

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY LANDSCAPE IN OHIO

FEBRUARY 2017



COLORADO LEAGUE of
CHARTER SCHOOLS
focus on achievement



ED.gov

THESE MATERIALS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER FUNDED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. THE NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER IS LED BY SAFAL PARTNERS UNDER CONTRACT NUMBER ED-011-13-C-0065.



NATIONAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
AT SAFAL PARTNERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the spring of 2015, the National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC), the Colorado League of Charter Schools (the League), the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools (OAPCS), and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (the Alliance) collaborated to collect data and information about charter school facilities and facilities expenditures in the state of Ohio. The data collection in Ohio was supported by the Charter School Facilities Initiative (CSFI), which is a national project developed by the League to research charter school facilities and facilities expenditures across the country.

The information contained in this report is based on survey, measurement, and enrollment data collected for the 2014-15 school year.¹ The initial identification of survey participants, data collection via on-site building visits and online surveys, data analysis and report production covered a period of approximately 14 months. Our policy conclusions are based on the charter school facility landscape in Ohio, the national facility landscape, and the collective expertise of the NCSRC, the League, OAPCS, and the Alliance.

All results presented in this report are from the 81 percent (277) of Ohio's 343 brick and mortar charter school facilities² that participated in this initiative in 2014-15.³ For additional information on survey participation please see Appendix A. The sample of brick and mortar charter schools is representative of the state in terms of region, school type, and management type. Academic performance data was not collected as part of this project. Therefore, an analysis between facility quality, amenities and academic performance was not within the scope of this research and report.

In Ohio, site-based public charter schools, commonly called brick and mortar schools, are those in which students physically attend classes. Site-based public charter schools can be general or special education and/or dropout prevention and recovery schools. According to the Ohio Department of Education's *Annual Community Schools Report*, approximately 94 percent of charter schools in Ohio were site-based.⁴ The facility needs, enrollment size, and learning environment for charter schools are often based on the focus area and school type. According to Ohio Department of Education's Fall Enrollment Data, Ohio's public charter schools served nearly 125,000 students – or approximately 7 percent of all public school students statewide.⁵

-
- 1 Enrollment data was obtained from the Ohio Department of Education.
 - 2 The number of facilities does not necessarily reflect the number of charter schools in the state. For example, some charter schools have multiple campuses operating as one school, such as an elementary and middle school that are not on the same facility site. Also, multiple separate schools may operate in one common facility.
 - 3 Online charter schools were not included in this initiative.
 - 4 Ohio Department of Education Annual Community Schools Report, 2014-15 (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Community-Schools/Annual-Reports-on-Ohio-Community-Schools/2014-15-Community-School-Annual-Report.pdf.aspx>).
 - 5 Ohio Department of Education FY-2015 Enrollment Data (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Enrollment-Data>).



The survey methodology used for the report was designed to address Ohio-specific facility and policy related issues, including: shared use information, site and classroom size, amenities, ownership, financing, grade levels and waiting lists.

Key findings include:

1. Ohio charter schools spend operating dollars on facilities and this spending varies across different ownership situations.

- Charter schools that own their building paid an average of \$438 per full-time equivalent pupil, or 7.6 percent of their state foundation funding in 2014-15 – \$5,800.
- Charter schools renting from a school district paid an average of \$412 per full-time equivalent pupil, or 7.1 percent of their state foundation funding.
- Charter schools that rent from for-profit organizations paid an average of \$751 per full-time equivalent pupil, or 13 percent of their state foundation funding.
- Charter schools renting from non-profit organizations paid an average of \$1,096 per full-time equivalent pupil, or 18.9 percent of their state foundation funding.

2. Few Ohio charter schools are able to utilize unused or underutilized district facilities.⁶

- Only 8 percent of charter schools were located in district facilities.
- 18 percent of charter schools reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was significantly underutilized.
- 49 percent of charter schools reported that the school would consider co-location in an underutilized district facility if that option was made available to them.

⁶ For purposes of this survey, underutilization was characterized as a facility that has 30 percent or more unused capacity.

