

LOUISIANA CHARTER SCHOOL COMPLIANCE
WITH ECONOMICALLY-DISADVANTAGED
ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS



PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES
ISSUED AUGUST 8, 2022

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LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
MICHAEL J. "MIKE" WAGUESPACK, CPA

August 8, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Page Cortez,
President of the Senate
The Honorable Clay Schexnayder,
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Senator Cortez and Representative Schexnayder:

The purpose of this audit was to determine whether the state's charter schools are achieving their required enrollment rate for economically-disadvantaged students.

Overall, we found the number of charter schools meeting their required percentage has improved. However, some schools still are not meeting the requirement.

We found that between academic years 2016-17 and 2021-22, 27 of 123 charter schools – or 22% – did not meet their required enrollment percentage for economically-disadvantaged students for at least one year, and most failed to do so repeatedly.

At the same time, the percentage of charter schools meeting the requirement has improved by 11 percentage points. In addition, schools authorized by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) had lower noncompliance rates than those authorized by local school boards. BESE-authorized schools had an average noncompliance rate of 14.3%, while those authorized by local school boards had a noncompliance rate of 18.5%.

We found most charter schools do enroll a sufficient number of economically-disadvantaged students, but a relatively small group – most of which are high academic performers – have chronically low enrollment of economically-disadvantaged students. Lower-rated schools were more likely to have higher rates of economically-disadvantaged student enrollment and higher rates of compliance with the requirement than A-rated schools.

We also found that even though state law requires most types of charter schools to enroll a certain percentage of economically-disadvantaged students, it does not provide specific guidance on how to enforce this requirement. The primary mechanism authorizers have is whether to renew a charter school at the end of its charter term. However, the only requirement in state law explicitly given for renewal is that a charter school must demonstrate, using

The Honorable Patrick Page Cortez,
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standardized test scores, improved student academic performance over the course of its operation.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) and local school districts have some enforcement tools for noncompliant schools, such as recommending shorter renewal periods, requiring corrective action plans, and setting incremental performance targets, but these tools do not appear to have always been effective in bringing schools into compliance with the required economically-disadvantaged student enrollment percentage.

The report contains our findings, conclusions, and recommendations. I hope this report will benefit you in your legislative decision-making process.

We would like to express our appreciation to the LDE, BESE, and local school districts for their assistance during this audit.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA
Legislative Auditor

MJW/aa

Louisiana Legislative Auditor

Michael J. “Mike” Waguespack, CPA



Louisiana Charter School Compliance With Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirements

August 2022

Audit Control # 40220015

Introduction

We conducted this review in response to a legislative request on whether charter schools are enrolling the required number of economically-disadvantaged students² and to provide an update to a finding in our 2017 LLA audit that found that 19% of charter schools authorized by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) had not enrolled the required percentage of economically-disadvantaged students. Most types of charter schools are required by state law to enroll a certain percentage of economically-disadvantaged students – generally 85% of the rate of economically-disadvantaged students from its enrollment area. For charter schools authorized prior to Academic Year (AY) 2011-12, the required enrollment percentage the charter must achieve is 100% of the economically-disadvantaged enrollment of the charter school in the school year prior to the establishment of the charter school.

State law¹ dictates that the **best interests of economically-disadvantaged students** should be the overriding consideration when charter school laws are implemented. As a result, most types of charter schools are required to enroll a certain percentage of economically-disadvantaged students. Enforcing economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates is important because charter schools may have an incentive to minimize enrollment of these students in order to improve academic performance.

BESE authorizes Louisiana’s Type 2, 4, and 5 charter schools, while the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) oversees them. In this audit, we evaluated BESE-authorized charter schools and expanded our previous analyses to include charter schools authorized by local schools boards and overseen by local school districts (Types 1 and 3). Exhibit 1 provides the number of charter schools and students by type, authorizer, and the economically-disadvantaged requirement for each type. As can be seen in Exhibit 1, during AY 2021-22, 108 charter schools serving 65,689 students had an economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirement.

¹ Louisiana Revised Statute (R.S.) 17:3972

² Per R.S.17:3973(4), economically-disadvantaged students are those students who are eligible for food assistance programs for low-income families, disaster food assistance program, programs for needy families with children, Medicaid, reduced-price school meals, are English Language Learners, are identified as homeless or migrant, are incarcerated, or have been placed in the custody of the state.

