

Chapter Seven

Teacher and Staff Characteristics

One of the stated goals of Act 22 is to provide enhanced professional development opportunities for teachers. Moreover, the charter concept makes certain assumptions about the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and staff. In this chapter we provide a general profile of charter school teachers and staff and in the following chapter we will examine opportunities for professional development of teachers and staff. Questions that will be addressed in this chapter include the following:

- How many teachers and staff do charter schools employ?
- What are the demographic characteristics of charter school teachers (gender, race/ethnicity, age)?
- What proportion of teachers and staff are devoted to instruction? What role do other staff play?
- How much and what kinds of experience/education and training do charter school teachers have? How does this compare with other Pennsylvania teachers?
- What proportion of teachers are certified to teach in their area? What are the credentials of those who do not hold PA teaching licenses?
- Why do teachers/staff choose to join a charter school?
- Are teachers/staff aware of the school's mission?

7.1 Description of Charter School Teachers and Staff

There are two main sources of data for the findings reported in this section. One is from the questionnaires we collected from a sample of teachers and staff in May 1999 and again in the spring of 2000. The other main source is data collected and reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The source of the data and information is included when reporting findings.

Survey Sampling of Teachers and Staff

In sampling teachers and staff, we included all instructional staff and key administrators at each of the 30 schools participating in our study. Thirty-one schools were open at the onset of the study in May 1999. Since that time, 1 school closed its doors, leaving 30 schools that we visited and administered surveys. An additional 17 schools opened their doors in the autumn of 1999. The only data we have from these schools was provided by PDE.

In our most recent survey, a total of 537 teachers and staff completed and returned surveys from the 649 that were targeted (82.7 percent response rate). All schools took part in this component of the

evaluation, and all schools are included in the analysis. One school had a response rate just under 40 percent; but 8 schools had a 100 percent response rate, 12 schools had response rates between 80 percent and 99 percent, and the remaining schools had response rates between 60 and 80 percent. The overall response rate was 83 percent, which was 10 percent higher than in the 1999 sample. The item response for each survey question was typically 95 percent or higher. Appendix B includes specific information about the achieved sample.

At the end of the 1998-99 school year, the sample included 447 teachers and staff from a total of 609 that were targeted. The overall response rate was 73.4 percent. Given the large number of surveys and given that all charter schools were sampled, we think these two samples can provide a representative picture of the teachers and staff at the charter schools.

Gender

In terms of gender differences, 69 percent of the teachers and staff were female, and 31 percent were male. Among the principals/directors, there was an even balance between males and females. There was little change in the distribution of teachers and staff between the two years that surveys were conducted. Female teachers and staff are still the majority in charter schools, just as they are in other public schools.

Race/Ethnicity

From the data we collected from the charter school survey, we determined that 54.8 percent of teachers/staff were white, 34.6 percent African American, 6.8 percent Hispanic, 2.1 percent Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 1.7 percent Native American. In comparison with the previous sample

