

District//Charter Collaboration Compact



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JUNE 2013

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//ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2011, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) with a grant to monitor, support, and analyze the cross-sector collaborative work undertaken in the 16 District-Charter Compact cities. We thank the Foundation for its support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Foundation.

This report would not have been possible without the candor and time that district and charter officials in the 16 Compact cities regularly shared with CRPE researchers over the last 24 months. Superintendents, district administrators, charter school leaders, community leaders, and city mayors and staff carved out time in already overloaded schedules to describe how collaborations were progressing as well as why they would sometimes stall. CRPE shares the hopes of those interviewed that the information provided here will help cities navigate their own collaborative work and build on the expertise of education leaders in Compact cities across the country.

The authors would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by the editors and reviewers of this report, including Parker Baxter, Alex Medler, and Linda Perlstein. Their expertise and insights helped to sharpen the description and analysis of what we learned during our work on this initiative.

//INTRODUCTION

In many communities, district-charter relations are as combative today as they have ever been. Suburban activists recently stormed the New Jersey Department of Education to protest charter school policies.¹ In California, one school district voted to bar students enrolled in a charter school from participating in the district's college scholarship program, then reversed the policy after a public outcry.² Even in communities where districts and charters are working together, such cooperation is highly controversial.³

Yet in several cities across the country, school district and charter leaders have begun to collaborate. District leaders are asking whether there is something they can learn from successful charter schools. Some of those leaders now work in the charter sector and vice versa, blurring once-stark lines between school types. Some high-performing charter schools, energized by their successes but facing barriers to growth, now view their local school districts as potential partners to help increase their reach.

In February 2010, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation brought together a group of superintendents and charter school leaders who had begun to seek “common ground rather than a battleground,” as the foundation's Vicki L. Phillips put it.⁴ Based on ideas generated by the group, the foundation announced its District-Charter Collaboration Compact initiative in December 2010. Since then, 16 cities have signed “Compact” documents promising to collaborate in a variety of ways, including the sharing of resources, data, and ideas. The Foundation provided each of the 16 cities with \$100,000 grants to begin following through on those promises (see Figure 1).

Gates Foundation District-Charter Collaboration Compact Cities

Signed Compacts in 2010:

Baltimore, Maryland
 Denver, Colorado
 Hartford, Connecticut
 Los Angeles, California
 Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Nashville, Tennessee
 New Orleans, Louisiana
 New York City, New York
 Rochester, New York

Signed Compacts in 2011:

Austin, Texas
 Boston, Massachusetts
 Central Falls, Rhode Island
 Chicago, Illinois
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Sacramento, California
 Spring Branch, Texas

The Gates Foundation hoped these grants would push district and charter leaders to focus more attention on how a given school performs instead of how it is governed. In a presentation at a 2010 charter school conference, the foundation wrote, “The goal of the Compact initiative is to improve collaboration and innovation between charter and district schools to provide all students in a city with a portfolio of highly effective education options, accelerating 80 percent college readiness in the city.” Signed Compact agreements outlined ambitious goals to tackle the most intractable challenges to collaboration, including access to facilities, equity in funding, and seats

1. See Christopher Baxter, “50 briefly occupy N.J. Department of Education lobby to protest charter schools,” *The Star-Ledger*, December 16, 2011.

2. Tawny Maya McCray, “Sweetwater won't exclude students from SDSU Compact,” *U-T San Diego*, November 30, 2011.

3. See Laura Heinauer, “Emails show IDEA Public Schools approached Austin school district about charter school proposal,” *Austin American-Statesman*, January 2, 2012.

4. Vicki Phillips, “Learning from each other,” *The School Administrator*, 7(68) 10-14.

for special-needs students. The cities enjoyed the initial fanfare and media attention that came with the Gates Foundation “Compact city” branding. They each looked forward to an opportunity to compete for significant foundation investment, and in December 2012, as promised, the Gates Foundation announced that seven of the sixteen cities would share nearly \$25 million in grant funding to continue their work (see Table 1).⁵

Table 1. Additional Gates Foundation Collaboration Grants

City	Amount Awarded
Hartford	\$4,996,773
Denver	\$4,001,999
New York City	\$3,699,999
Boston	\$3,250,000
New Orleans	\$2,968,172
Philadelphia	\$2,499,210
Spring Branch	\$2,192,636

The Gates Foundation selected the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) to act as a thought partner and expert resource for Compact signatories and to monitor and assess implementation of the district–charter collaboration compacts. For all 16 Compact cities, CRPE tracks progress on agreements and reports on local political, legal, and financial barriers to collaboration (see Appendices for details on progress for each Compact city). CRPE also facilitates networking and problem-solving among participants and highlights the most promising collaborative efforts in monthly newsletters and webinars. Since January 2012, CRPE has visited six of the Compact cities and conducted over 100 interviews, by phone or in person, with district and charter leaders from all 16 Compact cities. Two years into this work, this report uses data and documents obtained in these interviews to explore the lessons learned and potential opportunities and challenges ahead for Compact cities.

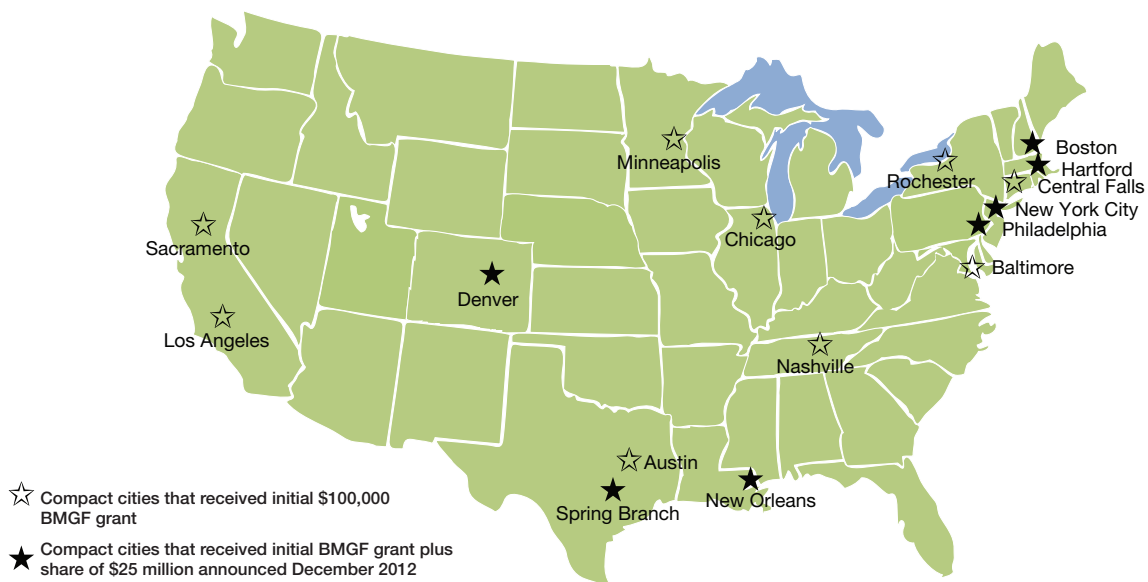
Summary of Findings

All Compact cities have made inroads toward a relationship focused more on problem-solving than on posturing, and most have made systemic changes to policies and practices in their first year of Compact implementation. Progress has been episodic, though—even among those awarded continued funding—and has sometimes stalled, due to leadership transitions, local anti-charter politics, and key leaders’ unwillingness to prioritize time and resources for implementation. Chicago, for example, used the Compact to enact some impressive policy changes, but the work was put on hold after the signing superintendent stepped down and a new one was hired. Such setbacks are disappointing but not surprising, given how entrenched the tensions between these sectors have been and how fragile the progress can be.

5. “Gates Foundation Invests Nearly \$25 Million in Seven Cities Dedicated to Bold Collaboration Between Public Charter and Traditional Schools,” Press Release, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, December 5, 2012.

Some cities benefited greatly from a pre-Compact history of alliances and partnerships between the district and charter sectors. In most cases this history was based on a “portfolio management” approach among district officials who believed that charter schools represent an important tool for meeting the needs of the city’s students and for creating high-functioning new schools. This deeper philosophical commitment and history of collaborative efforts provided a strong base, yet it did not guarantee continued momentum. For other cities, the Compact represented a shift from all-out war to mutually self-interested cooperation. With a few notable exceptions, the accomplishments in this latter group of cities have been more measured and the work appears less likely to endure.

Figure 1. Cities that signed District-Charter Collaboration Compacts



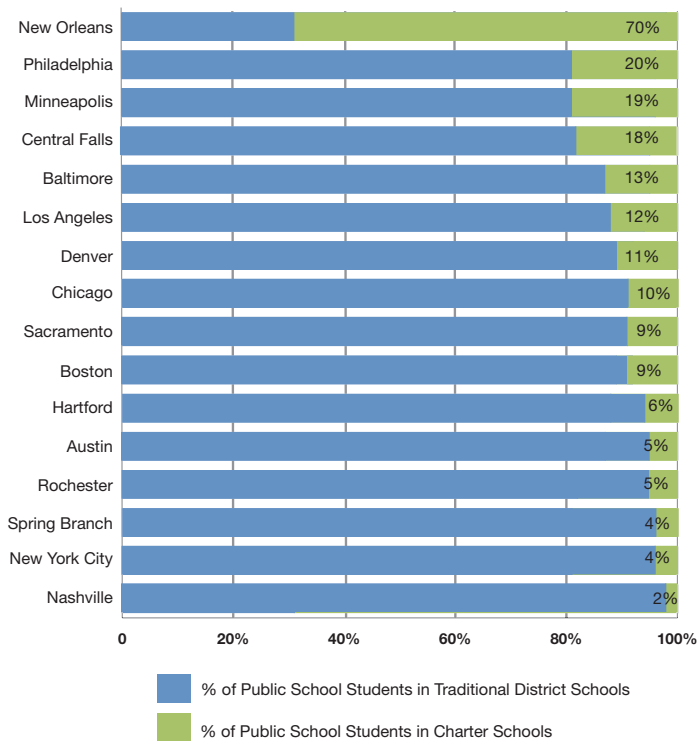
Even in the cities where collaboration is nascent and progress has been slow, there continues to be a push, albeit sometimes small, for coming together to improve education for all public school children regardless of who governs their school. But questions remain as to whether educational options and outcomes will improve as a result of the Compact, and if the changes enacted under a one-time grant will survive the relentless pressures of the status quo.

//COMPACT CITY CHARACTERISTICS

Compact cities vary widely in size, strength of the charter school market, political climates, and local governance structures for public education. The largest Compact city is New York City, with over 1 million students, and the smallest is Central Falls, Rhode Island, with a combined district and charter enrollment of less than 5,000. The rest are in mid- to large-sized urban settings; half are among the largest 25 cities in the country. Over 70 percent of the school districts in Compact cities enroll between 30,000 and 90,000 students. Six of the Compact cities are located on the eastern seaboard, from Boston to Baltimore, and the rest are scattered across the country.

Most have a fairly significant and mature charter school market. At Compact signing, six of the Compact cities had at least one of every ten public school students enrolled in charter schools (see Figure 2). But it is worth noting that Nashville, with less than 3 percent of its public school students in charter schools, also signed.

Figure 2. Charter school market share in Compact cities



Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Dashboard, 2010-11

Mayoral control is much more prevalent in Compact cities than in the nation as a whole, probably because mayors tend to view improving education as a city-wide priority. Mayors are also less attached to traditional ways of doing business and less entrenched in age-old habits of district-charter mistrust. Six of the sixteen Compact city school districts were under mayoral control when the Compacts were signed. Two cities, Central Falls and New Orleans, were under state oversight, and Baltimore was under partial state control. The remaining Compact cities have

elected school boards. This makes for distinct political situations: half of Compact cities must maintain sufficient support from elected boards, while the other half rely on the mayor or state to maintain pressure.

Mayoral control of a school board appears to have made the signing of a Compact more likely. This is, of course, predicated on having a mayor who believes charter schools can add value to a city's educational landscape. However, as the case in Boston shows, mayors can change their thinking. For many years Boston Mayor Thomas Menino expressed deep reservations about charter schools, and his school board appointments tended to reflect this stance. However, when Race to the Top grants endorsed charter schools, Menino's rhetoric shifted. Soon thereafter he advocated for Boston to become a Compact city. Once the Compact was signed, Menino continued to voice his support for the collaboration. Some of the education leaders in Boston even credit the momentum created by the Compact for the mayor's controversial choice to fill a vacancy on the school board with a charter school founder and director. The appointment came just three months after the Compact was signed.

Compact work in cities where mayors appoint all or a majority of school board members and where the charter schools were their own LEA independent of the district (e.g., Boston, Hartford, New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia) appeared to have an advantage. In these cities, charter sector leaders believed that they came to the table as equal partners likely due to the mayors' role in setting the tone and their own independent LEA status. However this does not mean that mayoral control and charter school LEA status are Compact requirements. Denver is an example of a city that did not have either mayoral control or an independent charter sector, yet their Compact work started strong and made progress.

Compact cities vary as well in how charter schools are authorized. In 5 of the 16 Compact cities, when the Compact was signed the local school district was the only active authorizer of charter schools. For the remaining 11 cities, non-district bodies (i.e., state universities, state agencies, etc.) either exclusively or additionally authorized charters. As one might expect, in those cases where the district did not authorize charter schools, charter school leaders described the tone of district leaders as more conciliatory during signing negotiations than in the other cities because charter schools were not beholden to the district for the right to exist.

Starting points for Compact negotiations ranged from solid working relationships to entrenched hostilities. Four cities—Hartford, New York, New Orleans, and Denver—signed Compacts to codify and continue partnerships they had already started. In two cities, Baltimore and Chicago, there was some collaborative work underway, but in a limited number of areas. However, in the remaining Compact cities, the Compacts were signed amid a highly distrustful environment, with little or no history of cooperative action or communication.

//MOTIVATIONS AND WHAT THE CITIES AGREED TO TAKE ON

The Gates Foundation required that Compacts be signed by key district and charter leaders and include agreements about specific collaborations. While all the Compacts contained ambitious goals, some kept a tight and measurable focus, and others spelled out a broader vision for collaboration. Most included goals that the Gates Foundation suggested, even when it was clear some were not possible in the short term. As Table 2 shows, nearly every Compact calls for facilities sharing, equitable funding for charter schools, more high-performing schools, and improved access to high-quality seats for special education students.

