

2016 Authorizer Report

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice
Florida Department of Education

Summary

School districts throughout Florida received 75¹ charter school applications by the statutory deadline of August 2016², continuing a steady decline in new charter proposals to districts that first began in 2012. The number of new applications submitted to districts in this most recent cycle, for instance, is down 46 percent from 2015 and 62 percent from 2014.

Even with fewer applications to review, however, districts approved 41 percent of the proposals they received last year – the same rate of approval seen in 2015. That statewide average masks wide variation in approval rates between districts (*see Findings below*), but it remains the case – as manifest in recent years – that the majority of charter school applications in Florida failed to win approval. Those applications not approved were either denied by their local school board during a publicly noticed meeting or were withdrawn from consideration before the school board acted.

Despite fewer applications, Florida’s charter school sector continues to expand. When the 2016-17 school year ended, there were 654 charter schools that served 283,755 students. While that number of new schools represented a modest increase from 2015-16 (when there were 652 charter schools) the number of students served at charters increased 5 percent during that same time period. Moreover, the number of students served at Florida’s charter schools has increased 58 percent from the 179,940 reported as enrolled in 2011-12.

By the Numbers

75 – Number of charter school applications districts received by August 2016

31 – Number of applications districts approved

41 percent – Average approval rate of applications submitted

38 – Number of applications to four counties alone: Miami-Dade (16); Palm Beach (8); Orange (8); and Hillsborough (6).

37 – Number of applications withdrawn from consideration before a local school board could make a decision at a publicly noticed meeting

8 – Number of draft applications submitted by May 1, 2016

2 – Number of virtual charter school applications (They were later withdrawn)

¹ The data in this report is submitted by school district authorizers.

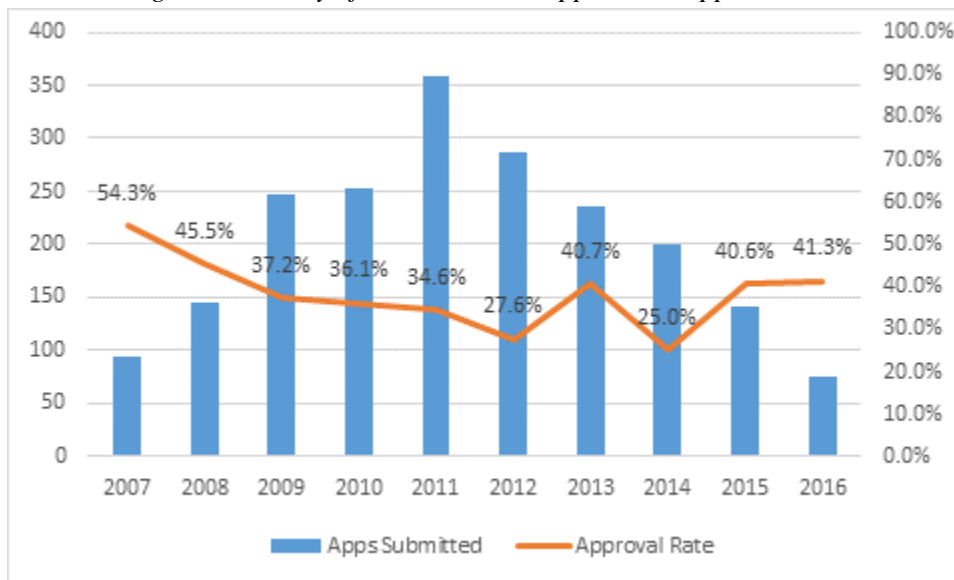
² Pursuant to Section 1002.33(6)(b), Florida Statutes; the 2017 legislative session amended this statute to change this deadline, starting in 2018, from August 1 to February 1 of each calendar year.

Findings

The biggest still account for the most. About half of the 75 charter applications statewide were submitted to four of Florida’s largest districts – Miami-Dade (16 applications); Palm Beach (8); Orange County (8); Hillsborough (6).

Approval rates remain the same this year as last year: As recently as 2014, just 25 percent of charter school applications were approved by their local school boards. That changed in 2015 and, now, in 2016, when districts approved a more generous 41 percent of all applications they received.

Figure 1. History of charter school application approval rate



Approval rates vary widely between districts: The 41-percent approval rate statewide masks wide variation between district authorizers. In Miami-Dade County, for instance, the district approved 56 percent of the 16 applications it received, while Palm Beach County approved just 13 percent – or just one – of the eight applications it received. Many of the state’s small to medium-sized districts (including Bay, Charlotte, and Osceola counties) approved most if not all of the relative handful of applications they received.