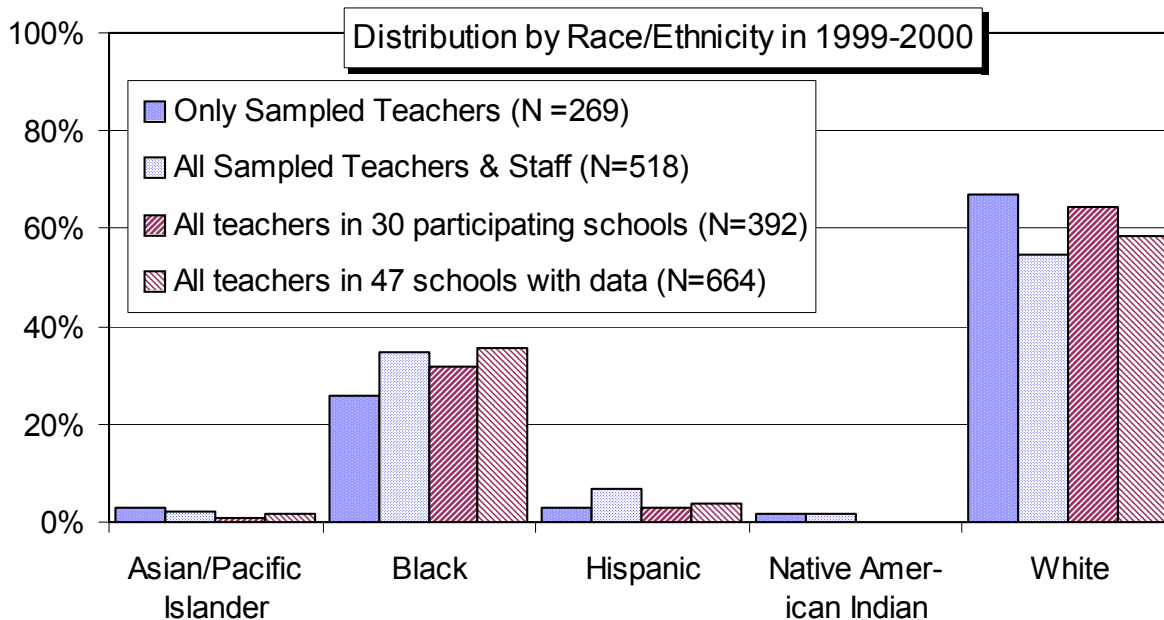


Figure 7:1 Distribution of Charter School Teachers and Staff by Ethnicity

(1998-99 school year), there are slightly increased percentages for white staff as well as Asian and Native American staff. The proportion of African-American and Hispanic staff dropped a few percentage points since the previous year, however. Figure 7:1 illustrates the relative distribution of staff by race/ethnicity in 1999/00. Separate bars illustrate the distribution for sampled teachers, all sampled staff, PDE data collected from 30 participating schools, plus PDE data collected from the 47 charter schools that were in operation during the 1999-00 school year.

Age

The age distribution among the Pennsylvania charter school teachers indicates that they are younger than teachers in the traditional public schools. Among classroom teachers in 1999/00 (n=277), 52 percent were in their 20s, 26 percent were in their 30s, 16 percent were in their 40s, and 5.4 percent were 50 or older. The classroom teachers were the youngest among the various groups of staff, while the principals/directors were considerably older.

Table 7:1 Age Distribution of Charter School Teachers Compared with National Distribution

Age Group	Pennsylvania		Percentage of National Public School Teachers 1993
	Charter School Teachers 1998/99	School Teachers 1999/00	
under 30	50.5%	52.3%	11%
30-49	43.5%	42.3%	64%
older than 49	6.1%	5.4%	14%

In comparison with the 1998-1999 school year, charter school teachers in the 1999/2000 school year are slightly younger. It was hard to find comparison data for regular public schools in Pennsylvania, but comparisons with national data indicate that the charter school teachers are younger than their regular public school counterparts (see Table 7:1).

Role and Proportion of Staff Devoted to Instruction

Among the 537 teachers and staff sampled in May 2000, 52.3 percent indicated that they were teachers, 11.6 percent teaching assistants, and 7.3 percent specialists. Approximately 8.2 percent indicated that they were Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), principals, or school directors, and 21 percent indicated that they had some other title or position. The number of key administrators increased greatly from the previous year. In part this is due to a better follow-up on the surveys. This is also likely to be due to employment of additional key administrators at a number of the larger schools during the past year to help with the operation of the school. It is important to point out that many of the teachers and staff have more than one role at their schools.

In comparison with data from 1998-1999, the percentage of teachers, specialists, and principals in the 30 charter schools increased 3.9 percent, 2.2 percent, and 3.7 percent, respectively, in 1999-2000.

