

# America's Best (And Worst) Cities for School Choice

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# Foreword

Amber M. Northern and Michael J. Petrilli

**This report focuses once again on one of Fordham’s core issues—school choice.**

**And it’s one that we’ve learned quite a bit about over the last decades.**

**Key among those lessons? Quantity does not equal quality. Plus: The conditions must be right for choice to flourish. Good intentions only take you so far; sturdy plants grow when seeds are planted in fertile ground.**

The best teacher of that last lesson has been our friend Rick Hess. Five years ago, we teamed up with him on a study that explored the ideal conditions for school reform at the city level. What factors in America’s major metropolises fostered the spirit and reality of innovation and enterprise such that reform might take root and thrive? That effort, *America’s Best (and Worst) Cities for School Reform*, found that too few of our big cities possess the talent, leadership, infrastructure, culture, and resources to beckon enterprising reformers and then help them succeed.

But we also found some innovators on that list of cities, many of which served as “proof points” and role models for stodgier places. (Especially notable were New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and New York City). And the report led to many fruitful conversations with school, city, business, and philanthropic leaders all over the place about how to fan the flames of “edupreneurship.”

Now we’re back with a targeted follow up. *America’s Best (and Worst) Cities for School Choice* is not a replica—it focuses on school choice rather than innovation writ large and considers some additional questions. But it again demonstrates vividly the spectrum of receptivity to fundamental education reform when one looks across cities.

To lead the work this time, we approached Priscilla (Penny) Wohlstetter, Distinguished Research Professor at Columbia University’s Teachers College. Penny is well known for her scholarship on the politics of education, and on school choice, including research on charter schools, charter management organizations, and parental involvement in schools of choice. Penny and a talented troop of graduate students joined forces with Fordham National Research Director Dara Zeehandelaar and Research and Policy Associate David Griffith to define what it means to be “choice-friendly,” gather and analyze copious amounts of data, and write up the results of this ambitious investigation.

They settled on three “buckets” of indicators that, taken together, provide a robust and multi-faceted picture of school choice in a given city:

- 1. Political support**, which gauges the stance of key players relative to school choice, including the mayor, city council, school board, superintendent, parent groups, and the media.
- 2. Policy environment**, which includes the strength of state charter laws; funding and facilities access for charter starters; non-profit, business, and philanthropic support; vital consumer tools, such as school report cards and pupil transportation; and quality control mechanisms, such as policies for closing weak and fading schools.
- 3. Quantity and quality**, which addresses the types of choice options that are presently available in a city and the mechanisms for helping people to access them (such as voucher and open enrollment programs); the portion of market share occupied by charters and other specialized schools; and the quality of the choice sector in that city.

The first bucket incorporates the informed opinions of several “insiders” in each community. Gaining a nuanced perspective about a city’s choice climate is impossible without asking close observers and participants. This small but carefully chosen group of respondents included a leader of the city’s largest school district (superintendent or other central office official); a representative of a local organization that supports choice; and a member of the business community. We do not claim that their views are representative of others in the city, but they do represent the informed judgment of a small group with deep knowledge of respective locales.

The use of this insider questionnaire, coupled with inclusion of a broader definition of school choice and varied data sources, means that our study's metrics differ in non-trivial ways from those used in the Brookings Institution's respected *Education Choice and Competition Index*.<sup>1</sup> (See page 24 for more.)

After combining more than one hundred data points into nearly fifty indicators of choice friendliness, here's what our ace analysts found: New Orleans and Washington, D.C. continue to earn top spots, just like last time. But Denver has come away with the bronze medal, while New York City has fallen into the mediocre middle. (Blame the "de Blasio effect.") Unsurprisingly, Albany and Pittsburgh are near the bottom. But there were also curveballs like Atlanta, which is notorious for its recent cheating scandal but turns out to attain a respectable ninth rank for choice friendliness.

Observe that all three cities with "honors grades" (New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Denver) are thriving, growing, and gentrifying places. Is that coincidence? If there's a causal relationship, which direction does it go? Do choice-friendly conditions boost a city's vitality or vice versa? Or both? It sure seems harder to enact big-time education reform of any sort in cities that are struggling economically (like Albany and Baltimore).<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the South is showing newfound strength. This includes New Orleans, of course, but also Atlanta. And keep an eye on Nashville, with its small but high-quality (and growing) charter sector. The history of segregation has always complicated school choice below the Mason-Dixon Line, but perhaps not for much longer.

**Our hope is that cities across the country will look at these rankings and work to catch up with New Orleans, Washington, and Denver. (Although reformers love to bicker over which of this trio may be the "best" model for school reform, all three tower over the rest.) But we're keenly aware that progress is not necessarily a permanent condition. New York City, in particular, reminds us that this whole enterprise is frighteningly fragile.**

**Some of us don't like to get down and dirty with the politics of school choice, preferring to focus instead on cleaner technocratic issues (like common enrollment systems, fairer funding, facilities financing, and stronger authorizing). Those are all well and good. Indeed, this report shows how important they are. But if the politics crater, all of it can crumble. So to our reform friends and allies in cities nationwide we say: Keep building smarter policies. But keep your eyes on the politics, too.**

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#### footnotes

1 Grover Whitehurst and Ellie Klein, *The 2014 Education Choice and Competition Index* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, February 2015).

2 See, for instance, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-bz-census-update-20150917-story.html> and <http://www.bizjournals.com/albany/news/2015/09/17/albany-area-private-sector-job-rate-growth-lags.html>.

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On the Fordham side, we thank co-authors Dara Zeehandelaar and David Griffith for rolling up their sleeves and seeing the many pieces of this project through to completion. Thanks also to Chester E. Finn, Jr. for carefully reviewing drafts. Research and administrative assistance was ably provided by interns Ashley Council, Megan Lail, Andrew McDonnell, Elizabeth McNerney, Melissa Reynolds, Damien Schuster, Stephen Shehy, Jane Song, and Kate Stringer. Kudos also to: Alyssa Schwenk for funder relations and report dissemination; Shep Ranbom and Ellen Alpaugh for media outreach; and Kevin Mahnken and Jonathan Lutton for report production. Additionally, we thank Shannon Last for copy editing and Bethany Friedericks, Kristin Redman and Cricket Design Works for their nifty layout design.

Last, though certainly not least, we extend our sincere gratitude to the many individuals who helped ensure that the information contained in this report was as timely and accurate as possible, including our local respondents and reviewers. A special thank you to Jim Griffin at Momentum Strategy and Research, and researchers at the National Charter School Resource Center, for their assistance on charter facilities.

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# Executive Summary

**This paper examines thirty major American cities to determine how “choice-friendly” they are today. Selected for their size and geographic diversity, the cities reveal both the best and worst conditions for school choice to take root and grow.**

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“School choice” is defined broadly to incorporate a wide range of public and private options, including charter, magnet, and private schools, as well as mechanisms for accessing these options, including open enrollment, vouchers, and tax credit scholarships.

Data on these options were collected from public databases and other sources, including district and state websites, newspaper articles, and education insiders in each city. We used these data to construct nearly fifty indicators of choice friendliness, then assessed the relative merits and drawbacks of each city’s choice atmosphere relative to three areas:

**1. Political Support** measures the views of various individuals and groups as they pertain to school choice. These players include the mayor, city council, school board, superintendent, and governor, as well as unions, parent groups, and the local media. Because this area is merely a means to an end (high-quality choices), it receives the least weight (15 percent).

**2. Policy Environment** addresses topics such as the strength of state charter laws; funding and facilities access; non-profit, business, and philanthropic support; consumer supports, including report cards and transportation; and quality control mechanisms, such as policies for closing schools. Because policies that enable school choice are an important precursor to a robust choice sector, this area is weighted more heavily (35 percent).

**3. Quantity and Quality** addresses the types of school choice options that are available; the mechanisms for accessing those options, such as voucher and open enrollment programs; the portion of market share occupied by charters and other specialized schools; and the quality of the choice sector. These topics are particularly relevant to students and families, and they are weighted most heavily (50 percent).

Based on how they measured up, cities were awarded scores and ranks, overall and for each of the three areas above. The final results are displayed on the following two pages (Tables ES-1 and ES-2). Although we opted against assigning cities “official” grades in the report, we assigned them unofficially in the tables that follow as a rough indication of each city’s performance level.

TABLE ES-1 | HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS YOUR CITY?

City	Grade	Score	Rank
New Orleans	A-	84.73	1
Washington, D.C.	B+	82.62	2
Denver	B-	74.61	3
Indianapolis	C+	73.54	4
Columbus	C+	72.51	5
Milwaukee	C+	71.57	6
Newark	C	70.18	7
Oakland	C	70.07	8
Atlanta	C	69.85	9
Detroit	C	69.10	10
Chicago	C	68.88	11
Boston	C	68.66	12
New York City	C	68.66	12
Philadelphia	C	67.64	14
Los Angeles	C-	67.21	15
Minneapolis	C-	66.51	16
Baltimore	C-	65.58	17
Kansas City, MO	D+	64.24	18
Houston	D+	63.23	19
San Francisco	D+	62.71	20
Nashville	D+	62.67	21
Jacksonville	D+	62.59	22
San Diego	D	59.41	23
Tulsa	D	57.94	24
Dallas	D	57.91	25
Seattle	D	57.53	26
Charlotte	D	56.79	27
Pittsburgh	D-	56.39	28
Austin	D-	55.08	29
Albany	F	53.52	30

GRADING SCALE: A: 85–100 (A+: 97–100; A-: 85–87); B: 75–84 (B+: 82–84; B-: 75–77); C: 65–74 (C+: 72–74; C-: 65–67); and D: 55–64 (D+: 62–64; D-: 55–57); F: below 55.



TABLE ES-2 | HOW DO CITIES STACK UP RELATIVE TO POLITICAL SUPPORT, POLICIES, AND THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF SCHOOL CHOICE?

Scores and Ranks							
		Area I: Political Support		Area II: Policy Environment		Area III: Quantity & Quality	
Rank	City	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
1	New Orleans	8.61	12	28.62	1	47.50	2
2	Washington, D.C.	7.34	21	25.94	5	49.34	1
3	Denver	11.95	1	25.79	6	36.88	11
4	Indianapolis	9.72	9	24.45	9	39.38	4
5	Columbus	6.67	24	26.47	4	39.38	4
6	Milwaukee	6.09	25	19.86	26	45.63	3
7	Newark	10.28	5	21.14	21	38.75	7
8	Oakland	8.13	15	23.20	14	38.75	7
9	Atlanta	8.20	14	27.27	2	34.38	17
10	Detroit	7.36	18	22.37	16	39.38	4
11	Chicago	10.14	6	25.62	7	33.13	20
12	Boston	8.47	13	23.31	12	36.88	11
12	New York City	5.83	26	26.72	3	36.11	13
14	Philadelphia	5.28	29	24.24	10	38.13	9
15	Los Angeles	7.08	22	25.13	8	35.00	16
16	Minneapolis	7.63	16	23.25	13	35.63	14
17	Baltimore	11.39	2	16.69	29	37.50	10
18	Kansas City, MO	7.57	17	21.52	19	35.16	15
19	Houston	9.45	10	20.03	25	33.75	18
20	San Francisco	5.78	28	23.18	15	33.75	18
21	Nashville	10.00	7	22.04	18	30.63	23
22	Jacksonville	10.55	4	21.42	20	30.63	23
23	San Diego	7.36	18	20.80	22	31.25	21
24	Tulsa	6.81	23	23.79	11	27.34	28
25	Dallas	9.86	8	18.05	28	30.00	26
26	Seattle	4.86	30	22.20	17	30.47	25
27	Charlotte	10.70	3	20.31	23	25.78	30
28	Pittsburgh	7.36	18	20.12	24	28.91	27
29	Austin	9.07	11	19.77	27	26.25	29
30	Albany	5.83	26	16.43	30	31.25	21

■ TOP TEN     
 ■ MIDDLE OF THE PACK     
 ■ BOTTOM TEN

Some cities' overall rankings come as no surprise: New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Denver are well-known reform hot spots and clearly deserve their honor grades. Seattle, especially in light of recent events, is an important (if depressing) cautionary tale. However, other cities' rankings are more unexpected. For example, New York City fails to crack the top ten (blame the “de Blasio effect”), while Atlanta ranks a surprising ninth overall (in part due to the right of first refusal that Georgia confers to charter schools when districts have surplus facilities).

Let's take a quick look at the high- and low-performers in each area. Denver ranks first for political support, thanks in part to the unusually strong backing that school choice receives from the local superintendent and school board; while Seattle ranks thirtieth, in part because of a dearth of support from these same groups. New Orleans ranks first on policy environment, reflecting its strong charter law, flexible teacher policies, and choice-friendly transportation (among other strengths); while Albany ranks last in this area, reflecting its stingy facilities policies, lack of philanthropic support, and unwillingness to close under-enrolled district schools. Finally, with a healthy supply of high-quality charter schools and popular voucher and open enrollment programs, Washington, D.C. ranks first on quantity and quality; while Charlotte, which has no voucher program, no open enrollment, and a tiny charter sector, ranks last.

Our results reveal notable patterns across cities. For example, the amount of intradistrict choice is surprisingly high, thanks to the growth of open enrollment programs. However, further proliferation of private school choice is constrained by the limits imposed on voucher and tax credit scholarship programs. Support mechanisms for consumers of choice, such as common applications and publicly provided transportation, are also inadequate in most cities. And in nearly every jurisdiction, there is still an unmet need for better facilities to house new and existing charter schools. Finally, cities like Washington, D.C., New Orleans, and Detroit show that charter market share need not come at the expense of quality, implying that the movement can be bigger and better at the same time given adequate accountability for schools and authorizers.

These patterns inform our recommendations for cities seeking to become more choice-friendly. They include the following:

**Provide charters with equitable resources,** including equitable facilities and funding.

**Expand public school choice** by establishing more robust open enrollment programs and increasing the number of magnet and CTE schools.

**Make choice more user-friendly for parents** by providing them with more and better information, incorporating magnet and charter schools into common application systems, offering equitable transportation to all types of schools of choice, and ensuring that charter and homeschooled students have access to district extracurricular activities.

**Keep mobilizing support for choice** by rallying external stakeholders to put pressure on state and local officials to go further, faster.

# Choice in America Today

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The case for school choice goes something like this: All children deserve accessible, high-quality schools. The right to choose a school is vital because it permits families to select an option that meets the needs of their children in accordance with their education values and priorities. Further, choice allows students to exit failing schools (which is particularly important for the disadvantaged children most likely to attend them). Thus, choice helps to level the playing field by broadening access to high-quality schools whose doors would otherwise be open mostly to higher-income families.

Because school choice resonates as a fundamental right to many Americans, it continues to gain traction in its myriad forms, even while it is under assault nationwide. Nevertheless, from the perspective of parents, what matters most is not the latest politics surrounding Washington, D.C.'s voucher program or the striking down of charters in Washington State, but rather the schooling options available in the city in which they live.

This paper examines thirty major American cities to determine how “choice-friendly” they are today. These findings will be of particular interest to civic leaders who want to strengthen high-quality educational opportunities in their cities and attract talented entrepreneurs who can help to make that happen. They will also interest school operators and other choice providers trying to determine where to move next. And they will give families who live (or may soon live) in these cities some orientation as to what they can expect there—and why.

## Choice in America Today

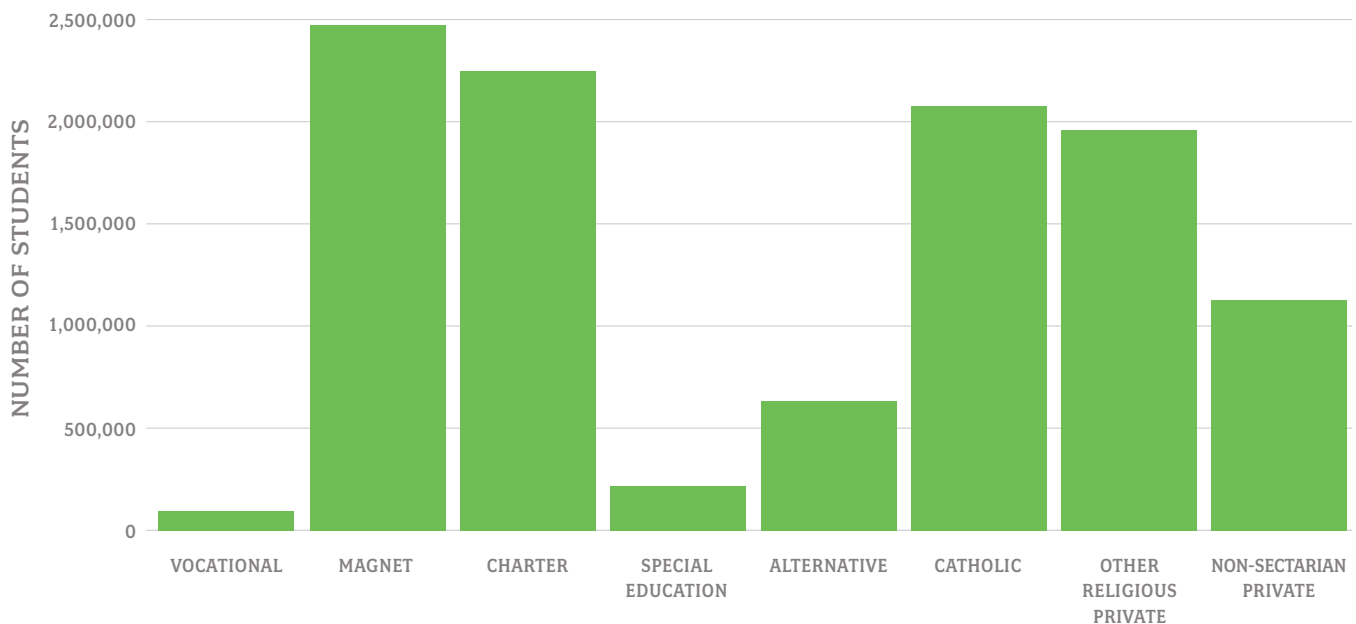
As of 2012–13, more than twelve million of the 56.5 million schoolchildren in America did not attend a traditional public school (Figure 1). Some are choosing district-sponsored specialized options like magnet or career and technical education schools. Others opt for charters: since 1991, when Minnesota passed the first charter school law, the number of charter schools—and the students taking advantage of them—has exploded (page 3, Figure 2). Now all but eight states have charter laws, and during the 2013–2014 school year, approximately 2.7 million children attended 6,440 of these independently operated public schools of choice.<sup>1</sup>

On the private side, many parents are choosing religious or secular schools, sometimes with the assistance of state programs like vouchers, tax credit scholarships, and academic savings accounts. In 2015, the Nevada legislature went so far as to give all parents in the state the right to choose to keep their children in public schools of their choice, or to pull them out and use their accompanying state funding for a variety of education services, including attending a private institution of their choosing. While other states—including Arizona, Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee—have implemented similar programs to benefit

specific groups of students, none has been as expansive as Nevada’s. This move comes on the heels of considerable growth in the number of states that permit private school choice. Eight new programs were added in 2013 alone. And as of the 2013–14 school year there are thirty-nine mechanisms for private school choice (vouchers, scholarship tax credit programs, education savings accounts, and tuition tax credits) across eighteen different states, including Ohio, Indiana, and Louisiana, providing \$1.2 billion in funding for 308,000 students.<sup>2</sup>

Even traditional district schools are becoming schools of choice, as more and more districts are removing strict enrollment zones and redefining what it means to be a “neighborhood school.” So it’s no surprise that as of 2012, nearly 37 percent of parents reported having some type of public school choice available to them (and 30 percent considered schools other than their neighborhood school).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, families that can afford to do so choose schools by relocating into zoned neighborhoods. Indeed, in 2012, 19 percent of public school parents reported that they actually moved to their current neighborhood because of the local school.<sup>4</sup>

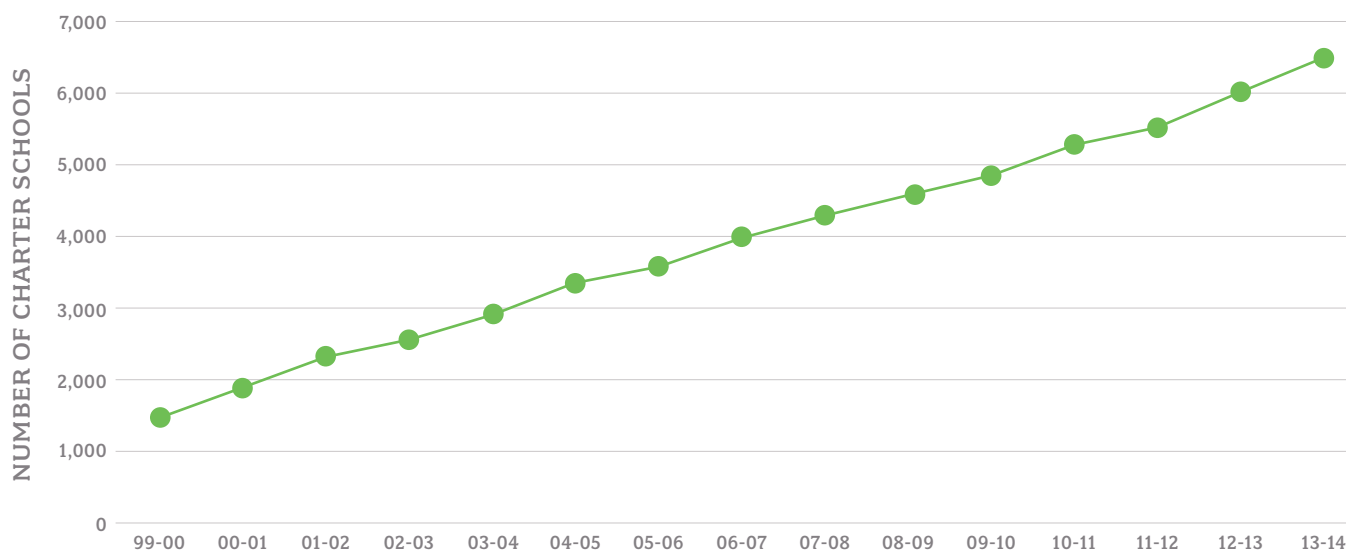
**FIGURE 1 | OF THE 56.5 MILLION STUDENTS IN AMERICA IN THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR, MORE THAN TWELVE MILLION DID NOT ATTEND A TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL.**



Notes: Private school data are from the 2011–12 school year (latest available). Magnet and charter schools are also included under special education, vocational, or alternative schools as appropriate. Data do not include all forms of choice (e.g., families exercising residential choice, students in cities with district-wide lotteries, students using attendance waivers, etc).

Source: NCES tables 205.20, 216.50, and 206.10.<sup>5</sup>

FIGURE 2 | BETWEEN 1999 AND 2014, THE NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS MORE THAN QUADRUPLED.



Source: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.<sup>6</sup>

Yet even as school choice expands around the land, it continues to come under fierce assault. In 2015, the Washington State Supreme Court overturned that state's charter school law, despite its having been approved by both the legislature and the voters. The Colorado Supreme Court struck down Douglas County's voucher program. And an Arizona appellate court ruled in 2014 that it's perfectly legal for charters to receive substantially less revenue than traditional district schools.

But do such attacks characterize the choice ethos in any particular place? Or are they merely isolated examples that don't tell us much about the environment for educational options?

That's where this study comes in. It answers a fundamental question: how choice-friendly are America's major cities? We examine a broad array of school choice options in the public and private sectors, including charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, and mechanisms for accessing these options—including open enrollment, vouchers, and tax credit scholarships.

Specifically, we examine these three areas:

- 1. Political Support:** How strong is the desire for school choice in the city? How willing are local officials and other community leaders to use their political capital to support school choice? To what degree do local media support it?
- 2. Policy Environment:** Does school choice have the potential to grow and thrive in this city? Do policies and practices support or hinder providers and consumers of school choice?
- 3. Quantity and Quality:** How real is school choice for families today? What options are available, how many students are taking advantage of them, and what is their quality?

**We analyze thirty cities—mostly large metro areas but also some mid-sized and smaller locales. Our results show which cities are running with the choice torch, which are inching forward, and which are near collapse.**

## Organization

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. First, we present our rationale for each area of our metric (Section 2), then we turn to matters of methodology, including a description of the data that comprise our scores (Section 3). Overall scores and city-level findings are presented in Section 4. (Readers primarily interested in the results can skip to this section, which begins on page 14.) City results are followed by a closer look at some key policy issues, such as whether students can enroll in other traditional public schools beyond their neighborhood and how simple (or difficult) it is for families to find information about schools of choice, apply to them, and get to them once enrolled (Section 5). We conclude in Section 6 by offering recommendations for local and state policymakers who want to advance school choice in their jurisdictions. Detailed profiles for each of the thirty cities begin on page 34.

*We examine a broad array of school choice options in the public and private sectors, including charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, and mechanisms for accessing these options—including open enrollment, vouchers, and tax credit scholarships.*

# What Makes a City Choice-Friendly?

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More than twelve million American students exercise some form of school choice by not attending a traditional public school and instead going to (for example) a charter, magnet, or private school, or opting for homeschooling.<sup>7</sup> Countless others are exercising choice using district-wide lotteries, attendance waivers, or interdistrict transfers to attend public schools other than the one in their neighborhood (see *Flavors of School Choice*, on page 7). But what does it mean to be choice-friendly? Under what conditions can choice take root and thrive? This section provides a brief rationale for the three areas that comprise the choice-friendly measure: political support, policy environment, and the quantity and quality of school options.

## Political Support

Research and experience show that the types of school choice available in a city can be shaped by local actors, such as mayors, city councils, and parent organizations. Consider New York City, where two consecutive mayors, Bloomberg and de Blasio, had vastly different stances relative to helping (or hindering) charter school access to facilities.<sup>8</sup> Teachers' unions also tend to be influential and opposed to charter schools as well as private school vouchers, which can create a hostile environment for choice providers and may dissuade parents from availing themselves of these options. And governors matter, too. Recall, for instance, Bobby Jindal's spirited support for the Louisiana Scholarship Program, which was enacted and launched in 2008 after a protracted battle.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the media play an important role: studies show that news consumers tend to be more active politically and that media bias can impact voter decisions.<sup>10</sup> Case in point: Washington, D.C. has one of the largest charter school sectors in the nation and benefits from the *Washington Post's* unwavering support of charters over the last two decades.

## Policy Environment

For school choice to exist and grow, a city must have in place a policy environment that supports providers, instead of placing restrictions on them. Charter schools are currently legal in forty-two states and the District of Columbia, but twenty-one states place a cap on the number of charter schools; other states prohibit virtual (i.e., online) charter schools, forbid failing district schools from converting to charters, offer limited options for charter authorizing, and/or give charters significantly less funding per student than traditional public schools.<sup>11,12</sup> On the other hand, a majority of states currently have policies that provide charter schools with access to facilities, such as the right of first refusal to purchase or lease facilities from the district at or below fair market value.<sup>13</sup>

A choice-friendly environment also provides parents with supports.<sup>14</sup> Some research shows that many public school parents make school decisions without seeking any information about the schools themselves, and that when they do they usually seek information from friends, neighbors, and other parents.<sup>15</sup> Other studies find that parents use academic achievement data when it is available and accessible, and that, given adequate information, they choose schools that meet the academic and other needs of their child.<sup>16</sup> Finally, parents report that transportation (or lack thereof) is a significant issue when selecting schools for their children, and many end up selecting schools based entirely on proximity.<sup>17</sup>

## Quantity and Quality

A city cannot truly be choice-friendly unless there are options—and those options produce positive outcomes for students. Research shows that public school choice has benefits. In Chicago, for instance, a 2005 study found that roughly half of the city's high school students attended a district school other than the one they were assigned, and those students were much more likely to graduate than those who attended school near home.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, a review of studies on magnet schools and interdistrict school choice suggests that these programs have a generally positive, if modest, impact on student achievement.<sup>19</sup> And charter students in a number of cities show stronger academic growth than their district peers.<sup>20</sup>

There is also a clear demand for private school choice, and a choice-friendly city should have mechanisms to assist parents, because tuition rules it out for many families. As of the 2013–14 school year, thirty-nine mechanisms are in place for private school choice (e.g., vouchers, scholarship tax credit programs, education savings accounts, and tuition tax credits) across eighteen different states.<sup>21</sup> Because private schools are often not subject to the same accountability requirements as public schools, the benefits for all private school students are largely unknown. But voucher students in Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Washington, D.C. show modest gains over their district peers; special education students report better provision of services; and parents overall report higher satisfaction with their child's school.<sup>22</sup>

**In short, choice-friendly cities have a fertile political climate, favorable policies, and a wide array of high-quality school options for children.**



## FLAVORS OF SCHOOL CHOICE

### *public school choice*

**Charter schools** are publicly funded, independently managed, and semi-autonomous schools of choice. They do not charge tuition and are held to the same academic accountability measures as traditional public schools. In theory, charters have more freedom over budgets, staffing, curricula, and other operations than do district-operated schools. In exchange, they must deliver academic results and satisfy community demand in order to remain open. Depending on state law and school policy, charter schools may be open to any students in the state, or only to students in the district in which the charter is located.

**Magnets** are free public elementary and secondary schools of choice that are operated by school districts or a consortia of districts. They have a focused academic theme and aligned curricula in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), fine and performing arts, International Baccalaureate, world languages (immersion and non-immersion), and many

others. Magnet programs are semi-autonomous, sometimes free-standing (entire schools), sometimes co-located with a traditional district school, and sometimes “schools within schools.” Magnets are typically open to all students within a district or geographic region.

**Career and technical education programs** provide students with technical and academic knowledge and skills based on what employers value. Some programs are their own autonomous schools, and others are semi-autonomous programs or academies embedded within a larger traditional district school.

**Virtual schools** allow students to work with their curriculum and teachers via the Internet; some also offer brick-and-mortar facilities for testing and/or supplemental instruction. Virtual schools are often charter schools, although some states and districts offer this option as well.

### *mechanisms for access*

**Open enrollment** allows students to attend a traditional district school other than the one that is closest to them. Intradistrict open enrollment policies allow a student to attend a school within his or her school district, regardless of where the student lives. The most “open” form is a district-wide lottery, in which students can attend any school in the district (or, said another way, in which no school has an attendance zone). Interdistrict open enrollment policies allow a student to attend a school outside his or her home district, subject to space availability, and often require that both sending and receiving districts agree to participate.

**Dual enrollment programs**—also known as dual credit, concurrent enrollment, postsecondary enrollment options, and so on—allow high school students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school, sometimes at no cost to the student or student’s family.

### *private school choice*

**Private schools** (sometimes called independent schools) are fully autonomous educational institutions run independently of the government; these schools typically charge tuition. A private school’s focus can be religious-based, academic-intensive, and/or specialized for specific groups of students. There are also accredited online tuition-based private schools.

**Homeschooling** is an alternative form of education typically carried out by parents within the home itself. Homeschooling is regulated differently from state to state. In some states, parents or tutors are able to create their own curricula, while in others, the state requires standardized tests, curriculum approval, a minimum education level of the parent or other education provider, and/or that families submit to a review by the state.