Virtual charters. Only two applications for virtual charter schools were submitted – one to Clay County, and another to Hillsborough County. The applicants withdrew their proposals before their respective district school boards could take action.

Relatively few draft applications. Despite a law enabling applicants to submit a draft application to their school districts for feedback on any material deficiencies, districts received just eight drafts by the statutory deadline of May 1. All but one were later submitted as final applications by August 1 (and three of those final applications were denied by local school districts).

Authorizer development and accountability

The State of Florida once again was the recipient of a sizable grant through the federal Charter Schools Program initiative. The Department was awarded a \$71 million share of this competitive award, in part, through its proposals to enhance charter school authorizing and accountability. Starting in 2016, and going into 2017, the Department has undertaken the following efforts, with more planned in the pipeline of this three-year grant project:

Performance framework: The Department, in collaboration with authorizers, operators, and national experts, is working to develop a statewide charter school performance framework that will provide authorizers, schools, and the public with a standardized set of objective measures to evaluate the academic, financial, and organizational performance of regular (including virtual) and alternative charter schools. Upon completing the framework, the Department will develop a delivery mechanism to allow authorizers, operators, and the public to view each charter school's performance on the measures included in the framework.

Authorizer accountability: The Department, in collaboration with authorizers and national experts, is working to develop a statewide system of authorizer accountability. This will include several in-person meetings with stakeholders.

Florida Leaders in Authorizing: This fellowship program will provide select, high-potential leaders within the Florida authorizing community an opportunity to strengthen and hone their skills in authorizing. The Department aims to partner with the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA) to create this leadership initiative. Participants will have the chance to build their capacity as well as the authorizing community through a train-the-trainer model, in which participants will be expected to disseminate information through FACSA.

Targeted training and support. Through a partnership with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) the Department is planning a series of trainings for authorizers during the next year that will dive deeply into [*the Florida Principles and Standards of Quality Charter School Authorizing*](#). Additionally, the Department, also through a partnership with NACSA, has helped to train school districts on the best practices of interview techniques so that they can better assess an applicant's capacity to open and operate a high-quality charter school.

2016 Charter School New Applicant Summary

District	Number of Applications Reported	Percentage of Statewide Total	Approved	Percentage Approved	Withdrawn	Percentage Withdrawn	Denied	Percentage Denied
BAY	1	1%	1	100%				
BREVARD	1	1%	1	100%				
BROWARD	5	7%	1	20%	4	80%		
CHARLOTTE	1	1%	1	100%				
CLAY	4	5%	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%
DADE	16	21%	9	56%	7	44%		0%
DUVAL	1	1%	1	100%		0%		0%
ESCAMBIA	1	1%		0%	1	100%		0%
HERNANDO	1	1%		0%	1	100%		0%
HILLSBOROUGH	6	8%	4	67%	2	33%		0%
LAKE	2	3%	1	50%	1	50%		0%
LEE	1	1%		0%	1	100%		0%
LEVY	1	1%		0%	1	100%		0%
MANATEE	5	7%	1	20%	3	60%	1	20%
MONROE	1	1%	1	100%		0%		0%
ORANGE	8	11%	4	50%	4	50%		0%
OSCEOLA	4	5%	3	75%	1	25%		0%
PALM BEACH	8	11%	1	13%	6	75%	1	13%
PASCO	1	1%	1	100%		0%		0%
POLK	4	5%		0%	2	50%	2	50%
ST. LUCIE	1	1%		0%		0%	1	100%
SARASOTA	1	1%		0%	1	100%		0%
VOLUSIA	1	1%		0%		0%	1	100%
Total	75		31	41%	37	49%	7	9%