According to 1998-1999 state-level data, classroom teachers comprised 49.2 percent of all public school staff in Pennsylvania. According to 1996-1997 national data, classroom teachers comprised 52.4 percent of all public school staff in the United States. Table 7:2 illustrates the change in charter schools over the last two years and compares this with the proportion of classroom teachers in all Pennsylvania public schools. One can see that charter schools have a higher proportion of classroom teachers in the most recent year; however, this estimate is likely to be high since our sample did not include custodial, maintenance, and cafeteria staff in the larger schools.

Table 7:2 Percentage of Classroom Teachers in Pennsylvania Charter Schools Compared with Regular Public Schools

Percentage of classroom teachers in Pennsylvania charter schools		Percentage of classroom teachers in Pennsylvania public schools
1999	2000	1999
48.4%	52.3%	49.2%

Distribution of Teachers and Staff by Grade Level

Teachers and staff were asked to indicate which grade they work with most. Teachers and staff appear to be somewhat evenly distributed by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school), but larger differences exist by particular grade levels. Figure 7:2 illustrates the distribution of all

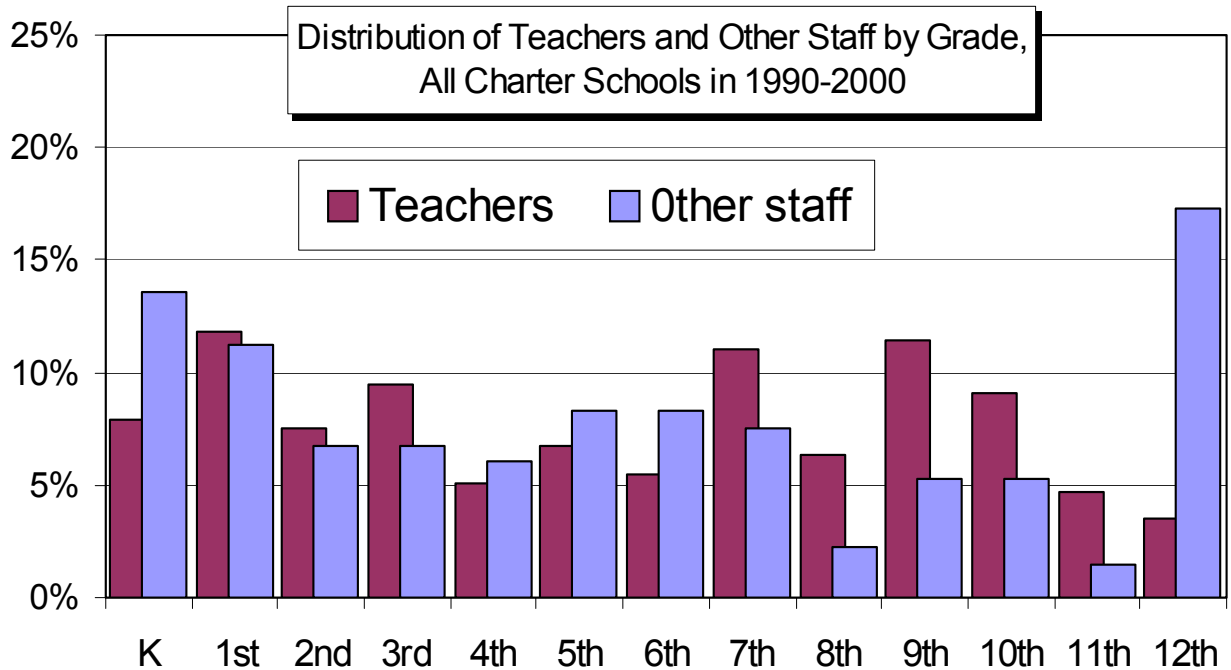


Figure 7:2 Distribution of Teachers and Other Staff by Grade, 1999-2000

Note: 23 teachers and 116 other staff indicated that grade level was not applicable for their position. The large proportion of “other staff” at Grade 12 is due to the large number of non teaching staff at Youth Build, which only caters to 12th grade students. This school accounted for 22 of the 23 staff completing a survey in this category.

teachers and staff by grade level as well as the distribution of teachers only across the various grade levels. Just over 26 percent of the staff indicated that the grade level with which they were working was not applicable because they worked in administration, in the provision of support services, or because they worked with a number of grade levels.