Table 2. What leaders agreed to in Compacts

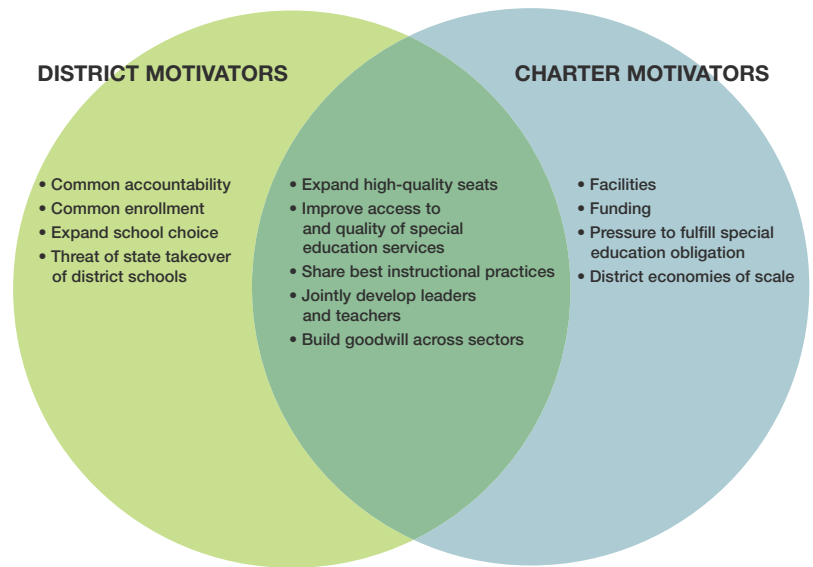
Topic	Typical Compact Agreement	Number of cities that made agreement
High-performing schools	Help the most effective schools expand and replicate; commit to locating new schools in the highest-need areas.	15
Resource and facilities access	Ensure equitable distribution of public school resources; ensure access to facilities for public charter schools.	15
Economies of scale	Enhance efficiencies through shared services contracts.	15
Special education	Charter schools commit to ensure transparency regarding student demographics and to recruit and retain comparable percentages of students.	14
Instructional practices	Actively share best practices to scale up successful programs and build capacity to serve all types of students.	14
Human capital	Make joint efforts in the recruitment, retention, and development of teachers and school leaders.	13
Low-performing schools	Work to close, reconstitute, or by other means immediately address persistently low-performing schools.	13
Accountability systems	Commit to a common school accountability framework in which all schools will participate.	10
Enrollment systems	Implement a common and coordinated choice enrollment system.	8

The charter-district debate has historically centered on how the interests of the two groups were at odds and could not be reconciled. Compact documents represent an important shift in the debate, as they spell out something that district and charter leaders in most of the cities did not believe existed: shared interests. The strongest Compacts focus on overlapping goals and working together to promote them. Figure 3 shows the self-reported motivations of leaders from each sector and where those motivations aligned.

Compacts Should Be Working Documents, Not Aspirational

The most actionable Compacts were specific about agreements and responsibilities and clear about long-term goals. Districts interested in pursuing a district-charter collaboration Compact can [review the 16 Compact documents on the CRPE website](#). Our analysis of these documents reveals that it matters how the Compact document is crafted. Compacts were most effective when their language was specific, assigned responsibilities and pushed tangible accomplishments. However, while this type of content helped move collaboration agreements, if the document failed to frame broader policy goals, the work would sometimes stall out. The strongest documents (for example, those from Chicago, Philadelphia, and Spring Branch) included specifics around agreements but were also broad enough to guide the work beyond goals identified at the time of the signing. These documents also spelled out the risks for parties and the detailed repercussions for non-compliance as a way to maintain focus for a distracted and often harried group of leaders.

Figure 3. Districts and charters share several motivations to sign Compacts



Source: CRPE interviews with district and charter representatives

Leaders in every Compact city were motivated to improve access to and the quality of special education services in schools. Some used the Compact to simply establish an accurate accounting of the number of special education students attending charter schools. Some charter schools saw the Compact as an opportunity to dispel myths that they serve a lower percentage of special education students. Charter schools with low (relative to the district) special education enrollment hoped the Compact would prod the district into

providing them with the supports they needed to successfully serve a higher number of high-needs students. For example, Boston Public Schools agreed to open up special education professional development to charter school teachers. The Recovery School District in New Orleans pledged to advocate for adequate funding for charter schools so they can properly serve high-needs students. In return, the signing charter schools agreed to develop and share “innovative solutions for the charter sector to open schools to serve students who require alternative settings” and to “accurately report all expulsion and withdrawal data to the State.”⁶ In Los Angeles, charter schools were invited to join local consortiums to provide adequate and appropriate special education services within a geographic region. District signers, meanwhile, saw the Compact as a way to help establish charter schools as a place for special education students, in the face of criticism that they do not.

Some districts, including Chicago, decided early on to have as many potential areas of collaboration on the table as possible. This appears to have helped these leaders design more aggressive Compacts as each side

6. New Orleans District-Charter Collaboration Compact, December 2010. <http://www.crpe.org/portfolio/external-resources/new-orleans-district-charter-collaboration-compact>

understood the needs of the other and could offer something in exchange. For example, amidst a budget crisis in Chicago, district leaders increased the amount of special education and Title I funds to charter schools, as well as their per-pupil facilities supplement. In exchange, charter sector leaders committed to participate in the district's common enrollment and accountability systems. Both sectors gave up resources or authority to help overcome some former impasses. In some cities, these important early wins provided a springboard for the sectors to begin to explore areas where there was less overlap.

For districts including Hartford, Spring Branch, and Philadelphia, a powerful motivator for coming to the Compact negotiating table was an interest in using high-performing charter schools to improve instruction throughout the district. As successful charter schools continued to graduate students at higher rates and with higher test scores than district schools serving similar student populations, they became more and more difficult for superintendents to ignore. This reality was enough to move district Compact signers beyond old ideas of competition to see charter schools as a local resource that could help them prepare more children for college and careers.

Even if they bought in to this new frame of shared interests, Compact signers still had to consider politics. District and charter sector leaders understood the risks of signing a pledge to consort with what some in their community, and even their own organizations, viewed as the enemy. But in these 16 cities, the benefits were seen to outweigh the perceived (or real) political risks. In places with a history of some portfolio management and collaboration, like Hartford and Denver, there was plenty of support for signing the Compact. In other places, the scales tipped in favor of signing, but less definitively. In Philadelphia, there was a history of political animosity and contention between the school district and charters, but leaders signed the Compact because of the growing demand to turn around chronically failing schools and the hope that local high-performing charter schools could be tapped to help. Charter schools in Boston had long operated in content isolation from the district, but several wanted to expand and could not shoulder the cost of new facilities. The district's offer to help provide facilities was an opportunity too good to pass up.

//PROGRESS OF COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE

One to two years into implementation, there have been important changes in each of the 16 Compact cities, but progress has been uneven. Some cities stalled out after initial gains, while others have maintained early momentum and accomplished a lot. Looking across cities, there are several areas of progress to celebrate as well as lessons to incorporate moving forward.

Interviews with education leaders in Compact cities revealed that changing the tone of the conversation between school districts and charter schools and tackling a few mutually beneficial projects has been extremely important, especially in cities starting from scratch. However, progress in several cities has slackened, illustrating the tenuous political nature of these agreements. The sites that are leveraging significant and sustainable change used the Compacts to codify both sides' long-term commitment to problem-solving and mutual support.

The examples of success in this first stage of the initiative illustrate how a Compact cannot simply be a to-do list. It needs to be a living document that can guide collaboration on issues that will arise long after it is signed. Successful Compacts also rely on strong and lasting trust and commitment from various actors in both the charter and district sectors, not just senior leadership.

The sections that follow provide a more detailed picture of the promise, progress, and limits of the work so far across the 16 Compact cities.

Compacts have helped to improve formerly icy relationships between districts and charters. They have resulted in more regular, open communications in each of the 16 cities, and thus a more fertile ground for achieving the Compact goals.

To date, the most common Compact accomplishment has been more open, regular communication between district and charter leaders. In all 16 cities, district and charter leaders reported improved dialogue. In cities that lacked any semblance of trust or goodwill, the Compacts were very effective in shifting leaders from all-out war to mutually self-interested dialogue, a critical foundation for taking future action on concrete policy change. In sites where collaboration was already underway, the Compact served as a mechanism to codify promises and intentions and map out an action plan to help sustain momentum.

Since signing the Compacts, district and charter leaders have had increased interaction through formal structures, such as steering committees, which has led, in turn, to informal conversations that before had been rare at best. The opening of communication channels is evident across various levels of staff—between superintendents and heads of charter management organizations, between charter principals and district staff, between district and charter teachers, and among charter leaders. Leaders in Boston, Chicago, Denver, and Spring Branch have formalized their communication structures through a Compact Steering Committee and subcommittees. A dedicated “Compact manager” oversees the committees and helps push the Compact agreements forward. District and charter leaders meet regularly, have clear responsibilities, and follow a decision-making process. But the communication doesn't stop in formal meetings. These district and charter leaders are checking in with each other and soliciting each other's opinions, which they say would have been highly unlikely in the past. As one charter leader said, “This is the most dialogue with other charters or with the district I have ever had.”

District and charter leaders expressed a belief that more communication had made real progress possible where it wasn't before. Conversations feel more productive than in the past because there is a strong focus on shared responsibility and school quality, which has allowed everyone to move past the rhetoric of district versus charter. One district leader described the shift this way: “It has gone from a very hostile, pointedly we-don't-like-you atmosphere, to an atmosphere that [charter schools] are a part of our strategic vision for turning around low-performing schools.”

In cities just embarking on this work, the Compacts have helped lay important groundwork. Many leaders expressed how talking more and creating stronger working relationships was a step toward collaboration. This represented significant progress in cities where leaders in the two sectors went from despising each other to meeting regularly. But ultimately, this initiative will have failed if all it produces is more civil conversations.

A Focus on Good Instruction Can Catalyze Deeper Partnerships

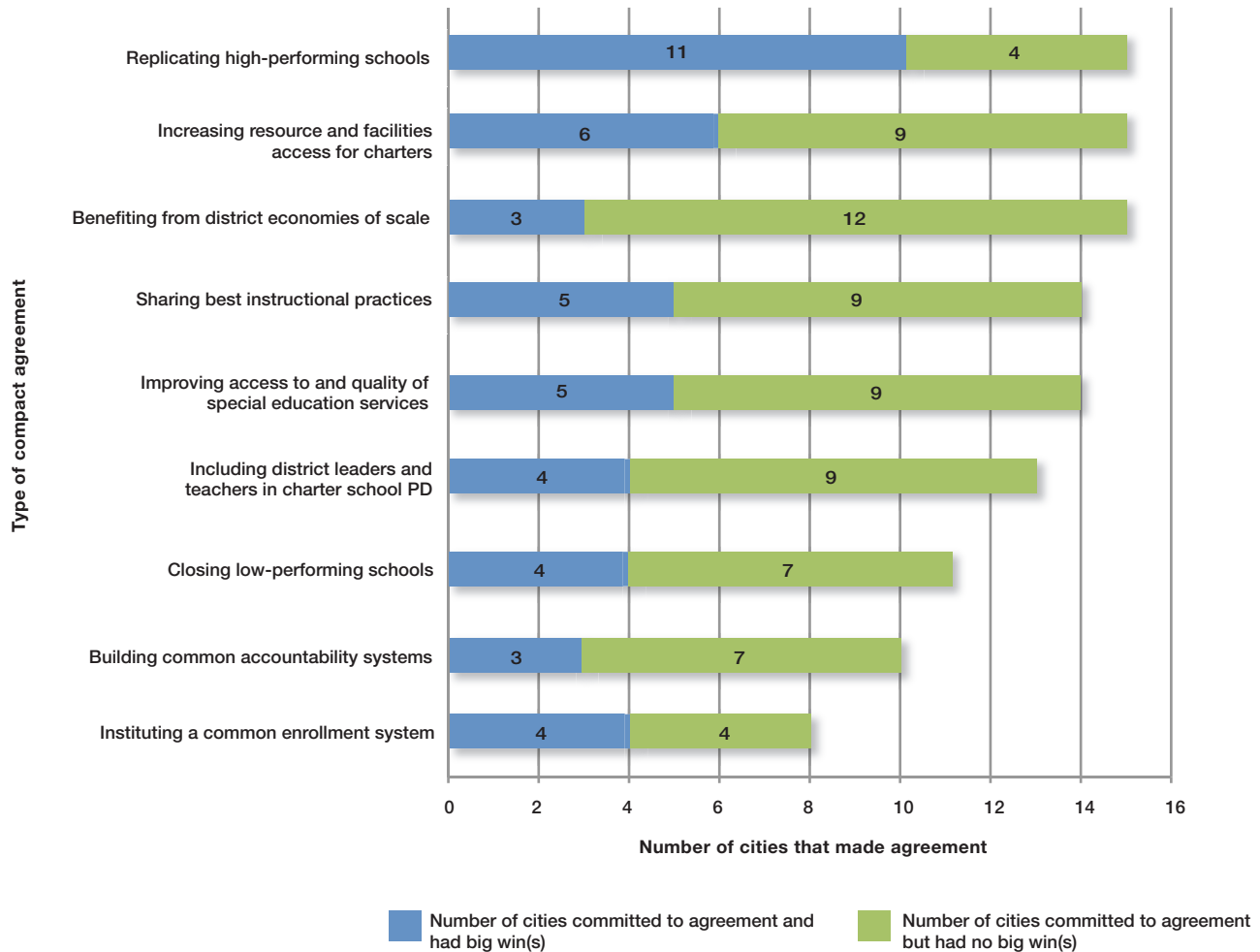
School districts hoping to increase the dialogue between district and charter school teachers and leaders in order to help improve instruction or to quell some of the political opposition to collaboration might consider using a Compact to achieve this goal. At least 4 of the 16 cities used the Compact agreements to create programs to coordinate professional development between district and charter school teachers or principals. The New York City Charter Center organized visits to high-performing charter schools for neighboring district and charter teachers. In Nashville, Compact leaders partnered with a local university to offer a joint district and charter teacher fellows program. Teachers from different sectors worked together to complete “school change projects” on topics of their choice. In Spring Branch, district and charter teachers whose schools share buildings have observed each other and provided feedback. In Boston, charter and district teacher leaders and administrators participated in the “instructional rounds network” at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The network organized teacher visits to classrooms in both sectors to observe and debrief on self-identified “problems of practice.” Boston also brought together school leaders across sectors to share strategies and resources regarding literacy instruction. After six months of meetings, they presented findings and independently requested opportunities to continue to engage with one another in sustained and deeper partnerships.

