



# **SCHOOL DISTRICT PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**K-12 Education: Reviewing the  
Research on Charter School Performance**

**A Report to the Legislative Post Audit Committee  
By the Legislative Division of Post Audit  
State of Kansas  
May 2007**

# ***Legislative Post Audit Committee***

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## ***Legislative Division of Post Audit***

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### **LEGISLATIVE DIVISION OF POST AUDIT**

800 SW Jackson  
Suite 1200  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-2212  
Telephone (785) 296-3792  
FAX (785) 296-4482  
E-mail: [LPA@lpa.state.ks.us](mailto:LPA@lpa.state.ks.us)  
Website:  
<http://kslegislature.org/postaudit>  
Barbara J. Hinton, Legislative Post Auditor

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**LEGISLATIVE DIVISION OF POST AUDIT**

800 SOUTHWEST JACKSON STREET, SUITE 1200  
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-2212  
TELEPHONE (785) 296-3792  
FAX (785) 296-4482  
E-MAIL: [lpa@lpa.state.ks.us](mailto:lpa@lpa.state.ks.us)

May 2, 2007

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This report contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from our completed performance audit, *K-12 Education: Reviewing the Research on Charter School Performance*.

We would be happy to discuss the findings presented in this report with any legislative committees, individual legislators, or other State officials.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara J. Hinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor

## Get the Big Picture

Read these Sections and Features:

1. **Executive Summary** - an overview of the questions we asked and the answers we found.
2. **Conclusion and Recommendations** - are referenced in the Executive Summary and appear in a box after each question in the report.
3. **Agency Response** - also referenced in the Executive Summary and is the last Appendix.

### *Helpful Tools for Getting to the Detail* 🔍

- In most cases, an “**At a Glance**” description of the agency or department appears within the first few pages of the main report.
- **Side Headings** point out key issues and findings.
- **Charts/Tables** may be found throughout the report, and help provide a picture of what we found.
- **Narrative text boxes** can highlight interesting information, or provide detailed examples of problems we found.
- **Appendices** may include additional supporting documentation, along with the audit **Scope Statement** and **Agency Response(s)**.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
LEGISLATIVE DIVISION OF POST AUDIT

**What Does the Research Literature Say About the Performance of Students Attending Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools?**

**Charter, magnet, and alternative schools provide students public alternatives to traditional schools.** ..... page 2  
*These schools are created by local school boards to offer families additional choices in public education. Charter schools generally provide specialized education programs and may seek waivers from some of the rules that normally apply to public schools (charter schools also must be approved by the State Board of Education). Magnet schools typically focus on specific subjects or themes in order to attract students from diverse backgrounds. Alternative schools serve students whose needs aren't met in a traditional school—often very poor performing students. In 2006-07, almost 15,000 students attended the 60 charter, magnet, or alternative schools throughout the State.*

**Researchers have found mixed results when comparing the performance of charter schools to traditional schools.** ..... page 3  
*We reviewed 10 studies or research summaries that compared the performance of students in charter schools to traditional public schools. Of those, three studies found that charters schools performed better, two found that traditional schools performed better, and the other five had mixed results.*

*In addition to studies in the education research literature, we also compared student performance and demographic data for charter schools and traditional schools in Kansas:*

- *Student Performance (2005-06 school year): Charter school students scored lower than traditional school students on State math and reading assessments at all grade levels except for elementary school reading.*
- *Student Demographics (2006-07 school year): Compared to traditional public schools, charter schools tend to have fewer special education (7% vs. 13%) and free-lunch students (23% vs. 28%) but more adult students (8% vs. 1%).*

**Studies examining the performance of magnet schools have found mixed results.** ..... page 5  
*There have been very few studies that compare the performance of students in magnet schools to traditional public schools. Of three studies we reviewed, one study found that magnet schools outperformed traditional public schools, one had mixed results, and one was inconclusive.*

*As with charter schools, we also compared student performance and demographic data for magnet schools and traditional schools in Kansas:*

- Student Performance (2005-06 school year): Magnet school students scored outperformed traditional school students on State math and reading assessments only at the high school level. This may be because the two magnet high schools in Kansas have a strong academic focus and may appeal to more academically prepared students.
- Student Demographics (2006-07 school year): Compared to traditional public schools, magnet schools tend to have slightly fewer special education (10% vs. 13%) students, but more free-lunch (49% vs. 28%) and elementary students (72% vs. 52%).

**There are no recent studies on alternative schools, but older studies found positive results.** While there's very little research in recent years comparing the performance of students in alternative schools to traditional public schools, the older research is quite abundant. We reviewed a 1995 analysis of the results of 57 studies looking at the effectiveness of alternative schools. Overall, the results suggested that alternative schools can have a positive effect on student performance, especially when the school targets a specific population, such as low achieving students.

..... page 7

Finally, we compared student performance and demographic data for alternative schools and traditional schools in Kansas:

- Student Performance (2005-06 school year): Alternative school students performed significantly worse than traditional school students on State math and reading assessments. This isn't surprising, because alternative schools generally serve students who haven't been successful in traditional schools.
- Student Demographics (2006-07 school year): Compared to traditional public schools, alternative schools tend to have fewer special education (4% vs. 13%) students, but significantly more free-lunch students (64% vs. 28%). In addition, because Kansas law limits alternative schools to grades 7-12, these schools have far more high school students than traditional schools (94% vs. 30%).

**Conclusion.** While charter, magnet, and alternative schools offer many students a public alternative to a traditional education, at this point it's difficult to evaluate how effective those schools are compared to traditional public schools. Because many of these schools target specific student populations, any meaningful assessment of their performance has to take into account the demographic differences between students who attend these schools and the general student population. As we've shown, even when the research controls for demographic differences the results are mixed.

..... page 9

It is important to note that much of the research uses only assessment scores as the gauge for effectiveness. For some schools, especially those that target struggling students, assessment performance may not be the only indicator of success or failure. For those schools, factors like graduation and attendance rates may be important when determining the effectiveness of a school.