7.2 Educational Background and Years of Experience of Pennsylvania Charter School Teachers and Staff

Certification of Teachers

Of the 280 staff who indicated they were teachers in the May 2000 sample, 75 percent reported that they are currently certified to teach in Pennsylvania. This is a decrease from 81.8 percent in the previous year. On the other hand, the percentage of staff who were certified in another state increased from 2.3 percent in 1999 to 4.3 percent in 2000. The percentage of staff who were working to obtain certification also increased from 12.1 percent in 1999 to 17.9 percent in 2000. Furthermore, the percentage of teachers who were not certified and were not working to obtain certification has declined from 3.7 percent to 2.9 percent between 1999 and 2000. This information should be considered indicative and not conclusive. For example, among the 50 teachers who reported that they are working to obtain certification, many may be working for a second certification. It may also be the case that the “teachers” who are working to obtain certification are, in fact, only teaching assistants and did not answer the question on role in school correctly.

Most teachers reported that they were teaching in a subject area in which they are certified to teach, although approximately 11.5 percent of the teachers indicated that they were not certified in the subjects they taught. This is a slight improvement from the previous year. Since the regulations require only 75 percent of the charter school staff to be certified, one can assume that charter schools have more uncertified teachers than traditional public schools. It is important to point out, however, that even though Pennsylvania has an oversupply of teachers, many school districts are have a large number of teachers on emergency certification.

Teacher Education

In terms of formal education, the charter school staff appear to be well qualified (see Tables 7:3 and 7:4). Among those 275 staff who had completed a university degree, 75.3 percent had a B.A. as their highest college degree, 20.7 percent had an M.A., 1.5 percent had a 5- or 6-year certificate, and 2.5 percent had a Ph.D. Thirty-three percent of the staff were working toward another degree. For the most part (i.e., 70.3 percent) they were working toward an M.A.

Table 7:3 Role and Amount of Formal Education

Role	Did not complete high school	Completed high school	Less than 4 years of college	College graduate BA/BS	Graduate courses, no degree	Graduate/professional degree
Teacher	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	44.1%	30.8%	24.0%
Teaching assistant	0.0%	35.5%	32.3%	22.6%	8.1%	1.6%
Specialist	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	33.3%	10.3%	41.0%
CAO/Principal	0.0%	6.8%	15.9%	29.5%	9.1%	38.6%
Other	1.9%	26.7%	24.8%	10.5%	12.4%	23.8%
Total (N=529)	0.4%	10.0%	11.7%	32.9%	21.2%	23.8%

Table 7:4 Role and Highest Academic Degree

Role	Bachelors	Masters	5- or 6-year cert.	Doctorate
Teacher	75.3%	20.7%	1.5%	2.5%
Teaching assistant	94.1	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Specialist	50.0%	41.2%	2.9%	5.9%
CAO/Principal	45.7%	31.4%	5.7%	17.1%
Other	49.0%	42.9%	4.1%	4.1%
Total (N=410)	68.3%	25.4%	2.2%	4.1%

Note: Figures based upon sample of teachers and staff. There were 127 surveys with missing data, because a considerable portion of the teaching assistants and staff in the “other” category did not complete a B.A. degree.