3. Ohio charter schools are generally smaller than recommended guidelines.⁷

- Only 35 percent of charter school classrooms met or exceeded recommended grade level guidelines.
- Many charter school facilities were smaller than the recommended guidelines.
- 32 percent of charter school sites did not have exterior space.

4. Physical education and recreational options may be limited for Ohio charter school students.

- 68 percent of charter schools did not have an athletic field on campus.
- 28 percent of charter schools did not have a gym on campus.

5. Serving meals can be a challenge for many Ohio charter schools.

- 76 percent of charter schools lacked a full-preparatory kitchen facility.
- 15 percent of charter schools did not have a lunch room.
- 80 percent of Ohio charter schools had lunches brought in by outside caterers (including school districts).

Per data from the 2014-15 school year, the key findings from the Survey indicate that many charter facilities and classrooms fall short of the recommended size guidelines. In addition, many buildings lack optimum spaces to deliver food services or recreational programs and while the majority of charter schools surveyed reported a desire to expand their student enrollment, these findings suggest that charter schools face significant barriers in accessing suitable facilities. Nearly half of Ohio's brick and mortar charter schools were using buildings that are not adequate for their planned enrollment growth in five years, and more than half were in structures not originally designed to be a school.

The Ohio Charter School Facilities Survey found that Ohio charter schools face challenges in obtaining equitable access to facilities and facilities funding. The Conclusions section of this Report further expands on the policy solutions that can be utilized to address the facilities challenges of Ohio's public charter schools.

⁷ These recommended guidelines were taken from the 2015 Ohio School Design Manual.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 2

Key Findings 5

 #1: Ohio charter schools spend operating dollars on facilities
 and this spending varies across different ownership situations. 5

 #2: Few Ohio charter schools are able to utilize unused or
 underutilized district facilities. 6

 #3: Ohio charter schools are generally smaller than recommended guidelines. 8

 #4: Physical education and recreational options can be limited for
 Ohio charter school students. 10

 #5: Serving meals can be a challenge for many Ohio charter schools. 11

Additional Evidence and Findings 12

Conclusions 14

Appendices: 16

 Appendix A: Survey Participation..... 16

 Appendix B: Survey Methodology 17

WRITTEN BY

Kevin Hesla,
Colorado League of Charter Schools

Jessica M. Johnson, Esq.,
Colorado League of Charter Schools

Dr. Darlene Chambers, Jesse Truett,
Julie Conry, Trint Hatt, and
RaShaun Holliman,
Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools

Todd Ziebarth,
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

PUBLISHED BY

National Charter School Resource Center
Colorado League of Charter Schools
Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

INTRODUCTION

Charter School Facilities Initiative Background

Since 2011, the League's work through the CSFI has been supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Charter School Program through a subcontract with the NCSRC.⁸ This work is the result of a Task Force launched by the League in 2007.⁹ The League and the CSFI have currently collected comprehensive charter school facility data in 17 states. The goal of the CSFI is to encourage public policy and private sector changes leading to a more comprehensive, sustainable, and adequate public school facilities system.

The Charter School Facilities Survey was developed as a means of collecting reliable and comprehensive charter school facilities data for research and policy development purposes. Over time, the Survey has evolved to account for changes in public school facilities design and construction, charter school financing, and other relevant policy developments and trends. This Survey is customized for use in each state to include state-specific questions that capture local charter school facilities context. For more information on survey methodology please see Appendix B.

8 <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/>

9 In 2007, the League developed a comprehensive Charter School Facilities Survey in partnership with a national leader in school facilities, Paul Hutton, AIA, of Cuningham Group Architecture, and experts in school planning, Wayne Eckerling, Ph.D. and Allen Balczarek.

Ohio Charter Schools

The Ohio General Assembly passed the first law establishing charter schools in 1997 to offer choices to Ohio families seeking a different educational environment for their children.

