



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What defines Washington's charter school experience?

Strobel Consulting collected online survey, focus group, and interview data from Washington charter school stakeholders (students, parents/caregivers, and educators) during the first half of the 2025-2026 school year. The data is intended to provide the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) with a deeper understanding of stakeholder perceptions regarding their charter school experience. While the SBE collects data and reports annually on the performance of the state's charter schools, including a comparison of the performance of charter schools to their other public school counterparts, the analysis has been limited to comparisons of quantitative metrics collected in the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF). While statistically significant differences in performance between charter and other public schools have been noted each year, those differences are relatively small, and the Board identified a need to add an analysis of qualitative information to provide a more holistic understanding and nuanced insights into the existing data and explore the experiences of students, families, and educators served by Washington's charter schools.

It is important to note, that while data collected as part of this project reflects the perceptions of participating respondents, it may or may not accurately reflect current state or local policy. Potential discrepancies between the perceptions of respondents and current state or local policy does not make such findings inaccurate. Rather, these types of findings are crucial, because they highlight current challenges in communication, implementation, and policy perception. If we want to truly understand the perspective of charter school stakeholders, then their perception of the truth, or what is true for them, is a deeply meaningful finding.

The following key findings are based on data collected from online surveys, focus groups, and interviews:

1. **Teacher /staff to student ratio, including smaller class sizes and overall enrollment at some public charter schools, is both a positive and challenging aspect of the charter school experience.** On one hand, many positive key findings are specifically related to a perceived higher teacher/staff to student ratio, lower enrollment and reported smaller class size (sense of community, customized learning, individual attention from teachers and support staff, etc.), while at the same time, many of the biggest perceived challenges reported also arise from smaller enrollment and class size (lack of funding, lack of extracurricular activities, lack of transportation, less anonymity, lack of staff to implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), minimal electives, etc.).
2. **Overall, participants reported that the most positive attribute of the charter school experience is a distinct sense of community.** Smaller total enrollment and smaller class size allows for personalized learning experiences where students feel "seen" by adults and peers who "genuinely care" about them. This includes opportunities for customized learning where learning challenges are quickly identified, and necessary supports and interventions are provided, helping students stay on track and ensuring they aren't, "lost in the shuffle". Staff expressed a sense of working as a team, and students shared that they felt a strong connection with their peers, teachers, and counselors.
3. **In general, all types of participants indicated that they feel their charter school offers better educational opportunities** including academics, mentoring opportunities, prevalence of hands on learning activities,

access to advanced classes, better preparation for post-graduation, and higher academic expectations in general, though students also cited higher academic expectations as a challenge (see 6. below).

4. **A positive school climate was reported as one of the strengths of the charter school experience.** Specifically, that diversity amongst the staff and student body helps create a positive culture where students, staff, and families feel accepted and included. Additionally, participants expressed that they felt physically and emotionally safe, though students reported they sometimes felt a lack of anonymity leading to increased emotional stress.
5. **Perceived funding issues were reported by the majority of participants as the biggest challenge for their charter school.** Specifically, participants attributed the following challenges to insufficient funding:
  - a. Decreased pay for staff leading to higher turnover and less experienced teachers (i.e. more experienced teachers were unwilling to be paid less)
  - b. No access to transportation, creating enrollment inequalities, and barriers to experiential learning opportunities such as field trips
  - c. Lack of extracurricular activities
  - d. Limited elective classes
  - e. Lack of accountability and staff to fully implement and support IEPs
  - f. Lack of classroom resources
6. **Student respondents shared that academic expectations caused additional effort and increased workload, sometimes leading to stress and anxiety,** even while they appreciated the high academic expectations and the associated benefits (better educational and post-graduation opportunities).
7. **Additionally, students reported that dress codes, which often included a uniform, limit their ability to express their personal style,** though a smaller number of student participants reported the dress code helped foster inclusion by reducing the pressure to meet stressful social standards and expectations.
8. **Data from educators reflect a frustration that they are paid less than their other public school counterparts while being expected to “do more”** and that this leads to burn out and feeling “stretched too thin”. The majority of educators respondents expressed that they were required to “wear many hats” and that while they liked having the flexibility to customize their teaching and contribute to various aspects of school day planning and activities, they felt burdened by the expectations of having to fulfill various roles.

**Table 1. Summary of Key Findings**

Key Findings from Surveys, Focus Groups, & Interviews
Teacher /staff to student ratio, including smaller class sizes and overall enrollment is both a positive and challenging.
The most positive attribute of the charter school experience is a diverse and distinct sense of community.
All types of participants feel their charter school offers better educational opportunities.
Positive school climate is one of the greatest strengths of the charter school experience.
Perceived funding issues are the biggest challenge for charter schools.
Higher academic expectations sometimes cause stress and anxiety for students.
Dress codes/uniforms limits student ability to express personal style.
Educators are paid less and expected to do more than their other public school counterparts.

## INTRODUCTION

Charter schools have been part of the educational landscape for over three decades (Dallavis, J. W., & Berends, M., 2022). Washington charter schools are public schools that are tuition-free, publicly funded, and staffed by certified teachers. They must meet the same state and national standards as other public schools (WA State Charter School Commission, 2025). Historically the charter school movement has focused on improving three aspects of schools: autonomy, innovation, and accountability. Advocates of charter schools typically believe that school choice paired with these aspects of reform result in educational innovations that advance curriculum, instruction, and learning, leading to better student outcomes (Tong, T., et. al., 2023). With educational policy in the US historically focusing on student achievement outcomes, current data on charter schools is often limited to quantitative research that focuses on organizational and instructional conditions associated with student achievement gains (Berends, M., 2021). Unfortunately, there are not as many qualitative studies that investigate when and under what conditions best practices at charter schools occur or provide greater context for quantitative findings. Review of the recent charter school research assessing what charter school leaders, teachers, students, and parents do in charter schools to make them effective reveals that a better understanding of these conditions and practices at charter schools are valuable areas of study (Dallavis, J. W., & Berends, M., 2022).

The WA SBE collects data annually and reports on the performance of the state's charter schools, including a comparison of their performance versus other public schools. However, until now, the analysis has been limited to comparisons of quantitative metrics collected in the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF). While statistically significant differences in performance between charter and other public schools have been noted each year, the differences are relatively small. In order to provide a deeper contextual understanding beyond what WSIF numbers have captured, this project was designed to collect qualitative data to give a voice to charter school stakeholders and uncover nuanced insights regarding the charter school experience in WA.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to collect qualitative data from charter school stakeholders, charter schools with any combination of grades 6-12<sup>1</sup> were invited to participate in the project via email. Each participating charter school was asked to identify a project liaison to act as the coordinator for the project and the main point of contact between students, educators, parents, and Strobel Consulting. Liaisons were provided with an overview of the project, including roles, responsibilities, and timelines, and parent permission letter templates for student participants. Additionally, each participating school received social media collateral with scannable survey barcodes and the links to the survey to share with staff, students, and parents. Schools were given the option to host both student and educator focus groups, or have educators schedule one on one interviews at a time of their choosing if that was easier for the school and staff. Parents completing the online survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a phone or Zoom interview and the project liaison at each school was asked to share interview opportunities with parents. Liaisons were responsible for recruiting students, educators, and parents to complete the online survey, and participate in focus groups, or interviews that collected data on their charter school experience in Washington. A total of 232 online surveys were collected, 28 students participated in focus groups, 7 educators were interviewed, and 1 parent was interviewed.

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<sup>1</sup> The scope and sequence of the grant, including funding, did not allow for stakeholder from all grades K-12, so priority was given to grades 6-12 for the first phase of the project, particularly because they could share feedback on post-graduation preparedness.

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## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

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### ONLINE SURVEY

Students, educators, and parents completed an online survey between September 11, 2025, and December 29, 2025. The survey was designed to collect data on various aspects of the charter school experience and included both multiple choice and open ended questions. Demographic data was also collected, along with interest in interview participation (parents only). The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Russian. There were 232 surveys collected.

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### STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

As part of participation each school was invited to host two student focus groups, conducted via Zoom, with a target of no more than seven students per focus group. Schools were also provided with a parent permission letter template to edit and utilize based on their school policies. Focus group duration was determined by the school's schedule, and focus groups typically lasted from 40-60 minutes. A project liaison at each participating school acted as the coordinator to schedule student focus groups, work with educators to select students, and help students log on to Zoom. Focus group questions addressed the following:

1. Whether or not students had previously attended a public school other than a charter school.
2. How long they had attended a charter school.
3. Why they decided to attend a charter school.
4. What they considered the biggest differences between other public schools and their charter school.
5. Their favorite part about attending a charter school.
6. Changes or improvements to make their charter school experience better.
7. Feedback on whether or not their charter school helped prepare them for life after graduation.
8. Anything else they wanted to share about their charter school experience (time permitting).

Every effort was made to recruit schools to host at least one focus group for students, however this proved incredibly challenging and many schools that initially agreed to host a focus group ended up canceling for a variety of reasons, usually related to a lack of time, last minute testing, or last minute schedule changes. Additionally, there was a high incidence of schools not logging onto Zoom for their student focus group. In total, four online focus groups were hosted, with a total of 28 student participants. Focus group sessions ranged in attendance from 7 to 14 attendees.