Exhibit 1 Authorizer and Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirements by Charter School Type Academic Year 2021-22					
Charter Type	Description	Authorizer	Economically Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirement	Number of Schools	Number of Students
Type 1	New school	Local school districts	85% of the district's economically-disadvantaged enrollment in the year before the school opened or before their most recent renewal period.**	53	26,456
Type 2	New or conversion school*	BESE	85% of the economically-disadvantaged enrollment rate in the year before the school began or the year before the start of its most recent enrollment period for the area from which the school may enroll students. Generally, Type 2 charter schools may enroll students from anywhere in the state.	40	27,091
Type 3	Conversion schools*	Local school districts	85% of the district's economically-disadvantaged enrollment in the year before the school opened or before their most recent renewal period.**	14	11,748
Type 3B	Former Type 5 transferred from the Recovery School District (RSD) to local school districts	Local school districts	No requirement.	33	21,009
Type 4	New or conversion school*	BESE and local school districts	85% of the district's economically-disadvantaged enrollment in the year before the school opened or before their most recent renewal period.	1	394
Type 5	Preexisting school transferred to RSD due to poor student performance	BESE	No requirement.	5	1,594
	Total			146	88,292
	Total Charter Schools with Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirement			108***	65,689
<p>*Conversion schools are pre-existing schools converted to charter schools.</p> <p>**Some schools authorized before AY 2011-12 have required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates equal to the percentage of such students enrolled at the school in the school year prior to the establishment of the charter school. We accounted for this in our work.</p> <p>***This 108 includes Belle Chase Academy, a Type 2 charter school. We excluded this school in our economically-disadvantaged analysis due to its unique economically-disadvantaged requirements concerning the dependents of U.S. military members.</p> <p>Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using state law and information from LDE.</p>					

As reported in our 2017 audit, enforcing required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates is important because charter schools may have an incentive to minimize enrollment of these students in order to improve academic performance. State law requires charter schools to show academic improvement of their students as a condition of renewal, and studies³ have shown that economically-disadvantaged students tend to perform worse academically than non-economically-disadvantaged students. State law dictates that the best interests of economically-disadvantaged students should be the overriding consideration when charter school laws are implemented.

The objective of this audit was:

Are the state’s charter schools meeting their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates?

Our results are summarized on the next page and discussed in detail throughout the remainder of the report. Appendix A contains LDE’s response, Appendix B provides our scope and methodology, and Appendix C summarizes all charter schools with a required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage and whether they met this percentage.

³ For example, Selcuk R. Sirin, “Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research,” *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 75 (2005) pp 417-453

Objective: Are the state's charter schools meeting their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates?

Overall, we found that while there has been improvement in the number of charter schools meeting the economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentages, some schools are still not meeting the requirement. Most of these schools have repeatedly failed to meet this requirement. To help ensure schools meet this requirement, the legislature may wish to consider providing guidance in state law about how to enforce this requirement. Specifically, we found:

- **Between academic years 2016-17 and 2021-22, 27 (22.0%) of 123 charter schools did not meet their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage for at least one year, most of them repeatedly.** However, the percent of charter schools meeting this requirement has improved by 11 percentage points over this time period. In addition, schools authorized by BESE had better rates of economically-disadvantaged enrollment compliance than those authorized by local school boards – with an average noncompliance rate of 14.3%, compared to 18.5% for locally-authorized schools.
- **Even though state law requires most types of charter schools to enroll a certain percentage of economically-disadvantaged students, it does not provide specific guidance about how to enforce this requirement.** As a result, while most charter schools do enroll a sufficient number of these students, a relatively small segment of charter schools – most of which are high academic performers – have struggled to meet this requirement and have chronically low enrollment of economically-disadvantaged students as compared to other charter schools.

Between academic years 2016-17 and 2021-22, 27 (22.0%) of 123 charter schools did not meet their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage for at least one year, most of them repeatedly. However, the percent of charter schools meeting this requirement has improved by 11 percentage points over this time period.

Between academic years 2016-17 and 2021-22, 27 (22.0%) of 123⁴ charter schools did not meet their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage for at least one year. During this time period, schools that did not meet their requirement had an average economically-disadvantaged enrollment of 53.6%. The average economically-disadvantaged enrollment across all public schools in the state was 70.1% during this time period, while the average rate among all charter schools was 77.4%. Exhibit 2 summarizes the 27 schools that did

⁴Not all 123 schools were open all six years.

not meet the required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage at some point during our time period.

