

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
Los Angeles Unified School District

INFORMATIVE

TO: Members, Board of Education Date: May 14, 2009

FROM: Randy Ross, Director of Educational Policy

SUBJECT: **Student Movements Between Charter and Traditional Schools**

COPIES: Ramon Cortines, Jim Morris, Jose Cole-Gutierrez, Cynthia Lim, Judy Elliott, Sharon Curry, Roberta Fesler, Jefferson Crain, Jerry Thornton

Introduction

Several board members have asked about the movement of students between different types of schools. During a recent meeting of the Charters and Innovation Committee, committee members inquired about the movement of students between traditional public schools and charters.

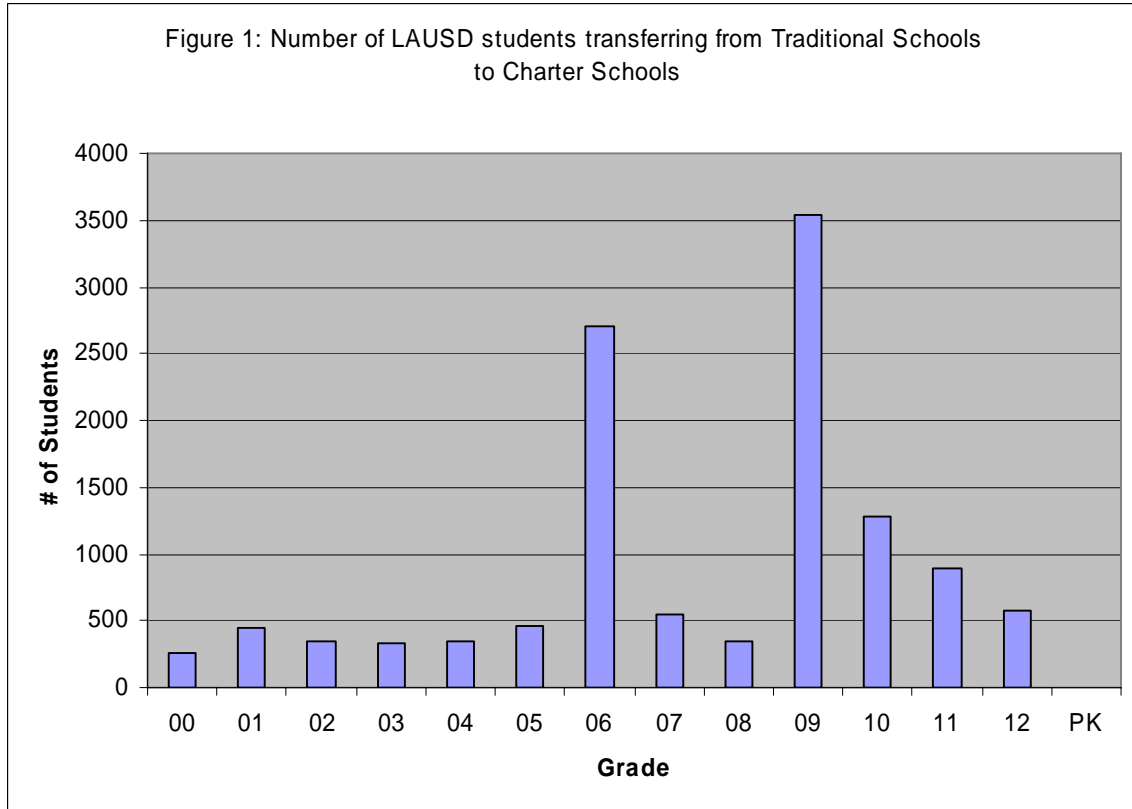
Using data assembled by LAUSD's Planning and Assessment Division (PAD), we have undertaken a preliminary analysis of this question. Specifically, PAD developed two data bases. One data base contains data on each student who moved from a traditional public school (including noncharter magnets) in 2007-08 to a charter school in 2008-09. The second data base lists students who moved from a charter school in 2007-08 to a traditional public school in 2008-09.