<b>APPENDIX A:</b> <i>Scope Statement</i>	.....	page 10
<b>APPENDIX B:</b> <i>Demographic and Assessment Data for All Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools</i>	.....	page 11
<b>APPENDIX C:</b> <i>Bibliography of Research on the Effectiveness of Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools</i>	.....	page 15
<b>APPENDIX D:</b> <i>Agency Response</i>	.....	page 17

This audit was conducted by Heidi Zimmerman. Scott Frank was the audit manager. If you need any additional information about the audit's findings, please contact Heidi at the Division's offices. Our address is: Legislative Division of Post Audit, 800 SW Jackson Street, Suite 1200, Topeka, Kansas 66612. You also may call us at (785) 296-3792, or contact us via the Internet at [LPA@lpa.state.ks.us](mailto:LPA@lpa.state.ks.us).





## K-12 Education:

# Reviewing the Research on Charter School Performance

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House Bill 2652, introduced during the 2006 legislative session, would have amended State law to make it easier to establish charter schools and ensure they receive the State funding associated with their students. Proponents contend charter schools can provide innovative strategies for teaching at-risk student populations. Critics contend there's little evidence charter schools perform better than similar traditional public schools. Members of the 2010 Commission were interested in what the literature says about the performance of charter, magnet, and alternative schools.

This audit answers the following question:

**What does the research literature show about the performance of students attending charter, magnet, and alternative schools?**

To answer this question, we reviewed the available studies on the performance of students in charter, magnet, and alternative schools. We also analyzed demographic and assessment data from the Department of Education.

A copy of the approved scope statement for this audit is included in *Appendix A*.

In conducting this audit, we followed all applicable government auditing standards set forth by the U.S. Government Accountability Office except, because of time constraints, we didn't test the student demographic or assessment data we obtained from the Kansas Department of Education. However, we felt the data were reliable for the purposes of this audit based on our previous work in testing and using those data for our January 2006 education cost study analysis, *Elementary and Secondary Education in Kansas: Estimating the Costs of K-12 Education Using Two Approaches*.

Our findings begin on page 2.

## What Does the Research Literature Say About the Performance of Students Attending Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools?

**ANSWER IN BRIEF:** *Charter, magnet, and alternative schools give students public alternatives to traditional public schools. Researchers have found mixed results when comparing the performance of charter and magnet schools to traditional schools. Recent studies assessing alternative schools are limited, but the older research is positive. These and related findings are discussed in the sections that follow.*

### ***Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools Provide Students Public Alternatives to Traditional Schools***

In recent years, some parents and other organizations have advocated for greater choice in public education. They assert that school choice will allow parents to find the educational environment that works best for their child. Many see charter, magnet, and alternative schools as a way to allow choice within the public school system.

Kansas offers all three types of schools, and in 2006-07 there were almost 15,000 students attending 60 of these schools throughout the State. **Figure 1-1** compares charter, magnet, and alternative schools in Kansas (a complete list these schools is included in **Appendix B**).

Figure 1-1 Summary of Kansas' Rules and Policies for Different Types of Special Schools		
Charter Schools (27 schools; 2,279 students)	Magnet Schools (29 schools; 12,168 students)	Alternative Schools (4 schools; 463 students)
<b>WHAT ARE THESE SCHOOLS?</b>		
Charter schools can receive waivers from one or more rules that normally apply to public schools, in order to implement a specialized education program.	Magnet schools typically focus on a specific subject or theme in order to attract students from diverse backgrounds.	Alternative schools serve students whose needs aren't met in a traditional school, including very poor performers, pregnant students, or delinquents.
These schools can be at any grade level.	These schools can be at any grade level.	Under Kansas statute, these schools are limited to grades 7-12.
<b>WHO ESTABLISHES THESE SCHOOLS?</b>		
Charter schools have to be approved by their local school board and the State Board of Education.	Magnet schools are created by the local school board. The State has no role in approving their creation.	Alternative schools are created by the local school board. The State has no role in approving their creation.
<b>HOW ARE STUDENTS ADMITTED?</b>		
The charter school must inform students in the community about the school and give them an equal opportunity to attend. If more students apply than the school has room for, a lottery determines which students can attend.	Some magnet schools require an entrance exam or a demonstration of a special skill to gain admittance to the school, while others are open to any student who wishes to attend.	Generally, students are referred to the alternative school by officials at the traditional school.
Source: Kansas statutes and interviews with officials from the Kansas Department of Education.		

### ***Researchers Have Found Mixed Results When Comparing the Performance of Charter Schools to Traditional Schools***

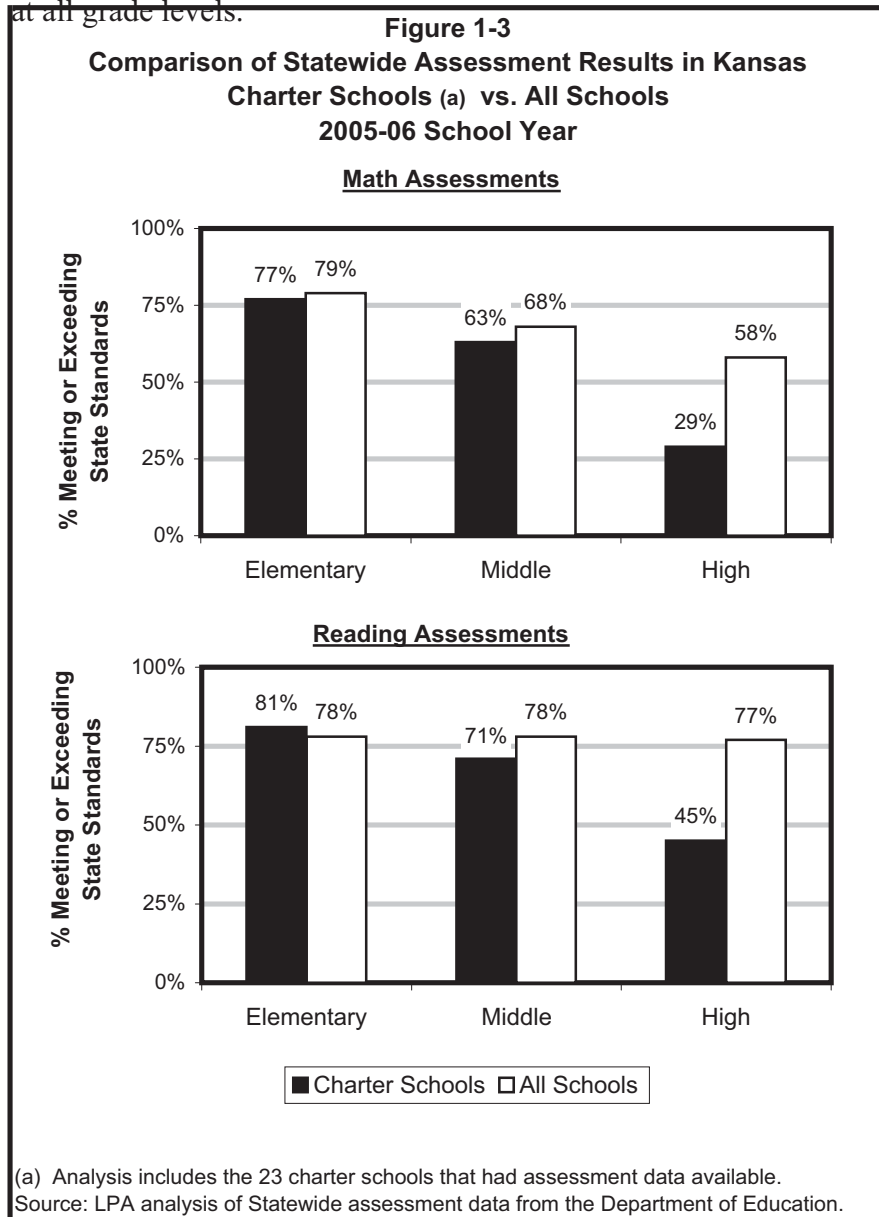
Charter schools are innovative public schools that operate under local boards of education. In many cases, charter schools receive waivers that free them from some of the rules and regulations other schools must follow. To assess the performance of charter schools we reviewed a January 2006 summary of charter school research prepared by the Kansas Department of Education. Much of the