Exhibit 2					
Charter Schools Not Meeting Required Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage					
For at Least One Year					
Academic Years 2016-17 through 2021-22					
Charter School	Years Open During Scope (6 years)	Years Noncompliant	Average Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage Requirement	Average Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage for <u>Years Not Meeting Requirement</u>	Average Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage for <u>All Years</u>
BESE-Authorized Charter Schools					
1. Acadiana Renaissance Charter Academy	6	100.0%	57.6%	42.6%	42.6%
2. Louisiana High School for Agricultural Sciences	6	100.0%	69.7%	53.8%	53.8%
3. Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle Orleans	6	100.0%	58.0%	45.2%	45.2%
4. The MAX Charter School	6	83.3%	57.3%	42.2%	45.0%
5. Avoyelles Public Charter School	6	50.0%	57.4%	52.4%	55.4%
6. D'Arbonne Woods Charter School	6	50.0%	56.9%	55.4%	56.6%
7. Madison Preparatory Academy	6	50.0%	74.0%	72.3%	78.8%
8. Delta Charter School	6	33.3%	56.4%	48.6%	56.9%
9. Northeast Claiborne Charter	6	16.7%	67.5%	64.5%	79.3%
Locally-Authorized Charter Schools					
10. BASIS Baton Rouge	4	100.0%	63.3%	38.6%	38.6%
11. Bayou Community Academy	6	100.0%	52.9%	34.1%	34.1%
12. Bricolage Academy	6	100.0%	63.1%	49.8%	49.8%
13. Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy	2	100.0%	67.0%	56.3%	56.3%
14. Edward Hynes Charter School - UNO	3	100.0%	73.4%	57.6%	57.6%
15. International School of Louisiana - Jefferson	1	100.0%	64.4%	60.1%	60.1%
16. Robert Russa Moton Charter School*	6	100.0%	98.3%	90.4%	90.4%
17. Beekman Charter School	6	83.3%	67.2%	61.6%	62.4%
18. Lusher Charter School*	6	83.3%	24.4%	21.0%	21.6%
19. Slaughter Community Charter School	6	83.3%	67.6%	56.8%	59.2%
20. Lake Forest Elementary Charter School*	6	66.7%	78.0%	71.2%	75.5%
21. Elan Academy Charter School	5	60.0%	70.3%	66.5%	72.3%

Charter School	Years Open During Scope (6 years)	Years Noncompliant	Average Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage Requirement	Average Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage for Years Not Meeting Requirement	Average Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Percentage for All Years
Locally-Authorized Charter Schools (Cont.)					
22. Audubon Charter School - Gentilly	4	50.0%	67.7%	64.4%	67.7%
23. Kenner Health Discovery	6	50.0%	65.3%	61.3%	65.7%
24. The Emerge School for Autism	4	50.0%	63.3%	58.8%	61.9%
25. Downsview Charter School	6	33.3%	71.5%	68.7%	68.8%
26. Edward Hynes Charter School*	6	33.3%	34.4%	32.9%	36.1%
27. Northshore Charter School	5	20.0%	78.5%	76.3%	91.7%
*Charter school authorized prior to AY 2011-12. These charter schools have different economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirements. The required enrollment percentage for these charters is 100% of the economically-disadvantaged enrollment of the charter school in the school year prior to the establishment of the charter school. Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using from LDE.					

In AY 2016-17, 17 of the 80 (21.3%) charter schools that were subject to economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirements that year did not meet their required rate.⁵ By 2021-22, the number fell to 11 of 107 (10.3%) schools, an 11-percentage point improvement. Exhibit 3 summarizes the number of charter schools, by year, that did not meet their economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirement.

Exhibit 3 Charter Schools Not Meeting Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirements AY 2016-17 through 2021-22			
Academic Year	Number of Charter Schools	Not Meeting Enrollment Requirement	% Not Meeting
2016-17	80	17	21.3%
2017-18	90	20	22.2%
2018-19	98	17	17.3%
2019-20	100	18	18.0%
2020-21	104	14	13.5%
2021-22	107	11	10.3%
Average	96.5	16.2	16.8%
*Total does not include Type 3B and 5 charter schools. Belle Chasse Academy, a Type 2 charter school, is also excluded due to unique economically-disadvantaged requirements concerning the dependents of U.S. military members. Source: Prepared by legislative auditor staff using data from LDE.			

⁵ As shown in Exhibit 1, not all charter schools have required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates.

Schools authorized by BESE had better rates of economically-disadvantaged enrollment compliance than those authorized by local school boards – with an average noncompliance rate of 14.3% compared to 18.5% for locally authorized schools. BESE-authorized and locally authorized charter schools must enroll economically-disadvantaged students at a rate that is generally 85% of the rate of economically-disadvantaged students in the area from which they may enroll their students.⁶ BESE-authorized schools typically may enroll students from anywhere in the state. As a result, they are subject to a rate that is equal to 85% of the statewide economically-disadvantaged percentage. While the exact number that schools must meet depends on when the school was last renewed, the statewide rate of economically-disadvantaged students generally ranges from about 67% to 74% depending on the year. Locally-authorized charter schools typically only enroll students from the district that authorizes them and so must meet 85% of that district’s rate. This varies significantly from district to district and can range from around 63% to as high as 93%, depending on the year. Exhibit 4 summarizes the number of charter schools by authorizer that did not meet their economically disadvantaged enrollment requirement.