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### EDUCATOR AND PARENT INTERVIEWS

Schools were given the option to host an educator focus group or have educators schedule one on one interviews at a time of their choosing if that was easier for the school and staff. Parents completing the online survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a phone or Zoom interview and the project liaison at each school was asked to share interview opportunities with parents. Liaisons were responsible for recruiting educators and parents to participate in a focus group or interview regarding their charter school experience in Washington. Interviews typically lasted from 15-30 minutes.

There were a high number of educators who scheduled interview times and then canceled or never showed up. Liaisons indicated that it was challenging to ask already overburdened staff to spend additional time providing feedback for the project and that staff were not readily interested in sharing feedback. Similarly, the majority of liaisons indicated they were unable to garner any parent interest and, of parents who completed the online survey, nearly all of them were not interested in being part of a follow up interview. A total of 7 educators and one parent was interviewed.

Interview questions for educators were designed to better understand:

1. Whether or not they had previously been employed at a public school other than a charter school.
2. How long they had worked at a charter school.
3. Why they decided to work at a charter school.
4. What they considered the biggest differences between other public school and charter school.
5. Their favorite part about working at a charter school.
6. Changes or improvements to make their charter school experience better.
7. Anything else they wanted to share about their charter school experience (time permitting).

Similarly interview questions for parents were designed to better understand:

1. Whether or not their child or children had previously attended a public school other than a charter school.
8. How long their child or children had attended a charter school.
9. Why they decided to send their child or children to a charter school.
10. What they considered the biggest differences between other public school and charter school.
11. Their favorite part about having their child or children attend a charter school.
12. Changes or improvements to make their charter school experience better.
13. Anything else they wanted to share about their charter school experience (time permitting).

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## SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Online survey respondents included students, parents, and educators. The majority of respondents were students, comprising 70% of the total sample.

**Table 2. Survey Respondent Types**

Respondent Types	Count	Percent
Students	162	70%
Parents	43	18%
Educators	27	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100%</b>

Respondents were asked if they had previously attended, had a child or children that attended, or had worked at a public school other than a charter school. The majority of respondents had attended, had a child or children that attended, or worked at a public school other than a charter school.

**Table 3. Previous Other Public School Exposure**

Yes	Count	Percent
Students	102	63%
Parents	27	63%
Educators	18	67%

Respondents were asked how many years they had attended a charter school, had a child or children that attended a charter school, or had worked at a charter school. More than half of all respondents had attended, had a child or children that attended, or worked at a charter school for 4 years or less.

**Table 4. STUDENT - Years Attending a Charter School**

<b>How many years have you attended a charter school?</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 year	21	13%
2 years	28	17%
3 years	28	17%
4 years	19	12%
5 years	14	9%
6 years	14	9%
7 years	10	6%
8 years	6	4%
9 years	12	7%
10 years	6	4%
11 years	4	3%
12 years	0	0%
13 years	0	0%

**Table 5. PARENT - Years Child/Children Have Attended a Charter School**

<b>How many years has your child/have your children attended a charter school?</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 year	11	26%
2 years	7	16%
3 years	4	9%
4 years	6	14%
5 years	7	16%
6 years	3	7%
7 years	1	2%
8 years	1	2%
9 years	2	5%
10 years	0	0%
11 years	0	0%
12 years	0	0%
13 years	1	2%

**Table 6. EDUCATOR - Years Employed at a Charter School**

<b>How many years have you been employed at a charter school?</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 year	3	11%
2 years	4	15%
3 years	1	4%
4 years	3	11%
5 years	6	22%
6 years	5	19%
7 years	0	0%
8 years	1	4%
9 years	2	7%
10 years	1	4%
11 years	0	0%
12 years	0	0%
13 years	1	4%

Respondents were asked to identify their current grade, the current grade/s of their children attending charter school, or the grade/s they taught. The largest proportion of respondents were associated with 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Table 7. STUDENT - Current Grade**

<b>What grade are you in?</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Grade 6	19	12%
Grade 7	40	25%
Grade 8	54	33%
Grade 9	15	9%
Grade 10	25	15%
Grade 11	3	2%
Grade 12	5	3%

**Table 8. PARENT - Current Grade of Child/Children**

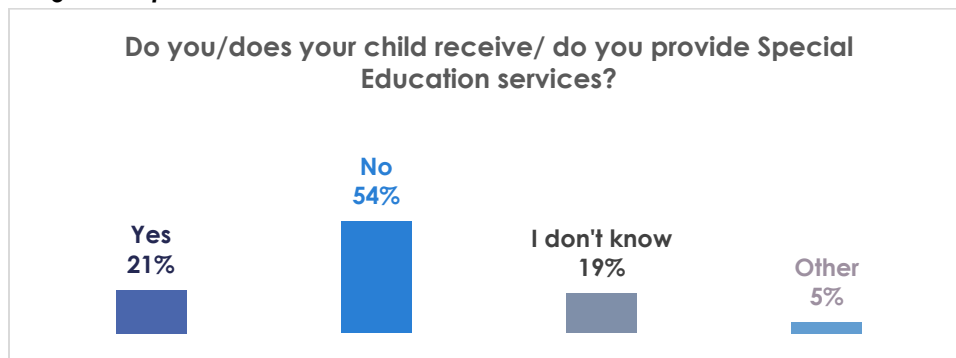
<b>What grade/s does your child/children attend?</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Grade 6	6	14%
Grade 7	7	16%
Grade 8	16	37%
Grade 9	2	5%
Grade 10	3	7%
Grade 11	7	16%
Grade 12	2	5%
None of the above	13	30%

**Table 9. EDUCATOR - Current Grade Teaching**

What grades do you currently teach?	Count	Percent
Grade 6	4	15%
Grade 7	5	19%
Grade 8	7	26%
Grade 9	9	33%
Grade 10	8	30%
Grade 11	8	30%
Grade 12	7	26%
None of the above – I'm an administrator	5	19%
None of the above – I'm a counselor	3	11%
Other	8	30%

Respondents were also asked if they were receiving special education services at their charter school, had a child that was receiving special education services at their charter school, or were responsible for providing or overseeing special education services at their charter school. The majority of respondents were not receiving special education services, their child was not receiving special education services, or they were not responsible for providing or overseeing special education services.

**Figure 1. Special Education Services**



Students were asked what their current post graduation plans were. The largest proportion of students planned to attend a four year educational institution or did not know.

**Table 10. Student Post High School Plans**

What are your post high school plans? (select all that apply)	Count	Percent
Enter the Work Force	20	12.3%
Enter the Armed Services (Navy, Airforce, Marines, Army, etc.)	16	9.9%
Attend a Four-Year Educational Institution	70	43.2%
Attend a Two-Year Educational Institution	17	10.5%
I Don't Know	67	41.4%
Other - Write In (Required)	22	13.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	

All respondents were given an opportunity to indicate their gender, racial identification, size of household, annual income, and languages spoken. Respondents also had the opportunity to decline to respond to any of the demographic questions. The majority of respondents were female (62%), White (63%), from a household of four or less (53%), didn't know their household income or preferred not to answer (60.8%), and spoke English (86.6%). To see the complete demographic tables refer to Appendix A.

**Table 11. Demographics – Gender & Race**

	Demographic	Respondent	
		Count	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	63	27%
	Female	114	62%
	Nonbinary	9	4%
	Other	18	8%
	Decline to Respond	9	4%
<b>Race</b>	American Indian or Alaskan Native	17	7%
	Asian	15	6%
	Black, African American	23	10%
	Hispanic or Latino/a/x	38	16%
	Middle Eastern or North African	7	3%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11	5%
	White	146	63%
	Other	17	7%
	Decline to Respond	22	9%

## RESULTS

Results are organized by quantitative survey data, followed by qualitative data collected from open response survey questions, focus groups, and interviews. Of note, there were only two survey questions where responses were shared by less than half of all survey respondents (< 50%). These responses are highlighted in red below.

It is also important to note that the following results reflect the perceptions of participating respondents and may or may not accurately reflect current state or local policy. Potential discrepancies between the perceptions of respondents and current state or local policy does not make such findings inaccurate. Rather, these types of findings are crucial, because they highlight current challenges in communication, implementation, and policy perception. These are very meaningful findings that inform future research, decision making, and areas for outreach.

Additionally, please see Appendix B for focus group and interview questions and Appendix C for the online survey questions.

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### ONLINE SURVEY

**Criteria for choosing a charter school varied by respondent type.** The top three reasons reported by students for attending a charter school were Curriculum Options (27%), School Size (26%), Safer School Climate (25%), and Teacher Quality (25%). More than half of all parent respondents indicated that their top three reasons for choosing a charter school were Expectations for Achievement (65%), Personalized Approach to Education (60%), and Higher Quality Instruction (58%). Somewhat similar to parents, educators/administrators reported that their

top three reasons for choosing to work at a charter school were a Personalized Approach to Education (59%), Specialized Programs (52%), Expectations for Achievement (44%).