There are two types of charter schools in Ohio: conversion schools and start-up schools. Conversion schools are those in which part, or all, of an existing traditional public school building, or a building operated by a joint vocational school district, or educational service center – is transformed into a charter school. These schools may be established in any school district in the state.

A new start-up charter school may locate only in a district that meets the definition of a “challenged” school district.¹⁰ Challenged districts are currently defined as:

- The “Ohio Eight” urban public school districts, including Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown.
- School districts located in the “pilot area” of Lucas County.
- School districts designated Academic Emergency or Academic Watch on the 2011-12 Local Report Card (until June, 2014).
- School districts graded D or F on the Performance Index and F on Value-Added for two of the last three school years.
- School districts with an overall grade of D or F in the 2016-17 school year, or later.
- School districts with a grade of F on the value-added measure for at least two of the last three school years.
- Approximately 10% of the school districts in Ohio were recognized as challenging districts.¹¹

During 2014-15, Ohio had 382 charter schools (including both brick and mortar and online schools).¹² In 2014-15, Ohio charter schools served nearly 125,000 students – or approximately 7 percent of all 1.8 million public school students statewide.¹³ In 2014-15, 76 percent of Ohio charter school students were economically disadvantaged and 60 percent belonged to a minority group.¹⁴

10 Ohio Department of Education Annual Community Schools Report, 2014-15.

11 Ohio Department of Education Annual Community Schools Report, 2014-15.

12 Ohio Department of Education FY-2015 Enrollment Data (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Enrollment-Data>).

13 Ohio Department of Education FY-2015 Enrollment Data (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Enrollment-Data>).

14 Ohio Department of Education – Office of Community Schools.

Charter School Facilities in Ohio

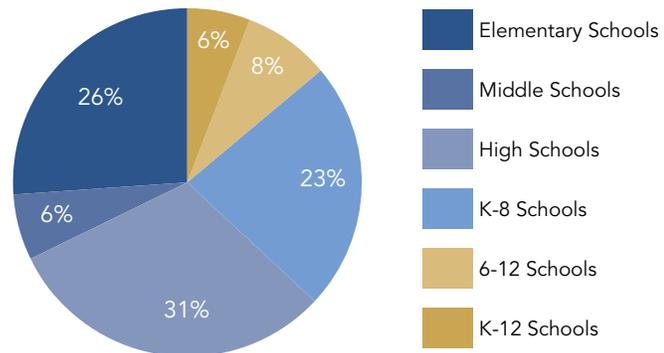
Site-based public charter schools, commonly called brick and mortar schools, are those in which students physically attend classes. The CSFI team identified 343 brick and mortar Ohio charter school facilities that were eligible to participate in this project in 2014-15.¹⁵ Online schools were excluded because the goal of this report is to focus exclusively on facilities that students physically attend for all, or part, of the school day.

Ohio’s charter school facilities are predominately located in major urban areas. In 2014-15, five percent were located in Akron, two percent were located in Canton, 8 percent were located in Cincinnati, 17 percent were located in Cleveland, 20 percent were located in Columbus, 7 percent were located in Dayton, 12 percent were located in Toledo, and 4 percent were located in Youngstown. Most of the remaining 25 percent were district authorized charter schools located outside of these eight major cities.¹⁶

In 2014-15, 26 percent of Ohio charter facilities were elementary schools, 6 percent were middle schools, 31 percent were high schools, 23 percent were K-8 schools, 8 percent were 6-12 schools, and 6 percent were K-12 schools (see Figure 1).

In 2014-15, 19 percent of charter school facilities were managed by non-profit charter management organizations (CMOs) and 46 percent were managed by for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs).¹⁷ The remaining 36 percent operated independently of a CMO or EMO.

Figure 1
Charter School Types in Ohio



15 Only brick and mortar charter schools were eligible to participate in this project.

16 Please note that these percentages are reported at the city level and not at the metropolitan level.

17 Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) are non-profit entities that manage two or more charter schools. CMOs often provide back office functions for charter schools to take advantage of economies of scale, but some also provide a wider range of services – including hiring, professional development, data analysis, public relations and advocacy. Education Management Organizations (EMOs) are for-profit entities that manage charter schools and perform similar functions as CMOs.