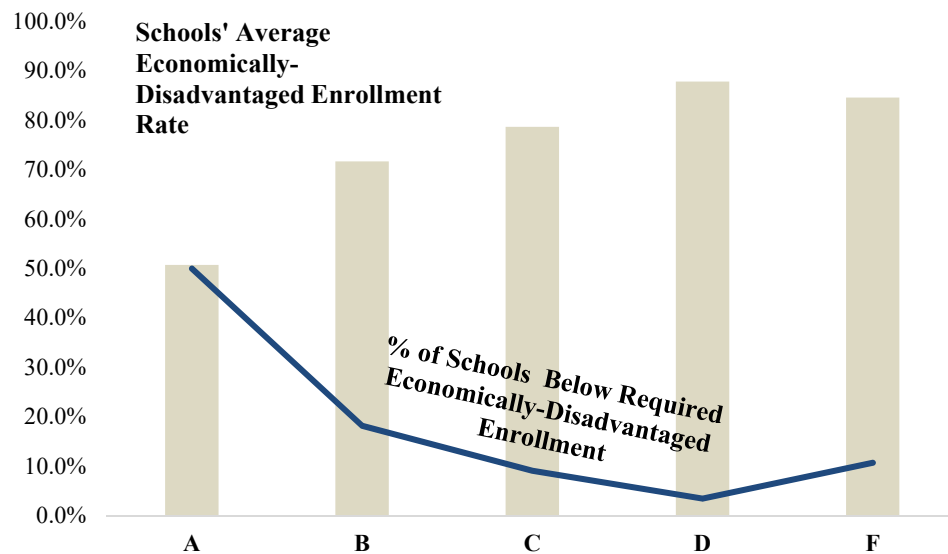
Exhibit 4						
Charter Schools Not Meeting Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirements						
AY 2016-17 through 2021-22						
Academic Year	Local School Board-Authorized Schools (Types 1 & 3)			BESE-Authorized Schools (Types 2 & 4)		
	Number of Charter Schools	Not Meeting Enrollment requirement	% Not Meeting	Number of Charter Schools	Not Meeting Enrollment Requirement	% Not Meeting
2016-17	40	9	22.5%	40	8	20.0%
2017-18	48	12	25.0%	42	8	19.0%
2018-19	55	11	20.0%	43	6	14.0%
2019-20	60	12	20.0%	40	6	15.0%
2020-21	65	10	15.4%	39	4	10.3%
2021-22	67	8	11.9%	40	3	7.5%
Average	55.8	10.3	18.5%	40.7	5.8	14.3%
*Total does not include Type 3B and 5 charter schools. Belle Chasse Academy, a Type 2 charter school, is also excluded due to unique economically-disadvantaged requirements concerning the dependents of U.S. military members.						
Source: Prepared by legislative auditor staff using data from LDE.						

⁶ Types 1, 2, 3, and 4 charter schools are required to meet these enrollment requirements. Type 5 schools and Type 3B schools (which are former Type 5 schools) are not required to meet them, because all of these schools were previously transferred from local school districts to the RSD as a result of persistent, low academic performance and typically already have extremely high rates of economically-disadvantaged enrollment.

Even though state law requires most types of charter schools to enroll a certain percentage of economically-disadvantaged students, it does not provide specific guidance about how to enforce this requirement.

While most charter schools do enroll a sufficient number of economically-disadvantaged students, a relatively small segment of charter schools – mostly of which are high academic performers – have struggled to meet this requirement and have chronically low enrollment of economically-disadvantaged students as compared to other charter schools. Lower-rated schools are more likely to have higher rates of economically-disadvantaged enrollment along with higher rates of compliance with the economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirements. The inverse is also true, particularly for A-rated schools, which are the most likely to be noncompliant with their required enrollment of economically-disadvantaged students. Exhibit 5 below shows the relationship between high academic performance and economically-disadvantaged enrollment or schools that are subject to these requirements.

Exhibit 5
Economically-Disadvantaged Enrollment and Compliance
by School Letter Grade
AY 2020-21



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using LDE MFP data.

Even though state law requires most types of charter schools to enroll a certain percentage of economically-disadvantaged students, it does not provide specific guidance about how to enforce this requirement. The primary mechanism that authorizers have for enforcing standards in their charter schools is whether to renew a school at the end of their charter term, which can last anywhere from three years for lower performing schools to 10 years for established, high-performing schools. However, the only requirement in state law that is explicitly given for renewal is that charter schools must demonstrate, using standardized test

scores, improved student academic performance over the course of their existence.⁷ The importance of academic performance may create an incentive for schools to minimize enrollment of economically-disadvantaged students in order to improve academic performance – which is vitally important for a school’s renewal. Compliance with the required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage is not a renewal requirement.