**Table 12. STUDENT - Criteria for Attending a Charter School**

Why did you choose a charter school (check all that apply?)	Count	Percent
Curriculum Options	43	27%
School Size	42	26%
Safer School Climate	41	25%
Teacher Quality	41	25%
Higher quality instruction	38	23%
Specialized Programs	29	18%
Communication with School Staff	27	17%
Personalized Approach to Education	27	17%
Opportunities for involvement	27	17%
Expectations for achievement	25	15%
Partnerships with Universities	18	11%
Instruction in Character & Values	16	10%
More Relaxed Application of Code of Conduct	13	8%
Greater Application of Code of Conduct	11	7%
Services for Students with Special Needs	6	4%
Partnerships with Employers	7	4%

**Table 13. PARENT - Criteria for Child/Children Attending a Charter School**

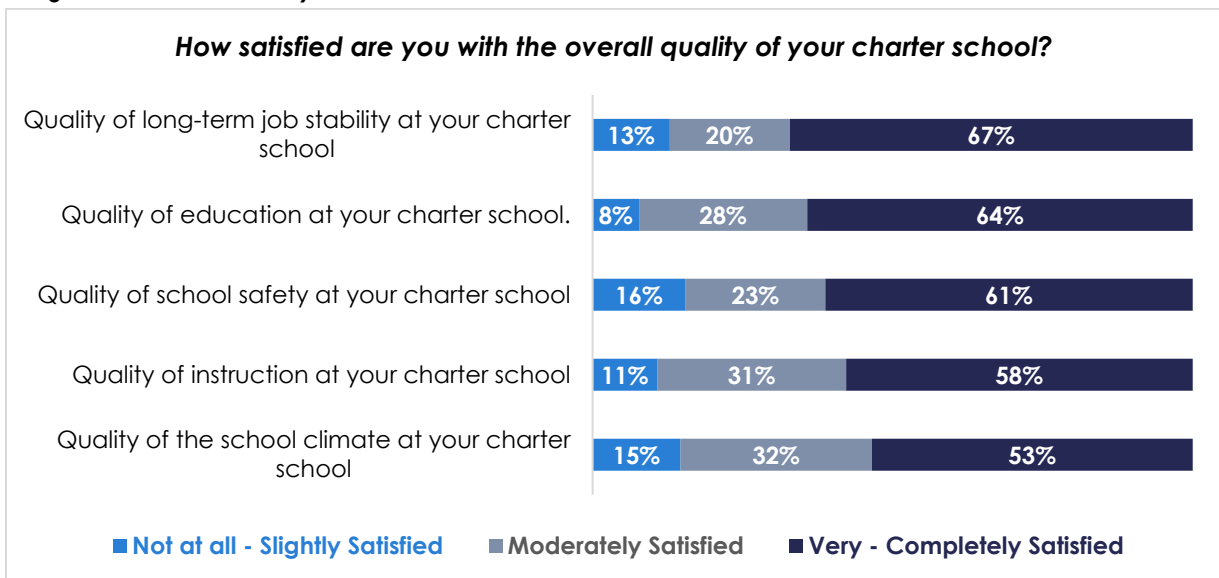
Why did you choose a charter school (check all that apply?)	Count	Percent
Expectations for Achievement	28	65%
Personalized Approach to Education	26	60%
Higher Quality Instruction	25	58%
Safer School Climate	20	47%
Communication with School Staff	18	42%
Curriculum Options	17	40%
School Size	17	40%
Instruction in Character & Values	16	37%
Greater Application of Code of Conduct	13	30%
Opportunities for Involvement	13	30%
Specialized Programs	12	28%
Teacher Quality	12	28%
Services for Students with Special Needs	11	26%
Partnerships with Universities	8	19%
Partnerships with Employers	5	12%
More relaxed Application of Code of Conduct	3	7%

**Table 14. EDUCATOR/ADMINISTRATOR - Criteria for Working at a Charter School**

Why did you choose a charter school (check all that apply?)	Count	Percent
Personalized Approach to Education	16	59%
Specialized Programs	14	52%
Expectations for Achievement	12	44%
Higher Quality Instruction	11	41%
School Size	11	41%
Instruction in Character & Values	10	37%
Opportunities for Involvement	10	37%
Curriculum Options	9	33%
Communication with School Staff	8	30%
Teacher Quality	7	26%
Safer School Climate	6	22%
Greater Application of Code of Conduct	5	19%
Partnerships with Employers	4	15%
Services for Students with Special Needs	3	11%
Partnerships with Universities	2	7%
More Relaxed Application of Code of Conduct	1	4%

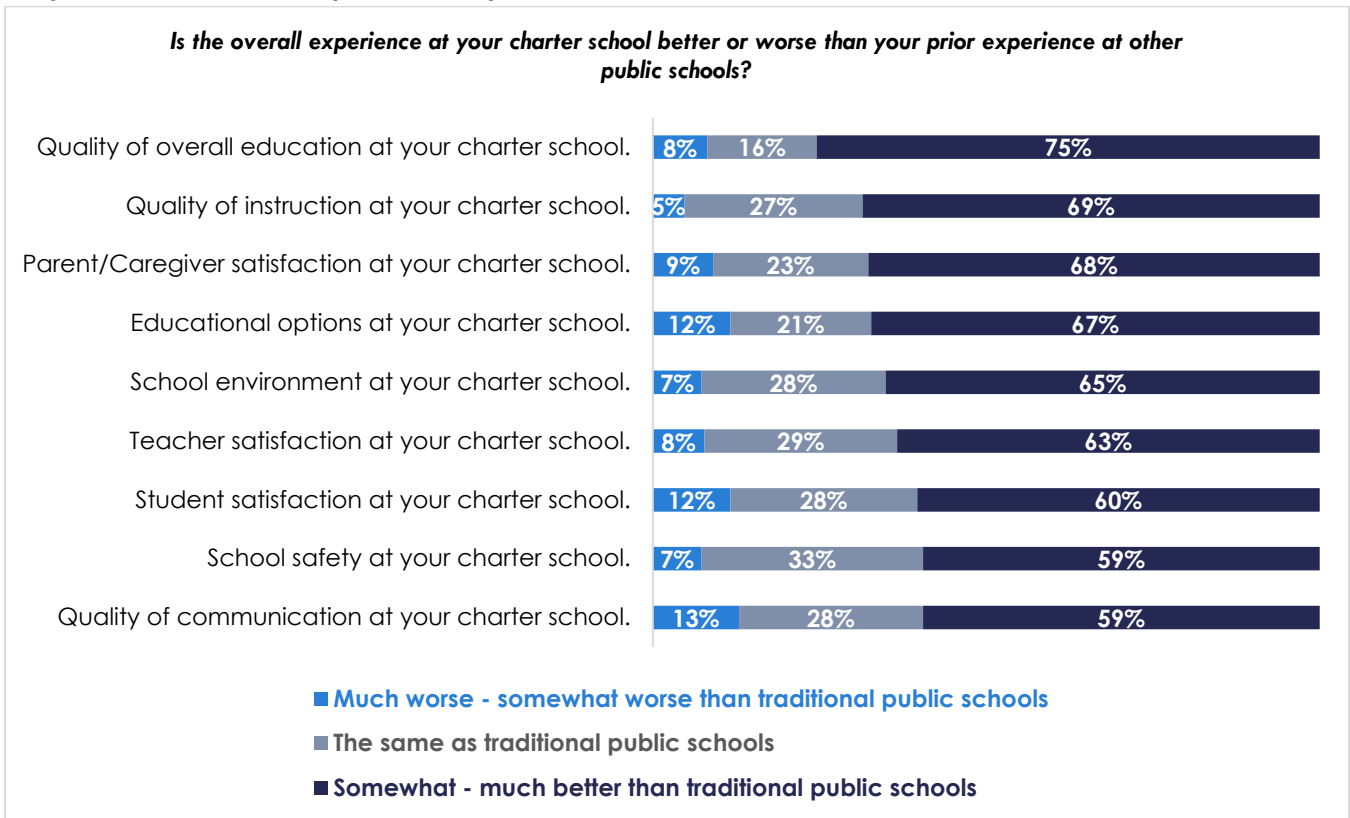
When asked about the overall quality of their charter school more than half of all survey respondents were **very to completely satisfied** with the quality of long term job stability (67%), education (64%), school safety (61%), instruction (58%), and climate (53%) at their school.