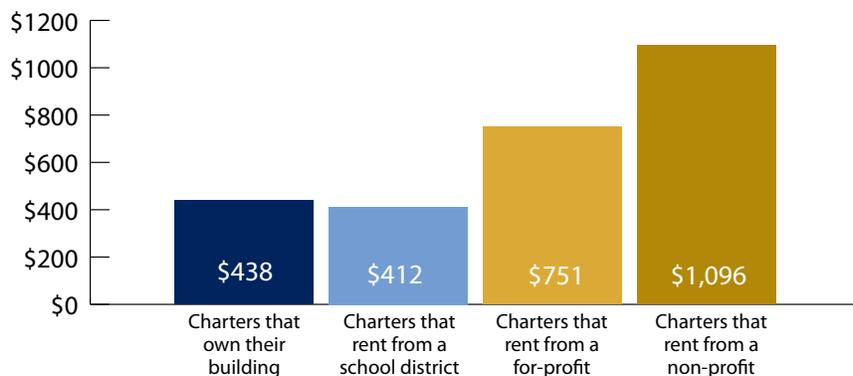
KEY FINDINGS¹⁸

Key Finding #1: Ohio charter schools spend operating dollars on facilities and this spending varies across different ownership situations.

In 2014-15, 17 percent of charter schools owned their buildings, 8 percent were housed in district facilities, 69 percent were located in private facilities that are owned by for-profit or non-profit organizations, and 6 percent had a mixed ownership structure. In 2014-15, Ohio charter schools received a state foundation payment of \$5,800 per full-time equivalent pupil.¹⁹ In addition, Ohio charter schools receive facilities assistance funding of \$100 per full-time equivalent pupil in 2014-15.^{20 21} On average, Ohio charter schools reported facilities expenses of \$785 per full-time equivalent pupil in 2014-15, after applicable reimbursements, or 13.5 percent of their state foundation funding. The amount being spent, however, varied depending on the type of entity that owns the facility: the school, a school district, or a private entity (including for-profit and non-profit organizations).

- Charter schools that own their building paid an average of **\$438 per full-time equivalent pupil**, or **7.6 percent of their state foundation funding**.
- Charter schools renting from a school district paid an average of **\$412 per full-time equivalent pupil**, or **7.1 percent of their state foundation funding**.
- Charter schools that rent from a for-profit organization paid an average of **\$751 per full-time equivalent pupil**, or **13 percent of their state foundation funding**.
- Charter schools renting from non-profit organizations paid an average of **\$1,096 per full-time equivalent pupil**, or **18.9 percent of their state foundation funding** (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Average Facilities Expenditures by Ownership Type



18 Academic performance data was not collected as part of this project. Therefore, an analysis between facility quality, amenities and academic performance was not within the scope of this research.

19 Am. Sub. H.B. 59 of the 130th General Assembly.

20 Am. Sub. H.B. 59 of the 130th General Assembly.

21 The 2016-17 school year facilities amount is \$200 per full-time equivalent pupil and the state foundation payment is \$6,000 per full-time equivalent pupil (<http://www.oapcs.org/legislation/ohio-budget-bill>)

Key Finding #2: Few Ohio charter schools are able to utilize unused or underutilized district facilities.

District facilities are a much more economical option for charter schools than renting from a for-profit or non-profit organization, as schools renting from a district paid an average of \$501 less per full-time equivalent pupil than their peers. In addition, non-district rental space is rarely designed for school use and often requires significant modifications or renovations in order to implement a specific educational mission and model.

41 percent of charter schools reported that their facility did not have the ideal amenities, nor desired specialized classrooms, to best implement their educational model. Locating in a district facility generally provides certain advantages, including: full kitchen facilities, lunch room and auditorium spaces, designated specialized instructional spaces, grade appropriate indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, and appropriate drop-off and pick-up areas. Despite the major advantages of locating in a district facility, only 8 percent of Ohio charter schools were located in district facility space. Eighteen percent of charter schools, however, reported the presence of a nearby district facility that was significantly underutilized (more than 30 percent unused capacity). Forty-nine percent of charters reported that the school would consider co-locating in an underutilized district facility if that option was made available to them.