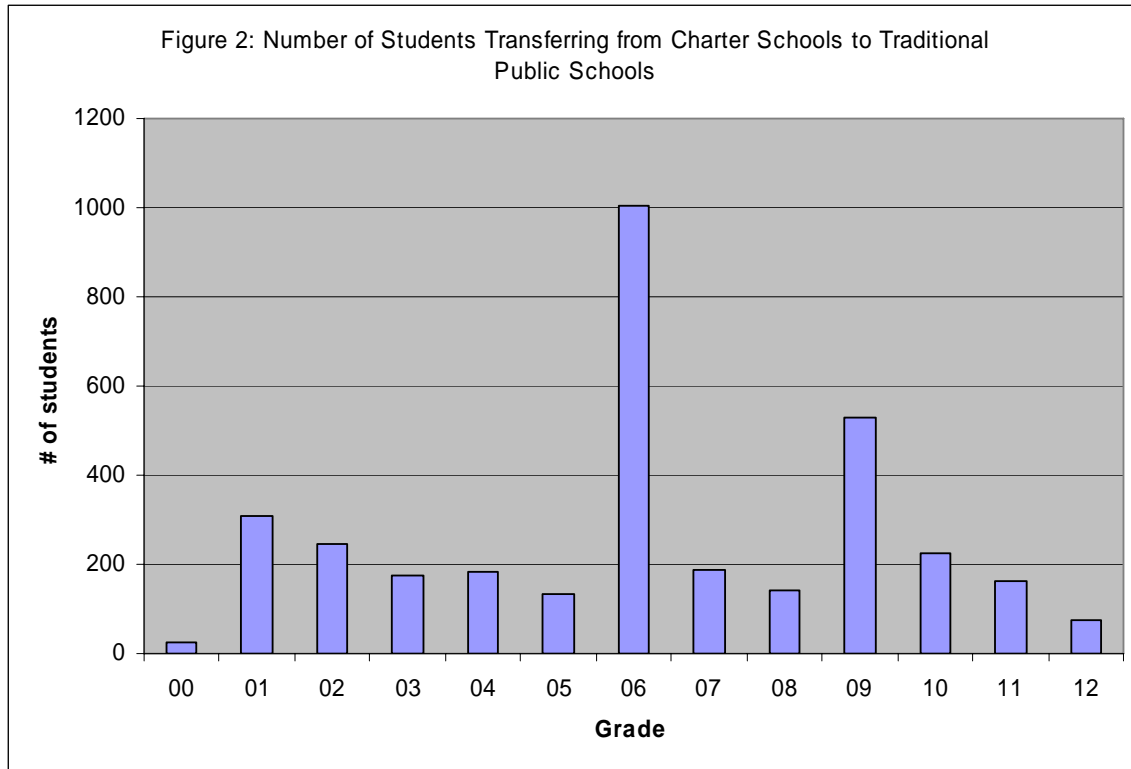
Our preliminary analysis finds that large numbers of students move between charter and traditional LAUSD schools. The largest chunk of movement involves grade-level culminations – that is, students who successfully complete one school's curriculum – generally grades 1, 5, and 9 – and move on to a higher grade-level school). Interschool movements at the other grade levels reveal no pattern. In some cases movements result from school closures (e.g., LEAP charter school) and the introduction of new charter schools (e.g., conversion of Locke to an independent charter school). Moreover, some movements could reflect perceived differences in the quality of the education offered by various schools (e.g., SOCES—Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies).

Discussion

From 2007-08 to 2008-09, nearly four times as many students left traditional public schools for charter schools as those who moved from charter to traditional schools. During this period, about 12,100 of LAUSD's students moved from a traditional school to a charter school. During this same period, about 3,400 students moved from LAUSD charter schools to traditional public schools.

Figures 1 and 2 show how these charter – traditional school movements vary by student grade level. About half of the student movements take place at two grade levels: 6th and 9th—the two main grade levels that follow students’ completion of their studies at elementary and middle schools (see Table 1).





**Table 1
Number of Students Moving To and From Charter Schools**

<i>Grade Levels</i>	<i>FROM charters</i>	<i>TO charters</i>	<i>Ratio (TO/FROM)</i>
All	3,388	12,078	3.56
	100%	100%	
6 and 9	1,533	6,247	4.08
	45%	52%	
Other	1,855	5,831	3.14
	55%	48%	

A question often asked by board members during discussions of charter school petitions concerns the extent to which charter schools serve special education students. Equity would imply that the percent of special education students among those who enter and those who leave charter schools would be about the same. Table 2 shows that to be the case for 2008-09. Of the students entering or exiting public schools, 9 percent were categorized as special education.¹

¹ Note that the available data do not specify the severity of the disabilities of special education students.