### *mechanisms for access*

Most families pay for private school out of pocket, and/or tuition (or the school itself) is subsidized by a religious or philanthropic organization. There are also some public policy programs that can provide families assistance in accessing private schools, including:

**School vouchers**, also referred to as opportunity scholarships, are publicly funded scholarships that pay for students to attend private rather than public school. Private schools must meet minimum standards established by legislatures in order to accept voucher recipients. Most voucher programs are established at the state level.

**Tax credit scholarship programs**, also known as tuition tax credits, allow individuals and corporations to allocate a portion of their owed state taxes to private, nonprofit organizations that award scholarships to participating students. Scholarships allow students to choose among private schools—and sometimes public schools outside the district—that have been approved by the scholarship organization.

**Education savings accounts** give funds directly to families, which parents can direct toward education services and products of their choice. This can include private school tuition, tutoring, fee-based online programs, textbooks, and individualized interventions for students with learning disabilities.

# Methods & Data Sources

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As indicated, choice friendliness has three components. First, the desire for school choice in the city; second, the potential for it to thrive via supportive policy and practices; and third, the reality of choice on the ground (actual options).<sup>23</sup> More specifically:

**1. POLITICAL SUPPORT:**

How strong is the desire for school choice in the city? How willing are local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice? To what degree does the local media support choice in the community?

**2. POLICY ENVIRONMENT:**

Does school choice have the potential to grow and thrive in the city? Do policies and practices in the city support providers and consumers of school choice, or hinder them?

**3. QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

How do families in the city experience the reality of school choice? What options are available to families, how many students are taking advantage of them, and are they high quality?

## City Selection

Locales were chosen based on size and geographic diversity. Using the 2010 Census, cities were categorized into mega (population of 1,000,000+), large (population of 500,000 to 999,999), and medium (population between approximately 100,000 and 499,999). Selection favored larger cities where we had reason to believe that education reform has gained traction—or is attempting to do so. The choice of cities also attempted to maximize the geographic distribution of cities across states and include a mix of choice environments (e.g., cities where choice is well established versus those where it is emerging). The final list of thirty includes seven of the nine American mega cities, fourteen of twenty-five large cities, and nine of forty-two medium-sized cities.<sup>24</sup>

## Defining and Measuring the Three Areas

This study uses a variety of data to characterize a city's choice friendliness. Information was collected from publicly available federal, state, and local education databases and from organizations that maintain relevant databases, such as the data dashboard and legislative analyses from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Data collection also involved a review of primary source information on district websites and in state policies, speeches, and newspaper editorials, and a small but carefully targeted questionnaire of insiders in each city (see *Targeted Questionnaire*). After data collection and analysis were complete, insiders in each city reviewed their city's profile; any errant data were corrected or updated if identified issues could be verified through publicly available sources.<sup>25</sup> Initial data collection began in December 2013 and was completed in November 2014; external verification was conducted between July 1 and September 15, 2015.

What follows describes in greater detail the three areas analyzed for each city and corresponding indicators. For additional information on scoring, data sources, and calculations related to missing data, see Appendix A on page 155.

## TARGETED QUESTIONNAIRE

Most of the information in the metric is gleaned from extant data sources. Yet gaining a nuanced perspective about a city's choice climate is impossible without asking insiders on the ground. To that end, we developed a seventeen-item questionnaire to be administered to a small (but carefully chosen) group of respondents working in or with each city. Three critical perspectives were identified: a leader of the city's largest school district (superintendent or other central office official, particularly someone focused on school choice); a representative of a local organization that supports choice (e.g., Stand for Children local offices, Education Cities members, etc.); and a member of the local business community, presumably with a vested interest in the academic success of students in their city. Respondents offered their opinions on the available financial and political support for school choice and the quality of choice options in their city. All three respondents in each city completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered June to November 2014, online and by phone.<sup>26</sup>

We make no claims, of course, that these views are representative of others in the city. Rather, respondents shared their own perceptions on behalf of a small group with knowledge of choice in their respective cities. These data inform a bit more than one-fifth of the metric.

**Area I: Political Support**

Desire for change is crucial to setting the agenda for education reform and making it happen, especially for school choice. Area I assesses the extent of state and local support for choice among key elected officials (e.g., the governor, mayor, and school board) as well as important stakeholders (e.g., teachers’ unions and parents). Also included is the tone of each city’s media—pro or con—about the city’s climate for school choice. Editorial and op-ed articles from each city’s principal newspaper were analyzed to gauge the amount of support. Media scores are also informed by responses to the questionnaire, where respondents were asked whether mass media (i.e., newspapers, television news, etc.) support school choice in their city.

Area I contains nine indicators, each of which is worth a maximum of four points, for a total of thirty-six possible points. Nearly all data in Area I are gleaned from the local questionnaire.

Political support lays the foundation for school choice to occur. Yet in the end, if policymakers choose not to enact and implement key policies (Area II) and make choice a reality (Area III), it cannot flourish. For this reason, Area I receives the least weight in a city’s overall score (15 percent) and Areas II and III more.

**TABLE 1 | TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE SUPPORT FOR CHOICE AMONG KEY ELECTED OFFICIALS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND THE MEDIA?**

AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)	
1.1 – Official Support	1.1.A To what extent is the mayor willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.B To what extent is the city council willing to use its political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.C To what extent is the superintendent willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.D To what extent is the school board willing to use its political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?
1.2 – Community Support	1.2.A To what extent are the teachers’ unions willing to use their political capital to support school choice?
	1.2.B To what extent are parent groups willing to use their political capital to support school choice?
	1.2.C To what extent are the media willing to use their political capital to support school choice?
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of the city’s principal newspaper?

*Desire for change is crucial to setting the agenda for education reform and making it happen, especially for school choice.*

**Area II: Policy Environment**

The potential for robust school choice rests on the policies and practices that states and cities adopt to enable different types of school choice to grow and thrive. Area II includes supports for providers (i.e., schools) and consumers (i.e., parents) of choice. On the provider end: To what extent do public and private entities offer help—funding, in-kind donations, or technical assistance—to schools of choice? Are policies in place that provide equitable funding and facilities for charter schools? Are there restrictions on the number of charters, or on the autonomies granted to them? On the consumer side: Is there a common application process? Do families have the information they need to make

informed decisions? Are students in schools of choice eligible for publicly funded transportation and/or extra-curricular activities?

Area II contains twenty-six indicators, each of which is worth a maximum of four points, for a total of 104 possible points. Data are gleaned from a combination of questionnaire, extant, and public sources.

As indicated, policies that enable school choice are an important precursor to a robust choice sector, and represent the all-important step between the bully pulpit and actual options. For this reason, Area II (35%) is assigned more weight than Area I (15%).

**TABLE 2 | WHAT DOES A CHOICE-FRIENDLY POLICY ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?**

<b>AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)</b>	
<b>PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT</b>	
2.1 – Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does the state’s charter law restrict the number of charter schools?
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in the city?
	2.1.C Is the city’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network? <sup>27</sup>
2.2 – Public Facilities	2.2.A Does the state have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?
	2.2.B What percentage of charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?
2.3 – Public Support	2.3.A In what ways do public entities (school district, city government, state education agency, and/or state government agencies) support schools of choice in the city?
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding?
	2.3.C Does state law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?
2.4 – NGO Support	2.4.A In addition to public, business, and philanthropic organizations, is there any other state or local organization (e.g. an NGO) that supports school choice in the city?
	2.4.B In what ways do NGOs support schools of choice in the city?
2.5 – Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support (money, in-kind donations, and/or technical support) in the city for schools of choice?
	2.5.B In what ways does the business community in the city support schools of choice?
2.6 – Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support (money, in-kind donations, and/or technical support) in the city for schools of choice?
	2.6.B In what ways does the philanthropic community in the city support schools of choice?
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, Walton) how many support schools of choice in this city?
2.7 – Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?
	2.7.B Are charter schools required to hire certified teachers?
2.8 – Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with the authority to sanction authorizers?
	2.8.B What is the average “quality score” for charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions?)
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and does it have a history of closing such schools?
<b>CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT</b>	
2.9 – Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in the state’s accountability system?
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice?
2.10 – Information	2.10.A In what ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents?
2.11 – Application	2.11.A Is there a common application for schools of choice?
2.12 – Transportation	2.12.A Is transportation to public schools of choice provided or subsidized on equal terms as transportation to district-assigned schools?
2.13 – Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

When sound policies and practices are in place, school consumers are more likely to have a wide variety of quality school options. Area III gauges the reality of school choice by measuring the accessibility of schools for families (e.g., charter magnet, career and technical education, private, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling), the share of the local education market they account for, and their quality relative to the district schools in the same city. It also examines mechanisms that allow students access to different types of schools, such as voucher programs that increase private school choice, and dual and open enrollment policies that expand public choice.

Area III contains ten indicators (or pairs of indicators), each of which is worth a maximum of four points. Data in Area III are gleaned from a combination of extant and public data and the authors’ own analyses.

Area III is truly where the rubber meets the road: In order for a city to be choice-friendly, it must have choice in place now, at scale, and with quality. This area is therefore considered the most important of the three and assigned the most weight (50%) in our analysis.

**TABLE 3 | WHAT IS THE QUANTITY & QUALITY OF CHOICE IN CHOICE-FRIENDLY CITIES?**

AREA III: QUANTITY AND QUALITY (50%)	
3.1 – Types of Schools	3.1.A/B Public schools of choice: Are charter and/or magnet or CTE schools available to families?
	3.1.C/D Private schools of choice: Are independent and/or Catholic schools available to families?
	3.1.E/F Other options: Are online/virtual schools and/or homeschooling available to families?
3.2 – Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a district-wide lottery?
	3.2.B/C External enrollment mechanisms: Are there interdistrict enrollment options? Can “receiving” districts opt out? Are there dual enrollment options? Can “sending” districts opt out?
	3.2.D Does the state have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for students in the city?
3.3 – Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students enroll in charter schools?
3.4 – Quality	3.4 A What is the marginal impact of attending a charter school on learning gains in reading?
	3.4 B What is the marginal impact of attending a charter school on learning gains in math?

*When sound policies and practices are in place, school consumers are more likely to have a wide variety of quality school options.*

### Calculating the Scores

Each data point is coded on a 0–4 scale, with 4 indicating more favorable choice elements and 0 least favorable. For each area, the city’s points are divided by the total possible points. This fraction is multiplied by that area’s weight, yielding the city’s area score. The area scores are added for the total score.

(For information on how missing data were addressed, see Appendix A on page 155.)

Table 4 demonstrates how the score for one city (Dallas) is calculated.

TABLE 4 | SCORING EXAMPLE

	Earned points	Possible points	Earned Points/Possible Points	Area Weight	Fraction x Weight	Area Score
Area I: Political Support	23.67	36	$23.67 / 36 = 0.6575$	15%	$0.6575 \times 15 = 9.86$	9.86 of 15
Area II: Policy Environment	53.63	104	$53.63 / 104 = 0.5156$	35%	$0.5157 \times 35 = 18.05$	18.05 of 35
Area III: Quantity and Quality	24.00	40	$24.00 / 40 = 0.6000$	50%	$0.6000 \times 50 = 30.00$	30.00 of 50
<b>TOTAL:</b> $9.86 + 18.05 + 30.00 = 57.91$ of 100 possible						

After all cities were scored, they were ranked. With its score of 57.91 points, Dallas ranks twenty-fifth out of the thirty cities on our list.

### Limitations

Choice friendliness is a moving target. Mayors and superintendents resign or lose elections; legislatures and governors enact policies that favor, constrain, or exclude various forms of school choice; and unwritten traditions or customs on the ground facilitate or deter access in ways that are difficult to measure (much less track). If gathered today, our data would likely reveal slightly different results. Further, as could be said of any study, we are limited by imperfect and missing data. For example, high-quality research is available on the academic quality of charter versus traditional district schools, but not on any other school type. Similarly, data exist on whether a particular state has a voucher program, but not on the number of students enrolled in that program in any given city in that state. Consequently, the metric tends to contain more information about public schools of choice, especially charter schools, than about other forms of choice.

**We make no claims that these areas or measures are flawless, or that they capture every choice-relevant detail of every city. As with any effort to rank cities, this exercise relies on judgments about what matters and how to measure and weight the available data.**

# City-Level Results

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This section summarizes city scores and ranks.<sup>28</sup> Table 5 on the following page displays the final rankings of the thirty cities in our sample. Top-ranked, middle-ranked, and bottom-ranked cities appear in green, yellow, and red, respectively.

Some of the cities' rankings come as no surprise: New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Denver, and Indianapolis—all traditionally known as hot spots of reform—rank high. Not unexpectedly, Albany, Austin, and Pittsburgh are near the bottom. Other cities' rankings perhaps do not align with expectations. New York City, for example, which is typically deemed choice-friendly, fails to crack the top ten in the rankings, in part due to the present lack of political support. (To see how our ranks stack up against the work of others, see *How is this Report Different?*, on page 24.)

We begin with a description of the cities that ranked highest and work down from there.



TABLE 5 | CITIES BY OVERALL CHOICE-FRIENDLY RANK AND SCORE

Scores and Ranks								
City	OVERALL		Area I: Political Support		Area II: Policy Environment		Area III: Quantity & Quality	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
New Orleans	84.73	1	8.61	12	28.62	1	47.50	2
Washington, D.C.	82.62	2	7.34	21	25.94	5	49.34	1
Denver	74.61	3	11.95	1	25.79	6	36.88	11
Indianapolis	73.54	4	9.72	9	24.45	9	39.38	4
Columbus	72.51	5	6.67	24	26.47	4	39.38	4
Milwaukee	71.57	6	6.09	25	19.86	26	45.63	3
Newark	70.18	7	10.28	5	21.14	21	38.75	7
Oakland	70.07	8	8.13	15	23.20	14	38.75	7
Atlanta	69.85	9	8.20	14	27.27	2	34.38	17
Detroit	69.10	10	7.36	18	22.37	16	39.38	4
Chicago	68.88	11	10.14	6	25.62	7	33.13	20
Boston	68.66	12	8.47	13	23.31	12	36.88	11
New York City	68.66	12	5.83	26	26.72	3	36.11	13
Philadelphia	67.64	14	5.28	29	24.24	10	38.13	9
Los Angeles	67.21	15	7.08	22	25.13	8	35.00	16
Minneapolis	66.51	16	7.63	16	23.25	13	35.63	14
Baltimore	65.58	17	11.39	2	16.69	29	37.50	10
Kansas City, MO	64.24	18	7.57	17	21.52	19	35.16	15
Houston	63.23	19	9.45	10	20.03	25	33.75	18
San Francisco	62.71	20	5.78	28	23.18	15	33.75	18
Nashville	62.67	21	10.00	7	22.04	18	30.63	23
Jacksonville	62.59	22	10.55	4	21.42	20	30.63	23
San Diego	59.41	23	7.36	18	20.80	22	31.25	21
Tulsa	57.94	24	6.81	23	23.79	11	27.34	28
Dallas	57.91	25	9.86	8	18.05	28	30.00	26
Seattle	57.53	26	4.86	30	22.20	17	30.47	25
Charlotte	56.79	27	10.70	3	20.31	23	25.78	30
Pittsburgh	56.39	28	7.36	18	20.12	24	28.91	27
Austin	55.08	29	9.07	11	19.77	27	26.25	29
Albany	53.52	30	5.83	26	16.43	30	31.25	21

■ TOP TEN     
 ■ MIDDLE OF THE PACK     
 ■ BOTTOM TEN

## The Top Ten

The top ten on the list includes many familiar names; New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Denver, and Indianapolis have all gained attention in school reform circles. However, Atlanta is a bit surprising. It receives high marks for its policy environment, as do most of the cities in this group (though Newark and Milwaukee fare poorly in this area). Interestingly, only three of these ten score well on political support (Denver, Newark, and Indianapolis). Columbus, Milwaukee, and Washington, D.C., on the other hand, all score poorly on political support despite ranking near the top on quantity and quality of choice, perhaps implying that vigorous, active political support is simply no longer necessary in these cities (or perhaps that choice is now seen as threatening and that political rhetoric has turned negative). Finally, eight of the ten rank high on quantity and quality; only Denver and Atlanta are not at the very top of the list in this area.

**01**

### NEW ORLEANS

Established in 2003, New Orleans' Recovery School District (RSD) grew into the nation's first all-charter system, attracting the attention of reformers and policymakers across the country in the process. The city's first-place ranking is partly attributable to its high marks for the quantity and quality of school choice (47.5 out of 50 possible points; ranking second out of thirty). More than 90 percent of New Orleans students enroll in charter schools, which outperform comparable district schools by a wide margin in both reading and math. However, New Orleans also receives high marks for its policy environment (28.6 out of 35; ranking first), thanks to its strong NGO, business, and philanthropic support; clear and accessible information for parents; unified application and enrollment system; choice-friendly transportation and teacher policies; and the RSD's willingness to close district schools with low enrollments.<sup>29</sup>

**02**

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

The nation's capital has acquired a reform-friendly reputation in recent years, due to the continued growth of its charter sector. Of the thirty cities in our study, Washington, D.C. ranks the highest on quantity and quality of choice (49.3 out of 50 possible points; ranking first out of thirty), reflecting the wide range of options available to families. The city's high-performing charter sector accounts for almost half of public school enrollment; a robust intradistrict open enrollment program provides students with additional public options; and the Opportunity Scholarship program offers a limited number of students access to private schools. The District receives high marks for its policy environment (25.9 out of 35; ranking fifth), reflecting a number of choice-friendly policies (such as those that exempt charters from collective bargaining and teacher certification requirements). However, it scores poorly on political support (7.3 out of 15; ranking twenty-first), perhaps reflecting recent squabbles over public and private school choice.

03

**DENVER**

Denver tops the rankings for political support (12.0 out of 15 possible points; ranking first out of thirty), thanks to the unusual number of local officials who have pushed for more school choice. In 2013, Denver Public Schools elected four new school board members, all of whom have joined other state and local officials supporting Superintendent Boasberg's charter-friendly policies, many of which are reflected in the city's high score for policy environment (25.8 out of 35 points; ranking sixth). Denver also receives high marks for business and philanthropic support, the percentage of charter schools that are located in district facilities, and a common application that includes neighborhood, magnet, and charter schools. However, it fares worse when it comes to the quantity and quality of school choice (36.9 out of 50 points; ranking eleventh), due to the lack of private school choice mechanisms in the city and the comparatively modest share of students who enroll in charters (though charters outperform district schools in both reading and math).

04

**INDIANAPOLIS**

Indianapolis is the only city that ranks in the top ten in all three areas. The city's high score for quantity and quality (39.4 out of 50 points; ranking fourth out of thirty) reflects the multiple school choice mechanisms at work there—including interdistrict and dual enrollment programs (which give families access to a variety of public options), as well as voucher and tax credit scholarship programs (which provide them with greater access to private options). Indianapolis's charters also account for a comparatively large share of public enrollment, in addition to outperforming district schools in both reading and math. Finally, the city's relatively favorable policy environment (24.5 out of 35 points; ranking ninth) and political climate (9.7 out of 15; also ninth) may be a testament to the work of organizations like The Mind Trust and Stand for Children, which have played a crucial role in bringing organizations such as Teach for America and TNTP to the region, in addition to supporting advocates for school choice in local elections.

05

**COLUMBUS, OH**

Columbus ranks high in two areas: policy environment (26.5 out of 35 points; ranking fourth out of thirty) and quantity and quality of choice (39.4 out of 50; fourth). Students in Columbus benefit from several private choice mechanisms, (such as the Educational Choice Scholarship Program), in addition to a number of public choice mechanisms (such as an intradistrict lottery). Moreover, Columbus has taken a number of steps to support consumers of school choice, such as establishing a choice-friendly transportation system. However, although charter schools account for a large share of public enrollment, on average they perform no better than district schools, perhaps thanks to a lack of quality control at the state level (which recently passed legislation aims to correct). However, the city's score on political support is poor (6.7 points out of fifteen; twenty-fourth), with local officials and parents expressing minimal support for choice.

06

**MILWAUKEE**

Milwaukee has a long history of school choice reform, which blossomed under then-Superintendent Howard Fuller. In 1990, it became the first major city in the United States to participate in a district-wide voucher program—extended exclusively to low-income, predominantly minority students. And since that time, the program has been expanded to include families with incomes up to 300 percent of the poverty line. It's no surprise that Milwaukee does very well on quantity and quality of choice (45.6 points out of 50; third out of thirty). However, many challenges remain, including a decided lack of political support (6.1 out of 15; twenty-fifth), as well as a poor policy environment for consumers and providers (19.9 out of 35; twenty-sixth out of thirty). Inequitable funding for charter schools and a lack of public transportation to schools of choice top the list of areas in need of improvement.

07

**NEWARK**

Newark made headlines for the implementation of “One Newark,” a citywide plan promoting choice, charter schools, and accountability led by former Superintendent Cami Anderson, who previously served as executive director for Teach for America and chief program officer for New Leaders for New Schools. When our questionnaire was administered, respondents indicated strong political support for school choice in the city (10.3 out of 15 possible points; ranking fifth out of thirty). But in the past year there has been a growing backlash. Newark also ranks well on quantity and quality (38.8 out of 50; seventh), although it lacks private-school-choice mechanisms. However, the city receives low marks for its policy environment (21.1 out of 35; twenty-first). While the district has closed schools with low enrollments and many charters are located in district facilities, New Jersey law does not exempt charters from collective bargaining or teacher certification requirements.

08

**OAKLAND**

Political support for choice in Oakland is lukewarm (8.1 points out of 15; fifteenth out of thirty), and the city’s policy environment is a mixed bag (23.2 out of 35; fourteenth). Oakland receives high marks for its philanthropic support, common application for enrollment, and willingness to close schools with low enrollments. However, funding for charter schools is well below that of district schools. Despite these weaknesses, Oakland fares well in terms of the quantity and quality of school choice (38.8 out of 50; seventh). A comparatively high percentage of students enroll in charters, which outperform district schools in both reading and math. Still, Oakland has few magnet schools or other district schools of choice, and because California does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, private options remain out of reach for many students.

09

**ATLANTA**

National media attention on Atlanta has focused on the test-cheating scandal, with choice receiving little attention. Yet, upon closer examination, Atlanta possesses some unexpected strengths. The policy environment is extremely choice-friendly (27.3 points out of a possible 35; second out of thirty). For example, in addition to placing no restrictions on the number of charter schools in the state, Georgia law grants them the “right of first refusal” to surplus district facilities. Moreover, the city receives high marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support, funding for charter authorizers, and its willingness to close schools with low enrollment. Last year, the Atlanta Board of Education, in conjunction with the new superintendent, Meria Carstarphen, submitted a letter of intent indicating they would apply to the state for Atlanta Public Schools to become a charter system. Still, the city scores in the middle of the pack on the quantity and quality of choice (34.4 out of 50; seventeenth) and political support (8.2 out of 15; fourteenth), showing there is room for growth in both areas.

10

**DETROIT**

Compared to other cities, a high percentage of Detroit’s public schools are schools of choice, and roughly 54 percent of public school students enroll in charters, which outperform the city’s abysmal district schools in both reading and math. Thanks to these strengths, the city ranks near the top on quantity and quality of choice (39.4 out of 50 possible points; ranking fourth out of thirty). Unfortunately, political support for choice is weak (7.4 out of 15; eighteenth). Although parent groups and local media support choice, the superintendent, school board, and teachers’ union do not. Similarly, the policy environment (22.4 out of 35; sixteenth) provides few supports for providers or consumers of choice. In particular, Detroit does not provide families with a common application or transportation to schools of choice, and charter schools receive far less funding than district schools.

## The Middle of the Pack

The middle of the pack includes several large cities that are traditionally thought of as choice-friendly, including Chicago, New York City, Boston, and Houston. However, each of these cities is missing some aspect of the choice landscape and receives low scores in at least one area. For several of these cities, district-wide lotteries are the primary way that families exercise school choice—a necessary phase, perhaps, in the transition to a system with more specialized options like magnets, charters, and private schools.

**11****CHICAGO**

Chicago has a track record of reform, so it's not surprising that it scores well on political support (10.1 out of 15 possible points; ranking sixth out of thirty). Paul Vallas, former chief executive officer of Chicago Public Schools, heavily promoted the opening of magnet and charter schools under former Mayor Daley's administration. And more recently, Mayor Rahm Emanuel has continued to push for charter schools.

This consistent political support is tied to a favorable policy environment (25.6 out of 35; seventh), which has attracted high-performing charter management organizations, such as the Chicago International Charter School. However, despite continued progress, the quantity and quality of options in the city leaves much to be desired (33.1 out of 50; twentieth). True, there has been a six-fold increase in charter school enrollment between 2003 and 2013. But the state caps the number of charters in the city, so most of Chicago's public school options are magnet (or "magnet cluster") schools. And although the Archdiocese of Chicago runs the largest private school system in the US, with 240 schools throughout the Chicago area, there are no voucher or tax credit options for students to access these schools.

**12****BOSTON (tied)**

Boston's scores are uniformly mediocre across our three areas. Political support for choice is mixed (8.5 points out of 15; thirteenth out of thirty), as is its policy environment (23.3 out of 35; twelfth). For example, the city receives high marks for its NGO, business, and philanthropic support, and for providing transportation to schools of choice on equal terms with district-run schools. However, Massachusetts charters lack the "right of first refusal" to district facilities, and few Boston charters are housed in them. The city's scores for quantity and quality highlight its untapped potential (36.9 out of 50; eleventh). Boston has the highest-performing charter sector in the nation, but a state charter cap keeps it small.

12

**NEW YORK CITY** (*tied*)

New York City scores well for its policy environment (26.7 out of 35 possible points; ranking third out of thirty). The city receives high marks for its business and philanthropic support and common application (for district schools), as well as the availability of district facilities for charter schools. Unfortunately, there has been an unmistakable decline in political support for choice (5.8 out of 15; twenty-sixth), since the election of Mayor Bill de Blasio, and his appointment of traditionalist Carmen Fariña as schools chancellor. Though New York City is known as a public school choice hotspot, thanks to its citywide lottery, the quantity and quality of choice has room for improvement (36.1 out of 50; thirteenth), in part because a comparatively low percentage of its million-plus students actually enroll in charters, and in part because of the lack of private choice mechanisms in the city.

15

**LOS ANGELES**

Like New York City, Los Angeles has a choice-friendly policy environment (25.1 out of 35 points; ranking eighth). In 2009, the Los Angeles Unified School District launched its Public School Choice Initiative, which allows teams of internal and external stakeholders (such as local educators, community members and charter school operators) to compete to run new or low-performing schools in the district. However, although the city's charter sector is growing, like New York's it remains relatively small compared to the district, and overall the city ranks in the middle of the pack on quantity and quality of choice (35.0 out of 50; sixteenth). Finally, also as it is in New York, political support for choice is fairly low in Los Angeles (7.1 out of 15; twenty-second) reflecting the protracted battles waged by the movement's supporters and opponents.

14

**PHILADELPHIA**

Philadelphia receives high marks for the quantity and quality of school choice in the city (38.1 points out of 50; ranking ninth out of thirty) and for its policy environment (24.2 out of 35; tenth). However, its score for political support is abysmal (5.3 out of 15; twenty-ninth). Questionnaire respondents indicated a lack of political support across the board, and the city has been divided by the prospect of new charter schools, with unions and many parents on the one side and choice proponents (such as StudentsFirst and the Gates Foundation), on the other. Despite these political barriers, Philadelphia's charter sector is one of the largest in the country, accounting for at least 30 percent of public enrollment. And the city's students also benefit from a number of choice-friendly state policies and programs, including a recently enacted voucher program.

16

**MINNEAPOLIS**

Minneapolis's commitment to school choice is exemplified by two policies: a district-charter compact signed in 2010 in which the two sectors agreed to expand "successful schools" in the form of charters; and "The Choice Is Yours" program, which provides low-income families with increased access to suburban schools and select magnet schools. However, this commitment has yet to lift the city to the top of our list in any of our three areas (sixteenth, thirteenth, and fourteenth out of thirty, respectively). Although families have a range of public (but not private) choice mechanisms, the city lacks charter-friendly policies for facilities and transportation, and charters are not exempt from teacher certification requirements.

17

**BALTIMORE**

Baltimore earned one of the highest scores for political support (11.4 points out of 15; second out of thirty). However, so far this has not translated into a choice-friendly policy environment (16.7 out of 35; twenty-ninth). For example, the city's charter schools are still bound by collective bargaining agreements and teacher certification requirements, and there is no publicly provided transportation for the students attending them. Yet Baltimore's dismal policy environment is not reflected in the quantity and quality of choice in the city (37.5 out of 50; tenth)—at least when it comes to the number of public options, which is surprisingly large at the high school level.

18

**KANSAS CITY, MO**

Kansas City's mix of strong and weak factors resulted in the city ranking middling-to-low in each area (seventeenth, nineteenth, and fifteenth out of thirty). On the choice-friendly side, the city receives high marks for NGO and business support; charters are exempt from collective bargaining agreements; and choice schools have a high market share (though this may be partly attributable to interdistrict choice and the district's loss of accreditation, which has motivated families to leave district schools). However, the city lacks a common application, "right of first refusal" for charters to access district facilities (many of which sit empty), and voucher or tax credit programs for private school choice. Charters also receive significantly less funding than district schools.

19

**HOUSTON**

As the birthplace of two of the most celebrated charter management organizations, YES Prep and KIPP Public Charter Schools, Houston might be expected to rank higher than nineteenth overall. Yet its policy environment is markedly choice-unfriendly (20.0 points out of a possible 35; ranking twenty-fifth out of thirty). Many of the city's public choice options are magnet schools, not charters, and its policies reflect this fact—magnet students have access to transportation and a common application, while charter students do not. Political support for choice is relatively strong (9.5 out of 15; tenth). However, the quantity and quality of choice leaves much to be desired (33.8 out of 50; eighteenth). As is the case in other mega-cities, Houston enrolls many students in charter schools—but many more in schools run by the district.

20

**SAN FRANCISCO**

Political and media support for choice is low in San Francisco (5.8 points out of 15; twenty-eighth out of thirty) and the policy environment is mixed (23.2 out of 35; fifteenth). Although there is a district-wide lottery, the city usually does not provide transportation to students who attend a district school other than their neighborhood school, and the same lack of transportation applies to charters. Additionally, San Francisco's charter sector (though high-performing) is small, and there is no voucher or tax credit scholarship program in the city—both factors that negatively impact its score for quantity and quality (33.8 out of 50; eighteenth).



## The Bottom Ten

The lowest-ranking cities in our sample aren't much of a surprise. After all, Tulsa and Pittsburgh aren't exactly hotbeds of school choice, and the atmosphere in Seattle is downright hostile to it. A few cities—Nashville, Jacksonville, Dallas, and Charlotte—seem to want school choice (all four rank high on political support). However, none of the cities in this group have choice-friendly policy environments, and they fare even worse when it comes to the quantity and quality of choice.

**21****NASHVILLE**

Nashville might best be described as a city with great potential. Charter networks have a strong presence there, with KIPP, LEAD, and RePublic Schools all running schools in the city. The city's potential is reflected in its scores, which place it near the bottom for quantity and quality of choice (30.6 points out of 50; ranking twenty-third out of thirty), in the middle for policy environment (22.0 out of 35; eighteenth), and near the top for political support (10.0 out of 15; seventh). On average, Nashville's charters outperform their district counterparts in both reading and math. However, despite their rapid growth, they account for just a small fraction of total public enrollment.