While LDE and local school districts have some enforcement tools for noncompliant schools, such as recommending shorter renewal periods, requiring corrective action plans, and setting incremental performance targets, these tools do not appear to have always been effective in bringing schools into compliance with the required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage. For some schools, low economically-disadvantaged enrollment is a chronic problem that has not been resolved using current enforcement mechanisms. Between AYs 2016-17 and 2021-22, 18 of the 27 schools did not meet their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rate in at least three years and six of the 27 schools failed to meet the required rate in all six years. LDE and local school districts have made efforts at bringing these schools in compliance with state law. For example, LDE suggested setting incremental economically-disadvantaged performance targets for Acadiana Renaissance Charter School, and one school district we surveyed stated that they had set incremental performance targets for the noncompliant school in their district that was designed to gradually increase the number of economically-disadvantaged students enrolled at the school.

Enforcing educational policy in a way that does not negatively impact existing students while still prompting schools to make the necessary changes to meet the economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirement is challenging. Closing otherwise successful schools due to low economically-disadvantaged student enrollment may not be in the best interests of current students or the economically-disadvantaged students who could potentially attend the school if it were able to increase enrollment of these students to the required level. Enforcement options may include making it a stronger consideration when setting a charter school’s renewal term or requiring schools to alter their lottery to admit all economically-disadvantaged students until the schools has met its requirement. For example, BESE promulgated a rule that states, “Nothing herein shall preclude the implementation of a weighted lottery to ensure each student population requirements are met,” which includes meeting the required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage. However, this rule does not include charter schools authorized by local school boards. While some schools do prioritize economically-disadvantaged students in their lotteries, this is typically in the form of a weighted lottery prioritizing economically-disadvantaged students *along* with other preferred types of students including siblings of existing students, rather than guaranteeing that every student admitted will be economically-disadvantaged until all seats are full, there are no more economically-disadvantaged applicants, or the school has brought its economically-disadvantaged enrollment into compliance with state law.

In addition, giving the state the ability to enforce charter school enrollment requirements in locally authorized charter schools may help improve the number of schools not meeting the required economically-disadvantaged enrollment percentage. Though locally authorized charter

⁷ R.S. 17:3992 (A)(2)(a)

schools make up 68.5%⁸ of charter schools in the state, there appears to be no mechanism for the state to address noncompliance with economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates for most charter schools, even in cases when noncompliance is habitual. Specifically, for locally authorized charter schools, the legal duty of enforcement of charter enrollment mandates under R.S.17:3991(B)(1) is placed solely on the local school board as authorizer. The legislature may wish to consider creating provisions that give the state the ability to enforce these requirements, especially for schools that have habitually failed to meet their economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirements over a number of years.

Matter for Legislative Consideration 1: The legislature may wish to consider defining how to enforce the economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirement, which could include making it a stronger consideration during a charter school's renewal or requiring all charter schools to change their lottery to require the school to admit all economically-disadvantaged students until the schools has met its requirement.

Matter for Legislative Consideration 2: The legislature may wish to consider creating provisions that give the state the ability to enforce the economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirement, especially for schools that have habitually failed to meet their economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirements over a number of years.

⁸ Including Type 3B charter schools.

APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

August 4, 2022

Mr. Michael J. Waguespack, Legislative Auditor
Post Office Box 94397
1600 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Dear Mr. Michael Waguespack,

Please consider the following communication as the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDE) response to the Louisiana Legislative Auditors review, "Louisiana Charter School Compliance with Economically Disadvantaged Enrollment Requirements," issued in August 2022.

First, I would like to thank the Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA) and, specifically, the individuals within the Performance Audit Services division for conducting a thorough and collaborative review. I am proud of the partnership with which members of the LLA and LDE teams worked together to ensure that the information presented in this report is accurate and reflective of the nuances involved in charter school authorizing and oversight in Louisiana.

While I recognize that there is much work to be done, this report also highlights elements of the work to be celebrated. In fact, this report shows that while the statewide portfolio of charter schools has grown from 80 schools in 2016-2017 to 107 in the 2021-2022 school year, the number of schools not meeting enrollment requirements, eleven, is the lowest ever (Exhibit 3).

Additionally, when considering the charter schools overseen directly by the LDE, 7.5% of schools are currently failing to meet requirements. In fact, in 2021-2022 school year, 37 of 40 schools in the BESE-authorized charter portfolio enrolled the required number of economically disadvantaged students (Exhibit 4).

In addition to the results shared in this report, the LLA makes several key observations with which LDE concurs. Namely, regarding performance differences between schools that meet enrollment requirements and those that do not as well as the limited degree to which the LDE can currently affect change across local authorizers in the area of required student enrollment.

As the review states, schools that fail to meet enrollment requirements historically perform at higher levels than schools that do meet requirements. This should not be.

The LDE's "[Believe to Achieve: Educational Priorities](#)", the Department's roadmap to improve outcomes for all Louisiana students, states that "choice expands opportunity". It is the work of this administration, as well as that of our colleagues serving in local systems across the state, to ensure that we not only expand choice *where* it is most needed but that we also expand choices *for whom* they are most needed.

