisfaction with Various Sources of Support, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type 48
5.11. Principal-Reported Hours of Principal Professional Development During Summer 2008 and the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type 51
6.1. Mean Size of Student Applicant Pools and Admission, Enrollment, and Transfer Rates in the 2008–09 School Year as Reported by Charter and Traditional School Principals, by School Type 53
6.2. Principals Who Noted That Their Schools Requested the Listed Data Element in the Admissions Process, and of Those Schools, the Percentage Who Use the Data Elements to Establish Admission Eligibility, by School Type 54
6.3. Schools That Required Families' Adherence to Schoolwide Policies, by District and School Type 55
6.4. Parent-Reported Reasons for Enrolling a Child in His or Her Current School, by School Type 57
6.5. Ways in Which Charter and Traditional School Principals Reportedly Advertised Their Schools to Parents, by School Type 59
6.6. Ways in Which Parents Said They First Learned About Their Child's Current School, by School Type 60
6.7. Charter and Traditional School Principals Who Reported Using Each Strategy to Promote Parent Involvement, by School Type 61
6.8. Parental Satisfaction with Various Types of School Services, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type 63
6.9. Parent-Reported Satisfaction with Various Aspects of Child's School, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type 65
7.1. Descriptive Statistics for New Orleans Schools in the Targeted Survey Sample as of Spring 2009 (Categorical Variables) 68
7.2. Descriptive Statistics for New Orleans Schools in the Targeted Survey Sample as of Spring 2009 (Continuous Variables) 69
7.3. Coefficients (and Standard Errors) from Regression Models Predicting Static School Performance Using Base 2008–09 School Performance Scores 72
7.4. Coefficients (and Standard Errors) from Regression Models Predicting the Change in School Performance Score from the Base 2007–08 Score to the Growth 2008–09 Score 73

7.5. Descriptive Statistics for New Orleans Schools Included in the Analysis of School Performance and Teacher Survey Data 75
7.6. Coefficients (and Standard Errors) from Regression Models Predicting the Change in School Performance Score from the Base 2007–08 Score to the Growth 2008–09 Score, as a Function of School Characteristics and Teacher Survey Responses 76

Summary

Context

The devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 triggered a dramatic overhaul of the public education system in New Orleans, Louisiana. Two months after the hurricane, in November 2005, the state of Louisiana took over nearly all of the district's schools and began developing a radically different system of schools featuring charter schools and parental choice. Before Katrina, the New Orleans Public School District was one of the nation's most beleaguered districts, and only a handful of charter schools existed in the city (Boston Consulting Group, 2007). As of the spring of 2010, however, the city was home to 62 charter schools, which jointly served 61 percent of its more than 38,000 public school students (Cowen Institute, 2010; New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010). New Orleans is the first city in the nation to implement a charter-school model at this scale (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010a).

Administrative authority over public schools in the city is now primarily divided between two separate districts. The largest is the Recovery School District (RSD), which is overseen by the state and includes 71 of the city's 90 public schools. The other district is run by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB). It is a remnant of the pre-Katrina school district and oversees 17 schools that were not taken over by the RSD because of low performance. Schools run by the OPSB thus tend to be among the city's highest-performing schools and, as was true before the storm, a subset are selective admission schools (Boston Consulting Group, 2007).

Consistent with the state's mission to decentralize public education in New Orleans and introduce competition, both the RSD and the OPSB operate a set of traditional schools and oversee their own portfolios of charter schools. In addition, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) oversees two schools in the city, both of which are charter schools. Each New Orleans charter school, in turn, is managed day to day by one of more than 30 charter operating organizations (Save Our Schools NOLA, 2008).

Because New Orleans is the first city in the nation to carry out a charter-based reform at this scale, its experiences have direct implications not only for the future of the city's public education system but also for the national conversation about charter schools and choice. Despite the growing prevalence of charter schools nationally during the past two decades, these schools remain controversial (Henig, 2008). Advocates argue that charter schools' freedom from administrative bureaucracy allows innovation to flourish and that the market and policy pressure facing schools in a system of choice can ultimately raise the quality of schooling options for all students (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Hill and Celio, 1998; Lake, 2010). Meanwhile, critics worry that charter schools siphon critical funds and the most motivated families

away from traditional public schools. This concern has been voiced with particular vigor in New Orleans, where the traditional schools run by the RSD are sometimes viewed as schools of last resort in comparison to RSD charter schools and to OPSB charter and traditional schools (Cowen Institute, 2008).[1] RSD traditional schools also serve a more racially segregated and economically disadvantaged population of students than do other schools in the city (Institute on Race and Poverty, 2010).

Research on the effectiveness of charter schools relative to traditional schools in raising student achievement and attainment has shown mixed effects as well as considerable variation among charter schools (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2009; Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2009; Hoxby and Rockoff, 2004; Lake, 2008; Zimmer et al., 2009). In addition, there has been only limited research on how charter schools differ from their traditional school counterparts in terms of operations, instruction, personnel, and relationships to students' families (Gross and Pochop, 2008; National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010b). Consequently, the aim of this study was to shed additional light on prominent local and national questions about how charter school practices differ from those of their traditional school counterparts. However, it is important to clarify that the noncharter schools in this study, which we refer to as "traditional schools," operate alongside their charter school counterparts in a post-Katrina system of citywide school choice and in the absence of collective bargaining. This context is very different from the pre-Katrina system of neighborhood-based school assignments within a single district in which teachers maintained collective bargaining rights (Boston Consulting Group, 2007). Moreover, because the RSD and OPSB districts oversee both charter and noncharter schools, and some in the OPSB maintain selective admission policies, our examination of charter and "traditional" schools post-Katrina represents merely one way of examining a complex and multifaceted "system of schools" (Cowen Institute, 2008, p. 3). For this reason, we report in many cases on supplemental findings disaggregated by both district (RSD versus OPSB) and type (charter versus traditional), and we acknowledge that the traditional schools we refer to in post-Katrina New Orleans operate within a decidedly nontraditional context.

The complex assortment of schools and school operators in post-Katrina New Orleans presents an unusual opportunity for researchers to examine the operational, instructional, human capital, and family outreach policies and practices of charter and traditional schools. Seeing this, Tulane University's Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives asked RAND to partner with it in using a U.S. Department of Education grant to examine differences in policies and practices between charter and traditional schools in post-Katrina New Orleans. RAND and the Cowen Institute then collaborated to design and administer a set of surveys directly to principals, teachers, and parents in both traditional and charter schools in the city.

In this technical report, we examine charter and traditional schools' policies and practices in four central dimensions of interest: governance and operations, educational contexts, educator quality and mobility, and parents' choice of and involvement in their children's schools. The four dimensions represent prominent local policy concerns, including teacher qualifications and parental access and choice, as well as topics of school governance and instructional contexts that have been identified by charter school research and theory as warranting additional understanding. A fifth topic provides a descriptive analysis of the relationship between school

[1] As noted above, the schools allowed to remain in the OPSB after the storm were already the city's highest performing. Several were selective admission schools, and some OPSB charter schools retain that status today (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).

characteristics and schools' academic performance during the survey year, 2008–09. Our specific research questions were as follows:

1. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ in terms of their governance and organizational practices, as reported by principals and teachers?
2. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ with regard to their educational contexts, including instructional practices and learning environments, as described by principals, teachers, and parents?
3. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ in terms of the qualifications and mobility of their teachers and principals, as reported by those individuals?
4. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ with regard to their efforts to engage parents and in terms of parents' experiences with the schools, as described by principals, teachers, and parents?
5. How do charter and traditional schools differ in terms of school performance and performance growth, and what, if any, observable school characteristics or practices are associated with these differences?

Methods and Limitations

For this study, we sent surveys to the principals of 75 of the 86 public schools operational in school year 2008–09, 42 in charter and 33 in traditional, district-run schools. We excluded schools that were newly constituted in 2008–09 and consisted of only a few grades. In addition, we surveyed a random sample of 436 teachers of elementary education, secondary English/language arts, and secondary mathematics, stratified by grade level and subject area, and representing the 59 schools that provided teacher rosters from which we could draw the random sample. We also sent parent surveys to 411 parents from the 55 schools that provided mailing addresses for the randomly drawn sample or agreed to distribute the surveys based on our instructions for drawing a random sample.

Survey questionnaires were mailed to principals and to sampled teachers and parents in the spring of 2009. The principal survey asked about enrollment, admission policies, academic programs, governance, accountability, teachers, professional development, operations, and school finance. The teacher survey asked about school governance, instructional feedback, professional development, instructional methods, parent communications and involvement, and teachers' career plans and professional backgrounds. The parent survey inquired about parents' choice of school, the school's academic programs, school communications, parent involvement, and parents' demographic backgrounds. Follow-up surveys, emails, and (in some cases) phone calls were sent to nonrespondents. Final response rates were approximately 32 percent for principals, 52 percent for teachers, and 36 percent for parents. Of 75 schools targeted by the surveys, principal survey respondents represented 24 schools (10 charter and 14 traditional), teacher survey respondents represented 57 schools (36 charter and 21 traditional), and parent survey respondents represented 51 schools (30 charter and 21 traditional). Overlap among schools represented by principal, teacher, and parent respondents was imperfect, with 32 of the 75 targeted schools represented by both teacher and parent respondents, and only 15 of 75 targeted schools represented in all three survey samples.

Survey data were tabulated using Stata 10.0 (StataCorp, 2007), disaggregated by charter versus traditional school type and, in some cases, also by district (OPSB or BESE versus RSD). Teachers' and parents' responses were adjusted to reflect the nesting of individuals within schools. In addition, we used ordinary least squares and multilevel regression analyses to describe the relationship between aggregate school performance in the survey year and school characteristics, including but not limited to school characteristics reported on the teacher surveys.

Most of the schools that participated in the teacher and parent surveys were represented by at least one respondent (97 percent of schools participating in the teacher surveys and 93 percent of those participating in the parent survey, respectively), and these represent 76 percent and 73 percent, respectively, of the 75 targeted schools. However, overall response rates were lower than anticipated. Because respondents within a school may differ systematically from nonrespondents, nonresponse bias is a possible threat to the interpretation of data from these surveys. Moreover, because schools willing to participate in the surveys may differ from those not willing to do so, teachers' and parents' survey responses cannot be generalized to all of the targeted schools. Also, because we received principal survey responses from only 32 percent of the 75 targeted schools, it is not possible to generalize those results to other charter and traditional schools in the city.

Other limitations associated with reliance on survey data include imprecision in participants' responses, as well as social desirability bias, although participants were assured that their responses would be treated as confidential. In addition, it is important to emphasize that our results are descriptive. Because differences among schools in terms of their survey results or their performance data may be due to unmeasured characteristics, there is no basis for drawing causal inferences about any of the relationships described in the report. Another critical limitation is that the survey results were captured at a single point in time so may not reflect more recent developments in the city's schools. Moreover, because we do not have parallel survey data from the years before Hurricane Katrina, our data do not permit even descriptive conclusions about how the schools in New Orleans have changed since the time before the storm or as a result of the citywide reform. As noted above, what is clear is that New Orleans schools now function in a dynamic, choice-based context, which means that even those schools we refer to in this report as "traditional" are operating within a nontraditional and swiftly changing public education environment.

Summary of Findings

The survey responses revealed both similarities and differences by school type (charter versus traditional) in schools' practices and parents' experiences. The following summary highlights key findings in each of our four domains of interest—governance and operations, educational contexts, educator quality and mobility, and parental choice and involvement. It also describes key findings about observed relationships between particular school characteristics and school performance.

Governance and Operations

As the largely independent nature of charter schools would suggest, principals reported having greater control over many leadership and decisionmaking practices of their schools, including

instructional practices, staff hiring and discipline, student assessments, budgeting, and curriculum. Nevertheless, both charter and traditional school principals placed similar ratings of importance on each of these categories.

The governance of charter and traditional schools where principals completed surveys appeared similar in many regards.

- Principals at both types of schools reported having steering committees that met about weekly or monthly, and teachers in both types of schools also reported meeting regularly to discuss issues relating to student assessments, instruction, and discipline.
- According to principal respondents, charter and traditional schools differed in terms of the providers of a variety of their operational services. In traditional schools, such functions as transportation, food services, and facility maintenance were reportedly carried out by the district, whereas the majority of responding charter school principals said that they contracted out for such services.
- Similarly, although most responding charter and traditional school principals reported that their schools offered nursing, social work, counseling, and speech therapy services, 10 to 30 percent of charter school principals reported contracting for such services, whereas none of the traditional school principals reported using contractors.

In short, the governance and operational practices of charter and traditional schools in the response samples differed with regard to schools' autonomy and provision of services, but we found little evidence that they differed markedly in school-level leadership and decision-making practices.

Educational Contexts

When we examined the educational contexts of charter and traditional schools in New Orleans, including their allocation of instructional time, course offerings and programs, and instructional practices, we again found few meaningful differences between the practices reported by principals, teachers, and to some extent, parents. Key findings were as follows:

- According to principals, neither the length of the school year or school day was notably different between charter and traditional schools. Specifically, the average reported school year length was 177 days in the former and 179 in the latter, and the average school day was reportedly 7.1 hours in the former and 7.6 in the latter.
- Teachers at charter schools reported stronger agreement than traditional school teachers with the statement that it was easy to maintain discipline at their schools (2.5 versus 1.9 on a scale of 1 to 4), though their responses were similar in terms of other school climate dimensions, such as the school having a strong sense of mission.
- Teachers in charter and traditional schools reported almost no meaningful differences in terms of their instructional practices. For instance, teachers in charter and traditional schools reported devoting an almost identical share of instructional time to activities that promoted higher-order thinking skills (about 30 percent of instructional time), were based on real-life situations (about 23 percent), required students to work independently (about 21 percent), and involved thematic instruction (about 12 percent).

The most critical differences that emerged between charter and traditional schools in terms of educational contexts involved educators' perceived challenges to improving student achievement. Principal and teacher respondents rated all 12 potential challenges presented to them (most notably, parent involvement, student discipline, and student transfers) as more serious in traditional schools than in charter schools, with the exception of facilities, which was rated as the most prominent challenge among charter school principals.

Educator Qualifications and Mobility

Our inquiry into educator qualifications and mobility examined the preparation, training, professional development experiences, and career plans of the surveyed teachers and principals. Key findings included the following:

- Among responding principals, those at charter schools reported being somewhat more likely than their traditional school counterparts to have hired a teacher directly from a traditional licensure program (16 percent versus 7 percent of their newly hired teachers, respectively), whereas charter school principals were reportedly less likely than their traditional school counterparts to have hired a teacher from the alternative route program Teach for America. However, this counterintuitive finding is most prominent in the RSD, where the district maintained a nonbinding contract with Teach for America stating that it planned to hire a certain number of its corps members each year (Carr, 2009a).
- Charter and traditional school principals gave similar ratings of teachers they had hired from traditional versus alternative licensure programs, rating the former at 3.3 on a satisfaction scale of 1 to 4, versus 2.8 for Teach for America Teachers.
- Charter and traditional school principals described encountering similar hiring difficulties, which were reportedly greatest in science, foreign languages, and mathematics, with 25, 21, and 17 percent of respondents reporting difficulties in each of these subjects, respectively.
- Teachers also reported a similar distribution of preparation routes and educational attainment levels, regardless of whether they worked in charter or traditional schools. The largest proportion of respondents (69 percent in charter schools and 73 percent in traditional schools) said that they held only a bachelor's degree.
- Traditional school teachers reported having about 3.3 more years of experience than their charter school counterparts, at 13 versus 9.7 years, on average. This difference in average experience level also accounted for a slightly higher average salary level reported by traditional school teacher respondents than their charter school counterparts.
- Charter school teachers reported receiving about 21 fewer hours, on average, of professional development than their traditional school counterparts, at 70 versus 91 hours during the school year and preceding summer.
- Charter and traditional school principals reported that the proportion of teachers returning to the school from the prior year was quite high, at 87 and 81 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, about 74 percent of teachers reported that they planned to return to their current schools the following year, and the difference between charter and traditional schools was not substantively noteworthy.
- Two-thirds of responding charter school principals and all responding traditional school principals reported holding an administrative credential.

Taken together, the survey results suggest that charter and traditional schools did not differ notably in terms of their human resource policies and practices, including their hiring priorities and needs, incentive structures, or professional development offerings. Teachers' anticipated career plans also did not differ notably between charter and traditional schools.

Parental Choice and Involvement

Finally, the surveys asked principals, teachers, and parents about their schools' recruitment, admissions, and parental outreach practices, and they asked parents specifically about their experiences in an environment of citywide school choice. Key findings were as follows:

- According to principals' reports, charter schools had larger applicant pools, lower acceptance rates, and lower rates of transfer into and out of the schools during the academic year than their traditional school counterparts. A likely explanation for the lower acceptance rates is that charter schools are permitted to cap their enrollments.
- The reasons parents gave for their choice of schools differed markedly between charter and traditional schools. When parents were asked why they chose their child's current school, the most common reason given by charter school respondents was the school's academic curriculum, followed by its record of student achievement and its attendance and discipline policies (chosen by 37 percent, 32 percent, and 27 percent, respectively). In contrast, the most common reason given by traditional school respondents was that the school provided transportation; the next reasons given were that the child could walk to school or use public transportation and the sense that it was the only school available to them (chosen by 43 percent, 30 percent, and 19 percent, respectively).
- Parents whose children attended charter schools reported higher satisfaction with their child's school overall and with several facets of the school, including its location, safety, educational quality, and discipline, as well as its communication about community services and volunteer opportunities, special education services, and gifted and talented education services. For instance, on a scale of 1 to 4, the average rating of educational quality was 3.6 among charter school parents and only 3.0 among traditional school parents. In addition, 41 percent of charter school parents gave their child's school a letter grade of A on a scale of A to F, as opposed to only 18 percent of traditional school parents.

In short, although survey responses showed few notable differences between charter and traditional schools with regard to their governance practices, educational and instructional contexts, and human resource practices, we found numerous differences in terms of the perceptions and experiences of charter and traditional school parents. Charter school parents perceived a greater sense of choice and greater satisfaction with their children's schools, on average, than their counterparts in traditional schools.

School Performance in Relation to School Characteristics

Our analysis of school performance made use of the School Performance Scores (SPS) generated annually by the state of Louisiana, which are based on student test scores, dropout/graduation rates, and attendance. It focused on the 75 established New Orleans schools included in our 2008–09 target survey sample, and it used school data from the 2008–09 academic year, including baseline and end-of-year SPS scores. In examining the baseline scores, we estimated that RSD schools markedly underperformed in comparison to OPSB and BESE schools, even

though the relationship between charter status and student achievement was positive only in the RSD and only when student demographics, school grade levels, and a school's admission policies (selective or open) were held constant.[2] However, none of these characteristics were statistically significant predictors of growth from baseline to the end-of-year scores.[3] Moreover, information we gathered from the teacher surveys about their respective schools' policies, teachers, and instruction—including professional development, class size, instructional practices, parent outreach, teacher experience, and teacher mobility plans—did not predict growth in a school's SPS among the schools represented in the teacher survey sample.[4]

Conclusions

New Orleans has been on the cutting edge of choice-based school reform efforts in the years since Hurricane Katrina struck the city. However, even six years after the hurricane, questions remain about the variation in schools' policies and practices in the wake of the reform and about parents' experiences in an environment of school choice. This study set out to address some of those questions through surveys of principals, teachers, and parents. In particular, we sought to uncover similarities and differences between charter and traditional schools with regard to the schools' governance and operational practices, educational contexts, educator qualifications and mobility, and parents' perceptions and experiences.

We found few differences between charter and traditional schools in terms of their school-based leadership practices, though the principals of charter schools did report having more autonomy than their traditional school counterparts. They also reported contracting out for some services, such as transportation, food services, and facilities maintenance, that were provided by the district in traditional schools.

Regarding educational contexts, principals and teachers again reported similar instructional practices regardless of whether they worked in charter or traditional schools, though teachers and principals in traditional schools reported facing greater challenges than their charter school counterparts, particularly in terms of parent involvement, student discipline, and student transfers. There were also few reported differences between charter and traditional schools in terms of their hiring priorities and needs, incentive structures, or professional development offerings. A key area in which differences did emerge, however, involved the perceptions and experiences of parents. Parents of students in charter schools perceived a greater sense of choice and greater satisfaction with their children's schools, on average, than their counterparts in traditional schools.

Moreover, charter school parents in the sample and charter school students in the city appeared more advantaged, on average, than their traditional school counterparts. Thus, one possible explanation for the difference in satisfaction and challenges may involve systematic differences between families enrolling their children in charter and traditional schools. Given that charter school parents who responded to the survey reported having a greater sense of choice than their traditional school counterparts, a lingering policy question is whether the

---

[2] This analysis was limited to the 71 schools in the targeted sample for which baseline scores were available.

[3] Based on the 53 schools for which SPS growth scores were available.

[4] Based on 43 schools with teacher survey data and SPS growth scores available.

system of citywide choice is equally accessible and navigable by all citizens of New Orleans. The parent responses we received would suggest that it may not be.

The fact that information about the policies and practices of New Orleans schools has not previously been available in the post-Katrina context also suggests the need for more mechanisms by which charter and traditional schools can share best practices and learn from their peers' innovations. Finally, we would encourage the development of stronger ties between the research and practice communities in New Orleans. Strengthened ties and coordinated data collection efforts may help fortify future efforts to inform policymakers and families about the range of school policies and practices under way in the city.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the Cowen Institute at Tulane University, the University of New Orleans, and the U.S. Department of Education for the funding that supported this research effort. We are also grateful to Orleans Parish Public Schools Superintendent Darryl Kilbert for his endorsement of the study. This report would not have been possible without the efforts of Melissa Bradley, Survey Director at RAND, who helped develop and pilot-test the survey and who directed its administration in the field. The study also benefitted from statistical consultancy by Lou Mariano at RAND, from research assistance by Laura Mogg, Colleen Murray, Courtney Massaro, and Russell Quiniola at the Cowen Institute and from Brian McInnis at RAND, and from administrative assistance by Louis Ramirez, Luetta Pope, and Catherine Piacente at RAND. In addition, this report benefitted from peer reviews by Kenneth Wong, Annenberg Chair for Education Policy at Brown University, and by John Pane, Senior Information Scientist at RAND, from a quality assurance review by Cathleen Stasz, Senior Behavioral Scientist at RAND, and from editing by Patricia Bedrosian, Senior Research Editor at RAND. It further benefitted from feedback from Debra Vaughn, Assistant Director for Research at the Cowen Institute, and from participants at the Five Years of Post-Katrina Educational Reform Research Conference at the University of New Orleans in September 2010. Finally, we would like to thank the principals, teachers, and parents who took time to respond to surveys. We are grateful for their participation in the study and for their commitment to public education in the city of New Orleans.

Abbreviations

BESE	Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
ELA	English/language arts
ELL	English language learner
FTE	full-time equivalent
GEE	Graduation Exit Examination
IEP	Individualized Education Program
iLEAP	Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program
LEAP	Louisiana Educational Assessment Program
LEP	limited English proficient
NOLA	New Orleans, Louisiana
NOPS	New Orleans Public Schools
OPSB	Orleans Parish School Board
RSD	Recovery School District
SPS	School Performance Score

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Research Context

New Orleans, Louisiana, has now completed its sixth calendar year of an ambitious effort to transform public education throughout the city. The education reform initiative, unprecedented in the United States in its scope and pace, dismantled a beleaguered public school system and replaced it with a decentralized, choice-based system of schools. The hurricanes and resulting flooding caused all schools in the city to close in August 2005, and the first schools to reopen did not do so until mid-November. In November 2005, spurred by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the state-run Recovery School District (RSD) hastened its efforts to turn around low-performing schools in Louisiana by taking over 107 of 126 public schools in the city of New Orleans. The few schools not taken over, most of which were selective admission magnet schools, were left to the management of the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), which had previously managed nearly all schools in the city ("Recovery School District Legislatively Required Plan," 2006). In the months following the hurricane, both the RSD and OPSB recruited charter operating organizations to reopen and operate as many schools as possible, though each district maintained direct control of some schools.

As a result, the RSD and the OPSB each now operates a set of traditional (district-run) schools and oversees its own portfolio of charter schools. As of the 2009–10 academic year, 61 percent of public school students in the city attended charter schools—by far the largest percentage of any city in the nation (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010a). Each charter school in the city has autonomy over most governance, operational, instructional, and staffing decisions and is managed day to day by one of about 33 charter operating organizations. In addition, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) oversees two charter schools that existed before the hurricane. Table 1.1 illustrates the distribution of the city's public schools by type and district as of spring of the 2009–10 academic year (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).

In considering this range of schools, it is important to note that New Orleans charter schools constitute several types under Louisiana law (Louisiana Department of Education, 2010). The charter schools overseen by both the BESE and the RSD are authorized directly by the state, but the two BESE schools in New Orleans are designated as Type 2 charter schools whose founding predated the storm and was not the result of low past performance. As Type 2 charter schools, they are funded separately from the RSD schools and are authorized to serve students from anywhere in the state. They are also permitted to use selective admission policies. In contrast, the RSD operates Type 5 charter schools; these schools are subject to particular regulations, including requirements that they have open admissions policies and serve the stu-

Table 1.1
Number of New Orleans Public Schools, by District and School Type, as of Spring 2010

District	Charter	Traditional	Total
OPSB	13	4	17
RSD	47	24	71
BESE	2	0	2
Total	62	28	90

SOURCE: New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010.

dents in the local community who reflect the local demographic population. Finally, the charter schools overseen by the OPSB fall into one of three groups: Type 1 charter schools, which are startups authorized by a local school board; Type 3 charter schools, which have been converted from noncharter schools with authorization from local school boards; and Type 4 charter schools, which are authorized by the state but are operated by a local school board. All three types of OPSB charter schools—Types 1, 3, and 4—are permitted to use selective admissions policies in choosing students. However, like RSD schools and unlike the BESE schools, they must serve the students in the local community who reflect the local demographic population (Louisiana Department of Education, 2010; "Recovery School District Legislatively Required Plan," 2006). Thus, in converting many of its pre-Katrina magnet schools to charter schools, the OPSB was in several cases permitted to maintain its extant selective admission policies.

Of course, this citywide decentralization of school management was only one component of the educational reforms New Orleans undertook after Hurricane Katrina. A closely related change was the implementation of a citywide system of school choice. Under the new, decentralized model in New Orleans, families can apply for their children to attend any school in the city. Nevertheless, it remains easier to enroll in some schools than others. As of the 2009–10 academic year, eight New Orleans charter schools, including seven OPSB schools and one BESE school, maintained selective admission policies, though none of the traditional schools reportedly did so (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).[1] And although all RSD schools are required to have open admissions, RSD charters are permitted to maintain enrollment caps. Many report that they admit students on a first-come, first-served basis, whereas a smaller number use a lottery system if they are oversubscribed (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010). Even in a lottery system, students must meet application deadlines to be included in the lottery (Editorial Page Staff, 2009). Only RSD traditional (district-run) schools have year-round open enrollment with no admissions caps, but these schools, many of which were the city's lowest-performing before Katrina, are sometimes viewed as schools of last resort (Cowen Institute, 2008).

A third change to take place as part of the post-Katrina reform was a transformation in staffing policies and priorities. When residents vacated the city as a result of the storm, all of the city's public school teachers were laid off, and those wishing to return to schools taken over by

[1] In addition, one OPSB charter school maintains a grade point average requirement for those attending the school, though it does not admit students selectively (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).

the RSD had to reapply for their jobs (Carr, 2009b). This process brought an end to collective bargaining in the schools, and the local teachers' union was effectively disbanded. Meanwhile, charter schools were given the freedom to set their own compensation structures, hiring and evaluation criteria, and working conditions. To help catalyze reforms and replace teachers who were not rehired, local reformers began aggressively recruiting potential teachers from around the country and training them through alternative entry routes, such as Teach for America, a national alternative teacher preparation program, and Teach NOLA (New Orleans, Louisiana), a local chapter of another national program called the New Teacher Project (Cowen Institute, 2008; Toppo, 2008). The promise of teachers recruited and prepared by these programs is that they are typically chosen for their strong academic records (Boyd et al., 2006), but a common concern is that they typically lack experience and formal training as teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1994; National Coalition for Quality Education in New Orleans, 2006). Also, because New Orleans launched a nationwide recruitment effort, some of these new teachers may have lacked familiarity with black and low-income student populations, which together constitute a majority in New Orleans public schools (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a). Finally, because Teach for America corps members' employment commitments last only two years, there is concern that reliance on these teachers may increase the turnover rates of teaching staff (Costa and Kirby, 2010; National Coalition for Quality Education in New Orleans, 2006).

Brief Summary of the Evidence on Charter Schools

Underlying charter-based reforms such as the New Orleans model is the theory that charter schools' autonomy frees them from bureaucratic constraints and allows innovation to flourish (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Gill et al., 2007). The New Orleans model seems especially promising in this regard, since its charter schools operate with considerable policy autonomy ("Recovery School District Legislatively Required Plan," 2006). One goal of metaphorically letting a thousand flowers bloom is that the best practices developed by the most effective schools may eventually be adopted by other schools, so that the system itself becomes a hotbed of innovative progress (Hill et al., 2009; Lake, 2010; Tough, 2008). A related theory is that since charter schools are funded on a per-pupil basis, the need to compete for students should force them to operate more efficiently and effectively in an effort to attract students and thereby survive (Lake, 2010). In Louisiana (as in many states), this purely market-based pressure is augmented by policy provisions specifying that schools failing to meet academic expectations and demonstrate improved student achievement on standardized tests may not have their charters renewed ("Charter School Demonstration Programs Law, Chapter 42, Part III," 2009).

Critics of charter schools worry that charter policies may result in "cream-skimming," whereby relatively advantaged students and families exercise choice, leaving traditional schools to educate the most disadvantaged students, or whereby charter schools actively recruit and pursue the most promising students (Gill et al., 2007). Although data from several studies do not bear out this concern (Buckley, Schneider, and Shang, 2004; Gill et al., 2007; Zimmer et al., 2009), the question remains relevant in New Orleans, where charter schools can cap their enrollment whereas RSD-run schools cannot, and where some RSD-run schools may be perceived as schools of last resort (Cowen Institute, 2008). In an environment of citywide school choice, it is an open question whether all parents feel that they have an equal ability

to exercise choice. It is conceivable that parents who are more educated, better connected, or have more discretionary time would find it easier than their counterparts to seek out the best options for their children (Carnoy et al., 2005; Cohen, 2010; Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, and Wang, 2010). Bolstering this concern, a recent study by the University of Minnesota's Institute on Race and Poverty (2010) showed that schools in post-Katrina New Orleans are racially segregated not only by charter and traditional status but particularly by district, with white students disproportionately concentrated in OPSB and BESE charter schools. However, it is important to note that a similar segregation pattern existed before the hurricane, with white students disproportionately concentrated in a few selective admission public schools (Boston Consulting Group, 2007).

It is well established that charter schools' effectiveness varies enormously, though evidence on whether charter schools outperform their traditional school counterparts remains mixed (Lake, 2008; National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010b; Zimmer et al., 2009). The most rigorous studies to date suggest that charter schools may be modestly more effective than traditional schools at raising student achievement and attainment (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2009; Hoxby and Murarka, 2007; Hoxby and Rockoff, 2004; Zimmer et al., 2009), particularly after they have had time to become established (Betts and Tang, 2008; Gill et al., 2007; Zimmer et al., 2009). For instance, studies that took advantage of students' lottery assignment to oversubscribed charter schools in Chicago (Hoxby and Rockoff, 2004), New York (Hoxby and Murarka, 2007), and Boston (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2009) found positive effects of charter school enrollment on student performance, though the oversubscribed charter schools that need to use lotteries may not be representative of charter schools more generally. Examining charter schools in eight states, Zimmer and colleagues (2009) found positive effects of charter schools on high school graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment, though they did not identify differences between charter and traditional public schools in terms of test score gains.