**Figure 2. Overall Quality of Charter School**



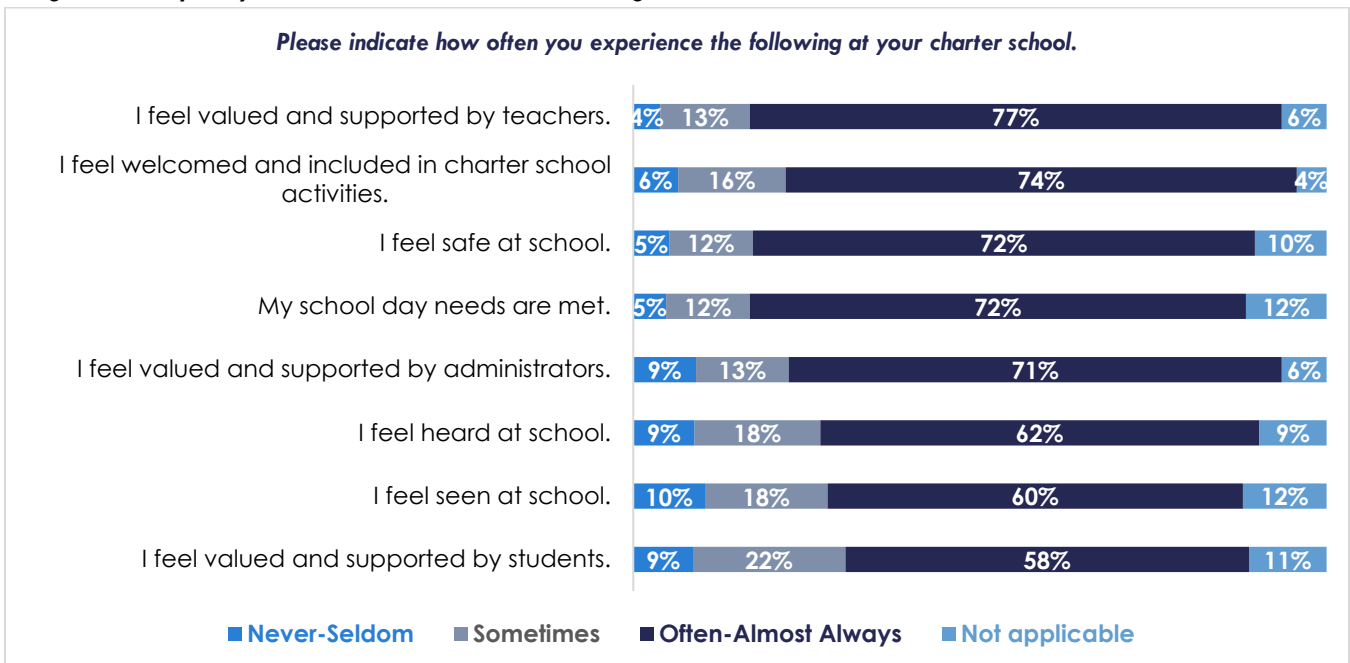
More than half of all survey respondents who indicated they had experience at other public schools reported that their charter school experience was “somewhat” to “much better” than their experience at other public schools, with 75% of respondents indicating the quality of education at their charter school was better than at other public schools.

**Figure 3. Charter School Experience Compared to Other Public School**



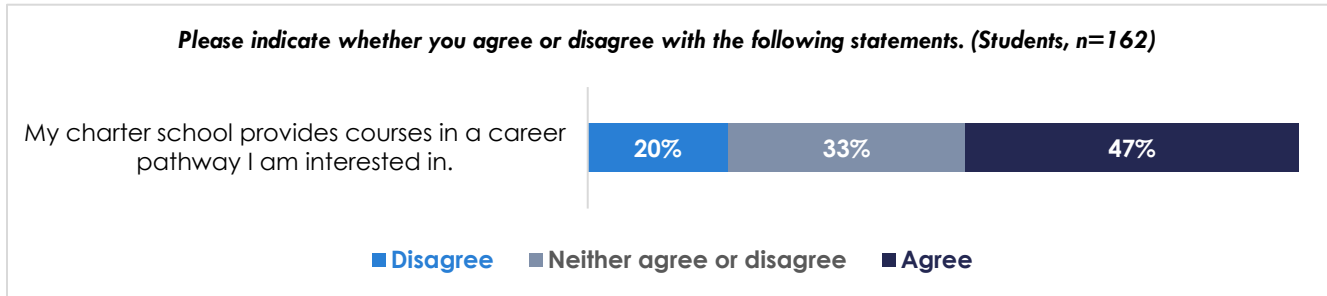
The majority of all survey respondents indicated that they “often” to “almost always” experienced social and emotional needs being met by their charter school. More than 70% of respondents indicated that they feel valued and supported by teachers (77%), welcomed and included in charter school activities (74%), safe at school (72%), their school day needs are met (72%), and valued and supported by administrators (71%). More than half felt heard at school (62%), seen at school (60%), and valued and supported by students (58%).

**Figure 4. Frequency of Social & Emotional Needs Being Met at Charter School**



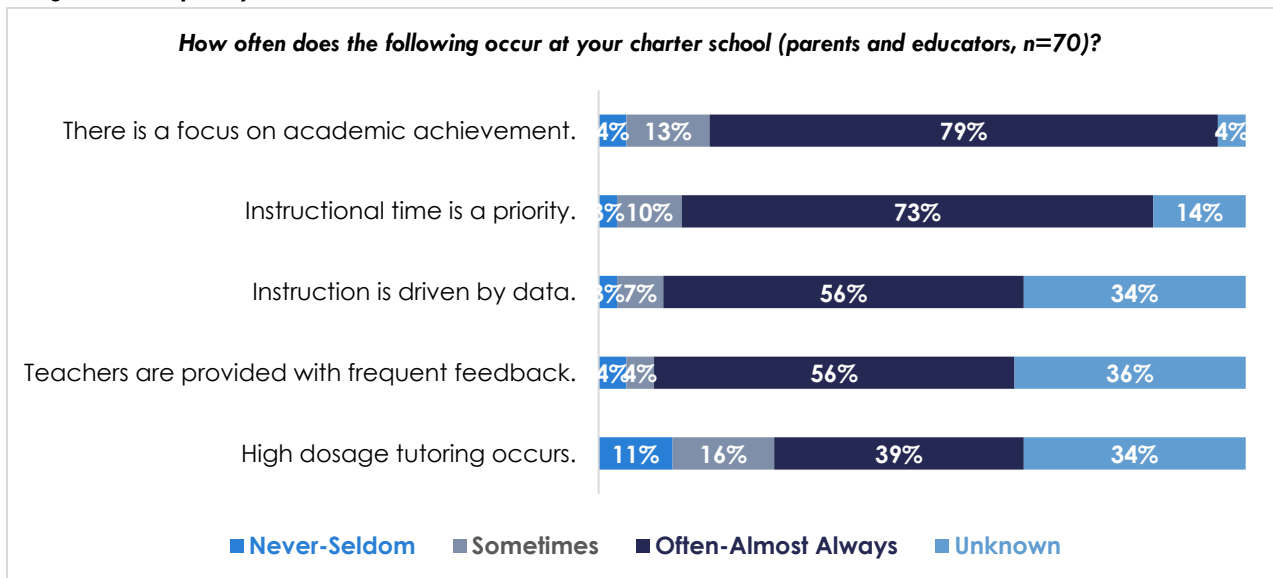
Less than half of all student respondents (parents and educators were not asked this questions) agree that their charter school provides courses they (students) are interested in (47%).

Figure 5. Charter School Provides Courses in a Career Pathway Students are Interested In.



Nearly 80% of parent and educator respondents (students were not asked these questions) indicated that **there is often to almost always a focus on academic achievement at their charter school (79%)**. Additionally, more than half of all parent and educator respondents reported that **instructional time is a priority (73%)**, instruction is **driven by data (56%)**, and **teachers are provided with frequent feedback (56%)**. **Less than half of parent and educator respondents indicated high dosage tutoring occurs (39%)**.

Figure 6. Frequency of Academic & Instructional Events



When it comes to life after high school the largest proportion of survey respondents agree that their charter school prepares students for college (75%) and life after high school (74%). Respondents also feel strongly that their school helps provides real world (71%) and hands on learning opportunities (71%) and prepares students with essential life skills (66%).

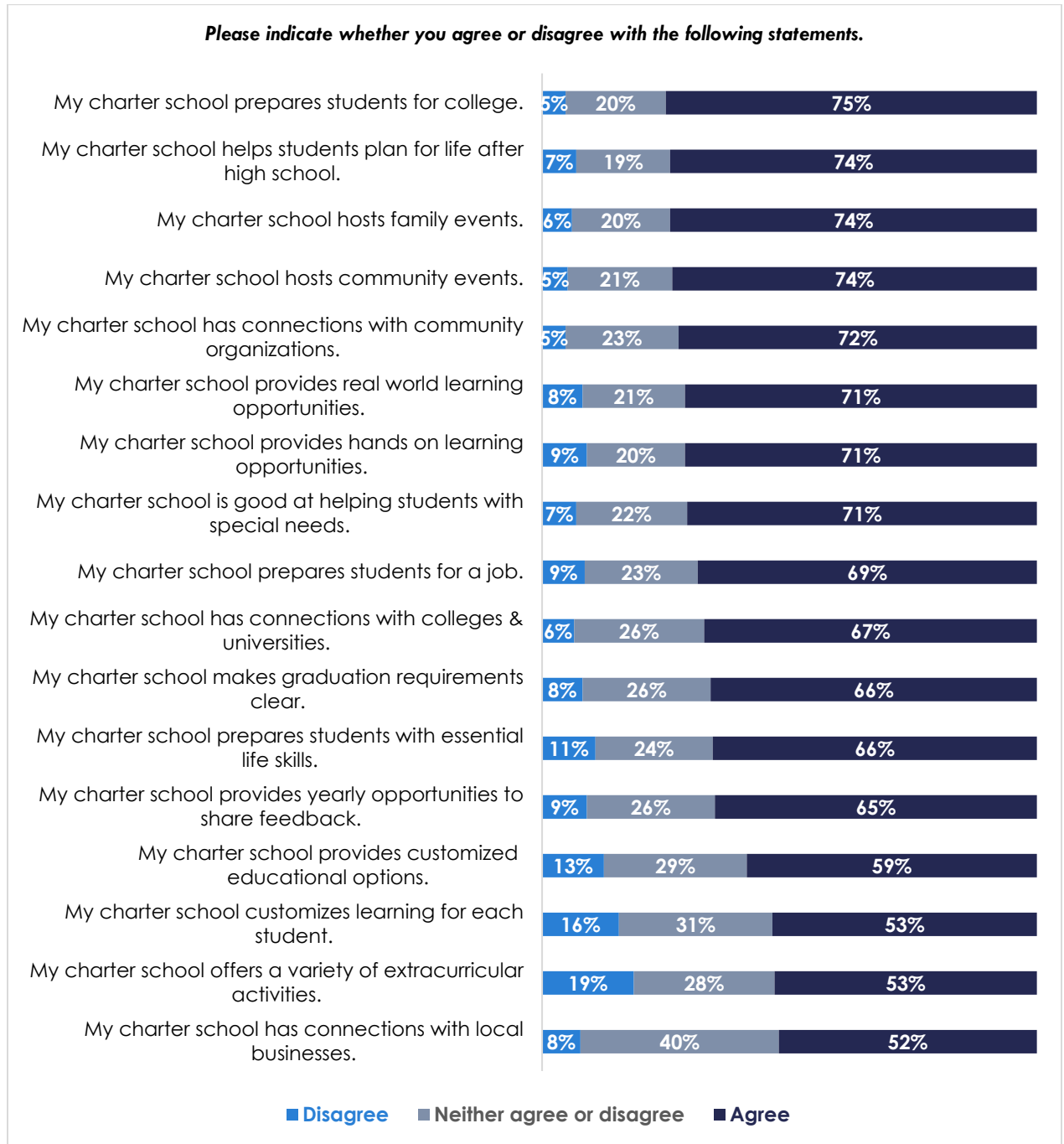
The majority of survey respondents also agree that their charter school is good at helping students with special needs (71%) and more than half agree that their charter school makes graduation requirements clear (66%), provides customized educational options (59%), and customizes learning for each student (53%).