Progress on Compact commitments has been episodic, and some commitments have gained more traction than others during implementation.

Progress in Compact cities typically began with low-hanging fruit unique to each city’s past work and immediate needs. In Baltimore, there had been widespread agreement for years that charter schools should have a standardized renewal process. The promise of a consistent accountability measure motivated many charter leaders to sign the Compact and helped to finally accomplish this goal. In Boston, state law requires that the district provide transportation to charter school students. But the variability of charter schools’ start and end times and afterschool programs meant that one school’s needs could create large additional costs. Hoping to alleviate a district concern about charters, charter leaders worked to better coordinate their transportation needs with nearby district schools and were able to save the district money.

Though cities have their own context-driven collaboration successes, some types of commitments have gained traction across sites. District and charter leaders moved furthest on agreements to expand and replicate high-performing schools (see Figure 4). Eleven of fifteen cities that committed to this goal made notable progress. For example, Nashville showed early success with its first charter turnaround of a district school, and Minneapolis passed legislation that helps high-performing charter schools replicate in district facilities.

Figure 4. Compact agreements have not always resulted in progress



Note: This figure presents the nine most prevalent, actionable topics of commitment in the sixteen Gates-funded district-charter collaboration Compacts. It is not meant to serve as an exhaustive list of agreements. As CRPE receives additional information from cities, the numbers may change.

About a third of the cities made progress on four other typical agreements. Six of the cities increased resource and facilities access for charters. In Boston, for example, prior to signing the Compact, district leaders realized that families in a high-poverty area of the city had almost no high-quality school options. In an agreement reached through their “Compact Steering Committee,” three high-performing charter schools that were ready and eager to expand were given the opportunity to lease empty district buildings in what the district called its “Circle of Promise” neighborhood. The schools were required to commit to serving children living nearby, a commitment they eagerly embraced.

Five of the fourteen Compact cities that agreed to improve access to, and quality of, special education services have done so already. Leaders in Los Angeles established a menu of shared services, including a reserve that

pools funds to serve students with special needs, and several charter schools in Denver agreed to host centers for the highest-need special education students. In Chicago, the district increased the amount of special education funds to charter schools for fiscal year 2013.

Eight cities committed to align enrollment systems across sectors, and four of them have made significant progress. Denver and New Orleans, the cities farthest along on implementation, were motivated by widespread frustration on the part of parents and some school administrators in dealing with an increasingly difficult school choice process. Leaders in these cities worked to simplify dozens of enrollment processes into one application and timeline. Following in the footsteps of these two cities, Chicago has plans in place for a common high school enrollment process (starting in the 2014-15 school year), and Spring Branch charter schools have aligned their lottery and admission systems with existing district admissions and transfer policies.

Another five of the Compact cities began collaborating to share best instructional practices, and four more worked to include district leaders and teachers in charter school professional development. In Central Falls, teachers from high-performing charter elementary schools have shared instructional methods with district teachers to improve their reading proficiency rates, an effort that has received national recognition. In Hartford, the Achievement First charter management organization trains residents for district school leadership positions through residencies in charter schools and district partner schools, intense individual coaching from the program director, and weekly professional development seminars. In Spring Branch, district staff and principals participated in the Knowledge is Power Program summer leadership training, and district teachers are participating in YES Prep's Teaching Excellence Program.

Eleven cities included language in their Compact pledging to close persistently low-performing schools, but only four cities followed through. Of those four, three (Baltimore, Denver, and New York) had a pre-Compact track record of closing schools for performance. Philadelphia was the only Compact city that used the Compact to shift how school closure decisions are made—i.e., to add school performance as a factor. Districts that pledged to close schools for performance but have not made progress are watching as Philadelphia and Chicago make daily national headlines. As Philadelphia continues to push for more closures, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten was arrested along with 18 other activists during a protest at the entrance to the school board hearing. In Chicago, intense public outcry over closures has inspired an estimated 900 protestors to rally outside city hall demanding a “moratorium on school closures.”

Compact cities have also struggled to gain traction when it comes to building common accountability systems and spreading to charter schools the benefits of district economies of scale. Though there are some notable exceptions—for example, New York charters were provided access to district Common Core training and resources, and Nashville officials began to include charters in its school report cards—Compact leaders have mostly shied away from these agreements or faced obstacles. In Chicago, district and charter leaders have agreed to the district's annual performance scorecard, but the board has yet to approve it. Each of these potential areas of collaboration was a priority of only one of the two sectors (or of external partners). It is not surprising that the areas of collaboration without overlapping interests have been the hardest to implement.

Early Wins Matter

As a city embarks on collaboration work, early wins increase the odds that the relationship between the sectors will last. Given that most successful Compact agreements center on shared interests and with both sides conceding but also “getting” something, this is a good recipe for how to begin. A district that needs to turn around a struggling school and a high-quality charter school operator in need of a facility can both be winners—as can the children they serve.

Compact agreements are tenuous political propositions.

In six of the sixteen Compact cities, the district head who signed the Compact is no longer holding that position (see Table 3). In two more districts, superintendents have announced retirement plans and in another the election of a new mayor will determine whether or not the superintendent remains. This was practically guaranteed, given that the average stay for a superintendent is just 3.6 years.⁷ But turnover is not isolated to the district lead. In many other cities, key leaders on both the district and charter sectors have left. This presents a tremendous challenge to sustaining a reform that is driven by relationships. Encouragingly, while high-level turnover has been a challenge for cities, it is not an automatic death knell for the Compact work. In Hartford, new superintendent Christina Kishimoto has the same strong commitment to the Compact that her predecessor, Steven Adamowski, had when he signed, and the city has made progress in several areas since the transition. In New Orleans and New York—cities with a strong pre-Compact history of collaboration—much of the Compact work was carried out by stakeholders beside the superintendent, and progress did not seem to be hampered by superintendent turnover. However, in Chicago and Rochester, both of which signed Compacts when Jean-Claude Brizard was superintendent, progress has stalled.

Austin School Board Reverses Course on Charter School Partnership

One year after approving IDEA Public Schools, a charter network, to take over persistently low-performing district elementary and middle schools in East Austin, the school board voted to dissolve the partnership.⁸ IDEA Public Schools had represented the city's first "in-district" charters—schools the school board authorizes itself (as opposed to ones that operate in the city but outside the district purview). Board trustees were hoping the network would help turn around low-performing schools threatened with state takeover, improve test scores, increase facilities revenue, and share successful practices with district educators. Newly elected trustees, however, had run on a platform against this controversial decision and reversed course on the partnership. IDEA still wants to find a district solution or has plans to move to a new building and appeal to the state charter authorizer to stay open, operating outside the district.⁹

The new board is not completely opposed to in-district charters. In fact, prior to ending the IDEA partnership, trustees voted unanimously to approve a different in-district charter. But unlike the IDEA plan, this proposal had the support of the majority of teachers at the current school and was supported by the teachers' union.¹⁰

7. Angela Pascopella, "[Superintendent Staying Power](#)," District Administrator, April 2011.

8. Melissa B. Taboada, "[Austin school trustees vote to end IDEA charter partnership](#)," The Austin American-Statesman, December 17, 2012.

9. Jade Mingus, "[IDEA announces plans for future in Austin](#)," KVUE News, December 18, 2012.

10. Taboada, December 17, 2012.

Table 3. Several cities changed district leaders since signing

	District Leader who Signed the Compact	District Leader in Office in June 2013
Austin	Meria Carstarphen	
Baltimore	Andrés Alonso	Tisha Edwards (Interim)
Boston	Carol R. Johnson	TBD
Central Falls	Fran Gallo	
Chicago	Jean-Claude Brizard	Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Denver	Tom Boasberg	
Hartford	Steven Adamowski	Christina Kishimoto
Los Angeles	John Deasy	
Minneapolis	Bernadeia Johnson	
Nashville	Jesse Register	
New Orleans	John White	Patrick Dobard
New York	Joel Klein	Dennis M. Walcott
Philadelphia	Leroy Nunery II (Interim)	William R. Hite
Rochester	Jean-Claude Brizard	Bolgen Vargas
Sacramento	Jonathan Raymond	
Spring Branch	Duncan Klussmann	

Unfortunately, some Compacts seem to be creating schisms among the charter community itself. In most cities, including Baltimore, Denver, and Philadelphia, the sector is not homogenous—rather, it comprises a mix of stand-alone schools and large charter management organizations. Agreements that benefit one size of organization or type of charter school may not benefit all of the schools, making consensus nearly or completely impossible at times. One district leader said that collaboration within the charter community presents more of a challenge than collaboration between the charters and districts. For example, in Boston, some charter leaders are on board with a common enrollment system, while others have fought to maintain independent systems. In some cases, such as Minneapolis, certain charter schools were intentionally left out of the negotiations, or out of the Compact altogether. Charter school quality varies greatly in Minneapolis, and district leaders only asked higher-performing charters to sign.

Leaders deeply engaged in the Compact work in several cities commonly recognized the power balance that favored the district over the charter sector. In some cases, charter leaders simply felt as if the district, which has many priorities besides the Compact, simply lost interest, and the charter community had no leverage to maintain momentum. One charter leader said that the Compact “gave a six-month window of charter access to the district. Now that the technical stuff needs to be worked out, the district is not as responsive.”

In cities where the district was the charter authorizer, Compact leaders said they did not feel like they had an equal role in defining the goals of the Compact and expressed more concern about potential power imbalances. Chicago

charter leaders, for instance, were worried the district could walk away from its promises with no consequences. That one side felt it had more to lose threatened the Compact's sustainability. Charter leaders believed this partly was the result of the district's role as the fiscal agent for the grant. Districts that took the Gates Foundation grant tended to feel as though it was their responsibility to see the work through. This showed promising commitment, but it sometimes had the side effect of making charter leaders feel as though they were left to answer to the district when it came to setting the tone or agenda.

Cities that had pre-Compact collaborations are much closer to an equitable, long-term partnership than cities that used the Compact to build common understanding. Cities just embarking on collaboration generally implemented fewer and less bold agreements.

The majority of Compact cities were sussing each other out and trying to make a connection. These cities, which were new to collaboration, previously had a history of acrimony and little to no history of dialogue. They saw the Compact primarily as a way to build trust. As Figure 5 shows, most of these cities made some progress, but their partnerships were typically confined to tentative efforts to build dialogue between charter and district schools and to lay the groundwork for more aggressive steps in the future. In some cases, these efforts have paid off; in others, they have not.

Philadelphia demonstrates the complicated history and lack of trust across sectors that cities new to collaboration faced when their Compact was signed. A federal investigation (beginning in 2008) of 18 of the city's charter schools for financial mismanagement seriously complicated the politics of civic and education leaders reaching out to charter schools. Yet the city has rallied around the Compact and an impressive array of champions has emerged, including the business community and several local foundations. The mayor signed the Compact and regularly voices his commitment to its ideals. And the city's Catholic archdiocese, which does not have a history of cooperation with either district or charter schools, has joined those sectors to explore ideas, such as common enrollment and educator evaluations, that would include all three types of schools. It is now a more widely held and voiced belief that charters are a critical part of the solution in Philadelphia.

But as promising as this is for Philadelphia's progress on major Compact agreements, at least one political roadblock has arisen: The NAACP and others recently filed an ethics complaint alleging that a study funded and released by the consortium of foundations guiding the Compact work amounted to undisclosed lobbying. The Compact highlighted the potential benefits of using charter schools to turn around struggling schools, but with one exception: a Mastery Charter Schools program to enhance professional development for district teachers. Work on that and other elements of the Philadelphia Compact remains in the planning phase.

In Sacramento, another city new to collaboration, Mayor Kevin Johnson founded charter schools and even raised funds to convert his own alma mater, Sacramento High School, from a district school into a charter. Yet as the Compact was signed, anti-charter rhetoric was very strong. It was not until summer 2012 that the board of education tipped in favor of charter schools, with the election of a charter school founder. Another more recent sign of progress is the hiring of a top administrator from St. HOPE Public Schools, a charter management organization, as district chief of staff.

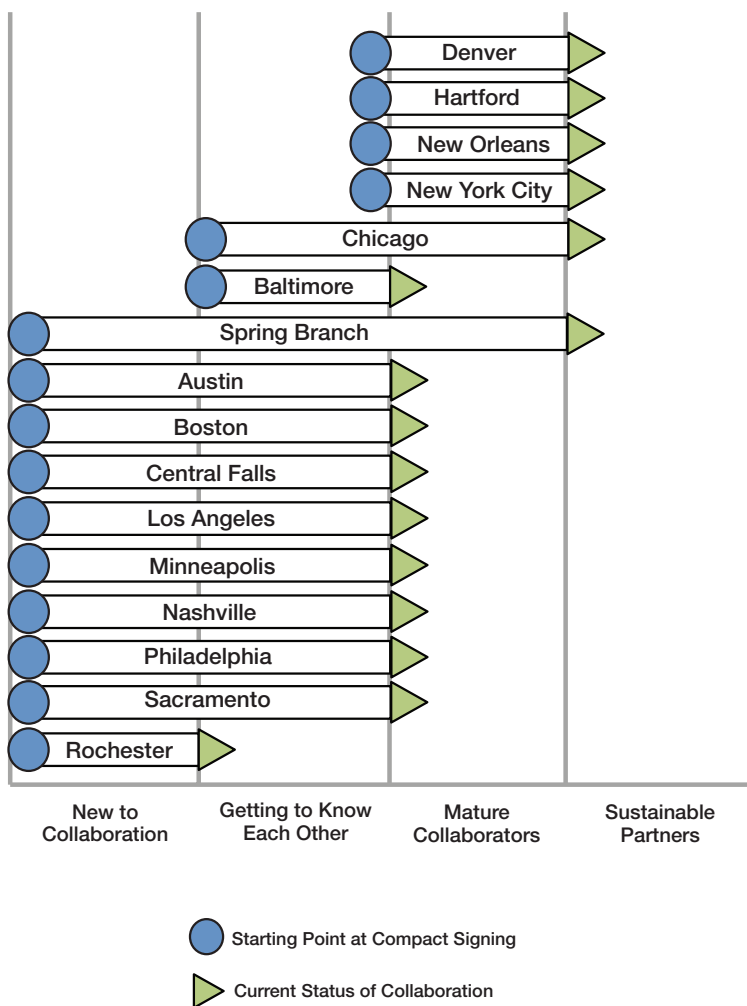
Across the 10 of 16 Compact cities that were new to cross-sector collaboration, there are similar stories of early strife, which made the Compact signing politically risky and progress difficult to accomplish. Given the significant work needed to build long-term trust and action between the two sectors, it is perhaps not surprising that only one of these ten places, Spring Branch, has been able to implement more than two significant Compact agreements.