However, other studies have suggested that charter schools are no more effective than traditional schools. In 2004, for example, a widely publicized analysis of charter and traditional school students' scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress suggested that charter schools were performing moderately worse than their traditional counterparts, though this study, which used cross-sectional, aggregate data, was not able to control thoroughly for students' background characteristics (Nelson, Rosenberg, and Van Meter, 2004). More recently, a 16-state study that matched charter school students to observably similar traditional school students in the same local area found that charter school students on the whole did not outperform their traditional school counterparts in mathematics or reading (Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2009). However, charter school students in Louisiana and four other states in that study *did* outperform their traditional school counterparts. The study has been criticized on diverse methodological grounds by charter school supporters and critics alike (Hoxby, 2009; Institute on Race and Poverty, 2010), but it remains one of the largest-scale studies to address the question of charter school effectiveness using student-level data and quasi-experimental methods to adjust for student selection.[2]

What has been less well-researched is how charter and traditional schools differ in terms of their policies and practices. Notwithstanding various case studies of high-performing charter schools (Forman, 2007; Merseth et al., 2009; Woodworth et al., 2008), there has been lim-

[2] The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2010b) provides a more detailed review of the existing research on charter school effectiveness.

ited systematic inquiry into how charter school leaders make effective use of their autonomy, and especially into how their policies and educational practices differ from their counterparts in local traditional schools. In one notable exception, researchers analyzed data from 36 charter school proposals and from the National Center for Education Statistics' 2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey, finding that charter schools were more likely than traditional schools to organize around specific instructional designs, offer a longer school day and year, customize support for students who struggle, and offer college-preparatory coursework (Gross and Pochop, 2008). Yet whether such patterns apply in a system where charter schools are the majority remains an open question, and one that the current study set out to explore. In addition, given concerns about the persistence of many of the newly recruited novice teachers and principals in New Orleans, we wondered about educator qualifications and mobility plans in charter and traditional schools. In light of concerns about families' access to schools of their choosing (Carnoy et al., 2005), particularly in an environment of citywide school choice (Cohen, 2010), we also sought to understand charter and traditional schools' approaches to parent outreach and parents' experiences and satisfaction in charter and traditional schools. The current study set out to address these issues in the context of post-Katrina New Orleans.

Purpose and Organization of This Report

To better understand what New Orleans's rapidly changing public education system would mean for the city's schools, Tulane University's Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives asked RAND to partner with it in using a U.S. Department of Education grant to understand the differences in policies and practices between charter and traditional schools in post-Katrina New Orleans. However, it is important to note that conceptualizing post-Katrina schools as one of two types—charter and "traditional"—is simply one lens for analyzing a multifaceted reform. The post-Katrina educational context in the city is markedly different from the pre-Katrina system in that, since the storm, schools have operated in an environment of citywide school choice, of multiple districts and operators, and of suspended collective bargaining rights. Thus, the noncharter schools, which we refer to in this study as "traditional" by default, are functioning within a notably nontraditional context characterized by more competition and fewer regulatory restrictions than one would find in most U.S. school districts (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2010a).[3]

Our two-year study, conducted between October 2008 and September 2010, examined several aspects of school policies and practices in the city. The study includes the results of three surveys administered to principals, teachers, and parents in both traditional and charter schools in New Orleans during the spring of the 2008–09 academic year.

As noted, we were particularly interested in the implications of the reform for four aspects of public education: schools' governance and operations, educational contexts, educator qualifications and mobility, and parental choice and involvement. In addition, we sought to investigate the relationship between various school characteristics, including charter/traditional

[3] It is also important to remember that both the OPSB and RSD oversee schools of each type (charter and traditional) and that some charter and traditional schools in the OPSB use selective admissions. Some of our supplemental analyses therefore disaggregate the survey data not only by school type (charter and traditional) but also by district, and a few of our analyses, particularly in Chapter Seven, adjust for selective admission status.

status and district, and schools' academic performance during the survey year, 2008–09. Our specific research questions were as follows:

1. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ in terms of their governance and organizational practices, as reported by principals and teachers?
2. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ with regard to their educational contexts, including instructional practices and learning environments, as described by principals, teachers, and parents?
3. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ in terms of the qualifications and mobility of their teachers and principals, as reported by those individuals?
4. How do New Orleans' charter and traditional schools differ with regard to their efforts to engage parents and in terms of parents' experiences with the schools, as described by principals, teachers, and parents?
5. How do charter and traditional schools differ in terms of school performance and performance growth, and what, if any, observable school characteristics or practices appear to account for these differences?

Because the charter school movement is largely predicated on the benefits of school autonomy from district bureaucracy, our first research question focused on how the schools make management decisions, who has input into those decisions, how particular operational services are provided, and how the schools allocate their expenditures. Limited research on the learning environments provided by charter versus traditional schools sparked our inquiry into educational contexts, including teachers' instructional practices, access to professional development, and use of data to inform instruction, as well as schoolwide safety, discipline, culture, and morale. Because the influx of novice teachers and principals in New Orleans has given rise to concerns about the preparation and persistence of the educator labor force, we wondered about educator qualifications and mobility in charter and traditional schools, including educators' training, licensure, and experience levels, as well as their plans for persisting in their schools or moving elsewhere. Finally, given concerns about family's awareness of and access to quality schooling options within the city, we sought to understand schools' efforts to reach out to parents, parents' perceptions of the school environment, their interactions with the school, and their experiences under a system of citywide school choice. We were also interested in understanding the performance of the charter and traditional schools and in whether any of the information our surveys collected about the schools might be associated with their school-level performance growth.

We surveyed school principals, teachers, and parents to gather information about each dimension of interest. The descriptive data analysis that follows focuses less on summary results for each dimension than on similarities and differences between charter and traditional schools throughout the city. In addition, using both publicly available data and data from the surveys, the report explores the relationship between schools' observable characteristics—collected from both public and survey data—and their academic performance.

The remainder of this report is divided into six chapters. Chapter Two describes the data, survey sample, analytic methods, and limitations of the study. Chapter Three describes governance and operations in both charter and traditional schools in the response sample. Chapter Four characterizes the educational contexts, including instructional practices, in each of the two school types in the response sample. Chapter Five presents survey results concerning edu-

cator qualifications and mobility in the sample, and Chapter Six discusses parental choice and involvement. Chapter Seven presents an analysis of the relationship between various school characteristics and school-level performance and performance growth. Chapter Eight discusses conclusions that can be drawn from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

Research Design

Data Sources

The data sources for the study include survey data collected in 2008–09 from principals, teachers, and parents in charter and traditional schools in New Orleans, as well as publicly available information on the characteristics and academic performance of these schools from the Louisiana Department of Education and the New Orleans Parent Organizing Network.

Survey Sample and Administration

The study developed three separate surveys for principals, teachers, and parents. In the spring semester of 2009, we sent surveys to the principals of all elementary, middle, and high schools that were operational in school year 2008–09, excluding alternative schools and schools that were newly constituted that year and consisted of just a few grades. The target school sample included 75 of the city's 86 public schools operating that year—42 charter schools and 33 traditional (district-run) schools. In addition, we surveyed a random sample of 436 teachers of elementary education, secondary English/language arts, and secondary mathematics, stratified by grade level and subject area and drawn from the 59 schools that provided teacher rosters from which we could draw the random sample. We also sent parent surveys to 411 parents from the 55 schools that provided mailing addresses for the randomly drawn sample or agreed to distribute the surveys based on our instructions for drawing a random sample.

Prior to administering the surveys, we obtained a letter of support from the superintendent of schools run by the OPSB but were not able to obtain a similar support letter from the superintendent of the RSD. We then contacted the 75 targeted schools via U.S. mail to solicit their cooperation in providing a roster of elementary school general education teachers, as well as mathematics and English/language arts specialist teachers in their schools. The purpose of the teacher rosters was to allow us to draw a random survey sample of teachers of each type, stratified by school, subject, and (for the elementary grades) grade level. We also requested the schools' help in drawing a random survey sample of parents, stratified by school and grade level. Graduate student research assistants visited the schools to follow up on the requests and, where possible, to work with staff to draw the parent random samples. Schools were asked only to provide mailing address information for the randomly drawn parents. Schools that did not wish to provide mailing addresses were invited instead to distribute the surveys themselves to the parents we had helped them draw at random. The randomly drawn survey samples consisted of between four and seven teachers per school and six parents per school. After inviting all 75 targeted schools to take part in the study, we received teacher rosters from 59 schools in

the target sample, and 55 schools agreed to help either by providing contact information for the randomly sampled parents or by directly distributing surveys to these parents.[1]

Survey questionnaires were mailed via Federal Express to principals and to sampled teachers and parents in the spring of 2009. Principals' and teachers' surveys were mailed to their respective schools, and parents' surveys were mailed to their homes. The principal survey, the charter school version of which is shown in Appendix B, included questions on enrollment, admission policies, academic programs, governance, accountability, teachers, professional development, operations, and school finance.[2] The teacher survey, which is presented in Appendix C, inquired about school governance, instructional feedback, professional development, instructional methods, parent communications and involvement, and teachers' career plans and professional background. The parent survey, shown in Appendix D, asked about parents' choice of school, the school's academic programs, school communications and parent involvement, and parents' demographic backgrounds. All surveys and study procedures were approved by RAND's Institutional Review Board.

The parent survey required about 20 minutes to complete, and the teacher and principal surveys each required about 30 minutes to complete. Teachers and parents each received $15 for completing the surveys, and principals received $30.

After mailing the surveys, we made up to four mail or telephone follow-up communications per survey recipient to encourage them to complete and return the survey. We also developed an electronic version of the teacher and principal surveys and emailed these to teachers and principals who had not responded to the paper version. In addition, research assistants called the schools and offered to administer the surveys via telephone with principals who had not responded up to that point. However, these additional measures increased response rates only slightly across the three targeted groups.

Survey Response Sample

Despite efforts to encourage high participation, response rates for all three targeted survey groups were lower than anticipated. Response rates disaggregated by school type (defined as charter versus traditional) are presented in Table 2.1. Overall, the principal response rate was

Table 2.1
Response Rates (and Raw Numbers of Respondents) to Principal, Teacher, and Parent Surveys

Respondent	Charter	Traditional	Overall
Principal	23.8% (10)	42.4% (14)	32.0% (24)
Teacher	52.4% (142)	52.1% (86)	52.3% (228)
Parent	41.9% (93)	30.7% (56)	36.3% (149)

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Surveys of New Orleans Principals, Teachers, and Parents.

[1] We mailed surveys to six parents per school for each of the schools that gave us mailing addresses. For the 14 schools that distributed the surveys themselves, because we were unable to send follow-up mailings to those families, we distributed 12 rather than six surveys per school at the outset.

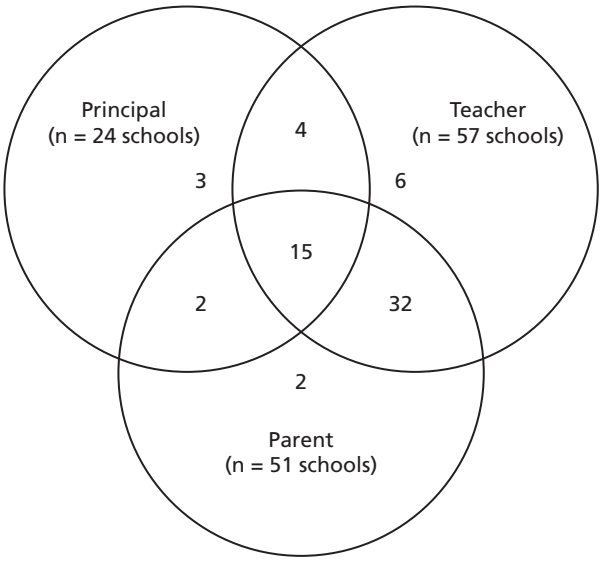
[2] The version for traditional school principals, available on request, is quite similar but asks fewer financial questions.

32 percent and was somewhat higher in traditional than charter schools (n = 10 charter principals and 14 traditional school principals). The teacher response rate, 52 percent overall, was similar in charter and traditional schools but less than we had hoped to obtain based on prior surveys that research team members had conducted elsewhere (e.g., Birman et al., 2009; Vernez et al., 2006). The final teacher samples included 142 charter teachers and 86 traditional teachers. The response rate for parents, at 36 percent, was somewhat higher in charter than traditional schools, resulting in 93 charter school parent respondents and 56 traditional school parent respondents. Though also low, the rate was less surprising in light of national data showing that private individuals are increasingly reluctant to respond to surveys, particularly those administered via mail rather than by phone or face-to-face (Dey, 1997).

In spite of the lower-than-anticipated response rates, 100 percent of charter schools and 91 percent of traditional schools that provided teacher rosters for the survey had at least one teacher responding to the survey. Similarly, 94 percent of charter schools and 91 percent of traditional schools that provided parent contact information or distributed parent surveys had at least one parent responding. Hence, the coverage of schools is better than the overall teacher and parent response rates would suggest. As explained below, our analysis of the data accounts for the nesting of individual teachers and parents within schools.

It is important to note that the schools represented by the principal, teacher, and parent respondents do not perfectly overlap. The Venn diagram in Figure 2.1 displays the extent of the overlap. Fifteen schools are represented by all three groups—principal, teacher, and parent respondents. Thirty-two additional schools are represented by both teacher and parent but not principal respondents. Four schools are represented by principal and teacher but not parent respondents, and two schools are represented by principal and parent but not teacher respondents. In addition, three schools are represented only by principal respondents, six only by

Figure 2.1
Overlap of Schools Represented Among Principal, Teacher, and Parent Survey Respondents



SOURCES: 2009 RAND Surveys of Principals, Teachers, and Parents.
RAND *TR1145-2.1*

teacher respondents, and two only by parent respondents. The imperfect overlap means that responses from any one group will not represent exactly the same array of schools as responses from another group.

School Participation Patterns

As noted above, we received teacher rosters from 59 of the 75 schools in the target sample, allowing us to draw and survey a random sample of elementary, secondary math, and secondary English teachers. In addition, 55 of the 75 targeted schools agreed to help with the parent survey either by providing contact information for the randomly sampled parents or by directly distributing surveys to these parents. An important question, therefore, is how similar these participating schools were to the schools in the targeted sample that did not permit us to survey their teachers or parents. Descriptive statistics on the participating and nonparticipating schools in each survey type (principal, teacher, and parent) are provided in Tables 2.2 through 2.4, disaggregated by school type. Because the small sample sizes limit statistical power to detect between-group differences, we do not include tests of statistical significance. The school characteristics are drawn from publicly available school-level data (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a). Table 2.2 compares the school characteristics of responding and nonresponding charter and traditional schools. OPSB schools are somewhat overrepresented relative to RSD schools, particularly among traditional schools, but the largest shares of participating charter and traditional schools are nevertheless RSD schools. Among both charter and traditional schools, elementary schools and secondary schools are somewhat overrepresented in the response samples, whereas schools that include both elementary and secondary grades are

Table 2.2
Characteristics of Schools Represented by Principal Respondents and Nonrespondents, by School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
	Respondents (n = 10)	Non-respondents (n = 32)	Respondents (n = 14)	Non-respondents (n = 19)
BESE-authorized	10.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%
OPSB-run or -authorized	40.0%	34.4%	28.6%	5.3%
RSD-run or -authorized	50.0%	62.5%	71.4%	94.7%
Elementary (including grades prekindergarten–6)	20.0%	6.3%	21.4%	0.0%
Elementary and secondary (incuding grades in prekindergarten–6 and 7–12)	60.0%	78.1%	35.7%	78.9%
Secondary (including grades 7–12)	20.0%	15.6%	42.9%	21.1%
Average share of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals	78.7%	84.4%	85.5%	88.3%
Average share of black students	83.4%	86.3%	95.2%	98.5%
Average share of other minority students	5.9%	6.7%	3.9%	0.8%
Average share of white students	10.7%	7.1%	0.9%	0.7%

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.

NOTE: n = 75 schools.

somewhat underrepresented. Relative to nonresponding schools, responding schools also have slightly lower shares of black students and slightly higher shares of white (in the case of charters) or other minority students (in the case of traditional schools).

Table 2.3 shows participation rates and characteristics of schools asked to administer the teacher survey (75 in total, with 59 agreeing to participate). Though OPSB and BESE schools are still slightly overrepresented among participating schools, the differences are quite small, and clearly RSD schools constitute the majority of participating charter and traditional schools. Schools that include both elementary and secondary grades are again underrepresented among participating teachers' schools, whereas elementary and secondary schools are overrepresented. And we find small differences in the demographic compositions of participating and nonparticipating schools: Nonparticipating charter and traditional schools have modestly higher shares of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals but slightly smaller shares of black students. For charter schools only, the share of white students in participating schools is considerably greater than in nonparticipating schools, though the proportion remains relatively small in both sets of schools. In general, the schools that provided teacher rosters were quite similar to the larger pool of targeted schools.

Fifty-five schools agreed to participate in the parent survey. Among those schools, as shown in Table 2.4, OPSB schools were slightly underrepresented among charter schools and modestly overrepresented in traditional schools. Elementary schools were represented about evenly, though secondary schools were still somewhat overrepresented—especially among traditional schools—relative to schools serving both elementary and secondary grades. Participating traditional schools had slightly larger shares of students eligible for subsidized meals than nonparticipating schools, though the reverse was true among charter schools. Participating and nonparticipating schools were quite similar in their racial/ethnic distributions, with only a

Table 2.3
Characteristics of Schools That Did and Did Not Provide Teacher Rosters, by School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
	Provided (n = 36)	Did Not Provide (n = 6)	Provided (n = 23)	Did Not Provide (n = 10)
BESE-authorized	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
OPSB-run or -authorized	36.1%	33.3%	17.4%	10.0%
RSD-run or -authorized	58.3%	66.7%	82.6%	90.0%
Elementary (including grades prekindergarten–6)	8.3%	16.7%	13.0%	0.0%
Elementary and secondary (including grades in prekindergarten–6 and 7–12)	72.2%	83.3%	47.8%	90.0%
Secondary (including grades 7–12)	19.4%	0.0%	39.1%	10.0%
Average share of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals	82.4%	87.4%	85.6%	90.7%
Average share of black students	85.6%	85.3%	97.9%	95.2%
Average share of other minority students	5.2%	14.0%	1.4%	3.8%
Average share of white students	9.2%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.

NOTE: n = 75 schools.

Table 2.4
Characteristics of Schools That Did and Did Not Provide Parent Rosters, by School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
	Provided (n = 32)	Did Not Provide (n = 10)	Provided (n = 23)	Did Not Provide (n = 10)
BESE-authorized	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
OPSB-run or -authorized	31.3%	50.0%	17.4%	10.0%
RSD-run or -authorized	62.5%	50.0%	82.6%	90.0%
Elementary (including grades prekindergarten –6)	9.4%	10.0%	8.7%	10.0%
Elementary and secondary (including grades in prekindergarten–6 and 7–12)	71.9%	80.0%	52.2%	80.0%
Secondary (including grades 7–12)	18.8%	10.0%	39.1%	10.0%
Average share of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals	84.1%	79.8%	85.7%	90.4%
Average share of black students	87.4%	79.9%	97.8%	95.4%
Average share of other minority students	5.2%	10.5%	1.4%	3.9%
Average share of white students	7.4%	9.6%	0.8%	0.7%

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.
NOTE: n = 75 schools.

slightly larger share of black students and smaller share of other minority students at participating schools relative to those that did not participate. In general, the schools that participated in the parent survey were similar to the pool of targeted schools.

Survey Response Patterns

We turn now to comparing the school characteristics of individual teachers and parents who did and did not respond to the surveys, conditional on being part of the survey sample. In other words, all of these individuals were affiliated with participating schools, were randomly sampled within their schools (stratified by grade and subject in the teachers' cases), and were mailed surveys. Table 2.5 presents the school characteristics of the teacher respondents and nonrespondents, disaggregated by charter versus traditional school type. We focus on presenting school characteristics because we have limited data about the other characteristics of respondents and nonrespondents. As shown in Table 2.5, 436 teachers were sampled from 36 charter and 23 traditional schools (59 schools in all). Of those sampled, 228 teachers responded, representing 36 charter and 21 traditional schools (57 schools in all). Thus, teacher survey respondents represented 97 percent of the schools that provided rosters. Relative to nonrespondents, teacher respondents in charter schools were disproportionately likely to work in OPSB or BESE schools, though the majority worked in RSD schools. Among traditional schools, teacher respondents were disproportionately likely to work in the RSD. Other differences in school characteristics between teacher respondents and nonrespondents were very small.

As shown in Table 2.6, 411 parents were sampled across 32 charter and 23 traditional schools, of whom 149 responded, representing 30 charter and all 21 participating traditional schools. Relative to nonrespondents, charter school respondents were especially likely to be from OPSB or BESE schools, whereas RSD respondents were overrepresented among respondents

Table 2.5
School Characteristics of Teacher Survey Respondents and Nonrespondents, by School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
	Respondents (n = 142)	Nonrespondents (n = 129)	Respondents (n = 86)	Nonrespondents (n = 79)
No. of schools represented	36	34	21	21
BESE-authorized	8.5%	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%
OPSB-run or -authorized	40.1%	30.2%	11.6%	15.2%
RSD-run or -authorized	51.4%	65.9%	88.4%	84.8%
Elementary general subject teachers	38.0%	38.8%	33.7%	35.4%
English/language arts teachers	33.1%	28.7%	31.4%	36.7%
Mathematics teachers	28.9%	32.6%	34.9%	27.8%
Average share of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals	81.5%	84.4%	86.7%	87.0%
Average share of black students	84.9%	86.6%	98.0%	97.9%
Average share of other minority students	5.8%	4.8%	1.3%	1.4%
Average share of white students	9.3%	8.6%	0.7%	0.7%

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.
NOTE: n = 436 teachers in 59 schools.

from traditional schools. Parents of children at schools serving both elementary and secondary grades were slightly underrepresented among both charter and traditional school respondents relative to parents of elementary or (particularly) secondary school students. On average, the schools of parent respondents had modestly fewer students receiving subsidized meals, though the mean difference was within 8 percentage points in charter schools and within 2 percentage points in traditional schools. The charter schools of respondents had modestly fewer black students and modestly more white students than those of nonrespondents, though there were no similar differences in schools' racial/ethnic compositions for traditional schools.

It is also worth considering the extent to which parent respondents were representative of the populations of charter and traditional schools in New Orleans during the survey year. Although we do not have data on the demographic characteristics of parental nonrespondents, we did collect some demographic information from parental respondents, which we can compare to publicly available data from the state about the average composition of charter and traditional schools in New Orleans during the survey year. We present these data in Table 2.7 for the 75 New Orleans schools targeted in our study. Among parent survey respondents, a considerably larger share of charter than traditional school respondents were white, Asian, or Hispanic/Latino, and a correspondingly smaller share were black/African American. This was similar to the racial/ethnic distributions in the 75 survey-targeted schools New Orleans during the survey year, 2008–09, though the charter school parent response sample had a modestly smaller share of African American respondents than the charter school composition would suggest. Parent respondents in charter schools were also substantially more likely than those in traditional schools to say that they had attained some postsecondary education, and they were less likely to report having earned less than a high school diploma. The average number of

Table 2.6
School Characteristics of Parent Survey Respondents and Nonrespondents, by School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
	Respondents (n = 93)	Nonrespondents (n = 139)	Respondents (n = 56)	Nonrespondents (n = 123)
No. of schools represented	30	32	21	23
BESE-authorized	11.8%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
OPSB-run or -authorized	40.9%	28.8%	12.5%	17.9%
RSD-run or -authorized	47.3%	66.2%	87.5%	82.1%
Elementary (including grades prekindergarten–6)	12.9%	8.6%	5.4%	7.3%
Elementary and secondary (including grades in prekindergarten–6 and 7–12)	62.4%	77.7%	50.0%	60.2%
Secondary (including grades 7–12)	24.7%	13.7%	44.6%	32.5%
Average share of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals	77.3%	85.3%	84.7%	86.5%
Average share of black students	80.3%	87.6%	97.6%	97.4%
Average share of other minority students	8.0%	5.8%	1.7%	1.7%
Average share of white students	11.7%	6.6%	0.7%	0.9%

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.

NOTE: n = 411 parents in 55 schools.

people living in the household was reported to be similar among both charter and traditional school parent respondents, but the estimated average annual household income (calculated using medians of the income categories listed on the survey), was over $33,000 among charter school parent respondents, as opposed to just over $19,000 among traditional school parent respondents.[3] Though data on parental education levels, household size, and household income are not available in the Louisiana Department of Education school-level data, Table 2.7 does illustrate that rates of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals are modestly higher in traditional than in charter schools in the district.

[3] The gap in education and income levels between charter and traditional schools was apparent in both the RSD and the OPSB/BESE districts, though absolute education and income levels were higher among OPSB and BESE respondents than among RSD respondents. In OPSB and BESE schools, 81 percent of charter school parent respondents said that they had completed some postsecondary education, compared to only 50 percent of traditional school respondents. In the RSD, 48 percent of charter school parent respondents said that they had completed some postsecondary education, compared to only 35 percent of traditional school parents. Similarly, the mean estimated income among charter school parent respondents in OPSB and BESE schools was $54,500 versus only $18,750 among traditional school parent respondents in OPSB schools. In the RSD, charter school parents reported an estimated mean family income of $23,467, whereas traditional school parents in the RSD reported an estimated mean family income of $19,396. We also found differences between responding charter and traditional school parents' racial/ethnic backgrounds in each district. In OPSB and BESE schools, 44 percent of responding charter school parents described themselves as black or African American, compared to 75 percent in traditional schools. In the RSD, 88 percent of responding charter school parents described themselves as black or African American, compared to 100 percent of responding traditional school parents.

Table 2.7
Self-Reported Mean Demographic Characteristics of Parent Survey Respondents and Average Student Demographics in New Orleans During the Survey Year, 2008–09, by School Type

	Parent Survey Respondents		Average Student Demographics	
Characteristic	**Charter**	**Traditional**	**Charter**	**Traditional**
Asian	4.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.9%
Black/African American	72.0%	97.0%	85.6%	97.1%
Hispanic/Latino	4.0%	0.0%	3.3%	1.2%
White	12.0%	3.0%	7.9%	0.8%
Other or multiple	8.0%	0.0%	—	—
Eligible for free or reduced- price meals	—	—	83.1%	87.1%
Less than high school diploma	17.0%	30.3%	—	—
Some postsecondary education	59.6%	36.3%	—	—
Number of people in household	4.0	4.3	—	—
Estimated annual household income	$33,587	$19,318	—	—

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents; Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.

NOTES: Parent respondents: n = 50 charter and 33 traditional school parents. Citywide: n = 42 charter and 33 traditional schools.

School Characteristics and Performance Data

To represent schools' academic performance in the years before and during the survey year, we used the School Performance Scores (SPS) calculated by the Louisiana Department of Education for all public schools in the state, which take into account not only students' test performance but also attendance, dropout, and graduation rates. Each year, the state publishes two types of SPS scores for each school. The first is the school's performance in the most recent academic year, which is labeled the "growth" score, although it does not directly represent growth from prior years. The second type of score is the base score, which is a two-year average of the single-year scores in years t and $t - 1$ (the two scores are averaged to improve score reliability). The state calculates a school's growth amount in year $t + 1$ by subtracting its base score in year t (representing the average of single-year scores in years t and $t - 1$) from its growth score in year $t + 1$ (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b). The state also annually reports other facts about each school, including the grade levels it serves, the district it is part of, whether it is a charter or traditional school, the proportion of students in each racial/ethnic group, the proportion who qualify for free or reduced-price meals, the proportion who receive special education services, and the proportion who are classified as limited English proficient (LEP) (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a). We use each of these measures in our analysis relating school performance and performance growth to school characteristics in 71 schools—41 charter and 30 traditional. In a subset of these analyses (including 43 schools), we also include as independent variables teacher survey responses to questions about professional development hours, class size, instructional practices, parent outreach, career plans, and

teaching experience aggregated at the school level. Additional information about the SPS data and analysis is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Data Analysis

The survey data were cleaned and tabulated using Stata 10.0 (StataCorp, 2007). Summary statistics from the principals' survey were disaggregated by school type (charter versus traditional) using Stata's tabulate two-way command. Because principal respondents represented only 10 charter and 14 traditional schools, we were faced with very limited statistical power to detect differences in the responses of charter and traditional school principals, and we therefore did not conduct hypothesis tests on these differences.

For results from the teacher and parent surveys, we estimated summary statistics using multilevel models that accounted for the nesting of teachers and parents within schools. We report fitted values from generalized least squares regression models using the xtreg command in Stata 10.0 (StataCorp, 2007). For survey questions that pertained to school practices or characteristics, we used between-group models that average teachers' or parents' responses at the school level. For questions that focused on the experiences, preferences, or backgrounds of individual teachers or parents, we used random-effect models that account for both between-school and within-school variance. As with principals, however, we do not report hypothesis tests on the differences between charter and traditional school teachers and parents because of the small number of schools represented and our consequent inability to generalize beyond the sample of responding schools. Additional details about the models appear in Appendix A.

In some cases, we further disaggregate charter and traditional school responses by district (RSD schools versus OPSB and BESE schools combined). Because these are supplementary analyses to examine whether charter and traditional school differences vary by district, we generally report these results in footnotes.

Though the teacher and parent samples were randomly drawn to be representative of their schools, the response samples cannot be considered random because of possible nonresponse bias. We used an unweighted analysis without imputation because we do not have adequate information about teacher or parent characteristics to predict nonresponse precisely enough that the data could be considered missing at random (Rubin, 1976).

In Chapter Seven, we also examine differences in school performance while controlling for school characteristics gleaned from publicly available data and, in some cases, as reported by teacher survey respondents. In analyses that used only school-level variables, we used ordinary least squares regression to estimate the relationships between school performance or performance growth and observable school characteristics. For the models that also included teachers' survey responses, we used generalized least squares regression analysis to fit multilevel, between-group regression models in which standard errors were clustered at the school level. Again using the xtreg command in Stata, we fit between-group multilevel models because the dependent variable—schoolwide performance growth—varies only at the school level. As noted above, such models regress the dependent variables on group means of the individual-level variables. The standard errors, therefore, reflect the clustering of teacher observations within schools. Additional information about the statistical models used in the analysis is presented in Appendix A.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study are subject to a number of important limitations. First, though the teacher and parent survey respondents were selected with a stratified random sampling strategy designed to represent the populations of teachers or parents at their respective schools, the relatively low response rates obtained mean that the respondents can no longer be considered a random draw from their respective populations. And although we find only modest observable differences in the school characteristics of respondents and nonrespondents, it is possible that respondents differ from nonrespondents in unobserved ways, whether at the school or individual levels.

Because of the relatively low response rates to the principal, teacher, and parent surveys, we do not attempt to generalize beyond the responding schools, and we do not report hypothesis tests of statistical significance when presenting survey results. Instead, the findings should be viewed as similar to findings from case studies of these particular schools. It is important to emphasize that the results presented here pertain to responding schools only and are not necessarily representative of the behavior and practices in other New Orleans schools.

A second limitation related to the survey methodology is that results are self-reported and, thus, are subject to imprecision and to social desirability bias. Imprecision occurs if, for instance, an individual estimates rather than accurately recalls certain quantities, such as the number of professional development hours completed. Still, insofar as a respondent's reporting precision is unrelated to other relevant characteristics about the individual or his/her school, imprecision should not bias the results. In contrast, social desirability bias may occur if respondents systematically provide answers that they believe will present them or their school in a positive light rather than providing the most accurate response. This tendency may be mitigated to some extent by the confidential nature of the survey, but to the extent that it occurs, it may result in biased findings. Insofar as the propensity toward such bias occurs similarly in charter and traditional schools, it still should not affect differences we report between the two types of schools.

A third limitation is that our findings are merely descriptive and cannot be interpreted as causal. We describe survey findings in terms of schools' status as charter or traditional (i.e., noncharter) and, in some cases, in terms of their district membership, but we are representing observed relationships and do not claim that any observed differences are caused by a school's charter status or district. Rather, such differences may be due to a host of unobserved factors including, but not limited to, a school's location, student composition, teacher composition, leadership, financial resources, facilities, length of existence, admission policies, and so forth. In Chapter Seven, we present descriptive analyses of school performance in which we attempt to control for a few of these factors, but as we cannot control for all possible confounds, we report on statistical associations rather than making claims about causal relationships.

A final limitation concerns the timing of the surveys, which were conducted during a single school year, 2008–09. As such, the analysis offers a snapshot of the city's schools in the fourth academic year after Hurricane Katrina, and it examines school performance in the 2008–09 school year relative to the average of the two previous years. Given that New Orleans' schools remain a system in flux, the findings may therefore not reflect more recent developments in the city's schools. In addition, we cannot draw conclusions about the effects of the charter-based reform on policies and practices in either charter or traditional schools in New Orleans. Because we do not have parallel survey data from New Orleans schools before Hur-

ricane Katrina, it is impossible to say how the transformation of New Orleans public schools post-Katrina has affected schools in the city. It may be that the schools in the sample that existed before Katrina behaved quite similarly before and after the hurricane, or it may be that the transformation resulted in changes that would not be apparent from a survey administered only after the hurricane and reform. Thus, policies and practices described by survey respondents in charter or traditional schools cannot necessarily be interpreted as consequences of the citywide reform.