In comparison with last school year (1998-1999), the percentage of teachers who had a B.A. increased from 71 percent in 1999 to 75 percent in 2000. However, the percentages of teachers who had an M.A. and a 5- or 6-year certificate decreased from 26.4 percent to 22.2 percent between 1999 and 2000. The percentage of teachers who had a doctorate

Table 7:5 Highest Academic Degree of Pennsylvania Charter School Teachers as Compared to Noncharter School Classroom Teachers

	Percentage of Charter School Teachers		Percentage of All Penn. Classroom Teachers
	1999	2000	2000
Bachelor’s degree	70.8%	75.3%	55.6%
Master’s degree & 5- or 6- year certificate	26.4%	22.2%	43.2%
Doctorate	2.8%	2.5%	0.5%

Source of charter school data comes from our surveys, while the noncharter data were obtained from PDE website.

decreased from 2.8 percent to 2.5 percent between 1999 and 2000. Table 7:5 highlights these changes between the two samples.

One can also see from this table the classroom teachers in noncharter public school tend to have more formal training with nearly twice as many of them receiving masters degrees than the charter school teachers. The charter schools had, however, a larger percent of the charter school teachers obtained a Ph.D. than the noncharter teachers (2.5% vs. 0.5%).

Table 7:6 Years of Experience by Role and in Various Types of School, 1999-00

	Private School		Parochial School		Charter School		Public School		Total Yrs. of Experience*		Years at Current School	
	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD
Teacher	0.95	2.54	0.31	1.37	1.69	0.82	1.84	3.28	4.80	4.36	1.72	0.94
Teaching assistant	0.39	1.32	0.19	1.08	1.56	0.74	0.89	1.99	3.03	2.42	1.74	1.21
Specialist	1.10	2.78	0.56	1.43	1.62	0.59	2.79	4.46	6.08	5.44	1.62	0.59
CAOs/directors	2.43	4.41	0.70	2.49	1.98	0.88	5.77	9.64	10.89	10.23	1.98	0.88
Other staff	0.62	2.26	0.05	0.28	2.00	2.24	1.84	3.94	4.50	5.66	2.00	2.24
Total, all teacher/staff (N=536)	0.93	2.62	0.29	1.35	1.76	1.24	2.12	4.41	5.11	5.57	1.78	1.29

* Total years of experience as an educator in the school types/roles listed in the table

Most of the years of experience for the charter school staff was in public schools. About 24 percent of the accrued experience of the charter school teachers and was in private and/or parochial schools.

On average, the teachers had 4.80 years of experience as educators (this does not include related experience outside of the school types noted in Table 7:6). This is an increase from 4.75 years of experience reported by teachers in the 1999 sample. Overall, the levels of formal education and amount of working experience of the charter school staff is similar to charter school teachers in other states we have studied. In terms of years at current school, we can see that the CAOs and key administrators have, on average, spent more years at the charter school than the teachers (1.98 years versus 1.69 years, respectively).

Table 7:7 contains data on teachers collected and reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The first 30 schools in the table are those that opened in 1997-98 or in 1998-99 that we visited to collect survey data. The last 17 are the schools that opened in 1999-00 and which we have not visited for data collection. The indicators include gender, status, certification type, race/ethnicity, education level, and totals for classroom teachers. At the bottom of the table we have tabulated totals and percentages for the 28 schools participating in the study as well as for all 45 schools that were in operation during the 1999-00 school year.

Table 7:7 Charter School Classroom Teachers by Gender, Employment Status, Certification Type, Race/Ethnicity, Level of Education, and Totals for 1999-2000 (www.pde.psu.edu/esstats.html)