Due to the lack of access to underutilized traditional school facilities, charter schools must be creative in the facilities process. Charter schools are often located in nontraditional spaces such as: office buildings, churches, strip malls, former big box stores and other unique spaces. This is true nationally, as well as in Ohio, with 53 percent of charter schools in Ohio locating in facilities that were not originally constructed as a school in 2014-15. Locating in a non-district facility may come with significant challenges, including navigating the zoning, land use, or permitting processes, as well as, the renovation costs needed to make these nontraditional spaces school ready. In 2014-15, 30 percent of charter schools in Ohio had undertaken major capital projects in the past five years in order to renovate, upgrade, or otherwise maintain their facilities. The Survey defined a major capital project as one that costs in excess of \$20,000. For charter schools that undertook a major capital project, the average project cost nearly \$525,000.²² There is a perception in Ohio that a majority of charter schools obtain significant philanthropic funding to meet facility expenses. This perception is untrue, as less than 10 percent of charters reported success in generating fundraising dollars to help cover facility-related expenses in the past five years.



²² The median capital project cost nearly \$275,000.

Key Finding #3: Ohio charter schools are generally smaller than recommended guidelines.

CLASSROOM SIZE:

Overall, only 35 percent of charter school classrooms met the recommended guidelines laid out in the 2015 Ohio School Design Manual (OSDM).²³ Table 1 shows the percentage of charter school classrooms that met these recommended guidelines in 2014-15.²⁴

Table 1: Classroom Size	
Classroom Type	Meeting OSDM Guideline
ECE ²⁵ & Kindergarten	21%
Elementary	34%
Middle	37%
High	43%

FACILITY SIZE:

Many Ohio charter school facilities are smaller than the recommended guidelines in terms of gross square feet per student.²⁶ Table 2 shows the percentage of charter school facilities that met these recommended guidelines at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.²⁷

Table 2: Facility Size	
Facility Type	Meeting OSDM Guideline
Elementary	44%
Middle	33%
High	12%

23 The OSDM is a comprehensive set of school facility standards and guidelines. The design manual is updated annually and sets necessary minimum standards of quality for the state’s educational facilities and provides a flexible set of guidelines to serve the diverse needs of local school communities and the children they serve. The OSDM creates size guidelines based on 25 students per classroom. The recommended size of ECE and kindergarten classrooms is 1,200 square feet (POR 2100 ES School Summary of Spaces). The recommended size of elementary school (POR 2100 ES School Summary of Spaces), middle school (POR 2200 MS Summary of Spaces), and high school (POR 2300 HS Summary of Spaces) classrooms is 900 square feet. Additional information can be found at the OSDM website (<http://ofcc.ohio.gov/Resources/DesignManual%28OSDM%29/2015OSDM.aspx>).

24 The OSDM guideline for ECE and Kindergarten classrooms is 48 square feet per student and the guideline for elementary, middle and high school classrooms is 36 square feet per student.

25 ECE stands for Early Childhood Education which is also commonly referred to as Pre-K.

26 These guidelines are also drawn from the OSDM. See the spreadsheet labeled “Bracketing for ES, MS, HS SF Allowance Charts.”

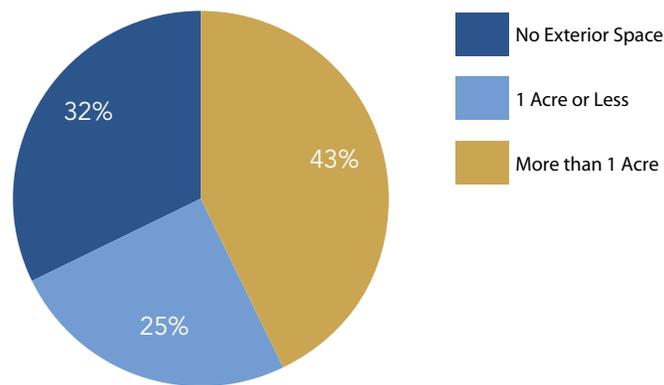
27 The OSDM guideline for elementary school facilities is 125 square feet per student, the OSDM guideline for middle school facilities is 151 square feet per student, and the OSDM guideline for high school facilities is 180 square feet per student. The OSDM does not publish specific guidelines for K-8, K-12 or 6-12 schools.