CHAPTER THREE

Governance and Operations

This chapter presents principals' survey responses with regard to the governance and operations of their schools. Their responses describe their level of autonomy over key education and staff policies, the processes put in place to involve stakeholders in decisions, responsibilities for providing various student services, and information about the schools' revenues and expenditures.

Autonomy

The survey asked principals to rate the extent to which the school has control over various school policy domains using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating no control and 4 indicating full control. It also asked them to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 how important they considered autonomy to be in each domain. Principals' responses to each of these questions are summarized in Table 3.1. The domains are sorted from highest to lowest control scores among charter school principals and then among traditional school principals.

Table 3.1
Principals' Mean Levels of Control Over and Perceived Importance of Controlling Various Policy Domains, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type

	Mean Control Score		Mean Importance Score	
Policy Domain	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Instruction	4.0	2.7	3.9	3.8
Staff discipline	4.0	2.5	4.0	3.9
Staff hiring	4.0	2.5	3.9	3.9
Student assessment	3.9	2.1	3.8	3.8
Budget allocation	3.8	1.8	3.9	3.9
Curriculum	3.8	1.7	4.0	3.6
Student discipline	3.6	2.3	4.0	3.8
Staff salaries	3.6	1.1	4.0	3.5
Student placement	3.5	2.0	3.5	3.8

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTES: 1 = "no control" and 4 = "full control." Importance scores are based on a similar scale, with 1 = "not important" and 4 = "very important." n = 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

As their autonomy from most district-level policies might suggest, principals of charter schools reported having nearly complete control over many aspects of their schools, including instructional practices, staff hiring and discipline, student assessments, budgeting, and curriculum, with average reported scores of 3.8 or higher in each category. Their mean reported autonomy was also relatively high—3.5 or higher—even in the remaining three categories: student discipline, staff salaries, and student assignment. In sharp contrast, principals in traditional schools reported much lower levels of control, on average, ranging from a high of 2.7 for instructional practices to lows of 1.7 for curriculum and 1.1 for staff members' salaries.

However, there was much less difference between principals in the importance they assigned to each type of control, and all types were judged to be relatively important (lowest average rating of 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 4). Charter principals indicated that curriculum decisions, as well as decisions about staff discipline, student discipline, and staff salaries, were "most important" (4.0), though they rated the other areas nearly as high. Traditional school principals gave their highest ratings (3.9 on average) to staff discipline, staff hiring, and budget allocations. They gave the lowest rating (3.5) to staff salaries, over which they also reported having the least amount of control.

Governance and Opportunities for Planning

Principals from both charter and traditional schools reported using similar governance practices. All 24 principals reported that their schools maintained a steering committee or leadership team that made recommendations or decisions for the school. Half of the principals reported that these steering committees met regularly each week. The other half reported monthly meetings, though there was no systematic variation by school type.

Most principals said that they had faculty committees that focused on specific issues such as curriculum and instruction, student discipline and school safety, and parental involvement. Between 75 and 90 percent of teachers in both charter and traditional schools reported that their schools had committees focusing on each of these areas, with no notable differences between school types. In both types of schools, principals reported that these committees met about monthly to discuss curriculum and instruction and student discipline; they reported meeting quarterly to discuss parental involvement.

Teachers also reported meeting regularly with other teachers for planning and decision-making purposes. On average, teachers in both charter and traditional schools reported meeting with similar frequency (n = 141 and 86 teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools, respectively). About half of teachers from each school type reported meeting about weekly to review student assessments, student behavior and discipline, instructional strategies, and the progress of individual students. However, the proportion of traditional school teacher respondents saying they never met to discuss particular students was more than four times that of charter school teacher respondents, at about 16 percent versus 3 percent, respectively. Approximately a fourth of teachers from each school type said that they met about weekly with other teachers to discuss curriculum revisions. Meanwhile, nearly a fifth of charter school teachers and a third of traditional school teachers reported that they never met with teachers for curriculum revisions.

Operational Services

Principals were asked about who provided a variety of logistical and support services within their schools. These services ranged from student transportation to food services, facilities maintenance, payroll, and professional development. Principals' responses are summarized in Table 3.2. Among principals in traditional schools, most reported that each of these services was provided by the district (other than meeting federal or state regulations, where about half reported that school staff provided the service).[1]

As expected, charter schools did not predominantly rely on the district for the provision of these services. Instead, principals of charter schools reported that their school staff or the staff of their charter operating organizations provided the majority of these services, including student assessment, professional development, payroll, bookkeeping, and compliance with state and federal regulations. Some services were provided by contractors, however. These included student transportation and food services and, to a lesser extent, facility maintenance and payroll. Additionally, a few charter school principal respondents reported receiving some assistance from the district for providing special education services, meeting state and federal regulations, and applying for grants or federal categorical funding.

Table 3.2
School Service Providers, by Service Category and School Type

	School Staff or Charter Operator		District		Contractor	
Service	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Transportation	11%	0%	0%	77%	67%	23%
Food services	22%	8%	0%	69%	78%	31%
Facility maintenance	44%	0%	0%	54%	56%	54%
Security	67%	0%	0%	92%	22%	8%
Payroll	78%	23%	0%	100%	33%	0%
Bookkeeping	100%	46%	0%	85%	0%	0%
Meeting federal or state regulations	100%	46%	44%	0%	11%	8%
Applying for funding	100%	15%	56%	100%	0%	0%
Student assessment	89%	23%	22%	77%	22%	15%
Special education	89%	31%	44%	92%	11%	8%
Professional development	100%	62%	22%	100%	33%	15%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTES: Percentages refer to the share of principal respondents within a given school type who reported that a service was offered by a given provider type. Categories were not mutually exclusive, and some principals indicated multiple providers per service category. n = 9 charter and 13 traditional school principals.

[1] It may be that the districts contract out for these services and that some respondents therefore referred to the district as the provider whereas others referred to a contractor, with both denoting the same provider.

Student Support Services

We asked principals about various student support services offered at their schools, and we further asked whether the services were provided by the school or the district directly, by referring students to an outside provider, or by bringing in a contractor to perform the services. As shown in Table 3.3, nearly all charter and traditional school principals said that their schools offered a range of noninstructional student support services including nursing, social work, counseling, and speech therapy services. Across both charter and traditional schools, the majority of principals responded that the services were performed directly by the school or district. However, two charter school and two traditional school principals reported that they referred students elsewhere for psychological services, whereas three charter school principals reported that they contracted with a psychologist. In addition, three charter school principals reported that they contracted out for speech therapy services. Only one traditional school principal reported that the school did not offer speech therapy.

Note that two charter school principals said that they did not offer counseling services, whereas six traditional and one charter school principal said that they did not provide psychologists. In light of these findings, it is worth noting that on the parent survey, more than three-quarters of parent respondents reported that their child was still "moderately" to "greatly" affected by Hurricane Katrina as of the spring of 2009.

We asked parents about their child's use of the school's nursing, counseling/psychological, speech therapy, and special education services. Sixty-one percent of responding parents (n = 78 in 37 schools) reported that their child had used the school's nursing services. About 26 percent of respondents (n = 145 in 51 schools) said that their child had used the school's counseling or psychological services, whereas 18 percent of respondents (n = 78 in 37 schools) said that their child had used the school's speech therapy services, and 14 percent of respondents (n = 144 in 51 schools) said their child had used disability or special education services. None of these responses varied notably between charter and traditional schools. However, more parent respondents in traditional than in charter schools reported that such services were not offered by their child's school (about 15 versus 3 percent of responding parents, respectively).[2]

Table 3.3
Number of Schools That Offered Student Support Services, by Service Type, School Type , and Provider

	Charter				Traditional			
Service	Not Offered	School or District	By Referral	Contractor	Not Offered	School or District	By Referral	Contractor
School nurse	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Social worker	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Counseling	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%	86%	7%	0%
Psychologist	10%	40%	20%	30%	43%	14%	14%	0%
Speech therapy	0%	60%	0%	30%	7%	93%	0%	0%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTE: n = 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

CHAPTER FOUR

Educational Contexts

This chapter presents survey responses from principals, teachers, and parents with regard to the educational context of their schools. Educational contexts are defined here to include instructional time and school year length, course offerings and programs, school climate, classroom practices and homework, educators' use of test results, and challenges that educators perceive in their efforts to improve student performance.

Allocation of Instructional Time

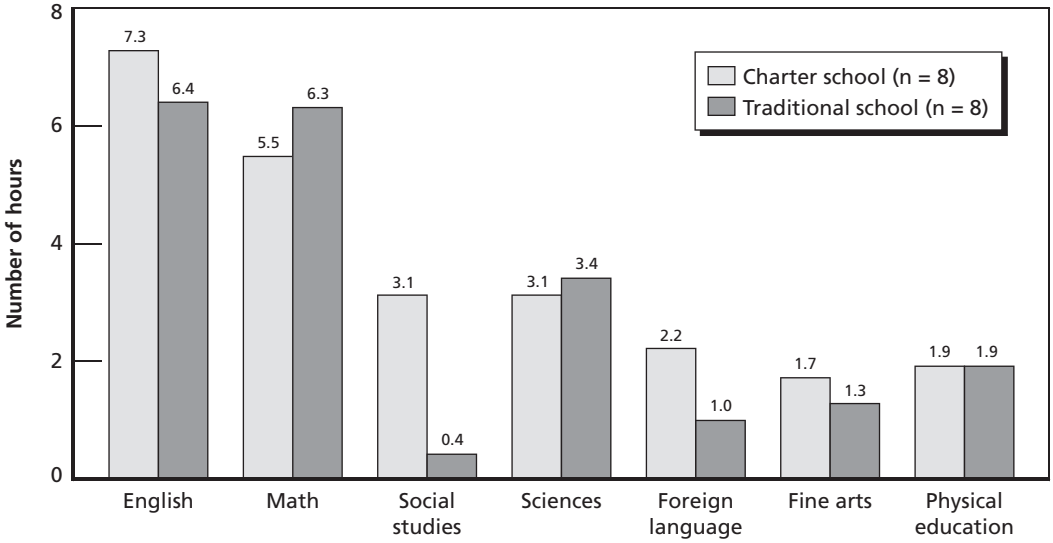
Principals were asked about the length of the school year and school day and about the allocation of instructional hours among various academic topics. Among the 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals who responded to the question, the reported length of the school year was very similar for charter and traditional schools, averaging 177 days (range 169–183) and 179 days (range 165–200), respectively.

Similarly, the mean number of hours of instruction per day was reportedly very similar in charter and traditional schools, at 7.1 and 7.6 hours on average per day, respectively (range 6.0–8.5 hours), as reported by the 10 charter school principals and 13 traditional school principals who responded to the question.

In addition, principals reported few differences between the two types of schools in the average number of hours per week devoted to specific academic areas. Figure 4.1 presents average hours of instruction per week for students in grade 4. Both categories of schools followed a similar pattern, with the largest share of instructional time (about five to seven hours per week, on average) devoted to English and math. Both charter and traditional school principals reported that their schools devoted less time to other instructional areas, with about three hours per week devoted to science, and roughly one to two hours per week devoted to foreign languages, fine arts, and physical education, respectively. The one content area in which we did identify a marked discrepancy between charter and traditional schools in grade 4 was in social studies. Responding charter school principals said that fourth graders spent 3.1 hours per week learning social studies, on average, whereas responding traditional school principals said the average number of social studies hours was about 24 minutes per week.

Though not shown in Figure 4.1, we also found very little difference between charter and traditional schools in instructional time allocation in grades 7 and 10, except that none of the seven traditional school principals whose schools offered grade 7 reported devoting any time to fine arts in that grade. In contrast, all of the six charter school principals whose schools offered grade 7 reported offering at least 45 minutes of fine arts per week in that grade, with a reported

Figure 4.1
Number of Hours of Instruction per Week in Grade 4, by Academic Subject and School Type



SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of Principals.
RAND *TR1145-4.1*

mean of two hours per week. The greater emphasis on fine arts in responding charter schools than in traditional schools may suggest a greater emphasis on tested subjects in traditional schools, since fine arts are not part of the state accountability tests. The greater emphasis on social studies in grade 4 (see Figure 4.1) could have a similar explanation, since social studies is also not a subject that is presently tested under the state accountability system.

Additional Academic Offerings

Principals reported that their schools offered various instructional programs in addition to instruction during the regular school day. Before- or after-school and summer school programs were reportedly offered by about 25 to 33 percent of both charter and traditional schools, as shown in Table 4.1. However, there were two notable differences between charter and traditional school principals' reports. First, charter school principals were less likely than their traditional-school counterparts to report that their schools offered weekend instruction (30 percent versus 50 percent, respectively). Second, charter school respondents were more likely to say that the school offered extended-day programs, which may include before- or after-school programs but which are not limited to enrichment activities (70 percent among charter school respondents versus 22 percent among traditional school respondents).

The parent survey also inquired about extracurricular school programs and families' use of them. Because not all parent respondents represented schools with principal respondents, we do not compare parents' and principals' responses by school. Instead we report school-level averages of the proportion of parents reporting that their schools offered various extracurricular programs. These responses are summarized in Table 4.2. As shown in the table, 43 percent of parents in both charter and traditional schools reported that their child's school offered

Table 4.1
Schools That Provided Additional Academic Programs, by Program Type and School Type

Program	Charter	Traditional
Extended days	70%	22%
Before- or after-school enrichment programs	30%	33%
Weekend academic classes	30%	50%
Summer school	30%	25%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.
NOTE: n = 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

Table 4.2
Parents Who Reported That Their Child's School Offered Before- or After-School Programs and Student Participation in These Programs, by Program Type and School Type

	Said That School Offers Program		Said That Their Child Participates in Program	
Program	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Before- or after-school enrichment programs	42%	13%	77%	89%
Weekend academic classes	29%	10%	82%	83%
Summer school	43%	43%	32%	37%
Free tutoring	34%	15%	77%	73%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents.
NOTE: n = 93 charter and 56 traditional school parents nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools.

summer school. However, with regard to before- or after-school enrichment programs, weekend classes, and free tutoring, a higher percentage of charter than traditional school parents reported their availability.

Table 4.2 also indicates the percentage of parents who said that their children used each type of program, conditional on reporting that the program was offered. Reported takeup rates were similar across school types, but with more traditional than charter parents saying that their children had used before- or after-school enrichment programs or summer school. Of course, it is important to remember that a much smaller number of respondents at traditional schools had reported that such programs existed. A slightly higher proportion of charter than traditional school parents (77 versus 73 percent) reported that their children had taken advantage of free tutoring, conditional on reporting that it was offered. Across school types, the majority of parent respondents who reported the existence of a service also reported that their child had used it, the exception being summer school, in which only a minority of charter and traditional school parents said that their child had participated.

School Climate

The teacher survey also inquired about the professional climate of the schools. In both traditional and charter schools, teachers were asked if they agreed or disagreed with statements about the managerial style of their principal, the morale of teachers in their schools, the use of their professional skills, and other aspects of school climate. Table 4.3 presents these responses.

On average, teachers in both charter and traditional schools reported moderate agreement with the notions that the administration and staff at their school had a strong sense of mission, that teachers in the school had high expectations of students, and that the principal was responsive to their concerns (see Table 4.3). However, teachers in both types of schools provided relatively low ratings in terms of teacher morale and student discipline. Reported differences between teachers in charter and traditional schools were small, with the exception of maintaining student discipline, where teachers at charter schools provided an average agreement rating of 2.5, whereas those at traditional schools offered an average rating of only 1.9.[1] This reported difference between charter and traditional schools in terms of maintaining student discipline is consistent with the greater economic and educational disadvantages faced by the traditional school parents, on average, who responded to the parent survey, as shown in Table 2.7. It is also consistent with the finding from our parent surveys (described in Chapter Six, Table 6.4) indicating that charter school parents were more likely than traditional school parents to say that they had chosen their child's current school because of its academic curriculum or record of student achievement.

Table 4.3
Teachers' Assessment of School Climate, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type

	Mean Rating	
Statement	**Charter**	**Traditional**
Administration and staff have a strong sense of school's mission	3.3	3.0
Teachers in this school believe that all students are capable of achieving at high standards	3.2	3.0
The principal is responsive to my concerns	3.1	3.2
My professional skills and expertise as a teacher are used to address schoolwide issues	2.8	2.7
Teacher morale is high	2.6	2.4
Maintaining student discipline is easy in this school	2.5	1.9
Teachers in this school emphasize immediate correction of students' errors in the classroom	2.1	2.1

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTES: 1 = "strongly disagree" and 4 = "strongly agree." n = 141 charter and 87 traditional school teachers nested in 6 charter and 21 traditional schools.

[1] We were also interested in whether the school climate ratings in charter and traditional schools depended on the district in which they were located. However, we found that the magnitude of the charter school and traditional school differences was similar when the sample was restricted to only RSD schools and to only OPSB/BESE schools.

Classroom Environment and Practices

Both principals and teachers were asked about classroom resources and practices in their schools. The principals' responses are displayed in Table 4.4, and the teachers' responses are summarized in Table 4.5. According to principals, the majority of charter and traditional

Table 4.4
Principal-Reported Indicators of Classroom Assignment Practices, by School Type

Indicators	Charter	Traditional
Percentage of schools assigning students to classes based on level of achievement		
English/language arts	78%	86%
Mathematics	33%	50%
Sciences	13%	21%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTE: n = 9 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

Table 4.5
Teacher-Reported Indicators of Classroom Environment and Practices, by School Type

Indicators	Charter	Traditional
Mean size of first class taught in a typical week	22.2	24.2
Mean number of computers in the teacher's classroom	6.0	6.6
Mean percentage of instructional time teachers report spending on:		
Teaching the whole class	41%	35%
Teaching small groups	30%	34%
Having students work independently	30%	33%
Percentage of teachers using a year-long plan or pacing guide	78%	94%
Percentage of teachers "rarely" keeping up with the year-long plan, conditional on using one	13%	20%
Approximate percentage of instructional time teachers say that they devote to the following activities:		
Higher-order thinking skills	30%	31%
Activities based on real-life situation or issues	24%	23%
Activities that connect to students' unique background	23%	19%
Students' independent work	22%	21%
Use of textbooks and workbooks	15%	18%
Lecturing or direct instruction	15%	12%
Thematic instruction	12%	12%
Percentage of teachers reporting that their students work collaboratively in groups every day	42%	45%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: n = 136 charter and 80 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

schools (78 and 86 percent, respectively) assigned students to English/language arts (ELA) classrooms based on the level of student achievement. A smaller proportion of principals (33 and 50 percent) reported that their schools did so for mathematics, and even fewer (13 and 21 percent) reported that their schools did so for sciences. The responding principals from traditional schools were more likely than charter school principals to say that they assigned students to classes based on achievement. The reasons for this finding are not clear, but results are quite similar when school level (elementary only, elementary/secondary, or secondary only) is held constant. This suggests that differences in the grade levels represented in each group do not explain the pattern. Among schools represented by principal survey respondents, charter schools were modestly larger than traditional schools, even holding school level constant, so differences in school size (with larger schools having more tracking) also do not explain the finding. However, the pattern does appear to be driven by RSD rather than OPSB schools. Specifically, the percentage of RSD charter and traditional school principals (n = 4 charter and 10 traditional) reporting that they assigned students to classes based on achievement was 50 percent and 100 percent, respectively, in English/language arts; 25 percent and 70 percent, respectively, in mathematics; and 0 percent and 30 percent, respectively, in sciences. The corresponding percentages among OPSB and BESE principals (n = 5 charter and 4 traditional) were 100 percent and 50 percent in ELA, 40 percent and 0 percent in mathematics, and 20 percent and 0 percent in sciences. Thus, among principals responding to the survey, the assignment of students to classes according to achievement was more prevalent in traditional schools within the RSD and in charter schools within the OPSB and BESE.

Teacher respondents from charter schools (n = 136 in 36 schools) reported that their classes averaged 22 students with a range from 3 to 48, whereas those in traditional schools (n = 80 in 21 schools) reported an average class size of 24 students with a range from 3 to 54. Charter school teachers reported slightly smaller classes on average.[2] With regard to resources in their classrooms, teachers reported that they had an average of six to seven computers for use in their classrooms, with no notable difference between charter and traditional schools.

The majority of teachers in both types of schools reported using a year-long plan or syllabus to guide teaching, though the proportion was higher in traditional schools, at 94 percent, than in charter schools, at 78 percent. Table 4.5 also indicates that a majority of teachers in both charter and traditional schools said that they were able to keep up with the plan throughout the year. Only about one in five teachers indicated that they could "rarely" keep up with their year long plan, with little difference between charter and traditional school teachers.

Table 4.5 also summarizes how much time teachers reported having devoted to specific teaching methods. The approximate percentages of time teachers reported are based on the midpoints of categories that included not only 0 percent but also 1–25, 26–50, 50–75, and 76–100 percent. Among the choices, teachers reported devoting the most time to teaching higher-order thinking skills, at roughly 30 percent, and the least time to thematic construction, at roughly 12 percent. Teachers' self-reports about the amount of time they spent teaching using each teaching method did not differ notably between charter and traditional schools.

With regard to teaching strategies, responding teachers in both charter and traditional schools reported that their students worked collaboratively two to four times a week. They also reported dividing their teaching time about evenly between teaching the whole class, teach-

[2] In question 15 of the teacher survey (see Appendix C), teachers were asked, "How many students do you have in the first language arts/mathematics class of the week that you teach?"

ing in small groups, and overseeing their students working individually. Interestingly, charter school teachers said that they spent a modestly larger share of time than traditional school teachers on whole-class instruction (41 versus 35 percent of their time).[3]

Homework

Table 4.6 presents teachers' and parents' survey responses regarding homework. Ninety-six percent of charter school teachers (n = 138 in 36 schools) and 79 percent traditional school teachers (n = 81 in 21 schools) reported that they assigned homework at least three days per week. About one-third of teachers in both types of schools who said that they assigned homework reportedly asked parents to sign their child's homework. When they were required to sign homework, between half and three-fifths of parents complied, according to the teacher respondents.

Turning to Table 4.7, we find that a large majority of parents in both charter schools (92 percent) and in traditional schools (80 percent) reported that their child spent at least 20 minutes doing homework on most days. Meanwhile, similar numbers of parents reported helping their children with homework: 59 percent of charter school parents and 52 percent of traditional school parents reported doing so at least three days per week.[4]

Table 4.6
Teacher-Reported Practices on Homework Assignments and Help, by School Type

Category	Charter	Traditional
Percentage of teachers		
Assigning homework at least three days per week	96%	79%
Requiring that parents sign homework (conditional on assigning homework)	33%	31%
Reporting parents signed homework (conditional on requiring parental signature)	61%	53%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: n = 138 charter and 81 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

[3] We also examined whether the differences between charter school and traditional school teachers' reports were similar in RSD schools and OPSB and BESE schools. Among the practices reported in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, we found no substantively meaningful differences by district except for the proportion of time spent on whole-class instruction. Overall, as we have noted, charter school teachers reported spending a slightly larger proportion of their time than traditional school teachers on whole-class instruction. When restricted to RSD school teachers alone, the groups were similar, with charter school teachers saying that they spent 39 percent of their time on whole-class instruction, versus 37 percent of traditional school teachers (n = 83 charter school teachers in three schools and 70 traditional school teachers in 18 schools). However, among OPSB and BESE teachers, the reported gap was larger, with charter school teachers reportedly spending 42 percent of their time on whole-class instruction, as opposed to 24 percent reported by teachers in traditional schools (n = 56 charter school teachers in 13 schools and 10 traditional school teachers in three schools).

[4] With regard to homework policies, neither teacher-reported nor parent-reported differences between charter and traditional schools were notably different in RSD schools as opposed to OPSB and BESE schools.

Table 4.7
Parent-Reported Practices on Homework Assignments and Help, by School Type

Category	Charter	Traditional
Percentage of parents		
Reporting child does 20 or more minutes of homework	92%	80%
Helping students with homework at least three days per week	59%	52%

SOURCES: 2009 RAND Surveys of New Orleans Teachers and Parents.

NOTE: n = 93 charter and 55 traditional school parents nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools.

Use of Test Results

All 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals reported receiving results from the state's accountability tests (LEAP, iLEAP, and GEE).[5] Principals reported receiving these results for the school as a whole, and most reported receiving them at grade, classroom, and individual student levels for both English/language arts and mathematics. Principals in both categories of schools similarly reported using the results of these tests moderately to extensively to improve student performance. They said that their schools used these tests to adjust the curriculum, assign students to tutoring, group students for instruction, shape the content of staff development, and allocate the year's school resources.

In charter schools, 70 percent of teacher respondents reported having received and reviewed the results from the state accountability tests, as did 61 percent of teacher respondents from traditional schools. As shown in Table 4.8, an even larger proportion of teachers in both types of schools reported administering progress tests required by their districts or schools periodically throughout the year. However, among the teachers who reported administering progress tests, the proportion administering the tests at least monthly was higher in traditional schools, at 36 percent, than in charter schools, at 15 percent. Teachers who used progress tests reported that the results of these tests became available within one to three weeks of their administration, on average, unlike the state tests, for which results are available only annually.

Teachers in charter and traditional schools who reported using progress test results described using them similarly, as is also shown in Table 4.8. In both charter and traditional schools, about half of these teachers reported using the tests "extensively" to identify students needing remedial assistance, identify curricular gaps, identify areas that they need to strengthen in their instruction, tailor instruction to students' needs, and to assign students to groups or tasks. About a third reportedly used them to plan curricular or instructional improvements, and fewer than a third said that they used them to develop or revise IEPs or to increase parent involvement.[6]

[5] Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, and Graduation Exit Examination.

[6] When we examined whether the relationship between charter and traditional school teachers' reports was different in the RSD versus the OPSB and BESE, we did find that a lower proportion of teachers reported administering progress tests in OPSB or BESE charter schools (49 percent) than in OPSB traditional schools (73 percent), RSD charter schools (90 percent), and RSD traditional schools (83 percent). With regard to the frequency of progress testing and use of progress test results, the relationships reported by charter and traditional school teachers were not notably different in RSD than in OPSB or BESE schools.

Table 4.8
Teacher-Reported Access to and Use of Test Score Data, by School Type

Category	Charter	Traditional
Administered progress tests	73%	81%
Administered progress tests at least monthly, among those who administered them at all	15%	36%
Used progress tests "extensively" to do the following, conditional on using them at all:		
Identify students needing assistance	54%	52%
Identify and correct gaps in the curriculum	46%	41%
Identify teaching skills that need strengthening	48%	53%
Tailor instruction to students' needs	52%	41%
Assign or reassign students to group or task	48%	47%
Plan curricular or instructional improvement	33%	36%
Develop or revise Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities	20%	29%
Improve or increase the involvement of parents in student learning	18%	20%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.
NOTE: n = 139 charter and 81 traditional school teachers nested within 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

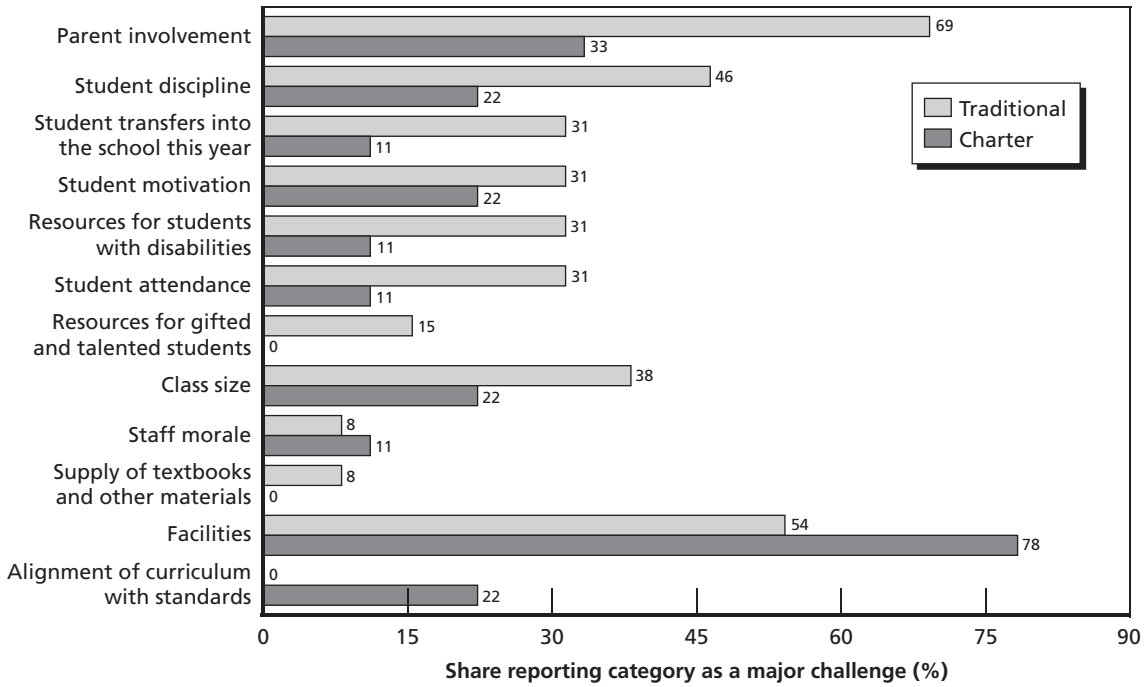
Challenges to Improving Student Performance

We asked principals and teachers to rate the extent to which several factors posed a challenge to improving student achievement at their schools. The proportion of respondents who rated each challenge as "major" (as opposed to "moderate," "minor," or "not a challenge") is shown in Figure 4.2 for principals and in Figure 4.3 for teachers. Among principals, traditional school respondents reported that parent involvement was the greatest challenge, on average, whereas among charter school respondents, facilities were rated as the greatest challenge. With the exception of facilities, alignment of curriculum with standards, and staff morale, traditional school respondents were more likely than their charter school counterparts to rate the remaining categories as major challenges.

Turning to teachers' responses, which are summarized in Figure 4.3, we find that the categories ranked most frequently as major challenges by teachers closely mirror those chosen by the principals, with parent involvement and student discipline rated near the top by traditional school respondents. A key exception is facilities, which only a small proportion of charter and traditional school teachers rated as a major challenge, unlike charter school principal respondents.

