



PAR report: Replicate charter successes in public schools

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The Public Affairs Research Council (PAR) today released an in-depth research report identifying best practices among Louisiana charter schools that can be replicated both in traditional public schools and new charter schools. [Click here to download the report.](#)

“Charter Schools in Louisiana: What Lessons Do They Have to Offer the Education Community?” describes these best practices, explains how charter schools are using them and calls for the state to take an active role in collecting and disseminating information about them to all school districts and schools.

The report groups the best practices in five categories:

- Establishing a learning environment
- Data-driven instruction
- Student enrichment
- Teacher support and development
- Policy-focused governing boards

PAR Recommends

Recommendation 1: The state Department of Education should create an advisory council to conduct ongoing analysis of best practices in Louisiana charter schools that can be replicated in traditional public schools and help develop guidelines for how these best practices might be implemented. Further, the council should prepare an annual report for dissemination among all local school districts.

The data also showed some areas of ongoing concern for charter schools, including funding, facilities, community outreach and transparency. Transparency, in particular, is a concern because it refers to the ease with which the public can access information about existing and proposed charter schools. Unfortunately, the charter school landscape in Louisiana remains difficult for many parents to navigate. Therefore, PAR has two recommendations to enhance the transparency of charter schools:

Recommendation 2: The state Department of Education should maintain a Web site with an accurate and easily accessible inventory of charter schools statewide, along with copies of their charters, amendments to those charters, the process for third-year performance evaluations and for charter renewals, and summary budget documents to ensure maximum transparency in the expenditure of public dollars. In addition, the Web site should provide links to all of the charter schools' Web sites.

Recommendation 3: State law should require each charter school to have a Web site that provides such information as the school's physical address, phone number and name of a specific contact person; a list of administrators, faculty and staff, and their work contact information; a list of governing board members, and the time and place of all of their meetings for the school year; and the agendas for all board meetings so that parents and other interested parties will know ahead of time what is to be discussed. In addition, each school should provide a clear explanation of its admission requirements, if there are any, and a step-by-step explanation of how to register.