charter school research presented here is from that review. We also reviewed an August 2006 study by the National Center for Education Statistics.

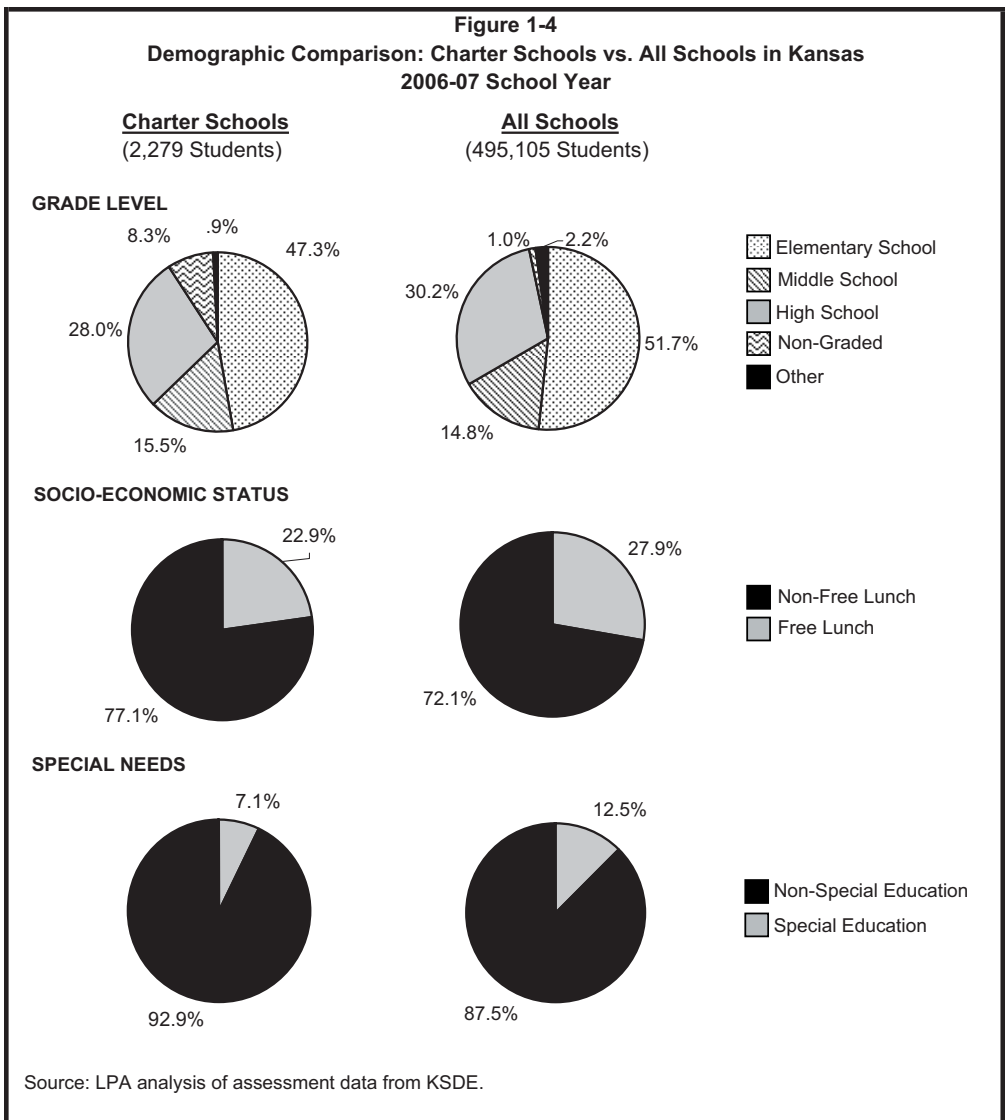
Overall, the research results were mixed for charter schools. Three studies found charter schools outperformed traditional public schools, two found they performed worse, and the other five had mixed results. These studies are summarized in *Figure 1-2*.

