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Georgia Charter Schools Improve Student Academic Growth

ATLANTA, GA., July 6, 2023 – New data show that students in Georgia state charter schools are outpacing their traditional school peers in academic growth. Conducted by the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia (SCSC), the analysis parallels the findings of a recent national study released by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University. [As A Matter of Fact, National Charter School Study III](#) is the third in a series of studies released by CREDO assessing the difference between student learning in charter schools and traditional public schools.

Mirroring the CREDO study methodology, the SCSC compared state charter school growth scores to the growth scores of the traditional public schools its students would otherwise attend over the same five-year period, from 2015- 2019. The independent analysis was necessary as the national report did not include Georgia data.

The SCSC analysis and the CREDO study revealed a variety of findings. Here are the key related takeaways:

- **Charter school academic growth compared to local traditional schools is rising nationally.** The number of state charter schools in Georgia with higher progress scores than the local traditional schools increased from 2015 to 2019, with over half outperforming in the most recent school year for which data are available 2021-2022.
- **Students of color perform better in charter schools.** Nationally, the academic performance of Black and Hispanic students attending charters grew by large margins relative to their peers attending traditional public schools. In Georgia, the share of majority-minority state charter schools outperforming their local traditional school comparisons rose dramatically from 17 percent to 60 percent between 2015 and 2019.
- **Charter schools yield better academic performance for students living in poverty.** From 2015 to 2019, the academic progress of charter school students living in poverty nationwide surpassed that of their peers attending traditional public schools. In 2015, Georgia had 11 state charter schools serving large populations of economically disadvantaged students, and only one had higher growth scores than the traditional local schools. However, by 2019, the number climbed to eight out of 17.
- **The instructional delivery model matters and varies by location.** At the national level, student performance in fully online charter schools floundered across the five-year period compared to traditional brick-and-mortar schools. Conversely, in Georgia, virtual state charters showed significant progress during the same period. By 2021-2022, both statewide virtual charter schools outperformed their traditional brick-and-mortar counterparts in several grades.

These positive findings affirm the crucial role of charter schools in Georgia's education system. The SCSC remains dedicated to fostering high-quality charter schools, ensuring that students in Georgia have



increased access to exceptional educational opportunities. To review the full report, please visit the SCSC website. <https://scsc.georgia.gov/research-evaluation-reports/research-reports>

The State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia (SCSC) is Georgia's state-level, independent charter school authorizing body. The mission of the SCSC is to improve public education by authorizing high-quality charter schools that provide students with better educational opportunities than they would otherwise receive in traditional district schools. The SCSC has the power to approve or deny petitions for state charter schools and renew, non-renew, or terminate state charter school petitions in accordance with Georgia law.

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