Charter School	Gender		Status		Type					Race					Level of Education				Total
	Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time	Elementary	Secondary	K-12 or Middle School	Special Ed.	Speech	Am.Indian / Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Less than BA	BA	MA	PhD	
Manchester Academic CS	4	10	14	0	6	5	3	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	0	6	8	0	14
Northside Urban Pathways CS	3	9	11	1	4	5	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	9	0	10	2	0	12
Urban League of Pittsburgh CS	3	3	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	5	1	0	6
Mosaica Academy CS	5	24	29	0	24	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	29	0	21	8	0	29
Centre Learning Comm. CS	3	1	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	1	4
Nittany Valley CS	0	4	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	4
Chester Co. Fam. Acad. CS	1	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3
Sylvan Heights Science CS	3	4	7	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	0	6	1	0	7
Chester Community CS	0	11	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	8	0	10	1	0	11
Chester Charter School	2	18	20	0	17	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	19	0	18	2	0	20
Village CS of Chester-Upland	6	8	14	0	9	3	1	1	0	0	0	10	0	4	0	11	2	1	14
GECAC Community CS	2	11	13	0	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	10	0	8	5	0	13
Northeast Charter School	2	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	0	3
Keystone Educ. Center CS	14	7	21	0	3	14	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	19	2	0	21
Center for Econ. & Law CS	11	5	15	1	0	15	0	1	0	0	0	9	1	6	0	10	5	1	16
Eugenio Maria de Hostos CS	3	5	8	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	0	6	2	0	8
Family Charter School	3	7	10	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	0	5	0	7	3	0	10
Imhotep Institute CS	6	9	14	1	0	14	0	1	0	0	0	14	1	0	0	10	5	0	15
Multi-cultural Academy CS	4	1	5	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	3	2	0	5
Phil. Community Acad CS	5	8	13	0	1	9	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	11	0	8	5	0	13
Phil. Harambee Inst CS	4	8	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	9	2	1	12
Alliance for Progress CS	1	10	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	5	0	9	2	0	11
The Laboratory School CS	6	19	20	5	21	2	2	0	0	0	1	9	0	15	0	17	8	0	25
The Preparatory CS	2	5	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0	5	2	0	7
West Oak Lane CS	2	19	21	0	17	2	0	2	0	0	0	13	0	8	0	18	2	1	21
World Communications CS	12	15	27	0	0	24	2	1	0	0	0	21	0	6	0	20	7	0	27
Youth Build Phila CS	5	3	8	0	0	7	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	4	0	1	7	0	8
Ridgeview Academy CS	14	39	51	2	7	41	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	53	0	50	3	0	53

Charter School	Gender		Status		Type					Race					Level of Education				Total
	Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time	Elementary	Secondary	K-12 or Middle School	Special Ed.	Speech	Am.Indian / Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Less than BA	BA	MA	PhD	
Career Connections CS	3	2	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	2	0	5
Thurgood Marshall Acad. CS	5	10	15	0	9	3	3	0	0	0	0	11	0	4	0	11	4	0	15
Wonderland CS	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	2
Collegium CS	0	8	8	0	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	3	5	0	8
Architecture & Design CS	14	6	16	4	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	14	0	8	10	2	20
Christopher Columbus CS	3	18	21	0	20	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	10	9	0	15	6	0	21
Freire CS	0	5	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	4	1	0	5
Germantown Settlement CS	7	13	20	0	15	5	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	6	1	11	7	1	20
Imani Education Circle CS	6	13	18	1	15	4	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	1	1	14	4	0	19
Mast Community CS	4	19	23	0	5	17	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	20	0	21	2	0	23
Math Civics and Sciences CS	16	24	39	1	24	14	2	0	0	0	1	24	0	15	0	25	14	1	40
Philadelphia Academy CS	6	24	30	0	27	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	27	0	20	10	0	30
Renaissance Advantage CS	6	18	24	0	21	1	1	1	0	0	0	15	0	9	0	21	3	0	24
Renaissance CS	9	10	16	3	2	11	5	1	0	0	1	15	1	2	0	12	7	0	19
Universal Institute CS	2	11	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	4	0	8	5	0	13
Young Scholars CS	0	3	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	3
Crispus Attucks Youth Build CS	1	4	5	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	3	1	0	5
Total for 30 participating schools opened in '97 or '98	126	266	381	11	193	161	17	21	0	0	4	125	11	252	0	295	92	5	392
Percentages for 30 schools	32%	67.9%	97.2%	2.8%	49.2%	41.1%	4.3%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	31.9%	2.8%	64.3%	0.0%	75.3%	23.5%	1.3%	
Totals for all 47 charter schools	208	456	644	20	355	253	28	27	1	1	11	238	26	388	3	479	173	9	664
Percentages for 47 schools	31%	68.7%	97.0%	3.0%	53.5%	38.1%	4.2%	4.1%	0.2%	0.2%	1.7%	35.8%	3.9%	58.4%	0.5%	72.1%	26.1%	1.4%	