Out of necessity, most cities new to collaboration focused first on building mutual understanding and trust between charter and district schools rather than tackling controversial or significant structural change. Boston's charter schools, for example, volunteered to reduce the busing burden on the district as a gesture of goodwill. In Minneapolis, charter schools have expressed interest in new legislation that will allow them access to district facilities

and services in exchange for sharing their test results with the school district on state accountability reports. For those cities newest to collaboration, the success of the first shared project is proving to be critical. One charter leader told us that if one Compact agreement fails, “the entire partnership with charters will fail.”

Two cities, Baltimore and Chicago, already had some history of partnership and goodwill before the Compact was signed but were still in a tenuous phase of getting to know each other. The experience of these cities demonstrates the tenuous nature of the Compacts when the initiative is dependent on the support of one or two top leaders. In the case of Chicago, progress has stalled due to the departure of Jean-Claude Brizard. Baltimore has made progress developing and beginning to implement a new charter renewal process and a common accountability system. However, charter school leaders and advocates there share doubt that collaborations will continue beyond the initial Gates grant, given the unusually large role Baltimore Public Schools plays in the management of charters.

Figure 5. Cities with pre-compact collaboration are much closer to equitable, long-term partnership



New to Collaboration: Signed their Compacts amid a highly distrustful environment, with little or no history of cooperative action and communication.

Getting to Know Each Other: Began to build trust, communicate regularly, and share some resources. Accomplished one or two big wins but have a long way to go toward true partnership.

Mature Collaborators: Significant and public history of sharing resources and responsibility and have accomplished three or more big wins. Still face serious sustainability challenges.

Sustainable Partners: Automatic communication and resource-sharing with a strong working relationship focused on quality. May continue to disagree on solutions and worry about maintaining a healthy balance of independence.

Finally, in four cities—Denver, Hartford, New Orleans, and New York—both district and charter leaders came to the table with a deep understanding of what could be gained from collaboration and saw that long-term commitment pay off. These “mature collaborators,” as we call them, signed Compacts in environments where the districts had supported charter schools for many years and believed that the district’s job is not to run all schools directly but to instead manage a portfolio of public schools for the city’s students. For example, Denver Public Schools has been aggressively recruiting new charter schools for five years, and Hartford Public Schools had been voluntarily sharing revenue with charter schools for six years.

These four cities translated that foundational relationship between the two sectors into more concrete and systemic changes than the other cities were able to achieve. They implemented new policies that put in place long-term structural changes, such as common student enrollment systems, systemwide facilities sharing, and long-term shared equity and accountability systems. In New York, the charter sector followed through with a Compact commitment to create a special education collaborative to share resources, in which 75 percent of the city’s charter schools now participate. Through new school report cards in New Orleans, leaders tackled previously intractable and contentious challenges about the reporting of the percentage of special education students served in charter schools. New Orleans also followed through on a commitment to create and make available to parents a combined enrollment system, and they solved a vexing problem of how facilities were awarded, ensuring that all charters had a home for the start of the school year.

//IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The signing of a Compact creates opportunity, but it is no guarantee of a long-term partnership. Action needs to be sustained and implemented strategically. The evidence thus far from the 16 cities suggests that a significant commitment of time, resources, and broad political support are critical. Cities that hope to sustain the work must be strategic about which agreements to tackle first, given their unique political realities. They must also find a way to sustain momentum and create structures that will survive changes in leadership and political context.

Collaboration takes time, resources, and cross-sector commitment.

As Compacts were signed across the country, there was generous media coverage and excitement. The goals, as outlined in the documents and as described in speeches, were lofty, and leaders expressed strong commitment to the work. Unfortunately, even just one year in, most of the cities have been unable to maintain the initial momentum, and a few have sputtered to a near-halt. Sustaining collaboration is a tremendous challenge in most cities, given all the pressures to regress. As one charter leader put it, “I did not realize how long it would take. ... Compact work is more intense than expected.” A number of issues could undermine long-term success of Compacts, including a lack of sustained attention from top leaders, resistance of central office middle managers to implementing changes, and infighting among charters.

Superintendents made a bold commitment to collaborate with charter schools. While their leadership helps set the tone for the district, it is no guarantee of buy-in across the central office. Districts have struggled to ensure that rank-and-file employees who interact directly with schools buy in to the collaboration. Middle managers have fought changes, complicating implementation of charter agreements. As one charter leader put it, “When you are dealing with a charter issue, you are not dealing with [the superintendent]. You are dealing with some person in the district who is thinking, ‘I hate you, you are taking away our jobs, and I am going to make your life miserable.’”

In places where district and charter leaders continue to work together in pursuit of the lofty goals in the Compact, key stakeholders have invested the necessary time. Leaders in places such as Spring Branch and Boston were clearly overburdened yet managed to carve out time to attend Compact meetings. These are two of four cities with a Compact Steering Committee, a structure that helps keep participants connected and on track. Leaders in these cities have also expressed an understanding that much of this work is relationship-driven, and that relationships take time to build.

Superintendents and school boards must stay committed to this work if it is going to succeed. Several Compact cities have taken steps backward in their Compact and school portfolio work after the turnover of superintendents or school boards. The presence of supportive mayors, strong local philanthropic partners (as in Philadelphia and Denver), and a broad coalition of other partners—such as teachers unions and advocacy groups—has helped to provide political cover for superintendents to take bold action and helped to sustain political pressure for more cross-sector learning.

Cities interested in pursuing Compacts must find a way to sustain momentum and create structures that will survive changes in leadership and political context.

Compact agreements that promise to close achievement gaps, ensure equity and access across schools, and raise the performance of all students require the shifting of ingrained policies and practices. Often, they mean making people and organizations uncomfortable or angry. While there are plenty of smart people hurriedly working in these systems to meet these goals, it’s clear that cities such as Denver, Hartford, New Orleans, and New York would not have been able to implement important and sustainable shifts in policy without a combination of strong leadership and the benefit of a multiyear history of voiced support for collaboration. At the same time,

those working on Compact initiatives in Austin, Chicago, Rochester, and other cities that have stalled on Compact progress saw how context can change in an instant and how promises made with strong rhetoric can fall with shifts in political winds or leadership. Leaders who hope to make dramatic changes must push hard to implement change while support is strong. In Philadelphia, where momentum currently favors reforms, the school district has invited a strong charter management organization to help train district school leaders. This would have been unheard of less than two years ago. After years of working to set the right conditions for partnership in Denver by opening high-performing schools, creating common performance expectations, and talking about charter schools as potential partners in reform, Denver is now able to focus on significant structural changes that would have been impossible earlier.

It is also clear, however, that other districts may not be able to move as quickly or as boldly as in Denver or New York. Superintendent Jonathan Raymond in Sacramento supported a proposal to shift the charter renewal cycle from one to five years. While not a particularly bold change compared to what has happened in other districts, for Sacramento it was significant. (And while it was a win for charter schools, it did not inspire strong resistance from charter opponents.) Other Compact leaders have strategically set their sights on goals like creating a universal enrollment system or improving accountability systems to include more school types. These changes fly under the radar of typical opposition groups, because they are seen as technical or because they are supported across sectors. However, they are a welcome change for students and families trying to make good choices—and they are difficult changes to roll back, once people see that all high-quality schools benefit from them.

//CONCLUSION

The early charter school movement was characterized by self-interest that materialized as mutual antagonism between charter and district leaders, a tendency to dismiss the other sector's accomplishments, and an inclination on both sides to be defensive and operate in isolation. This was probably inevitable, given how profoundly the movement disrupted the normal state of public education. School districts had a monopoly on power and were assumed to be the sole institutions for delivering public schools. Charter schools challenged their power base. They caused personal insult to countless board members, district leaders, administrators, and teachers—whose unions added significant political opposition. Some of the concerns were justified, as charters resisted accountability measures that traditional schools had to live by.

In a somewhat remarkable turn of events, that vicious dynamic is beginning to shift in some places. Part of that shift was probably inevitable. As the charter sector has matured, it has gained more public support and won powerful friends in major foundations, high-profile politicians, and civic leaders. All of this makes it easier for districts to consider alliances that would have been politically infeasible in the past.

The timing may have been right in other ways, too. In the last five years, there have been many well-publicized examples of high-performing charter schools, which have caught the attention of both the public and district officials. It is no longer possible to ignore the results of select charter schools that go leagues beyond what most districts have been able to achieve in high-poverty neighborhoods.

And then there is brute necessity. As this report explains, in many cities districts and charter leaders simply reached the point where they recognized that they could serve more kids more effectively by collaborating rather than competing and by making a simple trade of resources and responsibilities. CRPE's Portfolio School District Network, a group of more than 30 districts, is evidence of this growing trend for districts to view charter schools as a normal part of their portfolio of options for students.

Checklist for District and Charter Leaders Considering a Collaboration Compact

- Compact agreements should include both specific goals as well as frame broader policy goals. Agreements for both sides should also include a mechanism to ensure they are enforceable.
- Collaboration should guide how the work gets done and not simply become a list of tasks.
- If there are funds to support the collaboration work, both parties should carefully consider who takes on the role of fiscal agent—as this party will wield power and can push or slow progress.
- Recognize the power differential between the sectors and the impact it will have on their ability or willingness to follow through on agreements.
- Once an agreement is signed, Compact committees should be formed and meet regularly. It is important to begin by creating a governance structure with clear responsibilities moving forward. In some cities including Boston and Philadelphia, a neutral third party successfully organized the work.
- District and charter leaders (and private school leaders if they are also a party) should understand that they cannot always fully represent the various positions held by their sector. A district superintendent may have line staff who are unready or unwilling to work collaboratively with charter schools. Similarly, a large charter management organization may have very different needs as compared to a single independent charter school.
- Think proactively about how to sustain the work over time. For example, Compact work was more likely to be sustained when district and charter leaders altered or created written policies to institutionalize Compact agreements.
- Determine which other stakeholders will be needed going forward to deepen and sustain the work.

The District-Charter Collaboration Compacts, then, came at an opportune time and with an attractive deal: work out and codify how you will build mutual wins, and in return you will get the foundation support, fanfare, and political cover needed to move forward. At this writing, the Compacts seemed to have served their initial purpose: get people to the table, establish relationships, set up governance structures to accomplish tasks, and build momentum for continued partnership. At the very least, the Compacts have helped lay important groundwork, especially in cities where there was none previously. They have contributed to many successful and innovative initiatives, including experiments in shared teacher and leadership training, common enrollment and accountability systems, and shared responsibility for serving students with intensive special needs. Although some Compact initiatives were not controversial or particularly innovative, it is not correct to characterize this effort as simply a feel-good exercise.

Ultimately, however, the question is whether those initial efforts will be sustained over time, and whether they eventually result in dramatically improved results for students, as the Gates Foundation intends. This interim report raises important cautions. We report, for example, that leadership turnover and tentative board support could derail the commitment to long-term collaboration on the district side, and schisms based on diverse interests could threaten commitments on the charter side.

What's more, the easiest wins have come in many of the cities with the most tenuous political support. It's one thing to ask a jumpy board to commit to a shared teacher residency program and another altogether to ask them to agree to move district levy and foundation funds from district schools to charters. It's one thing to close one school and replace it with a high-performing charter school, but yet another to commit to doing that to more schools each year, until there are no more low-performing schools.

There is not yet an effort underway to study the impact of these initiatives on student outcomes. And it is impossible to say whether cities like New Orleans can achieve better results by, as the Recovery School District is beginning to do, ceding all operations to charter schools rather than attempting to partner with them. These and other questions are important for Compact cities and their supporters to wrestle with.

CRPE will continue to monitor and help support the next phase of Compact implementation. As described above, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has recently provided a significant infusion of financial as well as programmatic support to seven Compact cities—Boston, Denver, Hartford, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, and Spring Branch—to expand and deepen their collaborative projects. The Foundation also plans to fund another round of Compact grants in 2013. Moving forward, CRPE will track if and how these cities, as well as those that did not receive the larger grants, are able to sustain or improve upon past progress. We will pay particular attention to documenting the most promising collaborative co-operative models, factors that contribute most to strong or stalled progress, the politics of implementation and sustainability, and the role and strategies of charter and district leadership. CRPE will also continue to provide resources and support to the districts, charter schools, and community leaders engaged in this work, including webinars, case studies, and newsletters to highlight Compact cities' progress and noteworthy initiatives.

//APPENDICES

I. Austin

II. Baltimore

III. Boston

IV. Central Falls

V. Chicago

VI. Denver

VII. Hartford

VIII. Los Angeles

VIII. Minneapolis

X. Nashville

XI. New Orleans

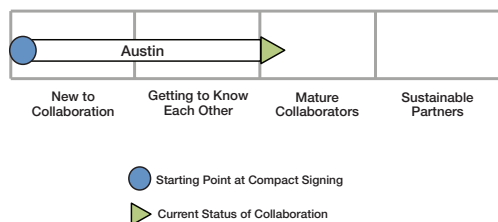
XII. New York City

XIII. Philadelphia

XIV. Rochester

XV. Sacramento

XVI. Spring Branch



Austin District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2011

Number of Students: 91,426 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 5.4%

Charter Authorizer: Texas Education Agency

School District Governing Body: Elected board

Overview

In December 2011, Austin Independent School District leaders launched their first partnership with charter schools by creating “in-district” charters, which (unlike past charters) are invited in by the district. IDEA Public Schools took over a low-performing district elementary and middle school vulnerable to state sanctions in the fall of 2012, and planned to take over a high school within the next few years. Community members had voiced opposition to the new in-district charter schools, and stakes were high for their success. In a dramatic twist of events, in December 2012, the school board—whose makeup had shifted in an election—revoked its contract with IDEA for the new merged elementary and middle charter school. IDEA still wants to find a district solution or continue operating the school as a state-authorized charter in a new building. Should the school operate outside the district and succeed, the district will lose out on sharing in the benefits it had initially sought: improved test scores, facilities revenue, and the turnaround of failing schools. Compact leaders are trying to focus on the positive—the new board approved a different in-district charter (one that was sponsored by district teachers and leaders and the teachers’ union) and district-charter collaboration working groups are up and running, focusing on school-to-school collaborations.