EXTERIOR SITE SIZE:

In addition to having smaller classrooms and facilities, Ohio charter schools also have small exterior sites. The average charter school in Ohio had only 2.2 acres of exterior space. Small exterior site footprints may constrain the ability of charter schools to provide outdoor physical education and recreational opportunities and amenities for their students.

In Ohio, 25 percent of charter schools had exterior sites that were just one acre or less and 32 percent had no exterior space at all.

Figure 3
Exterior Site Size of Ohio Charter Schools





Key Finding #4: Physical education and recreational options can be limited for Ohio charter school students.

Physical education options may be limited due to lack of designated facility space for Ohio charter school students. Although the majority of Ohio charter schools (61 percent) had playgrounds for elementary students, many Ohio charter schools reported that their facility did not have a gymnasium or an athletic field on campus. Not all charter schools have the need for a full range of athletic facilities, however for some charter schools, the lack of these amenities may make it harder to meet physical education requirements and participate in organized athletic activities.

- 68 percent of charter schools did not have an athletic field on campus.
- 28 percent of charter schools did not have a gym on campus.

Key Finding #5: Serving meals can be a challenge for many Ohio charter schools.

Kitchen facilities are commonly considered standard in traditional public school buildings. In the world of charter schools, however, kitchen facilities are an amenity that many charter schools do without. This is because adding a federally-compliant kitchen is often cost prohibitive when a charter school is building a new school facility or utilizing a non-traditional facility that has been converted into functional educational space. In Ohio, with only eight percent of charter schools in a district facility in 2014-15, the vast majority of charter schools have had to address this issue.

Ohio charter schools serve a high number of economically disadvantaged students. In 2014-15, 76 percent of charter school students were eligible for free and reduced price lunch (FRL).²⁸ While 85 percent of charter schools had either a dedicated lunchroom or a multipurpose lunchroom like a cafetorium, 15 percent of charter schools had no lunchroom space at all. Further, a majority of Ohio charter schools (76 percent) did not have a full-preparatory kitchen in which to prepare hot meals that qualify for reimbursement under the National School Lunch Program. Charter schools that participate in the federally subsidized meal program regularly provide food services by using contracted caterers – which often has additional costs. Eighty percent of charter schools in Ohio reported that they met this need by contracting with compliant external catering companies (including school districts). These outside service vendors often cost more than the federally subsidized reimbursement rate.

Charter schools must find other ways of covering this additional expense, either through operating funds or outside resources. This additional expense is even more severe for those charter schools with smaller enrollment numbers or those that have a lower percentage of economically disadvantaged students.



28 Ohio Department of Education – Office of Community Schools.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

Specialized Instructional Spaces

Most instruction during the school day takes place in general classrooms; however, specialized instructional spaces, such as science labs, libraries, and computer labs, are an important part of a comprehensive educational program. Ohio charter schools often have a limited number of these types of spaces. In fact, only 59 percent of Ohio charter schools reported that their facility had the ideal amenities and desired specialized classrooms to best implement their educational program.

- **81 percent** of charter schools serving high school students did not have a dedicated science lab.
- **74 percent** of charter schools did not have a dedicated health clinic.
- **68 percent** of charter schools did not have a dedicated music room.
- **65 percent** of charter schools did not have a dedicated library/media center.
- **55 percent** of charter schools did not have a dedicated art room.
- **47 percent** of charter schools did not have a dedicated computer lab.