Louisiana Believes



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

To that end, the LDE has enacted a set of interventions that have led to recent improvements. LDE requires weighted lotteries for the schools within the BESE portfolio that are failing to meet enrollment requirements. Additionally, schools that fail to meet enrollment requirements must submit annual enrollment and recruitment plans that outline the actions that each charter will take to diversify enrollment and meet required percentages. In a third crucial point, the LDE intentionally considers each school's economically disadvantaged enrollment compliance across key elements of oversight including the Charter School Annual Reviews published on an annual basis as well as in the course of material amendment requests and renewal decisions. One need only review the last year of the discussions heard at the School Innovation and Turnaround Committee (SIT) of BESE to understand that the LDE and BESE is committed to engaging with these issues and to administering a program in line with the intent of the charter school program outlined in R.S. 17:3971.

With regard to the relationship between local authorizers and the LDE in terms of setting and enforcing expectations for local authorizers, we agree with the LLA's interpretation of the relationship between the LDE and local charter school authorizers. The LLA correctly describes that the LDE has relatively no authority to affect change in the area of economically disadvantaged student enrollment in charter schools authorized by local school systems. There is no clear pathway for the LDE to set expectations for local authorizers nor to hold them accountable from a legal or statutory perspective.

That said, the LDE is excited to announce a series of initiatives, beginning in fall 2022, focused on enhancing the partnership and resource-sharing between the LDE and local authorizers. For example, this fall, the LDE will launch the inaugural class of the "Excellence in Authorizing" fellowship in which members of the LDE team and representatives of local charter authorizers across the state will receive intensive professional development from national leaders in the field of charter school authorization and oversight. This development will be grounded in Louisiana context as well as national best practices as an eventual goal of this fellowship is to develop a standardized set of authorization and oversight principles to be adopted by authorizers statewide.

We believe that through strong, intentional partnerships with local authorizers, we can not only reach our goal of 100% of schools serving at least the required percentage of economically disadvantaged students but also that we may become a cohesive, statewide system of excellent authorizers driving toward successful outcomes for all students.

In sum, this is priority work for the Office of School Choice and the LDE and while we are encouraged by the progress that we have seen thus far, we know there is still much work to do. I would like to again thank the Louisiana Legislative Auditor and team members for this important work. Just as we know it is vitally important to provide oversight and accountability to our schools, we too must be held accountable in order to accomplish incredible things for Louisiana students.

In Service,

Cade Brumley

State Superintendent of Education
Louisiana Department of Education

APPENDIX B: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report provides the results of our informational report on the required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates for charter schools. We conducted this performance audit under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. This report covered academic years (AY) 2016-17 through AY 2021-22. Our audit objective was:

Are the state's charter schools meeting their required economically-disadvantaged enrollment rates?

The scope of our audit was less than that required by *Government Auditing Standards*; however, we used those standards as a guide and believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions. To answer our objective, we reviewed internal controls relevant to the audit objective and performed the following audit steps:

- Researched and documented state law pertaining to the economically-disadvantaged enrollment requirement for charter schools.
- Reviewed LDE's Special Populations reports presented to BESE for AY 2015-16, AY 2019-20, and AY 2021-22.
- Analyzed October and February enrollment spreadsheets from LDE's website. This is what LDE uses to calculate MFP payments to the school districts.
- Analyzed the LDE charter school contact list from LDE's website to gain a full list of the charter schools that existed during our time period.
- Reviewed charter school renewals from both BESE and local school districts.
- Interviewed LDE staff, local school districts, and BESE to discuss this requirement.
- Analyzed School Performance Score data for AYs 2019-20 and 2020-21 to determine the letter grades for charter schools.
- Reviewed LDE's charter school compact used during annual charter school reviews.
- Provided LDE a copy of our analysis and report to obtain feedback.

APPENDIX C: CHARTER SCHOOL ECONOMICALLY-DISADVANTAGED ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS (AY 2016-17 to 2021-22)