Key Compact Agreements

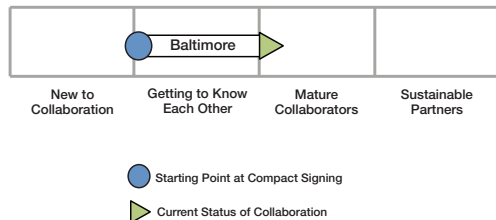
Big Wins

Development of in-district charters focused on college-preparation and/or alternate education.	In-district charter school (IDEA Public Schools) opened in fall 2012 as district turnarounds for Allan Elementary and Martin Middle School (revoked a year later); Travis Heights in-district charter school approved in December 2012; Responsive Education Solutions opened two dropout-recovery charter programs in existing district high schools.
Joint recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders to include the sharing of effective practices used by compact partners, such as strategic compensation programs, use of value-added data, and innovative teacher-appraisal systems.	
Enhance efficiencies through joint facilities access, shared services contracts, and collaborative pursuit of state/federal and private grant funding.	Caruth Foundation gave \$100,000 in support of future compact work; Educate Texas serves as fiduciary agent.
Charter schools commit to serve all types of students, including students requiring special education services, and ensure transparency regarding student mobility and achievement, particularly college readiness.	
Actively share best practices to scale up successful programs and build capacity to serve all students.	

Challenges and Next Steps

The Austin school board and district leaders have approached compact work cautiously after the community’s strong and negative reaction to IDEA Public Schools. After the latest setback by the board, it is even clearer that district and charter leaders will have to find better ways to communicate the benefits of district-charter partnerships to the public. Beyond developing new charters, district leaders and board members will also have to decide what value existing high-performing charter schools provide to the system and offer tangible incentives to work together. In fall 2012, compact leaders started working with Educate Texas and consultants Safal Partners to keep the compact intact. Led more by school leaders than the superintendent, working teams have formed that focus on sharing professional development and substitute teachers, joint communications, and expanding public school options including blended learning models. Moving forward, Austin compact leaders hope to show how bottom-up support can create collaboration momentum.

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.



Baltimore District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 83,625 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 12.8%

Charter Authorizer: Baltimore City Schools

School District Governing Body: Board appointed by mayor and governor

Overview

Of Maryland’s 52 charter schools, 33 are located in Baltimore City. Under Maryland state law, charter school teachers must belong to the union in their school district and are subject to local bargaining agreements and contract rules. In addition, Baltimore City Schools is the charter school authorizer, and the district CEO hires and fires charter school principals. This unusual set of conditions formed the backdrop for the signing of the compact agreement and clearly played a role in its progress and sticking points. Although the CEO of five years, Andrés Alonso, is highly supportive of charter schools, the inherent power imbalance made compact negotiations feel to some charter leaders as though the scales weighed in favor of the district. The compact was signed by Alonso, the city’s charter schools, a charter school advocacy organization, and a school board member. Agreements called for the district and charter sectors to work together on improving accountability systems, including developing a charter school renewal process. Impressively, after years of failing to act on charter school renewals, a working committee made up of district and charter representatives developed a renewal process, which gives schools different terms for their renewal based on their proven results. In January 2013, Alonso announced that charters would not be renewed for 3 of the 18 charter schools reviewed.

Key Compact Agreements

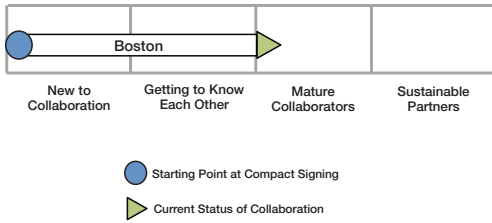
Big Wins

Refine the outside (non-district) operator schools renewal process; develop mutually agreed-upon strategy to close low-performing schools of any type; policy workgroup to determine criteria.	Working group of district and charter leaders convened and developed multiple-measure renewal tool. Tool was used to consider renewal of 18 charter schools; in January 2013 the CEO announced that 3 would not have their charter renewed.
Develop shared legislative agenda for Maryland General Assembly session.	During 2011 session of Maryland General Assembly, advocacy efforts were closely aligned on school funding, charter facilities, and other issues.
Develop a purchase-of-services model for services provided by the district, which can be optional for charter schools.	
Leverage partnerships to address facilities needs of all city students, including minimizing the cost of a public charter school in a traditional public school facility.	
District will create an Office of New Initiatives to interact with and serve charter schools.	In July 2011, district CEO completed a district reorganization and appointed an executive director to lead the new Office of New Initiatives.

Challenges and Next Steps

As compared with other compact documents, the scope of Baltimore’s compact was highly focused. While this helped concentrate efforts, especially around the development of a charter school renewal process, it also hamstrung the city’s movement toward broader goals, including addressing concerns about the limits to autonomy that have long troubled the city’s charter sector. Compact signers have rightly celebrated the big win of the creation of the operator-run renewal process. Most concede it was a hard-fought win and a good start, but a work in progress. Some charter leaders have expressed reservations about the lack of an appeals process, the failure of the tool to fully consider the unique instructional model or theme of the school, and the fact that a corresponding tool for district schools is not yet in place. Moving forward, the charter sector will continue to consider how to push the district on autonomy. For both sectors, questions around the renewal process remain: Are the five-year renewal winners candidates for expansion and replication? How should the weaker three-year and one-year renewal winners be supported? Lastly, the district has come a long way (with significant foundation support) toward investigating how district and charter schools are funded, whether or not inequities exist, and, if so, to what extent and how can they be remedied. But the answers, as well as any policy or funding changes they may call for, are still forthcoming.

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.



Boston District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: September 2011

Number of Students: 61,200 (2011-2012)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 12.8%

Charter Authorizer: Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

School District Governing Body: Mayor-appointed school board

Overview

Mayor Thomas Menino, who appoints the members of the Boston School Committee, or school board, expressed strong reservations about charter schools for most of his political career. Yet he understood the potential of the compact and helped bring the district and charter sectors together to sign. Interestingly, just three months after the board voted, by a narrow margin, to approve the district’s signing of the compact, the mayor made a surprising and controversial choice to fill a vacancy on the board with a charter school founder and director. Some say he made this choice because of the momentum created by the compact signing. Signs of a shift in the relationship are noteworthy given the nearly 20-year history of tension between the sectors. Recently, charter detractors have opposed the high reimbursement rate the district pays charter schools and expressed a belief that charter schools discourage harder-to-serve children from enrolling. The local teachers’ union opposed the compact, citing concerns over the agreement that allows charter schools to lease district buildings and another that permits charter schools to send special-needs students to the district’s specialized services program. Despite these political struggles, the compact has been a strong success and is considered a model in its governance structure and its inclusion of the Archdiocese of Boston.² Among the big wins for Boston via the compact, the district leased three buildings in a high-poverty neighborhood to high-performing charter schools, the district and charter enrollment calendars were aligned, and some charter schools have helped reduce district transportation costs.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

Mutually support the location of new charter schools in the neighborhoods with greatest need; district will explore leasing vacant or underutilized district buildings to charter schools.	The district leased three empty school buildings in a high-poverty neighborhood to charter management organizations. ³
Charter schools will help minimize district transportation costs. (Massachusetts law mandates the district provide transportation to charter school students.)	Charter schools have emphasized recruiting students from surrounding neighborhoods in order to lower transportation costs for the district and build community. Some charter schools have also altered start and end times to align with local district schools to reduce transportation costs.
Facilitate learning communities and shared professional development for district and charter teachers, instructional leaders, and school heads.	Teacher leaders and administrators from charter and district schools participated in the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s instructional rounds network. The network brought school delegations into colleagues’ classrooms to observe and debrief, and participants discussed instructional challenges in their schools.
Identify a tool and establish a process for evaluating the efficacy of individual schools, making recommendations for expanding successful programs or school turnaround plans, and closing schools as needed.	
Increase the number of high-performing teachers and leaders joining district and charter public schools by working with a local degree-granting and/or residency program.	

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.

2. Learn more about Boston’s Compact Steering Committee.

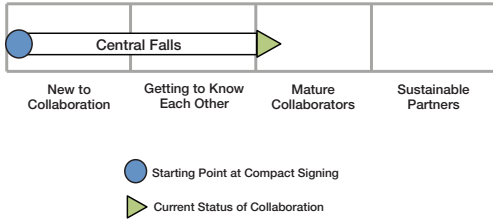
3. See the “BPS and Uncommon Schools Lease Agreement.”

Challenges and Next Steps

Boston was one of seven cities that shared \$25 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for continued compact work. This \$3 million dollar boost will ensure that the compact steering committee is staffed with a full-time coordinator and will allow the city to push forward on several original as well as some newly added compact agreements.⁴ They include focused attention on the academic achievement of the city's African American male students and the approximately one-in-three English language learner students, and an increase in the number of effective school leaders through the establishment of a school leadership pipeline.⁵ Given the progress to date, it is easy to understand why Boston received additional funding from the foundation, yet there is no shortage of challenges in the city. Some charter school leaders believe that while they are building good relationships, they are giving more than they are getting. Given their autonomy and freedom from regulations, charter schools can move faster than the district, which can lead to an imbalance of progress. There has been much talk of a shared accountability system, but progress has been slow. School leaders have opted to begin this work by forming relationships and trust across sectors, hoping a shared commitment to a common accountability tool will ease the implementation and help quell controversy. These early conversations have led to eight "School Performance Partnerships" that connect a district and charter and in some cases a Catholic school to work together on tasks such as aligning curricula to the Common Core. In the spirit of the compact, but not listed as an agreement, Boston has aligned school enrollment calendars. This was the first step toward Denver-like universal enrollment, but most agree there is a very long way to go.

4. See CRPE's webinar, "Pushing Compact Results from the Outside."

5. See CRPE's webinar, "How District and Charter Schools Coordinate Supports for English Language Learners: Lessons from Boston."



Central Falls District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: August 2011

Number of Students: 4,503 (2011-2012)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 17.7%

Charter Authorizer: Rhode Island Department of Education

School District Governing Body: State-appointed school board

Overview

With 2,700 students and six schools, and spanning just over a square mile, Central Falls School District is the smallest school district to sign a compact. Five charter schools also serve Central Falls students, with a combined enrollment of over 1,700 students. The city itself faces serious financial challenges, recently filing and emerging from bankruptcy, and the schools serve a high-poverty population. (Ninety percent of public school students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.) Under the leadership of Frances Gallo, Central Falls has embarked on bold reforms. In 2007, Gallo learned from parents about a promising charter school, the Learning Community Charter School, and she investigated. She was so impressed that the district formed a partnership with the school to help the district develop quality teaching practices. This close and protracted relationship gave the compact a jump-start, and collaboration between the sectors has been strong. Soon after the compact was signed, weekly meetings were scheduled with the superintendent and charter school leaders. One local dual-language charter school known for effective professional development, International Charter School, is developing a dual-language certification program that will help both district and charter schools recruit and train educators with the necessary skills to work with English language learners. Although not spelled out in the compact, the district has launched Teach CFI, a combined marketing and communications campaign to attract high-quality teacher applicants to all Central Falls schools. The district and charter schools also have made it a practice to jointly fundraise. A recent event featuring Central Falls alumnae and actress Viola Davis was co-hosted by a district school and a charter school, and proceeds were shared.

Key Compact Agreements

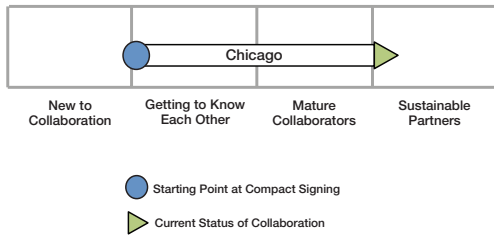
Big Wins

Charter schools agree to ensure transparency regarding student demographic data, student mobility, achievement, and instances where special needs designations shift.	
Actively exchange best practices and participate in communities of practice across sectors.	Learning Community Charter School and International Charter School help provide professional development to district teachers.
Support the Learning Community Charter School goal of reaching 500 teachers and 10,000 students through Lab School.	District relationship with Learning Community remains strong.
District will make available, where possible, economies of scale for charter schools.	
District will advocate for equitable distribution of resources for charter and district schools.	
Ensure that all on-site teacher and leader preparation courses are open to all district and charter school employees as space is available.	
District will provide charter schools access to facilities by studying potential excess space and helping to secure financing for renovations.	

Challenges and Next Steps

District-charter collaboration in Central Falls is strong and healthy, thanks in large part to Superintendent Frances Gallo's leadership. District and charter schools share a number of challenges, including implementing a new statewide teacher evaluation, educating a high number of students living in poverty, filling in gaps where funding is inadequate, recruiting and retaining strong teachers, providing services in all schools for special education students, ensuring strong instruction for English language learners, and sustaining multiple pathways to graduation. The sectors continue to be committed to work together and build on prior successes. Strong partnerships, such as the professional development program in reading that a charter school provides to a district school, have resulted in teacher-to-teacher relationships across sectors. This should help the compact survive a change in leadership if Superintendent Gallo steps down. Student achievement in district schools has showed gains, but students at Central Falls High School—a federal School Improvement Grant recipient school that made national headlines when the school board fired all the teachers—still struggle. In the 2010-2011 school year, just 7 percent of its 11th graders were proficient in math, and 7 percent were proficient in reading. Special education students in the district appear to be the focus of Central Falls compact work moving forward. There are plans to develop a shared risk pool for special education services (based on a Denver model) and to share specialists across schools. To tackle human resource challenges, there are plans to create a Central Falls Teaching Fellowship, which would invite potential teachers to spend a year working in a district or charter school, meet as a group, and carry a modified teaching load.