<b>Figure 1-2 Summary of Research on CHARTER SCHOOLS and Student Performance</b>			
<b>Study</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Direction of Findings</b>
<b>RESEARCH SUMMARY</b>			
<b>Gill, Timpane, Ross, and Brewer (2001)</b>	Review and analysis of literature comparing the performance of charter schools to traditional schools.	Charter school performance improved after the first year of operation; however, studies don't suggest that charter school achievement is significantly different than traditional public schools.	Mixed
<b>STUDIES</b>			
<b>Greene, Forster, and Winters (2003)</b>	Comparison of test score improvements for charter schools and traditional schools in 11 states over a one-year period.	Charter schools slightly outperformed traditional schools in math and reading.	Positive
<b>Hoxby and Rockoff (2004)</b>	Compares the performance of Chicago public school students who were selected through a lottery to attend a charter school to students who applied but weren't selected.	Students who were selected and attended a charter school in elementary school scored an average of six points higher in math and reading than those who weren't selected.	Positive
<b>Hoxby (2004)</b>	Comparison of state assessment scores of charter school students to students in nearby traditional schools.	A higher percentage of charter school students performed at or above proficient on state assessments than traditional school students.	Positive
<b>Bifulco and Ladd (2004)</b>	Comparison of charter school students' gains in reading and math to the gains they made while attending a traditional school.	Students in charter schools made smaller gains in reading and math than those same students made when enrolled in traditional schools.	Negative
<b>National Center for Education Statistics (2006)</b>	Comparison of 4th grade national assessment scores of charter school students to traditional school students.	In both reading and math, the charter school average was lower than the traditional school average, even after adjusting for student characteristics.	Negative
<b>Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, and Branch (2005)</b>	Comparison of the academic achievement of charter school students to those in traditional schools.	Student achievement results for the first three years a charter school is in operation are lower than those in traditional schools. However, after four years charter school scores were the same as or slightly higher than those of traditional schools.	Mixed
<b>Solomon, Paark and Garcia (2001)</b>	Comparison of the reading and math improvements made by charter school students over a three-year period compared to the improvements made by traditional school students.	Charter school students showed no significant improvements in math or reading during the first year of attendance compared to traditional schools. By the second and third years, they showed significant improvement in reading, but no difference in math.	Mixed
<b>Miron (2005)</b>	Comparison of the assessment results of Connecticut charter school students to the results of the traditional school students in the same district.	Charter schools outperformed traditional schools on one type of state assessment, while traditional schools outperformed charter schools on a different state assessment.	Mixed
<b>Zimmer, Budding, Chau, et al (2003)</b>	Comparison of the performance of charter schools to traditional schools using case studies.	Charter schools generally had comparable or slightly lower test scores than do traditional schools.	Mixed
Source: Results from KSDE and LPA review.			

**In Kansas, charter school students scored lower on the 2005-06 State assessments than traditional students.** We analyzed data for the 23 charter schools that had assessment results available. These results are summarized in *Figure 1-3*. With the exception of elementary school reading, traditional school students outperformed charter school students on the State assessment tests at all grade levels.



**Charter schools tend to have fewer special education and free-lunch students but more adult students than traditional schools.** We compiled student demographic information for 26 of the 27 charter schools operating in 2006-07. That information is



summarized in *Figure 1-4*.

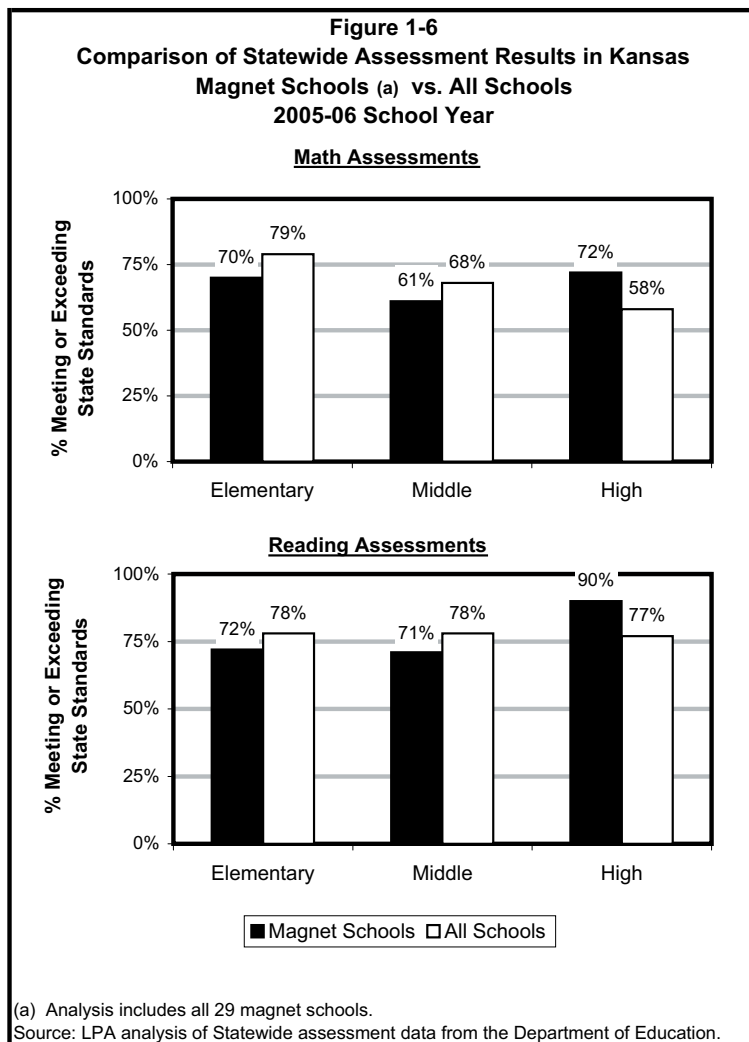
As the figure shows, charter schools have a smaller proportion of free-lunch students (23% vs. 28%) and special education students (7% vs. 13%) compared to traditional schools. The figure also shows that charter schools have a significantly greater proportion of non-graded students (8% vs. 1%). This may be because some charter schools target students who have dropped out but who are returning to finish their high school diploma.

***Studies Examining the Performance of Magnet Schools Have Found Mixed Results***

Magnet schools typically have a theme and try to attract students from across a city. Overall, the research results on magnet schools were limited and mixed. Of the three studies we reviewed, one study found that magnet schools outperformed traditional public schools, one had mixed results, and one was inconclusive. These studies are summarized in *Figure 1-5* on the next page.