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Acadiana Renaissance Charter Academy	Lafayette Parish	2	57.6%	No	No	No	No	No	No	-15.0%
Advantage Charter Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	57.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	33.1%
Alice M. Harte Elementary School	Orleans Parish	3	67.7%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11.3%
AmiKids Caddo	Caddo Parish	1	61.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	35.0%
Andrew H. Wilson Charter School	Orleans Parish	1	61.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	32.9%
Apex Collegiate Academy Charter School	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	29.2%
Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish	Jefferson Parish	2	57.3%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	28.8%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Audubon Charter School	Orleans Parish	3	38.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7.9%
Audubon Charter School - Gentilly	Orleans Parish	1	67.7%	-	-	Yes	No	No	Yes	-0.1%
Avoyelles Public Charter School	Avoyelles Parish	2	57.4%	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	-2.0%
BASIS Baton Rouge	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	63.3%	-	-	No	No	No	No	-24.8%
Baton Rouge Charter Academy at Mid-City	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	56.4%	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	39.3%
Baton Rouge University Preparatory Elementary	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	60.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	35.7%
Bayou Community Academy	Lafourche Parish	1	52.9%	No	No	No	No	No	No	-18.8%
Beekman Charter School	Morehouse Parish	3	66.8%	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	-4.3%
Benjamin Franklin Elem. Math and Science	Orleans Parish	3	69.8%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10.3%
Benjamin Franklin High School	Orleans Parish	3	8.3%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	26.6%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Bricolage Academy	Orleans Parish	1	63.1%	No	No	No	No	No	No	-13.3%
Children's Charter School	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	70.1%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	24.5%
Collegiate Baton Rouge	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	60.6%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	29.8%
Community School for Apprenticeship Learning	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	69.3%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11.6%
CSAL Elementary	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	64.8%	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	19.4%
Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak	Orleans Parish	1	67.7%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.8%
Cypress Academy	Orleans Parish	1	56.2%	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	7.3%
D'Arbonne Woods Charter School	Union Parish	2	56.9%	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-0.3%
Delhi Charter School	Richland Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	17.3%
Delta Charter School	Concordia Parish	2	57.0%	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-0.1%
Downsville Charter School	Union Parish	3	65.1%	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.7%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy	Jefferson Parish	1	67.0%	-	-	-	-	No	No	-10.7%
Dwight D. Eisenhower Academy of Global Studies	Orleans Parish	1	67.7%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	23.2%
Edna Karr High School	Orleans Parish	3	43.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	37.3%
Edward Hynes Charter School	Orleans Parish	3	34.4%	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.7%
Edward Hynes Charter School - UNO Campus	Orleans Parish	1	72.2%	-	-	-	No	No	No	-14.5%
Einstein Charter High School at Sara T. Reed	Orleans Parish	1	70.3%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15.1%
Einstein Charter Middle School at Sara T. Reed	Orleans Parish	1	70.3%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15.5%
Einstein Charter School at Sherwood Forest	Orleans Parish	1	70.3%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	19.9%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Einstein Charter School at Village De L'est	Orleans Parish	1	68.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.0%
Elan Academy Charter School	Orleans Parish	1	70.3%	-	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	2.0%
Eleanor McMain Secondary School	Orleans Parish	3	70.3%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	17.3%
ENCORE Academy	Orleans Parish	1	68.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	20.2%
Esperanza Charter School	Orleans Parish	1	73.4%	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	26.6%
Excellence Academy	Ouachita Parish	1	68.1%	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	26.3%
Foundation Preparatory Academy	Orleans Parish	1	61.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	34.1%
GEO Next Generation High School	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	58.3%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.5%
GEO Prep Academy of Greater Baton Rouge	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	57.8%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	30.9%
GEO Prep Mid-City, Inc.	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	60.6%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	31.2%
Glencoe Charter School	Franklin Parish	2	56.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	19.8%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Greater Grace Charter Academy Inc.	St. James Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	33.0%
Homer A. Plessy Community School	Orleans Parish	1	63.1%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9.8%
Hynes Parkview	Orleans Parish	1	72.0%	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	17.1%
Iberville Charter Academy	Iberville Parish	2	57.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18.6%
IDEA Bridge	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	63.3%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	30.2%
IDEA Innovation	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	63.3%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	20.7%
IDEA: Oscar Dunn	Orleans Parish	1	69.8%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.1%
Impact Charter Elementary	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	57.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	30.5%
Inspire Charter Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	64.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	28.8%
International High School of New Orleans	Orleans Parish	2	58.2%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	20.4%
International School of Louisiana	Orleans Parish	2	57.4%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.9%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
International School of Louisiana - Jefferson	Jefferson Parish	1	64.4%	No	-	-	-	-	-	-4.3%
JCFA	Jefferson Parish	1	64.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	18.3%
JCFA - East	Jefferson Parish	2	57.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	22.6%
JCFA - Lafayette	Lafayette Parish	2	60.6%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	28.4%
Jefferson RISE Charter School	Jefferson Parish	1	64.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	21.6%
JK Haynes Elementary School	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	70.1%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	23.1%
John F. Kennedy High School	Orleans Parish	1	73.4%	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	20.3%
JS Clark Leadership Academy	St. Landry Parish	2	69.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	26.0%
Kenner Health Discovery	Jefferson Parish	1	65.8%	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-0.2%
Lafayette Academy Charter School	Orleans Parish	1	73.4%	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	26.6%
Lafayette Renaissance Charter Academy	Lafayette Parish	2	57.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	22.2%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
Lake Charles Charter Academy	Calcasieu Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	32.6%
Lake Charles College Prep	Calcasieu Parish	2	57.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	21.4%
Lake Forest Elementary Charter School	Orleans Parish	3	78.0%	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	-2.5%
Laureate Academy	Jefferson Parish	1	64.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	12.4%
Laurel Oaks Charter School	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	39.9%
Lincoln Preparatory School	Lincoln Parish	2	58.7%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	29.7%
Living School	Orleans Parish	3	69.8%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	22.5%
Louisiana High School for Agricultural Sciences	Avoyelles Parish	4	69.7%	No	No	No	No	No	No	-15.9%
Louisiana Key Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	57.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9.3%
Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	57.3%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.8%
Lusher Charter School	Orleans Parish	3	24.4%	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	-2.8%