1. See this compact on CRPE's website.



Chicago District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: November 2011

Number of Students: 400,874 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 9.5%

Charter Authorizer: Chicago Public Schools

School District Governing Body: Mayoral control

Overview

Chicago’s District-Charter Collaboration Compact was signed at an opportune time. The newly appointed superintendent, Jean-Claude Brizard, used the compact to signal the importance of charter schools in his portfolio management strategy (an effort to diversify the district’s array of school options and signal that the performance of a school, not its governance, mattered). District leaders immediately worked to equalize funding between district and charter schools, something charter leaders had advocated for years. District leaders have also committed to providing charter schools equal access to facilities. For their part, charter school leaders have committed to participate in a common application for school enrollment and a common accountability system. This also includes adopting the district’s student assessments. Though the work has started strong, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has a long history of struggle and leadership instability, and progress has already slowed. In October 2012, Mayor Rahm Emanuel replaced Brizard after 18 months on the job. A new common enrollment process was delayed due to the union strike, and the school board hasn’t approved a new annual performance scorecard that includes charters. Moving forward, reforms will have to withstand possible resistance from a powerful teacher’s union, overcome district central office inertia, and remain a priority of the mayor and the new superintendent, Barbara Byrd-Bennett.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

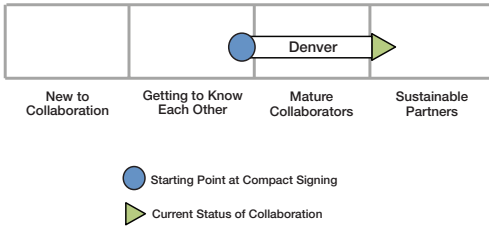
CPS and charters agree to prioritize the authorizing of new schools in high-need areas in CPS buildings. Charters commit to locating new schools in the highest-need areas, aligned to district portfolio plans.	District created the Call for Quality Schools, an application process for new schools operating as district, charter, or contract (includes replications and turnarounds).
By the 2013 enrollment cycle, the district will have established a common high school enrollment process that all high schools (traditional, charter, or contract) are permitted to use (or opt out of); same for elementary schools by 2016. ²	Plans in place for a common high school enrollment process in 2014-2015 school year; no charter schools have opted out yet.
Charter schools commit to a comparable representation of all student populations.	Compact provided clear, transparent data on the percentages and types of students that charter schools serve.
District commits to ensuring that funding for a student’s education will be equitable. District will make every effort to ensure that charters do not have to divert operating funds toward covering facility capital costs.	Increased amount of special education and Title I funds to charter schools in fiscal year 2013; start-up funding available for charter schools; increased facilities supplement from \$425 to \$750 per pupil (with \$1,000 expected next school year).
CPS and the Chicago Leadership Collaborative will partner with multiple providers to recruit, train, support, and retain effective principals, tripling the number of seats in residency programs from 32 to 100.	
Programs run by the Chicago Leadership Collaborative will serve to foster collegial relationships and ongoing best-practice sharing between district and charter leaders.	
A more streamlined authorization process will be developed to support the replication of high-quality local and national charter management organizations.	Streamlined authorization process implemented in 2012-2013 for national and local high-performing options.
Provide all schools access to actionable, comparative data that will enable teachers and school leaders to answer the questions “How am I doing?” and “Who is doing better?”	
Commit to a common accountability framework in which all public schools will participate. District will publish an annual performance scorecard for each school.	

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.

2. See the “Chicago Common Enrollment Policy.”

Challenges and Next Steps

More so than in any other compact city, leaders in Chicago have made concrete compact agreements that provide a strong mechanism for future collaboration. With clear indicators of success, district and charter leaders should be able to hold each other accountable. Furthermore, the mayor and former superintendent Brizard pushed through some hard-fought changes in union negotiations that mimic the structures of high-performing charter schools (including teacher evaluations linked to test scores). Compact leaders, however, will have to make sure Byrd-Bennett feels pressure to follow through with the agreements. (The new superintendent has already replaced one district leader that steered the compact work, and she does not share Brizard's commitment to use external operators.) If compact implementation continues, district leaders will have to negotiate with charter leaders, who worry that agreements to join the district's common enrollment and accountability systems could limit their autonomy and success.



Denver District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 78,651 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 10.9%

Charter Authorizer: Denver Public Schools

School District Governing Body: Elected board

Overview

Signing the district-charter collaboration compact reaffirmed Denver Public School’s longstanding commitment to using charter schools as a way to improve student performance across all schools. District and charter leaders have worked together to complete a unified school enrollment system that was initiated in 2009, increase the number of students with severe special needs in charter schools, and launch school-level partnerships to share instructional practices. Though Denver serves as a leader in compact implementation, large barriers remain. The charter sector does not fully buy in to the current compact work, which critics argue only reflects the district’s agenda. When they signed the compact, charter leaders expressed great concern over transparency and autonomy over special education funding and services, an area that has seen limited progress since. Implementation pressure will stay high as external reform organizations continue to push district and charter leaders to work together.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

Help the most effective schools reach substantially greater levels of scale; commit to locating new schools in the highest-need areas.	Simpler charter school renewal process for high-performing charter schools.
Implement a common and coordinated choice enrollment system; charters commit to ensure that midyear-entry students are provided equitable access to schools across the district.	Launch of SchoolChoice, a unified school enrollment system in which families choose schools through the same application. ²
Ensure equity regarding special education.	Several charter schools host centers for the highest-need special education students. ³
All students have access to adequate facilities and equitable resources, including per-pupil revenue and all other district resources.	High percentage of charters continue to be located in district space (approximately 50%); charter schools’ facilities agreements with the district moved from an annual to a contractual process (with five-year renewals); improved charter school funding mechanism for pre-K.
Commit to a market-driven system that allows charters to solicit bids for services.	
Share timely access to longitudinal data systems and data warehouses; charter schools commit to keeping data accurate and current.	
Refine and improve the School Performance Framework. ⁴	
Close or restructure the lowest-performing schools.	Continue to close low-performing schools.
Publish progress reports specifying core actions and specific impact of compact efforts over first 12-15 months of the effort.	
Implement a parent engagement strategy that effectively communicates the strengths of approved district-run and charter schools.	

Challenges and Next Steps

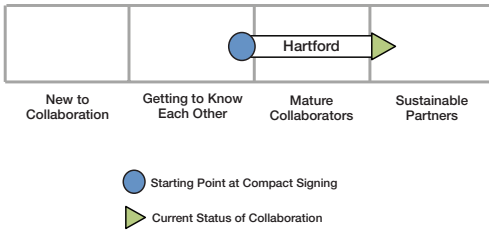
Many new collaboration projects are underway, and compact leaders have a lot to decide and learn during implementation. Will district leaders fulfill their commitment to support charter leaders with full flexibility as they take on programs for students with severe special needs? Can district and charter schools successfully share instructional practices under different environments, and what, if any, are the right pairs of schools to do so? Both of these collaborations, however, affect only a small number of charter schools. A larger challenge will be implementing policies that level the playing field and create sustainability for the charter sector beyond the current administration. Right now, the success of major reforms hinges on whether supportive board members are reelected in the next election. Charter school expansion, facilities sharing, and full charter financial equity continue to be contentious school board issues.

1. [See this compact on CRPE’s website.](#)

2. See CRPE’s webinar, “How District and Charter Schools Coordinate Enrollment: Practical Experiences from New Orleans and Denver.”

3. See CRPE’s webinar, “How District and Charter Schools Coordinate Supports for Students with Special Needs: Lessons from Denver and Los Angeles.”

4. See the “[Denver High School Performance Framework Rubric.](#)”



Hartford District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 22,228 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 5.7%

Charter Authorizer: Connecticut Department of Education

School District Governing Body: Mayor appoints most school board members, the rest are elected

Overview

Years of frequent superintendent turnover, poor performance, and alarmingly large gaps in achievement between white and minority students spurred an otherwise status quo school board into hiring the pro-reform Steven Adamowski in late 2006. Adamowski swiftly instituted a series of reforms and was a vocal supporter of high-performing charter schools. He paved the way for a cabinet member, Christina Kishimoto, to succeed him and to continue to implement the reforms, which had been followed by several years of steady growth in student performance. Although the Hartford School District is home to just a handful of charter schools, enrolling under 6 percent of the district's public school students, Kishimoto welcomed the opportunity to build on her school district's history of collaboration. She continued a practice established by Adamowski to supplement state charter school funding and was a key voice supporting state legislation to increase state dollars for charters. She also advocated for a local high-performing charter school to take over a chronically failing district high school. Through the compact the district has invited Achievement First, a charter network that operates two schools in the city, to provide residencies in both sectors, intense individual coaching, and weekly professional development seminars aimed at training district teachers to assume leadership roles.²

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

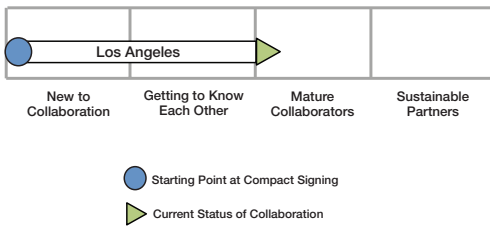
Charter schools to actively share best practices to build capacity of district schools.	Achievement First has opened up their effective leadership training program to district teachers.
Ensure transparency and accountability regarding student demographics, mobility, and achievement.	
Leverage district benefits of economies of scale with charter school sector.	
Collaboratively work to remove barriers to charter school success and expansion, such as charter caps and funding limitations.	District superintendent wrote open letter to legislators publicly advocating for legislation to increase charter school funding, and the measure passed.
Jointly pursue accountability across all schools, including working to close or reconstitute persistently low-performing schools.	District successfully advocated with the state for a local charter management organization to take over chronically failing district high school.

Challenges and Next Steps

In terms of a climate for bold change, the wind appears to be at Hartford's back. The new state education commissioner is the founder of Hartford's Achievement First charter management organization and a strong supporter of the reform work exemplified in the city. In December 2012, Hartford learned that it was awarded nearly \$5 million in continued Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation compact funding, the highest amount of all seven winners. Their proposal outlined a plan to build on the compact's wins to date as well as to embark on new collaborative efforts. The highly successful Achievement First leadership training program has helped the district prepare strong new principals, and the RFP funding will allow Hartford to further expand the program. The district also plans to partner with Achievement First to provide instructional support for teachers, and to work jointly to develop a curriculum and assessment tool aligned to the Common Core. There is a strong need in Hartford, as in many other cities, to find turnaround principals, but Connecticut's restrictive certification laws limit the city's ability to recruit effective, experienced principals from outside the state. Working in partnership with the Commissioner's Network (the state's school turnaround initiative), the district hopes to capitalize on the growing expertise of its high-performing charter schools to develop and train principals to turn around chronically low-performing schools.

1. See this compact on CRPE's website.

2. See CRPE's webinar, "Residencies for Leaders and Teachers: Lessons from Connecticut and Minneapolis." See also "Achievement First Residency Program for School Leadership Seminar: Framework."



Los Angeles District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 667,378 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 11.9%

Charter Authorizers: Los Angeles Unified School District, California Department of Education Charter Schools Division

School District Governing Body: Elected school board

Overview

Los Angeles is the second largest school district in the county, and over 100,000 of its students attend charter schools—roughly twice as many as in New York. But these numbers belie a historically difficult relationship between the district and charter sectors. Most elected school board members have not been pro-charter, and charter schools have long struggled for access to facilities and equitable funding. Initiatives including Proposition 9 (which ensures charter schools have access to vacant district buildings) and the Public School Choice program (which invites providers, including charter schools, to compete to take over failing district schools) have eased some tensions, but conflict remains. In Los Angeles, restrictions on state bond money create inequities between district and charter school facilities. New buildings are awarded to district schools regardless of enrollment and parent demand, while some oversubscribed charter schools operate out of subpar buildings without a gym or cafeteria. More than 100 charter schools signed the compact; they hoped that the district could support them in providing special education services and that the efforts might help end what they saw as the district’s failure to comply with the law. Leaders also saw opportunities to assemble district help with their short-term working capital needs (the state of California is months behind on funding charter schools). For its part, the district had been frustrated by many charter schools’ unwillingness to share student retention or special education enrollment numbers and hoped the compact would provide leverage. The biggest win in Los Angeles has been the reorganization of the Special Education Local Plan Area to allow for charter school participation.² The sectors have also, via the College-Ready Promise, shared best practices in educator effectiveness.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

Jointly identify academic performance standards that include status and growth metrics and that set minimum performance expectations across all schools.	A joint School Performance Framework for all schools was developed. ³
Commission an independent evaluation of demographic patterns for students living in the city combined with academic performance to ensure all children have access to high-quality schools.	
Ensure all parents are aware of and are able to access all enrollment options within the district boundaries.	
Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the charter community will propose to local and state boards that the regional special education service delivery system should allow charter schools.	The California State Board of Education unanimously approved the reorganization of the special education system.

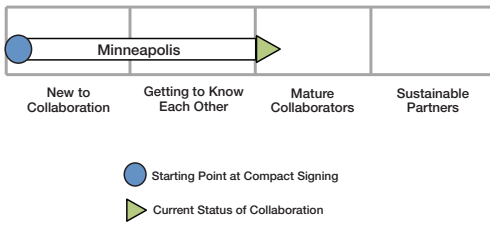
Challenges and Next Steps

Anti-charter sentiments are still common in Los Angeles. Although the current school board president is supportive of charters, several members are not. Recent school board elections indicated a public leaning in favor of reform. Evidence includes a school board member’s recent proposal to prohibit the opening of new charter schools and the superintendent’s announcement that charter schools would no longer be eligible to compete to take over failing district schools. Further complications include the revocation of a charter management organization charter after testing irregularities were uncovered, and the public problems facing a handful of the 50-plus charter schools in the district. Data sharing is another point of tension between the sectors. Charter schools in Los Angeles have resisted using the district data systems, which they believe are not as robust as their own. Additionally, due to the state’s interpretation of the charter law and charter schools’ local education authority (LEA) status, the California Department of Education does not report charter school student performance scores directly to the district. Instead, the district must rely on charter schools to manually provide the district with charter school scores they receive from the state. LAUSD is not able to count charter schools’ test scores towards their student results.