**23****SAN DIEGO**

In 2013, San Diego Unified was a finalist for the Broad Prize for Urban Education. However, the city as a whole fares poorly in our rankings. Political support is lukewarm (7.4 points out of 15; ranking eighteenth out of thirty), and the policy environment is not choice-friendly (20.8 out of 35; twenty-second). The city receives high marks for its accountability system and the number of charters located in district facilities, but low marks for the lack of charter funding equity and choice-friendly transportation. Finally, because it has comparatively few public schools of choice and no voucher or tax credit scholarship programs, San Diego receives low marks for quantity and quality (31.3 points out of 50; twenty-first).

**22****JACKSONVILLE**

The amount of school choice in Jacksonville has skyrocketed, with the fraction of students enrolled in charter schools growing 344 percent in the past five years. Duval County has worked to forge partnerships between traditional and charter schools and has made a concerted effort to provide high quality information to parents. Political support for choice is high (10.6 points out of 15; fourth out of thirty), but the policy environment (21.4 out of 35; twentieth) is still a work in progress, and the quantity and quality of choice leaves much to be desired (30.6 points out of 50; twenty-third). Jacksonville is the only city in our sample where district schools outperform charter schools.

**24****TULSA**

Tulsa's policy environment is mixed (23.8 points out of 35; ranking eleventh out of thirty). On the one hand, the city's charters benefit from state laws exempting them from collective bargaining and teacher certification requirements, and many are located in district facilities. But on the other hand, there is no common application for schools of choice, and the district (which authorizes about half of the city's charters) does not engage in many of the practices associated with quality authorizing, according to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. With little political support (6.8 out of 15; twenty-third), at least at the local level, Tulsa's choice sector faces challenges, which are reflected in the city's low rank on quantity and quality (27.3 out of 50; twenty-eighth).



25

**DALLAS**

Dallas is an example of a city in which support for choice is mostly talk—we see little action. Questionnaire respondents indicated strong political support for choice, and the city’s high rank in this area reflects that support (9.9 points out of 15; ranking eighth out of thirty). However, the policy environment is not particularly favorable for either providers or parents (18.1 out of 35; twenty-eighth). Funding for charter schools is inequitable, transportation is not choice-friendly, and most schools of choice are not included in Dallas’s common application system. These weak supports may explain why the quantity and quality of choice in Dallas is so low (30.0 out of 50; twenty-sixth).

26

**SEATTLE**

Even before the state Supreme Court declared Washington’s charter law unconstitutional, Seattle was one of the least choice-friendly cities on our list. (Note that data for Seattle are accurate as of July 2015, to be consistent with the remaining cities in the study, and recent implications of the Supreme Court hearing are not reflected in our findings.) Granted, the city has a long tradition of philanthropic support for choice, with Bill Gates, Paul Allen, and Alice Walton serving as vocal champions. However, even prior to the court’s decision, it still ranked dead last on political support (4.9 points out of 15; ranking thirtieth out of thirty) and near the bottom on quantity and quality (30.5 out of 50; twenty-fifth). Although Seattle has a district-wide lottery for “options schools” and traditional public schools, private school choice is nonexistent for families who cannot pay for it themselves.

27

**CHARLOTTE**

As Charlotte demonstrates, strong political support for choice (10.7 points out of 15; ranking third out of thirty) doesn’t always translate into a choice-friendly reality. In fact, when it comes to the quantity and quality of choice, Charlotte ranks last (25.8 out of 50; thirtieth). While the city offers a wide variety of choices, charter schools account for just six percent of total public enrollment (though the city does have a number of magnet schools). This disconnect is most likely attributable to Charlotte’s policy environment, which is also unfriendly to choice (20.3 out of 35; twenty-third). Because all charter schools must be authorized by the state, local support for choice does not mean as much as it might.

28

**PITTSBURGH**

Although there is still minimal political support for choice in Pittsburgh (7.4 points out of 15; ranking eighteenth out of thirty) district enrollment is nevertheless in decline, due to competition from charter schools. The district tried to address the issue by creating an open enrollment system for high schools in 2013. However, in general there are still few public options for students, and Pittsburgh ranks poorly on quantity and quality of choice (28.9 out of 50; twenty-seventh). The policy environment is not particularly choice-friendly either (20.1 out of 35; twenty-fourth). Although Pennsylvania law exempts charters from collective bargaining agreements and most teacher certification requirements, charters receive far less public funding than district schools and cannot easily locate in district facilities.

29

**AUSTIN**

There is significant political support for school choice in Austin (9.1 points out of 15; eleventh out of thirty). However, for now the quantity and quality of choice is low (26.3 out of 50; twenty-ninth). Austin has few public schools of choice of any type (including magnets), and only a small fraction of the city's students enroll in charter schools, which are academically no better than district schools. The policy environment in Austin is also unfriendly to choice (19.8 out of 35; twenty-seventh). Although charter schools are funded equitably, there is no common application or transportation to schools of choice, and school report cards provide limited information to parents.

30

**ALBANY**

Despite its history as a proving ground for choice, today there is little about Albany that is choice-friendly. Questionnaire respondents indicated that local politicians and media do not support school choice (5.8 points out of a possible 15; ranking twenty-sixth out of thirty), and the policy environment is equally bleak (16.4 out of 35; thirtieth). Charter schools cannot be located in district facilities in Albany (a significant burden since they receive less per-pupil funding than district schools). Moreover, choice receives little NGO, business, and philanthropic support. The city fares slightly better on the quantity and quality (31.3 out of 50; twenty-first), thanks to its large charter sector. However, there are no online or virtual schools.

**HOW IS THIS REPORT DIFFERENT?**

For the past few years, the Brookings Institution has released its *Education Choice and Competition Index*, which uses a number of indicators to measure choice friendliness (including a few that are included in this report).<sup>30</sup> Despite some similarities, however, the methods (and goals) of the two reports are quite different.

First, this report's definition of "school choice" is very broad. The metric captures several forms of choice that do not appear in the Brookings report, including interdistrict and intradistrict open enrollment, dual enrollment, and homeschooling. Second, the two reports use different data sources. The *Education Choice and Competition Index*, uses primarily federal data supplemented with interviews of district staff, while this one uses multiple

government databases, information from other organizations, state and district websites, newspapers, and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. Third, this report adopts a holistic approach to the school choice environment. For example, it includes charter-facilities access, teacher policy, as well as charter and authorizer quality. Finally, when data overlap in the two reports, they are assigned different weights. In particular, while five of Brookings' thirteen indicators address the accessibility and quality of information on school and student performance, these measures account for just three of the fifty indicators in this report.

It is therefore not surprising that the overall ranks differ in some ways and align in others. Our findings are similar in that New Orleans,

Washington, D.C., and Denver have strong choice environments (and that those in Albany and Nashville leave much to be desired). Yet Brookings gives Indianapolis a D grade and Atlanta an F, whereas they rank fourth and ninth in our report, respectively, reflecting the comparatively choice-friendly state policy environments in which they are located. Conversely, New York and Houston receive an A- and a B from Brookings, whereas we rank them twelfth and nineteenth. For New York, this difference reflects the low level of political support for choice. For Houston, it reflects a variety of factors, such as the lack of voucher programs in Texas.

# Taking a Closer Look

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This section explores six key questions, focusing on those that can only be answered by combining data from multiple sources in new and unique ways; it also includes information too nuanced to be captured by the metric.

**1.** Is charter market share related to quality?

**2.** Can students enroll in other traditional public schools besides their neighborhood school?

**3.** How simple is it for families to find information about schools of choice, apply to them, and access them once enrolled?

**4.** Do charters have access to district facilities?

**5.** Are high-quality authorizers available to prospective charter applicants?

**6.** Can families access vouchers or tax credit scholarships for private school choice regardless of their socioeconomic status?

### 1. Is charter market share related to quality?

Eight of the ten cities on our list with the highest charter market share also have information on charter quality relative to district schools. In seven of these cities, charters outperform their district peers in both reading and math. (Columbus, where district and charter schools perform similarly in both subjects, is the exception.) In contrast, though there are no data on charter quality for four of the ten cities on the list with the lowest charter market share, of the remaining six only three have charter schools that outperform their district counterparts in both reading and math (Nashville, New York, and San Francisco). In the other three (Austin, Atlanta, and Jacksonville), the quality of charters is mixed or poor. Specifically, district and charter schools in Atlanta perform at similar levels in reading, while in Austin they perform at similar levels in both subjects, and in Jacksonville charters actually perform worse in reading. Interestingly, New York and San Francisco operate under fairly restrictive charter caps, while Atlanta and Jacksonville are in states with no caps. Taken together, these data suggest that, while high market share does not necessarily dilute quality (and in some cities, seems to encourage it), market forces alone may be an ineffective guarantor of quality when charter market share is low.<sup>31</sup>

*Taken together, these data suggest that, while high market share does not necessarily dilute quality (and in some cities, seems to encourage it), market forces alone may be an ineffective guarantor of quality when charter market share is low.*

### 2. Can students enroll in other traditional public schools besides their neighborhood school?

Even if they don't offer the sort of diverse, specialized programming that charter and magnet schools often do, traditional "comprehensive" district schools can vary significantly in terms of their location, demographics, and performance. Thus, true choice means parents can access other traditional schools in addition to their neighborhood school. In its simplest form, this sort of intradistrict choice involves a waiver exempting a student from attending her zoned neighborhood school due to extraordinary circumstances and granting her the right to attend a school elsewhere in the district (space permitting). In its most complex (and empowering) form, it involves a district-wide lottery that allows families to rank their preferences of district schools independent of location.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the districts in the cities on our list allow for at least some form of intradistrict choice.<sup>33</sup> And in seventeen cities, the largest district has a lottery that allows families to rank their preferred schools, although no two cities conduct their lotteries in exactly the same way. Nine of these seventeen have some sort of "forced choice" system that requires families to rank their top choices, while the other eight give them the option of participating (but don't require that they do so, and default them to their neighborhood school if they don't). While almost every city with a lottery gives first and second priority to continuing students and siblings of current students respectively, cities take various approaches after these preferences have been satisfied. In twelve cities, children who live within a school's attendance zone get next priority. In San Francisco, children living in the city with low average test scores get priority, while Chicago reserves a certain percentage of available seats at every "open enrollment" or magnet school for students from different socioeconomic brackets (as defined by the district). Boston Public Schools gives each of its elementary and middle school families a list of ten to fourteen schools from which they may choose, but otherwise does not grant neighborhood priority. Finally, New Orleans gives no preference to students from particular neighborhoods or socioeconomic backgrounds.

In eight of our cities, the largest district grants enrollment waivers but does not have a district-wide lottery. However, in some cities, the district appears more favorably inclined toward such transfers than others. For example, Dallas ISD requires families who live outside a school's attendance zone to reapply for their enrollment waiver at the beginning of each school year.

### 3. How simple is it for families to find information about schools of choice, apply to them, and access them once enrolled?

#### IS INFORMATION ON SCHOOL CHOICE ACCESSIBLE?

School choice means little if families aren't aware of the options available to them. Fortunately, our results suggest that in most cities information about school choice is accessible. For example, in every city in our sample at least some information about schools of choice is available on both district and state websites, and in at least twenty-five cities information is also available on the website of a nonprofit organization (such as GreatSchools.org). In addition to these online resources, at least twenty-five cities have a school choice fair. Finally, in at least half our cities, community organizers or representatives from the choice sector go door-to-door to promote schools of choice. Still, more may be required. In a recent study, 33 percent of parents identified their confusion about which schools their children were eligible to attend as a barrier to choice.<sup>34</sup>

#### HOW COMMON ARE COMMON APPLICATIONS?

Completing a separate application for every school imposes a major burden on parents (especially those with multiple children). Of our thirty cities, only six—Baltimore, Denver, New Orleans, Newark, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.—offer parents a streamlined application process that includes charter schools. (Denver, Newark, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C. also include charters in their district-wide lotteries.) Another thirteen cities offer parents a common application for all district-run schools, including both traditional schools and magnets (but not for charters). And eight cities have a common application for magnet schools only that does not include traditional district schools or charters. Only three cities (Austin, Detroit, and Kansas City) have no common application for traditional district, magnet, or charter schools.

#### IS THERE TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOLS OF CHOICE?

In a recent study, more than one-quarter of parents cited lack of transportation as a barrier to school choice, and our results also suggest this is an area where many cities could improve.<sup>35</sup> Just nine cities provide the same transportation to public schools of choice that they offer to traditional district schools. However, two of these cities (New York City and Washington, D.C.) mostly rely on public transportation (subways, city buses, etc.) to serve both district and charter students, leaving just seven cities—Albany, Boston, Columbus, Newark, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh—that are actively choice-friendly in this regard. In Denver, Jacksonville, and Seattle, transportation to schools of choice is subsidized by the state, but schools or families may still

bear substantial direct or indirect costs.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Baltimore, Charlotte, and Houston provide transportation to magnet schools, but not to charters. Even where charters are legally entitled to transportation, there is no guarantee they receive it. For example, although Minnesota's school districts must provide transportation to charters that request it, because many Minneapolis charters operate on their own schedules, it is not practical or feasible for them to do so. Finally, in thirteen cities almost no schools of choice receive the transportation that district schools receive, and there is no transportation subsidy.

### 4. Do charters have access to district facilities?

Although there is no source for precise data on the percentage of charters that are located or co-located in district facilities at the city level, we were able to determine a rough estimate for most cities.<sup>37</sup> Thus, to the best of our knowledge, four of the thirty cities have no charters in district facilities: Albany, Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Seattle. Conversely, in twenty-five cities, one or more charters are located in a district facility, and in thirteen of these cities more than one-quarter of charters are so located. Finally, more than half of charters are located in district facilities in six cities: Atlanta, Denver, Milwaukee, New Orleans, New York, and Tulsa. (Note that, because of imprecise data, city counts represent minimums. For example: one or more charters are located in a district facility in at least twenty-five cities out of the thirty.)

One factor that might account for the differences among cities is a "right of first refusal law," granting charters the right to lease or purchase a closed, unused, or underused district facility at or below market value. Because districts are often reluctant to share their resources with charters, many states have passed such laws. Fourteen of our thirty cities are located in states or districts with a right of first refusal law, while sixteen are in states with no such policy whatsoever.<sup>38</sup> We might expect cities where many charters are housed in district facilities to be in states with a right of first refusal law. However, in Denver, Milwaukee, and Tulsa, more than half of charters are located in district facilities, despite the fact that charters lack the right of first refusal. Of the thirteen cities where at least one-quarter of charter schools are located in district facilities, seven are in states without a right of first refusal policy, suggesting the reality of facilities access may be determined as much by other factors as by state law (such as the availability and location of empty or underutilized district schools, or whether charters receive dedicated facilities funding).

### 5. Are high-quality authorizers available to prospective charter applicants?

Over the past decade, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has developed a list of twelve “essential practices” for authorizers, which it uses to assign them a “quality score” from zero to twelve. These include “using academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions” and other very basic quality control measures, such as annual financial audits and reports as well as having staff within the organization assigned to authorizing. In twenty-seven of the thirty cities, our weighted authorizer quality measure suggests the “average” charter authorizer has adopted at least nine of NACSA’s essential practices, and in seventeen cities the average authorizer has adopted at least eleven of the twelve.<sup>39</sup> Tulsa Public Schools (that city’s primary authorizer) is a clear outlier, however, having adopted just four of twelve practices.

Is there a relationship between authorizer quality and school quality? Cities with high-performing charter sectors (such as Boston, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans) have authorizers that scored well on the weighted authorizer quality measure, while in Jacksonville (where the district authorizer has adopted just nine of twelve practices) charters perform worse than traditional district schools. However, there are also cities that receive high marks for authorizer quality and low marks for charter quality (such as Columbus), so by itself authorizer quality is not a sufficient condition for charter success.

### 6. Can families access vouchers or tax credit scholarships for private school choice regardless of their socioeconomic status?

In eleven of our thirty cities, at least some students are eligible for a voucher or tax credit scholarship program. However, with the exception of the programs in Milwaukee and Washington, D.C. (which are specific to those cities) these are statewide programs, which usually have enrollment limits of some kind. Most of the vouchers or scholarships these programs provide are worth only a fraction of private tuition (or the amount spent per student in public schools). Finally, for most programs, eligibility is also restricted to a particular type or class of student, such as low- or middle-income students, special education students, or those from low-performing schools or districts. Indeed, of our thirty cities, only Atlanta has access to a voucher or tax credit scholarship program that does not restrict eligibility based on any of these characteristics (though at 300 percent of the poverty line, the eligibility threshold for Milwaukee’s voucher program is not terribly restrictive either).

*Most of the vouchers or scholarships these programs provide are worth only a fraction of private tuition (or the amount spent per student in public schools).*



# Making America's Cities More Choice-Friendly

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While school choice opportunities have increased nationwide, our results reveal considerable variation among cities. In those at the top of the list, school choice is the go-to reform strategy. The Recovery School District in New Orleans, for example, is frequently cited as a model of school improvement. Similarly, Washington, D.C., Denver, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Milwaukee have a variety of public and private options—and are largely seen as cities on the rise. At the other end of the spectrum, cities such as Austin, Pittsburgh, and Seattle have a long way to go before they are deemed choice-friendly, not only because they fail to provide many (or any) options, but also because they have few policies or supports that will allow more of them to take root and grow in the future.

As evident from the rankings, political support and choice-friendly policies do not guarantee a robust reality of choice. New York, Los Angeles, and Atlanta have choice-friendly policy environments, but little actual choice, at least for their size. Similarly, Houston, Dallas, Jacksonville, and Nashville have strong political support for choice, but so far it hasn't been enough to attract a sufficient quantity of high-quality options. On the other hand, Milwaukee, Detroit, Newark, and Baltimore appear to have beaten the odds. All have a robust choice sector on the ground, despite anti-choice policies or politics.

Of course, there are some obvious ways to make cities more choice-friendly across the board: Expand voucher programs and relax their eligibility requirements. Decrease or eliminate restrictions on the number and type of charters. Tie an expanded pool of options to stronger accountability systems. Shut down low-performing schools, so we aren't creating a market where bad schools recruit students. However, the data also suggest at least four less-obvious ways in which cities might improve.

## 1. Provide resources for charters that are truly equitable.

Cities' poor scores on a number of indicators demonstrate that charters and other public schools are not treated equally. For example, in nearly every city there is a significant (often drastic) funding disparity between charter and district schools. This disparity is usually more than 20 percent, and in some cities (such as Milwaukee and Pittsburgh) it is close to 50 percent. Many states and cities also make it extremely difficult for charters to acquire adequate facilities because they do not grant them the right of first refusal to lease or purchase unused district buildings (which presents even more challenges, since charters do not receive sufficient funds).

The implicit expectation that charters “do more with less” is unfair to the students and staff at these schools, even if it's an expectation that charters in many cities are managing to meet. It's true that in Baltimore, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Newark, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C. charters are dramatically outperforming district schools despite a funding gap of more than 30 percent. But imagine what these schools could accomplish if they were asked to do more with equal resources instead of more with less (and perhaps, at the same time, exempted all charters from teacher certification requirements that limit their human capital).

## 2. Expand intradistrict choice.

“Choice” does not necessarily mean “charter” or “private.” For many families, a traditional comprehensive public school may be the best fit, as long as it is high quality and meets other needs, such as safety and location. However, in many places, it's not easy for students to attend district schools other than the one to which they are assigned. Transferring between schools for reasons other than a change in residence can be difficult, requiring waivers that can be denied by the receiving school or district. In recent years, some districts have established open enrollment policies to expand access to traditional schools, making it easier (or at least possible) to attend a district school other than a neighborhood school. However, only a few have district-wide lotteries that allow families to rank their preferred schools, and these are often difficult to navigate, as well as optional (so parents might not even know about them).

Other families want a hybrid—specialized academics, such as a magnet or career and technical education program, within the structure of a larger traditional school and all that comes with it (like athletics and electives). Creating more of these programs—and making it easier to attend them via common applications and transportation—is another way of expanding the number and type of public school options in a district.

Expanding intradistrict choice is particularly important for cities and districts in states with restrictive charter laws that do not allow charters, or severely limit their number and type. It is also a way to address the “big-city” challenge. Even though they have lots of charter schools, cities like Houston, Los Angeles, and New York City will struggle to meet the demand for charters—there are simply too many students. Magnets, career and technical education schools, and even open enrollment are potential solutions to big-city problems.

*Imagine what these schools could accomplish if they were asked to do more with equal resources instead of more with less.*



### 3. Make choice more user-friendly for parents.

The theory of action supporting school choice suggests that, if parents are given the freedom to select a school outside of their neighborhood, they will choose a better-performing one. But this notion relies on parents actually being able to identify such schools and then apply and physically access them. From what we've seen, however, those conditions are in short supply and the theory falls flat. In many places, lots of school choice doesn't necessarily equate to a choice-friendly city.

The shortcomings in many of the cities we examined reveal a number of ways to make parents' tasks easier and improve the function of the education market. For example, most cities do not provide comprehensive report cards for all types of schools of choice; many omit key pieces of information, such as student safety, teacher quality, and academic proficiency and growth rates over time. Similarly, although twenty-seven cities have some sort of common application, none includes all types of schools of choice (e.g., many omit charters and/or online schools). Only nine cities provide students with transportation to any public school of choice within district borders on the same terms as a district-assigned school. Finally, in many cities, students who attend charter schools are excluded from district extracurricular activities—an often overlooked dimension of the school experience that is important to many families. And although eleven of our cities have some mechanism for facilitating access to private schools—either a voucher or a tax credit scholarship program—the value of the program is far less than the cost of tuition.

Providing comprehensive report cards, all-inclusive common applications, access to transportation, extracurricular activities, and fairly funded private school options—these are the types of things that cities can do to make choice more user-friendly for parents.

### 4. Keep mobilizing external and stakeholder support for choice.

In most cities, the data reveal that parent groups and the media support choice. However, support from non-governmental organizations is low, while union, school board, and city council opposition is high. And a few cities on the list demonstrate how important these factors can be. For example, the large urban centers of Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York City all have choice-friendly policy environments, meaning that theoretically they are fertile places for choice to take root and grow. But they all rank well out of the top ten on both political support and the quantity and quality of options, perhaps because local stakeholders do not use their bully pulpit to support choice. Conversely, Baltimore and Newark have weak policy environments, but strong political support and a decent amount and caliber of options, such that choice is thriving in a policy environment not conducive to it. This bodes well for cities like Nashville, Jacksonville, Dallas, and Charlotte, all of which have political support, but unfavorable policy environments and few high-quality choices.

**All of these recommendations carry with them the fundamental imperative to better educational options and outcomes for students. While this mission is important regardless of where children live, improving schools systems in major cities is especially critical for those children, often minority and/or living in poverty, who are enrolled in schools that are chronically under-performing with no signs of progress. School choice, at least the high-quality kind, gives students a way to exit inadequate schools and a chance to avoid the lifelong consequences of a second-rate education. Cities should do all they can to foster more of it.**

## endnotes

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- 24 In this report, "city" and "district" are not always coterminous. Where possible, data are from the city as a whole. For cities that include multiple districts within municipal boundaries, we use data from the largest district in the city when the indicator calls for such a distinction (for example, enrollment data). For districts that extend beyond the borders of a single city, we use data from the entire district if the city cannot be separated from the larger district (for example, Jacksonville, Florida is located in the Duval County school district; enrollment data for Jacksonville refers to Duval County).
- 25 In these cases, data will not match the cited extant data source.
- 26 Items are only counted if at least two respondents provided answers for that city; for additional information on how items are scored and combined, see Appendix A.
- 27 The Portfolio School District Network is a network of large school districts that have committed to a "portfolio management" approach, as outlined by the Center on Reinventing Public Education. At the heart of this approach is a commitment from the district to closing low-performing schools, regardless of whether they are run by the district or by charter organizations, and replacing them with new high-performing schools.
- 28 Readers can find in-depth profiles of individual cities in Section 7. A reorganization of cities by area scores and ranks appears in Appendix B.
- 29 In addition to placing first in our rankings, New Orleans also places first in the recent education reform rankings produced by Brookings (see *How is this Report Different?* on page 24).
- 30 In addition to *The Education Choice and Competition Index*, there are other ranking systems with similar (but distinct) goals. For example, in "Measuring Up to the Model," the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools ranks states according to the strength of their charter laws, but does not consider other forms of school choice. Similarly, Students First assesses the state-level policy environment in its *2014 State Policy Report Card*, but does not limit itself to school choice issues. Given these differences in focus (and the fact that both reports rank states, rather than cities or districts), the grades and rankings in these reports differ substantially from the ranks in this report and in that of the Brookings Institution.
- 31 Of the ten cities in our study with the highest charter market share, four are located in states with no charter cap whatsoever (Indianapolis, Newark, New Orleans, and Philadelphia) and five in states where the cap provides ample room for growth. The tenth city, Columbus, is effectively cap-less, since Ohio law does not restrict the number of charters in low-performing districts (though individual authorizers are limited to one hundred schools).
- 32 In New Orleans, Denver, Newark, and Washington, D.C., the district-wide lottery actually includes both charter and district schools. Similarly, some cities include some or all magnet schools in the lottery, while others have a separate lottery for such schools.
- 33 Districts can also facilitate interdistrict enrollment across boundaries. Eight cities are located in state where districts must do so. In fifteen cities, the largest district does so on a voluntary basis.
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- 38 Todd Ziebarth, "Measuring Up To the Model."
- 39 To calculate "average" charter authorizer quality for a city, the scores of each authorizer in the city are averaged together, weighted by the number of schools in the city that they authorized. See Appendix A for complete details on NACSA's twelve essential practices.

# **City Profiles by Rank**

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	44,699
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	4,152
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	40,547
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	91%



# New Orleans

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for New Orleans and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NEW ORLEANS?

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, which struck land on August 29, 2005, New Orleans Public Schools was one of the worst-performing districts in the country, with roughly two-thirds of its schools deemed "failing." Up to that point, the statewide Recovery School District—created in 2003 to take over the worst-performing schools and convert them into charters—had authorized just five charter schools. However, faced with both an unprecedented natural disaster and a mismanaged and bankrupt district system, the state gave control of 102 of 117 New Orleans schools to the Recovery School District, with the Orleans Parish School Board retaining control of the few remaining schools. Since then, graduation and proficiency rates in New Orleans have soared as the new system has driven continued improvements in school quality. Today, over 90 percent of the city's public school students are enrolled in charter schools, while others take advantage of the state's voucher program, launched in 2008.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**NEW ORLEANS RANKS TWELFTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of nine points out of fifteen. This middling ranking is largely due to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by local officials. Although the mayor has generally supported school choice, the city council, school board, and parent groups have remained relatively neutral, while the (severely depleted) teachers' union has been unsupportive. The picture is brighter at the state level, however, where the governor of Louisiana has publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

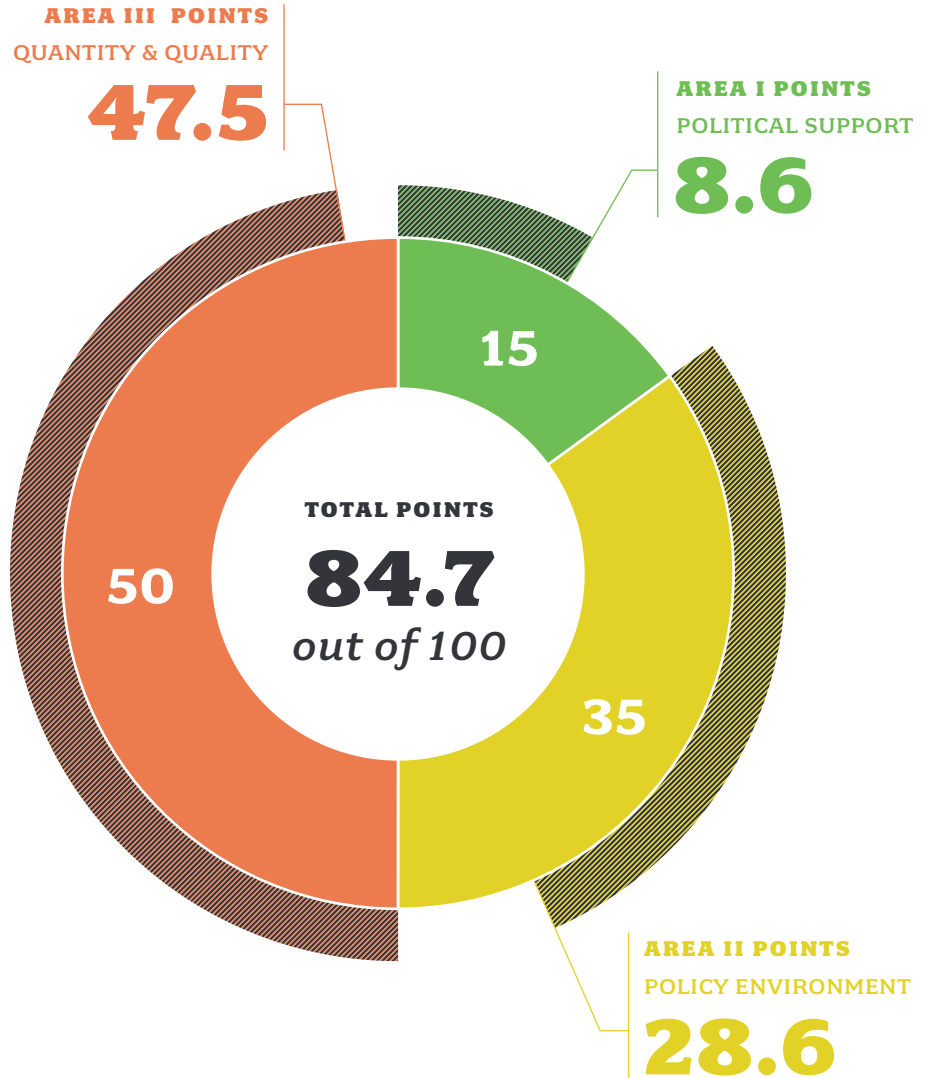
**35 POINTS**

**NEW ORLEANS RANKS FIRST** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-nine points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks in many areas, including NGO, business, and philanthropic support; information on school choice; teacher support; transportation; and its willingness to close schools with low enrollments in the wake of the hurricane. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. For example, there are gaps in New Orleans's accountability system; for instance, school report cards do not include measures of student progress or teacher quality.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**NEW ORLEANS RANKS SECOND** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of forty-eight points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Louisiana's voucher program also gives low- and medium-income students greater access to private options. New Orleans charter schools educate approximately 91 percent of the city's students, by far the highest percentage of any city in the country. Finally, students in New Orleans's charter schools outperform comparable students by a wide margin in both reading and math, suggesting that—by and large—charter quantity has not come at the expense of charter quality.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**UNSURPRISINGLY, NEW ORLEANS RANKS FIRST OVERALL**, with its high marks for policy environment and the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its middling scores for political support. New Orleans embodies many of the ideals of the school choice movement, with a system that is at once flexible, accountable, empowering, and efficient. Though there are still a few areas in which it could improve, New Orleans stands as a shining example of what can be accomplished when the chokehold of traditional interest groups is broken and families are allowed to choose how and by whom their children are educated.



HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NEW ORLEANS? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of New Orleans's principal newspaper?	Negative	1.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 20.67

**AREA I SCORE: 20.67/36.00 x 15% = 8.61**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Louisiana charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in New Orleans?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is New Orleans's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Louisiana have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of New Orleans charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	4.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in New Orleans (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	7 (of 9 possible)	2.96
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in New Orleans?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Louisiana law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in New Orleans?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in New Orleans support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	8 (of 9 possible)	3.63
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in New Orleans for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.33
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in New Orleans support schools of choice (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	2.44
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in New Orleans for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	2.67
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in New Orleans (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	3.19
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in New Orleans?	4 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are New Orleans charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are New Orleans charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	No	4.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for New Orleans's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.88	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Louisiana's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for New Orleans schools of choice?	Minimally/ Moderately comprehensive	1.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in New Orleans (of 8 possible)?	8 (of 8 possible)	3.79
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does New Orleans have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	3.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does New Orleans provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are New Orleans homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 101.11) = 82.68

AREA II SCORE:  $82.68/101.11 \times 35\% = 28.62$

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in New Orleans?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in New Orleans?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in New Orleans?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in New Orleans?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in New Orleans?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in New Orleans?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in New Orleans? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	4.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in New Orleans? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Louisiana have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for New Orleans students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in New Orleans are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in New Orleans enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a New Orleans charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive <sup>c</sup>	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a New Orleans charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive <sup>c</sup>	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 38.00

AREA III SCORE:  $38.00/40.00 \times 50\% = 47.50$

**TOTAL SCORE:  $8.61 + 28.62 + 47.50 = 84.73$**

table notes

<sup>a</sup> The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "New Orleans" refers to the city as a whole, New Orleans Public Schools, or the Recovery School District.

<sup>b</sup> For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

<sup>c</sup> Because there are so few traditional district schools left in New Orleans, students from the city's charter schools were matched with students from demographically similar schools from around the state, rather than with students from the feeder schools for a particular charter.

<sup>\*</sup> A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, New Orleans has only partial information for indicator 2.5.A, so we subtracted one point from the 2.5.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	82,958
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	46,393
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	36,565
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	44%



# Washington, D.C.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Washington, D.C. and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support, policy environment, and quantity and quality.** Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS WASHINGTON, D.C.?

In 1995, Congress passed the District of Columbia School Reform Act, effectively requiring that the District adopt charter schools to put pressure on its chronically underperforming education system. Since then, its charter sector has grown steadily under the watchful eye of the school district and (more recently) the D.C. Public School Charter Board, which has moved aggressively to shut down underperforming schools. Meanwhile, the advent of mayoral control and the appointment of Chancellor Michelle Rhee in 2007 marked a turning point for the district, which has begun to respond constructively to the charter threat. Today, charters serve roughly 44 percent of students in Washington, D.C., and a healthy competition with the school district continues to drive improvements in the performance of both sectors (although charters continue to outperform the district). Further, since 2004 approximately 1,500 students have participated in the District's Opportunity Scholarship Program, which provides low-income students with access to some of the nation's best private schools.

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## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., RANKS**

**TWENTY-FIRST** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This middling ranking reflects a number of factors, including lukewarm support for school choice among local officials. Although the mayor, city council, and chancellor have remained relatively neutral with regard to school choice, while parent groups and teachers' unions have been unsupportive. However, these negatives are partially offset by a relatively choice-friendly local media, led by the city's principal newspaper.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

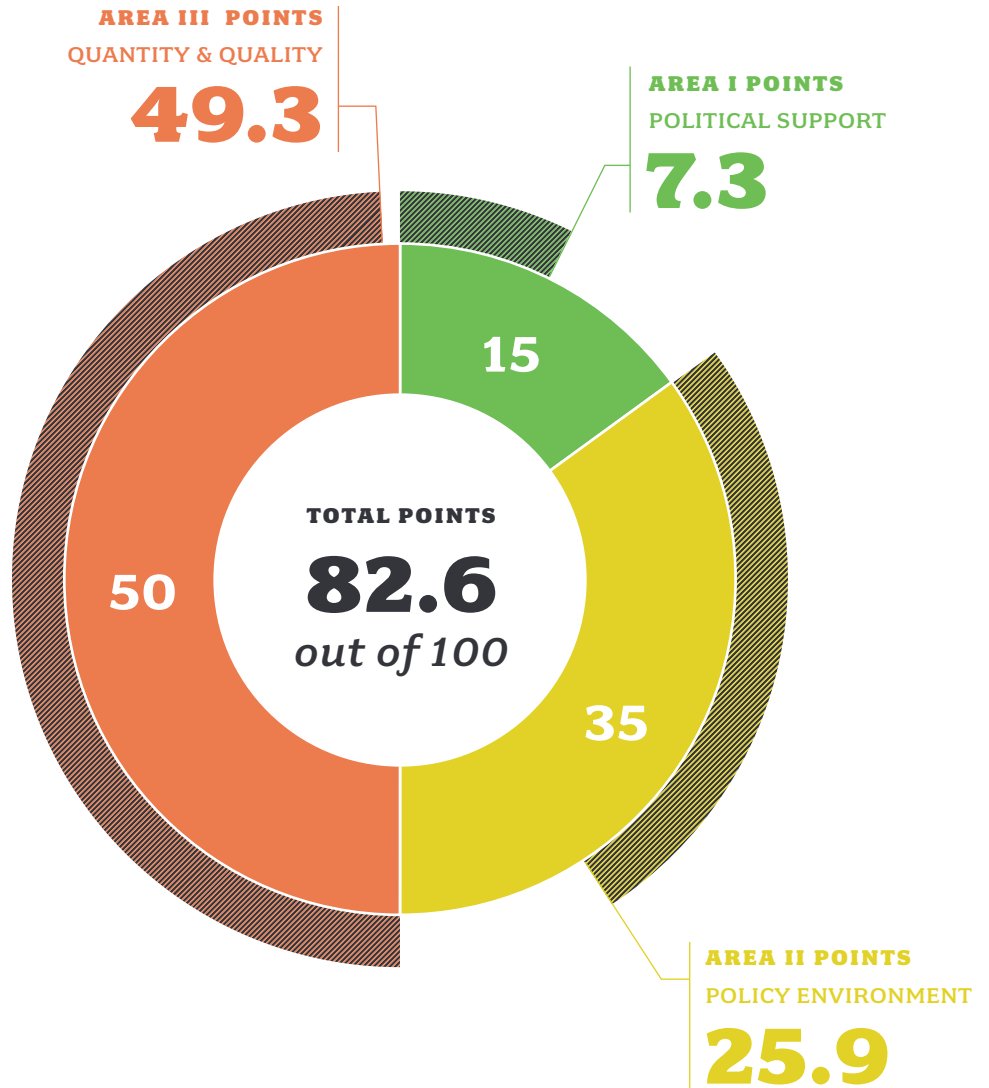
**35 POINTS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., RANKS FIFTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-six points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for the number of charters that are located in district facilities, its willingness to close schools with low or declining enrollments, and its newly minted common application system. Other strengths include a thriving philanthropic community (all five of the major foundations that support school choice are active in the city) and enlightened policies exempting charters from collective bargaining and teacher licensure requirements. Nevertheless, because charters still receive far less funding than district schools, it is often difficult for them to compete for the city's abundant human capital.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., RANKS FIRST** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of forty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet schools, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a robust set of public options, and the Opportunity Scholarship program gives low-income students the chance to attend some of the best private schools in the country. Compared to other cities, Washington, D.C., enrolls a high percentage of its students in charter schools. Finally, despite the well-documented improvement in the performance of district schools, D.C.'s charter sector significantly outperforms the district in reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., RANKS SECOND OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with its high marks for policy environment and the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its below-average scores for political support. Of the cities in our sample, D.C. trails only New Orleans and Detroit in terms of the percentage of students who are enrolled in charter schools, yet the quality of the city's charter sector has not suffered as a result of its growth. Consequently, the biggest outstanding question in Washington is simple: what percentage of the city's students will charters ultimately serve?

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS WASHINGTON, D.C.? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	**	**
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree	0.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of District of Columbia's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 32.00) = 15.67

**AREA I SCORE: 15.67/32.00 x 15% = 7.34**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does federal law restrict the number of charter schools in the District?	The district has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Washington, D.C.?	There is only one authorizer available, but federal law allows for multiple authorizers	3.00
	2.1.C Is the District of Columbia's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Washington, D.C., have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities? <sup>b</sup>	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Washington, D.C., charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	2.67
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Washington, D.C. (of 9 possible)? <sup>c</sup>	2 (of 9 possible)	0.89
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Washington, D.C.?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does federal law guarantee adequate funding for Washington, D.C., charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a local NGO that supports school choice in Washington, D.C.?	Yes*	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Washington, D.C., support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	4 (of 9 possible)	1.63
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Washington, D.C., for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice*	2.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Washington, D.C. support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	6 (of 9 possible)	2.59
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Washington, D.C. for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice*	2.50
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Washington, D.C. (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	3.19
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, Walton) how many support schools of choice in Washington, D.C.?	5 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Washington, D.C. charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Washington, D.C. charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	No	4.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Washington, D.C.'s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions?)	11.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in the District's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Washington, D.C. schools of choice?	Moderately comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Washington, D.C. (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)	3.45
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Washington, D.C., have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	3.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Washington, D.C., provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are the District of Columbia's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students must seek district's permission; charter students have limited eligibility	2.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 102.00) = 75.59

AREA II SCORE: 75.59/102.00 x 35% = 25.94

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Washington, D.C.?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Washington, D.C.?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Washington, D.C.?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Washington, D.C.?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Washington, D.C.?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Washington, D.C.?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Washington, D.C.? Can districts opt out?	**	1.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Washington, D.C.? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Washington, D.C., have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program?	Yes	4.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Washington, D.C., are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Washington, D.C., enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Washington, D.C., charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Washington, D.C., charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 38.00) = 37.50

AREA III SCORE: 37.50/38.00 x 50% = 49.34

**TOTAL SCORE: 7.34 + 25.94 + 49.34 = 82.62**

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Washington, D.C." refers to the city as a whole or to District of Columbia Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b In Washington, D.C., charters have "right of first offer."

c For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Washington, D.C. has only partial information for indicator 2.5.A, so we subtracted one point from the 2.5.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	86,043
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	72,390
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	13,653
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	16%



# Denver

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Denver and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS DENVER?

More than any other district in the country, Denver Public Schools has embraced a portfolio district management approach, meaning that it is agnostic about who runs its schools so long as students are learning. For the past decade, successive Denver superintendents have supported autonomous charter schools, as well as semi-autonomous innovation schools housed within the district. As the sole authorizer of the city's fifty-four charters, the district has also taken a number of concrete steps to embrace them, including adding them in its common application, issuing an annual call for new schools that are willing to locate in underserved communities, and signing a district-charter compact to guide collaboration between the sectors. Despite these promising steps, however, most Denver schools are still operated by the district. Because enrollment is growing across the board, rather than outcompeting district schools, Denver's charters have mostly supplemented them, helping the district meet its needs more efficiently without seriously disrupting the status quo.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**DENVER RANKS FIRST** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of twelve points out of fifteen. This high ranking is largely due to the strong support for school choice shown by state and local officials, as well as local press. Although the mayor, city council, school board, and superintendent have all supported school choice, as have parent groups and the city's principal newspaper. At the state level, the governor of Colorado has also supported school choice in his "state of the state" speeches.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

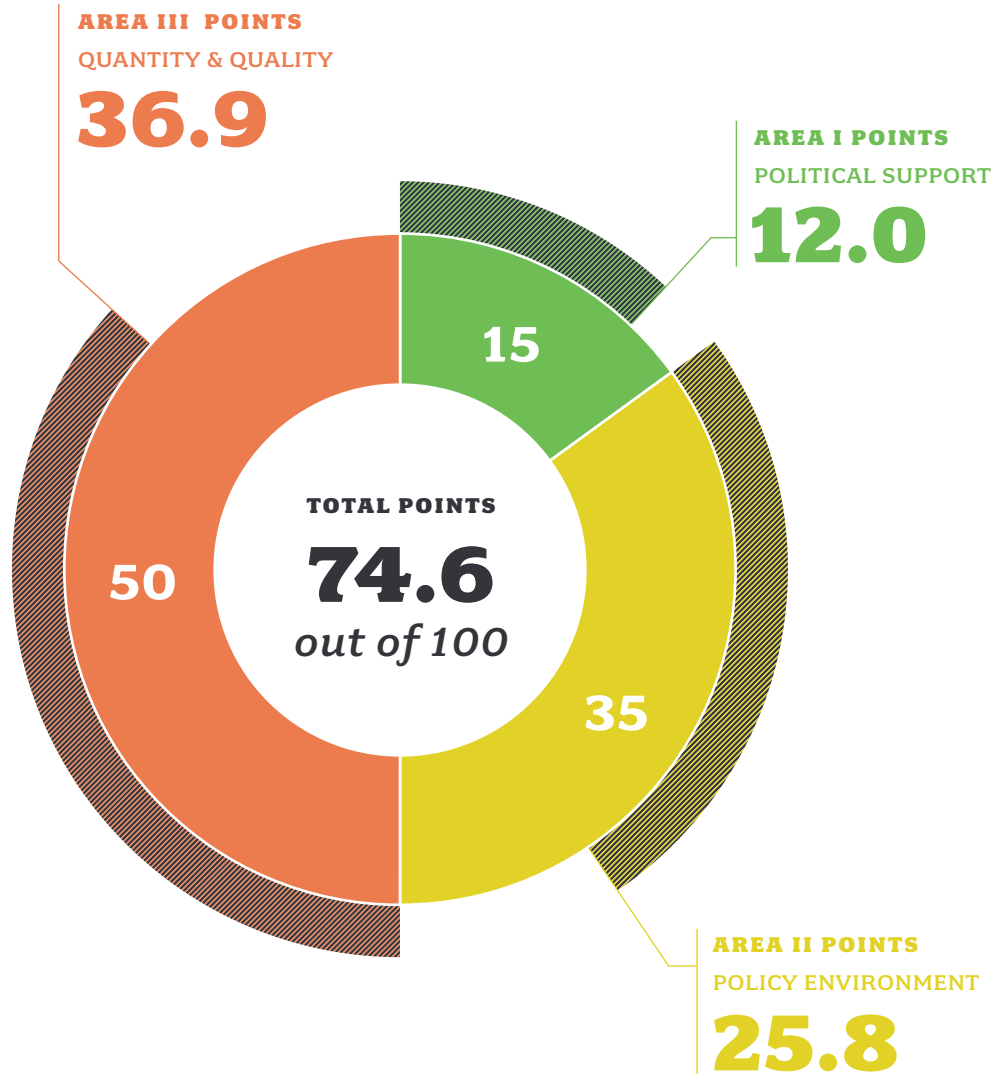
**35 POINTS**

**DENVER RANKS SIXTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-six points out of thirty-five. Denver Public Schools is a member of the Portfolio School District Network, and the city receives high marks for its common enrollment system and the percentage of charter schools that are located in district facilities. It also scores fairly well on NGO, business, and philanthropic support for choice. However, some Denver charters are not exempt from collective bargaining agreements or teacher certification requirements, limiting their flexibility and autonomy.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**DENVER RANKS ELEVENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-seven points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Intradistrict choice is actively encouraged through a districtwide lottery, and interdistrict and dual enrollment programs provide families with additional public options. However, because neither Denver nor Colorado has a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Denver families. Finally, although Denver charter schools outperform district schools in both reading and math, they still serve a comparatively modest percentage of the city's students.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**DENVER RANKS THIRD OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with high marks for political support and its policy environment and an above average score for the quantity and quality of choice. In the past decade, the city has taken a number of positive steps to support public schools of choice and has become a national leader in the delicate art of district-charter collaboration. Still, more is possible, and the lack of a private-school-choice mechanism, such as a voucher or tax credit scholarship, precludes the adoption of an even bolder and more revolutionary approach.



HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS DENVER? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Denver's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 28.68

**AREA I SCORE: 28.68/36.00 x 15% = 11.95**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Colorado charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Denver?	There is only one authorizer available, but state law allows for multiple authorizers	3.00
	2.1.C Is Denver's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Colorado have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Denver charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	4.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Denver (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	4 (of 9 possible)	1.78
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Denver?	Between 5% and 20%	2.00
	2.3.C Does Colorado law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Denver?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Denver support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	2 (of 6 possible)*	0.67
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Denver for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice	2.33
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Denver support schools of choice (of 4 possible)?	4 (of 4 possible)*	1.78
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Denver for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice*	2.50
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Denver (of 8 possible)?	8 (of 8 possible)*	3.56
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Denver?	4 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Denver charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Denver charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Denver's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	No	0.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Colorado's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Denver?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Denver (of 7 possible)?	7 (of 7 possible)*	3.29
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Denver have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	3.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Denver provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	District subsidizes transportation to schools of choice	2.67
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Denver's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are eligible; charter students have limited eligibility	3.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 98.50) = 72.58

AREA II SCORE: 72.58/98.50 x 35% = 25.79

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Denver?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Denver?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Denver?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Denver?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Denver?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Denver?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Denver? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Denver? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.D Does Colorado have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Denver students?	No	
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Denver are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Denver enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Denver charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Denver charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 29.50

AREA III SCORE: 29.50/40.00 x 50% = 36.88

TOTAL SCORE: 11.95 + 25.79 + 36.88 = 74.61

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Denver" refers to the city as a whole or to Denver Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Denver has only partial information for indicator 2.5.B, so we subtracted 2.22 points from the 2.5.B and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	43,727
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	30,813
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	12,914
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	30%



# Indianapolis

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Indianapolis and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS INDIANAPOLIS?

In 2001, Indiana passed charter school legislation with a unique twist: the mayor of Indianapolis was empowered to authorize schools. A decade later, the creation of a statewide authorizer further boosted the state's school choice movement. Today, the mayor authorizes thirty-eight Indianapolis charter schools, while eight are authorized by the state charter board. Together these schools serve approximately 30 percent of the city's public school students. Meanwhile, Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program (which provides vouchers worth approximately \$4,000 for low- and middle-income families) has experienced explosive growth since its inception in 2011 and now serves approximately 29,000 students, including many in Indianapolis. Thanks to these policy breakthroughs (and despite the political turmoil that has roiled Indiana's education system in recent years), school choice in Indianapolis seems destined for further growth in the years to come.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

AREA I  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



AREA II  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



AREA III  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**INDIANAPOLIS RANKS NINTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of ten points out of fifteen. This relatively high ranking is largely due to the broad support for school choice among state and local officials, which is only partially offset by the hostility of the local teachers' unions. Although the mayor, city council, local media, and parent groups have all supported school choice. At the state level, so has the governor.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

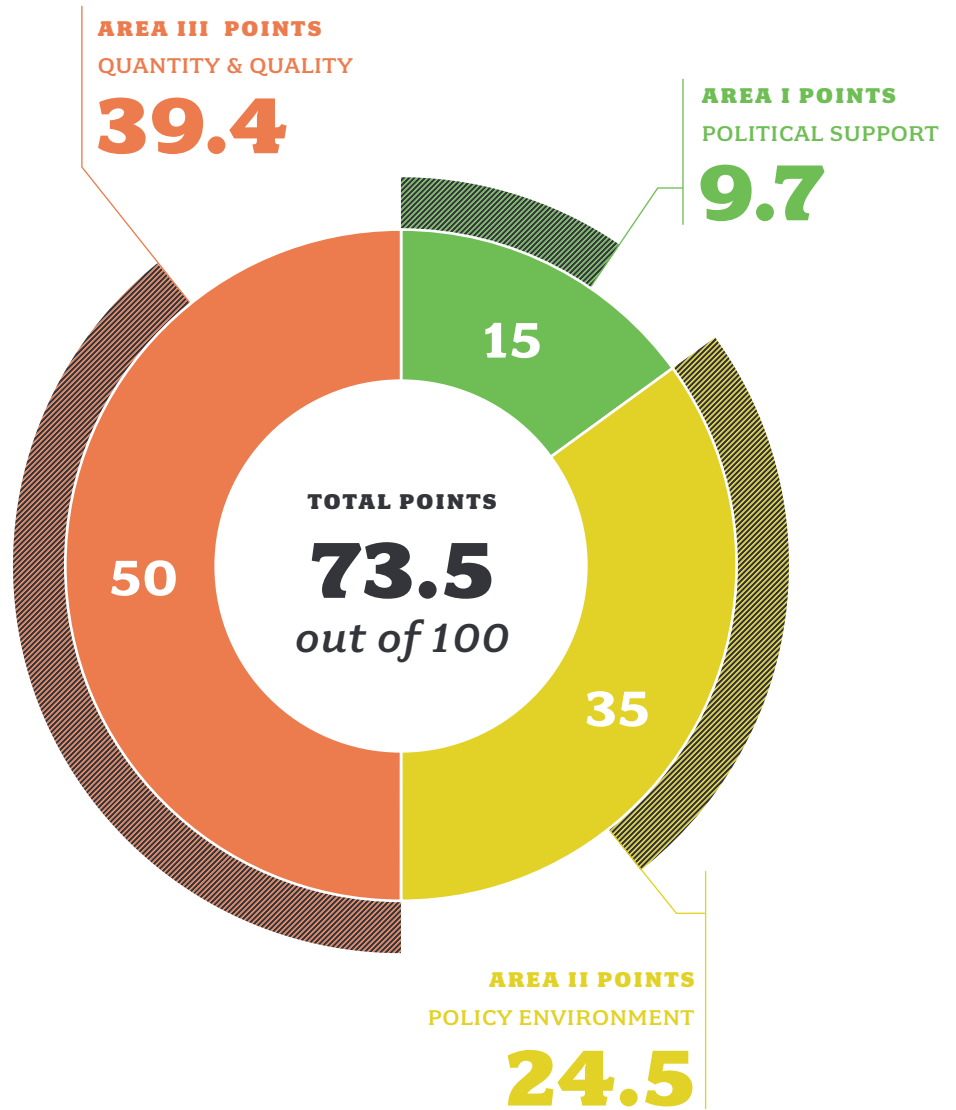
**35 POINTS**

**INDIANAPOLIS RANKS NINTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-five points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support (thanks in part to the efforts of entrepreneur David Harris, founder of the Mind Trust). Moreover, its choice-friendly policy environment is significantly boosted by Indiana law, which imposes no restrictions on the number of charters, grants them the "right of first refusal" to district facilities, and exempts them from collective bargaining agreements. Indianapolis Public Schools is also a member of the Portfolio School District Network. Still, Indianapolis charters receive less funding than district schools, putting them at a competitive disadvantage financially, and the city's common application includes magnet schools but not charters. Finally, because Indianapolis does not provide transportation to schools of choice, it is difficult for families to access the choices available to them.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**INDIANAPOLIS RANKS FOURTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as attendance waivers and inter-district and dual enrollment programs open the doors to a variety of public options, while voucher and tax credit scholarship programs provide a growing number of families with access to private schools. Finally, compared to other cities, Indianapolis enrolls a high (and growing) percentage of its students in charter schools, which outperform the city's district schools in reading and math.



Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.

**INDIANAPOLIS RANKS FOURTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with high marks across all three categories: political support, policy environment, and quantity and quality of choice. In recent years, Indianapolis has become a leader in the movement to give families more educational options, and the city's efforts have received a strong boost from choice-friendly policies at the state level. However, Indianapolis families seeking to take advantage of these opportunities need better logistical supports (such as transportation and a common application).**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS INDIANAPOLIS? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/Disagree	0.33
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Indianapolis’s principal newspaper?	Neutral	2.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 23.33

**AREA I SCORE: 23.33/36.00 x 15% = 9.72**

<b>AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)</b>			
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**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Indiana charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Indianapolis?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Indianapolis’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Indiana have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Yes	4.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Indianapolis charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Indianapolis (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 9 possible)	2.37
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Indianapolis?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Indiana law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Indianapolis?	Moderate state NGO support; strong local NGO support	3.33
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Indianapolis support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	5 (of 9 possible)	2.22
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Indianapolis for schools of choice?	Yes, for all types of schools of choice	4.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Indianapolis support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	8 (of 9 possible)	3.48
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Indianapolis for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Indianapolis (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	3.19
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Indianapolis?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Indianapolis charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Indianapolis charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Indianapolis’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	No	0.00

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

## CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Indiana's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Indianapolis?	Moderately comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Indianapolis (of 8 possible)?	8 (of 8 possible)	3.86
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Indianapolis have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Indianapolis provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Indianapolis's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students must be enrolled part time; law is silent on charter students	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 103.00) = 71.95

**AREA II SCORE: 71.95/103.00 x 35% = 24.45**

## AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Indianapolis?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Indianapolis?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Indianapolis?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Indianapolis?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Indianapolis?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Indianapolis?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waiver	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Indianapolis? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Indianapolis? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Indiana have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Indianapolis students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Indianapolis are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Indianapolis enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending an Indianapolis charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending an Indianapolis charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 31.50

**AREA III SCORE: 31.50/40.00 x 50% = 39.38**

**TOTAL SCORE: 9.72 + 24.45 + 39.38 = 73.54**

### table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Indianapolis" refers to the city as a whole or to Indianapolis Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

**\*** A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Indianapolis has only partial information for indicator 2.6.A, so we subtracted one point from the 2.6.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

**enrollment snapshot 2013-14**

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	65,239
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	49,168
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	16,071
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	25%



# Columbus, OH

**HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?**

To answer this question for Columbus and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

**Area I: Political Support (15%)**

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

**Area II: Policy Environment (35%)**

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)**

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

**HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS COLUMBUS?**

With nearly seventy charter authorizers, including school districts, universities, non-profits (including the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation), and the state department of education, Ohio is home to one of the country's largest and most diverse charter sectors. Yet critics charge that, in its rush to expand that sector, the state has sacrificed quality for quantity. In recent years, a number of low-performing Ohio charters have avoided closure, thanks to cozy financial relationships with their authorizers and "sponsor-hopping" (the practice of finding a new authorizer when a school's charter is in danger of being revoked). However, the state legislature recently passed a bill that tightens the rules governing these relationships. In Columbus, where research suggests charters perform no better than district schools, these changes cannot come soon enough.

**RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)**

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**COLUMBUS RANKS TWENTY-FOURTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This low rank is largely due to the lukewarm support for choice expressed by local officials and the absence of local organizations outside government pressing for expanded choice. The mayor, city council, superintendent, and parent groups have offered only occasional or weak support for choice, while the school board and the teachers' union have not been supportive. At the state level, however, the governor has publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**COLUMBUS RANKS FOURTH**

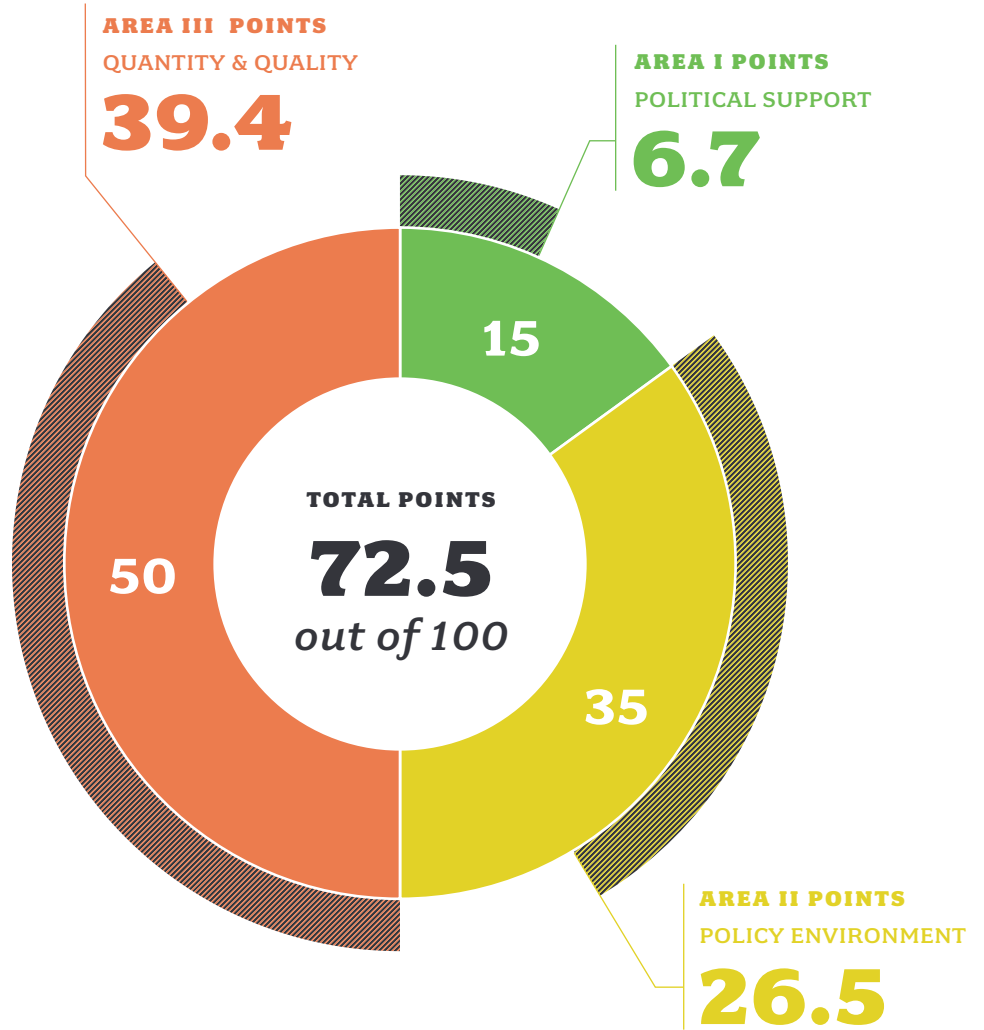
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-seven points out of thirty-five. Columbus City Schools is a member of the Portfolio School District Network, and the city receives high marks for providing equitable transportation to schools of choice, offering charter schools access to district facilities, and closing schools with low enrollment. However, it receives low marks for philanthropic support and funding equity for charters (though the latter is mostly attributable to state policy), and the absence of a common application that includes charters makes it difficult for parents to navigate the system.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**COLUMBUS RANKS FOURTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as an intradistrict lottery and dual and interdistrict enrollment programs provide students with a robust set of public options. Additionally, a number of statewide voucher programs provide a broad range of under-served students with access to private options. Compared to other cities in our study, a high proportion of Columbus's public schools are schools of choice, and a high percentage of students attend charter schools. However, on average, charters perform no better than district schools in reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**COLUMBUS RANKS FIFTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its high marks for policy environment and the quantity of choice outweighing its low scores for quality and political support. The city's families have no shortage of educational options from which to choose, but both the city and the state must do more to ensure the quality of these options by providing more oversight and holding low-performing schools and their authorizers accountable.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS COLUMBUS? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	0.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/Disagree	0.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Columbus’s principal newspaper?	Neutral	2.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 16.00

**AREA I SCORE: 16.00/36.00 x 15% = 6.67**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Ohio charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	Geographic caps limit the number of charters in certain areas	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Columbus?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Columbus’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Ohio have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Yes	4.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Columbus charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Fewer than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Columbus (of 4 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	2 (of 4 possible)*	1.19
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Columbus?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does Ohio law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state NGO that supports school choice in Columbus?	Yes*	2.00
	2.4.B Do NGOs in Columbus lobby on behalf of schools of choice?	Yes*	0.44
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business–community support in Columbus for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	1.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Columbus support schools of choice (of 3 possible)?	2 (of 3 possible)*	0.89
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Columbus for schools of choice?	Yes, for charter schools*	1.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Columbus (of 2 possible)?	1 (of 2 possible)*	0.67
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Columbus?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Columbus charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Columbus charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Columbus’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.62	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing such schools?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...



