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**CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONTINUE PROGRESS ON  
CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS**

*Data Shows Urban Charters Continue to Outperform Districts and Statewide Averages  
Expansion Still Blocked in High Need Communities by Enrollment Caps*

**BOSTON, MA – September 20, 2013** – Massachusetts charter public schools continued to put underserved children on the path to college with many schools that serve mainly low-income and minority children achieving the state’s highest academic rankings.

Sixty percent of charters were rated Level 1 schools on the state’s accountability system, which measures success at closing race-and-income-based achievement gaps. Of the 53 schools that received an accountability level, 32 charters were rated Level 1, 18 Level 2 and 4 Level 3.

More than 70 percent of Boston charters were rated Level 1 compared to 21% of district schools. Two-thirds of schools in Boston were rated Level 3 or below compared to 7% of charters.

In the state’s Gateway Cities, the data is similar: More than 60% of charters were rated Level 1 compared to 16% of district schools. Two-thirds of district schools in Gateway Cities were rated Level 3 or below compared to 17% of charters.

	<b>Number and Percentage of Schools in Level 1</b>	<b>Number and Percentage of Schools in Level 2</b>	<b>Number and Percentage of Schools in Levels 3 or 4</b>
<b>Boston</b>			
Commonwealth Charter Schools	71% (10 of 14)	21% (3 of 14)	7% (1 of 14)
District Schools and HMCS	21% (22 of 104)	12% (12 of 104)	67% (70 of 104)
<b>Gateway Cities</b>			
Commonwealth Charter Schools	61% (11 of 18)	22% (4 of 18)	17% (3 of 18)
District Schools and HMCS	16% (42 of 263)	21% (55 of 263)	63% (166 of 263)

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Twenty-two charter public schools ranked Number 1 in the state on various 2013 MCAS tests and academic growth rankings, according to data released today by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

“There are no excuses left for not allowing charter public schools to expand in high need communities across the state,” said Marc Kenen, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association. “The state’s own data and independent analysis confirms that charter public schools are closing race-and-income-based achievement gaps that have robbed generations of children from reaching their full potential. It’s time for arbitrary caps to be eliminated.”

In addition to the state data, a study by Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) found that Massachusetts charters are accelerating the pace of learning at a rate that outpaces charters in almost every state across the country.

In Boston, Holyoke and Chelsea, state caps have placed a freeze on charter expansion. In several other communities, such as Lawrence, Lowell, Somerville, Everett, Randolph, Salem, and Fitchburg, there is room for only one more charter.

Legislation currently before the Education Committee would eliminate enrollment caps in underperforming districts and allow the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to regulate charter school growth based on the strength of individual applications and the needs of communities. It would also provide targeted interventions in underperforming districts, and extend certain authorities granted to superintendents to turnaround schools and districts.

The legislation is targeted at the lowest 29 performing districts in the state. Nearly 30% of all public school students attend school in these communities – 70% of them come from low-income families.

More than 29,000 children sit on charter school waiting lists in these communities

Top-ranked charter schools include those that enroll children from some of the lowest performing school districts, including Boston, Cambridge, Lawrence, Worcester, Everett, Lowell, and Somerville - and rural districts in Central and Western Massachusetts and the Pioneer Valley.

“How long do parents in Boston, Chelsea, Holyoke and other communities have to wait for a chance to enroll their children?” Kenen said. “Across the state more than 40,000 children sit on waiting lists; more than 17,000 of them in Boston. With demand for charter seats at an all-time high and academic performance second to none in the country, the time is now to eliminate caps on charter growth.”

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Schools that ranked Number 1 in the state based on the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced include: Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School (Hadley), Community Day Charter Public School – Prospect (Lawrence), Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School (Franklin), Excel Academy Charter School (Boston), Abby Kelley Foster Regional Charter Public School (Worcester), Academy Of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School (Boston), Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School (Marlboro), Boston Collegiate Charter School (Boston), Community Charter School of Cambridge, Four Rivers Charter Public School (Greenfield), MATCH Charter Public School (Boston), Mystic Valley Regional Charter School (Malden), Pioneer Charter School of Science (Everett), Prospect Hill Academy Charter School (Somerville), Rising Tide Charter Public School (Plymouth), Salem Academy Charter School, South Shore Charter Public School (Norwell), and Sturgis Charter Public School (Hyannis).

Schools that ranked Number 1 in the state based on the state’s Growth Model, which measures academic improvement over time include: Edward Brooke Charter School (Boston), Edward W. Brooke Charter School 2 (Boston), Neighborhood House Charter School (Boston), Edward W. Brooke Charter School 3 (Boston), Four Rivers Charter Public School (Greenfield).