1. See [this compact on CRPE’s website](#).

2. See CRPE’s webinar, “How District and Charter Schools Coordinate Supports for Students with Special Needs: Lessons from Denver and Los Angeles.”

3. See the “[Los Angeles School Performance Framework](#).”



Minneapolis District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 42,204 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 18.6%

Charter Authorizers: Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota Department of Education, higher education institutes, and nonprofit organizations (11 authorizers have schools in Minneapolis)

School District Governing Body: Elected board

Overview

Nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions authorize most Minneapolis charters, and school quality varies greatly. District leaders in Minneapolis created a compact with high-quality charters, hoping to benefit from their strong academic performance and gain insights on effective instructional practices and talent recruitment. For their part, the charter schools were interested in increasing access to district facilities and benefiting from the district’s economies of scale. After Minneapolis was not selected to participate in the Gates Foundation compact RFP process, district leaders decided to look to other compact cities for ideas on how to move forward. Since early 2012, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) leaders have focused their compact efforts on expanding and improving their authorizer role, replicating strong schools models through a pilot of autonomous district schools, passing new legislation that encourages collaboration, building a data dashboard that compares all district-authorized schools on performance, and sharing best practices across sectors. For instance, the district secured funds to receive instructional support from two high-performing charter networks. How far and deep the compact work will spread, however, remains to be seen. Collaborations to date have only affected a small number of schools.

Key Compact Agreements

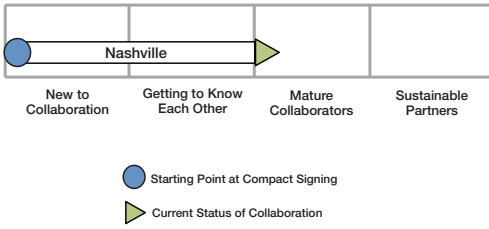
Big Wins

Build a talent incubator for school leaders.	
Remove financial barriers to replicating high-performing charter schools.	Replicated a high-performing charter school; passed legislation offering charter schools access to district facilities, transportation, and other services in exchange for sharing best practices and counting their test scores for the district.
Make MPS services available, including transportation and special education.	See above.
Provide MPS facilities for high-performing charter schools (with preference going to district-authorized charters).	The district adopted a process for leasing facilities that grounds allocation decisions in the charter school’s track record of academic performance; leases now require academic performance criteria.
Charter schools commit to ensure transparency around student demographics and recruit and retain comparable percentages of students.	
Document and share practices that accelerate student achievement.	

Challenges and Next Steps

Given that most of the charter schools in Minneapolis are not district-authorized, district-charter collaboration requires identifying mutual benefits outside of the authorizer relationship. Newly signed legislation will facilitate this by allowing the district to enter into contractual relationships with new and existing charter schools. The legislation will make it easier for the district to share resources and responsibility with high-performing charter school organizations, though realistically only a few charters may be considered high-performing or want to enter into these agreements. Going forward, district leaders will need to align their vision for the role of charter schools as they face difficult decisions about which charters to include in new collaborations. For example, the district has started working with a school support organization, Charter School Partners, to develop two talent incubators to address critical school leadership needs across sectors. But which charter schools participate has not been decided. District leaders will also have to coordinate and align nonprofit partners that have competing ideas on what compact work is and how best to implement it.

1. [See this compact on CRPE’s website.](#)



Nashville District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 78,750 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 1.6%

Charter Authorizers: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Achievement School District

School District Governing Body: Elected board, Achievement School District (eligible to oversee state's bottom 5% of schools)

Overview

In Nashville, district leaders collaborated with charter schools to provide more school choice to families as well as to avoid state intervention. The number of charter schools has increased sharply, and the district has also expanded the number of charter-like schools through its iZone, which comprises the lowest-performing district schools designated for turnaround. The newly created Achievement School District, which allows the state of Tennessee to authorize charter schools within Nashville, has put strong pressure on the district. District leaders must authorize more charter schools or risk losing students to state-authorized charter schools. Nashville's compact includes a wide range of agreements, and leaders have made significant progress on several. Most notably, leaders have designed a common school report card and have used charter schools as part of the district's efforts to turn around low-performing schools. It remains to be seen how deeply district leaders and school board members support the compact. Some of these leaders view charter schools as exceptions to a larger school system and remain skeptical that charters can provide systemwide benefits.

Key Compact Agreements

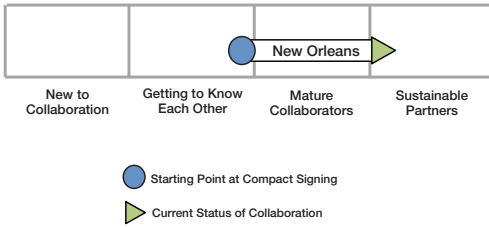
Big Wins

Charter schools will work with the district to locate schools in the highest-need areas.	Charter application lists district priority areas, so charters can target neighborhoods of greatest need.
Develop long-term strategic plan for new schools and work with existing and future charter operators to meet those needs.	LEAD Academy/Cameron College Prep has shown early success turning around a low-performing district school; LEAD opened its second district turnaround, Brick Church Middle School, in fall 2012.
Implement a common and coordinated choice enrollment system.	
Create an intradistrict joint communication and marketing plan informing parents of the wide array of public school choices.	Director's Parent Advisory Council expanded to include charter school parents.
Remove barriers for all eligible students to attend public charter schools by offering information regarding school enrollment and pertinent data in all languages.	
Ensure complete transparency regarding calculation and distribution of 100 percent of the per-pupil share of all eligible district expenditures, including facility allocations.	
Maintain annual identification of surplus facilities available for charter schools; give high-performing charter operators first right of refusal for access to those facilities.	
Create a team of highly effective instructors, from both district and charters, to take part in exchange programs.	13 district and charter teachers completed Lipscomb University's Shared Practices Fellows Program.
Charter schools commit to sharing resources, such as data templates, student tracking systems, lesson plan templates, etc.	
Ensure transparency and publicly accessible reporting of data on student demographics, achievement, mobility, discipline, exceptional education, and English language learners.	Common school report cards rolled out in fall 2012 include student performance and demographics data.
Collaboratively establish a common high-performing school indicator.	Design of common report cards includes extensive feedback from community members.
Continue to support parents in all public schools through programs like Parent University.	

1. See this compact on CRPE's website.

Challenges and Next Steps

As in many cities, tensions exist in Nashville over whether charter schools choose which students they want in their schools, push out students during the school year, or serve their fair share of special education students. The detailed student demographics data included in the new school report cards should help dispel these rumors in some charters and in others pressure them to serve more students with greater needs. Other points of contention include inequitable distribution of school facilities (for example, the district has provided high-performing charter schools only limited access to facilities) and the district's failure to reduce costs when charter schools attract students. How fast district leaders move to share buildings with potential charter partners may depend on how much pressure the Achievement School District applies. Moving forward, compact leaders are committed to coordinating district and charter school enrollment timelines (schools already use the same application and process) and completing a district academic performance framework that aligns with charter school renewal standards. District leaders have already sent a draft performance framework to principals for feedback.



New Orleans District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: June 2012

Number of Students: 39,896 (2011-2012)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 69.5%

Charter Authorizers: Orleans Parish School District, Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

School District Governing Body: State control

Overview

The percentage of New Orleans public school children attending charter schools went from 5 percent in 2005 to nearly 80 percent today, and the city is on track to reach 100 percent within the next three to five years. This makes for a compelling if unusual backdrop for a district-charter compact. Given their numbers and the strong push for reforms after (and to a lesser extent before) Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans charter schools were in a strong negotiating position at the signing of the compact, and they have wasted little time getting big things done. Perhaps the biggest win is the implementation of Recovery School District’s (RSD) universal enrollment system, OneApp, which streamlined the application process for parents and ensured that schools accepted children without regard to whether they needed special education.² To date, three-quarters of the city’s 83 public schools are participating in OneApp. Recent legislation paved the way for “Type 2” charter schools—those located in New Orleans but whose authorizer is the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education—to be included. The Orleans Parish School Board passed an amendment requiring that all of their schools join the OneApp system when their contracts are renewed. Since the compact signing, the city has also released a report card on all schools that includes a section covering on equity. This accessible “Equity Report” follows through on charters’ promise to improve transparency about the numbers of special-needs students served. Compact signers set out to develop a transparent facilities assignment process, which was also a success: every school in need of a facility was placed in one. There are several other smaller wins, including a new alternative education program.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

Universal enrollment that meets needs of all students including special-needs students and mid-year enrollees.	Universal enrollment completed and implemented for all RSD schools. ³
Improve services for special-needs students: ensure 100 percent of charter schools meet requirements, district will advocate for requisite resources, and charter schools will develop innovative solutions to serve students with special needs.	
Improve services for alternative education students by opening two new charter schools to serve them, securing adequate funding, and ensuring charter schools comply with legal requirements of expulsions and withdrawals, including accurate reporting of numbers.	Alternative education program launched in August 2012.
Develop a fair and transparent facilities assignment process.	Process based on neighborhood need and performance of the charter operator requesting facility was developed and partially relied upon. All schools in need of a facility were placed in one.
Develop process for community input in charter authorization process.	
Develop a common school report card and evaluation system to compare school-level results.	“Equity Report” released for 2011-2012 includes achievement, growth, and demographic data on each school in the city.
Develop master teacher training program.	One of two planned programs has launched.

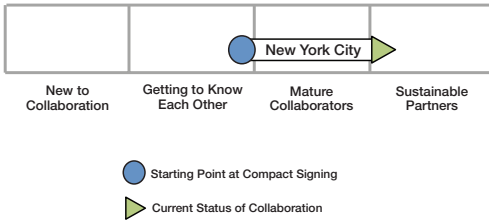
1. See [this compact on CRPE’s website](#).

2. See CRPE’s webinar, “How District and Charter Schools Coordinate Enrollment: Practical Experiences from New Orleans and Denver.”

3. See “New Orleans RSD OneApp Enrollment Packet 2012-13.”

Challenges and Next Steps

New Orleans submitted a RFP to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for continued funding of its compact work. The foundation has funded nearly \$3 million for many parts of the proposal, which is no less bold than the original compact. Importantly, however, the foundation has elected not to fund the city's efforts to improve special education services for children in charter schools. While the city has worked to improve these services, it has not made the progress it had hoped for. Students in pockets of the city are well-served, but there is no comprehensive strategy. The city continues to look for start-up capital to fund this project. Building on the work outlined in the original compact, the city hopes to iron out the kinks of the OneApp program and incorporate all public schools in New Orleans within the next two years. This may help further the goal of improving community engagement. Some progress was made including a new timeline for closure announcements, but it was a tight timeline, and parents were rarely offered better options in time for enrollment. It still represented progress from past practices of almost no local parent engagement. There has also been some progress on the compact's goal of creating citywide infrastructure for new school development, but that work has also not been fully realized. Efforts to solicit community input in the charter authorization progress have been slow given the local politics and historically strong opposition from powerful community groups. Given that the charter school market share is nearing 85 percent, this may be an issue that becomes less important over time. Policy and operations work is complete but yet to be tested. A concern for New Orleans going forward is shared by many other compact districts: how to improve instructional practices via improved talent pipeline and teacher training. Lastly, a concern unique to New Orleans is how to set a regulatory environment for an all-charter system.



New York City District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 1,019,553 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 3.8%

Charter Authorizers: New York City Department of Education (until 2010), New York State Education Department, State University of New York

School District Governing Body: Mayoral control

Overview

Over the past decade, under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the number of district and charter schools in New York City grew rapidly. Through a portfolio strategy, the district closed low-performing schools and opened new schools to provide families with more high-quality options. But it was often easier to change the policies around charter schools than to shift community members’ perceptions about them. Charter schools were seen as the “favorite child,” and union opposition was loud and strong. New York’s compact leaders have worked to shift the tone regarding charter schools and build more productive relationships among district and charter principals, teachers, parents, and community members. Under Chancellor Dennis Walcott, who took the job in 2011, the district has listened more to community input around charter school decisions, such as openings, closings, and co-locations. Leaders at the New York City Charter School Center have designed opportunities for principals and teachers to showcase classroom practices and have made accessible charter schools’ data on student performance and demographics. Compact leaders feel an urgency to step up their efforts to build goodwill about district-charter collaboration, as no one knows what a post-Bloomberg charter world looks like.

Key Compact Agreements

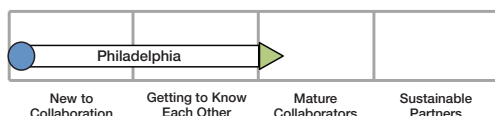
Big Wins

Support high-quality charters to open and replicate.	26 new charters expected to open in 2013.
Equitable distribution of resources; continue to co-locate and locate charter schools in underutilized district buildings.	
Charter schools commit to ensure transparency around student demographics and recruit and retain comparable percentages of students.	<p>NYC Charter School Center published the first-ever State of the NYC Charter Sector report, which provides transparent data on charter schools’ student performance and demographics.</p> <p>NYC Charter School Center launched a citywide Special Education Collaborative, with 75 percent of charter schools participating.</p>
Make available to charter schools the benefits of school district economies of scale (e.g., provide charter schools access to district data systems).	Charter schools have access to NYC DOE’s Common Core training and online resources.
Advocate for mutually beneficial state legislation, including making conversion of district schools to charter schools more affordable.	
Pursue accountability across all schools in the city, including by supporting or working to close, reconstitute, or by other means immediately address persistently low-performing schools.	NYC DOE continues to pursue a school closure and replacement strategy; refined process for communicating information about struggling schools early.
Actively share demonstrated best practices with the public schools in New York City.	<p>NYC Collaborates, an initiative to directly advance the compact work, organizes district and charter principals and teachers to visit high-performing schools.</p> <p>New Visions for Public Schools will provide Common Core training for a cohort of 16 district and charter middle schools (eight per year for two years).</p> <p>Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Public Charter Schools cohosted the What Works in Urban Schools conference to unite district and charter teachers under an instructional focus.</p>
Develop a program where district principals can take a leave of absence to work in a charter school.	Principals’ union approved that district leaders can take a leave of absence to work in a charter school.

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.