...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Ohio's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Columbus?	Minimally comprehensive	1.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Columbus (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)	3.43
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Columbus have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Columbus provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Columbus's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are eligible; charter students have limited eligibility	3.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 85.44) = 64.62

AREA II SCORE:  $64.62/85.44 \times 35\% = 26.47$

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Columbus?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Columbus?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Columbus?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Columbus?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Columbus?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Columbus?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Columbus? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Columbus? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Ohio have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Columbus students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Columbus are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Columbus enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Columbus charter school on learning gains in reading?	No impact	2.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Columbus charter school on learning gains in math?	No impact	2.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 31.50

AREA III SCORE:  $31.50/40.00 \times 50\% = 39.38$

**TOTAL SCORE: 6.67 + 26.47 + 39.38 = 72.51**

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Columbus" refers to the city as a whole or to Columbus Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

**\*** A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Columbus has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 2.2 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	86,485
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	68,413
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	18,072
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	21%



# Milwaukee

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Milwaukee and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS MILWAUKEE?

Milwaukee is often described as the birthplace of school choice. In 1990, Wisconsin lawmakers established the nation's first private school voucher program as a lifeline for the city's underserved children, and today the program serves 27,000 Milwaukee students in 114 private schools, giving the city the highest voucher participation rate in the country. In addition to these students, Milwaukee's charter schools enroll another 18,000 students, and another 20,000 students exercise intradistrict choice by enrolling in a district school other than their neighborhood school. Altogether, approximately 80 percent of Milwaukee students exercise some form of non-residential choice. Still, many of the city's students and schools continue to struggle. To address this situation, the Wisconsin legislature is considering a proposal to empower an independent commissioner to convert some of the Milwaukee's low-performing district schools into charters, which have generally demonstrated better results.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support****15 POINTS****MILWAUKEE RANKS TWENTY-FIFTH**

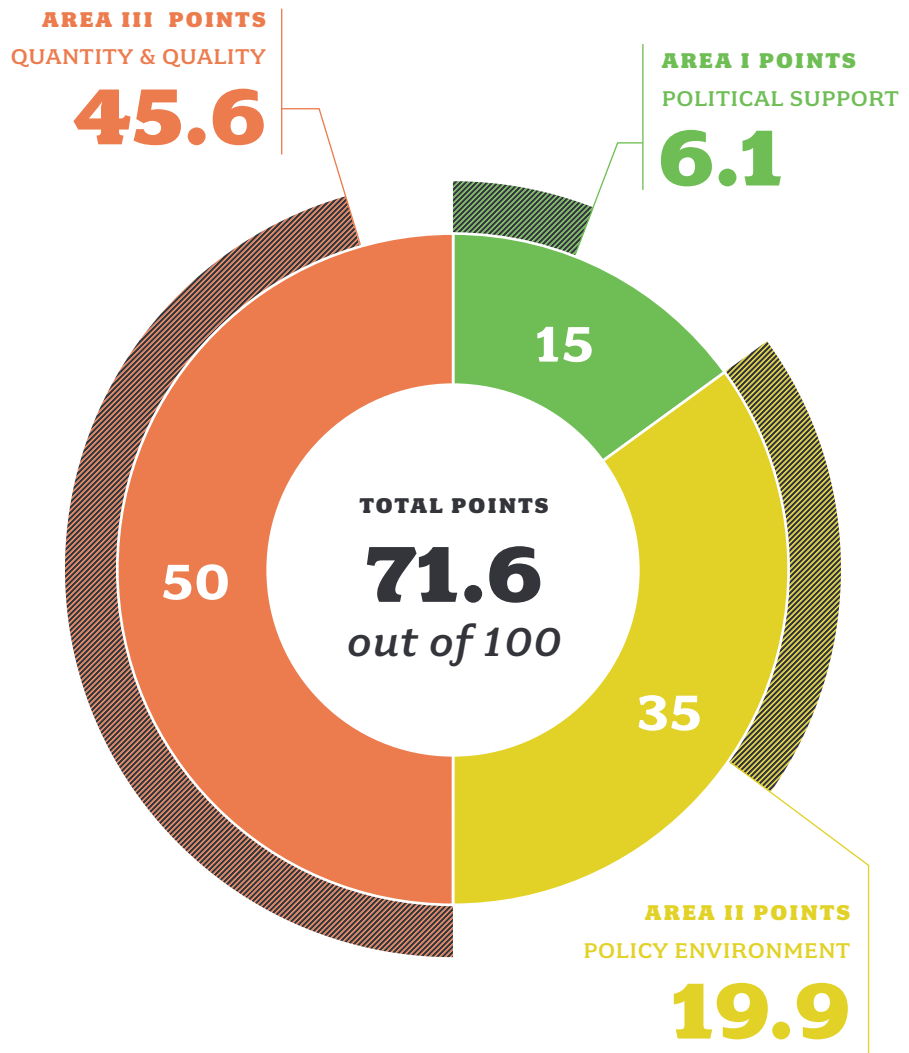
out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of six points out of fifteen. This low ranking is largely due to the lack of support for school choice among local officials. Although the city council, local media, and parent groups have remained relatively neutral, the school board and the teachers' unions have been unsupportive. The picture is brighter at the state level, where the governor has publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment****35 POINTS****MILWAUKEE RANKS TWENTY-SIXTH**

out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its NGO, business, and philanthropic support, willingness to locate charter schools in district facilities, and history of closing schools with low enrollments. However, the lack of transportation to schools of choice makes it difficult for families to access them, and because charters receive far less funding than district schools, the financial playing field remains tilted in favor of the district. Finally, many Milwaukee charters are "instrumentality charters," meaning they are more or less run by the district and do not have many of the autonomies guaranteed to other charters by state law.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality****50 POINTS****MILWAUKEE RANKS THIRD**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of forty-six points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. A districtwide lottery provides families with access to a robust set of public options, while one of the country's largest voucher programs provides a uniquely high percentage of families with access to private schools. Finally, in addition to accounting for a comparatively high percentage of public enrollment, Milwaukee charter schools continue to outperform their district peers in both reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**MILWAUKEE RANKS SIXTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with its high marks for the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its low scores for political support and policy environment.

Although there is no shortage of educational options in Milwaukee, the city could do more to empower both providers and consumers.

In particular, some of Milwaukee's charter schools need greater autonomy, and Milwaukee families seeking to take advantage of the opportunities available to them need better logistical supports (such as public transportation).

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS MILWAUKEE? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	0.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree	0.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Milwaukee’s principal newspaper?	**	**

AREA I POINTS (out of 32.00) = 12.99

**AREA I SCORE: 12.99/32.00 x 15% = 6.09**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Wisconsin charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Milwaukee?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Milwaukee’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Wisconsin have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Milwaukee charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	4.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Milwaukee (of 8 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	1 (of 8 possible)*	0.22
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Milwaukee?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Wisconsin law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state NGO that supports school choice in Milwaukee?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Milwaukee support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	5 (of 9 possible)	2.30
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Milwaukee for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Milwaukee support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	9 (of 9 possible)	4.00
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Milwaukee for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Milwaukee (of 9 possible)?	9 (of 9 possible)	4.00
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Milwaukee?	1 (of 5)	1.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Milwaukee charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Milwaukee charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Milwaukee’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.41	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing such schools?	Yes	4.00

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Wisconsin's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Milwaukee?	Moderately comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Milwaukee (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	3.08
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Milwaukee have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Milwaukee provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Milwaukee's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 100.06) = 56.77

AREA II SCORE:  $56.77/100.06 \times 35\% = 19.86$

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Milwaukee?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Milwaukee?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Milwaukee?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Milwaukee?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Milwaukee?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Milwaukee?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Milwaukee? Can districts opt out?	Yes, for part-time transfer; no opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Milwaukee? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Ohio have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Milwaukee students?	Yes, both	4.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Milwaukee are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Milwaukee enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Milwaukee charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Milwaukee charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 36.50

AREA III SCORE:  $36.50/40.00 \times 50\% = 45.63$

**TOTAL SCORE: 6.09 + 19.86 + 45.63 = 71.57**

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Milwaukee" refers to the city as a whole or to Milwaukee Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Milwaukee has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	45,003
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	34,976
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	10,027
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	22%



# Newark

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Newark and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NEWARK?

In 2010, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announced that he was donating \$100 million to Newark Public Schools (NPS), yet five years later it is far from clear what improvements (if any) this generous investment purchased. Instead, real change has come at the hands of Superintendent Cami Anderson, who was appointed by Governor Chris Christie in 2011 (NPS has been under state control since 1995). With his backing, Anderson implemented "One Newark," a comprehensive plan for the city's schools that involved closing or consolidating underperforming district schools, opening more charters, and establishing a universal open enrollment system. However, in 2014 Mayor Ras Baraka won election by campaigning against One Newark and Anderson's leadership. Within the year, Anderson resigned and was replaced by former education commissioner Christopher Cerf, a close ally and supporter of school choice who has nevertheless begun laying the groundwork for a return to local control.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**NEWARK RANKS FIFTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of ten points out of fifteen. This high ranking is largely due to the support that school choice has received from the governor and some elements of the local community. The state-appointed superintendent, local media, and parent groups have generally supported school choice, while the mayor, city council, and teachers' union have been less supportive.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

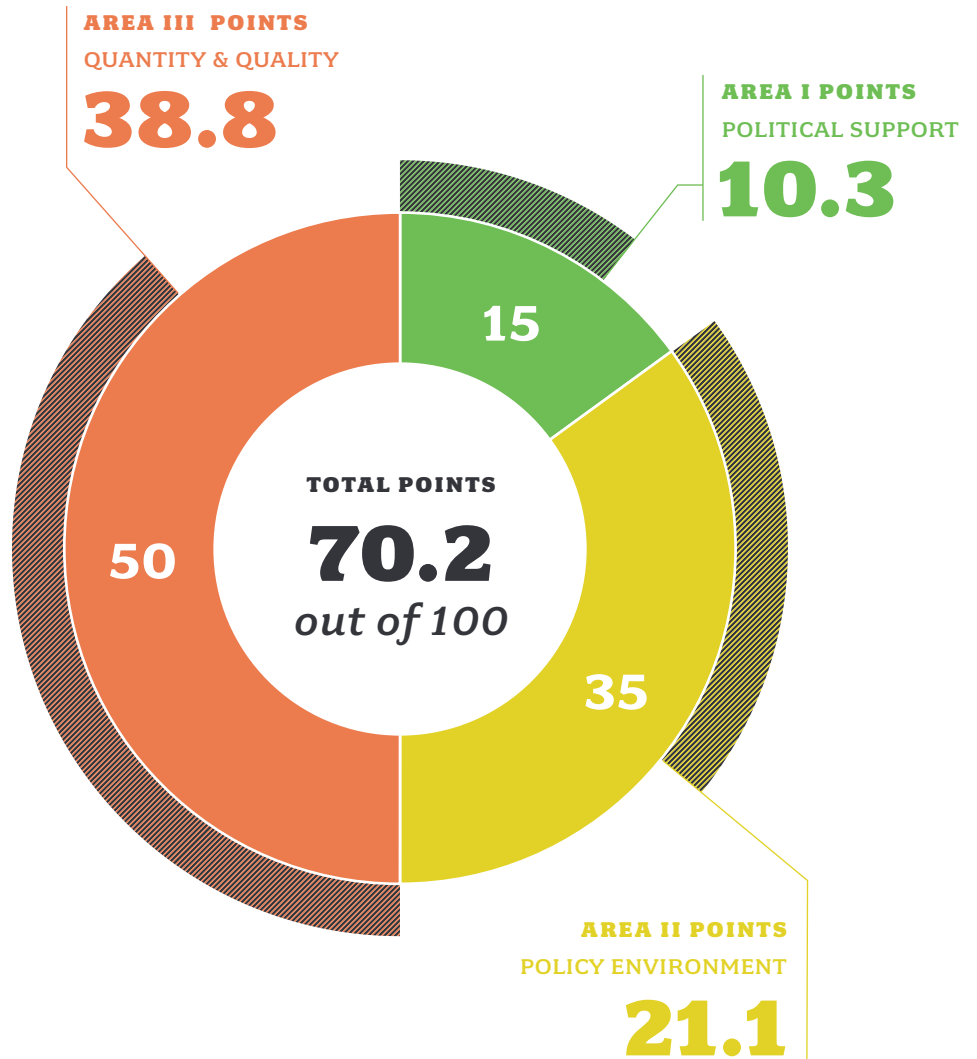
**35 POINTS**

**NEWARK RANKS TWENTY-FIRST** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-one points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support, as well as for its common application, choice-friendly transportation, and willingness to close schools with low enrollments and locate charters in district facilities. However, charters still face many barriers to success. For example, New Jersey law does not exempt them from collective bargaining or teacher certification requirements, and they receive far less funding than district schools, which are among the most generously funded in the country.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**NEWARK RANKS SEVENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a robust set of public options. However, because New Jersey does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Newark families. Although the city has comparatively few public schools of choice, it enrolls a comparatively high percentage of its students in charters, which continue to dramatically outperform district schools in reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**NEWARK RANKS SEVENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its high scores for political support and the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its low score for policy environment. As a consequence of state control, Newark has implemented a number of choice-friendly practices, such as common application and transportation systems. However, it is difficult to predict how the city's schools of choice will fare under a return to local control.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NEWARK? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Newark's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 24.68

**AREA I SCORE: 24.68/36.00 x 15% = 10.28**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does New Jersey charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Newark?	There is only one charter authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Newark's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does New Jersey have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Newark charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	3.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Newark (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	4 (of 9 possible)	1.85
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Newark?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Newark law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Newark?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Newark support schools of choice (of 2 possible)?	2 (of 2 possible)*	0.89
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Newark for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Newark support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	6 (of 9 possible)	2.74
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Newark for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.50
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Newark (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	2.89
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Newark?	3 (of 5)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Newark charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Newark charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Yes	0.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Newark's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.00	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...



...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in New Jersey's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Newark schools of choice?	Moderately comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Newark (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	3.11
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Newark have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	3.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Newark provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Newark's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students must seek district approval; law is silent on charter students	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 100.39) = 60.65

AREA II SCORE: 60.65/100.39 x 35% = 21.14

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Newark?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Newark?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Newark?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Newark?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Newark?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Newark?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Newark? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Newark? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does New Jersey have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Newark students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Newark are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Newark enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Newark charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Newark charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 31.00

AREA III SCORE: 31.00/40.00 x 50% = 38.75

TOTAL SCORE: 10.28 + 21.14 + 38.75 = 70.18

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Newark" refers to the city as a whole or to Newark Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Newark has only partial information for indicator 2.4.B, so we subtracted 3.11 points from the 2.4.B and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	47,028
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	36,703
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	10,325
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	22%



# Oakland

### HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Oakland and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

#### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

#### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

#### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

### HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS OAKLAND?

The perplexing dearth of magnet schools in Oakland contrasts sharply with the city's booming charter sector, which now accounts for more than a quarter of public enrollment—the highest percentage of any district in the state. After the district's insolvency prompted a state takeover in 2003, at least twenty local charters opened, leading to a sustained decline in district enrollment. And since regaining its autonomy in 2009, the district has been forced to close or merge at least eighteen schools, leaving it with more facilities than it requires. Superintendent Antwan Wilson has sought to move the district in a new direction; however, he has faced resistance since early 2015, when he issued an open call for proposals to turn around five under-enrolled and low-performing district schools.

### RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**  
15 POINTS

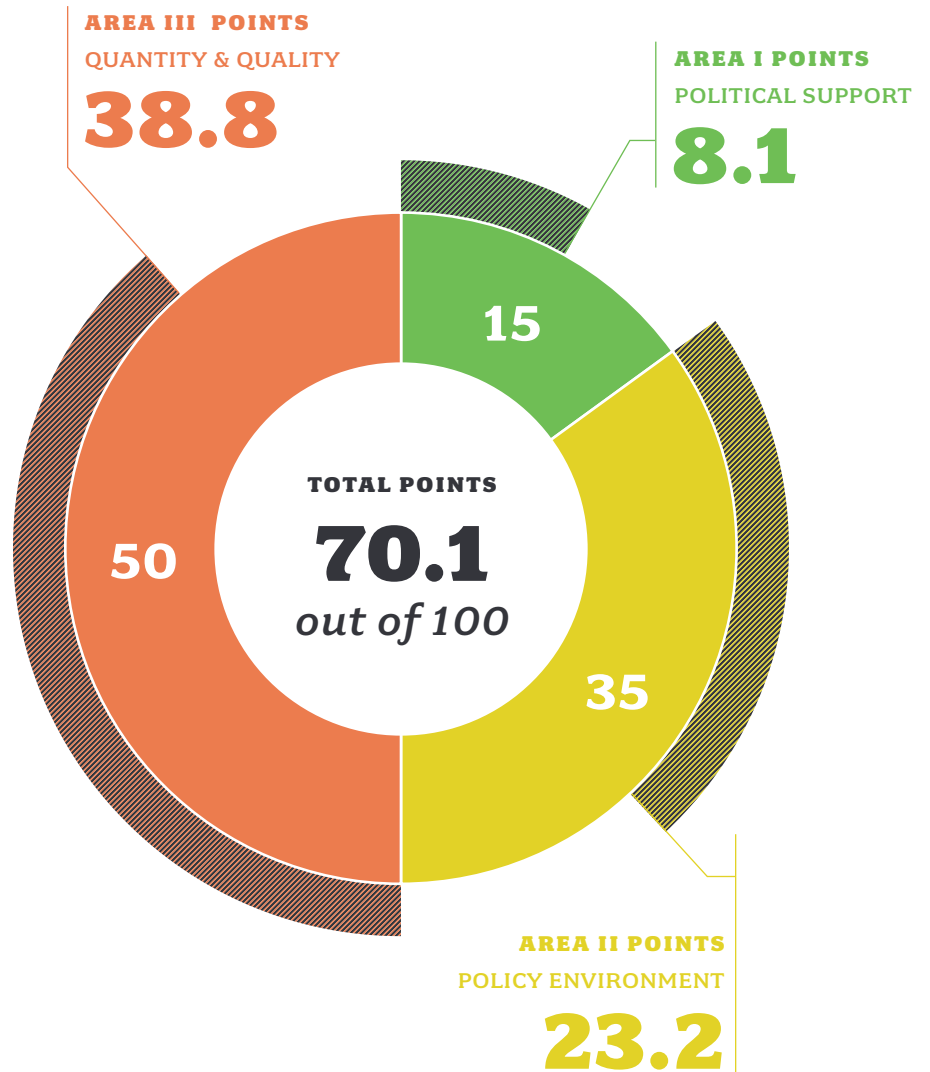
**OAKLAND RANKS FIFTEENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eight points out of fifteen. This middling ranking is largely due to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by local officials. Although parent groups have supported school choice, the mayor, city council, and school board have offered only modest support, while the local media have remained relatively neutral, and the teachers' unions have been hostile.

**Area II: Policy Environment**  
35 POINTS

**OAKLAND RANKS FOURTEENTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-three points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its philanthropic support, common application, and willingness to close schools with low enrollments. California law also exempts charter schools from collective bargaining agreements. However, Oakland charters receive significantly less funding than the city's district schools, and Oakland does not provide transportation to schools of choice. Finally, Oakland Unified School District—the city's primary charter authorizer—does not engage in many of the practices associated with quality authorizing, according to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (though it does get credit for being a member of the Portfolio School District Network).

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**  
50 POINTS

**OAKLAND RANKS SEVENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a robust set of public options. However, because California does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Oakland families. Finally, compared to other cities, relatively few of Oakland's public schools are schools of choice; however, a comparatively high percentage of students enroll in charter schools, which dramatically outperform the city's district schools in reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**OAKLAND RANKS EIGHTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with high marks for the quantity and quality of choice and middling scores for political support and policy environment. Oakland's charter schools are achieving great things with the city's students, but the city would benefit from a wider selection of magnet and CTE schools to complement its open enrollment program, as well as a more choice-friendly political climate.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS OAKLAND? <sup>a</sup>	DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
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**AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)**

1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Oakland's principal newspaper?	**	**

AREA I POINTS (out of 32.00) = 17.34

**AREA I SCORE: 17.34/32.00 x 15% = 8.13**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does California charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Oakland?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Oakland's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does California have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Oakland charter schools are located or co-located in city/district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Oakland (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	6 (of 9 possible)	2.52
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Oakland?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does California law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Oakland?	**	**
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Oakland support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Oakland for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.17
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Oakland support schools of choice (of 7 possible)?	5 (of 7 possible)*	2.30
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Oakland for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Oakland (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	3.19
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Oakland?	3 (of 5)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Oakland charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Oakland charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Oakland's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	8.15	2.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a history of closing schools but no formal policy	2.67

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in California's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Oakland schools of choice?	Moderately comprehensive	1.75
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Oakland (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.61
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Oakland have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Oakland provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Oakland's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; charter students have limited eligibility	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 93.11) = 61.71

AREA II SCORE:  $61.71/93.11 \times 35\% = 23.20$

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Oakland?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Oakland?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent and Catholic schools available to families in Oakland?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Oakland?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Oakland?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Oakland?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Oakland? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Oakland? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does California have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Oakland students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Oakland are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Oakland enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	3.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending an Oakland charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending an Oakland charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 31.00

AREA III SCORE:  $31.00/40.00 \times 50\% = 38.75$

TOTAL SCORE:  $8.13 + 23.20 + 38.75 = 70.07$

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Oakland” refers to the city as a whole or to Oakland Unified School District the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Oakland has only partial information for indicator 2.5.B, so we subtracted 0.89 points from the 2.5.B and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

**enrollment snapshot 2013-14**

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	51,694
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	45,130
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	6,564
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	13%



# Atlanta

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Atlanta and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS ATLANTA?

Although, Atlanta's education headlines have been dominated by its notorious cheating scandal, another (more positive) story has also been playing out. Since the passage of Georgia's charter law in 1998, momentum for school choice in the state has grown steadily, and Atlanta Public Schools now authorizes several high-performing charters (as do neighboring districts, such as Fulton, DeKalb, and Gwinnett). In 2011, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled Georgia's newly established statewide charter authorizer unconstitutional, saying it violated the sovereignty of local districts. However, within a year of the ruling, Georgia voters had approved a constitutional amendment reaffirming the state's authority to engage in charter sponsorship. In 2016, voters will be asked if they want to go further by granting the state the power to take over low-performing district schools (which includes the option of converting them into charters). As many as twenty-seven of Atlanta's district schools could be eligible for takeover.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**ATLANTA RANKS FOURTEENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eight points out of fifteen. This middling ranking is largely due to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by local officials. Although the superintendent and the school board have generally supported school choice, the mayor, city council, local media, and parent groups have remained relatively neutral. The picture is brighter at the state level, however, where the governor of Georgia has publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

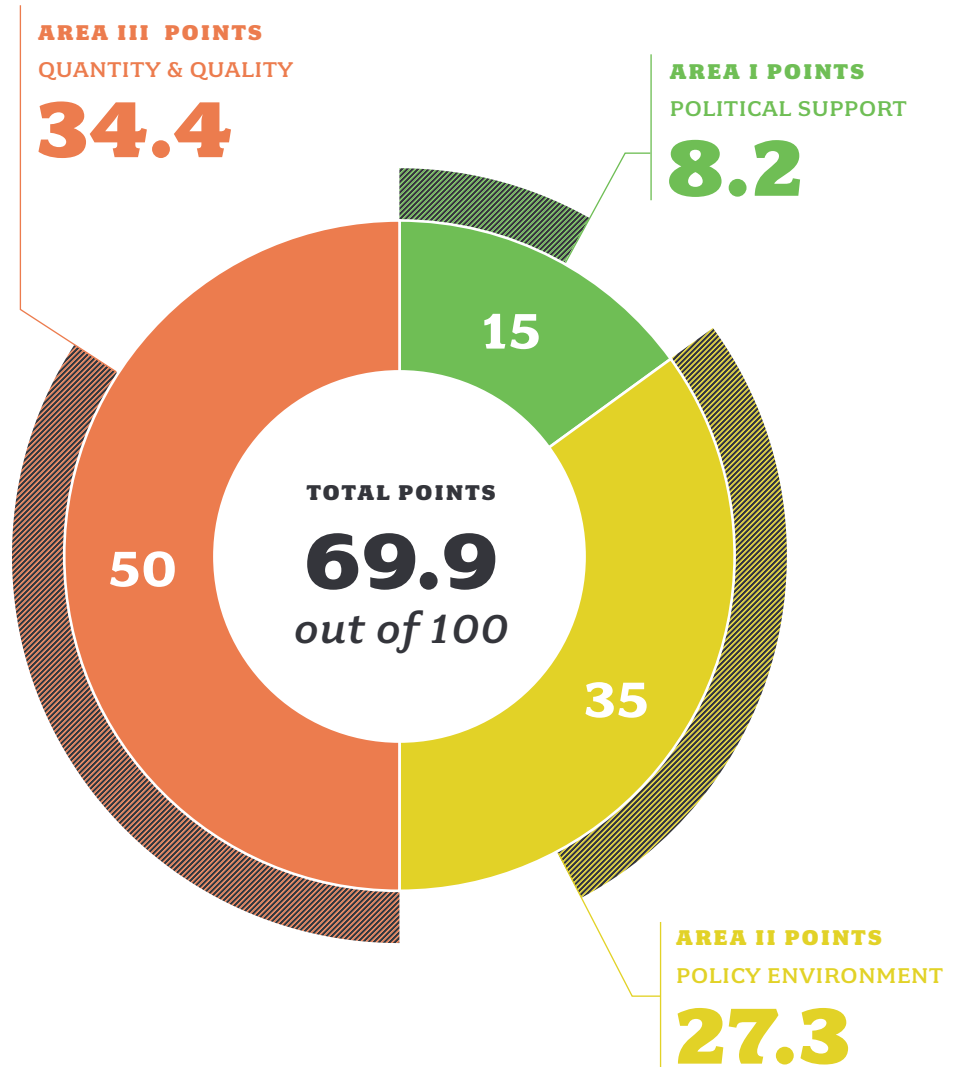
**35 POINTS**

**ATLANTA RANKS SECOND** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-seven points out of thirty-five. Atlanta Public Schools is a member of the Portfolio School District Network, and the city receives high marks for its willingness to close schools with low enrollment. Atlanta also benefits from several choice-friendly policies at the state level. For example, Georgia law places no restrictions on the number of charter schools in the state and grants them the “right of first refusal” when districts have surplus school facilities (which house more than 50 percent of Atlanta’s charters). However, because charters do not receive the same funding or transportation benefits as district schools, the educational playing field is still tilted against school choice.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**ATLANTA RANKS SEVENTEENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-four points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a robust set of public options, while vouchers and tax credit scholarships give them access to private options. However, compared to other cities, relatively few of Atlanta’s public schools are charters or magnets, and research suggests the quality of the city’s charter sector is uneven. For example, although Atlanta charters modestly outperform their district counterparts in reading, they are no better at raising math scores.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**ATLANTA RANKS NINTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with high marks for its policy environment outweighing its middling scores for political support and quantity and quality of choice. At the state level, Georgia has adopted numerous policies that should encourage the continued growth of schools of choice at the local level. However, the Atlanta families attending these schools would benefit from more equitable funding and transportation, as well as a firmer commitment to quality control.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS ATLANTA? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Atlanta's principal newspaper?	Negative	1.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 19.67

**AREA I SCORE: 19.67/36.00 x 15% = 8.20**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Georgia charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charters	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Atlanta?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Atlanta's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Georgia have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Yes	4.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Atlanta charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	4.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Atlanta (of 8 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 8 possible)*	2.00
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Atlanta?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does Georgia law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state NGO that supports school choice in Atlanta?	Yes*	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Atlanta support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.22
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Atlanta for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Atlanta support schools of choice (of 4 possible)?	3 (of 4 possible)*	1.48
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Atlanta for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Atlanta (of 7 possible)?	7 (of 7 possible)*	3.11
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Atlanta?	3 (of 5)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Atlanta charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Atlanta charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with the authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Atlanta's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	12.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing such schools?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...



...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Georgia's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Atlanta?	Minimally/ Moderately comprehensive	1.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Atlanta (of 5 possible)?	5 (of 5 possible)*	2.36
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Atlanta have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Atlanta provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Atlanta's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 92.61) = 72.17

AREA II SCORE: 72.17/92.61 x 35% = 27.27

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Atlanta?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Atlanta?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Atlanta?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Atlanta?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Atlanta?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Atlanta?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Atlanta? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Atlanta? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Georgia have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Atlanta students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Atlanta are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Atlanta enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending an Atlanta charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending an Atlanta charter school on learning gains in math?	No impact	2.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 27.50

AREA III SCORE: 27.50/40.00 x 50% = 34.38

TOTAL SCORE: 8.20 + 27.27 + 34.38 = 69.85

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Atlanta” refers to the city as a whole or to Atlanta Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Austin has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

**enrollment snapshot 2013-14**

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	106,805
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	48,193
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	58,612
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	54%



# Detroit

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Detroit and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS DETROIT?