When it comes to charter schools having connections with local businesses, community organizations, and colleges and universities the majority of survey respondents agreed that their charter school has connections with community organizations (72%), colleges and universities (67%), and local businesses (52%).

Nearly three quarters of all survey respondents agree that their charter school hosts community (74%) and family events (74%), while slightly less, but still just over half, agree that their charter school offers a variety of

**extracurricular activities (53%).** Additionally, the majority of respondents agree their charter school **provides yearly opportunities to share feedback (65%).**

**Figure 7. Charter School Experiences**



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## FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS, & SURVEY OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

Focus group participants, interviewees, and survey respondents (open ended response items) shared many advantages to being a part of a charter school, while also sharing significant challenges, primarily a perceived lack of funding. Frequently, findings like school enrollment, class size, high academic expectations, and school dress code/uniforms were perceived as both positive and challenging. While a variety of responses were collected from student focus groups, open ended survey responses, and teacher interviews, the findings reported here reflect data with strong themes and supporting survey evidence (qualitative data). Responses are organized below by perceived benefits and challenges.

## Perceived Benefits

1. Students, parents, and educators reported that the **small size of both the school and the classes make it easier to feel connected** to the school community, feel included, and get extra help and support from staff, including counselors. This includes educators feeling a sense of “team effort”.

*“My kids are getting what they need at their charter school. They are at a very small middle school, and the teachers are highly engaged, not burnt out or bitter toward the kids, and they have the attention to look at each child as an individual.” – Charter School Parent*

*“The thing I like best about charter school is being able to have a ‘family’ like community because we are so small, we are able to grow up with each other.” – Charter School Student*

*“They are able to meet all of my student’s IEP needs. The public schools are not able to and asked me to choose which needs were highest priority. At this school my child is seen by their teachers and doesn’t fade into being forgotten as would happen in a larger environment.” – Charter School Parent*

2. **Collected data shows diversity was another positive attribute of attending a charter school noted by participants**, especially for students who indicated that they experienced a sense of belonging, because their school community reflected who they were. They also shared that school diversity helped them feel “seen” and that they “fit in”. This often included learning opportunities embedded into the curriculum and activities that focused on different cultures and helped give them a more global perspective and inspiration for life beyond middle and high school.

*“We learn about all the other cultures in the world. You never feel like you’re the only one, because you know, everyone is learning about everyone. So even though the school is small, it’s diverse, and we have awareness of a lot of other people, different people, and we’re more globally minded, which helps when you go out into the world.” – Charter School Student*

*“There weren’t very many students like me at my other school. Here I feel like I fit in. Teachers and students are more like me. We’re encouraged to celebrate diversity and learn about cultural things.” – Charter School Student*

*“Because our school is small, it feels like a community. A diverse community where all of us are celebrated and all kinds of people are celebrated. It feels more like the world instead of just one place.” – Charter School Student*

3. **Students also shared that they were able to get help more easily and had more one on one attention because of the smaller class size.** This was also true when it came to career and college planning. Feedback from students indicates they felt they had access to counselors during and even after graduation, which they shared was something their other public school peers did not seem to have.

*“The best part of my school is the smaller community allowing you as a student to get help and communication easier. – Charter School Student”*

*“The education system is often better than that of a traditional school, and teachers are very engaged with their classes most of the time.” – Charter School Student*

*“Getting ready for high school and the life after that is easily the best part of going to a charter school.” – Charter School Student*

*“The staff at our school really know us and care. Our counselor follows up with students even after they graduate. It makes you feel like you’re not invisible, like what happens to you even after you leave will matter. My friends at regular public school don’t get that same attention.” – Charter School Student*

4. **Educators expressed that working at a charter school allowed them more autonomy in how they implemented curriculum**, enabled a more customized approach to their teaching, and gave them more control over how they taught. For most educators this increased their satisfaction with their role and job at the charter school.

*“Working in a charter school has been incredibly rewarding. The people I work with are passionate and driven by a genuine love for education, and that passion shines through in everything they do. Together, we strive for excellence even in the face of adversity and the stigma that sometimes surrounds charter schools. What makes it especially meaningful is the way we collaborate—not only to support our students, but also to maintain a strong and positive school culture that truly reflects our shared values.” – Charter School Educator*

*“We are able to make district-level decisions about programs and curriculum at the school level. We are able to create a school environment that fits our community.” – Charter School Educator*

*“I really appreciate being a part of a team, but I’m also not required to teach the material in rote way. I know what I’m supposed to teach, but it’s up to me how I teach. I can customize my lessons for my students, because I have the freedom to do so and that feels empowering.” – Charter School Educator*

5. **Parents, educators and especially students expressed a sense of community and belonging** and indicated this made them feel safer, cared for at school, and made their overall educational experience better in general than their previous experiences at other public schools.

*“Small school conducive to community building which fosters a sense of belonging. Innovative environment with teachers that aren’t burnt out because of ability to be flexible and not forced to teach a political agenda. Everyone is able to be themselves, and diversity thrives because of it.” – Charter School Parent*

*“So far we have loved the smaller community. We feel a part of a family rather than just another number. Our child is excited for school every morning, and we love hearing all about his day, interactions, and things he’s learned. We greatly appreciate the values of our charter school and having an educational team that truly feels dedicated to our child and their academic success and overall well-being.” – Charter School Parent*

*“We aren’t a huge school, so it really feels like a community with a common vision and care for one another. This includes our students and parents, not just our teaching team and leadership. Even though I get paid less than some of my friends who also teach, it feels meaningful to be a part of something bigger than just a single classroom.” – Charter School Educator*

6. **Academic rigor was consistently reported as a benefit of attending a charter school** by all types of respondents and focus group participants. Feedback also indicated that the academic rigor helped students to be better prepared for future academic endeavors and life after graduation.

*“The biggest reward is the level of education you get.” – Charter School Student*

*"Teachers expect us to do the work. Sometimes it's hard, but the rigor is making us ready for high school and college beyond that. I don't always like the challenge, but I know in the long run it's really worth it." – Charter School Student*

*Our daughter was never challenged at her old school. Now she is thriving in an environment where academic rigor is expected. She gets the help she needs to maintain a high standard of learning. We see the progress she makes; she can talk about what's she's learning and is engaged with her classes." – Charter School Parent*

7. Both parents and students indicated that **struggling students were more likely to get help at a deeper level** than they experienced at other public schools and that teachers are able to spend the one on one time needed for students to stay on track with their peers and that struggling students were identified more quickly.

*"The biggest reward is the involvement of the teachers. They all really know the students and are great about reaching out to parents not only when they have concerns, but to let us know when the students are doing well. My son has felt supported and cared for by his teachers and this is very important to me and him." – Charter School Parent*

*"My son is finally learning and enjoying going to school. A vast improvement over the 3 years he spent at the public middle school, where he left having learning almost nothing." – Charter School Parent*

*"It's really easy to get help when you need it. When I was at a public school the teachers didn't always have time to help me or didn't notice that I needed help. My school was bigger, and I felt shy to admit in front of so many strangers that I didn't understand. Here my teachers notice right away if I need help; I don't even have to ask. They help me get caught up as soon as I need help, so I never feel like I'm behind." Charter School Student*

8. Educators expressed that because parents and/or students chose to attend a charter school versus another public school, that they may have had an application process, and have had to overcome additional hurdles to be at school each day, such as a longer commute to and from the school, that **there is more buy in from parents and they are more likely to be involved in the school community and their child's learning experience in general.**

*"Our students are here on purpose. Some of them have long commutes, but here they are. I think because of that both students and families want to participate and be involved in our school community. They care about their learning." – Charter School Educator*

*"You don't end up at a charter school on accident. There's an application process, our expectations are greater, for students, and for parents. We have great students and great parents. They rise to the occasion, and they want to be involved." – Charter School Educator*

*"It's not unusual that a parent is the one who wants their learner to be here. There's a reason they picked a charter school, so they want to be involved, they care about what their child is learning. They hope for a better educational experience and understand they are part of that, that they're a part of our school community." – Charter School Educator*

## Perceived Challenges

9. **Lack of funding was the number one challenge** shared by almost every participant. Even students acknowledged that the disparity between other public school funding and charter school funding was an issue.