Table 2: Movement of Special Education Students TO and FROM Charters

To Grade	From Traditional to Charter		From Charter to Traditional		% diff
	Total	% Spec Ed	Total	% Spec Ed	
00	254	13%	24	0%	-13%
01	448	7%	307	6%	-1%
02	344	6%	247	7%	1%
03	337	5%	174	9%	4%
04	341	8%	182	10%	3%
05	465	8%	134	11%	3%
06	2,710	10%	1,003	9%	-1%
07	544	9%	187	8%	-1%
08	349	9%	140	14%	4%
09	3,537	8%	530	12%	5%
10	1,284	8%	226	7%	-1%
11	889	9%	161	6%	-3%
12	575	11%	73	7%	-5%
PK	1	100%			
Total	12,078	9%	3,388	9%	0%

We also explored the hypothesis that, aside from the culmination movements at grades 6 and 9, students desirous of matriculating in a magnet school or center would exit charters at a higher rate than they would leave magnets to enroll in charters. As Table 3 shows, while magnet students accounted for 6 percent of the students who left the District for charters, 14 percent of the students left charters to enroll in magnets. This pattern occurs at most grade levels. This pattern may be related to perceived differences in the effectiveness of magnets and the resulting difficulty of matriculating in the higher-demand magnet schools.

Table 3: Student Movements Between Magnets and Charter Schools

To Grade	From Magnet to Charter		From Charter to Magnet		% Magnet difference
	Total	% Magnet	Total	% Magnet	
00	254	1%	24	4%	3%
01	448	1%	307	14%	13%
02	344	4%	247	9%	5%
03	337	2%	174	9%	7%
04	341	2%	182	9%	7%
05	465	6%	134	7%	1%
06	2,710	9%	1,003	18%	9%
07	544	4%	187	10%	5%
08	349	7%	140	7%	0%
09	3,537	6%	530	21%	15%
10	1,284	5%	226	10%	5%
11	889	4%	161	4%	0%
12	575	2%	73	5%	3%
PK	1	0%			
Total	12,078	6%	3,388	14%	8%

Below we describe some school-level examples of movements between charter schools and magnets. In our first example, we look at the movement of students to Brentwood Science Magnet. Table 4 shows that from 2007 to 2008, 28 students moved from charters to Brentwood. Half of the charter school students moving to Brentwood were from Jardin de la Infancia, an East Los Angeles charter school which educates students in grades K-1 only.²

² Note that Jardin de la Infancia's students are bussed from East Los Angeles to Brentwood. Jardin de la Infancia also expects that their students, upon completing Brentwood, will remain within the Brentwood feeder pattern (i.e., Revere charter middle school)

**Table 4
Number of Students Moving Between Charter Schools and
Brentwood Science Magnet**

Charter School	FROM Charter	TO Charter	Total
ACAD SEMILLAS PUEBLO		1	1
ACCELERATED CHARTER		1	1
ALEXANDER SCI CTR SC	1		1
CANYON EL		1	1
CRESCENDO CHTR CNTRL	2		2
CRESCENDO CHTR SOUTH	3		3
DANTZLER PREP CHT MS		1	1
DOWNTOWN VALUE SCH	2		2
GABRIELLA CHARTER	1		1
JARDIN D LA INFANCIA	14		14
KENTER CANYON EL		3	3
LARCHMONT CHARTER	1		1
MAGNOLIA SCI ACAD #4		3	3
MAGNOLIA SCI ACAD 3		2	2
MARSHALL CHTR MS		1	1
MONTAGUE ST EL	1		1
NEW HEIGHTS CH SCH		1	1
NEW LA CHARTER SCH		1	1
PACIFIC PALISADES EL		2	2
PACIFICA COMM CHT #2	1		1
REVERE MATH/SCI MAG		66	66
REVERE MS		35	35
STELLA ACADEMY CHTR		2	2
VIEW PK PREP ACC MS		1	1
WESTWOOD EL	2		2
Total	28	121	149

Table 4 also shows that 121 students moved from Brentwood Science Magnet to 15 different charter schools. Most of these students culminated from Brentwood and headed for Revere, an affiliated charter middle school. Note that of the 101 Brentwood students who transitioned to Revere, two-thirds attended Revere’s math-science magnet.

Euclid High Ability/Gifted Bilingual Magnet offers another example of the nexus between LAUSD’s charter and magnet schools. All 9 charter students who moved to this school were from Puente Charter School, which serves only grade K students. The 6 students who left Euclid were culminating students who moved on to middle school (4 to KIPP and 2 to Camino Nuevo Charter Academy).

School openings and school closures also explain some of the movements. For example, Table 5 suggests that the departure of 14 of King-Drew Medical Magnet’s students to charters seems partly attributable to the conversion of Locke High School to an

independent charter.³ Indeed, over 2,000 of the student movements to charter schools from 2007-08 to 2008-09 were attributable to the conversion of Locke High School to an independent charter.