2016 Charter School New Applicants

Name of Proposed School	District	Contact Person First Name	Contact Person Last Name	Email Address	Application Status	Approved Date	Withdrawn	Denied	Final Contract Execution Date
Palm Bay Prep Academy	BAY	Carla	Lovett	carla.lovett@palmbayprep.org		10/11/2016			03/14/2017
Pineapple Cove Classical Academy - North Campus	BREVARD	Kelly	Gunter	gunterk@pineapplecoveclassicalacademy.com		09/27/2016			05/23/2017
Championship Academy of Distinction of West Broward	BROWARD	Christine	Jurado	christine@juradolaw.com		11/01/2016			02/07/2017
Leadership Academy of Health Sciences and Communication K-8	BROWARD	Gustavo	Prats	g.prats@aol.com			09/29/2016		
Leadership Academy of Technology and Humane Sciences K-8	BROWARD	Gustavo	Prats	g.prats@aol.com			09/29/2016		
Mount Sinai Christian Academy	BROWARD	Gary	McCleod	revvyvregbm@aol.com			09/08/2016		
Paramount Charter School	BROWARD	Jimika	Mason	info@paramountcharterschool.org			09/22/2016		
Babcock Neighborhood School	CHARLOTTE	Christy	Noe	cnoe@me.com		09/08/2016			02/14/2017
Clay Classical Academy	CLAY	William	Korach	wmkorach@gmail.com				09/15/2016	
Clay MYcroSchool	CLAY	Joy	Baldree	joy.baldree@mycroschool.org			10/18/2016		
Florida Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics Charter School	CLAY	Patricia	Beitler	patricia.beitler@icloud.com			10/02/2016		
St. Johns Classical Academy	CLAY	Amy	Miller	amy.e.miller1@gmail.com		09/15/2016			10/20/2016
Academy of Aviation and Aerospace K-8	DADE	Melissa	Prado Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			10/21/2016		
Agro Tech K-8	DADE	Melissa	Prado Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			10/21/2016		
Agro Tech Preparatory Academy High School	DADE	Melissa	Prado Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			10/13/2016		
KIPP Miami School	DADE	Trisha	Coad	tcoad@kipp.org		10/05/2016			
Larkin School for the Health Sciences	DADE	Jack	Michel	jmichel@larkinhospital.com		06/22/2016			
Leadership Academy of Health Sciences and Communication	DADE	Melissa	Prado Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			10/21/2016		
Leadership Academy of Technology and Humane Sciences	DADE	Melissa	Prado Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			10/21/2016		
Mater Academy Cutler Bay Middle School	DADE	Christine	McGuinn	christinemcguinn@yahoo.com		11/23/2016			
Mater High South	DADE	Christine	McGuinn	christinemcguinn@yahoo.com		11/23/2016			
Paramount Charter School	DADE	Sonya	Sheer	info@paramountcharterschool.com			10/04/2016		
Phoenix Academy of Excellence	DADE	Dorothy	Davis	phoenixacademies@yahoo.com		03/09/2016			
Phoenix Academy of Excellence - North	DADE	Dorothy	Davis	phoenixacademies@yahoo.com		03/09/2016			
Somerset Palms Academy (K-8)	DADE	Adriana	Lima	adrilimamed@gmail.com		08/10/2016			
STARS Charter School of Miami Dade County	DADE	Engleleevlyn	Nunez	starschartercorp@gmail.com			09/19/2016		
True North Classical Academy High School	DADE	Luis	Diaz	ldiaz@swkj-cpa.com		03/09/2016			
True North Classical Academy South	DADE	Luis	Diaz	ldiaz@truenorthacademy.org		06/22/2016			
Seaside Charter K-8 School	DUVAL	Sharon	Sanders	principal@seasidecharter.org		10/04/2016			06/06/2017
Samantha's Academy of Science, Math & Technology	ESCAMBA	Samantha	Hill	samanthahill9023@gmail.com			08/16/2016		
Hernando Collegiate Charter High School	HERNANDO	H. Andre	Buford				09/06/2016		
Early Childhood Learning Center	HILLSBOROUGH	Jerry	Miller	jerrymiller@evolution-institute.org		04/04/2017			06/27/2017
Florida Connections Academy	HILLSBOROUGH	Karen	Duquette	kduquette@connectionseducation.com			11/04/2016		
ICan Lighthouse Charter Academy	HILLSBOROUGH	Zenobia	Cann	zjcann@icanacademies.org		12/06/2016			05/02/2017
Kid's Community College Southeast Middle Charter School	HILLSBOROUGH	Martha	Caballero	mcaballero@kidscc.org		12/06/2016			05/02/2017
Navigator Academy of Leadership Hillsborough	HILLSBOROUGH	Melissa	Prado Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			09/09/2016		
The Collaboratory	HILLSBOROUGH	Christy	Noe	christynoe@outlook.com		12/06/2016			05/16/2017
Lake Charter Academy	LAKE	Cheryl	McDonnough	cmcdonnough@charterschooluse.com		03/06/2017			
Lakeshore Academy	LAKE	Steven	Hoffman	shoffman123@gmail.com			09/02/2016		
Athenian Academy of Estero	LEE	Kathy	Hershelman	schoolleaderkh@gmail.com			09/13/2016		
New Beginnings STEM School Organization	LEVY	Bobby	Johnson	famubobby@gmail.com			09/14/2015		
Avant Garde Academy Manatee	MANATEE	Jennifer	Lucas	jlucas@allianceedservices.org				10/25/2016	
Championship Academy of Distinction of Bradenton	MANATEE	Melissa	Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com			10/10/2016		
Parrish Charter Academy	MANATEE	David	Sellars	tnflman@comcast.net			09/26/2016		
Parrish Charter Academy (1st submission)	MANATEE	David	Sellars	tnflman@comcast.net			07/20/2016		
Rowlett Monroe Rowlett Middle Academy for Leadership, Arts, and Communication	MANATEE	Brian	Flynn	flynnb@rowlettacademy.org		09/13/2016			01/24/2017
Somerset Key West Collegiate Academy Middle School	MONROE	Thomas	Rompella	TRompella@keywestacademy.org		11/22/2016			
Central Florida K-5 Polytechnic Academy	ORANGE	Lorna	Lowe	lowe1953.ll@gmail.com			09/23/2016		
Central Florida Polytechnic 6-12	ORANGE	Lorna	Lowe	lowe1953.ll@gmail.com			09/23/2016		
Creative Global Schools	ORANGE	Kim	Lundy	creativeglobalschools@gmail.com			08/02/2016		
Montessori High School Charter	ORANGE	Patrice	Cherico	patrice@mwgcs.com			08/25/2016		
Pincrest Collegiate Academy	ORANGE	Fernando / Judy	Barroso / Marty	fernbarr@gmail.com		09/13/2016			
Pincrest Collegiate High School	ORANGE	Yasmeen	Khan	ykhan@pincrestoriando.com		09/27/2016			
Pincrest Collegiate Middle School	ORANGE	Yasmeen	Khan			09/27/2016			