*“Another challenge is Special Education funding, I think there are a lot of students that have higher needs and that a charter school is probably their best option and at the same time, I think there's not enough funding for specialists and mental health professionals and services.” Charter School Parent*

*“Inequitable funding by the State relative to traditional districts which leads charters to have to manage with up to 20% lower operating budgets than traditional school districts.” – Charter School Parent*

*“These challenges are often linked, as under-enrollment can lead to financial instability, while high turnover is linked to lower pay, impacting both budget and education quality.”- Charter School Educator/Administrator*

*“One of the greatest challenges charter schools face is both funding and public perception. On the funding side, charter schools in many urban areas receive significantly less per-pupil revenue than traditional public schools — for example, in some cases charters received as much as 37% less in federal funding per student than district schools.” Charter School Parent*

Specifically, that the lack of funding impacts available resources, extracurricular activities, teacher salaries, and the availability of general resources and specifically:

- a. The **lack of buses, drivers, or dedicated funding for charter school transportation** was cited as a challenge by many respondents who indicated that getting students to and from charter schools can be hard, especially for working parents who may not be able to so easily accommodate longer commute times to and from school.

*“Transportation for students and facilities maintenance is the biggest challenge our school faces.”*

*“If I had to look for a challenge related to a charter school it would probably have to be with transportation. Since it's not a public school there isn't a requirement to provide students with transportation. However, our charter school does offer limited transportation via a contracted company, and we were able to sign up for the waitlist and were assigned when spots opened up.” – Charter School Parent*

*“The biggest challenge of us is trying to make it to school events. Because of the commute from home to school and back we need to rush to make it to after school events than start at 5. Would love if we can push events out to 5:30-6 pm so it's easier for us to be a part of events.” – Charter School Parent*

- b. All respondents indicated that a **lack of extracurricular activities, especially sports**, was another challenge of being a part of a charter school. Students especially wished that they had more opportunities to participate in sports and to attend sporting events, and other social school community activities like their other public school counterparts do.

*“We don't have options for sports, or a big prom. I think we miss out on some fun things that are at other schools.” – Charter School Student*

*“One of the biggest challenges of a charter school is that we receive less funding than the traditional public school. This impacts our ability to provide some services to public school children who choose to come to our school like after school sports and extracurriculars. Shouldn't they be entitled to the same funding*

regardless of which school their family chooses to enroll them in?" – Charter School Educator/Administrator

"Since we are so small, we don't have a lot of funding, so it makes it hard to form after school sports and play other schools within our community. But overall, the challenge is the funding of our school." – Charter School Student

"Charter schools like the one my kids go to do not get the funding that they need to be able to do all of the things that they want to do, including extracurricular activities, sports, after school clubs, etc." – Charter School Parent

- c. Educators expressed that **one of the hardest things about working at a charter school was having more work for less pay**. They shared that the smaller school and class sizes mean staff are expected to "wear many hats", but that they are paid less than their public school counterparts and there is no union for charter school employees as of yet. They shared that this can also have negative repercussions for attracting and retaining good educators.

"The biggest challenge I face is the small size of our teaching team; I don't have another teacher in my content area to collab with. We wear lots of hats and that can be stressful." – Charter School Educator/Administrator

"Our staff spread too thin, doing multiple jobs, being paid less & getting burnt out and then leaving. That is really hard." – Charter School Educator/Administrator

"I think it's hard to wear so many hats and some days I am running from thing to thing. It can really wear you down, especially when you make less than you would at a traditional public school. How can we attract and keep good staff if the work is harder and you aren't paid as much?" – Charter School Educator/Administrator

"We are really small, so everyone wears a lot of hats and sometimes it can be overwhelming. It has never made sense that charter school teachers, who are doing so much in a day, are expected to work for less. No wonder it's hard to recruit good teachers." – Charter School Educator/Administrator

10. While many respondents indicated that the lower enrollment, class size, and/or great staff to teacher ratio was a plus, feedback from survey respondents, focus group participants, and interviewees also revealed that the **smaller size of the school and classes can lead to more socio-emotional drama for both students and educators** and that there is less anonymity and social independence at charter schools.

"I think since the classes are so small, everyone knows each other and if something happens with you and another student it can really affect your class time, because it's drama and everyone knows." – Charter School Student

"Small schools like ours can be hard. Our students know each other so their beef with one another can take a lot of staff time. We have a student support team which is amazing at helping with all that, but the small size can really impact day to day social interactions in big ways." – Charter School Educator/Administrator

"Everybody knows each other so things spread like wildfire, and everyone is in your business. At my old school it was big, so you just had your circle of friends, and you didn't know everyone. It's nice to have the community, but knowing everyone knowing you is hard too, because sometimes you just want to be a little more hidden." – Charter School Student

11. **Academic rigor was a challenge reported by students**. As indicated above, while feedback on academic rigor is considered a positive by most survey respondents, including students, for students it's also a challenge, as they say it can cause more stress and more work, though in the long run it's worth it.

"Being able to handle the amount of homework and class work being given is the biggest challenge for me. The academic expectations are more here and I do think that's good, but it is really, really challenging." – Charter School Student

*“The biggest challenges of a charter school is like the strict curriculum and being asked to be able to go beyond the normal expectations, but it’s a good challenge even though it’s harder academics.” – Charter School Student*

*“Some of the bigger challenges is the homework. Although the homework helps us understand our material better it puts a lot of stress onto students.” Charter School Student*

*“Charter schools are more strict than the public middle schools and are more calm but in a way that they want their students to be more ahead. Public middle schools they want you to be on pace and my charter school is more wanting us to be advanced for the future so that you are ready, and that’s good, but it’s also HARD.” – Charter School Student*

12. Students also shared that the **dress codes/school uniform are limiting** as compared to other public schools and they wish they had more freedom to express their individual style.

*“Things are much more strict and there is a dress code that requires a school branded shirt and no branded jackets and of course, there still are a few bad kids, but the school is still nice, and my teachers are really nice and like me for real.” – Charter School Student*

*“The biggest challenge is wearing a uniform every single day. We should be able to express ourselves and we can’t. The rest of school is nice.” – Charter School Student*

*“There are not enough free dress days and there are no sports or many after school clubs.” – Charter School Student*

## CONCLUSION

In line with the rest of the US, more data is needed on Washington charter schools in order to draw any substantive conclusions about charter school best practices for consistent effects on student achievement, growth, and overall quality of education in a charter school environment. Similarly, additional data is needed from both public charter schools and other public schools in Washington to begin to make data based conclusions on how charter schools and other public schools truly compare to one another. For the present time this project has made solid progress in gathering meaningful data to help provide context for quantitative metrics collected as part of the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF), while also providing a more holistic approach to understanding the unique experiences of students, families, and educators served by Washington’s charter schools. If future work is conducted to further explore the similarities and differences between Washington’s public charter schools versus other public schools and how this might impact school success and student achievement, we recommend the following:

1. Collect the same data from other public schools that has been collected from charter schools so that a viable analysis can be done and comparisons made.
2. Follow up with additional data collection that looks at heterogeneous effects (including academic performance) among different types of charter schools, organizational frameworks, and the instructional conditions under which they operate, ensuring a large enough sample size to compare and contrast subgroups, this might include site visits to participating schools.
3. Questions for additional research might include:

- a. Why do charter school students, as a group, perform slightly better than their counterparts in other public schools (based on observable characteristics, such as grade level and prior tests scores) on standardized tests?
- b. How do unobservable characteristics in charter school students, staff, and family members such as motivation, family support, sense of belonging, etc. affect academic performance in charter schools?

The majority of results show that the charter school experience brings together academic rigor, a sense of community, school diversity, and provides students with a customized education that supports them in achieving success in school and beyond. While the results show that stakeholders feel very positive about their charter school experience, there was also evidence of challenges and areas for growth, such as funding, staff retention, lack of extracurricular activities, and higher workload burdens for teachers trying to fill many roles. The Washington charter school experience highlights the many positive attributes that make students, parents, and educators proud to be a part of the Washington charter school community and the future holds great promise for these caring communities.