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2000 (www.pde.psu.edu/esstats.html)

7.3 Reasons to Seek Employment at a Charter School

A number of possible reasons for the teachers and staff to seek employment at a charter school were listed, and the staff were asked to rate each reason on a 5-point scale according to how relevant each reason was in influencing their decision to seek employment at the charter school. (Table 7:8 includes a rank-ordered list of the results on this question.)

Table 7:8 Reasons for Seeking Employment at This School (Rank Ordered According to Means)

	Not important		Very important			Mean	STD	Median	N	Miss- ing
	1	2	3	4	5					
My interest in being involved in an educational reform effort	3.1%	3.5%	20.7%	31.5%	41.3%	4.04	1.02	4	518	19
Opportunity to work with like-minded educators	2.9%	3.5%	20.4%	33.1%	40.1%	4.04	1.00	4	514	23
This school has small class sizes	3.5%	3.7%	21.0%	31.8%	40.0%	4.01	1.04	4	518	19
Safety at school	6.3%	6.3%	19.4%	24.4%	43.5%	3.92	1.20	4	520	17
Academic reputation (high standards) of this school	7.8%	7.6%	28.3%	28.9%	27.3%	3.60	1.19	4	512	25
Promises made by charter school's spokespersons	10.4%	9.8%	26.5%	27.9%	25.4%	3.48	1.26	4	520	17
More emphasis on academics as opposed to extracurricular activities	5.8%	10.4%	33.4%	29.9%	20.5%	3.49	1.10	4	521	16
Parents are committed	13.4%	10.3%	25.5%	24.1%	26.6%	3.40	1.34	4	522	15
Convenient location	18.9%	13.0%	28.0%	18.7%	21.4%	3.11	1.39	3	529	8
Difficult to find other positions	36.8%	15.0%	23.7%	13.0%	11.5%	2.47	1.39	2	506	31

Two intrinsic factors were among the most important factors for seeking employment in charter schools were: the interest in an educational reform effort and the opportunity to work with like-minded educators. Other factors that influence teachers/staff to join a charter school are safety at school, academic reputation, promises made by charter school's spokespersons, more emphasis on academics, committed parents, and convenient location. The least important factor rated by teachers/staff was difficulty in finding other positions. Nevertheless, just over 24.5 percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that "difficulty in finding other positions" was an important factor in seeking their position.

Many factors that were important in influencing decisions to seek employment at the charter schools were related to a better working environment; for example, working with small classes, safety at school, and high academic standards.

It is interesting to note that the rank order and relative strength of these factors was largely unchanged between 1998-99 and 1999-00. Two factors, however, dropped in terms of their importance in choosing to work at a charter school. One was promises made by the charter school's spokespersons, and the other was the academic reputation of the school.

7.4 School Mission

Charter schools provide choices for parents. Additionally, charter schools allow teachers to choose learning communities in which to work that match their interests and skills. Note that the choice premise of the charter concept assumes that teachers choose schools according to mission and that this, in turn, makes them more likely to work harder for student outcomes. In this section, we shall explore 3 general questions related to school mission, including: (i) how familiar are teachers and staff with the mission of their school? (ii) do teachers and staff believe the mission of their school is being met? and (iii) are charter schools able to fulfill their mission?

All but 16 staff members (3.1 percent) indicated that they were aware of the school’s mission. Of those who indicated they were familiar with the mission of the school, 27.6 percent thought the mission was being followed “very well,” while 44.8 percent thought it was being followed “well,” 23.2 percent “fair,” and 4.4 percent “not very well.” These figures indicate that most teachers and staff thought their school was living up to its mission.