Being innovative with space is a hallmark of the charter school sector, thus surveyed schools frequently utilized alternative locations to provide specialized programming across a range of curriculum areas, including art, music, science, and technology. For many charter schools, however, tailoring space exclusively for specific instructional purposes can be cost prohibitive.



School Environment

Studies conducted by Uline and Tschannen-Moran,²⁹ Tanner,³⁰ Nielson and Zimmerman,³¹ and Lumpkin³² demonstrate a link between the quality of the physical environment within a school facility and students' educational outcomes. Facility characteristics that are believed to have an impact on student learning are: windows and lighting, thermal comfort, acoustics and indoor air quality. The facilities survey asked Ohio charter school leaders to rate the physical environment of their school. Many of the schools surveyed reported deficiencies with the quality of the school facility and a belief that those deficiencies negatively impact the learning environment for students.

- **48 percent** of charter schools reported that they do not have insulated (thermal pane) windows.
- **41 percent** of charter schools reported that classroom temperatures are not reasonably comfortable throughout the school year.
- **38 percent** of charter schools reported that noise generated from other classrooms or corridors is disruptive to learning.

29 Cynthia Uline and Megan Tschannen-Moran, (2008) "The walls speak: the interplay of quality facilities, school climate, and student achievement," *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 46 Issue: 1, pp. 55–73.

30 C. Kenneth Tanner, (2009) "Effects of school design on student outcomes," *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 47 Issue: 3, pp. 381–399.

31 Christopher Nielson and Seth Zimmerman, (2014) "The effect of school construction on test scores, school enrollment, and home prices," *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol 120, pp. 18-31.

32 Ronald B. Lumpkin, (2013) "School Facility Condition and Academic Outcomes," *International Journal of Facility Management*, Vol. 4, No. 3.

CONCLUSIONS

In 2014-15, Ohio's public charter schools served nearly 125,000 students – or approximately seven percent of all public school students statewide.³³ A significant number of students attending one of the 343 brick and mortar charter school facilities in the state were in classrooms that fell short of the recommended guidelines. Additionally, many buildings lack optimum spaces to deliver food services or recreational programs. These deficits are particularly challenging for schools serving economically disadvantaged charter school students.

The results of the Ohio Charter School Facilities Survey demonstrate that during the 2014-15 school year nearly 47 percent of Ohio's public charter schools were utilizing buildings that are not adequate for their planned enrollment in five years. Further, with limited ability to obtain space in unused or underutilized traditional district facilities, more than half of the Ohio charter schools surveyed were located in structures that were not originally designed to be a school. In addition, 94 percent of the schools surveyed wanted to expand to meet growing student demand.



33 Ohio Department of Education FY-2015 Enrollment Data (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Enrollment-Data>).

For charter schools in Ohio, attaining equitable facilities that are comparable to traditional districts will require both legislative initiatives and funding models to support the expenses required for acquisition and renovation. By helping public charter schools meet their facilities challenges, Ohio lawmakers will enable charter schools to better serve their students by allocating more operational dollars toward core educational outcomes rather than direct these critical funds to the continual economic demands of facility modification and improvement.

According to a January 2016 report by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools entitled “Measuring Up to the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws, Seventh Edition,” (which analyzes and ranks each state’s public charter school law against the Model Law), Ohio law addresses some of the facilities components in the Model Law:

- Ohio law provides brick-and-mortar charter schools with \$150 per pupil in facilities funding in Fiscal Year 2016 and \$200 per pupil in Fiscal Year 2017.
- In June 2015 the “Community School Classroom Facilities Grant” was created and the legislature appropriated \$25 million in state funding for the Grant. This Grant allows high-performing charter schools, as defined in the law, access to dollars to help alleviate facilities costs.³⁴
- Ohio law allows charter schools the right of first refusal to purchase or lease at, or below, fair market value a closed, unused, or underused public school facility or property. According to OAPCS, many charter schools report challenges with accessing these closed, unused, or underused facilities or properties. There have been reports that districts often do not put their empty or underused facilities up for sale, “leasing” them instead for a nominal amount to other groups rather than making them available to Ohio charter schools.
- Ohio law allows charter schools to use loans guaranteed under the Community Schools Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program for the construction of new school buildings. For Fiscal Year 2017, the state is not funding this program.
- Ohio law creates a revolving loan fund that allows charter schools to apply to use funds for any services described in their charter. The law provides that the maximum cumulative loan amount is \$250,000 and that it must be repaid within five years. For Fiscal Year 2017, the state is not funding this program.
- Ohio law provides that the Schoolhouse Tax Exemption applies to charters leasing from commercial realtors.