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Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle Orleans	Orleans Parish	2	58.0%	No	No	No	No	No	No	-12.8%
Madison Preparatory Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	73.3%	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	5.6%
Magnolia School of Excellence	Caddo Parish	1	58.7%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	21.7%
Mary Bethune Elementary Literature/Technology	Orleans Parish	3	69.8%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14.6%
McDonogh #42 Elementary Charter School	Orleans Parish	1	70.3%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.3%
McDonogh 35 Senior High School	Orleans Parish	3	69.8%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	23.2%
Mentorship STEAM Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	64.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	19.6%
Milestone Academy	Orleans Parish	2	56.4%	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	37.0%
New Harmony High	Orleans Parish	2	57.3%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14.9%
New Orleans Accelerated High School	Orleans Parish	1	73.4%	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	23.8%

Charter School Name*	Parish	Type	Average Required Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment Rate	Met Requirement in 2016-17?	Met Requirement in 2017-18?	Met Requirement in 2018-19?	Met Requirement in 2019-20?	Met Requirement in 2020-21	Met Requirement in 2021-22?	Average Difference from Requirement (Actual ED Percentage – Required ED Percentage)
New Orleans Military/Maritime Academy	Orleans Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	15.1%
New Orleans Science & Math High School	Orleans Parish	3	0.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	77.8%
New Vision Learning Academy	Ouachita Parish	2	60.2%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	23.6%
Northeast Claiborne Charter	Union, Lincoln, and Claiborne Parishes	2	66.4%	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	12.9%
Northshore Charter School	Washington Parish	1	78.5%	-	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	13.2%
Opportunities Academies	Orleans Parish	3	69.8%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	20.4%
Pathways in Education - North market	Caddo Parish	1	56.4%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	12.3%
Pathways in Education - Shreveport	Caddo Parish	1	57.5%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16.1%
Pierre A. Capdau Charter School	Orleans Parish	1	73.4%	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	20.3%
Red River Charter Academy	Red River Parish	2	58.3%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.0%

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Robert Russa Moton Charter School	Orleans Parish	3	98.3%	No	No	No	No	No	No	-7.9%
Rooted School	Orleans Parish	1	70.3%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	7.2%
Rosenwald Collegiate Academy	Orleans Parish	1	67.7%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	23.6%
Slaughter Community Charter School	East Feliciana Parish	1	67.6%	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	-8.4%
Smothers Academy Preparatory School	Orleans Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	25.5%
South Baton Rouge Charter Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	66.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	21.7%
Southwest Louisiana Charter Academy	Calcasieu Parish	2	59.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	25.9%
St. Landry Charter School	St. Landry Parish	2	62.5%	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	23.2%
Tallulah Charter School	Madison Parish	2	56.4%	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	36.5%
Tangi Academy	Tangipahoa Parish	2	57.4%	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	15.6%
The Emerge School for Autism	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	63.3%	-	-	No	Yes	No	Yes	-1.4%

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The MAX Charter School	Lafourche Parish	2	57.3%	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	-12.3%
The Noble Minds Institute for Whole Child Learning	Orleans Parish	2	60.6%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	26.8%
THRIVE	East Baton Rouge Parish	1	70.1%	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	27.0%
University View Academy	East Baton Rouge Parish	2	58.0%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.6%
Virtual Academy of Lafourche	Lafourche Parish	1	52.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9.7%
Vision Academy	Ouachita Parish	2	56.9%	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	36.3%
Warren Easton Senior High Charter School	Orleans Parish	3	54.7%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	27.7%
Williams Scholar Academy	Vermilion Parish	2	62.5%	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	28.3%
Willow Charter Academy	Lafayette Parish	2	57.6%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	37.1%
Woodmere Celerity Charter School	Jefferson Parish	3	64.7%	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	23.6%
YACS at Lawrence D. Crocker	Orleans Parish	1	72.0%	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	26.1%

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Young Audiences Charter School	Jefferson Parish	1	66.7%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	19.2%
* Excludes Belle Chasse Academy Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from LDE.										