Challenges and Next Steps

Compact leaders want to build trust between district and charter leaders, but it's hard to measure a change in opinions and mindset. Misinformation about charter schools persists, and educators and families continue to question the fairness of comparing district and charter schools. Egos get in the way of the charter sector working together and with the NYC DOE. There is a disincentive for district principals to showcase strong charter partnerships because of union resistance. External partners are taking the lead on new compact initiatives, as district leaders are distracted with the impending mayoral race. The pressure is on compact leaders to advocate for state legislation that provides sustainability plans for charter schools, including long-term access to district facilities and facilities funding. The recent \$3.7 million Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation award will support these advocacy efforts as well as other compact priorities, including developing and implementing Common Core training and tools across district and charter middle schools.



● Starting Point at Compact Signing
 ► Current Status of Collaboration

Philadelphia District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2011

Number of Students: 206,779 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 19.5%

Charter Authorizers: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Philadelphia School Reform Commission

School District Governing Body: School board appointed by mayor and governor

Overview

The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) has seen its share of reforms over the years, and some wonder if (and even hope that) the compact will be added to the list of efforts that have come and gone. Numerous charter operators have been taken to court on charges of fraud or worse, further fueling the distrust and antagonism some feel toward the city’s autonomous schools. However, compact committee members, who include representatives from high-quality charter schools and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, claim that the momentum around the compact agreements is unprecedented. There is even a sense that its message—that quality matters and governance does not—has begun to percolate in schools and neighborhoods. The city’s mayor, Michael Nutter, ran and was reelected on a platform of improving the school system and early on indicated an intention to include the charter sector in the conversation. The compact likely played a role in the school board recruiting candidates for the superintendency who had a track record of and strong belief in collaborating across sectors. The School Reform Commission (i.e. school board) has taken a lead role in the compact work. The Philadelphia School Partnership (PSP), a strong consortium of local philanthropic organizations, has guided the compact work and will continue to serve as the fiscal agent for the recent \$2.5 million Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation award.² The PSP has helped raise tens of millions of dollars of private money to support the reform efforts. This broad support was built on some early compact momentum, including a big win around shared professional development. Mastery Charter Schools, a homegrown and highly successful charter management organization, has partnered with the district to provide professional development to teachers at district schools.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

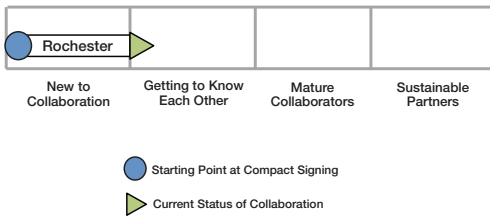
Collaboratively develop, consistently implement, and make accessible to all stakeholders a transparent performance framework.	
Create consistent and transparent processes that will enable access to funding and facilities for all schools.	
Provide resources and supports to high-quality schools to encourage their expansion.	District expanded enrollment at over a dozen high-performing schools by more than 2,000 students.
Provide feedback and support to chronically low-performing schools; failure to improve after a probationary period can result in closure.	Board recently voted to close four low-performing charter schools and eight schools that were under-enrolled.
Share best practices across sectors on how to provide high-quality options for special education students and English language learners.	Mastery Charter Schools developed and piloted the Teacher Effectiveness Institute, a professional development program for teachers.
Pursue a system on universal enrollment.	
School Reform Commission will establish a new Office of Charter Schools.	

Challenges and Next Steps

The dire financial status of the SDP is difficult to overstate. During the past summer, the district floated \$300 million of debt just to maintain school operations. In recent months the new superintendent has made a slew of public appearances to announce the closure of 37 school buildings. Although finances played a role in the decisions to close the schools, under-enrollment and, in some cases, weak performance was also a factor. The School Reform Commission and district continue to rely on the compact as a guide and a frame for decision-making. As laid out in the compact and in the RFP, the work moving forward will focus on expanding high-performing district and charter schools and closing and reconstituting schools that have not performed well over time. One of the first schools up for closure is the 100-year-old chronically struggling Germantown High School, and parents and students have begun to position themselves for a fight. Decisions like this, driven by the overarching goal of replacing 50,000 low-performing seats by 2017, will test the compact and its signers. Equally controversial is the planned overhaul of the district’s Office of Charter Schools. Pressures from charter schools to make it more welcoming conflict with pressures from many in the community who see front page headlines of fraud and believe it needs to move in the other direction.

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.

2. See CRPE’s webinar, “Pushing Compact Results from the Outside.”



Rochester District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2010

Number of Students: 33,120 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 5.0%

Charter Authorizers: New York State Education Department, State University of New York Charter Schools Institute

School District Governing Body: Elected board

Overview

Soon after the district-charter collaboration compact was signed, Rochester’s superintendent resigned to take a position leading Chicago Public Schools. Implementation of the compact seems to have suffered as a result. The new superintendent has not made charter schools a part of the district’s strategy for improving performance across the city. The majority of school board members do not support the compact work, including agreements that would provide charters space on district campuses. To date, district leaders have not challenged the board’s position. Several independent charter schools in Rochester have resisted committing to serving similar populations of students as the district, and charter leaders remain divided in how they want to work with the district. The compact, however, has served to improve communications between the district and charter schools (and among charter schools) and helped erase a perception of animosity. Leaders in the district more frequently cite the successes of charter schools and have invited charters to participate in the district’s School Choice Expo. But with no other successes, it is uncertain whether district and charter leaders will implement the agreements.

Key Compact Agreements

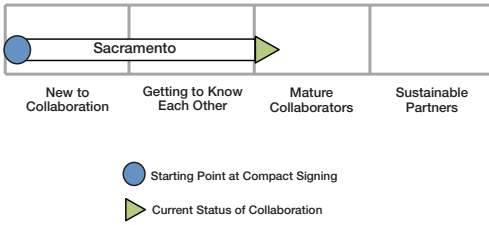
Big Wins

Help the most effective schools expand and replicate; locate new schools in highest-need areas.	
Charter schools will seek to recruit, serve, and retain sector-comparable percentages of students as district schools (e.g., at-risk populations).	
Charter schools commit to ensure transparency regarding student mobility and achievement, particularly college readiness.	
Work toward equitable distribution of public school resources; ensure access to facilities for public charter schools.	
Make available, where possible, the benefits of economies of scale to charter schools.	
Actively share demonstrated best practices with all charter schools to scale up what works.	
Reward and support successful schools and work to close, reconstitute, or by other means immediately address persistently low-performing schools.	
Operate and describe public charter schools as partners in the citywide effort to provide an excellent education for all students.	Hosted School Choice Expo, where district and charter schools jointly advertised to families.
Advocate for equitable per-student funding.	

Challenges and Next Steps

Rochester’s compact includes lots of agreements, but many of the strategies do not align with the district’s current plans. For example, district leaders have halted new school openings and are moving away from per-student funding. District and charter leaders experienced an early setback when their first collaboration, a joint professional development program, received mixed reviews from participants. Compact leaders are still meeting regularly, but participation has waned. For any progress to be made, charter leaders will have to agree on what they want to work on with the district, and district leaders will have to decide what value high-performing charter schools provide to the system and offer tangible incentives to work together. The superintendent has started that conversation by talking with charter leaders about restarting a low-performing district school. But district and charter leaders do not have any firm plans in place.

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.



Sacramento District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: October 2011

Number of Students: 47,609 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 8.7%

Charter Authorizers: California Department of Education Charter Schools Division, Sacramento City Unified School District

School District Governing Body: Elected school board

Overview

Sacramento’s mayor, Kevin Johnson, founded a charter management organization. He raised funds to convert his alma mater, Sacramento High School, from a district school to a charter school, and his wife, Michelle Rhee, has made Sacramento the home base of her education reform organization. Yet anti-charter rhetoric has long been strong in Sacramento, and the city is new to collaboration. Jonathan Raymond, a reform-minded former chief accountability officer, was appointed superintendent in 2009 and has been an outspoken advocate for charter schools. Raymond’s conversations with the state’s charter school association and with leaders from several top local charter schools on how to improve the district-charter dynamic formed the basis for the compact. Agreements outlined in the compact include developing a common accountability framework, sharing professional development, and improving services for special education students and English language learners. The compact also addresses long-term facilities and funding inequities, including sharing local bond and parcel tax revenues. The big win for Sacramento has been the shift in the renewal process for charter schools from one to five years for high-performing schools. The annual renewal process was cumbersome for charter schools, and they welcomed the change. There are some other indications that district-charter collaboration has resulted in easing of tensions between the sectors. In 2012, a charter school founder was elected to the school board, and recently a top administrator from the St. HOPE charter school management organization became the district’s chief of staff. To oversee and monitor the progress of the compact, a joint oversight committee was formed, made up of community members and district and charter school representatives.

Key Compact Agreements

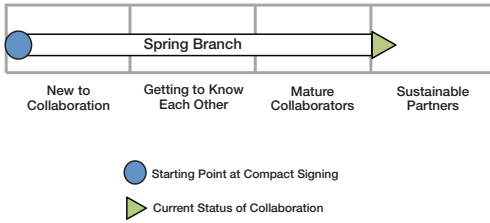
Big Wins

Creating an accountability framework that includes an annual oversight process that recognizes excellence and provides an early warning system for low-performing charter schools.	
Establishing a framework for fast-track renewal and/or replication of successful charter schools and non-renewal of chronically underperforming ones.	Renewal requirements for high-performing charter schools shifted from one to five years.
Co-developing a blended technology school.	
Sharing human capital and leadership pipelines.	
Charter schools to provide equitable access and high-quality supports for students with special needs and English language learners; will ensure all student data, including demographic, enrollment, and perceptions surveys, is accurate and accessible to the district.	
Establish Sacramento Pathways for College and Careers.	
Collaborate on professional development and Common Core planning.	

Challenges and Next Steps

Although there are signs that some entrenched negative perceptions of charter schools have begun to shift in Sacramento, progress on the compact work is contingent in part on the political realities in the city. The big win of shifting the charter school renewal cycle from one year to five years is a good example of progress without much protest. Because charter schools are still controversial in Sacramento, compact signers who hope to sustain collaboration work would be wise to choose battles carefully. Improving transparency for charter schools around special education students or working toward a common performance framework are examples of areas where the committee sees the potential for significant progress without strong opposition. The compact committee continues to meet and Superintendent Raymond regularly attends. While the meetings have strengthened the individual relationships between the leaders in each sector, there is growing concern that conversations at meetings tended to get mired in detail. Moving forward, the committee hopes to expedite the work by using sub-committees to craft concrete proposals that can then be quickly moved through the full committee and implemented.

1. See this compact on CRPE’s website.



Spring Branch District-Charter Collaboration Compact¹

Date Signed: December 2011

Number of Students: 33,293 (2010-2011)

Percent of Charter School Students to All Public School Students: 4.1%

Charter Authorizers: Texas Education Agency, Spring Branch Independent School District

School District Governing Body: Elected board (all positions elected at-large)

Overview

In Spring Branch Independent School District (SBISD), which lies mostly in Houston, Texas, the two charter schools the district opened have had better results with at-risk students than neighborhood schools have, and they maintain long waiting lists. District leaders, recognizing this success, were motivated to expand their school choice options to include partnerships with charter school organizations. Aiming to learn from and replicate the best examples in the area, district leaders agreed to a bold and detailed partnership, called the SKY Partnership, with Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Houston and YES Prep Public Schools. Charter leaders were interested in increasing access to district facilities and expanding choice in untapped areas of Houston, and the agreement included shared buildings for district and charter schools. As compared to other compact cities, the SKY Partnership has seen impressive collaboration wins over a short period, including the participation of district central office staff, principals, and teachers in KIPP and YES Prep trainings. Compact leaders attribute this success to the clear commitment articulated by the superintendents and school board, the process of making decisions together through a formal steering committee and working groups, and their work to create buy-in within their own organizations.² The compact has created an intense focus within the district to pursue a portfolio strategy, and district leaders see the compact as the beginning of a larger process to meet family demand and provide school choice through multiple means.

Key Compact Agreements

Big Wins

Community outreach campaign that engages families in developing and selecting school options.	District and charter superintendents and boards jointly gave the message that we serve all families through the SKY Partnership.
Provide charter schools space in underutilized campuses.	Model co-location contract was put in place for underutilized SBISD campuses (KIPP Courage College Prep at Landrum Middle School and YES Prep Northbrook Middle School).
SBISD will develop a menu of contract services for KIPP and YES Prep that are of equitable cost to standard district services.	Contract includes a menu of contract services at equitable costs; shared extracurricular and athletic programs and student services.
Develop an equitable funding formula for charters who are compact signatories.	Co-location contract provides equitable funding.
Collaborate across campuses to ensure curricular alignment and share best practices.	SKY teachers observe each other and provide feedback; instructional leaders observe some teachers together and calibrate observation metrics.
Create avenues for common leadership development; ensure instructional leaders are trained to ensure students are college-ready.	District principals and central office staff participated in KIPP's summer leadership program; YES Prep Teaching Excellence Program is training 19 SBISD teachers at co-location sites and campuses across the district.
Establish a common longitudinal data system; explore the possibility of a common school report card.	
Coordinate lottery application windows.	Charters aligned lottery and admission systems with existing SBISD admissions and transfer policies.

1. See [this compact on CRPE's website](#).

2. [Learn more about the SKY Partnership's Steering Committee](#).

Challenges and Next Steps

District and charter leaders do not want to take their early successes for granted and are aware of the enormous amount of work needed to meet the district's goal that by 2017, SBISD will double the number of students completing a higher education credential. District leaders continue to focus on collaborations that they believe will produce systemwide change. As a first priority, district leaders are broadening their talent strategies and building an in-house leadership pipeline, drawing from charter lessons on how to best recruit, hire, and train teachers and leaders.³ SBISD hired Elliott Whitney, a former KIPP teacher and administrator, to head the initiative. The recent \$2.2 million Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation compact award will support part of this work. Plans are also underway to increase the number of charter schools, but many uncertainties exist around scale. Can district-charter co-locations increase student performance across campuses and the system? In retrospect, district leaders wished they had included compact agreements on how to measure and compare student performance across schools. For now, compact leaders will assess student engagement in both district and charter schools. SBISD students in grades 4 through 12 and KIPP and YES Prep students will participate in the Tripod survey, which was developed by Harvard economist Ronald Ferguson and seeks student feedback about teacher effectiveness.

3. See CRPE's webinar "[Managing Talent and Sharing Instructional Practices in Spring Branch.](#)"