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Renaissance at Eastside Orlando	ORANGE	Derek	Kelmanson	dkelmanson@charterschoolsusa.com	08/23/2016			01/24/2017
Central Florida Polytechnic Academy 9-12	OSCEOLA	Lorna	Lowe	lowe1953.1l@gmail.com		09/22/2016		
Creative Inspiration Journey School of St. Cloud	OSCEOLA	Patricia (Patty)	Marquis	CJS-SC@cjschools.com	10/04/2016			
Renaissance Charter School at Eastside Osceola A	OSCEOLA	Cheryl	McDonnough	cmcdonnough@charterschoolsusa.com	10/04/2016			
Renaissance Charter School at Eastside Osceola B	OSCEOLA	Cheryl	McDonnough	cmcdonnough@charterschoolsusa.com	10/04/2016			
American Legacy	PALM BEACH	Adam	Miller	adammilleredu@gmail.com		09/29/2016		
Burnett International Academy	PALM BEACH	Burnet	Moise	moiseb@burnett.edu			11/02/2016	
Olympus International Academy	PALM BEACH	Liz	Knowles	Edrknow2@gmail.com		10/28/2016		
Paramount Charter School	PALM BEACH	Sonya	Sheer	info@paramountcharterschool.com		10/26/2016		
Rock Point Charter	PALM BEACH	Belkis	Coupet	bcoupet@abapros.com		09/12/2016		
Somerset Academy of the Arts	PALM BEACH	Lisa	Ameaud	larneaud@academica.org		11/21/2016		
South Tech Success Center	PALM BEACH	James	Kidd	jim.kidd@pbcharterschools.org		12/07/2016		
Sports Leadership Arts Management Academy (SLAM - Boca)	PALM BEACH	Alex	Tamargo	tamargoalex@yahoo.com	05/03/2017			06/07/2017
Pasco MYcroSchool	PASCO	Joy	Baldree	Joy.Baldree@mycroschool.org	10/18/2016			02/21/2017
Navigator Academy of Leadership Polk County	POLK	Melissa	Aguilar	mpaguilar.edu@gmail.com		10/04/2016		
Our Children's Prep School	POLK	Sharon	Comkowycz	sharcomk@gmail.com			10/25/2016	
Polk Charter Academy	POLK	Cheryl	McDonnough	cmcdonnough@charterschoolsusa.com			09/20/2016	
The Academy for Language and Learning	POLK	Donna	Buckner	donnalee.buckner@gmail.com		10/10/2016		
Somerset College Preparatory Academy Middle School	ST. LUCIE	Erika	Rains	rains.erika@cpatc.org			09/22/2015	
Athenian Academy Charter School of Sarasota	SARASOTA	Kathy	Hershelman	schoolleaderkh@gmail.com		10/28/2016		
Volusia Classical Academy	VOLUSIA	William	Korach	Wmkorach@gmail.com			09/27/2016	