Figure 1-5 Summary of Research on <u>MAGNET SCHOOLS</u> and Student Performance			
Study	Description	Conclusion	Direction of Findings
<b>Gamoran (1996)</b>	Study using data from a group of 8th graders and following them through their 10th grade year.	Magnet school students slightly outperformed their traditional school peers. A second analysis found that the achievement advantage of magnet schools was as large as the advantage of staying in school versus dropping out.	Positive
<b>Cullen, Jacob, and Levitt (2005)</b>	Compares the performance of public school students who were selected through a lottery to attend a magnet school to students who applied but weren't selected.	In general, there were no significant differences in student performance between magnet schools and traditional schools on reading, English, or math assessments, except that magnet school students performed better on the 10th grade reading assessment.	Mixed
<b>Ballou, Goldring, and Liu (2006)</b>	Estimates the impact of attending a magnet school on achievement for a mid-sized southern district.	After adjusting for student demographics there was very little difference in performance between magnet schools and traditional schools.	Inconclusive

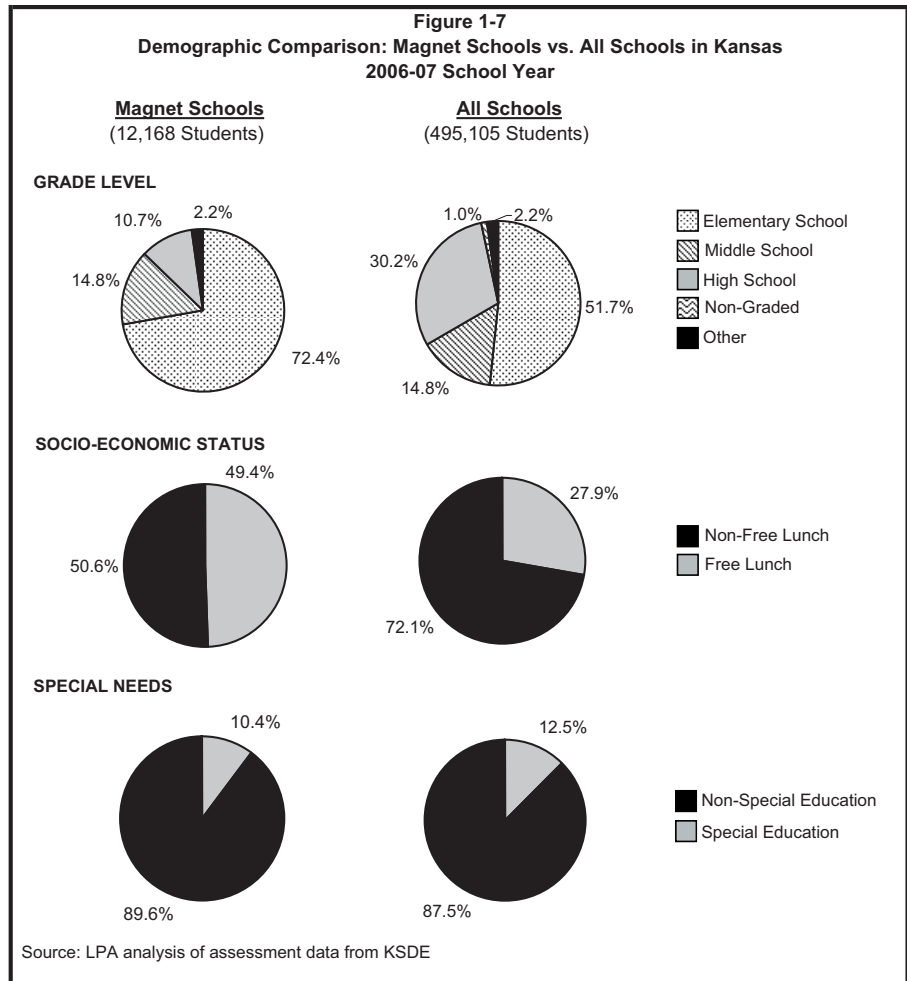
Source: LPA summary of research.



**In Kansas, magnet schools outperformed traditional schools only at the high school level on the 2005-06 State assessments.** We analyzed assessment data for all 29 magnet schools in the State. These results are summarized in *Figure 1-6*.

The performance differences between magnet high schools and magnet middle and elementary schools may be because the high schools tend to have a strong academic focus, and may be likely to appeal to the more academically prepared students.

**Magnet schools tend to have a slightly lower percentage of special education students but a greater percentage of free-lunch and elementary students than traditional schools.** We compiled student demographic information for all 29 magnet schools in the State. That information is summarized in *Figure 1-7*.



As the figure shows, magnet schools have a slightly lower proportion of special education students as traditional schools (10% vs. 13%), but have a significantly greater proportion of free-lunch students (49% vs. 28%) and elementary students (72% vs. 52%).

***There Are No Recent Studies on Alternative Schools, but Older Studies Found Positive Results***

Alternative schools generally serve students who have difficulty in the traditional school environment. While there's a lack of recent literature regarding alternative schools, the older research is quite abundant. The one study we reviewed examined 57 studies and concluded that alternative schools can have a small positive effect

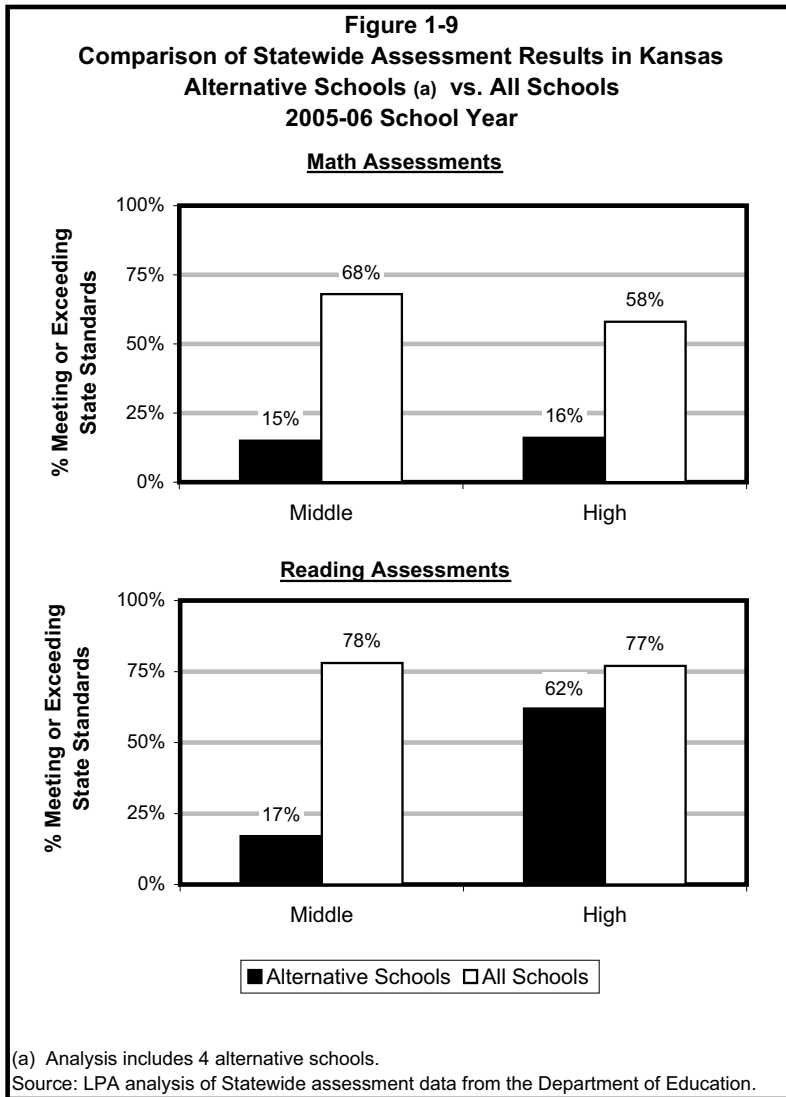
**Figure 1-8**  
**Summary of Research on ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS and Student Performance**