Table 5
Movements between King-Drew Medical Magnet
and Charter Schools

Charter School	To Grade	TO	Total
ANIMO LOCKE TECH HS	10	3	3
ANIMO SOUTH LA	11	1	1
LOCKE SH	10	1	1
	11	3	3
	12	2	2
MARSHALL CHTR HS	10	1	1
NEW MILLENNIUM SS	08	1	1
NEW VILLAGE CHT SH	11	1	1
OUCHI HS	10	1	1
Total		14	14

Table 6 provides an example of student movements caused by the closure of a charter school. LEAP's closure in 2007-08 resulted in 78 of this charter school's approximately 200 students transferring to traditional public high schools within LAUSD. The largest share of LEAP's students (32 of 78) transferred to Chatsworth Senior High School. The next largest shares (11 and 9 students, respectively) transferred to Camino Real and Stoney Point high schools.

³ Note that no charter school students transferred to King-Drew during this period.

Table 6
Number of Students Moving Between LEAP and
Traditional Public Schools

School	To Grade	FROM LEAP
CANOGA PARK SH	10	2
	12	1
CHATSWORTH SH	10	11
	11	11
	12	10
CLEVELAND SH	10	2
	11	5
	12	2
EL CAMINO REAL SH	10	2
	11	6
	12	3
GRANT COMM MAG	10	1
GREY HS	10	1
KENNEDY SH	10	2
	11	1
RESEDA SH	10	1
ROGERS HS	12	1
STONEY POINT HS	09	1
	10	3
	11	1
	12	4
SYLMAR SH	09	1
TAFT SH	10	1
	12	4
VAN NUYS SH	11	1
Total		78

Our final example shows that in some cases the student movements may reflect perceived differences in the quality of schools. Table 7 shows data regarding student movements between LAUSD’s SOCES (Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies) magnet school and charter schools. Of the 19 interschool movements, 17 students moved from 13 different charter schools. None of these 17 transfers were at a culmination grade level (6 or 9). Moreover, only two of the 19 students transferred from SOCES to a charter school (one to Douglass Academy and another to Stella Academy). These data validate the ubiquitous perception that seats at SOCES are highly sought-after by students in any school – traditional or charter.

Table 7
Number of Students Moving Between SOCES and Charter Schools

Charter School	To Grade	FROM Charters	TO Charters	Total
ALEXANDER SCI CTR SC	04	1		1
CHAMPS	10	1		1
CHIME CHARTER MS	08	1		1
DOUGLASS ACADEMY HS	10		1	1
IVY ACADEMIA	04	1		1
IVY BOUND ACAD M/S/T	07 08	2 1		2 1
LARCHMONT CHARTER	04	1		1
MAGNOLIA SCI ACAD	07	3		3
MAGNOLIA SCI ACAD #2	08	1		1
MULTICULT LRN CTR	04	1		1
OUR COMMUNITY CHT	04	1		1
PACOIMA EL	04	1		1
STELLA ACADEMY CHTR	08		1	1
WESTWOOD EL	04 05	1 1		1 1
Total		17	2	19

Concluding Remarks

Large numbers of LAUSD students transfer from charter to traditional schools and from traditional to charter schools. These movements occur for a variety of reasons. Chief among the reasons is the idea that as students chart their paths through LAUSD, they avail themselves of the best options available to them. Sometimes the best perceived option is a charter school. Sometimes the best perceived option may be a magnet school or a regular traditional school.

This exploratory analysis of student movements suggests that LAUSD schools – traditional public schools, magnet schools/centers, and charters – share a strong nexus. However, a deeper understanding of this nexus should be pursued by exploring answers to questions such as the following:

- Broadly, why do students transfer from one school to another?
- What, if any, connection exists between student characteristics (e.g., income, gender, ethnicity, location of residence) and student mobility among different school types?
- How are student movements between schools related to the characteristics of schools – e.g., historical student performance, enrollment size, student characteristics, location, school type (traditional, magnet, special ed, charter), charter type (independent or affiliated charter, conversion or start-up), and how long a school has been in existence)?

To answer these and related questions, the District would benefit from assembling a data base that traces all student intra-LAUSD movements – those discussed in this informative (charter-to-traditional and traditional-to-charter) and all others (including, but not limited to, traditional-to-traditional and charter-to-charter). With an extended data base along with case studies of selected schools, we would be better able to assess why large numbers of students move among schools. Of particular import is the extent to which students avail themselves of the extensive school choices offered in LAUSD.