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## APPENDIX A – COMPLETE DEMOGRAPHIC TABLES

**Table 15. Demographics – Gender & Race**

	Demographic	Respondent	
		Count	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	63	27%
	Female	114	62%
	Nonbinary	9	4%
	Other	18	8%
	Decline to Respond	9	4%
<b>Race</b>	American Indian or Alaskan Native	17	7%
	Asian	15	6%
	Black, African American	23	10%
	Hispanic or Latino/a/x	38	16%
	Middle Eastern or North African	7	3%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11	5%
	White	146	63%
	Other	17	7%
	Decline to Respond	22	9%

**Table 16. Demographics – Household Size**

How many people live in your household?	Count	Percent
1	3	1.3%
2	15	6.5%
3	25	10.8%
4	80	34.5%
5	41	17.7%
6	26	11.2%
7	12	5.2%
8	5	2.2%
9	2	0.9%
10 or more	3	1.3%
Prefer not to answer	20	8.6%

**Table 17. Demographics – Annual Household Income**

What is your annual household income?	Count	Percent
Under \$25,000	8	3.4%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	17	7.3%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	25	10.8%
\$100,000 - \$199,999	26	11.2%
\$200,000 or more	15	6.5%
I don't know	109	47.0%
Prefer not to answer	32	13.8%

**Table 18. Demographics – Languages Spoken at Home**

Which languages are used in your home (select all that apply)?	Count	Percent
Arabic	1	0.4%
Cambodian	1	0.4%
English	201	86.6%
Korean	1	0.4%
Russian	7	3.0%
Sign Language	2	0.9%
Somali	1	0.4%
Spanish	44	19.0%
Vietnamese	2	0.9%
Other - Write In (Required)	21	9.1%
Prefer Not to Answer	12	5.2%

**Table 19. Washington Charter School Demographics Compared to Average State Demographics<sup>2</sup>**

School	Local School District	Grades (25/26)	Enrollment (25/26)	6 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Enrollment (25/26)	Per-pupil Expenditure (24/25)	Average Class Size (24/25)	Student/Teacher Ratio (24/25)	Teacher Count x (24/25)	Average Years Teacher Experience (24/25)
Catalyst Public Schools	Bremerton	K–10	522	189	\$19,592	27.5	12.1 to 1	42	0.8
Innovation High School	Spokane	9–12	169	169	\$24,227	15.6	10.6 to 1	22	7.7
Lumen High School	Spokane	10–12	25	25	\$78,178	11.8	5.5 to 1	6	7.2
Pinnacles Prep	Wenatchee	6–11	220	220	\$21,329	21.1	22 to 1	19	5.3
Rainier Prep	Highline	5–8	362	272	\$19,464	22.8	13.3 to 1	27	6
Rainier Valley Leadership Academy	Seattle	K–1, 6–12	107	83	\$44,791	15.4	7.7 to 1	15	5.2
Rooted School	Evergreen (Clark)	10–11	66	66	\$39,225	20.1	11.8 to 1	5	4.8
Spokane International Academy	Mead	K–12	868	351	\$17,095	20.7	14.6 to 1	57	8.2
Summit Atlas	Seattle	6–12	629	629	\$21,758	25.1	16.3 to 1	35	5.2
Summit Sierra	Seattle	9–12	169	169	\$22,980	22.3	14.4 to 1	15	3.5
Why Not You Academy	Highline	9–12	65	65	\$26,945	15.1	10.2 to 1	13	1.2
<b>STATE</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>\$19,347</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>16.4 to 1</b>	-	<b>13.4</b>

<sup>2</sup> Source: OSPI Report Card, accessed January 9, 2026

# APPENDIX B – FOCUS GROUP & INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## WA SBE CHARTER SCHOOL DATA PROJECT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Focus Group Summary

**Structure:** 4-7 participants per focus group, 60 minutes

**Participants:** Students, educators, parents/caregivers

### GENERAL PROBES:

- What do others think about...?
- I'd like to hear a little more about...
- Does anyone else have anything to add?
- Has anyone had a different experience?
- Can you give me an example?
- I want to make sure I understand, can you clarify?

---

### *Focus Group Protocol*

**All Groups Welcome:** Welcome to the WA State Board of Education's focus group regarding your charter school experience. We appreciate your willingness to be a focus group participant and share your perspective. My name is Alisha Strobel and I'm the president of Strobel Consulting. We were hired by the State Board to oversee the collection of data from students, parents, and educators regarding their charter school experience so that the State Board can gain a better understanding of what it's like to be a part of the charter school community in Washington.

Before we get started, I wanted to let you know that today's session will be recorded, as I can't always write fast enough to keep up with the discussion. That being said, data gathered from these focus groups will be reported in summary form and any quotes used from the sessions will be shared anonymously. Please raise your hand to indicate your agreement with the meeting being recorded. If you prefer not to participate in a recorded session, we understand.

*For Zoom focus groups only:* To keep background noise to a minimum please keep your microphone on mute if you are not actively sharing.

Are there any questions before we begin?

### Questions – Student Focus Group:

- 1) Let's begin with a quick round of introductions. Please tell me 1) your first name, 2) grade; and 3) how many years you've attended a charter school?
- 2) Raise your hand if you've ever attended a regular public school that's not a charter school.

- 3) Why did you decide to attend this charter school instead of a regular public school?
- 4) For those of you that have attended a regular public school, what is the biggest difference between the regular public schools you've attended versus your experience at this charter school?
- 5) What is your favorite part about attending this charter school?
- 6) How could this charter school change or be improved in order to make your experience here better?
- 7) Do you feel like this charter school is helping you prepare for life after graduation?
- 8) Is there anything else you'd like to share about the difference between attending this charter school versus regular public school?

**Student Closing:** Thank you so much for taking the time to be a part of this focus group. Your feedback is especially valuable to the work we are doing! I hope you have a wonderful day.

#### **Questions – Educator Focus Group & Interview:**

- 1) Let's begin with a quick round of introductions. Please tell me 1) your first name, 2) your role at this charter school, and 2) how many years you've worked at this charter school?
- 2) Raise your hand if you've ever worked at a regular public school that's not a charter school.
- 3) Why did you decide to work at this charter school versus a regular public school?
- 4) For those of you that have worked at a regular public school, what is the biggest difference between the regular public schools you've worked at versus your experience at this charter school?
- 5) What are the most positive aspects of working at this charter school?
- 6) What could be improved at this charter school?
- 7) Is there anything else you'd like to share about the difference between working at this charter school versus a regular public school?

**Educator Closing:** Thank you so much for taking the time to be a part of this focus group. Your feedback is very valuable. If, as you digest the discussion that occurred, you think of other feedback you'd like to share please don't hesitate to call or email me.

#### **Questions – Parent/Caregiver Focus Group & Interview:**

- 1) Let's begin with a quick round of introductions. Please tell me 1) your first name, 2) how many children you have attending this charter school; and 2) how many years your child or children have attended this charter school?
- 2) Raise your hand if your child or children have ever attended a regular public school that's not a charter school.

- 3) Why did you decide to have your child/children attend this charter school versus a regular public school?
- 4) For those of you that have had a child or children attend a regular public school, what is the biggest difference between the regular public schools they've attended versus your experience at this charter school?
- 5) What are the most positive aspects of this charter school?
- 6) What could be improved at this charter school?
- 7) Do you feel like this charter school is helping you prepare for life after graduation?
- 8) Is there anything else you'd like to share about the difference between your experience at this charter school versus a regular public school?

**Parent/Caregiver Closing:** Thank you so much for taking the time to be a part of this focus group. Your feedback is very valuable. If, as you digest the discussion that occurred, you think of other feedback you'd like to share please don't hesitate to call or email me.

## APPENDIX C – ONLINE SURVEY

### WA SBE Charter School Feedback Survey 2025

#### INTRODUCTION

**Page exit logic:** Skip / Disqualify Logic **IF:** #1 Question "Are you currently attending, teaching or working at, or have a child or children attending a charter school?" is one of the following answers ("No") **THEN:** Jump to [page 5 - Your survey is complete!](#) Flag response as complete



#### WASHINGTON SBE CHARTER SCHOOL FEEDBACK SURVEY

[Para responder la encuesta en español, haga clic aquí.](#)

The Washington state board of education (WA SBE) is conducting an informal evaluation gathering feedback regarding Washington charter schools. The project will help provide insight on educator, student, and parent/caregiver perceptions of their charter school experience so that the wa sbe has a better understanding of what makes charter schools unique.

This survey is intended for students, parents, and educators. You will not be required to provide your name or any identifying information on this survey, and all responses will be reported anonymously or in aggregate form. You may exit this survey at any time by selecting "exit survey" at the top right of each page. This survey will close December 20 at 10 pm pacific time.

