



## **Charter School Facts and Figures: Arizona and Nationwide**

### Number of Charters:

- 455 charter schools serve close to 95,000 students in Arizona.
- Nationally, there are 4,100 charter schools in 40 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- About 12% of the nation's charter schools and 8% of the nation's charter school students are in Arizona.
- Nationwide, the number of charter schools in the U.S. grew by 11% in the 2006-2007 school year. <sup>i</sup>

### Size of Charters:

- The average Arizona charter school serves about 230 students ó almost 100 students fewer than the average charter school, nationally. <sup>ii</sup>
- Charter schools tend to be rather small, both in Arizona and nationwide. In Arizona, most charter schools (74%) serve fewer than 300 students. About one third of Arizona's district schools are comparably small. The average U.S. charter school enrolls about 330 students, while district schools enroll about 520 students. <sup>iii</sup> At the high school level the difference is even greater ó the average charter high school enrolls about 450 students and the average district high school enrolls about 1,550 students. <sup>iv</sup>

### Student Demographics:

- **Income:** One third of Arizona charter schools voluntarily participate in the National School Lunch Program. About two-thirds of students in those schools are designated as low-income. Nationally, nearly 90% of charter schools and almost all district schools participate in the National School Lunch Program. Within these schools, 50% of the charter school students are designated low income, while 43% of the district school students are designated low income. <sup>v</sup>
- **Ethnicity:** The proportion of minority students in Arizona charter schools is a bit smaller than nationwide. In the U.S. 61% of students in charter schools are minority students, <sup>vi</sup> compared to about 48% in Arizona. About one-third of Arizona charter students are Hispanic, about seven percent are African American, about five percent are Native American and about 3% are Asian. The remaining 52% are white.
- **Special Education:** Approximately 8.8% of Arizona charter school students are enrolled in and are provided special education services.

### Closing the Achievement Gap:

- Out of a nationwide sample of charter schools, a case study of eight charter high schools in 2006 serving different populations are showing progress in closing the achievement gap between low-income, minority, and special needs students and their peers. <sup>vii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> The Center for Education Reform. "Number of Charter Schools Up 11 Percent Nationwide More than Half of Charter Students Are Low-Income or Minority" May 10, 2007. <http://www.edreform.com/index.cfm?fuseAction=document&documentID=2632>.

<sup>ii</sup> The Center for Education Reform. "2007 Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools." Washington, D.C.: April 2007.

<sup>iii</sup> The Center for Education Reform. "2007 Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools." Washington, D.C.: April 2007.

<sup>iv</sup> Christensen, Jon. 2007. "School Safety in Urban Charter and Traditional Public Schools." Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project.

<sup>v</sup> Christensen, Jon. 2007. "School Safety in Urban Charter and Traditional Public Schools." Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project.

<sup>vi</sup> Christensen, Jon. 2007. "School Safety in Urban Charter and Traditional Public Schools." Seattle, WA: National Charter School Research Project.

<sup>vii</sup> U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement. "Charter High Schools Closing the Achievement Gap: Innovations in Education." Washington, D.C., 2006.

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