It's no secret that Detroit has fallen on hard times in recent years, with city managers facing a series of financial catastrophes culminating in formal bankruptcy in July 2013. In June 2011, Governor Rick Snyder announced the creation of a Detroit-centric turnaround agency known as the Education Achievement Authority (EAA), which now runs fifteen of the city's worst-performing schools. However, Detroit Public Schools has continued to lose market share as charters and other education alternatives have grown, even as overall enrollment in the city has declined. Unfortunately, because Article VIII, Section 2, of Michigan's constitution explicitly bans the use of public resources for vouchers or other "non-public" forms of education, many Detroit students have few alternatives to the city's struggling public schools.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**DETROIT RANKS EIGHTEENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This low ranking is largely due to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by local officials. Although parent groups and the local media have supported school choice, the superintendent, school board, and teachers' unions have not (foundation support is included in Area II). At the state level, however, the governor of Michigan has supported school choice in his "state of the state" speeches.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

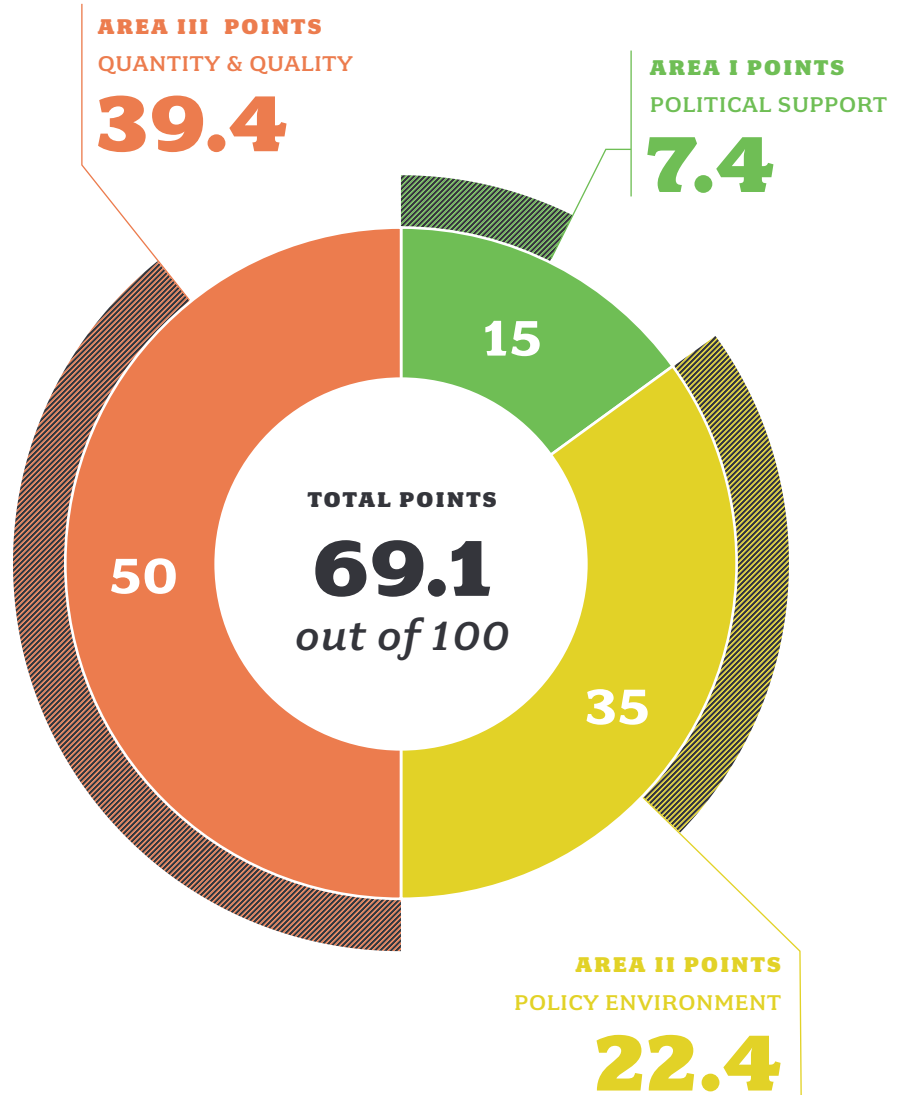
**35 POINTS**

**DETROIT RANKS SIXTEENTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-two points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its NGO, business, and philanthropic support, as well as its willingness to close under-enrolled district schools. Nevertheless, charter schools still receive far less funding than district schools, putting them at a competitive disadvantage financially. Moreover, because Detroit does not provide transportation to schools of choice, it is difficult for families to access them, and the absence of a common application poses a challenge for parents attempting to navigate the system.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**DETROIT RANKS FOURTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as attendance waivers as well as interdistrict and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options. However, because Michigan does not have a voucher or tax credit program, many private options remain out of reach for Detroit families. Compared to other cities, a very high proportion of Detroit's public schools are schools of choice, and a similarly high percentage of students enroll in charter schools, which outperform its district schools in both reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**DETROIT RANKS TENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with its high marks for the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its below-average score for political support and middling score for policy environment. Of the cities in our sample, Detroit trails only New Orleans in terms of the percentage of students enrolled in charters. However, Detroit families seeking to take advantage of the opportunities available to them need better logistical supports (such as transportation and a common application).

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS DETROIT? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/ Disagree	0.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly Disagree	0.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly Agree	3.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Detroit’s principal newspaper?	Neutral	2.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 17.66

**AREA I SCORE: 17.66/36.00 x 15% = 7.36**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Michigan charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	State law places various limits on “schools of excellence” and cyber schools	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Detroit?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Detroit’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Michigan have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Detroit charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Detroit (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	3 (of 9 possible)	1.33
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Detroit?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Michigan law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Detroit?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Detroit support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	5 (of 9 possible)	2.07
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Detroit for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Detroit support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	8 (of 9 possible)	3.33
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Detroit for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.17
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Detroit (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)*	3.41
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Detroit?	3 (of 5)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Detroit charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Detroit charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score out of 12 for Detroit’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.37	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing of closing such schools?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Michigan's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Detroit?	Minimally/Moderately comprehensive	1.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Detroit (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)	3.71
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Detroit have a common application for schools of choice?	No	0.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Detroit provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Detroit's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 103.56) = 66.19

AREA II SCORE: 66.19/103.56 x 35% = 22.37

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Detroit?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Detroit?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Detroit?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Detroit?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Detroit?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Detroit?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waivers	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Detroit? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Detroit? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Michigan have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Detroit students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Detroit are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Detroit enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Detroit charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Detroit charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 31.50

AREA III SCORE: 31.50/40.00 x 50% = 39.38

**TOTAL SCORE: 7.36 + 22.37 + 39.38 = 69.10**

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, "Detroit" refers to the city as a whole or to Detroit Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

**\*** A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Detroit has only partial information for indicator 2.6.B, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.6.B and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	397,972
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	343,976
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	53,996
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	14%



# Chicago

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Chicago and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual-enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS CHICAGO?

Since his election in 2011, Mayor Rahm Emmanuel has retained many of the choice-friendly policies established by former mayor Richard M. Daley and former superintendent Arne Duncan, in addition to overseeing the closure of more than fifty under-enrolled and under-performing district schools in 2013 (in the face of immense budgetary pressure). Unsurprisingly, these positions have earned him the wrath of the city's powerful teachers' union, which went on strike in 2012 and strongly opposed his reelection in 2015. However, despite the union's best efforts, Emmanuel was comfortably reelected, and under his direction Chicago Public Schools has continued to expand the choices available to students by establishing more magnet schools and authorizing new charters, including members of high-performing networks like KIPP, Noble, and YCCS. Meanwhile, declining enrollment and years of underfunded teachers' pensions have left the district on the verge of bankruptcy, forcing it to take out a \$1.1 billion loan and lay off more than 1,000 teachers in 2015.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



### Area I: Political Support

15 POINTS

**CHICAGO RANKS SIXTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of ten points out of fifteen. This high ranking is largely due to the broad support for school choice expressed by state and local officials, which is only partially offset by the hostility of the union. Although the mayor, his appointed superintendent and school board, and parent groups have supported school choice, the city council and the local media have remained neutral (though Chicago's largest newspaper has supported school choice). At the state level, the governor of Illinois has also publicly supported school choice.

### Area II: Policy Environment

35 POINTS

**CHICAGO RANKS SIXTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-six points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support; its membership in the Portfolio School District Network; and the district's willingness to close schools with low enrollments. Despite the fact that charters do not have the "right of first refusal" to district buildings, many Chicago charters are located or co-located in district facilities (though many empty buildings have yet to be utilized). However, the potential for future growth is limited by Illinois law, which places a cap on the number of charters that can operate in the city. Additionally, because Chicago does not provide transportation to schools of choice, it is often difficult for families to access the choices available to them.

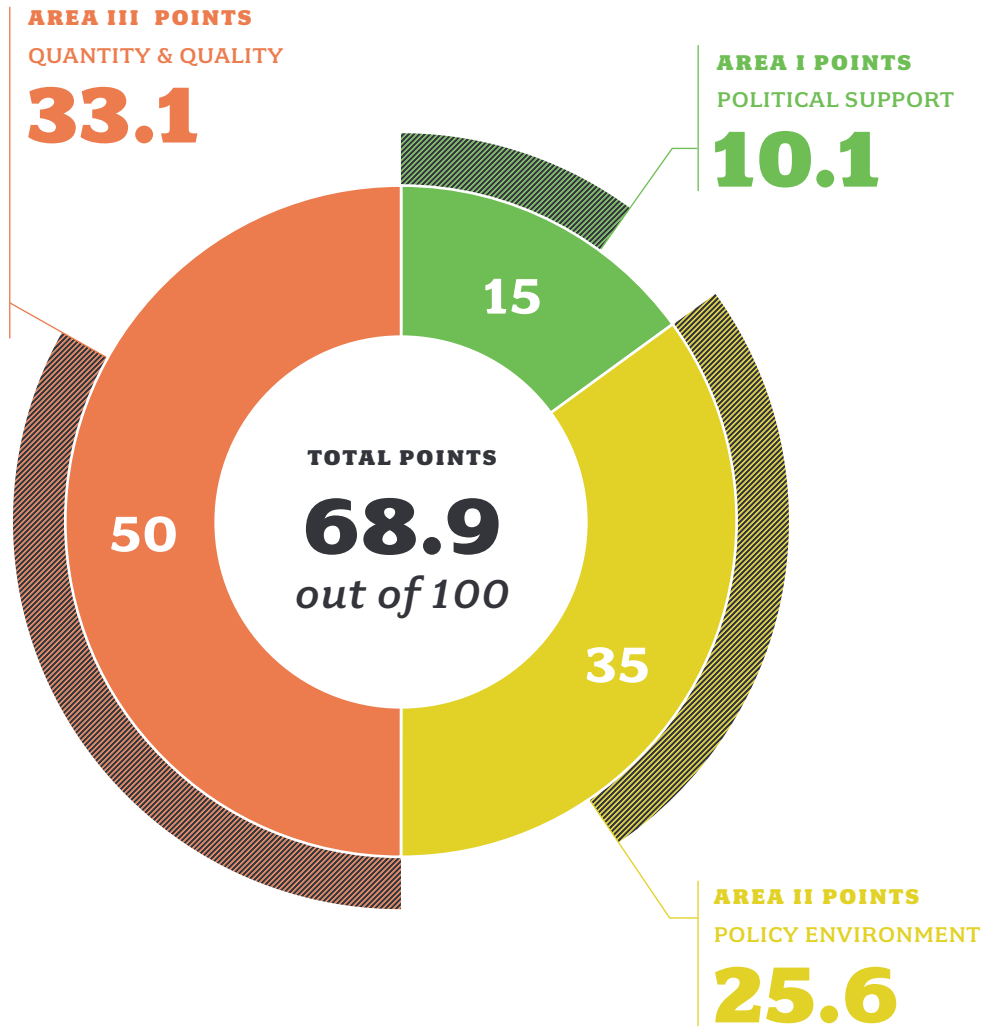
### Area III: Quantity & Quality

50 POINTS

**CHICAGO RANKS TWENTIETH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-three points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options. However, because Illinois does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Chicago families. Compared to other cities in the study, a high proportion of Chicago's public schools are schools of choice. However, most of these are magnet (or "magnet cluster") schools, and the percentage of Chicago students who enroll in charters is still fairly low. Finally, the performance of Chicago's charters is average, modestly exceeding that of district schools in math but not in reading.

## Chicago Results

76



Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.

**CHICAGO RANKS ELEVENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with high marks for political support and policy environment outweighing its below average score for the quantity and quality of choice. Thanks to the strong support it receives from NGOs, business, and philanthropies, Chicago's charter sector seems poised for continued growth. However, the city's families need better supports—such as more choice friendly transportation—to take full advantage of these options. Chicago's many underserved communities would also benefit from a private-school-choice mechanism, such as a voucher or tax credit scholarship program.**



HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS CHICAGO? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/Disagree	0.33
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Chicago's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 24.34

**AREA I SCORE: 24.34/36.00 x 15% = 10.14**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Illinois charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has geographic caps with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Chicago?	There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Chicago's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Illinois have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Chicago charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	3.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Chicago (of 4 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	2 (of 4 possible)*	0.81
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Chicago?	Between 5% and 20%	2.00
	2.3.C Does Illinois law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Chicago?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Chicago support schools of choice (of 3 possible)?	3 (of 3 possible)*	1.33
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Chicago for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Chicago support schools of choice (of 5 possible)?	5 (of 5 possible)*	2.22
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Chicago for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Chicago (of 6 possible)?	6 (of 6 possible)*	2.44
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Chicago?	5 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Chicago charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Chicago charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Chicago's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	12.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

## CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Illinois's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Chicago?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Chicago (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.50
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Chicago have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Chicago provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Chicago's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students must be enrolled part time; law is silent on charter students	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 94.00) = 68.8

AREA II SCORE: 68.8/94.00 x 35% = 25.62

## AREA III: QUANTITY &amp; QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Chicago?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Chicago?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Chicago?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Chicago?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Chicago?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Chicago?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Chicago? Can districts opt out?	No	
	3.2.C Are there dual-enrollment options in Chicago? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	1.50
	3.2.D Does Illinois have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Chicago students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Chicago are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Chicago enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Chicago charter school on learning gains in reading?	No impact	2.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Chicago charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 26.50

AREA III SCORE: 26.50/40.00 x 50% = 33.13

TOTAL SCORE: 10.14 + 25.62 + 33.13 = 68.89

## table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Chicago" refers to the city as a whole or to Chicago Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Chicago has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 2.22 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	63,958
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	54,300
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	9,658
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	15%



# Boston

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Boston and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS BOSTON?

Beneath Boston's confusing *mélange* of Commonwealth Charter Schools, Horace Mann Charter Schools, Pilot Schools, and Innovation Schools lie two simple truths: First, the city's true charters (that is, its Commonwealth Charters) are outstanding, as every measure of their performance clearly demonstrates. Second, they are pitifully scarce, accounting for a mere 15 percent of total public school enrollment, despite the lengthy waiting lists that exist at many schools. What accounts for this frustrating disconnect between supply and demand? In this case, the culprit is a 1993 Massachusetts law, the most recently revised version of which effectively caps the number of charters that can operate in the city by requiring that no more than 18 percent of net school spending in low-performing districts go toward charter tuition. Proponents of school choice have planned a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the law on the grounds that it violates the civil rights of the state's minority students.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**BOSTON RANKS THIRTEENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of nine points out of fifteen. Although the mayor, local media, and parent groups have generally supported school choice, the mayor's appointed school board, its appointed superintendent, and city council have remained fairly neutral, while the teachers' unions have been hostile to choice. At the state level, the governor has not mentioned school choice in his "state of the state" speeches.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

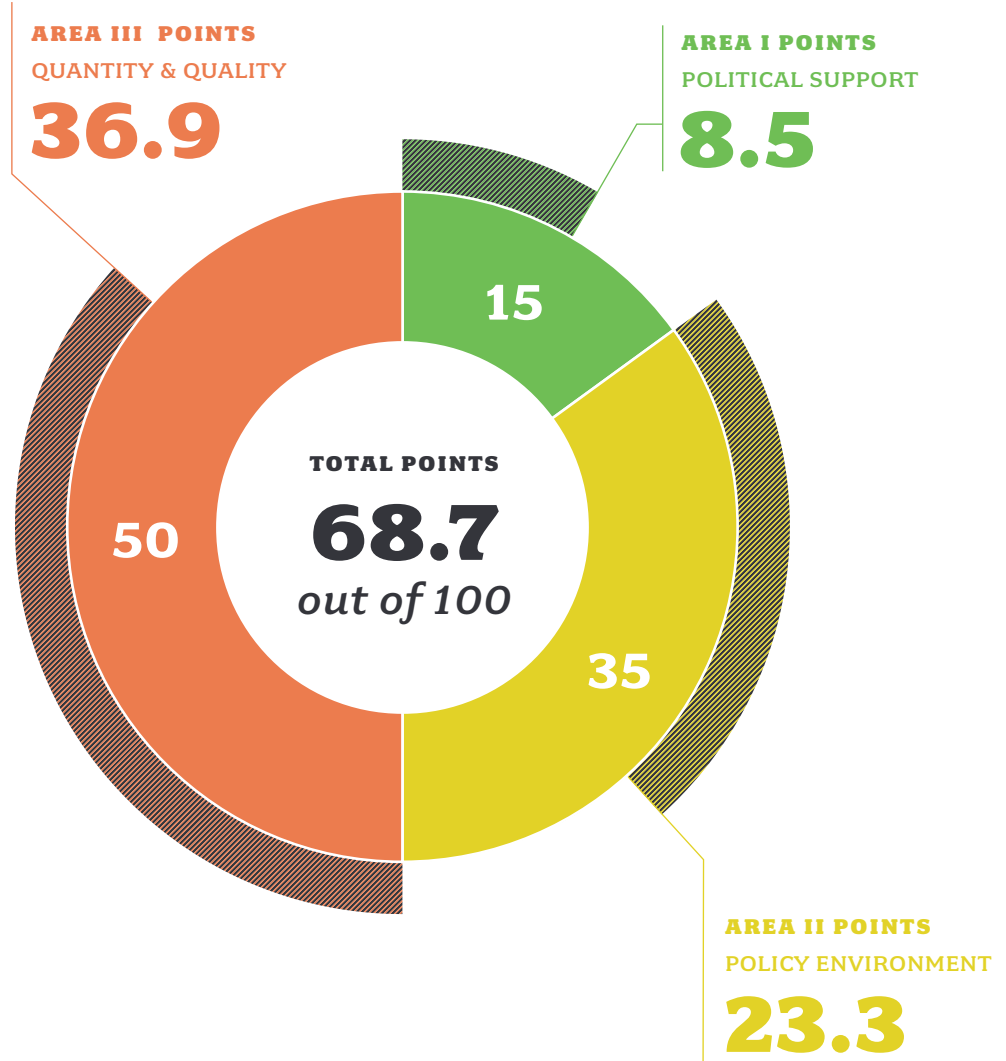
**35 POINTS**

**BOSTON RANKS TWELFTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-three points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its NGO, business, and philanthropic support and for providing transportation to schools of choice on equal terms with district-run schools. Boston Public Schools is also a member of the Portfolio School District Network. However, its Horace Mann charters are not exempt from collective bargaining agreements or teacher certification requirements. And because Massachusetts charters lack the "right of first refusal" to district facilities, few Boston charters have managed to gain access to them. Most importantly, the statewide cap on the number of charter schools and the aforementioned limit on charter funding in low-performing districts leave little room for Boston's sector to grow.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**BOSTON RANKS ELEVENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-seven points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. A complicated intradistrict lottery provides families with a robust set of public options (especially at the high school level, where 50 percent of the seats at most schools are reserved for the citywide lottery). However, because Massachusetts does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options are out of reach for Boston families. Finally, although they serve a modest proportion of the city's students, Boston's charter schools continue to outperform its district-run schools by a wide margin in both reading and math, making the cap on charter funding all the more incomprehensible.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**BOSTON RANKS TWELFTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with middling scores for all three areas: political support, policy environment, and quantity and quality of choice. Boston's Commonwealth Charter Schools are among the best schools in the country. (On average, they achieve more than double the learning gains of their district counterparts.) However, they cannot truly transform the city's education landscape unless they are allowed to serve more students. Thus, the task facing state legislators is simple: lift the cap.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS BOSTON? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/strongly agree	3.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Boston's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 20.33

**AREA I SCORE: 20.33/36.00 x 15% = 8.47**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Massachusetts charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Boston?	There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Boston's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Massachusetts have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Boston charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Boston (of 5 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	3 (of 5 possible)*	1.48
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Boston?	Between 5% and 20%	2.00
	2.3.C Does Massachusetts law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Boston?	Modest state NGO support; strong local NGO support	3.33
	2.4.B Do NGOs in Boston lobby on behalf of schools of choice?	Yes*	0.44
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Boston for schools of choice?	Yes, for charters*	1.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Boston support schools of choice (of 4 possible)?	4 (of 4 possible)*	1.78
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Boston for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Boston (of 8 possible)?	8 (of 8 possible)*	3.56
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton) how many support schools of choice in Boston?	4 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Boston charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Boston charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with the authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Boston's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a history of closing schools but no formal policy	2.67

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Massachusetts's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Boston?	Minimally/Moderately comprehensive	1.75
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Boston (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.43
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Boston have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice <sup>c</sup>	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Boston provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Boston's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students must seek district approval; law is silent on charter students	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 90.00) = 59.94

AREA II SCORE: 59.94/90.00 x 35% = 23.31

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Boston?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Boston?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Boston?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Boston?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Boston?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Boston?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery <sup>d</sup>	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Boston? Can districts opt out?	No	1.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Boston? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Massachusetts have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Boston students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Boston are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Boston enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Boston charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Boston charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 29.50

AREA III SCORE: 29.50/40.00 x 50% = 36.88

TOTAL SCORE: 8.47 + 23.31 + 36.88 = 68.66

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Boston" refers to the city as a whole or to Boston Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

c Although Boston's three exam schools have their own admissions processes, the overwhelming majority of its magnet schools are included in its common application.

d Technically, Boston's lottery is not districtwide, because families must choose from a list of schools created by the district. However, according to the district website, "every family will have a choice of at least six schools" and "most will have between ten and fourteen choices."

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Boston has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 1.78 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	1,052,772
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	982,562
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	70,210
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	7%



# New York City

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for New York City and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NEW YORK CITY?

In education reform circles, New York City is perhaps best known for its massive intradistrict open enrollment program, which requires that all rising freshmen in the nation's largest school district rank their preferred high schools. However, the city also boasts some of the country's finest magnet schools, including famous exam schools like Stuyvesant and the Bronx School of Science. In recent years, a number of high-performing charter networks, such as the rapidly expanding Success Academy, have managed to gain a foothold in New York's education market. Yet, despite their growth, charters still serve only a small fraction of the city's million-plus students, most of whom still enroll in traditional district schools. Unfortunately, New York's current political leadership has been hostile to charters, and in recent years the battle between charter bête noire Mayor Bill de Blasio and Success Academy CEO Eva Moskowitz over access to district facilities has made national headlines. A 2015 deal in the state legislature, which increased the number of additional charters allowed in New York City from twenty-five to fifty, represented a victory for school choice advocates, but more battles lie ahead.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**NEW YORK RANKS TWENTY-SIXTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of six points out of fifteen. This low ranking is largely due to the dearth of support for school choice among local officials. Although parent groups and the local media have remained neutral (or, perhaps more accurately, divided) on school choice, the current mayor, city council, and chancellor have all been hostile—a dramatic departure from the earnest support offered by their predecessors.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**NEW YORK RANKS THIRD**

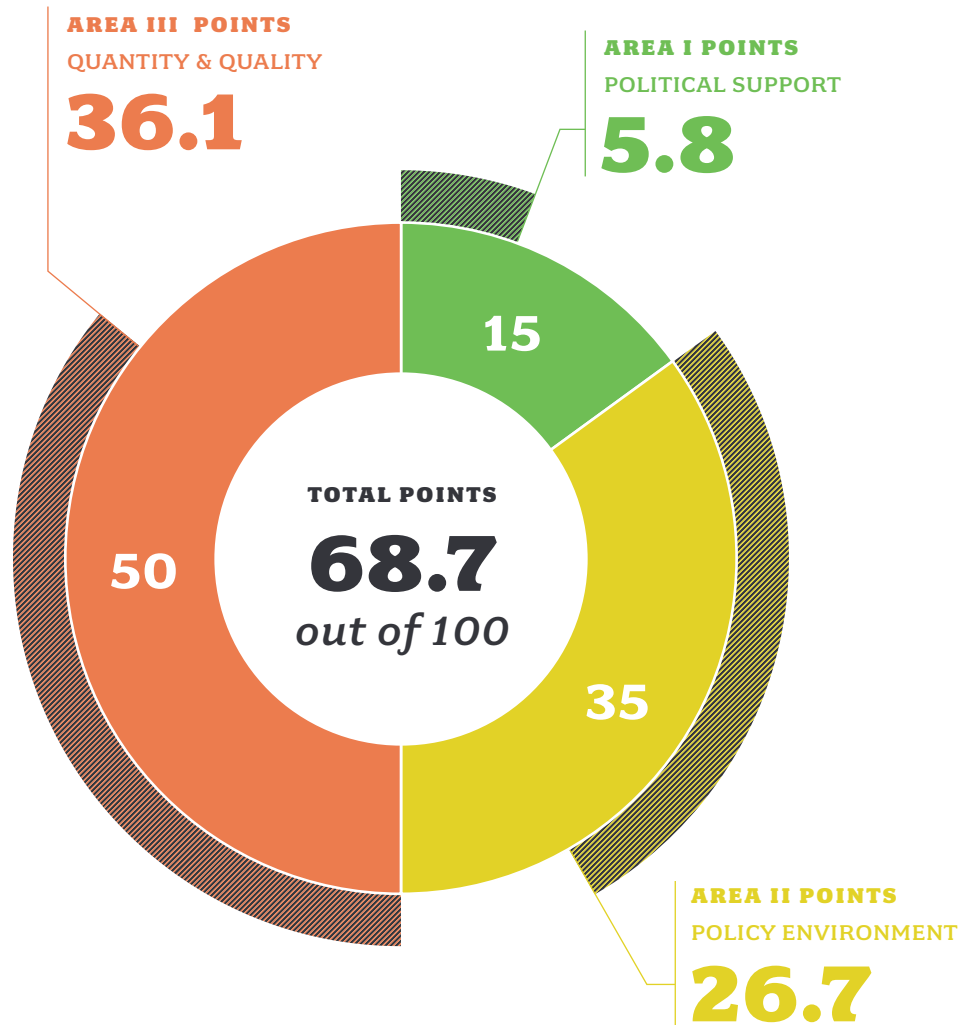
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-seven points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its business and philanthropic support and willingness to close schools with low enrollments, as well as for its common application for district schools (though it does not include the city's charters). Despite the most recent mayor's opposition, New York also gets high marks for the percentage of charter schools that are located in district facilities, which is among the highest in the country (thanks to the previous administration). However, the city's charter schools receive significantly less funding than district schools, and they don't have as much flexibility as they could when it comes to hiring teachers.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**NEW YORK RANKS THIRTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-six points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs also provide families with access to a variety of public options. However, because the state of New York does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for New York families. Finally, despite their strong academic performance, New York's charter schools enroll a comparatively low percentage of the city's million-plus students.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**NEW YORK RANKS TWELFTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its low marks for political support more or less balancing out its high score for policy environment and middling score for the quantity and quality of choice. The city has adopted a number of important (and, in some cases, innovative) policies to encourage school choice, including a sophisticated common enrollment system for district schools. However, its current political leadership is hostile to choice, and because of its sheer size and cultural gravity, its reputation as a choice Mecca has in some ways outpaced the reality on the ground.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NEW YORK CITY? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of New York's principal newspaper?	Neutral	2.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 14.00

**AREA I SCORE: 14.00/36.00 x 15% = 5.83**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does New York charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in New York City?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is New York City's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does New York have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of New York City charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	4.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in New York City (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	7 (of 9 possible)	2.96
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in New York City?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does New York law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Funding is adequate but not guaranteed	2.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in New York City?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in New York City support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in New York City for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice*	2.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in New York City support schools of choice (of 5 possible)?	5 (of 5 possible)*	2.00
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in New York City for schools of choice?	Yes, for charter schools*	1.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in New York City (of 4 possible)?	3 (of 4 possible)*	1.56
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in New York City?	4 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are New York City charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are New York charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for New York City's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.42	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

## CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in New York's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for New York City schools of choice?	Mostly comprehensive	2.75
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in New York City (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)	3.29
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does New York City have a common application for schools of choice? <sup>a</sup>	For some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does New York provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are New York City's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; charter students have limited eligibility	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 92.00) = 70.23

**AREA II SCORE: 70.23/92.00 x 35% = 26.72**

## AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in New York City?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in New York City?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in New York City?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Catholic schools available to families in New York City?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in New York City?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in New York City?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in New York City? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in New York City? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does the state of New York have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for New York City students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in New York City are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)? <sup>d</sup>	**	**
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in New York City enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a New York City charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a New York City charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 36.00) = 26.00

**AREA III SCORE: 26.00/36.00 x 50% = 36.11**

**TOTAL SCORE: 5.83 + 26.72 + 36.11 = 68.66**

### table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “New York” refers to the city as a whole or to New York City Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

**c** Although a few of New York’s most selective magnets have their own applications, the overwhelming majority are part of the common application system.

**d** Because of the size and complexity of New York’s education system, we were unable to arrive at an accurate count of New York’s magnet schools and were thus unable to estimate the number of public schools of choice in the city.

**\*** A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, New York City has only partial information for indicator 2.5.A, so we subtracted one point from the 2.5.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	198,059
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	137,674
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	60,385
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	30%



# Philadelphia

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Philadelphia and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS PHILADELPHIA?

Since 2001, authority over the perpetually insolvent School District of Philadelphia has rested with the School Reform Commission, a hybrid school board appointed by the mayor and governor. Between 2007 and 2014, charter enrollment in Philadelphia doubled to 60,000 students (or 30 percent of total public school enrollment) as the Commission converted twenty-one low-performing district schools into charters. However, in an effort to protect the district's woeful finances, the Commission refused to consider applications for new schools. This moratorium was lifted in 2014 as part of a legislative deal to secure passage of a new cigarette tax, yet in 2015 the Commission approved just six of thirty-nine charter applications. Under state law, rejected applicants may appeal the Commission's decision or resubmit their application, and many appear likely to do so. Meanwhile, Pennsylvania's Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program continues to provide private scholarships to more than 7,000 students annually, including many in Philadelphia.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**PHILADELPHIA RANKS TWENTY-NINTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of five points out of fifteen. This low ranking is due to a number of factors, including the lack of support for school choice among local officials and the hostility of the city's principal newspaper. Although the mayor, superintendent, and School Reform Commission have remained relatively neutral with regard to school choice, the teachers' unions, city council, and local media have not been supportive.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**PHILADELPHIA RANKS TENTH**

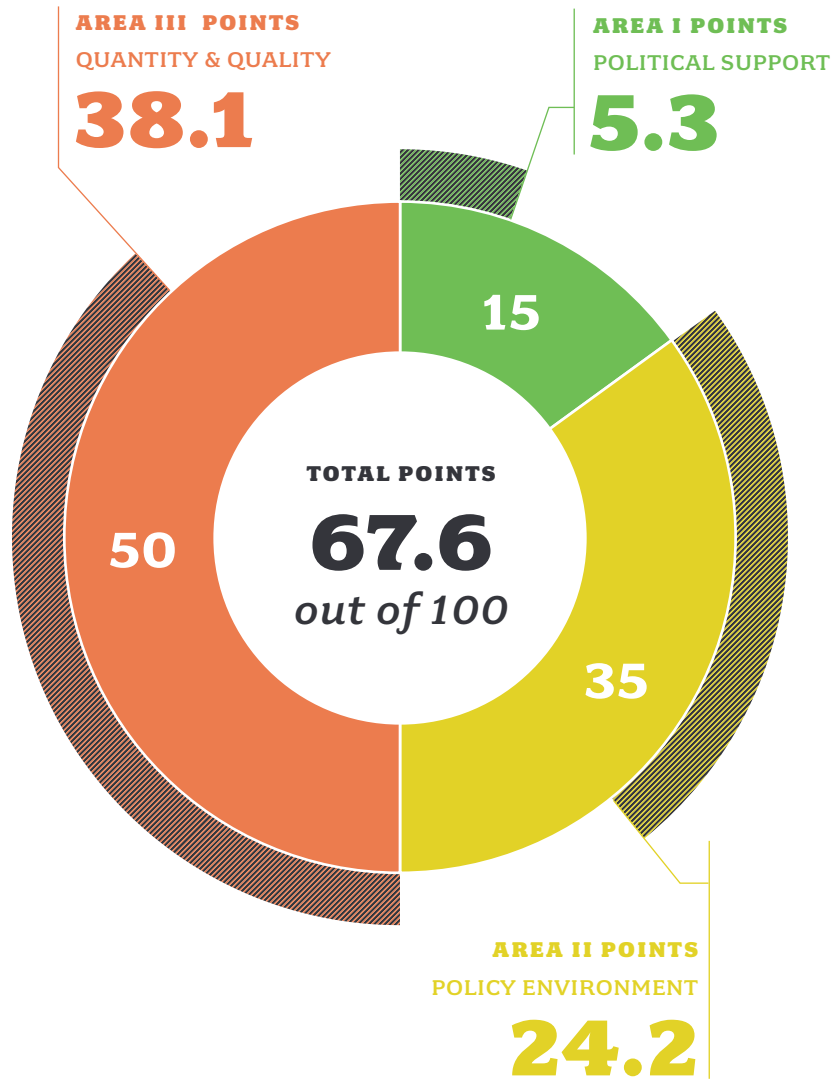
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-four points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its common application and choice-friendly transportation, as well as for its willingness to close schools with low enrollments and locate or co-locate charter schools in district facilities. The School District of Philadelphia is also a member of the Portfolio School District Network. However, Philadelphia charters still receive significantly less funding than district-run schools, and the School Reform Commission's effective monopoly on authorizing limits the rate at which the city's charter sector can grow.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**PHILADELPHIA RANKS NINTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-eight points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. A district wide lottery provides families with access to a variety of public options, while a tax credit scholarship program gives some low-income students greater access to private options. Finally, although Philadelphia has few magnet schools for a city of its size, a comparatively high percentage of its students enroll in charter schools, which outperform district schools in both reading and math.