In comparison with last school year (1998-99), teachers and staff in 1999-00 were slightly more aware of their school’s mission. Likewise, a slightly larger proportion of the teachers and staff thought the mission of their school was being followed reasonably well (i.e., the percentage of teachers and staff who thought the mission was being followed “very well” and “well” increased from 70.4 percent in 1999 to 72.4 percent in 2000). As in the previous year, these figures indicate a general satisfaction among the teachers and staff in terms of their school’s ability to live up to its mission.

In another section of the questionnaire, the staff were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of aspects of the school, including school mission statement. Here, 32.5 percent of the staff indicated that they were “very satisfied” with the mission of their school, while another 37.7 percent indicated that they were “satisfied” with it. While the teachers and staff were generally quite satisfied with the schools’ missions, they were not equally convinced that the schools could fulfill them. Nearly 14.2 percent of the staff indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their school’s ability to fulfill its mission, while 29.4 percent were uncertain. Still, 37.7 percent of the staff indicated that their school could fulfill its mission, and 18.7 percent were very convinced that their school could do this.

Table 7:9 Level of Satisfaction with the Mission of the School (N=507)

	Very dissatisfied					Very satisfied	Mean	STD
	1	2	3	4	5			
School mission statement	2.8%	3.2%	23.9%	37.7%	32.5%	3.94	0.97	
Ability of school to fulfill its stated mission	6.5%	7.7%	29.5%	37.7%	18.7%	3.54	1.08	

When comparing the two items in Table 7:9, note a significant difference in level of satisfaction in terms of the school's ability to fulfill its mission ($Z = -10.349, p = 0.00$).¹ Hence, there is a significant difference between the "ideal school" represented by the school mission and the "actual school" represented by the perceived ability of the school to fulfill its stated mission. The difference between these two items increased slightly from last year. Over time, it will be interesting to continue to trace the difference between these two indicators. Since the schools are all relatively new, and all but 4 schools are in their second year of operation, these results are not surprising. After three or more years of operation, however, one should expect that the staff's belief in their school's ability to fulfill its mission would increase substantially.

7.5 Summary

This chapter contained descriptive information about teachers and staff in Pennsylvania charter schools. It was found that a majority of the teachers in charter schools are female, while principals and directors were evenly distributed between males and females. This generally measures up to the figures for traditional public schools in Pennsylvania. Also, in comparison with traditional public schools, the teachers of charter schools are generally younger. It was found that the majority of teachers in charter schools are white, with African-American teachers second. There are few Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Native American teachers in Pennsylvania charter schools.

The survey also sought to identify the roles of staff and the proportion of those directly involved in instruction. The survey found that there is a slightly higher percentage of teachers on staff in the charter schools than in the traditional schools. Many of the principals and directors noted that they also hold an additional title/role. The teachers are distributed relatively equally by level of elementary, middle, and high school, but the distribution among certain grade levels is not as equal.

Background information and data on staff experience were also collected. The percentage of teachers certified in Pennsylvania dropped from the previous year's study, but the percentage of teachers certified in other states rose slightly. There was also an increase in the percentage of teachers working toward certification from the previous year. The vast majority of the teachers with university degrees had attained a B.A. as their highest level of education. However, a third of the teachers stated they are working toward another degree. The average years of experience level among surveyed Pennsylvania charter school teachers was just under five years.

When teachers were asked why they chose to seek employment in the charter school, the response that was highest rated was "to be part of an education reform movement." Teachers also sought to work with like-minded educators and to work in a safe environment. The least popular reason given was that a teacher had difficulty finding work elsewhere.

Teachers were also asked about the mission statement of their school. The teachers seemed to be quite familiar with their school's mission statement. However, they were not as confident in the school's ability to fulfill the mission.

¹ Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to analyze the difference between these two variables. This nonparametric procedure tests the hypothesis that the two related variables have the same distribution. It makes no assumptions about the shapes of the distributions of the two variables.