Study	Description	Conclusion	Direction of Findings
<b>Cox, Davidson, and Bynum (1995)</b>	Statistical analysis of 57 studies examining the performance of alternative schools.	Overall, the results suggested that alternative schools can have a small positive effect on school performance. The largest effect was found for schools that served a target population, such as low achievers or delinquents.	Positive

Source: LPA summary of research.

on student performance. This study is summarized in *Figure 1-8*.

**In Kansas, alternative school students performed significantly worse than traditional school students on the 2005-06 State assessments.** We analyzed assessment data from all four alternative schools in the State, all of which are located in Wichita. These results are summarized in *Figure 1-9*.



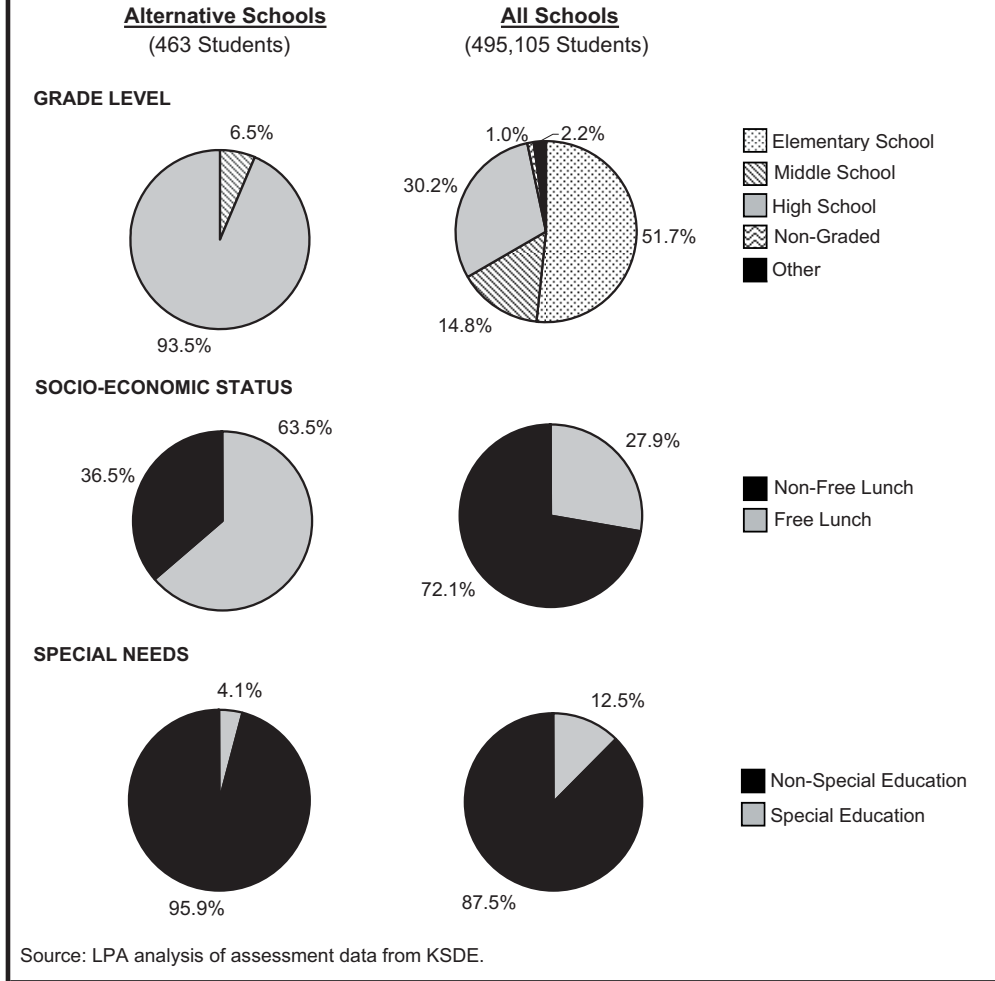
As the figure shows, traditional school students significantly outperformed alternative schools at all levels. When comparing alternative schools to traditional schools it's important to remember that alternative schools generally serve students who have not been successful in traditional schools, and therefore we would expect their scores to be lower.

**Alternative schools have fewer special education students but more free-lunch and high school students than traditional schools.** We compiled student demographic information for all four alternative schools in the State. That information is summarized in *Figure 1-10*.

As the figure shows, alternative schools have fewer special education students (4% vs. 13%) but more free-lunch students (64% vs. 28%) compared to traditional schools. We would expect to find more high school students in alternative schools because Kansas law limits alternative schools only to grades 7-12.



**Figure 1-10**  
**Demographic Comparison: Alternative Schools vs. All Schools in Kansas**  
**2006-07 School Year**



**CONCLUSION:**

While charter, magnet, and alternative schools offer many students a public alternative to a traditional education, at this point it's difficult to evaluate how effective those schools are compared to traditional public schools. Because many of these schools target specific student populations, any meaningful assessment of their performance has to take into account the demographic differences between students who attend these schools and the general student population. As we've shown, even when the research controls for demographic differences the results are mixed.

It is important to note that much of the research uses only assessment scores as the gauge for effectiveness. For some schools, especially those that target struggling students, assessment performance may not be the only indicator of success or failure. For those schools, factors like graduation and attendance rates may be important when determining the effectiveness of a school.

## APPENDIX A

This appendix contains the scope statement approved by the 2010 Commission for this audit on May 19, 2006

### SCOPE STATEMENT

#### **K-12 Education: Reviewing the Research on Charter School Performance**

House Bill 2652, which was introduced during the 2006 Legislative Session, would have amended State law to make it easier to establish charter schools and to ensure that charter schools receive the State funding that is associated with their students. Proponents of this and similar proposals contend that charter schools can provide innovative strategies for teaching at-risk student populations. Critics contend there's little evidence that charter schools really perform better than similarly situated traditional public schools.

This audit would answer the following question:

**What does the research literature show about the performance of students attending charter, magnet, and alternative schools?** To answer this question, we'd gather and review any studies available on whether students in charter, magnet, and alternative schools perform better than students in traditional public schools that are of similar size and student demographics. In addition, we'd review any information compiled by the Kansas Department of Education on the performance of charter, magnet, and alternative schools in Kansas.

Estimated completion time: 200 hours

## APPENDIX B

### Demographic and Assessment Data for All Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools

This appendix contains demographic and assessment information for the charter, magnet, and alternative schools in operation during the 2006-07 school year. The table shows the following data for each school:

- **Demographic Information** (2006-07 school year)
  - ▶ total enrollment
  - ▶ percent of students who qualify for free lunches
  - ▶ percent of students who are in special education students
- **Assessment Information** (2005-06 school year)—percent of students who met or exceeded standards on the State math and reading assessments

**Appendix B**  
**Charter, Magnet, and Alternative School**  
**Demographic and Assessment Information**

School District	School Name	Grades Served	Demographic Information (2006-07 School Year)			Assessment Information (2005-06 School Year) (a)	
			Total Enrollment (Headcount)	% Free Lunch	% Special Education	% Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Reading	% Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Math
<b>CHARTER SCHOOLS (29 SCHOOLS)</b>							
101 - Erie	Galesburg Elementary	K-8	2,279	23%	7%	72%	65%
200 - Greeley County	Greeley County Junior/Senior High	6-12	127	34%	22%	75%	80%
202 - Turner - Kansas City	Turner Virtual School	9-12	140	23%	0%	76%	68%
218 - Elkhart	Point Rock Academy	9-12	33	0%	3%	n/a	n/a
253 - Emporia	Turning Point Learning Center	K-8	147	49%	1%	<10 scores	<10 scores
261 - Haysville	Haysville Charter School	8-12	60	8%	2%	91%	73%
263 - Mulvane	Mulvane Academy	9-12	13	38%	0%	<10 scores	<10 scores
267 - Renwick	Colwich Grade School	K-8	19	21%	0%	50%	<10 scores
287 - West Franklin	West Franklin Learning Center	9-12	335	6%	15%	87%	80%
312 - Haven	Pleasantview Academy Grade School	K-8	17	71%	59%	<10 scores	<10 scores
312 - Haven	Pleasantview Academy High School	9-12	42	36%	0%	52%	60%
312 - Haven	Yoder Charter Elementary School	K-8	52	27%	0%	44%	7%
315 - Colby	Thomas County Academy	5-10	90	20%	2%	86%	93%
321 - Kaw Valley	Delia Charter School	K-8	24	38%	17%	93%	57%
332 - Cunningham	Zenda Elementary School	K-6	79	63%	28%	71%	86%
349 - Stafford	Stafford Economic Development Charter School	12	20	40%	50%	80%	58%
373 - Newton	E3: Entrepreneurial Education Enterprise	9-12	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
376 - Sterling	Sterling Academy	K-6	26	19%	8%	n/a	n/a
400 - Smoky Valley	Smoky Valley Virtual School	7-12	39	28%	21%	n/a	n/a
424 - Mullinville	21st Century Elementary School	K-8	65	8%	0%	<10 scores	<10 scores
424 - Mullinville	21st Century High School	9-12	19	32%	0%	24%	14%
465 - Winfield	Community Learning Center	8-12	115	31%	0%	12%	6%
490 - El Dorado	E-CATS	11-12	32	31%	6%	14%	<10 scores
			7	29%	0%	<10 scores	n/a

**Appendix B  
Charter, Magnet, and Alternative School  
Demographic and Assessment Information**

School District	School Name	Grades Served	Demographic Information (2006-07 School Year)			Assessment Information (2005-06 School Year) (a)	
			Total Enrollment (Headcount)	% Free Lunch	% Special Education	% Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Reading	% Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Math
<b>CHARTER SCHOOLS (continued)</b>							
497 - Lawrence	Lawrence Virtual School	K-8	550	1%	3%	79%	65%
499 - Galena	Cornerstone Alternative Charter High School	9-12	21	76%	0%	29%	<70 scores
501 - Topeka	Hope Street Charter Academy	9-12	197	55%	3%	60%	40%
501 - Topeka	Hope Street Middle Charter School	6-8	10	70%	0%	12%	0%
<b>MAGNET SCHOOLS (29 SCHOOLS)</b>			<b>12,168</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>68%</b>
259 - Wichita	Allison Traditional Middle Magnet	6-8	526	19%	6%	86%	84%
259 - Wichita	Black Traditional Magnet	K-5	347	49%	18%	68%	61%
259 - Wichita	Bostic Traditional Magnet	K-5	303	17%	11%	92%	93%
259 - Wichita	Brooks Middle Magnet	6-8	600	48%	13%	72%	56%
259 - Wichita	Bryant Core Knowledge Magnet	K-5	425	52%	18%	84%	87%
259 - Wichita	Buckner Performing Arts Magnet	K-5	340	42%	15%	88%	86%
259 - Wichita	Cleveland Traditional Magnet	K-5	304	30%	17%	74%	83%
259 - Wichita	Dodge Literacy Magnet	K-5	491	73%	8%	51%	63%
259 - Wichita	Earhart Environmental Magnet	K-5	328	42%	12%	90%	85%
259 - Wichita	Emerson Open Magnet	K-5	222	23%	16%	87%	81%
259 - Wichita	Horace Mann Magnet	K-8	573	75%	7%	71%	74%
259 - Wichita	Hyde International Studies Magnet	K-5	302	24%	12%	90%	88%
259 - Wichita	Isely Traditional Magnet	K-5	199	52%	7%	63%	55%
259 - Wichita	Jardine Middle Magnet	6-8	443	82%	13%	47%	33%
259 - Wichita	Kelly Liberal Arts Magnet	K-5	601	65%	15%	64%	59%
259 - Wichita	Lewis Open Magnet	K-5	217	37%	7%	87%	87%
259 - Wichita	L'Overture Computer and Technology Magnet	K-5	350	47%	8%	78%	77%

**Appendix B  
Charter, Magnet, and Alternative School  
Demographic and Assessment Information**

School District	School Name	Grades Served	Demographic Information (2006-07 School Year)			Assessment Information (2005-06 School Year) (a)	
			Total Enrollment (Headcount)	% Free Lunch	% Special Education	% Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Reading	% Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Math
<b>MAGNET SCHOOLS (continued)</b>							
259 - Wichita	Mayberry Middle Magnet	6-8	609	51%	8%	73%	67%
259 - Wichita	McLean Science Magnet	K-5	299	33%	8%	79%	76%
259 - Wichita	Minneha Core Knowledge Magnet	K-5	595	52%	15%	64%	54%
259 - Wichita	Northeast Magnet High School	9-12	538	30%	4%	88%	70%
259 - Wichita	Price-Harris Communications Magnet	K-5	453	55%	8%	70%	65%
259 - Wichita	Riverside Cultural Arts Magnet	K-5	245	35%	5%	77%	77%
259 - Wichita	Spaght Accelerated Magnet	K-5	333	79%	13%	43%	44%
259 - Wichita	Woodland Health Magnet	K-5	197	58%	17%	62%	60%
308 - Hutchinson	Hutchinson Magnet Elementary	K-6	295	45%	18%	84%	80%
500 - Kansas City	Sumner Academy of Arts and Science	8-12	998	36%	1%	86%	70%
501 - Topeka	Scott Computer Magnet	K-5	459	80%	11%	55%	55%
501 - Topeka	Williams Science Magnet	K-5	576	60%	10%	69%	76%
<b>ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS (4 SCHOOLS)</b>			<b>463</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>15%</b>
259 - Wichita	Blackbear Bosin	7-9	44	73%	7%	17%	15%
259 - Wichita	Metro-Boulevard Alternative High School	9-12	135	55%	6%	69%	12%
259 - Wichita	Metro-Meridian Alternative High School	9-12	150	58%	5%	59%	13%
259 - Wichita	Metro-Midtown Alternative High School	9-12	134	75%	1%	56%	27%

(a) Assessment information for schools with fewer than 10 scores are confidential.

Source: LPA analysis of KSDE demographic and assessment data.

## APPENDIX C

### **Bibliography of Research on the Effectiveness of Charter, Magnet, and Alternative Schools**

This appendix lists the one research summary and thirteen studies we reviewed that examined the effectiveness of charter, magnet, and alternative schools. To identify these studies we reviewed documents prepared by the Kansas Department of Education, spoke with education researchers, and searched the Internet.

#### Charter School Research Summaries:

Gill, B., Timpane, M., Ross, K., & Brewe, D., 2001. Rhetoric Versus Reality: What We Know and What We Need To Know About Vouchers and Charter Schools. RAND Corporation.

#### Charter School Studies:

Bifulco, R. & Ladd, H., 2004. The Impact of Charter Schools on Student Achievement: Evidence from North Carolina. Durham, NC: Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University.

Greene, J, Forster, G, & Winters, M., 2003. Apples to Apples: An Evaluation of Charter School Serving General Student Population. Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, and Branch, 2005. Charter School Quality and Parental Decision Making With School Choice. National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper Series.

Hoxby, C. & Rockoff, J., 2004. The Impact of Charter Schools on Student Achievement.

Hoxby, Caroline, 2004. Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Difference.

Miron, G., 2005. Evaluating the Performance of Charter Schools in Connecticut. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

National Center for Education Statistics, 2006. A Closer Look at Charter Schools Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling.

Solomon, L., Paark, K., Garcia, D., 2001. Does Charter School Attendance Improve Test Scores? The Arizona Results. A Project of the Goldwater Institute, March 2001.

Zimmer, R., Buddin, R., Chau, D, et al., 2003. Charter School Operations and Performance: Evidence from California. RAND Corporation.

Magnet School Studies:

Cullen, J., Jacob, B., & Levitt, S., 2005. The Effect of School Choice on Student Outcomes: Evidence from Randomized Lotteries.

Ballou, D., Goldring, E, and Liu, K, 2006. Magnet Schools and Student Achievement. National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education.

Gamoran, A., 1996. Do Magnet Schools Boost Achievement? Educational Leadership, 42-45.

Alternative School Study:

Cox, S., Davidson, W., Bynum, T., 1995. A Meta-Analytic Assessment of Delinquency-Related Outcomes of Alternative Education Programs. Crime and Delinquency, 219-234.



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Agency Response**

On April 20, 2007, we provided copies of the draft audit to the Department of Education. Its response is included in this Appendix.



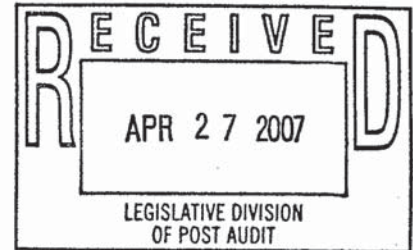
## Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services

785-296-3871  
785-296-0459 (fax)

120 SE 10th Avenue • Topeka, KS 66612-1182 • (785) 296-6338 (TTY) • www.ksde.org

April 23, 2007

Mrs. Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor  
Legislative Division of Post Audit  
800 S. W. Jackson Street, Suite 1200  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-2212



Dear Mrs. Hinton:

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the status of recommendations concerning your performance audit, *Reviewing the Research on Charter School Performance*. Your auditors appear to have conducted a thorough review of research literature/studies on charter, magnet, and alternative schools as alternatives to traditional public schools.

Please feel free to contact this office if we can assist you further.

Sincerely,

Dale M. Dennis, Interim  
Commissioner of Education

DMD:tjm