As we observed among principal respondents, teachers in traditional schools were considerably more likely than their charter school counterparts to rate each of the potential challenges as "major." In the teachers' case, the only exception was aligning curriculum with standards, which was rated as a major challenge by 8 percent of charter and 5 percent of traditional school teachers. Figure 4.3 indicates some differences of interest between charter and traditional school teachers' views on the challenges to improving student performance. Some of the largest differences involve the teachers' perceptions of parental involvement, student discipline,

Figure 4.2
Principals Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance



SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.
NOTE: n = 10 charter and 13 traditional school principals.
RAND *TR1145-4.2*

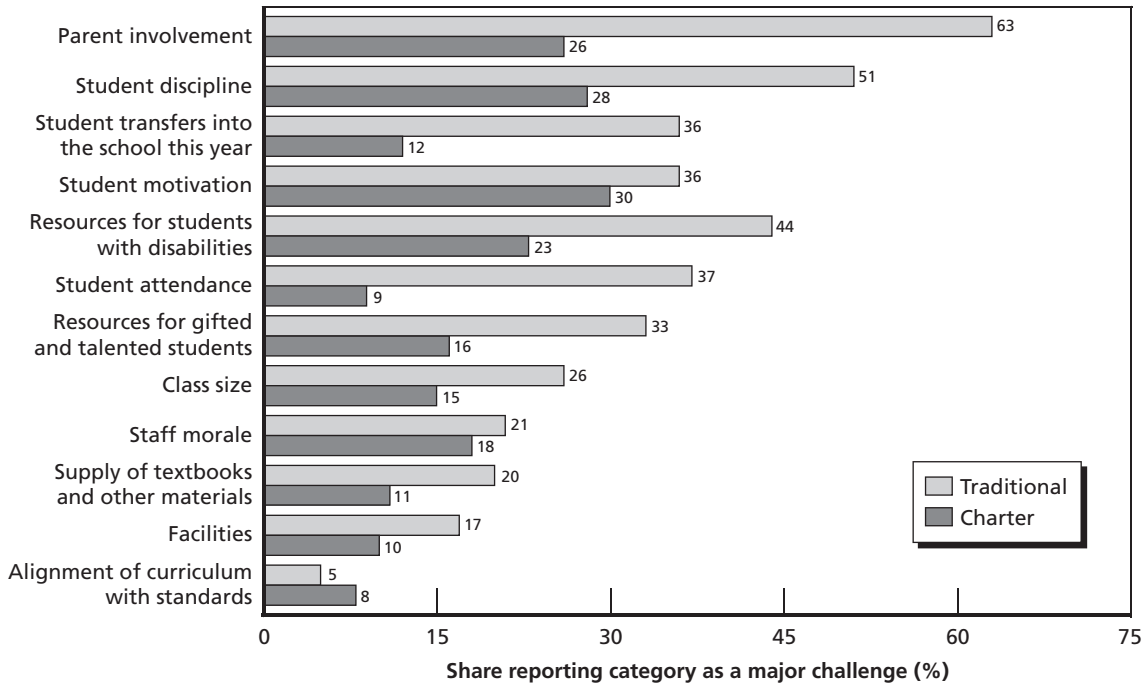
student transfers during the school year, resources for students with disabilities, student attendance, and resources for gifted students.[7]

For the 17 schools in which both principals and teachers responded to a question about the challenges they faced, we also examined similarities and differences in their responses by school type, as shown for charter school principals and teachers in Figure 4.4 and for traditional school principals and teachers in Figure 4.5.[8] Bearing in mind that this analysis examines only the small subset of schools with both principal and teacher responses to the question, we find that charter school principals and teachers differed mainly in terms of their concern about school facilities. Seventy-eight percent of these principals indicated that facilities were a major challenge, though only 5 percent of teacher respondents in these schools agreed. This discrepancy may reflect the fact that charter school principals have a greater responsibility than their teachers for finding and maintaining adequate school facilities. Also noteworthy is the fact that teachers in this subset of charter schools were more sanguine about most aspects of their schools than were their principals, other than resources for gifted students and the supply of textbooks and other materials. Responding principals in this subset were considerably more

[7] We found that none of the differences between charter and traditional school teachers reported in Figure 4.3 were markedly different in the RSD alone as opposed to OPSB or BESE districts, though within a given school type (charter or traditional), the challenges were reported to be greater, on average, in the RSD than in the OPSB or BESE.

[8] We report in Chapter Two that 19 schools had overlapping principal and teacher respondents, but principals from only 17 of those schools responded to the survey question about challenges to improving student performance.

Figure 4.3
Teachers Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance



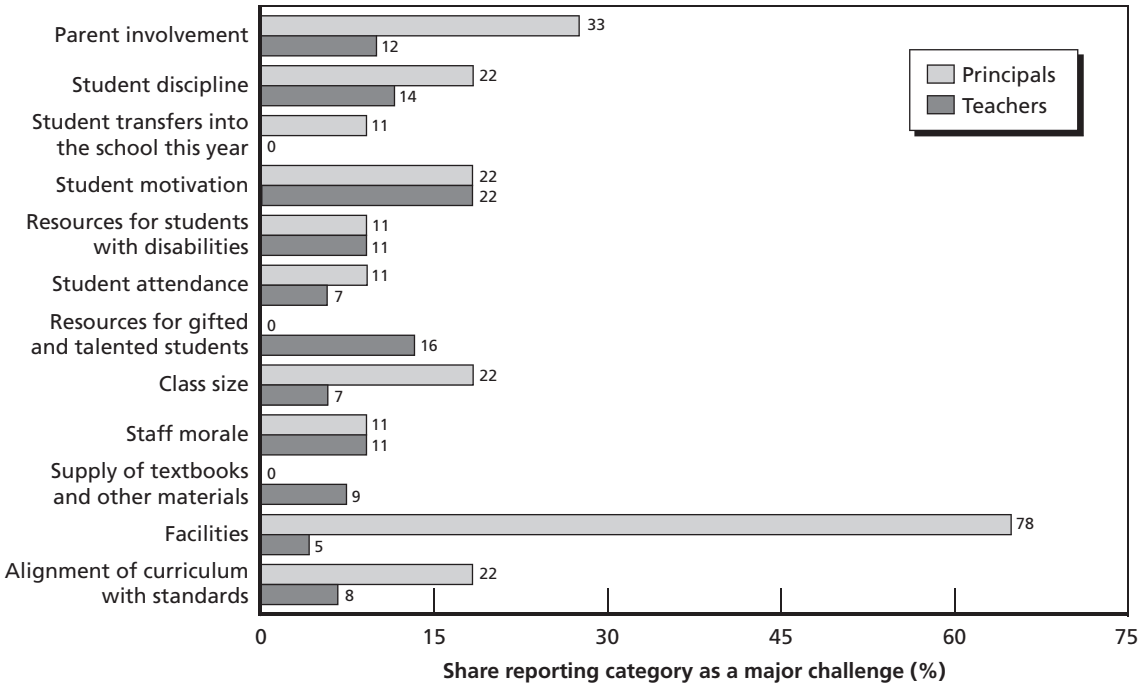
SOURCES: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.
NOTE: n = 138 charter and 82 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.
RAND *TR1145-4.3*

likely than their responding teachers to rate parent involvement, student discipline, and class size as major challenges.

We also found few large discrepancies between principals and teachers in the subset of traditional schools that they had in common, as shown in Figure 4.5. Again, however, principals were much more likely than their teachers to rate facilities as a major challenge (50 percent versus 13 percent). Teachers were again more sanguine than principals in most categories, with the exception in this case of resources for students with disabilities, student attendance, staff morale, and alignment of curriculum with standards.

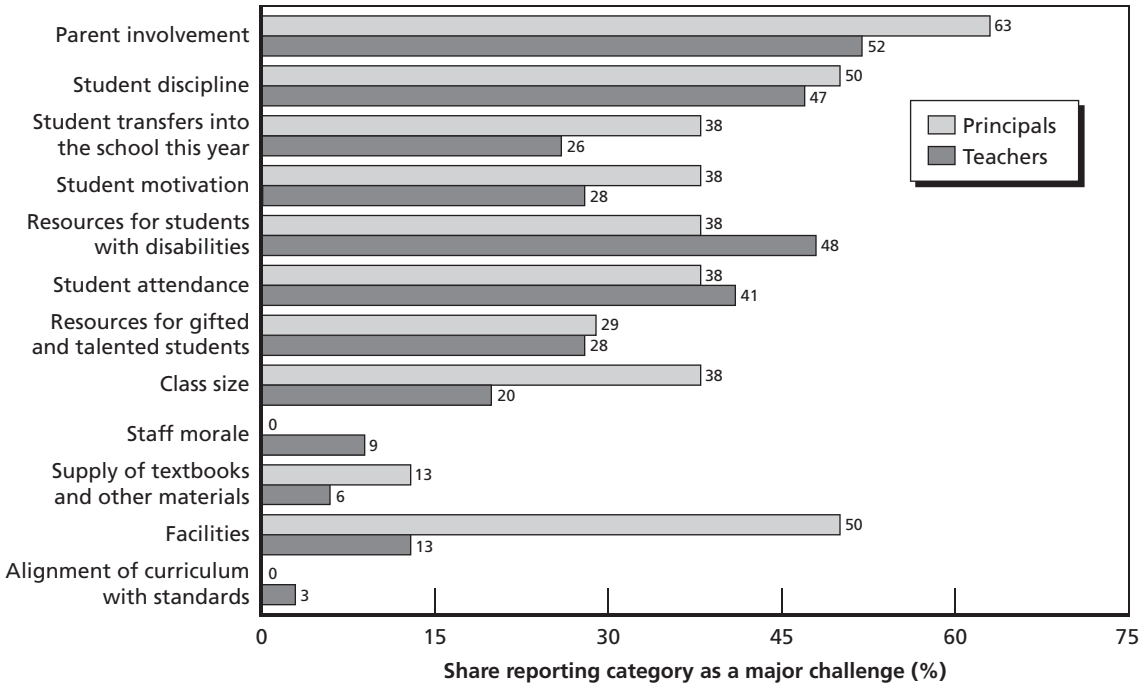
Once again, a comparison of Figure 4.4 with Figure 4.5 shows that both principals and teachers in traditional schools identified more categories as major challenges than did their charter school counterparts, though it is worth noting that 56 percent of the charter schools in this subset belonged to the OPSB or BESE, as opposed to only 25 percent of traditional schools in the subset. However, only three of the charter schools and none of the traditional schools in the subset were selective admission schools.

Figure 4.4
Charter School Principals and Teachers Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance in the Schools They Have in Common



SOURCES: 2009 RAND Surveys of New Orleans Principals and Teachers.
NOTE: n = 9 principals and 47 teachers nested in 9 charter schools.
RAND *TR1145-4.4*

Figure 4.5
Traditional School Principals and Teachers Who Reported Each Category as a "Major" Challenge to Improving Student Performance in the Schools They Have in Common



SOURCES: 2009 RAND Surveys of New Orleans Principals and Teachers.
NOTE: n = 8 principals and 24 teachers nested in 8 traditional schools.
RAND *TR1145-4.5*

CHAPTER FIVE

Educator Qualifications and Mobility

The principal and teacher surveys were also designed to capture information about the qualifications of teachers and administrators working in New Orleans charter and traditional schools. In this chapter, we present principals' and teachers' responses regarding their schools' staffing practices, teacher preparation, hiring, qualifications, salaries and incentives, professional development experiences, and anticipated mobility, in addition to information about principals' backgrounds, qualifications, and professional development experiences.

Staffing Practices

On average, charter school principals reported employing more full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers and paraprofessionals than did their traditional school counterparts: Charter principals (n = 9) said that they employed an average of 43 teachers and nine paraprofessionals per school, whereas principals at traditional schools (n = 13) reported employing an average of 30 teachers and six paraprofessionals. However, differences in enrollment size among the responding principals' schools partially account for this difference in the number of teachers employed. Charter school principals also reported employing a greater number of noninstructional school staff, such as nurses and counselors, with an average of seven in charter schools versus five in traditional schools. In addition, charter school principals reported that their schools employed a greater number of administrators, with an average of six, compared to two administrators per traditional school, on average.

With regard to hiring, principal respondents reported hiring an average of six teachers per school in the 2008–09 academic year. The average number of new teacher hires reported among charter school principals was 11, versus four among the 14 traditional school principals who responded. In addition, 23 principal respondents (nine from charter schools and 14 from traditional schools) reported on the hiring sources of these teachers. Overall, they reported that 10 percent were hired through Teach for America, 26 percent through Teach NOLA, and 10 percent directly from traditional licensure programs. Thirty-nine percent were reported to be experienced New Orleans teachers, and 15 percent were reportedly experienced teachers from outside New Orleans.

As shown in Table 5.1, charter school respondents reported hiring a larger share of teachers directly from traditional licensure programs than did traditional school respondents (16 percent versus 7 percent), as well as a smaller share of corps members from the alternative preparation program Teach for America (2 percent versus 15 percent).

Table 5.1
2008–09 Newly Hired Teachers from Each Source, by School Type

Hiring Source	Charter	Traditional
Teach for America	2%	15%
Teach NOLA	40%	15%
Traditional licensure program	16%	7%
Experienced New Orleans teacher	26%	49%
Experienced teacher from outside New Orleans	16%	14%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTES: Categories are not mutually exclusive. n = 9 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

This finding is somewhat counterintuitive, since both charter schools and alternative preparation routes such as Teach for America constitute nontraditional approaches to the provision of public schooling in the United States. However, it is likely that traditional schools hired more Teach for America corps members than charter schools did because RSD traditional schools faced the greatest hiring challenges in the city in the years shortly after Katrina, and thus they came to rely considerably on Teach for America as a recruiting source (Cowen Institute, 2008). In fact, the district maintained a contract with Teach for America to hire a particular number of its corps members each year (e.g., 30 in 2009–10), though the contracts were reportedly nonbinding (Carr, 2009a). Moreover, placing teachers in underserved schools is consistent with Teach for America's stated mission. To examine whether the RSD was in fact driving the patterns shown in Table 5.1, we disaggregated the results by district in addition to school type. Indeed, only RSD principals reported hiring from Teach for America at all. In contrast, responding principals from OPSB and BESE schools reported that all of their new hires in traditional schools and 46 percent of their new hires in charter schools were experienced teachers from either within or outside the city.

Principals who said that they had hired teachers from any source summarized in Table 5.1 were asked to rate their satisfaction with each source on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 representing "very dissatisfied" and 4 representing "very satisfied." Overall, experienced teachers and those from traditional licensure programs received the highest principal ratings, at 3.4 for experienced teachers from outside New Orleans and 3.3 for graduates of traditional licensure programs and experienced New Orleans teachers. Principals were slightly less satisfied with Teach for America teachers (average rating 2.8) and Teach NOLA teachers (average rating 3.0). Ratings were similar for both charter and traditional schools principals.

Hiring Needs and Priorities

Among the 24 respondents, principals reported having the greatest teacher hiring difficulties in science, mathematics, and foreign languages, with 25 percent reporting difficulties in science, 21 percent in foreign languages, 17 percent in mathematics. Thirteen percent reported hiring difficulties in English/language arts, though one respondent clarified that the difficulty lay in hiring teachers of gifted students. Though challenges in hiring special education teachers have been well-documented nationally (Boe, Bobbitt, and Cook, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003), only

4 percent of responding principals reported difficulties hiring special education teachers in New Orleans. These percentages did not differ notably between charter and traditional schools.

We also examined whether principals in charter and traditional schools prioritized different qualifications in the process of hiring teachers. Table 5.2 presents the relative importance principals said that they placed on various teaching candidate qualifications. They evaluated each criterion on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 meant "not at all important" and 4 meant "very important."

As shown in the table, ratings from charter school and traditional school principals were similar. Both groups of principals assigned higher importance to licensure status, familiarity with local students and families, and years of experience than to measures of academic or real-world proficiency, such as college selectivity and work experiences outside schools. This pattern is consistent with other research suggesting that principals assign more weight to teachers' sensitivity, experience, and subject-matter knowledge than to general intelligence proxies, which they may associate with higher rates of turnover (Ballou, 1996; D. N. Harris et al., 2010). Charter school principals assigned less importance to in-field college majors and more importance to graduation from a selective institution than did traditional school principals, but these were the only notable differences between the two groups.

Teacher Qualifications and Experience

Teachers, too, were asked about their training backgrounds and teaching experience. Forty-eight percent of teachers responding to the survey indicated that they had pursued teacher licensure while earning their bachelor's degrees—44 percent among charter school teachers and 51 percent among traditional school teachers, as shown in Table 5.3. Charter school teachers were more likely to report having pursued traditional licenses after earning their bachelor's degrees, at 20 percent versus 12 percent.

Table 5.3 further illustrates that the proportion of teachers who trained through alternative routes was similar in both groups: 12 to 14 percent of charter and traditional school teach-

Table 5.2
Principals' Mean Ratings of the Importance of Various Teacher Criteria in Hiring Decisions, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type

Criteria	Charter	Traditional
Full standard state credential for field to be taught	3.8	3.8
Passage of a state teacher licensure test	3.7	3.8
Familiarity with New Orleans students and families	3.4	3.4
Years of teaching experience	3.3	3.4
College major in field to be taught	3.1	3.9
Noneducation skills or real world experience	2.8	2.7
Graduation from a highly selective college or university	2.7	2.3

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTES: 1 = "not at all important" to 4 = "very important." n = 9 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

Table 5.3
Teachers Who Reported Receiving Each Type of Teacher Preparation, by School Type

Preparation Route	Charter	Traditional
Traditional licensure program while earning bachelor's degree	44%	51%
Traditional licensure program after earning bachelor's degree	20%	12%
Alternative route	17%	14%
Teach for America	14%	12%
Teach NOLA	6%	6%
No formal training	1%	1%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTES: Categories are not mutually exclusive, though only four teachers reported multiple categories. n = 142 charter and 86 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

ers reported training through Teach for America, whereas 5 percent of both groups reported training through Teach NOLA, and 14 to 17 percent reported training through another alternative route.[1]

Eighty-two percent of teacher respondents reported being highly qualified under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* to teach all of their classes in 2008–09. Highly qualified status under this legislation indicates that they were licensed and had demonstrated mastery (through coursework or passing a test) in the particular subjects they taught (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The percentage reporting themselves to be highly qualified was slightly higher in traditional schools, at 85 percent, than in charter schools, at 80 percent. In aggregate, the share of respondents reporting that they held a full Louisiana teaching certificate in 2008–09 was 70 percent. This percentage was modestly higher in traditional schools than in charter schools (76 and 65 percent, respectively). Meanwhile, a somewhat larger share of charter school teachers (30 percent) than their traditional school counterparts (21 percent) reported that they were actively pursuing licensure.[2]

The reported distribution of teachers' educational levels was quite similar in charter and traditional schools, as shown in Table 5.4. Thirty percent of charter school teacher respondents said that they held advanced degrees, versus 27 percent of traditional school teachers. Only a very small percentage of teachers in either group reported holding an education specialist degree or doctorate.[3]

The most common subject in which teacher respondents said that they held a degree was elementary education (43 percent), followed closely by a social science (21 percent), with the latter category encompassing such subjects as history, psychology, sociology, and other

[1] Differences between charter and traditional schools in the reported preparation routes of their teachers were also very similar in both RSD and OPSB/BESE schools.

[2] These differences by school type were not notably different in RSD versus OPSB and BESE schools, though a larger share of teachers by about 18 percentage points reported being fully licensed in OPSB and BESE than in RSD schools.

[3] Moreover, these patterns of similarity between charter and traditional schools also occur when disaggregating schools by district.

Table 5.4
Highest Degrees Held by Teachers in Charter and Traditional Schools, by School Type

Highest Degree	Charter	Traditional
Bachelor's degree	69%	73%
Master's degree	28%	25%
Education specialist	1%	1%
Doctorate	1%	1%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: n = 137 charter and 81 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

Table 5.5
Teachers Who Reported Holding a Bachelor's Degree or Higher in the Listed Subjects, by School Type

Degree Subject	Charter	Traditional
Elementary education	39%	44%
Social sciences	20%	23%
English/language arts	18%	17%
Secondary education	11%	18%
Mathematics	9%	10%
Arts/music/humanities	6%	1%
Foreign languages	5%	0%
Special education	4%	6%
Business/finance	5%	3%
Early childhood education	4%	2%
Educational administration	2%	7%
Computer science	1%	0%
Natural sciences	1%	2%
English as a second language	1%	1%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTES: Categories are not mutually exclusive so columns may not sum to 100 percent. n = 142 charter and 86 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

social sciences. As shown in Table 5.5, this pattern held for both charter and traditional school respondents.

In terms of number of years in the profession, teachers in traditional schools reported having more experience, on average, than their counterparts in charter schools. The average number of years of total teaching experience for charter school teachers (n = 138 nested within

36 schools) was 9.7 years; the range was from 1 to 35, and the median was five years). In contrast, the mean among traditional school teachers (n = 81) was 13.0 years. The range was from 1 to 45 years, and the median was 10 years. A similar pattern emerged regarding the length of time these teachers said that they had taught within the city of New Orleans: an average of 8.3 years for charter school teachers (median = 3), versus 11.3 for traditional school teachers (median = 9).[4]

Salaries and Financial Incentives

Traditional school teachers reported earning higher salaries, on average, than their counterparts working in charter schools. Given that teachers' salaries are generally tied to their experience levels in New Orleans and elsewhere (Odden, 2000; Vigdor, 2008), this pattern is consistent with the higher reported years of experience among the teachers at traditional schools. Using midpoints of the salary ranges in which teachers classified themselves, we estimated an average annual salary of $46,232 among traditional school teachers and $43,677 among charter school teachers. However, when years of experience were held constant, the average salary difference between traditional and charter schools decreased notably, to just over $600 per year.[5]

With regard to additional financial incentives, as shown in Table 5.6, charter school teachers reported greater availability of funding for classroom-related activities, whereas traditional school teachers reported greater availability of funding for items related to salary or professional growth. For instance, charter school teachers reported a greater availability of stipends

Table 5.6
Teachers Who Reported That Particular Financial Incentives Were Offered at Their Schools and, If Offered, Whether They Expected to Receive Such Incentives in the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type

	Incentives Offered (%)		If Offered, % Who Expected to Receive Incentives	
Incentive Type	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Stipend to cover classroom expenses	74%	47%	69%	28%
Recruitment bonus	41%	57%	10%	29%
Retention bonus	45%	64%	24%	40%
Salary increase or bonus for reaching educational/professional goals	57%	64%	48%	35%
Salary increase or bonus for daily attendance	47%	45%	23%	5%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: n = 136 charter and 80 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

[4] When we examined whether charter and traditional school differences in teachers' reported education and experience levels varied by district, we did not find notable differences between RSD and OPSB or BESE schools. Average years of experience were about four years lower in the RSD on average than in OPSB and BESE schools, however.

[5] The gap between charter and traditional school compensation did not differ notably in RSD as opposed to OPSB and BESE schools.

to cover their classroom expenses than did traditional school teachers in the response sample, and among those who said that such stipends were offered, a larger percentage of responding teachers in charter schools expected to receive them. However, traditional school teachers reported greater availability of retention bonuses ($p = 0.042$), as well as bonuses for recruitment and for reaching educational or professional goals.[6]

Professional Development

Teachers who provided information about their professional development experiences ($n = 216$) reported receiving an average of 78 hours of professional development in the 2008–09 academic year, including the summer of 2008 (range from 0 to 720, median = 60). The mean number of hours reported by traditional school teachers was higher than for charter school teachers, at 91 and 70 hours, respectively (range: 3 to 720 and 0 to 400, respectively).

Table 5.7 presents teachers' reported hours of professional development provided by the state, district, school, or charter operating organization during the summer of 2008, during an average month of the 2008–09 school year, and overall during the year. Responses are disaggregated by professional development topic, such as instructional strategies and content knowledge in various subject areas, preparing students for testing, using student achievement data, implementing student discipline, and using technology for instruction. Overall, teachers reported receiving the greatest amount of professional development in instructional strategies or content knowledge for English/language arts, mathematics, and other subjects; in analyzing student achievement data; and in using technology to improve instruction. During the summer and school year combined, charter school teachers reported receiving fewer hours of professional development than traditional school teachers did in every topic area, and particularly with regard to state test preparation, student discipline, and technology training.[7]

Though in most categories traditional school teacher respondents reported receiving considerably more hours of professional development than their charter school counterparts, traditional and charter school teachers reported participating in various kinds of professional development at similar rates (see Table 5.8), with instructional strategies for English language learners (ELLs) and special education students having the lowest participation rates, probably as a result of the relatively small numbers of these students in the schools. Charter school and traditional school teachers also provided similar ratings of the usefulness of each type of professional development. On a scale of 1 to 3 (with 1 indicating little learning from the professional development experience, and 3 indicating not only learning but applying that learning to their teaching), teachers gave the highest usefulness ratings—between 2.5 and 2.8 on average—to instructional strategies and content knowledge in mathematics and English/language arts, preparing students for assessments, implementing student discipline, analyzing student achievement data, and using technology to improve instruction. The largest differences in usefulness ratings between charter and traditional school teachers lay in professional development for

[6] We did estimate that, relative to teachers in RSD schools, those in OPSB or BESE schools were markedly less likely to say that their schools offered recruitment bonuses, retention bonuses, or salary bonuses for reaching their goals. Also, the estimates were lowest in OPSB traditional schools.

[7] The total number of professional development hours teachers reported receiving in charter and traditional schools did not differ notably between the RSD schools and those under OPSB or BESE jurisdiction.

Table 5.7
Reported Hours of Teacher Professional Development During Summer 2008 and the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type

	Total Hours (Summer Plus School Year)		Summer 2008		Monthly During School Year	
Professional Development Topic	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching language arts/ mathematics	108.8	127.9	8.2	12.8	11.2	12.8
Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching other academic subjects (e.g., science, social studies, foreign language)	49.1	78.1	4.0	2.9	5.0	8.4
Instructional strategies for ELLs	6.5	17.4	0.9	2.5	0.6	1.7
Instructional strategies for students with IEPs	14.6	28.7	1.7	1.7	1.4	3.0
Preparing students to take the annual state assessment	21.7	66.0	3.9	4.5	2.0	6.8
Analyzing and interpreting student achievement data	34.9	82.9	4.6	4.0	3.4	8.8
Student discipline or positive behavior support	32.9	71.2	4.5	5.8	3.2	7.3
Use of technology to improve classroom instruction	28.3	81.0	3.3	4.9	2.8	8.5
Other professional development	23.9	24.4	3.2	1.7	2.3	2.5

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: n = 134 charter and 79 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

technology usage, where charter school teachers provided an average rating of 2.8, as opposed to the average rating of 2.5 provided by traditional school teachers, and in instructional strategies for students with IEPs, where the average ratings were 2.3 and 2.0, respectively.[8]

When asked about the professional growth and development opportunities available to them in their schools, at least 90 percent of both charter and traditional school teachers who responded reported that their schools offered release time, such as a planning period, for course preparation (see Table 5.9). Similarly, over 90 percent of those who said that such planning time was available reported that they had received or expected to receive it. However, a substantially larger share of teachers in traditional schools than in charter schools (94 percent versus 76 percent) reported that release time was available for collaborating with other teachers. Mentoring and induction plans had similar rates of availability in both charter and traditional school teachers' reports (64 percent and 66 percent, respectively). However, the percentage expecting to take part in such plans was fairly low, at 56 percent in charter schools and 28 percent in traditional schools, because many survey respondents were not, themselves, novice teachers. The difference between expected takeup rates at charter and traditional schools remained, however,

[8] The reported usefulness ratings among charter and traditional school teachers were not notably different in the RSD schools than in OPSB and BESE schools.

Table 5.8
Teachers Who Participated in Each Type of Professional Development and Mean Usefulness Ratings by Participants, Based on a Three-Point Scale, by School Type

	% of Sample Who Participated		Usefulness Rating by Participants	
Professional Development Topic	**Charter**	**Traditional**	**Charter**	**Traditional**
Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching language arts/mathematics	77%	75%	2.7	2.5
Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching other academic subjects (e.g., science, social studies, foreign language)	51%	47%	2.2	2.3
Instructional strategies for ELLs	26%	22%	2.2	2.2
Instructional strategies for students with IEPs	49%	45%	2.3	2.0
Preparing students to take the annual state assessment	63%	63%	2.6	2.4
Analyzing and interpreting student achievement data	71%	61%	2.5	2.5
Student discipline and positive behavior support	60%	71%	2.6	2.5
Use of technology to improve classroom instruction	62%	74%	2.8	2.5

SOURCE: RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: 1 = "did not learn very much," 2 = "learned but did not apply to my teaching," and 3 = "learned and applied to my teaching." n = 142 charter and 86 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

even when teachers' reported years of experience were held constant. Teachers reported that release time for taking college courses was less available, on average, in traditional than in charter schools (34 percent versus 42 percent). However, stipends for professional development participation were reportedly more common in traditional schools (81 percent versus 63 percent). Teachers' anticipated use of release time or stipends for higher education was reported at less than 30 percent regardless of school type.[9] Teachers also reported on the extent to which support was available from their districts, schools, and fellow teachers in the areas of instructional improvement, lesson plan preparation, student support and discipline, data use, and help for students with disabilities. In addition, they reported on their satisfaction with each type of support that was offered. As shown in Table 5.10, teachers in both charter and traditional schools reported high levels of availability of each type of support we asked about. The largest difference between teachers from the two school types was in the percentage reporting that they received support for helping students with disabilities. Specifically, 94 percent of charter school respondents and 85 percent of traditional school respondents reported receiving such support.

[9] When we investigated whether differences in the availability of these professional development opportunities in charter and traditional schools varied by school district, we found that higher education funding and professional development stipends were reportedly less available in RSD charter schools than in RSD traditional schools, OPSB and BESE charter schools, and OPSB traditional schools. For instance, 37 percent of RSD charter school teachers reported that funding was available for higher education, versus between 60 and 69 percent of teachers in the other groups. Similarly, 48 percent of RSD charter school teachers reported that stipends were available for professional development, versus between 80 and 86 percent of teachers in the other groups. Despite these differences, we found no substantial differences between RSD and OPSB or BESE schools in the expected takeup rates of each opportunity among charter versus traditional school teachers.

Table 5.9
Teachers Who Reported That Particular Types of Professional Development Opportunities Were Offered at Their Schools and, If Offered, Whether They Expected to Participate in the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type

	Opportunity Was Offered		If Offered, % who Expected to Participate	
Professional Development Opportunity	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Release time for course preparation, such as a planning period	90%	95%	94%	91%
Release time to work with other teachers	76%	94%	91%	86%
Sustained mentoring or induction program for new teachers	64%	66%	56%	28%
Peer coaching	66%	71%	56%	45%
Release time to take college courses	42%	34%	17%	8%
Funding to take higher education courses	51%	64%	28%	19%
Stipend for professional development	63%	81%	58%	62%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: n = 138 charter school teachers and 80 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

Table 5.10
Teacher-Reported Availability of and Satisfaction with Various Sources of Support, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type

	% Who Report Support Was Offered		Satisfaction with Support If Offered	
Sources of Support	Charter	Traditional	Charter	Traditional
Improving instructional skills	96%	96%	2.9	2.7
Preparing lesson plans	85%	88%	2.8	2.9
Helping students who are falling behind	98%	92%	2.5	2.1
Using assessment data to identify areas of instructional or student need	87%	94%	2.9	2.5
Supporting students with disabilities	94%	85%	2.5	2.0
Maintaining classroom discipline	94%	93%	2.7	2.2

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.

NOTE: 1 = "very dissatisfied" to 4 = "very satisfied." n = 138 charter and 81 traditional school teachers nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools.

Teachers also rated their satisfaction with each type of available support on a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 indicating "very dissatisfied" and 4 indicating "very satisfied"). As shown in Table 5.10, teachers in charter and traditional schools reported similar levels of satisfaction with the support available for improving instructional skills and preparing lesson plans. However, respondents from traditional schools were reportedly less satisfied than charter school respondents with the support available for helping students who were falling behind, for using assessment

data to identify areas of instruction or individual students in need of more attention, for supporting students with disabilities, and for maintaining classroom discipline.[10]

Teacher Mobility

Because a substantial share of both charter and traditional school teachers arrived in the city in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, some researchers and educators have expressed concern that the city will not be able to retain high-quality teachers in the long term (Costa and Kirby, 2010; Cowen Institute, 2008). Consistent with their lower reported years of experience in the profession and in New Orleans schools, charter school teachers (n = 138 in 36 charter schools) reported having lived in New Orleans for less time, on average, than their traditional school counterparts (n = 81 in 21 traditional schools). Fifteen percent said that they had lived in the city for a year or less, versus only 7 percent of traditional school respondents. However, the proportion of teacher respondents who had lived in the city for fewer than six years was 64 percent in charter schools and 70 percent in traditional schools.[11]

We investigated teacher mobility in charter and traditional schools with questions on both the principal and teacher surveys. When asked what percentage of their schools' full-time teachers from the prior school year (2007–08) had returned in the 2008–09 academic year, charter school principal respondents (n = 10) reported that 87 percent of their teachers had returned from the prior year. The comparable figure reported by the 14 traditional school principal respondents was only slightly lower, at 81 percent.

Teacher survey respondents (138 charter and 82 traditional nested in 36 charter and 21 traditional schools) also reported on their plans for the following school year. Seventy-four percent said that they planned to return to their current schools the following year; 16 percent said that they did not. Ten percent of both charter and traditional school teachers said that they did not know what their plans for the next year entailed. However, a larger share of traditional school teachers than charter school teachers reported that they did not plan to return to the same school (23 percent versus 15 percent, respectively).

Among the 57 teachers who said that they did not plan to return to the same schools or were uncertain:

- Thirty percent (23 percent of charter and 40 percent of traditional school respondents) said that they were very likely to teach in a different school in the same district.
- Twenty percent (22 percent of charter and 17 percent of traditional school respondents) said that they were very likely to teach in a different district within New Orleans.
- Thirteen percent of both charter and traditional school respondents said that they were very likely to teach in a school somewhere other than New Orleans.

[10] We did not find that any of the differences between charter and traditional school teachers reported in Table 5.10 varied notably between the RSD schools and the OPSB and BESE schools with regard to either the availability of various kinds of support or teachers' reported satisfaction with that support.