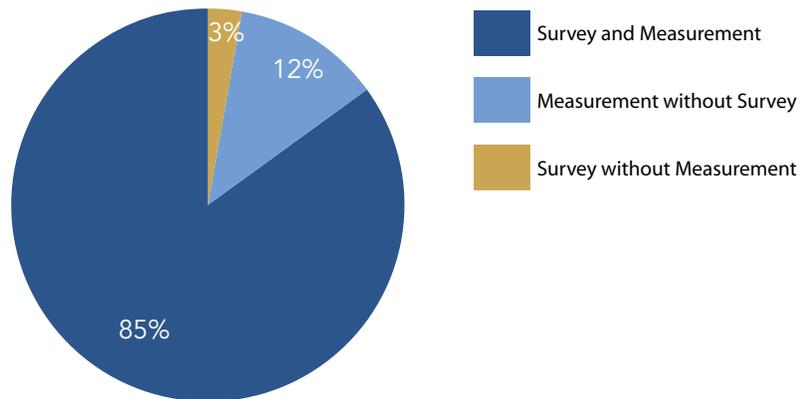
34 Am. Sub. H.B. 64, § 501.10(A)(1)(2)(B)(C).

APPENDIX A

Survey Participation

All results presented in this report are from the 277 brick and mortar charter school facilities that participated in this initiative in 2014-15. Below is the percentage of facilities that participated in the survey, the percentage of facilities that participated in building and site measurement, and the percentage of facilities that participated in both.

Figure 4
Ohio Charter School Participation in Charter School Facilities Survey



APPENDIX B

Survey Methodology

All brick and mortar Ohio charter schools were asked to complete the Charter School Facilities Survey and allow an OAPCS representative to conduct an on-site measurement of the school facility and its educational spaces. Although the survey was carefully constructed to obtain data about a broad range of charter facility related issues in Ohio, it was not designed to address each and every possible issue faced by charter schools in their search for high-quality and affordable facilities. OAPCS led the data collection effort and provided supplemental data, as necessary. Additional data on school enrollment and student demographics was obtained from the Ohio Department of Education. The survey and measurement data was collected between January and May of 2015. As necessary, OAPCS and their consultants provided technical assistance to schools completing the survey. Submitted surveys were reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

The original version of the survey was created by the League's facility task force, League staff, and others with expertise in school construction and education policy. Further revisions to the base survey have been made based on feedback from all participating charter schools and charter support organizations. The survey administered in Ohio was revised through a collaborative effort of OAPCS and the League to address Ohio-specific facility and policy-related issues.

Topics addressed include the following:

- Grades served, year of inception, and waiting lists;
- Future facility plans;
- Shared use information;
- Facility age and site size;
- Facility ownership, financing, and annual payments;
- Facility and classroom size and information technology resources;
- Facility amenities such as gymnasiums, lunch rooms, libraries, and playgrounds; and
- Facility adequacy, condition, and maintainability.

Page intentionally left blank.

Page intentionally left blank.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained by contacting the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, the National Charter School Resource Center, or the Charter School Facilities Initiative. Please visit the Charter School Facilities Initiative website at www.FacilitiesInitiative.org to obtain additional state reports, additional information on data presented in this report, or for general charter school facilities questions.

Charter School Facilities Initiative: An Analysis of the Charter School Facility Landscape in Ohio, was prepared by the National Charter School Resource Center, the Colorado League of Charter Schools and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools on behalf of the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools.