

DIGGING INTO THE DATA ON COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS An In-Depth Look at Graduation Rates for Students of Color

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JULY 2020

Researchers across the country have found that charter schools can be particularly effective at raising student achievement and improving outcomes for students of color, and Colorado’s graduation rates data reflects this as well. This report compares 2019 graduation rates for traditional brick and mortar high schools in Colorado.

Colorado Graduation Rates by Region

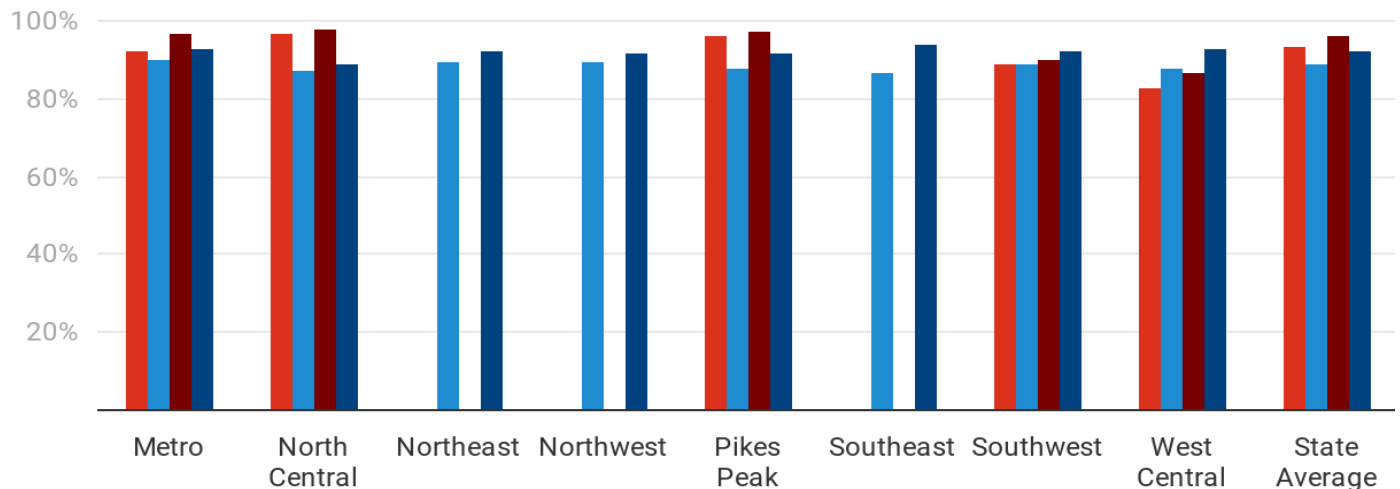
- **The statewide 4-year graduation rate for charter schools was 93% in 2019 compared with 89% at non-charter high schools.**
- Charter schools have higher graduation rates than district-run schools in the Metro, North Central and Pikes Peak regions, lower graduation rates in the West Central region, and comparable rates in the Southwest region.
- In the North Central and Pikes Peak regions, charter schools have 4-year graduation rates that are eight to nine percentage points higher than those of non-charter schools.



Charter schools have higher graduation rates on average than district-run schools in Colorado

Charter and Non-Charter School Graduation Rates by Region, 2019

■ Charter, 4-Year Graduation Rate ■ Non-Charter, 4-Year Graduation Rate
■ Charter, 6-Year Graduation Rate ■ Non-Charter, 6-Year Graduation Rate



Note: Data obtained from the Colorado Department of Education.

Colorado Graduation Rates for Students of Color (2019)

- Both the 4-year and 6-year graduation rates for Black and African American students were 5.7 percentage points higher than the respective graduation rates for Black and African American students at district-run schools.
- The 6-year graduation rate for **Black and African American students at charter schools (95%)** was two percentage points higher than the six-year graduation rate for *white* students at non-charter schools (93%).
- The 6-year graduation rate for Hispanic charter school students (97%) is the highest rate among all student subgroups at charter and non-charter schools.

Black and Hispanic students graduate at higher rates at charter schools than district-run schools in Colorado



Considering the 6-year graduation rate, traditional brick and mortar charter schools have essentially closed the gap between white students and students of color.

- Within schools that have a high concentration of non-white students (over 70%), students of color at charter schools have an 87.8% 4-year graduation rate compared to 80.2% for their peers at district-run schools.

Graduation Rates for Students of Color at Charter and Non-Charter Schools with over 70% Students of Color



Note: Data obtained from the Colorado Department of Education.

Conclusion

Charter schools are not a silver bullet; there are good and bad charter schools just as there are good and bad district-run schools. **Charter schools remain a critical part of Colorado's educational ecosystem** by providing families with options for different learning environments that can better meet their children's needs and **by proving capable of improving outcomes for traditionally underserved students.**