[11] When we examined whether these small differences were similar in the RSD schools and the OPSB and BESE schools, we did find a few differences. Specifically, the proportion of teachers who reported living in New Orleans for a year or less was 19 percent in RSD charter schools, 8 percent in RSD traditional schools, 9 percent in OPSB and BESE charter schools, and only 4 percent in OPSB traditional schools. Focusing on the proportion of teachers who had lived in New Orleans six years or fewer, however, we did not find substantive differences in the effects of school type by district.

- Four percent (3 percent of charter and 4 percent of traditional school respondents) said that they were very likely to work in education but not as a K–12 teacher.
- Fifteen percent (13 percent of charter and 17 percent of traditional school respondents) said that they were very likely not to work in education.[12]

Principals' Background and Qualifications

Though our discussion of educator qualifications has focused thus far on teachers, we also asked principals about their own professional and academic backgrounds. Of charter school principals reporting (n = 9), one reported a bachelor's degree as the highest degree earned, six said that their highest degree was a master's, and two said that they had earned education specialist degrees. No traditional school principals responded to this question. In terms of their licensure status, six of nine responding charter school principals and all 13 responding traditional school principals reported that they held an administrative credential.

Similar to the sample of teacher respondents, principals in traditional schools said that they had more prior experience in the field of education than did their counterparts in charter schools. The average number of years of paid teaching experience reported by charter school principals was 13, ranging from 0 to 40, in contrast to 18 years (with a range from 6 to 31) among traditional school principals. The two groups of principals looked more similar, however, in terms of their reported experience working as principals. Years of experience as a principal (in any setting) ranged from 3 to 25 among responding charter school principals and from 1 to 26 years among responding traditional school principals, with an average of 9 years of experience for both groups. The median years of experience leading their current schools was reported to be 3 years in both groups.

Principals' Professional Development

We also asked principals about the amount and types of professional development they received from the school, district, or state during the summer of 2008 and in a typical month of the 2008–09 academic year. Unlike in the teacher sample, responding charter school principals reported receiving modestly more hours of professional development than their traditional school counterparts, at an average of 343 hours among charter school principals and 311 hours among traditional school principals during the summer and school year combined. As shown in Table 5.11, charter school principals reported devoting the most professional development hours to topics that included school management and governance, the analysis of

[12] Viewed from a district perspective, it is noteworthy that 89 percent of OPSB or BESE charter school teacher respondents and 90 percent of OPSB traditional school teacher respondents said that they planned to stay in their current schools the following year, as opposed to only 70 percent of RSD charter school teachers and 66 percent of RSD traditional school teachers. (In this analysis, n RSD charter = 82 teachers nested in 23 schools; n RSD traditional = 72 teachers nested in 18 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 56 teachers in 13 schools; n OPSB traditional = 10 teachers nested in three schools.) Among the 17 teachers who said that they were very likely to change schools but stay in the same district, 15 worked in RSD schools and two worked in BESE charter schools. Among the 11 who said that they were very likely to work in a different district in New Orleans, 10 worked in RSD schools and one worked in a BESE charter school.

Table 5.11
Principal-Reported Hours of Principal Professional Development During Summer 2008 and the 2008–09 Academic Year, by School Type

	Total Hours (Summer Plus School Year)		Summer 2008		Monthly During School Year	
Professional Development Topic	**Charter**	**Traditional**	**Charter**	**Traditional**	**Charter**	**Traditional**
School management or governance	66.2	25.3	16.2	3.5	5.6	2.4
Planning and budgeting	37.7	25.8	6.7	1.8	3.4	2.7
Family and community involvement	17.9	22.3	2.9	1.3	1.7	2.3
Instructional strategies for LEP students	4.6	2.5	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.3
Instructional strategies for students with IEPs	17.7	13.8	1.7	1.0	1.8	1.4
Alignment of curriculum and instruction with state or district content standards	57.7	24.0	10.7	0	5.2	2.7
Analyzing and interpreting student achievement data	61.7	50.9	9.7	1.4	5.8	5.5
Preparation of students to take the annual state assessments	20.4	56.8	1.4	1.3	2.1	6.2
Student discipline and positive behavior support	22.2	41.8	4.2	1.3	2.0	4.5
Use of educational technology	36.7	47.9	6.7	2.2	3.3	5.1

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTE: n = 9 charter and 12 traditional school principals.

student achievement data, and aligning curricula with standards. Traditional school principals reported the greatest focus on analysis of student achievement data and on preparing students to take the annual state assessment.

CHAPTER SIX

Parental Choice and Involvement

This chapter focuses on the dynamics of school choice as experienced by both schools and parents in the 2008–09 academic year. It also examines schools' outreach efforts to parents, as well as parents' involvement in and satisfaction with their children's schools. The chapter draws on data from the principal, teacher, and parent surveys, with a particular focus on the parent surveys.

Application and Admission Requirements

We asked principals about their applicant pools and transfer rates relative to the size of their student body. On average, charter school principals reported higher school enrollments than did their counterparts at traditional schools, as illustrated in Table 6.1. Among the 23 schools whose principals responded, the charter schools had more applicants, fewer admissions, and lower rates of transfer into and out of the schools during the 2008–09 academic year. These data are consistent with the charter schools' ability to cap their enrollments after admitting students on a first-come, first-served or lottery basis. In contrast, RSD traditional schools are required to admit students throughout the year (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).

Table 6.1
Mean Size of Student Applicant Pools and Admission, Enrollment, and Transfer Rates in the 2008–09 School Year as Reported by Charter and Traditional School Principals, by School Type

Category	Charter	Traditional
Applied to enroll this year	566	397
Met school's admission requirement	558	398
Were admitted to school by fall of 2008	405	413
Were enrolled in school at beginning of year (may include students who had been admitted previously)	601	404
Transferred in to school since beginning of year	16	59
Transferred out of school since beginning of year	13	62
Were enrolled in late spring of 2009	604	405

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTE: n = 10 charter and 13 traditional school principals.

We also asked principals whether their schools used a lottery to admit students. One RSD traditional school that has since converted to a charter school reported having a lottery-based system, which it may have been developing at the time of the survey. As expected, the other RSD traditional school principals reported that their schools did not use a lottery, which is consistent with the inability of RSD traditional schools to cap admissions. Of the 10 charter school principals, six confirmed that their school held admission lotteries. Given that lotteries are consistent with the open-admission policies required of RSD charter schools but not required of OPSB and BESE charter schools, it is worth noting that three of the schools confirming their use of lotteries were OPSB or BESE charter schools, and three were RSD charter schools. The other four charter school principal respondents—representing one OPSB and three RSD schools—reported that their schools did not hold lotteries. This means either that they were not oversubscribed or that they used a different admission process, which could have included selective admission (permitted in OPSB and BESE schools only) or first-come, first-served admission.

The principal surveys also inquired about the formal admission requirements of each school, including the types of data requested in the admission process and how the data were used. Table 6.2 presents the percentage of principals, disaggregated by district as well as school type, who said that their schools requested the data element listed in the admission process. For the schools that requested each element, the right-hand panel of the table presents the share of principals who said that they used that element to inform admissions decisions, as opposed to simply using it for informational or placement purposes. Though several charter and traditional school principals reported asking for such data as students' academic record, attendance

Table 6.2
Principals Who Noted That Their Schools Requested the Listed Data Element in the Admissions Process, and of Those Schools, the Percentage Who Use the Data Elements to Establish Admission Eligibility, by School Type

	Element Requested				Of Schools Requesting Each Element, % Using It to Establish Admissions Eligibility			
	Charter		Traditional		Charter		Traditional	
Data Element	OPSB and BESE (n = 5)	RSD (n = 5)	OPSB (n = 4)	RSD (n = 10)	OPSB and BESE	RSD	OPSB	RSD
Standardized admission or achievement test	60%	20%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%	--
Academic record	60%	40%	100%	30%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Evidence of special skills, aptitudes, or talents	40%	40%	50%	20%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Personal interview	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	—	—	—
Recommendations	0%	0%	50%	10%	—	—	50%	0%
Behavioral record	0%	40%	25%	30%	—	0%	0%	0%
Attendance record	25%	40%	50%	30%	100%	0%	50%	0%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTE: n = 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

record, and evidence of special skills, only a few OPSB and BESE school principals reported that they used such data in admissions decisions.

In addition, we asked principals about the policies they require students and families to adhere to, since these may contribute to systematic differences in the students and families that choose particular schools. Table 6.3 presents the percentage of principals who reported on their school's having various policies, including school uniform, attendance, academic, and behavioral expectations. The table illustrates that most schools, regardless of district or type, reportedly had school uniform policies in place. However, parental involvement, grade point average, and student attendance policies appeared more prevalent among the responding OPSB and BESE schools (n = 9) than among the RSD schools (n = 15), regardless of their charter or traditional status.

We also asked parents about their schools' stated expectations of students and families. When we asked whether they had been required to sign a contract specifying the school's expectations, 45 percent of charter school respondents (n = 47 parents representing 23 schools) said that they had signed such a contract, as opposed to 52 percent of traditional school respondents (n = 31 parents representing 13 schools). In addition, 14 percent of charter school parent respondents and 11 percent of traditional school parent respondents said that they were not sure whether they had signed such a contract.

Parental Choice

The parent survey asked whether respondents had a choice in selecting their child's school in the 2008–09 academic year. Among respondents to that question (n = 92 charter and 54 traditional school parents nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools), charter school parents perceived having more of a choice than did traditional school parents. Specifically, 86 percent of responding charter school parents said that they had a choice, 10 percent said that they did

Table 6.3
Schools That Required Families' Adherence to Schoolwide Policies, by District and School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
Policy Type	OPSB and BESE (n = 5)	RSD (n = 5)	OPSB (n = 4)	RSD (n = 10)
School uniform policy	80%	80%	75%	90%
Parental involvement policy	60%	0%	75%	10%
Minimum student grade point average policy	20%	0%	0%	0%
Minimum student attendance policy	80%	20%	50%	20%
Other policies (written-in responses):				
Behavioral policy	20%	0%	0%	10%
Student/parent/school agreement	0%	0%	0%	10%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTE: n = 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

not, and 4 percent did not know. In contrast, 59 percent of responding traditional school parents said that they had a choice, 37 percent said that they did not, and 4 percent did not know. These differences in perceived choice suggest that, within the sample, traditional school parent respondents felt that they had less of a choice than their charter school counterparts.[1] The results are consistent with a scenario in which the charter school parents were more successful in utilizing choice structures given the presence of charter school enrollment caps and families' need for transportation-accessible schools.

Twenty percent of all responding parents (n = 93 in 30 charter schools and 56 in 21 traditional schools) said that they had applied for admission to more than one school in 2008–09. Specifically, 17 percent of charter school parent respondents and 25 percent of traditional school parents said so. Among those parents who said that they had applied to more than one school (n = 16 charter and 14 traditional school parents), the mean number of schools applied to was 1.7 for charter school parents and 1.2 for traditional school parents. The mean number of other schools at which their child was accepted was 0.6 for charter parents, ranging from 0 to 2, and 0.8 for traditional parents, ranging from 0 to 1. When asked whether they considered their child's current school to be their first choice, 68 percent of responding parents (n = 46 charter parents in 26 schools and 33 traditional school parents in 14 schools) said yes. That proportion was higher among charter school parents, at 76 percent, than among traditional school parents, at 58 percent.[2]

Parents were asked the extent to which they agreed with several statements about school choice in New Orleans on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 4 indicating "strongly agree." Responses by parents whose children attended charter schools indicated that they may have been somewhat more comfortable with the choice-based system than were their traditional school counterparts. When asked whether they agreed that they had options to choose from when enrolling their children in school, the mean response was 3.2 among charter parents (n = 90 in 29 schools) and 2.9 among traditional parents (n = 53 in 21 schools). These responses suggest a stronger perception of choice among charter school parents in the response sample. Charter school parent respondents in the sample also reported agreeing slightly more strongly than traditional school respondents that information about school options was easy to obtain (charter = 2.8 and traditional = 2.7) and that it was easy to register one's child for school (charter = 3.4 and traditional = 3.2), though these differences, too, were very small.[3]

---

[1] This difference was similar in RSD schools and OPSB or BESE schools. (In this analysis, n RSD charter = 48 parents in 20 schools; n RSD traditional = 47 parents nested in 18 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 44 parents in 10 schools; n OPSB traditional = 7 parents nested in 3 schools.)

[2] In addition, this charter/traditional school difference in proportion of parents reporting their child's school as their first choice did not differ notably between RSD and OPSB or BESE schools. When disaggregated by district and school type, n RSD charter = 30 parents in 16 schools; n RSD traditional = 29 parents nested in 12 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 16 parents in 6 schools; n OPSB traditional = 4 parents nested in 2 schools.

[3] These charter/traditional school differences did not vary notably between the RSD and OPSB or BESE districts. When disaggregated by district and school type, n RSD charter = 48 parents in 19 schools; n RSD traditional = 46 parents nested in 18 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 42 parents in 10 schools; n OPSB traditional = 7 parents nested in three schools.

Parents' Choice Rationales

On average, 63 percent of the 149 responding parents in 51 schools reported that their child attended the same school in 2008–09 as in 2007–08. However, when disaggregated by school type, 69 percent of charter parents said so (n = 93 in 30 schools), as compared to only 54 percent of traditional school parents (n = 56 in 21 schools). Among those 55 students who were reportedly attending their current schools for the first time, 25 percent were in their first year of schooling, 16 percent had changed schools as a result of a grade-level transition (e.g., transitioning from elementary to middle school or middle school to high school), and 36 percent had changed schools for other reasons. Of the 20 parents citing other reasons, 47 percent reported that their child had attended school in another city or state the prior year, 17 percent said that their child had previously attended a private school, 17 percent were dissatisfied with the quality of their child's prior school, 8 percent had sought a school closer to home, 6 percent said that their child had been expelled from the prior school for disciplinary reasons, and 3 percent said that they had previously homeschooled their child.

When parents were asked the reasons why they chose their child's current school, the most common reason, given by 30 percent of all respondents, involved the school's academic curriculum. This was followed closely by the school's provision of transportation, cited by 29 percent, and the fact that the child could walk to school or take public transportation, cited by 28 percent. (Choices were not mutually exclusive.) Reasons cited by fewer than 10 percent of charter and traditional respondents involved the school's athletic programs and special education services.

It is important to note that when the responses were disaggregated by school type, as shown in Table 6.4, different patterns emerged between charter school parents and traditional

Table 6.4
Parent-Reported Reasons for Enrolling a Child in His or Her Current School, by School Type

Rationales	Charter	Traditional
School's academic curriculum	37%	17%
School's record of student achievement	32%	10%
School's attendance and discipline policies	27%	14%
Child can walk or use public transportation	22%	30%
School provides transportation	23%	43%
School's after-school or tutoring programs	14%	10%
Child had siblings in the school	11%	9%
Knew the school's faculty or staff	10%	11%
School's athletic program	9%	8%
School's special education services	5%	4%
Only school available	2%	19%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents.

NOTES: Categories are not mutually exclusive. n = 93 charter and 56 traditional school parents nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools.

school parents. Charter school parents were considerably more likely than their traditional school counterparts to cite the school's academic curriculum, record of student achievement, and attendance and discipline policies as reasons for their choice, whereas traditional school parents were more likely to cite transportation availability. In addition, a much larger proportion of traditional than charter school parents (19 percent versus 2 percent) reported that their child's school was the only one available to them. Within our response sample, these patterns suggest systematic differences in the parents from charter and traditional schools in terms of their needs and preferences within a system of citywide school choice.

In addition, when we controlled for whether the student in question was in elementary or secondary grades (grades 1–6 versus 7–12), the magnitude of the charter and traditional school parents' responses shown in Table 6.4 remained virtually unchanged.[4]

Given the importance that many responding parents attributed to transportation availability, it is noteworthy that responding charter and traditional school parents (n = 45 in 23 schools and 28 in 12 schools, respectively) reported similar amounts of travel time between home and school in the morning. Charter school parents reported that their child's morning travel time averaged 24 minutes (range: 5 to 105 minutes), whereas traditional school parents reported 27 minutes of average travel time (range: 4 to 105 minutes). In other words, it did not appear that charter school students represented in the parent survey sample spent longer getting to school than their traditional school counterparts. Depending on their access to various modes of transportation, which we were unable to investigate in this study, this may or may not indicate that they lived as close to their schools as students who attended traditional schools.[5]

School Communication and Outreach

The survey of principals inquired about how their respective schools attempted to attract parents and students through advertising and outreach. Table 6.5 summarizes the methods that charter and traditional school principals reported using. Charter school principals were more likely than their traditional school counterparts to say that they employed business-style marketing methods. Such methods included placing advertisements in local newspapers and newsletters (90 percent versus 79 percent), placing signs around town (90 versus 29 percent), and

[4] We also examined whether the differences between charter and traditional school respondents shown in Table 6.4 varied between RSD and OPSB or BESE schools. In most cases, the responses were quite similar regardless of district. One exception concerned the importance of the school providing transportation, which was cited as a choice rationale by 71 percent of OPSB traditional school parent respondents, versus only 4 percent of OPSB and BESE charter school respondents, and between 35 and 39 percent of RSD respondents. However, the number of OPSB respondents in each group was small, making it impossible to generalize from this disaggregation. When disaggregated by district and school type, n RSD charter = 49 parents in 20 schools; n RSD traditional = 49 parents nested in 18 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 44 parents in 10 schools; n OPSB traditional = 7 parents nested in 3 schools.

[5] Interestingly, we did find a notable difference between reported travel times among parents in RSD charter and traditional schools and those in OPSB or BESE schools, such that the mean reported travel time was nearly 30 minutes among RSD parents versus 18 minutes among OPSB and BESE charter school parents and 10 minutes among OPSB traditional school parents. However, the number of reporting OPSB traditional school parents was very small, again making it impossible to generalize from this disaggregation. When disaggregated by district and school type, n RSD charter = 30 parents in 17 schools; n RSD traditional = 25 parents nested in 10 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 15 parents in six schools; n OPSB traditional = three parents nested in two schools.

Table 6.5
Ways in Which Charter and Traditional School Principals Reportedly Advertised Their Schools to Parents, by School Type

Advertising Strategy	Charter	Traditional
Held enrollment fairs, open houses, or other events presenting information about the school	100%	100%
Placed ads in local newspaper or newsletter	90%	79%
Placed signs in front of school or other buildings, or on the neutral ground[a]	90%	29%
Maintained a school website (separate from any site maintained by the district)	90%	36%
Included school information in a community newsletter	70%	79%
Distributed flyers in the neighborhood	30%	36%
Placed ad on bus or billboard	0%	0%
Other	36%	0%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.

NOTES: Categories are not mutually exclusive. n = 10 charter and 14 traditional school principals.

[a] In New Orleans, "neutral ground" refers to a road median.

maintaining school websites separate from district-maintained websites (90 versus 36 percent). However, all principal respondents from both charter and traditional schools reported holding enrollment fairs or open houses to present information about the school, and more than 70 percent at each school type described including school information in a community newsletter. Fewer than 40 percent of principals from each school type said that their schools distributed flyers locally, and none reported placing advertisements in more costly locations, such as on a bus or billboard.

We also asked parents how they had heard about their child's current school. Both charter and traditional school parents were most likely to say that they had learned of the school through word of mouth. As Table 6.6 indicates, 49 percent of charter school parents reported hearing about their child's school through friends or parents of students at the school, versus only 22 percent of traditional school parents. Meanwhile, 51 percent of traditional school parents and 37 percent of charter school parents reported hearing about their child's school because other family members had attended the school.

Charter school parents in the sample were slightly more likely than their traditional school counterparts to say that they had learned about the school through site contacts and visits. For example, 30 percent of charter school parents said that they had attended a general meeting at the school, whereas only 9 percent of traditional parents reported having learned about the school in that way. Similarly, 24 percent of parent respondents in the charter school sample said that they had spoken individually to a contact person at the school, whereas only 15 percent of the traditional sample reported having done so. Nevertheless, the proportion who described attending an enrollment fair at the school was higher among traditional school parent respondents, at 22 percent, than among charter school parent respondents, at 11 percent. In addition, a larger proportion of traditional than charter school parent respondents reported learning about the school through the New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2009).

Table 6.6
Ways in Which Parents Said They First Learned About Their Child's Current School, by School Type

	Charter		Traditional	
Information Source	No. Responding	% Who Learned About School in the Way Listed	No. Responding	% Who Learned About School in the Way Listed
Friends or parents of students at the school recommended it	35	49%	22	22%
Family member attended school	34	37%	24	51%
Attended a general meeting at the school	29	30%	23	9%
Child attended school pre-Katrina	33	24%	24	9%
Spoke individually to a person from the school	63	24%	42	15%
Heard through newsletter, newspaper, radio, or television	29	22%	23	17%
Saw a sign in front of a building or on the neutral ground (i.e., street median)	29	19%	23	0%
Received a brochure about the school	29	14%	21	14%
Attended an enrollment fair	29	11%	25	22%
Heard through the New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools	29	7%	23	17%
Saw an ad on a bus or billboard	29	7%	22	0%
Other	24	38%	19	63%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents.

NOTES: Categories are not mutually exclusive. n = 93 charter and 56 traditional school parents nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools.

Traditional school parents did not report learning about their child's current school from business-style marketing techniques such as advertising signs on grounds, buses, or billboards, whereas a small subset of parents of charter school parents did report hearing about their child's school in these ways.[6]

Through the principal and teacher surveys, we also sought to understand how schools communicated with the parents of their currently enrolled students. As displayed in Table 6.7, principals from both charter and traditional schools were very likely to report that their schools scheduled meetings at times that were convenient for parents, provided materials and training to help parents work with their children, and held parent education workshops. In contrast, a much larger share of traditional school principals than their charter school counterparts (92 versus 56 percent) said that their schools translated material into other languages, and a modestly larger share of traditional school principals than charter school principals (69 versus 56 percent) said that their schools provided child care and transportation services to encourage parent involvement. In addition, a larger share of charter than traditional school principals

[6] We did not find notable differences between districts with regard to how charter school and traditional school parents said that they heard about their child's current school.

Table 6.7
Charter and Traditional School Principals Who Reported Using Each Strategy to Promote Parent Involvement, by School Type

Outreach Strategy	Charter	Traditional
Arranging school meetings at times that are convenient for parents	100%	92%
Providing materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve achievement	100%	85%
Employing a parent liaison or home-school coordinator	100%	46%
Holding parent education workshops	89%	100%
Working with community leaders and community-based organizations to promote parent involvement	78%	39%
Providing child care or transportation services to support parent participation	56%	69%
Translating information about school and parent programs for parents who do not speak English	56%	92%

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals.
NOTE: n = 9 charter and 13 traditional school principals.

reported hiring parent liaisons and working with community-based organizations to promote parent involvement.

We also asked teachers about their efforts to communicate with their students' parents. Teachers reported on the percentage of their students' parents they had contacted in the last month about particular topics. We found few differences between the parent outreach practices reported by charter and traditional school teachers who responded (n = 133 in 36 charter schools and 74 in 20 traditional schools, respectively). For instance, charter school teachers reported contacting the parents of 38 percent of their students in the past month about their children's academic performance, whereas traditional school teachers reported contacting parents of 36 percent of students. With regard to student behavior, charter school teachers said that they had contacted 27 percent of their students' parents within the last month, whereas the reported average was 29 percent among traditional school teachers. Regarding upcoming events on campus, charter school teachers said that they had contacted the parents of 36 percent of their students, compared to the 26 percent reportedly contacted by traditional school teachers. Finally, charter school teachers said that they had contacted the parents of 10 percent of their students about student attendance in the past month, whereas traditional school teachers reported contacting the parents of 18 percent of their students.[7]

Beyond asking principals and teachers about their outreach efforts to parents, we also asked parents about the kinds of communication they received from their child's school. When asked about the number of academic report cards they received during the school year, the average for both charter (n = 47 in 23 schools) and traditional school parent respondents

[7] When we disaggregated these outreach patterns separately for the RSD schools versus the OPSB and BESE schools, the only notable difference we found was in the proportion of teachers who reported reaching out to parents about their children's behavior. The average percentages reported by RSD teachers was 34 percent in charter schools and 31 percent in traditional schools. In contrast, the comparable percentages were only 16 percent in OPSB and BESE charter schools and 20 percent in OPSB traditional schools. In this analysis, n RSD charter = 78 teachers in 23 schools; n RSD traditional = 66 teachers in 17 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 55 teachers in 13 schools; n OPSB traditional = eight teachers in three schools.

(n = 32 in 14 schools) was 3.7. Only one respondent from each group reported that, as of late spring, they had not received a report card for the 2008–09 school year.[8]

Parents were also asked whether they had received a letter from the school or the district informing them about the performance of their child's school. Fifty-one percent of traditional school respondents (n = 32 in 14 schools) reported having received such a letter, versus 45 percent of charter school respondents (n = 46 in 22 schools). Among those who reported receiving such a letter, all but two parents also responded with regard to its user-friendliness. Eighty-two percent of respondents who received letters found them "very easy" to understand, and the other 18 percent found them "somewhat easy" to understand, as opposed to "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult." Respondents' reported impressions of the letters did not differ notably between charter and traditional school parents.[9]

When asked whether their child's school was classified by the state as "academically unacceptable" or "failing," 7 percent of charter school respondents (n = 46 parents in 22 schools) and 27 percent of traditional school respondents (n = 33 parents in 14 schools) said yes, whereas 30 percent of charter school parent respondents and 52 percent of traditional school parent respondents were not sure.[10] In reality, however, among the parents who responded to the question, 96 percent of their traditional schools had received an academically unacceptable or failing designation the prior year, versus only 11 percent of their charter schools. Of the 28 parent respondents whose children's schools had, in fact, been rated academically unacceptable or failing after the prior school year, 21 percent correctly identified their school as such, whereas 61 percent said that they were not sure, and 18 percent indicated that the school had not received such a rating. In contrast, only 6 percent of the 33 responding parents whose children attended schools that had not been declared "academically unacceptable" believed that the schools had been classified as such. These data suggest that many parents, and particularly those in underperforming schools, may not be aware of their school's performance status and may be basing their school choice decisions on imperfect information.

In addition, we asked parents about how well their child's school communicated with parents and performed other important services. As illustrated in Table 6.8, parents of students at charter schools reported greater satisfaction with each facet of their child's school. This was especially true with regard to communication about community services and volunteer opportunities, special education, and gifted and talented services. Given that a common concern about charter schools involves their provision of special education programs and services, it is noteworthy that the mean satisfaction rating with special education programs (among parents who rated them) was a full point higher for charter school than traditional school respondents, at 3.4 versus 2.2 on a scale of 1 to 4. However, the number of parents and schools represented in the special education ratings was comparatively small. In addition, the survey cannot rule out the possibility that the charter school families who rated their school's special education services had less complex special education needs than their counterparts from traditional schools.

---

[8] There was no difference between districts in the number of report cards parents reported receiving.

[9] Furthermore, charter and traditional school parents' reported rates of receiving the letters and understanding them did not differ notably between districts.

[10] As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven, a school with a School Performance Score below 60 on the state's rating scale is deemed "academically unacceptable" or "failing" under state regulations. This status can lead to sanctions up to and including school closure (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b).

Table 6.8
Parental Satisfaction with Various Types of School Services, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type

	Charter			Traditional		
School Service	Parents Providing a Rating[a]	Schools Represented in Rating	Average Rating	Parents Providing a Rating[a]	Schools Represented in Rating	Average Rating
Lets you know between report cards how your child is doing in school	46	23	3.5	30	14	3.4
Gives information on workshops, materials, or advice about how to help your child learn at home	89	29	3.1	47	21	2.7
Gives information about how to help your child with his/her homework	90	30	3.0	47	21	2.4
Gives information on community services to help your child or family	43	22	3.0	26	13	2.3
Tells you about opportunities to volunteer at the school	87	29	3.2	49	21	2.4
Provides disability or special education services, including 504 Plans	23	15	3.4	19	12	2.2
Offers programs for gifted and talented students	63	25	3.2	28	18	2.3

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents.

NOTES: The question prompt was "Please indicate how well your child's school has been doing in the following areas during this school year (2008–2009)." 1 = "school does not do it at all" to 4 = "school does it very well." n = 93 charter and 56 traditional school teachers, nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools.

[a] Excludes those who were "not sure" or did not answer.

Parental Involvement

Parents were also asked how comfortable they felt about interacting with their child's school in various ways. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating "not at all comfortable" and 4 indicating "very comfortable," charter school parent respondents (n = 47 nested in 23 schools) reported feeling slightly more comfortable than their traditional school counterparts (n = 33 nested in 14 schools) in calling the child's teacher (charter mean = 3.8, traditional mean = 3.6), calling the principal (charter mean = 3.7, traditional mean = 3.4), and participating in a parent involvement committee such as a Parent Teacher Organization (charter mean = 3.5, traditional mean = 3.2).[11]

Consistent with these findings and with reported differences in parents' education and income levels described in Table 2.7, charter school parents reported slightly higher levels of involvement in their children's schools. When asked about the frequency of their participation in particular activities ranging on a scale from 0 to more than times per year, charter school parent respondents (n = 92 nested in 30 schools) reported helping in the classroom an aver-

[11] We did not find evidence that these small differences between charter and traditional schools differed notably between RSD schools and OPSB and BESE schools.

age of 1.2 times per year, as compared to the 0.8 times per year reported by traditional school parents (n = 55 nested in 21 schools).[12] Charter school parents reported serving on a school-related committee, including but not limited to a Parent Teacher Organization, once per year, versus 0.7 times for traditional school parents. In addition, charter school parents said that they attended a before- or after-school event three times per year on average, versus 0.9 times per year as reported by traditional school parents. In short, the charter school parents reported only modestly higher levels of involvement than their traditional school counterparts, mainly with regard to attending before- or after-school events at the school.[13]

Parental Satisfaction

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with particular aspects of their child's school, including its location, teachers, safety, educational quality, discipline, and facilities. Table 6.9 displays their responses, by school type. As before, the satisfaction ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 means "not at all satisfied" and 4 means "very satisfied"). Charter school parent respondents reported higher mean satisfaction in all areas, and especially in terms of location, school safety, and educational quality.[14]

Finally, we asked parents about their overall satisfaction with their child's school. Given differences in satisfaction with particular domains just discussed, it is unsurprising that charter school parents reported higher overall satisfaction with their child's school than did traditional school parents. When asked to assign a letter grade to their child's current school from A to F,

[12] Means are calculated using category midpoints, where the categories are "not at all," "one to two times," "three to five times" and "more than five times." The value assigned to the final category was six.

[13] When these reported participation patterns were disaggregated by district as well as by school type, the lowest comfort levels consistently emerged among parents from RSD traditional schools. For example, the mean number of times respondents reported helping in the classroom was 0.7 among RSD traditional parents, whereas it ranged between 1.1 and 1.4 among the other school types. The mean number of times attending a before- or after-school event was also 0.7 among RSD traditional parents but ranged between 1.8 and 3.6 among the other school categories. Finally, the mean number of times serving on a school-related committee was lower in both types of RSD schools (0.5 among traditional school parents and 0.7 among charter school parents) than in OPSB and BESE schools (2.2. among traditional school parents and 1.4 among charter school parents).

[14] We also explored whether the gaps between charter and traditional school respondents depended on parents' educational or racial/ethnic backgrounds. We found that satisfaction gaps between charter and traditional school parents were mostly consistent regardless of their level of education (some postsecondary education versus a high school diploma or less). However, with regard to satisfaction with the child's teacher, the charter/traditional gap existed mainly among parents with at least some postsecondary education: Those in traditional schools gave their child's teachers a 3.3 rating, on average, whereas those in charter schools gave their child's teachers an average 3.6 rating, similar to the rating given by charter and traditional school parents who held a high school diploma or less. With regard to discipline, on the other hand, the gap between charter and traditional school respondents was driven primarily by parents with a high school diploma or less. Those whose children attended charter schools reported a similar mean satisfaction level as both charter and traditional school parents with some postsecondary education—a 3.5 rating—whereas those whose children attended traditional schools rated their satisfaction with discipline as only 2.9. When we disaggregated by race, we found that the gaps in charter and traditional school parents' satisfaction with the dimensions in Table 6.9 were quite similar among black parents as among parents of other racial/ethnic groups.We also found that the satisfaction gaps reported in Table 6.9 between charter and traditional school parents were similar in RSD schools and OPSB or BESE schools, except with regard to discipline, where average reported satisfaction levels in RSD traditional schools (3.0) were considerably lower than in OPSB traditional (3.5), RSD charter (3.3), and OPSB/BESE charter schools (3.6). Note that in this analysis, n RSD charter = 49 parents in 20 schools; n RSD traditional = 49 parents in 18 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 44 parents in 10 schools; n OPSB traditional = 7 parents in 3 schools.

Table 6.9
Parent-Reported Satisfaction with Various Aspects of Child's School, Based on a Four-Point Scale, by School Type

Criteria	Charter	Traditional
Location	3.7	3.0
Your child's current teacher(s)	3.6	3.4
School safety	3.6	3.0
Educational quality	3.6	3.1
Discipline	3.4	3.1
School facilities	3.4	3.3

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents.

NOTES: 1 = "not at all satisfied" to 4 = "very satisfied." n = 93 charter and 56 traditional school parents nested in 30 charter and 21 traditional schools.

41 percent of charter school respondents (n = 47 nested in 23 schools) gave their child's school an A, versus only 18 percent of traditional school respondents (n = 33 nested in 14 schools). Moreover, only 11 percent of charter school parents assigned their child's school a C or below, compared to 52 percent of traditional school parents. Additionally, no charter school parents assigned their child's current school a D or F, whereas 9 percent of traditional school parent respondents assigned a D, and 3 percent assigned an F. In other words, the difference between charter and traditional school parent respondents' ratings of their schools was substantial.

Given the average demographic differences between parents at charter and traditional schools, we further examined whether greater satisfaction with charter schools was observed among parents of different socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds. We found that the proportion of responding parents assigning their schools an A on a scale of A to F was 48 percent among charter school parents without any postsecondary education and 35 percent among charter school parents with some postsecondary education. In contrast, only 16 percent of traditional school parents without any postsecondary education and 17 percent of traditional school parents with some postsecondary education assigned a grade of A to their child's school. In other words, although the satisfaction gap between traditional and charter school parents was greater among parents without any postsecondary education, it was substantial for both groups. We also found a slightly larger gap in satisfaction between charter and traditional schools among black as opposed to nonblack parents, but both black and nonblack charter school parents still expressed much greater satisfaction than their traditional school counterparts. Specifically, 38 percent of black charter school parents and 50 percent of nonblack charter school parents gave their schools an A, versus 17 percent of black traditional school parents and 5 percent of nonblack traditional school parents. These patterns suggest that gaps in satisfaction between charter and traditional school parents cannot be accounted for by demographic differences between charter and traditional school families.

However, disaggregating parents' satisfaction levels by district revealed that the primary difference between charter and traditional schools lay in the RSD. In RSD charter schools, the percentage of responding parents assigning their schools an A was 13 percent relative to 41 per-

cent in RSD charter schools, 42 percent in OPSB or BESE charter schools, and 50 percent in OPSB traditional schools.[15] In other words, parents of children attending RSD charter schools were nearly as satisfied as those with children in charter and traditional schools run by the OPSB or BESE, but this was not the case for parents of children in RSD traditional schools. This finding appears consistent with the common characterization of RSD traditional schools as schools of last resort (Cowen Institute, 2008).

[15] In this analysis, n RSD charter = 31 parents in 17 schools; n RSD traditional = 29 parents in 12 schools; n OPSB or BESE charter = 16 parents in six schools; n OPSB traditional = four parents in two schools.

CHAPTER SEVEN

School Performance in Relation to School Characteristics

In this chapter, we use publicly available, school-level performance data from the Louisiana Department of Education to examine school performance in charter and traditional schools in the RSD, OPSB, and BESE districts during the survey year, 2008–09. We also examine growth in school performance from the prior year, 2007–08, for the subset of schools with School Performance Scores on file for that year. Finally, we conduct exploratory analyses to investigate whether survey responses that teachers provided about their educational practices and experiences were associated with any of the variation in school performance growth observed from 2007–08 to 2008–09.

School Accountability in Louisiana

School Performance Scores in Louisiana are based largely on students' performance on state accountability tests—the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, the Integrated LEAP, and the Graduation Exit Examination. Students' performance on these assessments accounts for 90 percent of the SPS in schools serving grades K–5, K–8, or 7–8, and for 70 percent of the SPS in schools serving grades 9–12. The remainder of the SPS is attributable to attendance in K–5 schools, to attendance and dropout rates in K–8 and 7–8 schools, and to graduation rates in schools serving grades 9–12 (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b).

A school's SPS can theoretically range from 0 to 200. Schools with an SPS that falls below 60 are considered "academically unacceptable" and given a performance grade of F, whereas schools with scores of at least 120 are given the highest performance grade, an A (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b). To represent school performance in the 2007–08 academic year, we use the *base08* SPS, which is publicly available from the state Department of Education (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a). *Base scores* reported by the state are two-year averages intended to improve score stability, so the *base08* score is actually the mean of a school's single-year scores in 2006–07 and 2007–08. The scores labeled *growth scores*, in contrast, are single-year SPS scores.

We follow the same procedure as the state's Department of Education in subtracting *base08* scores from *growth09* scores to gauge a school's performance growth between the 2008–09 academic year and its average performance in the prior two years. We refer to the resulting difference as *growth_amount09.* However, a number schools in the RSD opened or reopened after 2006–07, which is the first year in the *base08* average, and the state did not report *growth09* scores for schools without *base08* scores on record as a basis of comparison. Consequently, neither *base08* scores nor *growth09* scores are reported for 20 of the 75 schools

in our targeted sample. In addition, because of the aftermath of Katrina, no New Orleans schools have SPS scores on record from 2005–06, the year of the storm, and thus both *base07* and *growth08* scores are missing for all schools in the city. For this reason, our analysis begins with *base08* scores, which, as noted, represent an average of a school's performance in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

In characterizing schools' performance, we summarize not only changes in School Performance Scores over time but also static School Performance Scores as reported by the state during the survey year. To measure the range of absolute performance in the survey year, 2008–09, we use *base09* scores (which average the year-specific 2007–08 and 2008–09 scores) because *base09* is missing for only four of the 75 schools in the sample, whereas *growth09* is missing for 21 schools, and we want to provide as complete a descriptive picture as possible in cases where the data are available.

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 present descriptive statistics for the schools in the performance analysis. We present not only the aforementioned School Performance Scores but also other schoolwide characteristics obtained or generated from state data, which we use in the school performance analyses below. The categorical variables in Table 7.1 include whether the school is charter or traditional and whether it is part of the RSD as opposed to the OPSB or BESE. The variables also indicate whether a school is *elementary* (serving only students in grades K–6 or a subset thereof), *secondary* (serving only students in grades 7–12 or a subset thereof), or *elementary and secondary* (serving some combination of grades K–6 and 7–12). The largest group of schools

Table 7.1
Descriptive Statistics for New Orleans Schools in the Targeted Survey Sample as of Spring 2009 (Categorical Variables)

	Share of Schools
Type	
Charter	56.0%
Traditional	44.0%
District	
RSD	70.7%
OPSB	26.7%
BESE	2.7%
Characteristics	
Elementary	9.3%
Elementary/secondary	68.0%
Secondary	22.7%
Selective admission	10.7%

SOURCES: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a; New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010.

NOTES: Categories may not add to 100 percent because of rounding. n = 75 schools.

falls into the latter category. Table 7.2 includes the percentage of students in the school that are both minority (defined as black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian) and eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals, which we are able to report because state data provide the intersection of the minority population with the subsidized-meal-eligible population in each school. We use the variable combining these two school-level demographic averages because it shows greater variance than either the percentage-minority or percentage-subsidized meal variable alone (standard deviation = 0.18 versus 0.12 and 0.15, respectively). In addition, the percentage of minority students in a school and the percentage of students qualifying for subsidized meals are highly correlated with each other in the dataset (Pearson correlation = 0.83), so including them separately would likely introduce collinearity into the analysis. We also report the percentage of LEP students in the school. Finally, we report whether a school has a selective admission policy, though the latter data point is drawn not from the state dataset but from our review of each school's admissions requirements as described in the fourth edition of the *New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools* (New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).

School Performance in the Survey Year

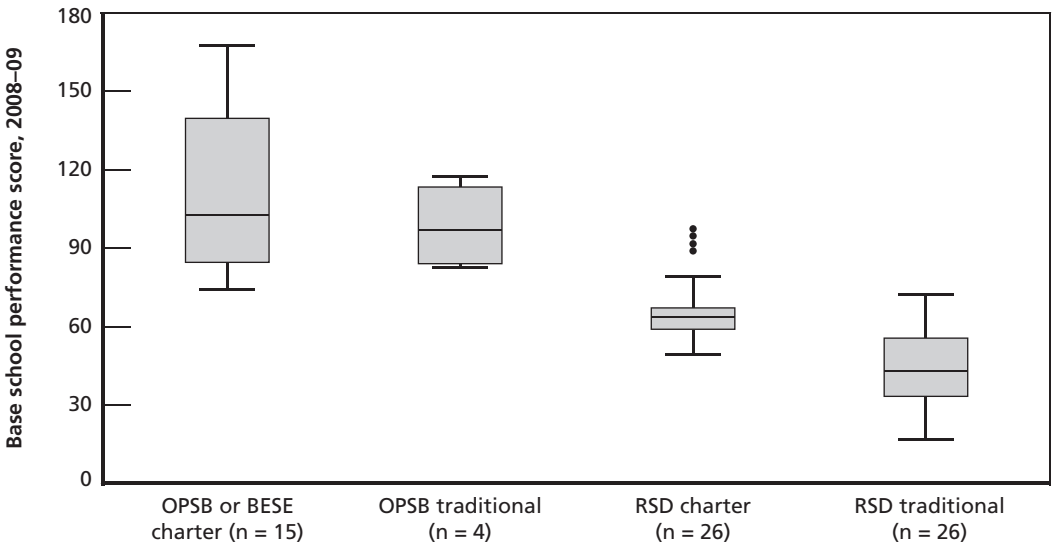
In describing the performance of charter and traditional schools in each district, we first examine the distribution of the base SPS for the 2008–09 school year (*base09*) because this variable has the fewest missing data points of the School Performance Scores reported by the state for the years in question. As noted above, the base SPS for that year represents the average of the school's SPS as calculated in 2007–08 and 2008–09. Figure 7.1 presents the distribution of *base09* SPS disaggregated by school type (charter or traditional) and district (RSD versus OPSB or BESE, with charter schools in the latter two combined into a single category). Note that in the box-and-whiskers plots shown here, the central horizontal line in a box represents the median of the distribution, and the bottom and top of the boxes represent the 25th and 75th percentiles, respectively. The outer horizontal lines represent, respectively, the 5th and 95th percentiles, and the outside values (those beyond the 5th or 95th percentiles) are denoted

Table 7.2
Descriptive Statistics for New Orleans Schools in the Targeted Survey Sample as of Spring 2009 (Continuous Variables)

	No. of Schools	Share of Schools	SD	Min	Max
Percentage minority and eligible for subsidized meals	75	0.832	0.181	0.217	0.994
Percentage LEP	75	0.021	0.051	0	0.365
School performance					
SPS base09	71	68.828	30.623	17.1	167.5
SPS base08	54	70.756	31.824	16.3	165.2
SPS growth09	54	76.893	33.372	18.2	169.6
SPS growth amount 09	54	5.672	6.053	–9.7	17.4

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.

Figure 7.1
Distribution of School Performance Scores in New Orleans Schools, by School Type and District, for Base Year 2008–09



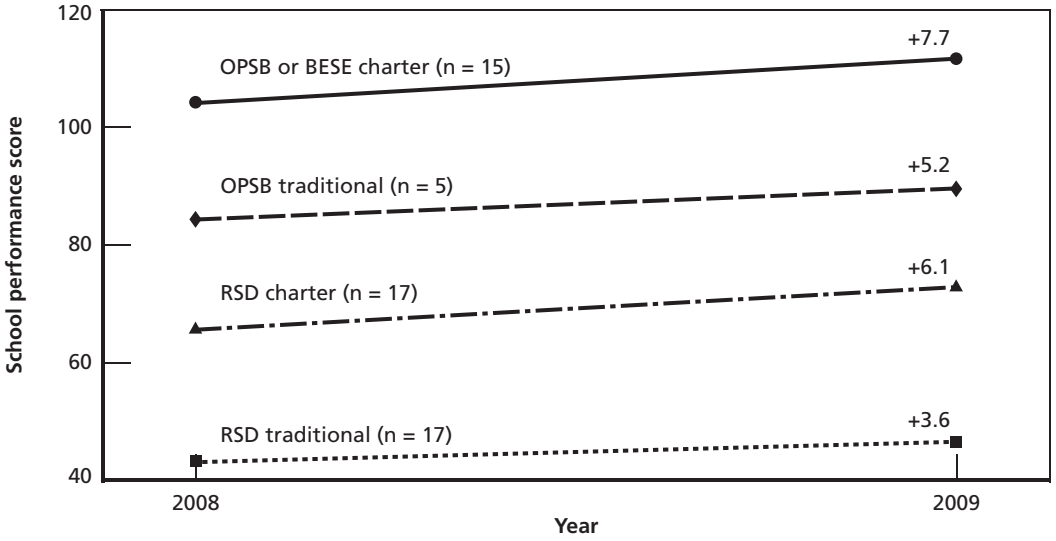
SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.
NOTES: As reported by the state, base year 2008–09 scores represent the mean of a school's single-year scores from 2007–08 and 2008–09. n = 71 schools.
RAND *TR1145-7.1*

by dots. The figure illustrates that the OPSB/BESE charter and OPSB traditional schools have similar median performance levels and that the lowest-performing of the OPSB schools are on par with the higher-performing RSD schools. It also shows that the RSD traditional schools are modestly underperforming relative to their charter counterparts.

School Performance Growth in the Survey Year

An obvious limitation of Figure 7.1 is that it focuses only on static performance levels and thus may be driven as much by the prior knowledge and motivation of the students attending these schools as by differences in the schools' instructional effectiveness. In an attempt to reduce (though not eliminate) the effects of student and family selection, it is useful to examine the change in students' average performance from one year to the next. Though the school-level data at our disposal do not allow us to track the performance of individual students over time—a method that would help to adjust for changes in student composition from year to year—they do permit us to examine not only static achievement but also growth in School Performance Scores from *base08* (an average of the 2006–07 and 2007–08 scores) to *growth09* (a single-year score for 2008–09). As noted above, this is the method the state uses to calculate a school's growth amount (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b). Figure 7.2 displays schools' growth trajectories disaggregated again by school type and district, though because *base09* or *growth09* data are not available for several schools, the category samples are different and mostly smaller in Figure 7.2 than in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.2
Mean Change in School Performance Scores from the Base 2007–08 Score to the Growth 2008–09 Score, by School Type and District



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.
NOTE: n = 54 schools.
RAND *TR1145-7.2*

Examining Figure 7.2, we find the highest rates of growth in SPS scores among the OPSB and BESE charter schools, which also constitute the top category in terms of absolute performance. Nevertheless, we still find substantial rates of growth, at 6.1 points and 5.2 points respectively, in RSD charter and OPSB traditional schools. The RSD traditional schools fall into the lowest category in not only static performance but also growth, with a mean growth rate of 3.6 points.

Predicting School Performance Levels

An important question is whether these differences in overall performance and performance growth rates are meaningful or can be attributed to statistical noise. To address that question, we conducted a series of statistical regression analyses using Stata 10.0 (StataCorp, 2005). These analyses allowed us to examine predictors of a school's performance and performance growth while holding constant other observed variables that may partially account for differences by district or between charter and traditional schools. The results are displayed in Tables 7.3 and 7.4.

Table 7.3 presents ordinary least squares regression coefficients from two models in which static performance (*base09*) is regressed on various school characteristics. These models include all 71 schools for which *base09* data are available. Note that here we are examining whether the static performance distribution differences shown in Figure 7.1 are statistically meaningful, and whether they may also be associated with other school characteristics not shown in Figure 7.1, such as demographics, selective admission policies, and grade levels. Column 1 examines only the main effects of charter status and school district, demonstrating that, even

Table 7.3
Coefficients (and Standard Errors) from Regression Models Predicting Static School Performance Using Base 2008–09 School Performance Scores

	(1)	(2)
Charter	19.915*** (4.935)	–19.830* (8.787)
RSD	–40.947*** (5.341)	–56.915*** (7.833)
Charter × RSD		41.810*** (9.733)
Percentage minority and eligible for subsidized meals		–29.096~ (15.793)
Selective admission		32.787*** (9.092)
Elementary		1.677 (6.680)
Secondary		–18.758*** (4.394)
Intercept	86.164*** (5.847)	130.735*** (15.792)
No. of schools	71	71
Degrees of freedom in model	2	7
Degrees of freedom in residual	68	63
F	51.75***	37.67***
R^2	0.603	0.807

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.
*** p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, ~p < 0.1.

holding district constant, charter schools' SPS scores were about 20 points higher, on average, than those of traditional schools ($p < .001$), Moreover, holding charter status constant, RSD schools' performance scores were about 41 points lower, on average, than those of OPSB and BESE schools.

The model whose fitted coefficients are shown in Column 2 includes not only the main effects of charter status and district but also the two-way interaction of charter status and district (*charter* × *RSD*) to examine whether the relationship between charter status and school performance varies by district. Moreover, this model controls for the potentially confounding effects of school demographics (denoted by percentage of students who are minority *and* are eligible for subsidized meals), selective admission policies (coded 1 if the school has such policies, and 0 otherwise), and school level—elementary, secondary, or elementary *and* secondary, where the first two coefficients are estimated relative to the third, omitted category. Nearly all the coefficients in the model are statistically significant at the 5 percent level or better, meaning that the chance that the associated predictor is unrelated to school performance in this context is less than 5 percent, holding the other terms constant. Moreover, the R^2 term at the bottom of the table indicates that this model accounts for 80 percent of the variation in New Orleans schools' base performance scores in 2008–09.

Table 7.4
Coefficients (and Standard Errors) from Regression Models Predicting the Change in School Performance Score from the Base 2007–08 Score to the Growth 2008–09 Score

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Charter	1.750 (1.709)	–1.765 (3.155)	–2.449 (3.507)
RSD	–1.603 (1.709)	–5.118 (3.155)	–4.977 (3.201)
Charter × RSD		4.942 (3.742)	4.969 (3.961)
Percentage minority and eligible for subsidized meals			11.446~ (6.804)
Selective admission			7.108~ (3.763)
Elementary			5.166 (3.567)
Secondary			–0.221 (1.925)
Intercept	5.855** (1.863)	8.700** (2.839)	–1.627 (6.589)
No. of schools	53	53	53
Degrees of freedom in model	2	3	7
Degrees of freedom in residual	50	49	45
F	1.462	1.571	1.649
R^2	0.055	0.088	0.204

SOURCES: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a; New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010.
***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, ~p < 0.1.

The coefficients suggest that in the survey year, 2008–09, the RSD charters outperformed RSD traditional schools by about 22 SPS points on average (41.8 – 19.8 = 22), whereas OPSB and BESE charters in fact performed about 20 points less well than OPSB traditional schools once selective admission status, demographics, and school grade levels were held constant. Secondary schools (defined as only including grades 7–12 or a subset thereof) underperformed elementary and elementary/secondary schools by about 19 points, controlling for the other terms, whereas elementary and elementary/secondary schools did not differ significantly from one another. Finally, selective admission schools had average performance levels that were about 33 points higher than nonselective schools, again holding constant the other terms in the model. Taking these other terms into account, the effect of the demographic composition variable is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Predicting School Performance Growth

Nevertheless, these models examine variation in schools' static performance averaged only across the 2007–08 and 2008–09 academic years. In Table 7.4, we instead examine predictors of schools' performance *growth* from the 2007–08 base score (*base08*) to the 2008–09 growth score (*growth09*). Using the difference between these scores, *growth_amount09*, as our dependent variable, we test first whether the growth differences observed across categories in Figure 7.2 are statistically meaningful. It is important to recall, however, that this analysis includes only 53 schools instead of 71, because a number of the schools were missing scores from the state. In Column 1 of Table 7.4, we find that neither the modestly positive estimate associated with charter status or modestly negative estimate associated with RSD status approaches statistically significant levels. In Column 2, we also find no statistically significant evidence that the effect of charter status varied by district in 2008–09. When we add the control variables discussed above, we find in Column 3 that the only terms that approach statistical significance are the coefficients on school percentage minority and eligible for subsidized meals and on selective admission status. Controlling for the other terms in the model, both coefficients are positive, but they are not actually significant at the 5 percent level. Moreover, given that there are only 53 schools in the analysis and that the model uses seven degrees of freedom, the estimates should be interpreted with great caution. As currently specified, the model appears to account for 20 percent of the variance in growth amount among the 53 schools, but the global F-test ($F_{7,45} = 1.65$) suggests that the terms in the model are not jointly significant in explaining the variation in schools' growth rates.

Do Teacher Practices and Experiences Help Explain School Performance Growth?

We also examined whether information collected from teachers about their professional development, practices, resources, experience, and career plans might be associated with schools' performance growth during the 2008–09 school year when the survey data were collected. We chose to examine these variables because teachers' experience, instructional practices, and access to professional development have each been linked to teachers' effectiveness in prior studies, as have resources such as the size of their classes (Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor, 2007; Cowen Institute, 2008; Elmore and Burney, 1997; Harris and Sass, 2006; Kane and Staiger, 2005; Mosteller, 1995), and because teachers' career plans may plausibly influence and be influenced by their schools' performance (Clotfelter et al., 2004).

Table 7.5 provides descriptive statistics for the teacher-reported data we examined. The data are drawn from only the 43 schools for which we had both teacher survey response data and records of *growth_amount09*. We present descriptive statistics only for the 151 teachers who had nonmissing data on all of the variables shown in the table. The variables presented include teachers' reported professional development hours during the year, their class size in the first class of the week, their use of a pacing guide, the frequency with which their students work in groups and with which they (the teachers) assigned homework, the extent of their proactive outreach to parents (namely, outreach about events on campus), their plans to stay in the same school the following year, and their years of teaching experience.

Table 7.5
Descriptive Statistics for New Orleans Schools Included in the Analysis of School Performance and Teacher Survey Data

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Teacher's professional development hours during the year	78.596	75.604	0	720
Class size in first class of the week	21.821	6.209	3	48
Teacher uses a pacing guide (1 = yes; 0 = no)	0.881	0.325	0	1
Students work in groups at least 3–4 times per week (1 = yes; 0 = no)	0.821	0.384	0	1
Teacher assigns homework at least 3–4 times per week (1 = yes; 0 = no)	0.881	0.325	0	1
Number of families teacher has contacted about school events in past month	11.954	18.798	0	100
Teacher plans to stay in same school next year (1 = yes; 0 = no)	0.775	0.419	0	1
Teacher's years of teaching experience	11.629	10.555	0	39

SOURCE: 2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers.
NOTE: n = 151 teachers nested in 43 schools.

To examine the extent to which these teacher-reported variables accounted for differences in their schools' performance growth, we estimated the relationship between each and schools' change from their *base08* to *growth09* scores. The number of teachers who responded to these survey questions per school ranged from 1 to 9, with a mean of 3.5. In all models, we control for a school's charter status and district (RSD versus OPSP/BESE) but, given the small sample size and the exploratory nature of the analysis, we do not include the other school-level control variables in the analysis because we want to limit the degrees of freedom expended. Coefficients from the fitted models are shown in Table 7.6.

The overriding lesson from Table 7.6 is that none of the teacher-reported survey variables we tested accounts for any substantively or statistically meaningful variation in schools' performance growth from the *base08* to *growth09*, at least among the subset of 43 schools for which we have data. The variable that comes closest is the assigning of homework at least three to four times per week (linked in magnitude to school performance growth of 4.2 points) but given the small sample, it does not begin to approach statistical significance.

Of course one difficulty in linking survey data to school performance growth lies in the limited number of schools for which we have both school performance growth data and survey responses. Another difficulty lies in the fact that the teacher data are drawn from only a small—albeit randomly sampled—subset of elementary, language arts, and mathematics teachers in the schools. To address the second problem, we would have liked to link *principals'* survey data about schoolwide policies or practices to school performance growth but, in this case, we have principal data from only 24 schools, and only 16 of those have school performance growth data on record for 2008–09. On a strictly exploratory basis, we examined whether the length of the school day and school year as reported by those principals was associated with school performance and found no substantive evidence of a relationship. Still, given the very small number of observations, such a finding sheds little light on whether such a relationship might exist in the larger population of New Orleans schools.

Table 7.6
Coefficients (and Standard Errors) from Regression Models Predicting the Change in School Performance Score from the Base 2007–08 Score to the Growth 2008–09 Score, as a Function of School Characteristics and Teacher Survey Responses

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Charter	0.931 (2.057)	0.018 (2.115)	1.254 (2.097)	1.653 (2.258)	1.091 (2.103)	0.499 (2.113)	1.058 (2.087)	0.969 (2.091)	1.290 (2.143)
RSD	–1.667 (1.987)	–1.988 (1.969)	–1.870 (2.007)	–1.350 (2.036)	–1.816 (2.030)	–1.186 (2.058)	–1.603 (2.007)	–1.808 (2.134)	–1.363 (2.055)
Teacher's professional development hours during year		–0.036 (0.024)							
Class size in first class of the week			0.201 (0.233)						
Teacher uses a pacing guide (1 = yes; 0 = no)				2.925 (3.684)					
Students work in groups at least 3–4 times per week (1 = yes; 0 = no)					1.985 (4.078)				
Teacher assigns homework at least 3–4 times per week (1 = yes; 0 = no)						4.240 (4.598)			
Number of families teacher has contacted about school events in past month							–0.049 (0.086)		
Teacher plans to stay in same school next year (1=yes; 0=no)								–0.706 (3.555)	
Teacher's years of teaching experience									0.083 (0.127)
Intercept	6.147** (2.234)	9.861** (3.314)	1.603 (5.717)	2.969 (4.589)	4.495 (4.074)	2.351 (4.685)	6.637** (2.413)	6.746~ (3.772)	4.752 (3.100)
No. of individuals	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151
No. of schools	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Degrees of freedom in model	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Degrees of freedom in residual	40	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
F	0.645	1.192	0.676	0.636	0.501	0.712	0.530	0.433	0.567
R^2 within schools	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
R^2 between schools	0.031	0.084	0.049	0.047	0.037	0.052	0.039	0.032	0.042
R^2 overall	0.051	0.058	0.046	0.054	0.052	0.052	0.041	0.045	0.031

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of data from the Louisiana Department of Education, 2009a.

*** p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, ~p < 0.1.

Finally, it is vital to emphasize again that none of the associations discussed here between school characteristics and the schools' static performance *or* performance growth can be interpreted as causal. In other words, we have no basis for concluding that charter status, district membership, school demographics, selective admission policies, school grade levels, or teacher-reported practices and experiences are the causes of a school's performance or performance growth. Our description of such relationships may help inform theories that could be tested

using experimental or rigorous quasi-experimental designs, but our purpose here is simply to describe the distribution of school performance and performance growth in terms of observable school characteristics of interest.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

Review of Findings

In the years following Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans has found itself in the vanguard of urban school reform efforts in the United States. Its citywide, choice-based system of multiple school districts and school operators has brought charter-based school choice to a scale not seen in any other part of the country. Along the way, the system has attracted much controversy, particularly from critics who worry about unequal access to the city's highest-performing schools (Chang, 2010; Institute on Race and Poverty, 2010) and about schools' reliance on large numbers of inexperienced teachers who may not be willing to make a long-term commitment to the region (Costa and Kirby, 2010; National Coalition for Quality Education in New Orleans, 2006). In the midst of these dramatic reform efforts, what has not been well-documented are the experiences and perceptions of those directly working in and interacting with the city's charter and traditional schools. This study set out to examine those experiences by surveying school principals, as well as a stratified random sample of teachers and parents drawn from schools that agreed to provide teacher and parent contact information or distribute surveys. Our objective was to understand how the city's charter and traditional schools differed or were similar in terms of their governance and operations, their educational contexts, their educator quality and mobility, and their parental perceptions and involvement, since these have been prominent areas of policy concern in the city (Chang, 2010; Cowen Institute, 2008, 2010; National Coalition for Quality Education in New Orleans, 2006).

The findings we present in this report to address these issues have several limitations. First, the survey responses reflect the perspectives only of the samples of participating schools and of sampled survey recipients within those schools who chose to respond. Though we detected only modest observable differences between selected characteristics of participating and nonparticipating schools associated with the different respondents, individual respondents and nonrespondents within a given school may differ in ways we could not measure that are, in fact, related to their perspectives and experiences. Moreover, we could not generalize survey data to the schools with principals who not did not respond or to schools not associated with teachers or parents in the sample. Another key limitation is that the survey data were self-reported, making them subject to imprecision and social desirability bias, but there is little reason to think that such imprecision or bias might be different for principals, teachers, or parents in charter schools than in traditional schools. Third, the relationships we describe here are descriptive and should not be interpreted causally. In other words, any observed differences in survey results by school type or by school district status cannot be taken to mean that the difference resulted from a school's type or status. Similarly, any observed relationships between

school characteristics and academic performance do not mean that the characteristic is the reason for the difference in school performance. Finally, because the data reported here were collected during the 2008–09 academic year, they offer a snapshot rather than a longitudinal view of school policies and practices during a dynamic period of school reform. Although the snapshot presents stakeholder perspectives that have not been captured in other studies, these may not reflect ongoing changes and developments. Also, because we do not have similar data from before Hurricane Katrina, these data do not suggest the extent to which the post-Katrina reforms changed the policies and practices of individual schools.

Bearing in mind that the study cannot generalize beyond our survey response samples, a key finding is that within those samples, the policies and practices reported by charter and traditional schools were, in most cases, fairly similar. What did appear to differ is that teachers, parents, and even principals who responded to the surveys reported encountering fewer major challenges in charter than traditional schools, and those in charter schools seemed modestly more satisfied with their experiences. With regard to each of the five research questions, key takeaways are as follows:

- The *governance and operational practices* of charter and traditional schools differed with regard to schools' autonomy and provision of services, such that charter school principals reported greater autonomy and were more likely than traditional school counterparts to contract out for special services, such as transportation, food services, and facilities maintenance. However, we found strong similarities between charter and traditional schools in terms of school-level leadership and decisionmaking practices, such as the existence and frequency of school governance meetings.
- The most critical differences that emerged between charter and traditional schools in terms of *educational contexts* involved educators' perceived challenges to improving student achievement. Principal and teacher respondents rated all 12 potential challenges presented to them (most notably, parent involvement, student discipline, and student transfers) as more serious in traditional schools than in charter schools, with the exception of facilities, which was rated as the most prominent challenge among charter school principals.
- The survey results suggested that charter and traditional schools did not differ markedly in terms of their *educator qualifications and mobility*, including human resource practices related to hiring priorities and needs, incentive structures, or professional development offerings. Teachers' anticipated plans to stay in their current schools did not differ meaningfully between charter and traditional schools.
- Though the surveys showed few notable differences between charter and traditional schools with regard to their governance practices, educational contexts, and educator qualifications and mobility, surveys did reveal several differences in terms of the *perceptions and experiences of charter and traditional school parents*. Specifically, charter school parents perceived a greater sense of choice and greater satisfaction with their children's schools, on average, than their counterparts in traditional schools.
- With regard to schools' performance, results we examined from the teacher surveys did not account statistically for differences between charter and traditional schools' year-to-year academic performance, though the analytic sample was very small.

What remains less clear is to what extent these differences in educators and parents' reported satisfaction and perceived challenges can be attributed to the motivation of students and families who were able to obtain access to the city's charter schools. An important question is whether the different student populations served by the schools—and the different admissions constraints facing the schools—are contributing to these differences. It is beyond the capacity of the data available in this study to answer those questions.

Another finding of interest is that the variation in teacher experiences and practices detected by our surveys explained none of the variation in student performance growth during the survey year, though the sample was limited in size, and we did not have an adequate number of principal responses to include principal survey results in these analyses. If future research using student-level data can more precisely identify those schools that are most and least effective, it may be possible to conduct case studies of particular schools to understand their particular policies and practices in more detail.