If you have questions about this survey please contact Randy Spaulding, executive director for the Washington state board of education at [randy.spaulding@k12.wa.us](mailto:randy.spaulding@k12.wa.us). Your participation in the survey is greatly appreciated! Please feel free to share the survey link with other Washington charter school parents, students, and educators: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8462970/wa-charter-school-feedback-survey-2025>

---

1) ARE YOU CURRENTLY ATTENDING, TEACHING OR WORKING AT, OR HAVE A CHILD OR CHILDREN ATTENDING A CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

- Yes
- No

## GENERAL QUESTIONS I

---

2) ARE YOU A STUDENT, PARENT/CAREGIVER, OR EDUCATOR/ADMINISTRATOR?\*

- Student
- Parent/Caregiver
- Educator/Administrator

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Student")**

---

3) DID YOU PREVIOUSLY ATTEND A REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL (I.E. NOT A CHARTER SCHOOL)?\*

- Yes
- No
- Other - Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_\*

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver")**

---

4) DID YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY ATTEND A REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL (I.E. NOT A CHARTER SCHOOL)?\*

- Yes
- No
- Other - Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_\*

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Educator/Administrator")**

---

5) DID YOU PREVIOUSLY WORK AT A REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL (I.E. NOT A CHARTER SCHOOL)?\*

Yes

No

Other - Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_\*

## GENERAL QUESTIONS II

---

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A CHARTER SCHOOL (check all that apply)?\*

Class Size

Communication with School Staff

Greater Application of Code of Conduct

More Relaxed Application of Code of Conduct

Expectations for Achievement

Curriculum Options

Higher Quality Instruction

Instruction in Character & Values

Personalized Approach to Education

Opportunities for Involvement

Safer School Climate

School Size

Services for Students with Special Needs

Specialized Programs

Teacher Quality

Partnerships with Universities

Partnerships with Employers

Other 1 - Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Other 2 - Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Other 3 - Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Other 4 - Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Other 5 - Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

---

7) 7) HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE OVERALL QUALITY OF YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

	Not At All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
Quality of education at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of the school climate at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of school safety at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of instruction at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of communication at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

8) IF YOU SELECTED "NOT AT ALL SATISFIED" ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU INDICATED YOU ARE "NOT AT ALL SATISFIED" WITH THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL CLIMATE, SCHOOL SAFETY, INSTRUCTION, OR COMMUNICATION AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL.

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver", "Educator/Administrator")**

9) HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

	Not At All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
Quality of long-term financial stability at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of educational program stability at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of long-term job stability at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver", "Educator/Administrator")**

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10) IF YOU SELECTED "NOT AT ALL SATISFIED" ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU INDICATED YOU ARE "NOT AT ALL SATISFIED" WITH THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STABILITY, OR LONG-TERM JOB STABILITY OF YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL?

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**Logic: Hidden unless: #3 Question "**

**Did you previously attend a regular public school (i.e. not a charter school)?  
" is one of the following answers ("Yes")**

**Logic: Hidden unless: #4 Question "**

**Did your child/children previously attend a regular public school (i.e. not a charter school)? " is one of the following answers ("Yes")**

**Logic: Hidden unless: #5 Question "**

**Did you previously work at a regular public school (i.e. not a charter school)?  
" is one of the following answers ("Yes")**

11) IS THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL BETTER OR WORSE THAN YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE AT TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS?\*

	<b>Much Worse Than Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>Somewhat Worse Than Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>The Same as Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>Somewhat Better Than Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>Much Better Than Traditional Public Schools</b>
Quality of overall education at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Educational options at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
School environment at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
School safety at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of instruction at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Quality of communication at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Teacher satisfaction at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Student satisfaction at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Parent/Caregiver satisfaction at your charter school	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

12) PLEASE INDICATE HOW OFTEN YOU EXPERIENCE THE FOLLOWING AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL:\*

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always	Not Applicable
I feel welcomed and included in charter school activities.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I feel valued and supported by students.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I feel valued and supported by teachers.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I feel valued and supported by administrators.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My school day needs are met.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I feel seen at school.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I feel heard at school.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I feel safe at school.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

13) PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:\*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My charter school prepares students for college.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school prepares students for a job.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school is good at helping students with special needs.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school has connections with local businesses.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school has connections with colleges & universities.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school has connections with community organizations.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

14) PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:\*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
My charter school provides customized educational options.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school hosts community events.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school hosts family events.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school makes graduation requirements clear.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school offers a variety of extracurricular activities.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

15) PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:\*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
My charter school provides hands on learning opportunities.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school provides real world learning opportunities.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school customizes learning for each student.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school helps students plan for life after high school.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school prepares students with essential life skills.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My charter school provides yearly opportunities to share feedback.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Student")**

16) PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:\*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
My charter school provides courses in a career pathway I am interested in.	()	()	()	()	()

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver", "Educator/Administrator")**

17) HOW OFTEN DOES THE FOLLOWING OCCUR AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
Teachers are provided with frequent feedback.	()	()	()	()	()	()
Instruction is driven by data.	()	()	()	()	()	()
High dosage tutoring occurs.	()	()	()	()	()	()
Instructional time is a priority.	()	()	()	()	()	()
There is a focus on academic achievement.	()	()	()	()	()	()

18) WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST REWARDS OF A CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

\_\_\_\_\_

19) WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF A CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

\_\_\_\_\_

20) IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH US ABOUT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE TO HELP US BETTER UNDERSTAND WHY YOU HAVE CHOSEN A CHARTER SCHOOL OR WHY IT'S A BETTER FIT THAN A TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL?\*

\_\_\_\_\_

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

21) WHAT CHARTER SCHOOL ARE YOU CURRENTLY ATTENDING, TEACHING OR WORKING AT, OR HAVE A CHILD OR CHILDREN ATTENDING (select all that apply).\*

- Catalyst Public Schools
- Innovation High School
- Lumen High School
- Pinnacles Prep
- Rainier Prep
- Rainier Valley Leadership Academy
- Rooted School
- Spokane International Academy
- Summit Atlas
- Summit Sierra
- Whatcom Intergenerational High School
- Why Not You Academy

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Student")**

22) WHAT GRADE ARE YOU IN?\*

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- None of the Above

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver")**

23) WHAT CHARTER SCHOOL GRADE/S DOES YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN ATTEND  
(select all that apply)?\*

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- None of the Above

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Educator/Administrator")**

24) WHAT GRADES DO YOU TEACH (select all that apply)?\*

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- None of the Above / I'm an Administrator
- None of the Above / I'm a Counselor
- Other - Please Describe: \_\_\_\_\_\*

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Student")**

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25) HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU ATTENDED A CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years
- 4 Years
- 5 Years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 Years
- 9 Years
- 10 Years
- 11 Years
- 12 Years
- 13 or More Years

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver")**

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26) HOW MANY YEARS HAS YOUR CHILD/HAVE YOUR CHILDREN ATTENDED A CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years
- 4 Years
- 5 Years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 Years
- 9 Years
- 10 Years
- 11 Years
- 12 Years
- 13 or More Years

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Educator/Administrator")**

27) HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED AT A CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years
- 4 Years
- 5 Years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 Years
- 9 Years
- 10 Years
- 11 Years
- 12 Years
- 13 or More Years

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Student")**

28) DO YOU RECEIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL? \*

- Yes
- No
- I Don't Know
- Other - Write In (Required): \_\_\_\_\_ \*

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver")**

29) DOES YOUR CHILD/DO ANY OF YOUR CHILDREN ATTENDING A CHARTER SCHOOL RECEIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?\*

Yes

No

I Don't Know

Other - Write In (Required): \_\_\_\_\_ \*

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Educator/Administrator")**

30) DO YOU PROVIDE OR OVERSEE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AT YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

Yes

No

Other - Write In (Required): \_\_\_\_\_ \*

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Student")**

31) WHAT ARE YOUR POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANS (select all that apply)?\*

Enter the Work Force

Enter the Armed Services (Navy, Airforce, Marines, Army, etc.)

Attend a Four-Year Educational Institution

Attend a Two-Year Educational Institution

I Don't Know

Other - Write In (Required): \_\_\_\_\_ \*

32) WHAT IS YOUR RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?\*

American Indian or Alaskan Native (e.g., Nisqually Tribe, Samish Nation, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, Maya, etc.)

Asian (e.g., Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)

Black or African America (e.g., Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.)

Hispanic or Latino/a/x (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Cuban, Dominican, Guatemalan, etc.)

Middle Eastern or North African (e.g., Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, etc.)

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)

White (e.g., English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, Scottish, etc.)

Other - Write In (Required): \_\_\_\_\_\*

Prefer Not to Answer

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33) WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT GENDER IDENTITY (select all that apply)?\*

Woman

Man

Nonbinary

Two-Spirit

Agender

Genderqueer/Genderfluid

Questioning/Unsure

Other - Write In (Required): \_\_\_\_\_\*

Prefer Not to Answer

---

34) HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?\*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10+

Prefer Not to Answer

---

35) WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME?\*

- Under \$25,000
  - \$25,000 - \$49,999
  - \$50,000 - \$99,999
  - \$100,000 - \$199,999
  - \$200,000 or more
  - I Don't Know
  - Prefer Not to Answer
- 

36) WHICH LANGUAGES ARE USED IN YOUR HOME (select all that apply)?\*

- Arabic
- Cambodian
- English
- Korean
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Sign Language
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Ukrainian
- Vietnamese
- Other - Write In (Required)
- Prefer Not to Answer

**Logic: Hidden unless: #2 Question "**

**Are you a student, parent/caregiver, or educator/administrator?  
" is one of the following answers ("Parent/Caregiver")**

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37) WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN A 10-20 MINUTE ZOOM INTERVIEW REGARDING YOUR EXPERIENCE HAVING A CHILD OR CHILDREN ATTEND A WASHINGTON CHARTER SCHOOL?\*

No - Thank You

Yes - I will email you at [alisha@strobelsconsulting.com](mailto:alisha@strobelsconsulting.com)

Yes - Please Email Me At: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR SURVEY IS COMPLETE!

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THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR FEEDBACK REGARDING YOUR WASHINGTON CHARTER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.

YOUR RESPONSE IS MEANINGFUL AND IMPORTANT!



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SURVEY PLEASE CONTACT RANDY SPAULDING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, AT [RANDY.SPAULDING@K12.WA.US](mailto:RANDY.SPAULDING@K12.WA.US).