**PHILADELPHIA RANKS FOURTEENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with its high marks for policy environment and the quantity and quality of choice more or less balancing out its abysmal scores for political support. Alternatives to the city's dysfunctional school district continue to multiply, and with a total enrollment of over 60,000, Philadelphia's charter sector is now the third largest in the country (after Los Angeles and New York). Still, thousands of families remain on waitlists. If local interest groups can be tamed and local officials effectively won over, their children may yet receive the education they deserve.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS PHILADELPHIA? <sup>a</sup>	DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
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**AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)**

1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree	0.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Philadelphia’s principal newspaper?	Very negative	0.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 12.67

**AREA I SCORE: 12.67/36.00 x 15% = 5.28**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Pennsylvania charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	State has a cap with ample room for growth	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Philadelphia?	There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Philadelphia’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Pennsylvania have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Philadelphia charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	3.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Philadelphia (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	3 (of 9 possible)	1.33
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Philadelphia?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does Pennsylvania law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Philadelphia?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Philadelphia support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	6 (of 9 possible)	2.74
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Philadelphia for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Philadelphia support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	2 (of 9 possible)	1.11
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Philadelphia for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Philadelphia (of 9 possible)?	6 (of 9 possible)	2.44
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton) how many support schools of choice in Philadelphia?	3 (of 5 possible)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Philadelphia charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Philadelphia charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Philadelphia’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.00	3.00
	2.8.C Does Philadelphia have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Pennsylvania's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Philadelphia schools of choice?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Philadelphia (of 8 possible)?	6 (of 8 possible)	3.02
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Philadelphia have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	3.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Philadelphia provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Philadelphia homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are eligible; charter students have limited eligibility	3.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 102.00) = 70.64

AREA II SCORE: 70.64/102.00 x 35% = 24.24

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Philadelphia?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Philadelphia?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Philadelphia?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Philadelphia?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Philadelphia?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Philadelphia?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Philadelphia? Can districts opt out?	No	1.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Philadelphia? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Pennsylvania have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Philadelphia students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Philadelphia are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Philadelphia enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Philadelphia charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Philadelphia charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 30.50

AREA III SCORE: 30.50/40.00 x 50% = 38.13

TOTAL SCORE: 5.28 + 24.24 + 38.13 = 67.64

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Philadelphia” refers to the city as a whole or to the Philadelphia School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Philadelphia has only partial information for indicator 2.5.A, so we subtracted two points from the 2.5.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	652,421
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	513,247
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	139,174
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	21%



# Los Angeles

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Los Angeles and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS LOS ANGELES?

In the past decade, the number of charter schools in Los Angeles has quadrupled, while district enrollment has declined by approximately 100,000 students. With over 260 schools and 140,000 students, the city's charter sector is now the largest in the country in terms of total enrollment, though it still pales in comparison to LAUSD, which enrolls 500,000 students in 1,000-plus schools, including nearly 200 magnet schools.

Los Angeles is the birthplace of several high-performing charter networks, including the Green Dot and Alliance networks, as well as a number of highly regarded independent charters, such as High Tech Los Angeles. Moreover, compared to students in district schools, those in Los Angeles charters achieve the equivalent of two to three months of additional learning in reading and math, with Hispanic and low-income students seeing even greater gains. Despite these strong results, however, charters remain a divisive issue in local politics, and in recent years, unions and charter advocates have fought pitched battles over the composition of the Los Angeles school board, the city's primary charter authorizer.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

AREA I  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



AREA II  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



AREA III  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**LOS ANGELES RANKS TWENTY-SECOND** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This low ranking is attributable to a number of factors. For example, the city's leading newspaper has been critical of school choice. Although the superintendent and parent groups have supported school choice, the mayor, city council, and school board have remained neutral (or divided), while the teachers' union has been hostile.

Although the superintendent and parent groups have supported school choice, the mayor, city council, and school board have remained neutral (or divided), while the teachers' union has been hostile.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

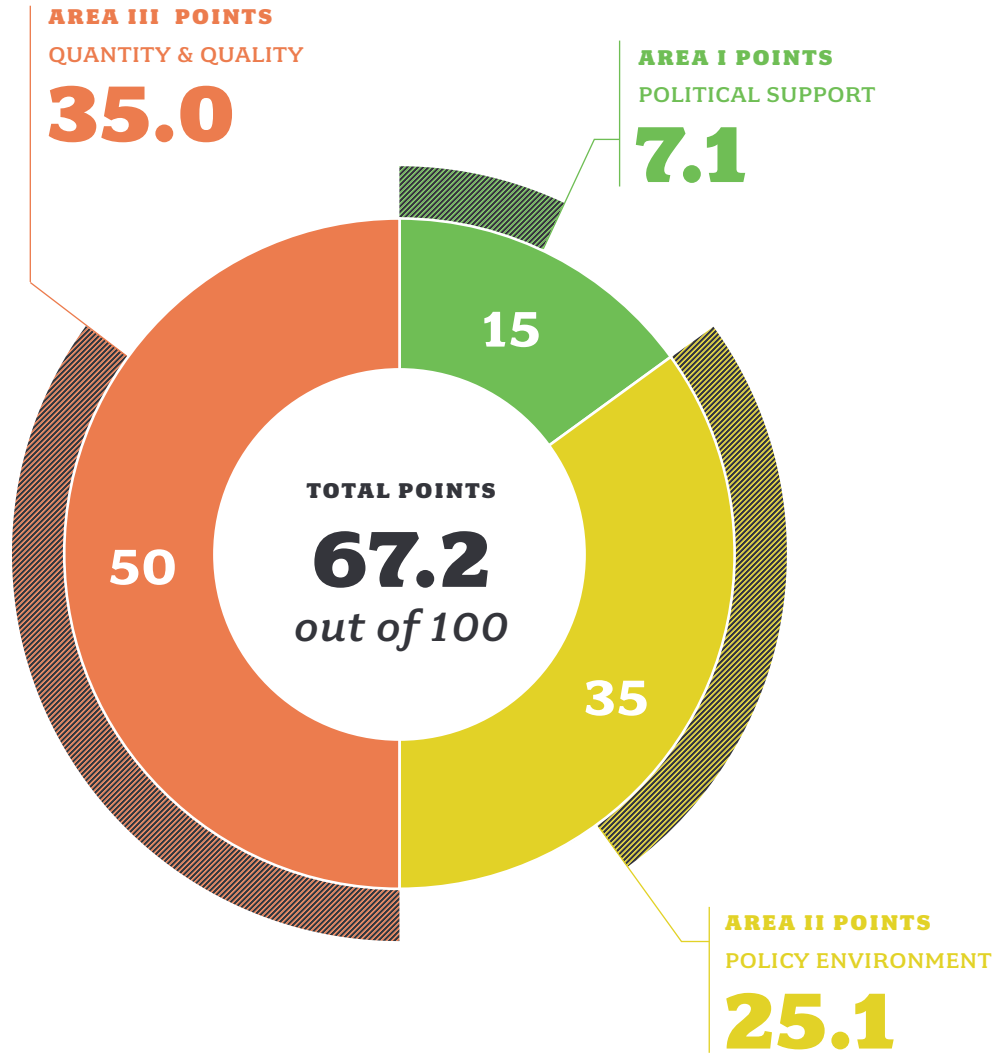
**35 POINTS**

**LOS ANGELES RANKS EIGHTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-five points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support, and for the number of charter schools that are located in district facilities. However, the absence of a common application system for most types of schools poses a challenge for parents attempting to navigate the enormous system, and the lack of public transportation to schools of choice makes it difficult for some families to access the choices available to them. Finally, despite the number of students that have left the district for charters, Los Angeles Unified does not have a history of closing district schools due to low enrollment.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**LOS ANGELES RANKS SIXTEENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-five points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a robust set of public options. However, because neither Los Angeles nor California has a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private schools remain out of reach for most Los Angeles families. Finally, despite operating at a financial disadvantage, Los Angeles charter schools continue to grow their market share and outperform district schools in reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**LOS ANGELES RANKS FIFTEENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its high mark for policy environment more or less balancing out its low score for political support and middling scores for the quantity and quality of choice. A number of high quality charter providers are active in Los Angeles. However, demand for these options still outstrips supply, and a mixture of union hostility, scarce facilities, and low funding has prevented the sector from achieving even faster growth. Los Angeles families seeking to take advantage of the options available to them also need better logistical supports (such as transportation and a common application).**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS LOS ANGELES? <sup>a</sup>	DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
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**AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)**

1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Los Angeles's principal newspaper?	Very negative	0.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 16.99

**AREA I SCORE: 16.99/36.00 x 15% = 7.08**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does California charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Los Angeles?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Los Angeles's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does California have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Los Angeles charter schools are located or co-located in city/district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	3.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Los Angeles (of 8 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 8 possible)*	2.15
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Los Angeles?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does California law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Los Angeles?	Yes, both	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Los Angeles support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	4 (of 9 possible)	1.93
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business community support in Los Angeles for schools of choice?	Yes, for all types of schools of choice	4.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Los Angeles support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	8 (of 9 possible)	3.41
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Los Angeles for schools of choice?	Yes, for all types of schools of choice	4.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Los Angeles (of 8 possible)?	8 (of 8 possible)*	3.56
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, Walton) how many support schools of choice in Los Angeles?	4 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Los Angeles charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Los Angeles charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Los Angeles's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions?)	11.83	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	No	0.00

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in California's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Los Angeles schools of choice?	Mostly comprehensive	3.25
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Los Angeles (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.52
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Los Angeles have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Los Angeles provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Los Angeles homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law does not explicitly address charter eligibility	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 102.11) = 73.32

AREA II SCORE: 73.32/102.11 x 35% = 25.13

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Los Angeles?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Los Angeles?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Los Angeles?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Los Angeles?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Los Angeles?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Los Angeles?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waivers	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Los Angeles? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Los Angeles? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does California have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Los Angeles students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Los Angeles are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Los Angeles enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Los Angeles charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Los Angeles charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 28.00

AREA III SCORE: 28.00/40.00 x 50% = 35.00

TOTAL SCORE: 7.08 + 25.13 + 35.00 = 67.21

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Los Angeles” refers to the city as a whole or to Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Los Angeles has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	46,415
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	37,534
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	8,881
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	19%

16

# Minneapolis

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Minneapolis and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS MINNEAPOLIS?

When it comes to school choice, Minneapolis is a city of firsts. In 1988, the Minnesota legislature passed the nation's first statewide interdistrict open enrollment law, which gave every Minnesotan child the right (at least in principle) to enroll in any district in the state. In 1991, it passed the nation's first charter law, which the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools still ranks as the country's best. A year later, the nation's first charter school opened its doors in St. Paul, just across the river from Minneapolis. Finally, in 2011 the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers formed the first union-backed charter-authorizing organization, the Minnesota Guild of Charter Schools, which has authorized five schools so far (including three in Minneapolis). Today, over a third of Minneapolis students either enroll in charters or leave the city's dysfunctional school district for neighboring districts.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

AREA I  
POLITICAL SUPPORT

16

AREA II  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

13

AREA III  
QUANTITY & QUALITY

14

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**MINNEAPOLIS RANKS SIXTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eight points out of fifteen. This middling rank is due largely to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by local officials. Although the local media have mostly supported school choice, the mayor, city council, school board, and superintendent have remained neutral (perhaps because school choice is already so well established). At the state level, the governor has not mentioned school choice in his speeches.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**MINNEAPOLIS RANKS THIRTEENTH**

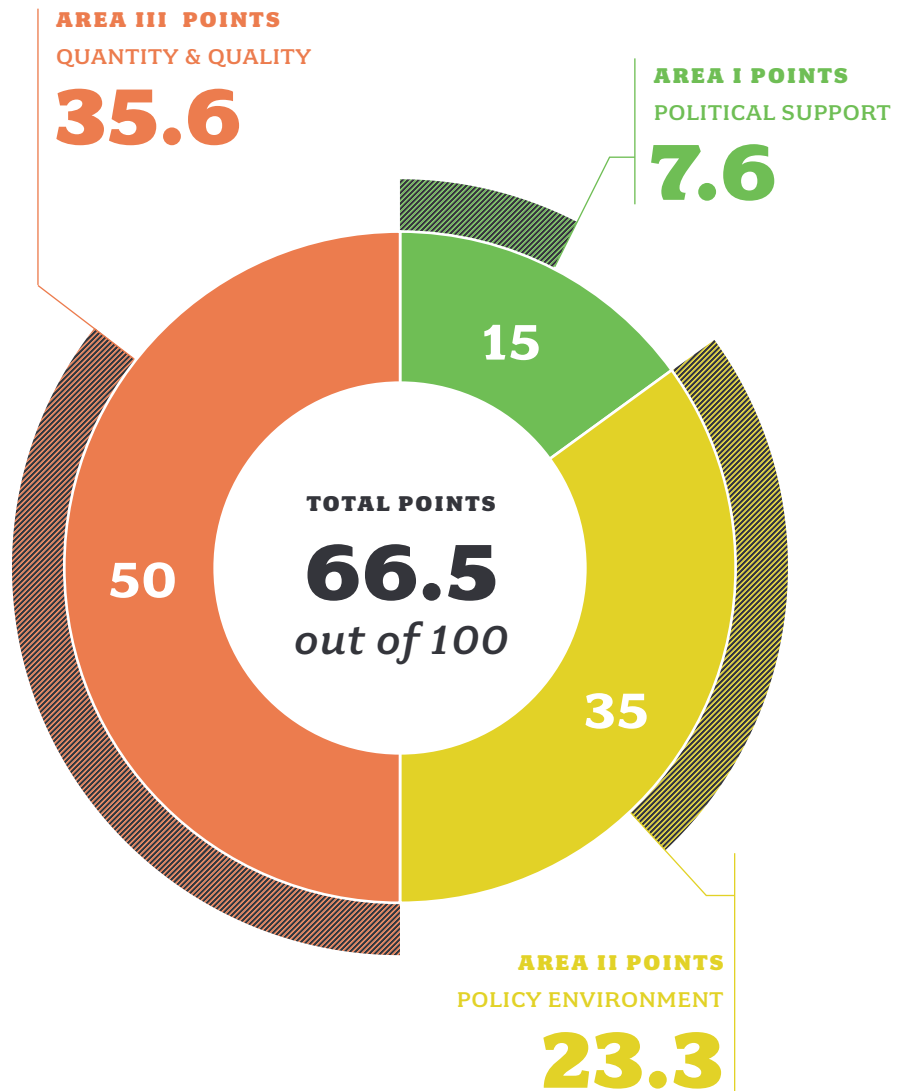
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-three points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for a policy environment that is mostly free of restrictions on charter schools. For example, there is no statewide cap on the number of charter schools, and all charters are exempt from collective bargaining agreements. However, charters receive less funding than district schools, and in practice the district does not provide transportation to most schools of choice (despite being legally required to do so under Minnesota law). Finally, Minneapolis does not have a history of closing district schools with low or declining enrollment.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**MINNEAPOLIS RANKS FOURTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-six points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a robust set of public options, and the city treats its home-schooled students fairly by allowing them to participate in district programs. However, the quality of the city's charter schools is mixed; although Minneapolis charters outperform the city's district schools in math, they perform no better in reading.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**MINNEAPOLIS RANKS SIXTEENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES**

**OVERALL**, with middling scores in all three categories: political support, policy environment, and quantity and quality of choice. Minneapolis provides families with a range of public options, but its charter schools would benefit from better facilities and more flexible transportation policies, and both the city and state must pay more attention to quality control.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS MINNEAPOLIS? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Minneapolis's principal newspaper?	Agree	3.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 18.32

**AREA I SCORE: 18.32/36.00 x 15% = 7.63**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Minnesota charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Minneapolis?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Minneapolis's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Minnesota have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Minneapolis charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	2.33
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Minneapolis (of 6 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	4 (of 6 possible)*	1.70
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Minneapolis?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does Minneapolis law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Minneapolis?	**	**
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Minneapolis support schools of choice?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Minneapolis for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Minneapolis support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	6 (of 6 possible)*	2.52
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Minneapolis for schools of choice?	Yes, for charters*	1.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Minneapolis (of 7 possible)?	7 (of 7 possible)*	3.11
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Minneapolis?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Minneapolis charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Minneapolis charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Yes	0.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Minneapolis's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.14	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	No	0.00

AREA II continued on next page...



...AREA II continued

## CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Minnesota's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Minneapolis?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Minneapolis (of 5 possible)?	5 (of 5 possible)*	2.43
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Minneapolis have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Minneapolis provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No <sup>c</sup>	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Minneapolis's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are eligible; charter students have limited eligibility	3.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 85.94) = 57.09

**AREA II SCORE: 57.09/85.94 x 35% = 23.25**

## AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Minneapolis?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Minneapolis?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Minneapolis?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Columbus?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Minneapolis?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Minneapolis?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Minneapolis? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Minneapolis? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Ohio have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Minneapolis students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Minneapolis are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Minneapolis enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Minneapolis charter school on learning gains in reading?	No impact	2.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Minneapolis charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 28.50

**AREA III SCORE: 28.50/40.00 x 50% = 35.63**

**TOTAL SCORE: 7.63 + 23.25 + 35.63 = 66.51**

### table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Minneapolis" refers to the city as a whole or to Minneapolis Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

**c** Although state law requires districts to provide transportation to charters if they request, because many charters operate on a different schedule than district schools, in practice most do not receive district transportation.

\* A few indicators may be out of less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Minneapolis has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 1.33 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	84,747
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	72,402
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	12,345
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	15%

17

# Baltimore

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Baltimore and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS BALTIMORE?

Baltimore City Schools spends a whopping \$17,329 per student and is legally required to give an equal amount to its thirty-one charters—minus the cost of the services it provides for them. However, in practice, the amount that charters receive has been negotiated, and many charter advocates say the current per-student allocation of \$9,387 is inadequate (and illegal). This is especially problematic because Maryland law places numerous restrictions on the way that charters operate. For example, charters lack the authority to hire or fire their teachers or principals, who are employees of the district (and union members subject to the district-wide collective bargaining agreement). As originally drafted, the Public Charter School Improvement Act of 2015, which received strong backing from Governor Larry Hogan, would have addressed some of these issues by providing charters with significantly greater funding and autonomy. However, by the time it reached the governor's desk, many of the bill's most consequential provisions had been watered down.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

AREA I  
POLITICAL SUPPORT

02

AREA II  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

29

AREA III  
QUANTITY & QUALITY

10

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**BALTIMORE RANKS SECOND** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eleven points out of fifteen. Although the mayor, superintendent, school board, and local media have all supported school choice—perhaps because Maryland’s schools of choice are so much a part of the district system that they pose no threat to district finances or union membership. At the state level, the governor has also strongly supported school choice of a more authentic variety.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

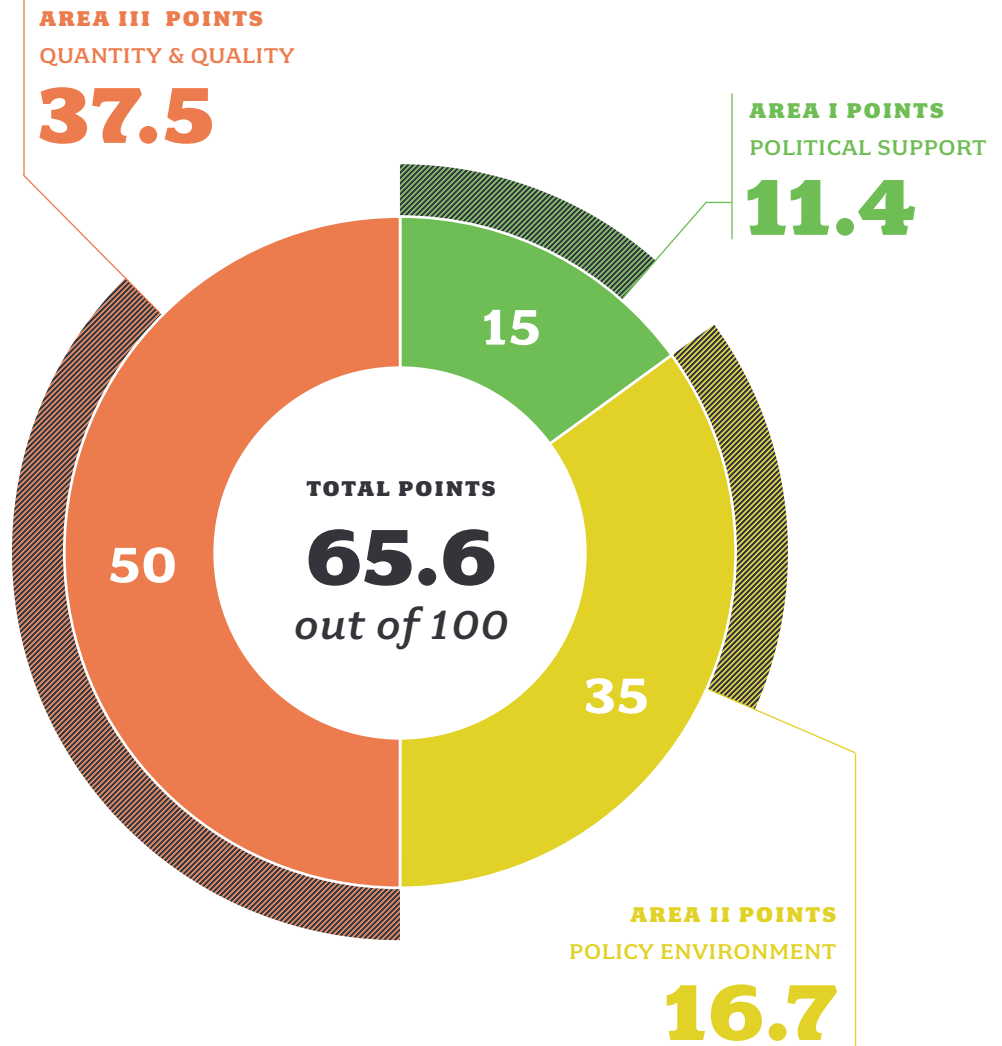
**35 POINTS**

**BALTIMORE RANKS TWENTY-NINTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of seventeen points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its common application and for the number of charter schools that are located or co-located in district facilities. However, it does not provide charters with transportation, forcing them to foot the bill for doing so, in order to comply with state law. Moreover, Maryland charters are not exempt from collective bargaining agreements or teacher-licensure requirements, severely restricting their organizational autonomy. Finally, Baltimore City Schools has no history of closing schools with low or declining enrollments.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**BALTIMORE RANKS TENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-eight points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options, especially at the middle and high school levels. However, because there are no voucher or tax credit scholarship programs in Maryland, private options remain out of reach for many families. Finally, Baltimore’s charter schools serve a comparatively low percentage of the city’s students.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**BALTIMORE RANKS SEVENTEENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with low marks for its policy environment more or less balancing out its high scores for political support and the quantity and quality of choice. To better support its schools of choice, the city and the district must provide them with more equitable funding and transportation. The state of Maryland should also remove the many burdensome restrictions on how charters operate, which make it difficult for them to function more efficiently or effectively than traditional district schools.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS BALTIMORE? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Baltimore's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 27.33

**AREA I SCORE: 27.33/36.00 x 15% = 11.39**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Maryland charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Baltimore?	There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Baltimore's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Maryland have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Baltimore charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	2.67
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Baltimore (of 8 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 8 possible)*	2.07
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Baltimore?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Maryland law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Baltimore?	Modest state NGO support; strong local NGO support	3.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Baltimore support schools of choice (of 8 possible)?	5 (of 8 possible)*	2.00
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Baltimore for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Baltimore support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	5 (of 9 possible)	2.15
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Baltimore for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Baltimore (of 9 possible)?	5 (of 9 possible)	2.15
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Baltimore?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Baltimore charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	No	0.00
	2.7.B Are Baltimore charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Yes	0.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	No	0.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Baltimore's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does Baltimore have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing such schools?	No	0.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Maryland's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Baltimore?	Moderately comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Baltimore (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	2.92
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Baltimore have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	3.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Baltimore provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes, but charters are excluded	1.33
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Baltimore homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 101.61) = 48.46

AREA II SCORE: 48.46/101.61 x 35% = 16.69

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Baltimore?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Baltimore?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Baltimore?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Baltimore?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Baltimore?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Baltimore?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery <sup>c</sup>	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Baltimore? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Baltimore? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Maryland have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Baltimore students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Baltimore are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Baltimore enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Baltimore charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Baltimore charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 24.00

AREA III SCORE: 24.00/32.00 x 50% = 37.50

TOTAL SCORE: 11.39 + 16.69 + 37.50 = 65.58

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Baltimore" refers to the city as a whole or to Baltimore City Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

c For middle and high school students only. Elementary students must request a transfer.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Baltimore has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	24,091
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	15,214
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	8,877
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	37%



# Kansas City, MO

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Kansas City and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS KANSAS CITY?

Since the passage of Missouri's charter law in 1998, Kansas City's charter sector has grown to include twenty-eight schools serving approximately 10,000 students. This growth has accelerated the breakdown of the traditional school district, which was already suffering from declining enrollment thanks to persistently low performance and a failed integration effort. In 2010, the district closed twenty-six under-enrolled schools to cut costs, but after the Missouri Board of Education revoked its accreditation in 2012, it saw further enrollment losses. Currently, at least twenty district school buildings stand vacant, yet just three of these facilities have been sold or leased to charters, a situation that has inspired bipartisan legislation to ensure more equitable access. For now, all Kansas City charters are authorized by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and sponsored by institutions of higher learning. However, in a sign of the times, in 2015 the state board approved the district's request to become a charter sponsor.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**KANSAS CITY RANKS SEVENTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eight points out of fifteen. This middling ranking is largely due to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by local officials. Although the mayor has generally supported school choice, the city council, school board, superintendent, and parent groups have remained relatively neutral, while the teachers' union has been unsupportive. Kansas City's principal newspaper has also been hostile to choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**KANSAS CITY RANKS NINETEENTH**

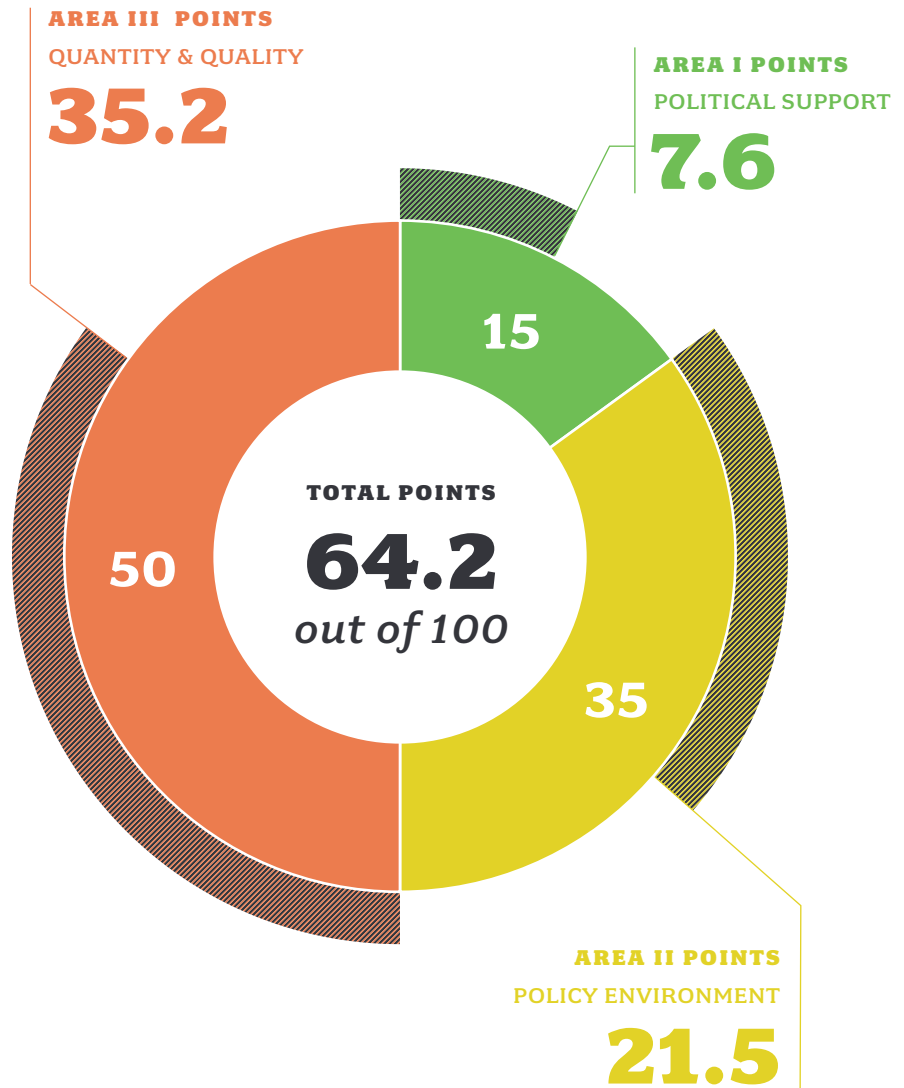
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-two points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO and business support but low marks for philanthropic support (though some organizations not included in our metric, such as the Kauffman Foundation, have supported local charters). The state policy environment is also a mixed bag. Although charter schools are exempt from collective bargaining agreements, they receive significantly less funding than district schools and do not have the "right of first refusal" to district facilities (many of which stand empty). Finally, because there is no common application in Kansas City, it is difficult for parents seeking to enroll their children to navigate the system.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**KANSAS CITY RANKS FIFTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-five points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Although Kansas City Public Schools does little to encourage intradistrict choice, since its accreditation was revoked, interdistrict transfers have become an important mechanism for public choice, allowing many families to leave for neighboring districts. Not coincidentally, charters account for a comparatively high percentage of total public enrollment. However, because Missouri does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Kansas City families.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**KANSAS CITY RANKS EIGHTEENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with middling scores in all three areas: political support, policy environment, and quantity and quality of choice. Of the cities on our list, Kansas City ranks fourth in terms of the percentage of students enrolled in charter schools. However, with more equitable access to facilities and funding, as well as better supports for families (such as a common application), charters could likely provide an even greater percentage of the city's students with an alternative to the district system.**



HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS KANSAS CITY? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.50
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Kansas City's principal newspaper?	Very negative	0.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 18.17

**AREA I SCORE: 18.17/36.00 x 15% = 7.57**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Missouri charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Kansas City?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Kansas City's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Missouri have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Kansas City charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	0.67
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Kansas City (of 4 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	2 (of 4 possible)*	1.11
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Kansas City?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does Missouri law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Kansas City?	Strong state NGO support; Modest local NGO support	3.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Kansas City support schools of choice (of 3 possible)?	3 (of 3 possible)*	1.33
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Kansas City for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Kansas City support schools of choice (of 4 possible)?	3 (of 4 possible)*	1.56
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Kansas City for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Kansas City (of 4 possible)?	3 (of 4 possible)*	1.33
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Kansas City?	1 (of 5)	1.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Kansas City charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Kansas City charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Kansas City's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.55	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools due to low enrollment and a history of doing so?	**	**

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Missouri's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Kansas City?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Kansas City (of 8 possible)?	5 (of 8 possible)	2.36
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Kansas City have a common application for schools of choice?	No	0.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Kansas City provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	**	**
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Kansas City homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 78.67) = 48.36

AREA II SCORE: 48.36/78.67 x 35% = 21.52

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Kansas City?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Kansas City?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Kansas City?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Kansas City?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Kansas City?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Kansas City?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	No	0.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Kansas City? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Kansas City? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.D Does Missouri have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Kansas City students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Kansas City are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Kansas City enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Kansas City charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Kansas City charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 22.50

AREA III SCORE: 22.50/32.00 x 50% = 35.16

TOTAL SCORE: 7.57 + 21.52 + 35.16 = 64.24

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Kansas City” refers to the city as a whole or to Kansas City Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Kansas City has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 2.22 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	242,740
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	192,855
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	49,885
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	21%



# Houston

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Houston and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS HOUSTON?