Future Directions

One rationale that is sometimes given for the New Orleans approach of letting a thousand flowers bloom is that the innovation that results in the most effective schools may eventually spill over to other schools that begin to learn from their fellow institutions (Tough, 2008). Though the surveys did not detect marked variation in school policies and practices among school types, perhaps in part because of their limited scope, the question of how best to foster organizational learning among schools—whether within or between the charter and traditional sectors—remains open. Some might argue that competition—especially combined with state intervention—will eventually improve education by forcing the weaker schools to close. However, this perspective assumes that the system has capacity to replace them with better alternatives. It therefore seems vital that both charter and traditional schools have a mechanism for learning from their counterparts. Fortunately, New Orleans does have some such mechanisms. For instance, the Louisiana Charter School Alliance, funded by Baptist Community Ministries and managed by the School Leadership Center of Greater New Orleans, is a consortium of nine charter schools that work together to establish operational efficiencies in terms of choosing accounting systems, obtaining legal advice, ordering supplies, and undertaking other back-office functions (Maloney, 2008). While the Alliance, which is affiliated with the city's Eastbank Collaborative, primarily serves OPSB charter schools and one BESE charter school, the School Leadership Center operating the Alliance offers professional development to leaders of other schools in the city and throughout the state (School Leadership Center of Greater New Orleans, 2010). In addition, the Algiers Charter School Association, which was founded locally, operates a number of RSD charter schools (Maloney, 2008). Nevertheless, neither of these mechanisms—collaboration among charter schools nor operational efficiencies provided by charter management organizations—ensures opportunities for the sharing of best practices between charter and traditional schools. Policymakers in New Orleans may wish to consider ways of creating such between-school collaboration mechanisms, perhaps looking to other cities that are developing processes to encourage such sharing (Zehr, 2010).

Ongoing progress in New Orleans will also depend on transparency and on families' access to information about their school choice options. In compliance with *No Child Left Behind*, Louisiana already provides some transparency by making School Performance Scores,

growth scores, and demographic information available to the public (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b). Moreover, the New Orleans Parent Organizing Network (2010), founded by local parents after Hurricane Katrina, annually publishes the *New Orleans Parents Guide to Public Schools*, which summarizes the features, programs, and admission procedures of all public schools in the city in an effort to help parents navigate the choice-based system. Yet these provide limited public information about the variation in charter and traditional schools' policies and procedures, curricular and instructional emphases, staffing characteristics, or performance from the viewpoint of families (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009b; New Orleans Parent Organizing Network, 2010).

A key objective of this study was to support transparency by providing information about those dimensions, within the confines of a survey that could not gather in-depth information on many topics. However, the limited survey response rates make it impossible to generalize broadly from this study's results. For this reason, we hope that the study's findings will provide fodder for organizational reflection among school and district leaders, though we would caution against basing broad-ranging policy decisions on these results.

Still, the study's findings do suggest areas for further attention, such as the need to ensure high-quality information and transportation options to families so that charter schools become an accessible option for a variety of families. In addition, the fact that this study is the first to report on the experiences of randomly sampled principals, teachers, and parents in post-Katrina New Orleans across school types suggests a need for ongoing and coordinated data collection efforts to understand the progress of the reform as it continues to take shape. Although schools and the state undoubtedly face a burden from numerous, uncoordinated efforts to collect data, we suggest that strengthening the partnership between the research and school communities in New Orleans could ultimately benefit the city by providing more and better information to policymakers, schools, and communities. One possible model is that of a research consortium in which local researchers collaborate on a single data-collection effort, so that a number of agencies and programs can use data to answer questions about school policies and practices. In a school system transforming as rapidly as that of New Orleans, there is potential for formative research to help education policymakers, schools, and communities guide the direction of ongoing reforms. Strengthening the partnerships between the communities of research and practice may also help illuminate what progress is being made and what remains to be done in promoting a stable educational future for the children of New Orleans.

APPENDIX A

Statistical Models Used in the Analyses

This appendix supplements the methods described in Chapter Two by providing a description of the statistical models used in the analyses. In Chapters Two through Six, we use simple cross-tabulations (Stata's tabulate command) to estimate the difference between charter and traditional school responses for principals. However, we use between-school effects regression models to report the results of teacher and parent surveys for questions about the policies, practices, or qualities of their particular schools. These models average the results to the school level and are specified as follows:

$$y_j = \alpha + \beta charter_j + u_j \quad (1)$$

In equation 1, y_j represents the dependent variable of interest—namely, the response to a given survey question. The average difference between charter and traditional school respondents in response to that question is given by β. The intercept term is α, and u_j represents a normally distributed, mean-zero error term at the school level, with a standard deviation of σ.

For responses that pertain to the characteristics, preferences, or backgrounds of individual teacher or parent respondents, we fit random-effects regression models. These models also account for the nesting of individuals within schools (particularly important for hypothesis testing, though we do not report on hypothesis tests in this analysis) by taking into account both between-school and within-school variation. The random-effects model is similarly specified except that i now indexes individuals, whereas j continues to index schools. The model includes both a school-level error term, u_j, as well as an individual-level error term, ε_{ij}, both of which are normally distributed with means of zero and standard deviations of σ_1 and σ_2, respectively:

$$y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta charter_{ij} + u_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (2)$$

When further disaggregating results by district as well as school type, we specify the model as follows (shown here in a between-school effects framework, though we fit the model in a random-effects framework as well):

$$y_j = \alpha + \beta charter_j + \delta rsd_j + \lambda(charter_j * rsd_j) + u_j \quad (3)$$

In equation 3, δ represents the mean difference between traditional schools in the RSD and those in OPSB or BESE districts, and λ represents any additional difference between RSD

and OPSB or BESE schools among the charter schools in the sample. Thus, estimated values of λ established whether the difference between charter and traditional schools on a given question was similar across districts or was driven by a particular district. After fitting between-school effects or random-effects models, we use the fitted coefficients to report estimated values for charter and traditional school responses to each question.

In Chapter Seven, we present the results from additional between-school effect models. These models are similar to equation 3 in that they include school charter status, district status, and the charter-by-district interaction as predictors, but they also use School Performance Scores or score gains as dependent variables and include additional controls for such school characteristics as school level (elementary, secondary, or elementary/secondary), selective admission, and percentage of students in the school who are low-income/minority. We use a similar model to generate the coefficients and standard errors in Table 7.6. This model does not include the interaction effect of charter and RSD but does include school-average teacher responses to particular survey questions as predictors of growth in school performance. The model is specified as follows:

$$growth_amount09_j = \alpha + \beta charter_j + \delta rsd_j + \kappa y_j + u_j \quad (4)$$

where the dependent variable in equation 4, $growth_amount09_j$, is the change in SPS from *base08* to *growth09* at school j; y_j is the average response of teachers in school j to survey question y, and κ is the difference in *growth_amount09* associated with a unit difference in y, holding constant the main effects of charter and district status. The variables $charter_j$ and rsd_j are defined as before, and their coefficients each represent their associations with the dependent variable, $growth_amount09_j$, holding constant the other terms in the model. As before, α is an intercept term, and u_j represents a normally distributed, mean-zero error term at the school level, with a standard deviation of σ.

APPENDIX B

2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Principals

STUDY OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC EDUCATION PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Dear Principal:

We are asking you to complete this survey as part of a Study of the Transformation of New Orleans Public Education. We greatly value the information about your experiences and opinions that only you can provide and hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

- **Purpose of Study:** The survey asks about your experiences dealing with your local school and school district. We hope to learn about your school's admission policies, governance, and monitoring activities, and services provided by your school.
- **Sponsor:** The study is being conducted by the Scott S. Cowen Institute at Tulane University and the RAND Corporation and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Confidentiality:** All information collected will be confidential. We will not provide any information that identifies you to anyone outside of the study team, except as required by law. Results will be reported in aggregate form only.
- **Response Burden:** The survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.
- **Benefits:** The information you give will be helpful in guiding efforts to improve public education in New Orleans. We will send you $15 when we receive your completed survey as a token of our appreciation for your efforts.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Taking part in this survey is voluntary. The school/district and its programs will not be informed of your participation, and your relationship to the school/district will not be affected. Feel free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer.
- **More Information:** For questions or more information about this study, you may contact the study research team at **mbradley@rand.org** or call the study's toll-free number, **1-800-836-4779**.

Please write your answers directly on the questionnaire, by checking the appropriate box, circling the appropriate number, or writing your answer in the space given.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this very important effort!

YOUR SCHOOL

1. For this school year (2008-09), how many students in your school:

(*Write in the number of students in each box. If none, write in "0."*)

		Number of students
a.	Applied to enroll in your school	☐☐☐
b.	Met your school's admission requirements (*If your school has no admission requirements, this number should be the same as the number who applied to enroll.)*	☐☐☐
c.	Were admitted to your school	☐☐☐

2. For this school year (2008-09), how many students:

(*Write in the number of students in each box. If none, write in "0."*)

		Number of students
a.	Were enrolled at your school at the beginning of the school year	☐☐☐
b.	Transferred into your school since the beginning of the school year	☐☐☐
c.	Transferred out of your school since the beginning of the school year	☐☐☐
d.	Are currently enrolled in your school	☐☐☐

3. For this school year (2008-09), in what ways did your school let parents know about the school?

(*Check one box in each row.)*

		Yes	***No***
a.	Held enrollment fairs, open house, or other events that presented information about the school	❑	❑
b.	Included information about school in community newsletters	❑	❑
c.	Placed ads in local newspaper and/or newsletters	❑	❑
d.	Placed signs in front of school or other building, or on the neutral ground	❑	❑
e.	Placed ad on bus or billboard	❑	❑
f.	Maintained a school website (separate from a site the district maintains for you)	❑	❑
g.	Distributed flyers in the neighborhood	❑	❑
h.	Other (please specify): _____	❑	❑

ADMISSION

4. For this school year (2008-09), did your school hold a lottery to select students to admit?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes
❑ No

5. Does your school's admission process require any of the following elements?

(Check all that apply in each row.)

Admission requirement	*Not used*	*Requested for informational purposes only*	*Used for placement purposes only*	*Used to determine eligibility for admission*
a. Admission test or standardized achievement test	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Academic record	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Special student aptitudes, skills or talents	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Personal interview	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Recommendations	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Behavioral record	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Attendance record	❑	❑	❑	❑

6. Which of the following types of policies do you require that students and families adhere to in order to attend your school?

(Check all that apply.)

❑ School uniform policy
❑ Parental involvement policy
❑ Minimum student grade point average policy
❑ Minimum student attendance policy
❑ Other policy (*please specify*): _____

_____

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

7. How many instructional days per year are offered by your school?

(Write in the number of instructional days.)

Number of instructional days per year

8. How many hours of instruction does your school provide daily (excluding lunch)?

(Write in hours and minutes per day.)

☐☐ **Hours** ☐☐ **Minutes**

9. In a typical week, how many hours of instruction does the *typical fourth-grade* student receive in...

❑ ***Check this box if your school does not offer Grade 4 and go to Question 10.***

(Write number in each box. If none check box in the first column.)

		None		
a.	English/Language Arts.....	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**
b.	Mathematics	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**
c.	Social Studies	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**
d.	Sciences.....	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**
e.	Foreign Language.....	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**
f.	Fine or Performing Arts	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**
g.	Physical Education	❑	☐☐ **Hours**	☐☐ **Minutes**

10. In a typical week, how many hours of instruction does the *typical seventh-grade* student receive in...

❑ ***Check this box if your school does not offer Grade 7 and go to Question 11.***

(Write number in each box. If none check box in the first column.)

		None				
a.	English/Language Arts.....	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
b.	Mathematics	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
c.	Social Studies	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
d.	Sciences.....	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
e.	Foreign Language.....	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
f.	Fine or Performing Arts	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
g.	Physical Education	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**

11. In a typical week, how many hours of instruction does the *typical tenth-grade* student receive in...

❑ ***Check this box if your school does not offer Grade 10 and go to Question 12.***

(Write number in each box. If none check box in the first column.)

		None				
a.	English/Language Arts.....	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
b.	Mathematics	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
c.	Social Studies	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
d.	Sciences.....	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
e.	Foreign Language.....	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
f.	Fine or Performing Arts	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**
g.	Physical Education	❑	☐☐	**Hours**	☐☐	**Minutes**

12. Are students assigned to any of the following classes based upon their CURRENT LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT (as opposed to by age alone)?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

		Yes	***No***
a.	Reading classes	❑	❑
b.	Math classes	❑	❑
c.	Science classes	❑	❑

13. How many Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses does your school offer*? If the same course is offered more than once during the school year, please count it as only one course.*

❑ ***Check this box if your school does not offer Grades 9 - 12 and go to Question 15***

(Write in the number of courses for each row. If none, write in "0.")

		Number of courses
a.	Advanced Placement courses	☐☐☐
b.	Honors courses	☐☐☐

14. How many students are participating in:

(Write in the number of students for each row. If none, write in "0.")

		Number of students
a.	Advanced Placement courses	☐☐☐
b.	Honors courses	☐☐☐

15. This school year (2008-09, including last summer 2008), did your school offer the following programs for low-performing students? *If "YES," mark what percent of students participated approximately. If mandatory, mark 100%.*

(Write in the number of students for each row. If none, write in "0.")

Program	*No*	*Yes*	*IF YES: Percent of children participating*
a. Extended school day	❑	❑ →	☐☐☐ %
b. Before or after school tutoring/enrichment programs.....	❑	❑ →	☐☐☐ %
c. Weekend instructional classes	❑	❑ →	☐☐☐ %
d. Summer school or summer instructional sessions	❑	❑ →	☐☐☐ %

16. For this school year (2008-09), is your school eligible for and does it receive funds from the following federal and state categorical programs?

(*Check one box in each row.)*

Categorical Program	*Eligible & received*	*Eligible but did not apply*	*Ineligible*	*Don't know*
a. Title I	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Title II (Teacher and principal training)	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Child nutrition program.....	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Special education IDEA Part B	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. 21st Century grant program.....	❑	❑	❑	❑

17. During this school year (2008-09), how (if at all) did your school offer each of the following services?

(*Check all that apply.)*

	Did not offer	*Offered by referral to a government or community organization*	*Offered by a private contractor to the school*	*Offered by a school or district employee*
a. School nurse	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Social worker.....	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Counselor.....	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Psychologist.....	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Speech and language pathologist.....	❑	❑	❑	❑

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

18. During this school year (2008-09), how frequently did your school steering committee or leadership team meet? ***A school steering committee or leadership team is a group of staff members and (sometimes) community members that makes decisions or recommendations for the school.***

(Check one.)

- ❑ This school does not have a steering committee
- ❑ About once a year
- ❑ About every marking period
- ❑ About monthly
- ❑ About weekly

19. How much control does your school have over the following policies? Please also indicate the importance of each type of control.

Policy	*(Check one box in each row.)* No Control 1	2	3	Full Control 4	*(Check one box in each row.)* Not Important 1	2	3	Very Important 4
a. Student disciplinary and dismissal policies	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Student placement policies	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Student assessment policies (except state mandated tests)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Curriculum	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Instruction	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Staff salaries and benefits	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Budgetary expenses other than salaries and benefits	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Staff hiring	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
i. Staff discipline and dismissal	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

ACCOUNTABILITY

20. If the results from the 2007-08 state accountability tests (LEAP, iLEAP, and GEE) have been made available to your school, in what format did you receive them?

❑ ***Check this box if your school did not receive the results from the 2007-08 state tests and go to Question 21.***

(Check one box in each row.)

	Not made available in this way	***Available but did not use***	***Used minimally***	***Used moderately***	***Used extensively***
Results in different formats:					
a. Results for the school as a whole	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Results for subgroups of students (e.g., racial/ethnic subgroups, LEP students, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Results for each grade level	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Results for each classroom	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Results for individual students	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Results broken down by specific topics or skills:					
f. Results on specific math topics or skills (e.g., computation, applications, etc.)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Results on specific reading topics or skills (e.g., word recognition, grammar, etc.)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Results showing changes over time:					
h. Trends in individual student results across years	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
i. Trends in the school's results across years	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

21. To what extent has your school used the results received from last year's (2007-08) state accountability tests (LEAP, iLEAP, and GEE) for the following activities?

(*Check one box in each row.)*

School used state tests results to…	*NA/ District sets policy*	*Did not use in this way*	*Used minimally*	*Used moderately*	*Used extensively*
a. Align or adjust the curriculum	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Assign students to supplemental instruction or tutoring.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Determine this year's instructional focus	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Group students for instruction (either within or across grade levels)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Shape the content of professional development activities for teachers.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Allocate this years' school resources.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Improve or increase the involvement of parents in student learning.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

22. During this school year (2008-09), how many times did your school receive formal school visits from the following operating organizations?

(Write in number of visits in each row. If none, write in "0.")

Organization	*Number of visits*
a. State staff	☐☐☐
b. District staff	☐☐☐
c. Charter operating organization	☐☐☐

TEACHERS

23. At the beginning of the school year, approximately how many full time equivalent (FTE) staff work in each of the following categories in your school (please exclude preschool and pre-K)?

(Write in number. If none, write in "0.")

		Number of staff
a.	Teachers	☐☐☐
b.	Teacher aides or paraprofessionals	☐☐☐
c.	Other professional staff (non-administrators, such as counselors, librarians, nurses, social workers, etc.)	☐☐☐
d.	Administrators	☐☐☐

24. What percent of your full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers from last school year (2007-08) returned for this school year (2008-09)?

(Write in the percent of teachers. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐☐ **%**

25. At the beginning of this school year (2008-09), how many of the following staff were <u>newly</u> hired/assigned in <u>your school</u>?

(Write in number. If none, write in "0.")

		Number of staff
a.	Full-time teachers	☐☐☐
b.	Part-time teachers	☐☐☐
c.	Teacher aides or paraprofessionals	☐☐☐

26. Of the new teachers for school year 2008-09, how many have participated in the following programs and/or have the following backgrounds?

(Write in number. If none, write in "0.")

Program/Background	***Number of new teachers***
a. Teach for America	☐☐☐
b. TeachNOLA	☐☐☐
c. New graduate of a teacher education program	☐☐☐
d. Experienced New Orleans teacher	☐☐☐
e. Experienced teacher from outside New Orleans	☐☐☐

27. <u>In the years since Hurricane Katrina</u>, how satisfied have you been with the knowledge, skills, and teaching effectiveness of teachers assigned or hired by your school who participated in the following programs and/or have the following backgrounds?

(*Check one box in each row.)*

Program/Background	***I have not hired teachers from this source***	***Very satisfied***	***Somewhat satisfied***	***Somewhat dissatisfied***	***Very dissatisfied***
a. Teach for America	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. TeachNOLA	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. New graduate of a teacher education program	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Experienced New Orleans teacher	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Experienced teacher from outside the New Orleans	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

28. In the current school year (2008-09), in which of the following areas did your school have difficulty hiring qualified teachers?

❑ ***Check this box if your school does not have specialized teachers and go to Question 29***

(Check all that apply.)

❑ English/Language Arts
❑ Languages
❑ Mathematics
❑ Special Education
❑ Sciences
❑ Other (*please specify*): _____

29. How important are the following criteria in considering applicants for teaching positions in your school?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

Criteria	***Very important***	***Somewhat important***	***Not very important***	***Not at all important***
a. Full standard state credential for field to be taught	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Passage of a state teacher licensure test	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. College major in field to be taught	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Graduation from a highly selective college or university	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Years of teaching experience	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Familiarity with New Orleans students and families	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Non-education skills or real world experience	❑	❑	❑	❑

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

30. Please indicate how many hours of professional development you received in each of the following topics during the current school year (2008-09, including summer 2008)?

Include only professional development PROVIDED OR PAID FOR by your school, district, state, or charter operating organization. If an hour of professional development addresses multiple topics, include it next to the primary topic it addresses.

(Write in the number of hours in each box. If none, write in "0.")

Area of Professional Development	*Number of Hours Summer of 2008*	*Number of Hours Typical Month in 2008-09*
a. School management or governance		
b. Planning and budgeting		
c. Family and community involvement		
d. Instructional strategies for limited English proficient (LEP) students		
e. Instructional strategies for students with individualized education plans (IEPs)		
f. Alignment of curriculum and instruction with state and/or district content standards		
g. Analyzing and interpreting student achievement data		
h. Preparation of students to take the annual state assessments		
i. Student discipline and/or positive behavior support		
j. Use of educational technology		

STUDENTS

31. How many special education students are currently being served in each of the following instructional settings in your school?

(Write in number for each row. If none, write in "0.")

Instructional Setting	***Number of students***
a. Exclusively in general education classrooms	☐☐☐
b. Exclusively in separate classrooms (i.e., self-contained specials classrooms or departmentalized special education classes)	☐☐☐
c. Part of the time in general education classrooms. and part of the time in separate classrooms (i.e., pull-out programs)	☐☐☐

32. Does your school have a program that focuses specifically on supporting gifted and talented students?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Not applicable: We do not have students designated as gifted and talented.

33. During this school year (2008-09, including summer 2008) did your school focus on the following strategies for promoting parent involvement?

(*Check one box in each row.)*

Strategy	***Yes***	***No***
a. Employing a parent liaison or home-school coordinator	❑	❑
b. Providing materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve achievement	❑	❑
c. Translating information about school and parent programs for parents who do not speak English	❑	❑
d. Arranging school meetings at times that are convenient for parents	❑	❑
e. Providing child care or transportation services to support parent participation	❑	❑
f. Working with community leaders and community-based organizations to promote parent involvement	❑	❑
g. Holding parent education workshops	❑	❑

34. Please indicate the approximate percent of students for whom these issues are a problem in your school.

(Write in percent for each row. If none, write in "0.")

Issue	***Percent of students***
a. Student tardiness	☐☐☐ %
b. Student absenteeism	☐☐☐ %
c. Student disciplinary actions	☐☐☐ %
d. Student dropouts	☐☐☐ %

35. To what extent do you feel that Hurricane Katrina and subsequent displacement continue to affect students in your school?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Not at all
- ❑ To a small extent
- ❑ To a moderate extent
- ❑ To a great extent

SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND FINANCE

36. This school year (2008-09), who provides the following services to your school?

(*Check all that apply in each row.*)

Service	*NA/Not provided*	*School staff*	*Contractor to the school*	*District*	*Charter operating organization*
a. Transportation for students	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Food services for students	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Custodial and facility maintenance services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Security	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Student assessments (other than state assessments)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Special education services	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Professional development for teachers	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Payroll	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
i. Bookkeeping	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
j. Assistance in meeting district, state and federal requirements and regulations	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
k. Assistance to apply and maintain state and federal categorical funding	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

37. For the school year 2007-08, what was your school's:

(Write number in each row.)

a.	Total revenues?	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00
b.	Total expenditures?	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00

38. What was your school's total revenue during the 2007-08 school year from the following sources?

(Write number in each row.)

a.	Minimum Foundation Program (i.e., regular state and local per pupil funds)	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00	OR: ☐ **Does not apply**
b.	Charter school categorical block grant	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00	OR: ☐ **Does not apply**
c.	Special education	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00	OR: ☐ **Does not apply**
d.	Title I	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00	OR: ☐ **Does not apply**
e.	Other revenues	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00	OR: ☐ **Does not apply**

39. For the 2007-08 school year, what was <u>your school's</u> expenditures on each of the following?

(Write number in each row.)

a.	Teacher salaries and benefits	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00
b.	Other staff salaries and benefits	$ ☐☐,☐☐☐,☐☐☐.00

40. For this school year (2008-09), did your school receive private funding?

(Check one.)

❑ No
❑ Not sure
❑ Yes → **IF YES, what was the amount?** *(Please indicate approximate amount.)*

$ ☐☐ ,☐☐☐ ,☐☐☐.00

41. During this school year (2008-09), what percent of your total operating budget comes from one-time or non-recurring funding (e.g. grants for one or two years)?

(Write in the percent. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐☐ **%**

42. How much of a challenge is each of the following to your efforts to improve student performance?

	(*Check one box in each row.*)			
Type of Challenge	***Not a challenge***	***Minor challenge***	***Moderate challenge***	***Major challenge***
a. Class size	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Facilities	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Supply of textbooks and other instructional materials	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Alignment of textbooks and instructional materials with state standards	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Student discipline	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Parent involvement	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Student transfers into this school during the year	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Student motivation	❑	❑	❑	❑
i. Staff morale	❑	❑	❑	❑
j. Student attendance	❑	❑	❑	❑
k. Resources for students with disabilities	❑	❑	❑	❑
l. Resources for gifted and talented students	❑	❑	❑	❑

BACKGROUND

43. What is the HIGHEST degree you hold?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Associate's Degree
- ❑ Bachelor's Degree (B.A., B.S., B.E., etc.)
- ❑ Master's Degree (M.A., M.A.T., M.Ed., etc.)
- ❑ Education Specialist or professional diploma
- ❑ Doctorate or first professional degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)

44. Do you have an administrative credential (i.e., certification as a school administrator)?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

45. How many years of paid <u>teaching experience</u> do you have?

(Write in the number of years. If none, write "0." Do not include time working as a full-time administrator.)

☐☐ **Years**

46. How many years of experience do you have as a principal overall? *Count the current year as 1 full year.*

(Write in the number of years.)

☐☐ **Years**

47. How many years have you been principal of your current school? *Count the current year as 1 full year.*

(Write in the number of years.)

☐☐ **Years**

48. How many contract days will you work this year (2007-08)?

(Write in the number of days.)

☐☐☐ **Days per year**

49. Please specify a range of your current gross (before taxes) annual salary in this school?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Less than $50,000
- ❑ $50,000 - $64,999
- ❑ $65,000 - $79,999
- ❑ $80,000 - $94,999
- ❑ $95,000 - $109,999
- ❑ $110,000 - $124,999
- ❑ $125,000 - $139,999
- ❑ $140,000 or more

Please return the completed survey in the pre-paid envelope you received in the survey mailing to:

THE RAND CORPORATION
1200 South Hayes Street
Arlington, VA 22202-5050

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX C

2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Teachers

STUDY OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC EDUCATION TEACHER SURVEY

Dear Teacher:

We are asking you to complete this survey as part of a Study of the Transformation of New Orleans Public Education. We greatly value the information about your experiences and opinions that only you can provide and hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

- **Purpose of Study:** The survey asks about your experiences dealing with your local school and school district. We hope to learn about your school practices, the staff development and other support you receive, and your classroom activities.
- **Sponsor:** The study is being conducted by the Scott S. Cowen Institute at Tulane University and the RAND Corporation and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Confidentiality:** All information collected will be confidential. We will not provide any information that identifies you to anyone outside of the study team, except as required by law. Results will be reported in aggregate form only.
- **Response Burden:** The survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.
- **Benefits:** The information you give will be helpful in guiding efforts to improve public education in New Orleans. **We will send you $15 when we receive your completed survey as a token of our appreciation for your efforts.**
- **Voluntary Participation:** Taking part in this survey is voluntary. The school/district and its programs will not be informed of your participation, and your relationship to the school/district will not be affected. Feel free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer.
- **More Information:** For questions or more information about this study, you may contact the study research team at **mbradley@rand.org** or call the study's toll-free number, **1-800-836-4779**.

Please write your answers directly on the questionnaire, by checking the appropriate box, circling the appropriate number, or writing your answer in the space given.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this very important effort!

a. Our records indicate that you are a teacher at:

SCHOOL NAME STICKER

(Check one.)

❑ I currently teach at this school ➔ ***CONTINUE WITH QUESTIONNAIRE***

❑ I no longer teach at this school ➔ ***STOP QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED***

b. Which subjects do you currently teach?

*(Check all that apply. Teachers of **both** Math and English, including generalist elementary teachers, should check both.)*

❑ I currently teach Language Arts/English/Reading at this school ➔ ***CONTINUE WITH QUESTIONNAIRE***

❑ I currently teach Mathematics at this school ➔ ***CONTINUE WITH QUESTIONNAIRE***

❑ I do not teach Mathematics or Language Arts/English/Reading at this school ➔ ***STOP QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED***

c. Which grade(s) do you currently teach?

(Check all that apply.)

❑ Pre-K	❑ 3rd Grade	❑ 7th Grade	❑ 11th Grade
❑ Kindergarten	❑ 4th Grade	❑ 8th Grade	❑ 12h Grade
❑ 1st Grade	❑ 5th Grade	❑ 9th Grade	
❑ 2nd Grade	❑ 6th Grade	❑ 10th Grade	

IMPORTANT: In completing this questionnaire, when you see questions asking about your "Language Arts/Mathematics" classes, choose answers related to the subject you checked above. *If you checked both subjects above, then please choose answers related to your Language Arts classes*.

YOUR SCHOOL

1. How often do you participate in the following faculty committees or teams? ***If your school does not have such a committee or team, check NA.***

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	NA	Never	About yearly	About quarterly	About monthly	About weekly
a. Parental involvement.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Curriculum and instruction	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Discipline and school safety ...	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Budgetary issues	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Other (*please specify*): _____.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

2. This school year, how frequently do you hold planned meetings with other teachers to do the following?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Never	About yearly	About quarterly	About monthly	About weekly
a. Assess school needs and set goals.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Develop or implement plans to meet school goals	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Review student assessment results or student work.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Discuss the progress of particular students.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Develop or revise curriculum	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Discuss or demonstrate instructional strategies.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Discuss student behavior/discipline ..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Strongly agree	***Somewhat agree***	***Somewhat disagree***	***Strongly disagree***
a. Administration and staff have a strong sense of the school's mission.	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. The principal is responsive to my concerns.	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Teacher morale is high	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Maintaining student discipline is easy in this school.	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Teachers in this school believe that all students are capable of achieving at high standards.	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. My professional skills and expertise as a teacher are used to address school-wide issues.	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Teachers in this school emphasize immediate correction of students' academic errors in the classroom.	❑	❑	❑	❑

FEEDBACK

4. How frequently do you receive feedback or structured critiques of your teaching from the following?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Never	*About yearly*	*About quarterly*	*About monthly*	*About weekly*
a. District staff	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. The school principal	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. A school administrator other than the principal, such as a vice principal	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. An experienced or mentor teacher	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Someone contracted by your school	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

REMINDER: When questions refer to "Language Arts/Mathematics" choose answers related to the subject you teach. ***If you teach both subjects, then please choose answers related to your Language Arts classes*****.**

5. Have you received and reviewed individual student results from the 2007-08 LEAP, iLEAP, or GEE test in Language Arts/Mathematics?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes, I have received and reviewed the test results. → ***Go to Question 6***

❑ Does not apply. My students did not take these tests. → ***Go to Question 7, page 5***

❑ I received but have not reviewed individual student results in Language Arts/Mathematics. → ***Go to Question 7, page 5***

❑ I have not received individual student results in Language Arts/Mathematics. → ***Go to Question 7, page 5***

6. How much have you used the results from the 2007-08 LEAP, iLEAP, or GEE test in Language Arts/Mathematics for your school for each of the following purposes?

Purpose	*(Check one box in each row.)* ***Did not use in this way***	***Used minimally***	***Used moderately***	***Used extensively***
a. Identify individual students who need remedial assistance	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Tailor instruction to individual students' needs	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Identify and correct gaps in the curriculum for all students	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Improve or increase the involvement of parents in student learning	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Plan curricular or instructional improvement in collaboration with other teachers.	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Identify areas where I need to strengthen my content knowledge or teaching skills.	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Assign or reassign students to groups or tasks	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Develop or revise Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities	❑	❑	❑	❑

7. In the current school year (2008-09), do you administer progress tests (also called benchmark or interim tests)? By progress tests we mean required tests administered periodically (for example, every 6 weeks) to monitor students' progress in Language Arts/Mathematics. *Progress tests do not refer to annual state LEAP, iLEAP or GEE tests, nor to the tests that you develop or choose to administer in your own classrooms*.

(Check one.)

❑ Yes

❑ No → ***Go to Question 11, page 6***

8. How often are the Language Arts/Mathematics progress tests administered in this school?

(Check one.)

❑ Once a year

❑ About every quarter

❑ About every month

❑ About weekly

9. How soon after students take the Language Arts/Mathematics progress tests are the results made available to you?

(Check one.)

❑ Within a week

❑ Within three weeks

❑ Within six weeks or more

❑ Results are not made available to me → ***Go to Question 11, page 6***

10. How much have you used the results from Language Arts/Mathematics progress tests for each of the following purposes?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

Purpose	*Did not use in this way*	*Used minimally*	*Used moderately*	*Used extensively*
a. Identify individual students who need remedial assistance	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Tailor instruction to individual students' needs	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Identify and correct gaps in the curriculum for all students	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Improve or increase the involvement of parents in student learning	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Plan curricular or instructional improvement in collaboration with other teachers.	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Identify areas where I need to strengthen my content knowledge or teaching skills.	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Assign or reassign students to groups or tasks	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Develop or revise Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities	❑	❑	❑	❑

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

11. During this school year (2008-09, including summer 2008) how many total hours of professional development did you receive? ***Do not include training you must complete to become a certified teacher.***

(Write in the number of hours. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐☐ **Hours**

12. Please indicate how many hours of professional development <u>you</u> receive in each of the following topics during a typical month this school year (2008-09) and how many hours you received during the entire summer of 2008? **For this question, only include professional development <u>PROVIDED OR PAID FOR</u> by your school, district, state, or charter operating organization (if applicable). If an hour of professional development addresses multiple topics, include it next to the <u>primary</u> topic it addresses.**

(Write in the number of hours in each box. If none, write in "0.")

Area of Professional Development	Number of Hours *Summer of 2008*	*Number of Hours Typical Month in 2008-09*
a. Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching <u>Language Arts/Mathematics</u>		
b. Instructional strategies <u>or content knowledge for teaching other</u> academic subjects (e.g., science, social studies, foreign language, etc.).....		
c. Instructional strategies for English Language Learners (ELL)		
d. Instructional strategies for students with individualized education programs (IEPs)		
e. Preparing students to take the annual state assessment		
f. Analyzing and interpreting student achievement data		
g. Student discipline and/or positive behavior support		
h. Use of technology to improve classroom instruction		
i. Other professional development *(please specify):* _____		

13. During this school year (2008-09, including summer 2008), how useful were professional development activities focused on the following topics?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

Topic of Professional Development Activity	*Did not participate*	*Participated but did not learn very much*	*Participated and learned, but have not applied to my teaching*	*Participated, learned, and applied to my teaching*
a. Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching Language Arts/Mathematics	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Instructional strategies or content knowledge for teaching other academic subjects (e.g., science, social studies, foreign language, etc.)	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Instructional strategies for English language learners (ELLs)	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Instructional strategies for students with individualized education programs (IEPs)	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Preparing students to take the annual state assessment	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Analyzing and interpreting student achievement data	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Student discipline and/or positive behavior support	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Use of technology to improve classroom instruction	❑	❑	❑	❑

14. For each of the following types of support, please mark "Yes" if you have received or expect to receive it during the current school year (2008-09, including summer 2008). ***Mark "No" if the support is available but you do not expect to receive it this school year. Mark "NA" if that type of support is not offered.***

(*Check one box in each row.*)

Type of Support	*Yes*	*No*	*NA/ School does not offer it*
a. Release time for course preparation for the classes you teach (e.g., planning period)	❑	❑	❑
b. Release time for taking college courses	❑	❑	❑
c. Release time to work with other teachers (e.g., common planning time, teacher work groups, teacher networks)	❑	❑	❑
d. Program of sustained mentoring or induction for new teachers	❑	❑	❑
e. Peer coaching	❑	❑	❑
f. Funding for higher education courses (e.g., tuition)	❑	❑	❑
g. Stipend to cover school-related expenses (e.g., instructional and classroom materials)	❑	❑	❑
h. Recruitment bonus	❑	❑	❑
i. Retention bonus	❑	❑	❑
j. Salary increase or bonus for reaching educational/professional goals	❑	❑	❑
k. Salary increase or bonus for daily attendance	❑	❑	❑
l. Stipend for professional development	❑	❑	❑

INSTRUCTION

REMINDER: When questions refer to "Language Arts/Mathematics," choose answers related to the subject you teach. ***If you teach both subjects, then please choose answers related to your Language Arts classes*.**

15. How many students do you have in the first Language Arts/Mathematics class of the week that you teach?

(Write in the number of students.)

☐☐ **Number of students**

16. How many computers in your first Language Arts/Mathematics class of the week are used for instructional purposes?

(Write in the number of computers. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐ **Number of computers**

17. This school year (2008-09), do you use a year-long plan, pacing guide, or other document to help you follow the curriculum? ***A year-long plan or pacing guide outlines the sequence of lessons or topics to be covered in class.***

(Check one.)

❑ Yes

❑ No → ***Go to Question 19***

18. How well do you usually keep up with the year-long plan/pacing guide?

(Check one.)

❑ I rarely keep up with the pace

❑ I usually keep up with the pace

❑ I usually move faster than the pace

19. During a typical Language Arts/Mathematics lesson, what percent of time do you use the following teaching strategies?

(Write in the percent for each row. If none, write in "0.")

		Percent of time
a.	Teach to the whole class	☐☐☐ %
b.	Teach to small groups of students	☐☐☐ %
c.	Students work independently	☐☐☐ %

20. How frequently do your students work collaboratively in groups or pairs during Language Arts/Mathematics instruction?

(Check one.)

❑ Never

❑ Less than once a week

❑ Once a week

❑ 2-4 times a week

❑ Every school day

21. IN A TYPICAL WEEK in your classroom, what percent of instructional time do you devote to the following?

	(*Check one box in each row.*)				
	0%	*1-25%*	*26-50%*	*51-75%*	*76-100%*
a. Thematic instruction (i.e., interdisciplinary instruction organized around the exploration of a broad subject)..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Higher-order thinking skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Students' independent work.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Activities based on real-life situations or issues	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Activities that connect to students' unique background or interests	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Lecturing or direct instruction	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Use textbooks and workbooks	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

22. How often do you assign Language Arts/Mathematics homework? ***Please refer to your first Language Arts/Mathematics class or group of the week.***

(Check one.)

❑ Never → ***Go to Question 25, next page***
❑ Less than once a week
❑ Once a week
❑ 2-4 times a week
❑ Every school day

23. Do you require your students' parents or guardians to sign their child's completed homework? ***Please refer to your first Language Arts/Mathematics class or group of the week.***

(Check one.)

❑ Yes
❑ No → ***Go to Question 25, next page***

24. Approximately what percent of your students return their signed homework to you in an average week? ***Please refer to your first Language Arts/Mathematics class or group of the week.***

(Write in the percent of students. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐☐ **% of students**

25. In the first class you teach each week, how many of your students receive supplemental tutoring or instruction in Language Arts/Mathematics?

(Write in the number of students. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐ **Number of students**

26. In the first Language Arts/Mathematics class you teach each week, what percent of your students:

(Write in the percent for each row. If none, write in "0.")

	Percent of students
a. Have 504 accommodations?	☐☐☐ %
b. Have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?	☐☐☐ %
c. Are typically absent?	☐☐☐ %
d. Are typically more than 15 minutes late?	☐☐☐ %

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

27. Please identify the number of students in your class whose parents YOU'VE CONTACTED IN THE PAST MONTH by phone, letter/note, email, or in person about the following. *Please refer to your first Language Arts/Mathematics class of the week.*

(*Write in the number of students for each row. If none, write in "0.")*

	Number of students
a. Their child's academic performance	☐☐☐
b. Their child's behavior in school	☐☐☐
c. Their child's attendance	☐☐☐
d. Upcoming events for parents on campus (such as open houses or student performances)	☐☐☐

28. How much of a challenge is each of the following in your efforts to improve students' performance?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

Type of Challenge	*Not a challenge*	*Minor challenge*	*Moderate challenge*	*Major challenge*
a. Class size	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Facilities	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Supply of textbooks and other instructional materials	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Alignment of textbooks and instructional materials with state standards	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Student discipline	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Parent involvement	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Student transfers into this school during the year	❑	❑	❑	❑
h. Student motivation	❑	❑	❑	❑
i. Staff morale	❑	❑	❑	❑
j. Student attendance	❑	❑	❑	❑
k. Resources for students with disabilities	❑	❑	❑	❑
l. Resources for gifted and talented students	❑	❑	❑	❑

29. How satisfied are you with the support the district, school, and/or other teachers in your school provide to you in the following areas:

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Very satisfied	*Somewhat satisfied*	*Somewhat dissatisfied*	*Very dissatisfied*	*NA / No support provided*
a. Improving my instructional skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Preparing lesson plans	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Helping students that are falling behind	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Using state and progress test results to identify areas of instruction or students needing more attention	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Supporting students with disabilities	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Maintaining classroom discipline	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

30. In the *next school year*, do you plan to work in your current school?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Yes → ***Go to Question 32***
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

31. In the *next school year*, how likely are you to:

	(*Check one box in each row.*) ***Very likely***	***Somewhat likely***	***Somewhat unlikely***	***Very unlikely***
a. Teach in a different school in the same school district.	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Teach in a different district within New Orleans	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Teach in a school somewhere other than New Orleans	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Work in education but not as a K-12 teacher.	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Not work in education.	❑	❑	❑	❑

BACKGROUND

32. Are you currently considered "highly qualified" to teach <u>all of your classes</u> for the purpose of No Child Left Behind?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

33. What is your teaching certification status?

(Check one.)

- ❑ I hold a full Louisiana teaching certificate.
- ❑ I hold a Louisiana practitioner's (temporary) teaching certificate, but I am actively pursuing a full certificate(s).
- ❑ I do not hold a full Louisiana teaching certificate, and I am not pursuing it.

34. How did you train to be a teacher?

(Check all that apply.)

- ❑ I completed a traditional teacher certification program while completing my bachelor's degree.
- ❑ I completed a traditional teacher certification program after completing my bachelor's degree.
- ❑ I trained with Teach for America.
- ❑ I trained with TeachNOLA.
- ❑ I trained with another alternative-route program.
- ❑ I did not receive any formal training to be a teacher.

35. What is the HIGHEST degree you hold?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Associate's Degree
- ❑ Bachelor's Degree (B.A., B.S., B.E., etc.)
- ❑ Master's Degree (M.A., M.A.T., M.Ed., etc.)
- ❑ Education Specialist or professional diploma
- ❑ Doctorate or first professional degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)

36. In what subjects do you hold academic degrees at the Bachelor's level or higher?

(Check all that apply.)

- ❑ Elementary Education
- ❑ Secondary Education
- ❑ Special Education
- ❑ Educational Administration
- ❑ Arts/Music
- ❑ English/Language Arts
- ❑ English as a Second Language
- ❑ Foreign Languages
- ❑ Mathematics
- ❑ Computer Science
- ❑ Natural Sciences
- ❑ Social Sciences
- ❑ Other (*please specify*): _____

37. How many years have you been a teacher? *Count the current year as 1 full year, but do not count teachers' assistant positions or student teaching.*

(Write in the number of years.)

☐☐ **Years**

38. How many years have you been a teacher in the City of New Orleans? ***Count the current year as 1 full year, but do not count teachers' assistant positions or student teaching.***

(Write in the number of years.)

☐☐ **Years**

39. How long have you lived in the New Orleans metropolitan area? ***Include time when you were evacuated due to storms.***

(Check one. Please round up if necessary.)

- ❑ 0-1 years
- ❑ 2-3 years
- ❑ 4-5 years
- ❑ 6 years or more

40. Please specify a range of your current gross (before taxes) annual salary in <u>this school</u>?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Less than $30,000
- ❑ $30,000 - $44,999
- ❑ $45,000 - $59,999
- ❑ $60,000 - $74,999
- ❑ $75,000 - $89,999
- ❑ $90,000 - $104,999
- ❑ $105,000 or more

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed pre-paid envelope to:

THE RAND CORPORATION
1200 South Hayes Street
Arlington, VA 22202-5050

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX D

2009 RAND Survey of New Orleans Parents

STUDY OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC EDUCATION PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are asking you to complete this survey as part of a Study of the Transformation of New Orleans Public Education. We greatly value the information about your experiences and opinions that only you can provide and hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

- **Purpose of Study:** The survey asks about your experiences dealing with your local school and school district. We hope to learn about the options being given to students and their parents, especially new choices given to parents like free tutoring and the choice to enroll their children in higher performing schools.
- **Sponsor:** The study is being conducted by the Scott S. Cowen Institute at Tulane University and the RAND Corporation and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Confidentiality:** All information collected will be confidential. We will not provide any information that identifies you to anyone outside of the study team, except as required by law. Results will be reported in aggregate form only.
- **Response Burden:** The survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.
- **Benefits:** The information you give will be helpful in guiding efforts to improve public education in New Orleans. **We will send you $15 when we receive your completed survey as a token of our appreciation for your efforts.**
- **Voluntary Participation:** Taking part in this survey is voluntary. The school/district and its programs will not be informed of your participation, and your relationship to the school/district will not be affected. Feel free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer.
- **More Information:** For questions or more information about this study, you may contact the study research team at **mbradley@rand.org** or call the study's toll-free number, **1-800-836-4779**.

Please write your answers directly on the questionnaire, by checking the appropriate box, circling the appropriate number, or writing your answer in the space given.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this very important effort!

Our records indicate that you are a parent/guardian of a child who currently attends:

SCHOOL NAME LABEL

(Check one.)

❑ My child no longer attends this school ➔ ***RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED***

❑ My child currently attends this school ➔ ***CONTINUE WITH QUESTIONNAIRE***

1. **Please answer this questionnaire for your youngest child who attends the school listed above who is not in either Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten.**

   What is the grade of this child? ***Even if you have more than 1 child at this school, it is important for research purposes that you answer about your youngest child who is in Grade 1 or above.***

   (Check one.)

   ❑ 1st Grade ❑ 4th Grade ❑ 7th Grade ❑ 10th Grade
   ❑ 2nd Grade ❑ 5th Grade ❑ 8th Grade ❑ 11th Grade
   ❑ 3rd Grade ❑ 6th Grade ❑ 9th Grade ❑ 12th Grade

2. **How are you related to this child?**

   (Check one.)

   ❑ Mother
   ❑ Father
   ❑ Grandparent
   ❑ Aunt or Uncle
   ❑ Other (*please specify*): _____

We would like you to answer the remaining questions in this survey about your youngest child in Grade 1 or above whom you referred to in Question 1.

CHOICE OF SCHOOL

3. **In the current school year, did you have a choice in selecting a school that would meet the needs of your child?**

   (Check one.)

   ❑ Yes
   ❑ No
   ❑ Not sure

4. How did you <u>first</u> find out about the school your child is currently attending?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

		Yes	***No***
a.	It was my child's pre-Katrina school	❑	❑
b.	Received a brochure about the school	❑	❑
c.	Attended a general meeting at the school	❑	❑
d.	Went to an enrollment fair	❑	❑
e.	Someone from the school spoke with me individually	❑	❑
f.	Heard about the school through a newsletter, newspaper, radio, or television	❑	❑
g.	Read information about the school in the *New Orleans Parent's Guide to Public Schools*	❑	❑
h.	Heard from friends or parents of other students about the school	❑	❑
i.	Saw a sign in front of the school or another building or on the neutral ground	❑	❑
j.	Saw an ad on a bus or billboard	❑	❑
k.	Another family member attends/attended this school	❑	❑
l.	Other (*please specify*): _____	❑	❑

5. Did your child attend the same school last year (2007-08) as this school year (2008-09)?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes

❑ No, this is my child's first year in school.

❑ No, my child changed schools. → **If your child changed, schools, please indicate the reason.**

(Check one.)

❑ Moved from elementary school to middle school

❑ Moved from middle school to high school

❑ Moved for other reason *(please explain):* _____

_____

_____

6. For this school year (2008-09), did you apply for your child to attend any schools other than the school he/she now attends?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No → ***Go to Question 9***
- ❑ Don't know → ***Go to Question 9***

7. How many <u>other</u> schools did you apply to?

(Write in the number of schools.)

☐☐ **Schools**

8. How many <u>other</u> schools admitted your child?

(Write in the number of schools. If none, write in "0.")

☐☐ **Schools**

9. Is your child enrolled at the school that was your first choice?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

10. What were the most important reasons you decided to enroll your child in his/her current school?

(Check all that apply.)

- ❑ My child can walk to school or use public transportation.
- ❑ The school provides transportation.
- ❑ The school's academic curriculum
- ❑ The school's record of student achievement
- ❑ The school's attendance and discipline policies
- ❑ The school's athletic program
- ❑ The school's after-school program or tutoring program
- ❑ The school's special education services
- ❑ It was the only school available for my child.
- ❑ My child already had siblings in the school.
- ❑ I knew the school's faculty or staff members.
- ❑ Other *(please explain):* _____

11. How much time does it take your child to get from home to school in the morning?

(Write in hours and/or minutes.)

☐☐ **Hours** ☐☐ **Minutes**

12. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	(*Check one box in each row.*) ***Strongly agree***	***Somewhat agree***	***Somewhat disagree***	***Strongly disagree***
a. I have options to choose from when enrolling my child in a school	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Information on different school options is easy to obtain.	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. It was easy to register my child for school ...	❑	❑	❑	❑

13. What overall grade would you give your child's current school?

(Check one.)

❑ A - Excellent
❑ B - Good
❑ C - Fair
❑ D - Unsatisfactory
❑ F - Failing

ACADEMICS

14. During the current school year (2008-09), how often have you or other adults in your household helped your child with his/her homework?

(Check one.)

❑ Less than 1 day a week
❑ 1 to 2 days a week
❑ 3 to 4 days a week
❑ 5 or more days a week

15. Does your child do 20 or more minutes of homework on most school days?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Don't know

16. Does the school offer the following programs in the current school year (2008-09, including the summer of 2008)?

a. Summer school session in 2008?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes → **IF YES, Did your child participate in summer school?**
(Check one.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not sure

❑ No

❑ Not sure

b. Weekend academic classes?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes → **IF YES, Has your child participated in weekend academic classes provided by the school?**
(Check one.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not sure

❑ No

❑ Not sure

c. Academic tutoring that parents must pay for?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes → **IF YES, Has your child participated in paid tutoring provided by the school?**
(Check one.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not sure

❑ No

❑ Not sure

d. Academic tutoring that is *free*?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes → **IF YES, Has your child participated in free tutoring provided by the school?**
(Check one.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not sure

❑ No

❑ Not sure

e. Before- or after-school enrichment programs (for example, arts or academic programs, sports, etc., not including tutoring)?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes → **IF YES, Has your child participated in before- or after-school enrichment programs provided by the school?**
(Check one.)
❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not sure

❑ No

❑ Not sure

17. This school year (2008-09, including summer of 2008), has your child used the following services at the school?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

		Yes	***No, these services were not offered***	***No, my child did not need these services***	***Don't know***
a.	School nurse or health services	❑	❑	❑	❑
b.	Counseling or psychological services	❑	❑	❑	❑
c.	Speech/language pathology services	❑	❑	❑	❑
d.	Disability or special education services, including 504 Plans	❑	❑	❑	❑

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

18. How often do you receive report cards about your child's academic progress?

(Check one.)

❑ 5 or more times a year
❑ 3 to 4 times a year
❑ 2 times a year
❑ Once a year
❑ I have not received a report card.

19. Since the summer of 2008, have you received a report or letter from your child's school or district telling you how well the school is performing (for example, in terms of student achievement or teacher qualifications)?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes
❑ No → ***Go to Question 21, next page***
❑ Don't know → ***Go to Question 21, next page***

20. Was the information you received about your child's school in the report or letter:

(Check one.)

❑ Very easy to understand
❑ Somewhat easy to understand
❑ Somewhat difficult to understand
❑ Very difficult to understand

21. Please indicate how well your child's school has been doing in the following areas during this school year (2008-2009).

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Does it very well	Does it just O.K.	Does not do it well	Does not do it at all	Not Sure
a. Lets you know between report cards how your child is doing in school.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Gives information on workshops, materials, or advice about how to help your child learn at home	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Gives information about how to help your child with his/her homework	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Gives information on community services to help your child or family ..	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Tells you about opportunities to volunteer at the school.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. Provides disability or special education services, including 504 Plans.....	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
g. Offers programs for gifted and talented students	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

22. Did you have to sign a contract with your child's school describing the school's expectations for you and your child?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Don't know

23. How many times in the current school year (2008-09) have you participated in the following activities?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	More than 5 times	3-5 times	1-2 times	Not at all
a. Helping in the classroom.	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Serving on a school-related committee (e.g., Parent Teacher Organization/Association (PTO/PTA), school improvement committee, etc.)...	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Attending a before- or after-school event.....	❑	❑	❑	❑

24. How comfortable would you feel:

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Very comfortable	*Somewhat comfortable*	*Not very comfortable*	*Not at all comfortable*
a. Calling your child's teacher	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Calling your child's principal	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Participating in parent involvement committees such as the PTO/PTA	❑	❑	❑	❑

25. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your child's school?

(*Check one box in each row.*)

	Very satisfied	*Somewhat satisfied*	*Not very satisfied*	*Not at all satisfied*
a. Educational quality	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. School safety	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Discipline	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Location	❑	❑	❑	❑
e. Your child's current teacher(s)	❑	❑	❑	❑
f. School facilities	❑	❑	❑	❑

26. Each year, the state of Louisiana must name the schools that are "Academically Unacceptable" or "Failing." Is your child's school an "Academically Unacceptable" or "Failing" school as classified by the state?

(Check one.)

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not sure

BACKGROUND

27. What is your race/ethnicity?

(Check all that apply.)

❑ American Indian or Alaska Native
❑ Asian or Pacific Islander
❑ Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
❑ Hispanic or Latino
❑ White (non-Hispanic)
❑ Other (*please specify*): _____

28. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

(Check one.)

- ❑ Less than high school diploma
- ❑ High school diploma or GED
- ❑ Technical/trade/vocational school
- ❑ Some college
- ❑ College degree
- ❑ Advanced or professional degree

29. How many people (adults and children) live in your household full-time?

(Write in the number of people.)

☐☐ **People**

30. What is your total, annual household income?

(Check one.)

- ❑ $0 – $14,999
- ❑ $15,000 – $29,999
- ❑ $30,000 – $44,999
- ❑ $45,000 – $59,999
- ❑ $60,000 – $74,999
- ❑ Over $75,000

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed pre-paid envelope to:

THE RAND CORPORATION
1200 South Hayes Street
Arlington, VA 22202-5050

THANK YOU!

References

Abdulkadiroglu, A., Angrist, J. D., Cohodes, S., Dynarski, S., Fullerton, J., Kane, T. J., et al. (2009). Informing the debate: Comparing Boston's charter, pilot, and traditional schools. Boston: The Boston Foundation.

Ballou, D. (1996). Do public schools hire the best applicants? *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 111(1), 97–133.

Betts, J. R., and Tang, Y. E. (2008). Charter schools and student achievement: A review of the evidence. In R. J. Lake (Ed.), *Hopes, fears, and reality: A balanced look at American charter schools in 2008* (pp. 1–8). Bothell, Wash.: Center for Reinventing Public Education.

Birman, B. F., Boyle, A., Le Floch, K. C., Elledge, A., Holtzman, D., Song, M., et al. (2009). State and local implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act: Volume VIII—Teacher quality under NCLB: Final report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Boe, E. E., Bobbitt, S. A., and Cook, L. H. (1997). Whither didst thou go? Retention, reassignment, migration, and attrition of special and general education teachers from a national perspective. *The Journal of Special Education,* 30(4), 371–389.

Boston Consulting Group. (2007). The State of Public Education in New Orleans. New Orleans, La.: The Greater New Orleans Education Foundation, Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University and the New Orleans City Council Education Committee.

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., and Wyckoff, J. (2006). How changes in entry requirements alter the teacher workforce and affect student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy,* 1(2), 176–216.

Buckley, J., Schneider, M., and Shang, Y. (2004). Are charter school students harder to educate? Evidence from Washington, D.C. New York: National Center on Privatization in Education.

Carnoy, M., Jacobsen, R., Mishel, L., and Rothstein, R. (2005). *The charter school dust-up: Examining the evidence on enrollment and achievement.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Carr, S. (2009a, August 3). Recovery School District to lay off dozens of teachers today, *New Orleans Times-Picayune.* As of August 16, 2011:
http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2009/08/recovery_school_district_to_la.html

———. (2009b, Nov. 14). Teachers fired after Katrina can keep class-action suit, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. As of November 19, 2009:
http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2009/11/post_49.html

Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2009). Multiple choice: Charter school performance in 16 states. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University.

Chang, C. (2010, August 26). Katrina rewrites the book on education in New Orleans, *New Orleans Times-Picayune.* As of January 9, 2010:
http://www.nola.com/katrina/index.ssf/2010/08/hurricane_katrina_swept_away_y.html

Charter School Demonstration Programs Law, Chapter 42, Part III, Code No. 3983, Pub. L. No. 292, Chartering process, revision, and renewal (2009). As of August 24, 2011:
http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/17768.pdf

Chubb, J. E., and Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., and Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Teacher-student matching and the assessment of teacher effectiveness. *Journal of Human Resources,* 41(4), 778–820.

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., Vigdor, J. L., and Diaz, R. A. (2004). Do school accountability systems make it more difficult for low-performing schools to attract and retain high-quality teachers? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management,* 23(2), 251–271.

Cohen, A. (2010). Charter school conversion leaves some parents anxious, others hopeful. As of December 29, 2010:
http://thelensnola.org/2010/05/17/dibert-charter-conversion/

Costa, A. C., and Kirby, P. C. (2010, September 24). *Organizational conditions and contextual factors that impact teacher turnover in Post-Katrina New Orleans charter schools.* Paper presented at the Five Years of Post-Katrina Educational Reform Research Conference, New Orleans, La.

Cowen Institute. (2008). The state of public education in New Orleans. New Orleans, La.: Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University, the Greater New Orleans Education Foundation, and the New Orleans City Council Education Committee.

———. (2010). The state of public education in New Orleans: 2010 Report. New Orleans, La.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1994). Who will speak for the children? How "Teach for America" hurts urban schools and students. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 76(1), 21–33.

Dey, E. L. (1997). Working with low survey response rates: The efficacy of weighting adjustments. *Research in Higher Education,* 38(2), 215–227.

Editorial Page Staff. (2009, November 15). Making New Orleans school choices easier, *New Orleans Times-Picayune.* As of November 19, 2009:
http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2009/11/making_new_orleans_school_choi.html

Elmore, R. F., and Burney, D. (1997). Investing in teacher learning: Staff development and instructional improvement in Community School District #2, New York City (p. 49). New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Forman, M. L. (2007). Developing an action plan: Two Rivers Public Charter School focuses on instruction. In K. P. Boudett and J. L. Steele (Eds.), *Data wise in action: Stories of schools using data to improve teaching and learning* (pp. 107–124). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press.

Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., and Wang, J. (2010). Choice without equity: Charter school segregation and the need for civil rights standards. Los Angeles: Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Gill, B., Timpane, P. M., Ross, K. E., and Brewer, D. J. (2007). *Rhetoric versus reality: What we know and what we need to know about vouchers and charter schools* (MR-1118-1). Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation. As of August 16, 2011:
http//www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1118-1.html

Gross, B., and Pochop, K. M. (2008). How charter schools organize for instruction. In R. J. Lake (Ed.), *Hopes, fears, and reality: A balanced look at American charter schools in 2008* (pp. 9–22). Bothell, Wash.: Center for Reinventing Public Education.

Harris, D., and Sass, T. R. (2006). The effects of teacher training on teacher value-added. Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida State University.

Harris, D. N., Rutledge, S. A., Ingle, W. K., and Thompson, C. C. (2010). Mix and match: What principals really look for when hiring teachers. *Education Finance and Policy,* 5(2), 228–246.

Henig, J. R. (2008). *Spin cycle: How research is used in policy debates: The case of charter schools.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation and the Century Foundation.

Hill, P. T., Campbell, C., Menefee-Libey, D., Dusseault, B., DeArmond, M., and Gross, B. (2009). Portfolio school districts for big cities: An interim report. Portfolio School Districts Project. Seattle, Wash.: Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Hill, P. T., and Celio, M. B. (1998). *Fixing urban schools.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Hoxby, C. M. (2009). A serious statistical mistake in the CREDO study of charter schools. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University.

Hoxby, C. M., and Murarka, S. (2007). Charter schools in New York City: Who enrolls and how they affect their students' achievement. Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Hoxby, C. M., and Rockoff, J. E. (2004). The impact of charter schools on student achievement. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Department of Economics.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). Is there really a teacher shortage? (p. 30). Philadelphia, Pa.: Consortium for Policy Research in Education and Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Institute on Race and Poverty. (2010). The state of public schools in Post-Katrina New Orleans: The challenge of creating equal opportunity. Minneapolis, Minn.: Institute on Race and Poverty and Loyola Institute for Quality and Equity in New Orleans.

Kane, T. J., and Staiger, D. O. (2005). Using imperfect information to identify effective teachers (p. 61). Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Lake, R. J. (Ed.). (2008). *Hopes, fears, and reality: A balanced look at American charter schools in 2008*. Bothell, Wash.: Center for Reinventing Public Education.

———. (2010). Achieving the ripple effect: How can charters prompt district improvement? In R. J. Lake (Ed.), *Hopes, fears, and reality: A balanced look at American charter schools in 2009* (pp. 49–57). Bothell, Wash.: National Charter School Research Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Louisiana Department of Education. (2009a). 2009 SPS, DPS, and graduation rates As of August 24, 2011: http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/2009_sps/2009_DPS_SPS_Grad_(ALL).xlsx

———. (2009b, Fall). Accountability at a glance. As of January 5, 2010: http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/14886.pdf

———. (2010). Charter schools. As of August 24, 2011: http://www.doe.state.la.us/divisions/charters/

Maloney, S. (2008, March 10). N.O. East Bank charter schools unite through alliance. New Orleans City Business. As of December 21, 2008: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4200/is_20080310/ai_n24410498/

Merseth, K. K., Cooper, K., Roberts, J., Tieken, M. C., Valant, J., and Wynne, C. (2009). *Inside urban charter schools: Promising practices and strategies in five high-performing schools.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Press.

Mosteller, F. (1995). The Tennessee study of class size in the early school grades. *Critical Issues for Children and Youths,* 5(2), 113–127.

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. (2010a). *A growing movement: America's largest charter school communities,* 5th annual edition. Washington, D.C.

———. (2010b). *Measuring charter performance: A review of public charter school achievement studies,* 6th edition. Washington, D.C.

National Coalition for Quality Education in New Orleans. (2006, May). A review and critique of "Rebuilding and transforming: A plan for world-class public education in New Orleans." As of December 30, 2010: http://www.coweninstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/BNOBresponse.pdf

Nelson, F. H., Rosenberg, B., and Van Meter, N. (2004). *Charter school achievement on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress.* Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers.

New Orleans Parent Organizing Network. (2009). *New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools* (3rd ed.). New Orleans, La.: Author.

———. (2010). *New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools* (4th ed.). New Orleans, La. As of April 28, 2010: http://www.nolapon.org/files/NOLA%20Parents%20Guide%202010.pdf

Odden, A. (2000). History of teacher pay. As of December 1, 2005: http://cpre.wceruw.org/tcomp/general/teacherpay.php

Recovery School District Legislatively Required Plan. (2006, June 7). As of August 29, 2008: http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/8932.doc

Rubin, D. B. (1976). Inference and missing data. *Biometrika*, 63(3), 581–592.

Save Our Schools NOLA. (2008, September 4). Public schools of New Orleans: District organizational chart snapshot. As of October 10, 2008: http://www.sosnola.org/sosnola-home/docuploads/docshare/doc_12PSNOOrganizationalChartSnapshot.pdf

School Leadership Center of Greater New Orleans. (2010, June 9). SLC Summer Institutes take school leaders back to school. As of January 8, 2011: http://www.slc-gno.org/news.aspx?id=5

StataCorp. (2005). *Survey data reference manual.* College Station, Tex.: Stata Press.

———. (2007). Stata statistical software. College Station, Tex.: StataCorp LP.

Toppo, G. (2008, September 11). Young, inexperienced teachers recruited to New Orleans, *USA Today.* As of August 16, 2011: http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-09-10-new-orleans-teachers_N.htm

Tough, P. (2008, August 14). A teachable moment. *New York Times Magazine,* MM30-41.

U.S. Department of Education. (2002, October). Highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. *Student Achievement and School Accountability Conference.* As of July 23, 2006: http://www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/learn/hqt/hqteachers.pdf

Vernez, G., Karam, R., Mariano, L. T., and DeMartini, C. (2006). *Evaluating comprehensive school reform models at scale: Focus on implementation* (MG-546-EDU). Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation. As of August 16, 2011: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG546.html

Vigdor, J. L. (2008). Scrap the sacrosanct salary schedule. *Education Next,* 8(4), 36–42.

Woodworth, K. R., David, J. L., Guha, R., Wang, H., and Lopez-Torkos, A. (2008). San Francisco Bay Area KIPP Schools: A study of early implementation and achievement. Final report. Menlo Park, Calif.: SRI International.

Zehr, M. A. (2010). Gates pushes district-charter collaborations. *Education Week,* 30. As of January 11, 2010: http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/12/07/15charter.h30.html?r=582103050

Zimmer, R., Gill, B., Booker, K., Lavertu, S., Sass, T. R., and Witte, J. F. (2009). *Charter schools in eight states: Effects on achievement, attainment, integration, and competition* (MG-869-BMG/JOY/WPF). Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation. As of August 16, 2011: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG869.html