Houston is the birthplace of the country's most famous charter network, the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), which was founded by locals Mike Feinberg and David Levin in 1994 and supercharged by grants from the Fisher Foundation and others after its stellar results became apparent. Today, KIPP operates 183 schools, including twenty-four in Houston some of which are among of the city's highest performers. Houston also features other high-performing charter networks, such as Yes Prep and Harmony, as well as more than one hundred district-run magnet schools. Together, charters and magnets serve more than half of Houston's predominantly Hispanic and African American students. Still, the quality of these options remains a concern. Although the Houston Independent School District authorizes more than thirty schools, most Houston charters are authorized by the Texas Education Agency, which has revoked the charters of at least five local schools since the passage of SB 2 in 2013 made it easier to shut down low-performing schools.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support****15 POINTS**

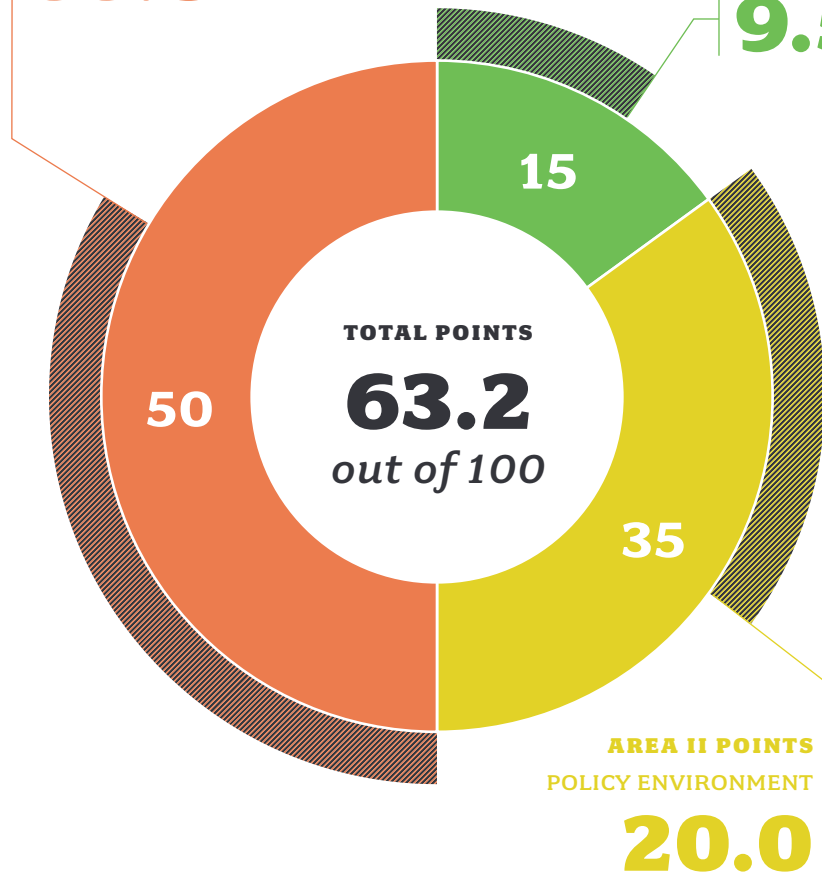
**HOUSTON RANKS TENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of ten points out of fifteen. This high ranking is due to a number of factors. For example, like his predecessors, the governor of Texas has publicly supported school choice, as has Houston's largest newspaper. Still, support for school choice is not universal. Although parent groups have generally supported school choice, the city council, school board, and superintendent have remained relatively neutral, while the mayor has been unsupportive.

**Area II: Policy Environment****35 POINTS**

**HOUSTON RANKS TWENTY-FIFTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its willingness to close schools with low or declining enrollments, and it is the only city on our list that actually provides charter schools with more funding than district schools. Still, relatively few of the city's charters are located or co-located in district facilities. Moreover, although Houston has a common application for magnet schools, charters are not included. Similarly, because Houston provides transportation to magnets but not to charters, it is difficult for families to access some of the choices available to them.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality****50 POINTS**

**HOUSTON RANKS EIGHTEENTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-four points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as enrollment waivers and intradistrict and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options. However, because neither Houston nor Texas has a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Houston families. A comparatively high proportion of Houston's public schools are schools of choice, but because many of these are magnets, the fraction of students who enroll in charters is still fairly modest. Finally, the quality of Houston charters is uneven, modestly exceeding district schools in math but not in reading.

**AREA III POINTS  
QUANTITY & QUALITY****33.8****AREA I POINTS  
POLITICAL SUPPORT****9.5**

*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**HOUSTON RANKS NINETEENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its middling score for the quantity and quality of choice and low score for policy environment outweighing its high marks for political and media support. Between charters and magnets, Houston has a healthy and growing supply of public schools of choice. However, families seeking to access the options that are available to them need better logistical supports, such as transportation and a common application that includes charter schools.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS HOUSTON? <sup>a</sup>	DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
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**AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)**

1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Houston's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 22.67

**AREA I SCORE: 22.67/36.00 x 15% = 9.45**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Texas charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Houston?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Houston's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Texas have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Houston charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Less than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Houston (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 9 possible)	2.07
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Houston?	Charter schools receive at least 5% more funding	4.00
	2.3.C Does Texas law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Houston?	Yes	4.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Houston support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	2 (of 9 possible)	1.04
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Houston for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Houston support schools of choice (of 7 possible)?	5 (of 7 possible)*	2.37
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Houston for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	1.83
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Houston (of 3 possible)?	3 (of 3 possible)*	1.33
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Houston?	3 (of 5)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Houston charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Houston charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	No	0.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Houston's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	12.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Texas's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Houston?	Minimally/Moderately comprehensive	1.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Houston (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)	3.45
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Houston have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Houston provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.33
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Houston's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 99.44) = 56.92

AREA II SCORE: 56.92/99.44 x 35% = 20.03

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Houston?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Houston?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Houston?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Houston?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online/virtual schools available to families in Houston?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Houston?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waiver	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Houston? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Houston? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Texas have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Houston students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Houston are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Houston enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Houston charter school on learning gains in reading?	No impact	2.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Houston charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 27.00

AREA III SCORE: 27.00/40.00 x 50% = 33.75

TOTAL SCORE: 9.45 + 20.03 + 33.75 = 63.23

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Houston" refers to the city as a whole or to Houston Independent School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Houston has only partial information for indicator 2.5.B, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.5.B and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	57,895
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	54,490
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	3,405
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	6%



# San Francisco

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for San Francisco and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS SAN FRANCISCO?

School choice is controversial in San Francisco thanks to the city's massive open enrollment program, which gives siblings of enrolled students and children from neighborhoods with low average test scores preference over kids who live within a school's attendance zone. Although the program's goal is greater diversity (as well as choice), a 2015 analysis suggests that it may actually be producing greater segregation. Moreover, although 61 percent of families get their first choice of school and 89 percent get one of the choices on their list, some students are forced into long commutes because all of the closer options are full. Not coincidentally, perhaps, one-third of children in San Francisco now attend private schools—an option that is out of reach for the city's poorer families in the absence of a voucher or tax credit scholarship program.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**SAN FRANCISCO RANKS TWENTY-EIGHTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of six points out of fifteen. This low ranking is attributable to a number of factors. Although the mayor, city council, school board, superintendent, local media, and parent groups have all remained relatively neutral with regard to school choice, the teachers' union has been hostile.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**SAN FRANCISCO RANKS FIFTEENTH**

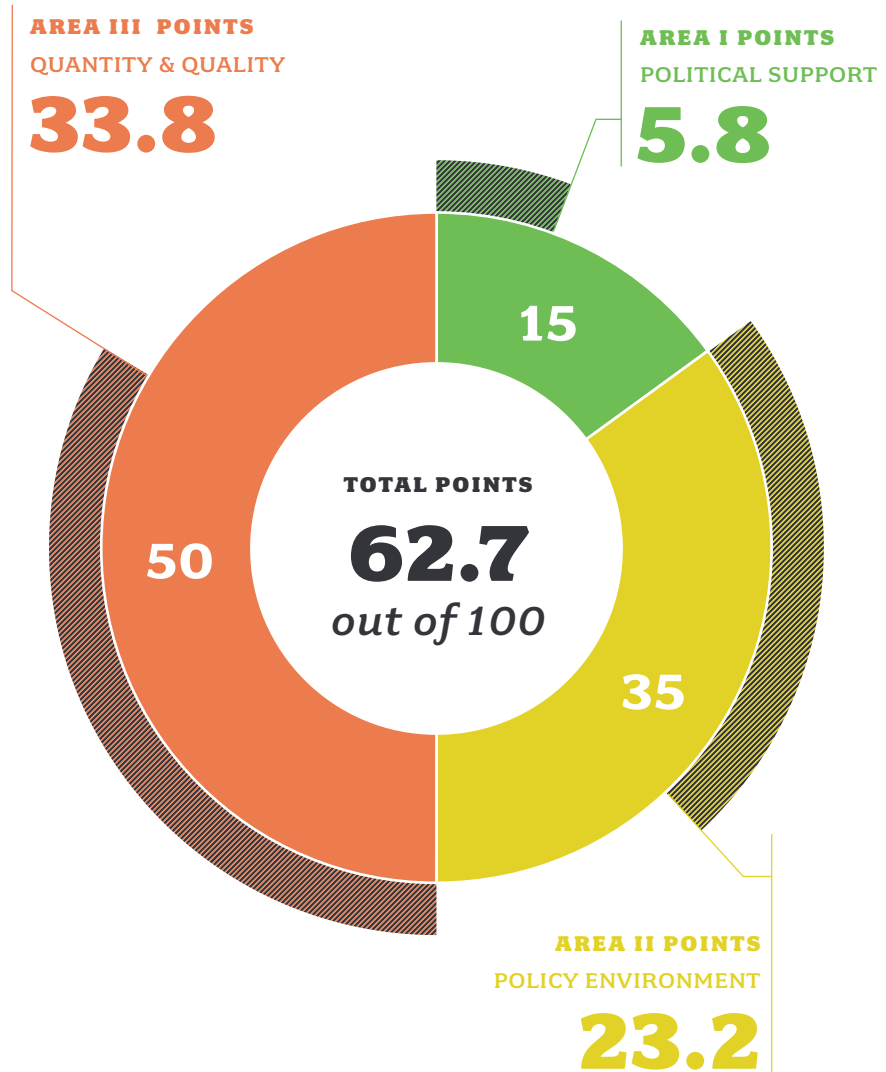
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-three points out of thirty. The city receives high marks for business and philanthropic support and the proportion of charter schools located in district facilities. However, like other California charter schools, San Francisco's charters receive less funding from the state than district schools. Although there is a district-wide lottery, the city usually does not provide transportation to students who attend a district school other than their neighborhood school—or to charters—making it difficult for families to access the choices available to them. Finally, San Francisco has no history of closing schools due to low or declining enrollment.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**SAN FRANCISCO RANKS EIGHTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-four points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. A massive intradistrict open enrollment program provides families with access to a robust set of public options. However, because California does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for San Francisco's poorer families. Finally, although they enroll only a small fraction of the city's students, San Francisco's charters dramatically outperform its district schools in reading and math.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**SAN FRANCISCO RANKS TWENTIETH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES**

**OVERALL**, due to its low marks for political support and middling scores for policy environment and quantity and quality of choice. The city's charter sector has shown strong results, despite its modest size. However, its intradistrict open enrollment program may need tweaking, if it is to achieve its stated goals and avoid driving wealthier families out of the public system. The lack of public transportation is also a major barrier for schools of choice, regardless of their type.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS SAN FRANCISCO? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of San Francisco's principal newspaper?	**	**

AREA I POINTS (out of 32.00) = 12.34

**AREA I SCORE: 12.34/32.00 x 15% = 5.78**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does California charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	State has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in San Francisco?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is San Francisco's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does California have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of San Francisco charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	3.67
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in San Francisco (of 4 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	3 (of 4 possible)*	1.33
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in San Francisco?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does California law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in San Francisco?	Modest state and local NGO support	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in San Francisco support schools of choice?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in San Francisco for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice*	2.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in San Francisco support schools of choice (of 4 possible)?	4 (of 4 possible)*	1.78
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in San Francisco for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/some types of schools of choice*	2.67
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in San Francisco (of 3 possible)?	3 (of 3 possible)*	1.33
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in San Francisco?	4 (of 5)	4.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are San Francisco charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are San Francisco charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for San Francisco's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	**	**
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a policy for closing schools but no history of doing so	1.33

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in California's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for San Francisco schools of choice?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in San Francisco (of 7 possible)?	5 (of 7 possible)*	2.60
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does San Francisco have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does San Francisco provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are San Francisco's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; charter students have limited eligibility	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 86.39) = 57.21

AREA II SCORE: 57.21/86.39 x 35% = 23.18

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in San Francisco?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in San Francisco?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in San Francisco?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in San Francisco?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in San Francisco?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in San Francisco?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in San Francisco? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in San Francisco? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does California have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for San Francisco students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in San Francisco are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in San Francisco are enrolled in charter schools?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a San Francisco charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a San Francisco charter school on learning gains in math?	Very positive	4.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 27.00

AREA III SCORE: 27.00/40.00 x 50% = 33.75

TOTAL SCORE: 5.78 + 23.18 + 33.75 = 62.71

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "San Francisco" refers to the city as a whole or to San Francisco Unified School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, San Francisco has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 2.22 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	81,134
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	77,877
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	3,257
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	4%



# Nashville

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Nashville and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NASHVILLE?

In the past five years, charter enrollment in Nashville has more than quintupled, with national networks such as KIPP, LEAD, and Rocketship Education joining the growing list of local operators. However, in recent years the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools board, which authorizes most of Nashville's charters, has become increasingly hostile to school choice. In 2014, the board announced it would limit new charters to areas of the city with growing populations or to takeovers of failing schools, and it subsequently approved just two of the fourteen applications that were recommended for the 2015 cycle. Several unsuccessful applicants, including KIPP and Rocketship Education, have appealed the local school board's decision to the state board of education. Meanwhile, Tennessee's Achievement School District (which has the power to convert failing district schools into charters) signaled that it may take a greater interest in Nashville going forward, when it approved two providers (KIPP and Knowledge Academies) for potential takeovers.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**NASHVILLE RANKS SEVENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of ten points out of fifteen. This high ranking is due largely to the broad support for school choice among state and local officials. Although the mayor, city council, and superintendent have all supported school choice, the local media outlets have remained relatively neutral (though Nashville's leading newspaper has been skeptical of choice). At the state level, the governor of Tennessee has also supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

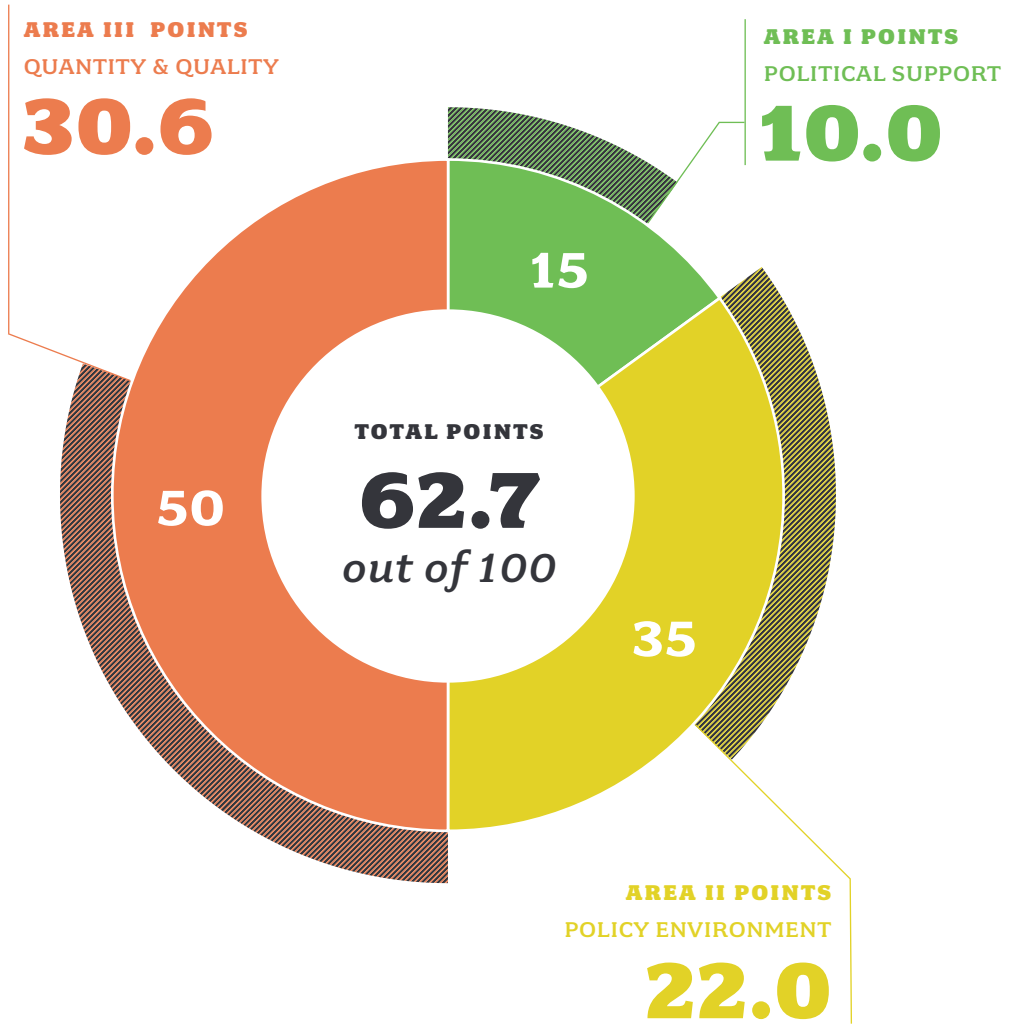
**35 POINTS**

**NASHVILLE RANKS EIGHTEENTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-two points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support, as well as its willingness to locate charter schools in district facilities. Additionally, there is no restriction on the number of charter schools that can operate in the state. However, Nashville charters receive less funding than district schools, and because the city does not provide most students with transportation to schools of choice, it is difficult for families to access the options available to them. Finally, Nashville does not have a history of closing schools with low or declining enrollment.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**NASHVILLE RANKS TWENTY-THIRD** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-one points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options, and a recently enacted voucher program for special-education students is scheduled to go into effect in 2016. However, Nashville has comparatively few schools of choice, and despite their recent growth the city's charters still enroll only a small percentage of its students (though they do outperform district schools in reading and math).



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**NASHVILLE RANKS TWENTY-FIRST OUT OF THIRTY CITIES**

**OVERALL**, with its low scores for the availability of choice options outweighing its high marks for political support and middling scores for policy environment. Despite the high quality of the city's charter schools and the absence of a statewide cap on the number of charters, the growth of Nashville's charter sector is increasingly threatened by the intransigence of the school board. Going forward, Nashville's political and civic leaders would be well-advised to focus their attention on helping its successful charter networks expand their impact, instead of stifling them.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS NASHVILLE? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Nashville's principal newspaper?	Negative	1.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 24.01

**AREA I SCORE: 24.01/36.00 x 15% = 10.00**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Tennessee charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Nashville?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Nashville's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Tennessee have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Nashville charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	3.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Nashville (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 9 possible)	2.37
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Nashville?	Between 5% and 20%	2.00
	2.3.C Does Nashville law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Nashville?	Strong state NGO support; weak local NGO support	2.67
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Nashville support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	3.33
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Nashville for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.50
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Nashville support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	3 (of 9 possible)	1.26
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Nashville for schools of choice?	Yes, for all types of schools of choice	4.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Nashville (of 7 possible)?	5 (of 7 possible)*	2.15
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Nashville?	3 (of 5)	3.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Nashville charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Nashville charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Yes	0.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Nashville's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.75	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	No	0.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Tennessee's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Nashville schools of choice?	Mostly comprehensive	3.25
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Nashville (of 7 possible)?	5 (of 7 possible)*	2.60
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Nashville have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Nashville provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No <sup>e</sup>	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Nashville's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are eligible; law is silent on charter students	2.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 102.61) = 64.63

AREA II SCORE: 64.63/102.61 x 35% = 22.04

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Nashville?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Nashville?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Nashville?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Nashville?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Nashville?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Nashville?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Yes	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Nashville? Can districts opt out?	No	
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Nashville? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	1.50
	3.2.D Does Tennessee have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Nashville students?	No <sup>d</sup>	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Nashville are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Nashville enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Nashville charter school on learning gains in reading?	Very positive	4.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Nashville charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 24.50

AREA III SCORE: 24.50/40.00 x 50% = 30.63

TOTAL SCORE: 10.00 + 22.04 + 30.63 = 62.67

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Nashville" refers to the city as a whole or to Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

c All public high school students have free public transportation on city buses.

d In May 2015, Tennessee created a new voucher program for students with disabilities. However, the program is not scheduled to go into effect until 2016.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Nashville has only partial information for indicator 2.6.B, so we subtracted 0.89 points from the 2.6.B and Area II denominators.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	127,563
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	118,802
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	8,761
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	7%

**22**

# Jacksonville

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Jacksonville and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS JACKSONVILLE?

In the last five years, the number of charters schools in Duval County has more than tripled, though the sector as a whole still accounts for just 7 percent of public enrollment (compared to 33 percent for magnet schools). Today there are at least thirty charters in the Jacksonville area, including members of the non-profit KIPP network and the for-profit network Charters USA. However, critics charge that this rapid growth has come at the expense of appropriate oversight and quality control—and they have a point. Despite their rapid growth (or perhaps because of it), on average Jacksonville's charters perform worse than its traditional district schools in reading—the only city in our study for which this is the case—and perform no better in math.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT

**04**

**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

**20**

**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY

**23\***

\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**JACKSONVILLE RANKS FOURTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eleven points out of fifteen. This high ranking is largely due to the broad support for school choice expressed by state and local officials. Although the city council, local insiders, superintendent, and local media have generally supported school choice, while the teachers' union has been unsupportive. At the state level, successive governors have also publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

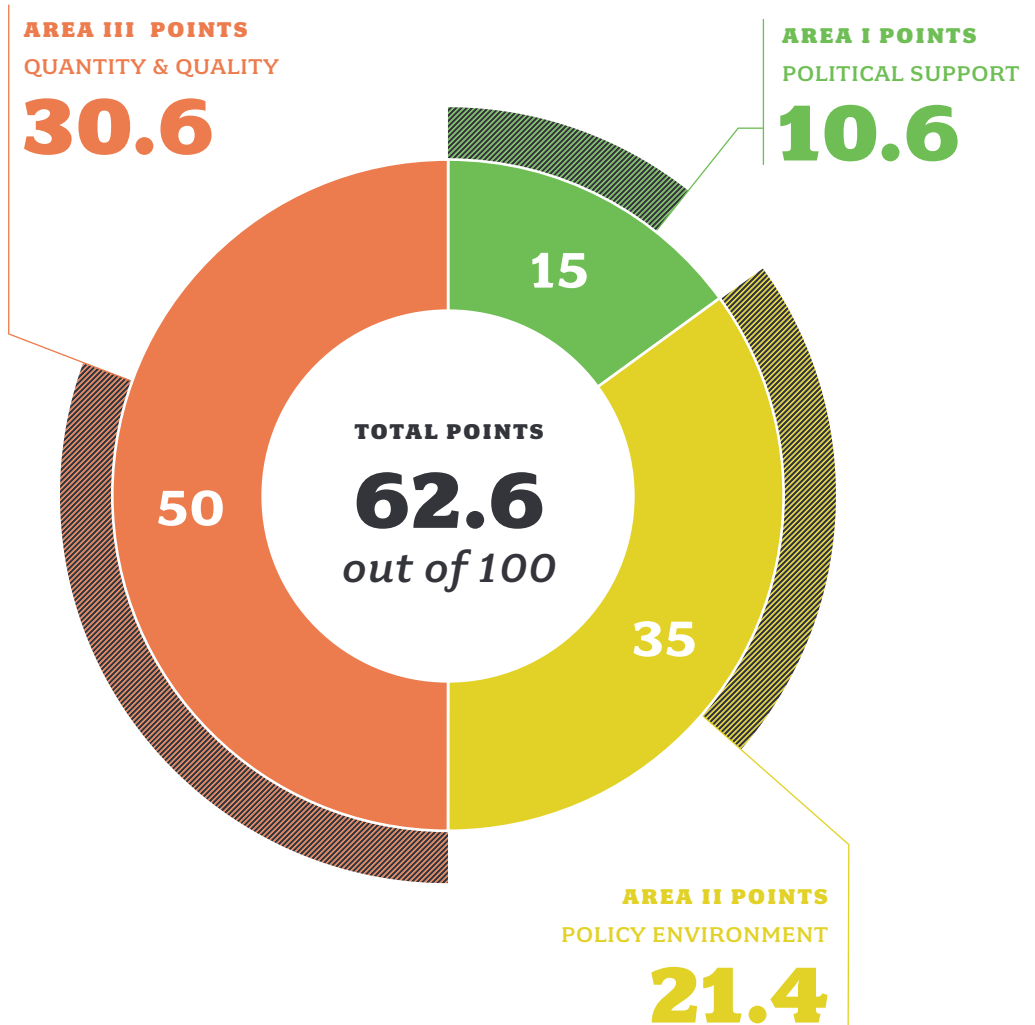
**35 POINTS**

**JACKSONVILLE RANKS TWENTIETH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-one points out of thirty-five. The city's score benefits from a state regulatory environment that is mostly free of restrictions on charters. For example, there is no statewide cap on the number of charter schools, and charters are exempt from collective bargaining agreements. However, because charters receive less funding than district-run schools and do not have the "right of first refusal" to district facilities, the financial playing field is still tilted against them.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**JACKSONVILLE RANKS TWENTY-THIRD** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-one points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as attendance waivers and interdistrict and dual enrollment programs open the door to a variety of public schools, while voucher and tax credit scholarship programs provide a small number of students with access to private options. Despite its plethora of magnet schools, Jacksonville enrolls a comparatively low percentage of its students in charter schools. Moreover, the quality of many charters leaves much to be desired. On average, Jacksonville charters perform no better than district schools in math, and they perform worse in reading.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**JACKSONVILLE RANKS TWENTY-SECOND OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with its low scores for policy environment and the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its high score for political support. Many conditions in Jacksonville portend the continued growth of school choice, but going forward the city must take a more aggressive approach to quality control. Closing bad schools—including both charter and district-run schools—should be high on the educational agenda.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS JACKSONVILLE? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.50
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.50
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.50
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.50
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Strongly agree	3.50
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Jacksonville's principal newspaper?	**	**

AREA I POINTS (out of 32.00) = 22.50

**AREA I SCORE: 22.50/32.00 x 15% = 10.55**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Florida charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charter schools	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Jacksonville?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Jacksonville's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Florida have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Jacksonville charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	**	**
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Jacksonville (of 4 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	2 (of 4 possible)*	0.89
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Jacksonville?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does Florida law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Jacksonville?	State NGO only	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Jacksonville support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Jacksonville for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Jacksonville support schools of choice (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	2.44
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Jacksonville for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Jacksonville (of 6 possible)?	6 (of 6 possible)*	2.44
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Jacksonville?	1 (of 5)	1.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Jacksonville charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Jacksonville charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Yes	0.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	No	0.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Jacksonville's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	9.00	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a policy for closing schools but no history of doing so	1.33

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

## CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Florida's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Jacksonville?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Jacksonville (of 8 possible)?	8 (of 8 possible)	3.93
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Jacksonville have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Jacksonville provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Charters receive state transportation funding	2.67
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Jacksonville's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Yes	4.00

AREA II POINTS (out of 88.56) = 54.20

**AREA II SCORE: 54.20/88.56 x 35% = 21.42**

## AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Jacksonville?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Jacksonville?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Jacksonville?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Jacksonville?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Jacksonville?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Jacksonville?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waivers	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Jacksonville? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Jacksonville? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Florida have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Jacksonville students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Jacksonville are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Jacksonville enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Jacksonville charter school on learning gains in reading?	Negative	1.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Jacksonville charter school on learning gains in math?	No impact	2.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 24.50

**AREA III SCORE: 24.50/40.00 x 50% = 30.63**

**TOTAL SCORE: 10.55 + 21.42 + 30.63 = 62.59**

### table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Jacksonville" refers to the city as a whole or to Duval County Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Jacksonville has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 2.22 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	130,102
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	110,604
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	19,498
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	15%



# San Diego

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for San Diego and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS SAN DIEGO?

Although California passed charter legislation in 1992, it took another eight years for the city of San Diego to get its first charter school. In 1996, members of the city's high-tech community began discussing how to better prepare local youth for the new digital economy, and four years later those discussions bore fruit in the form of High Tech High—a famously successful and innovative charter school that has since evolved into a network of thirteen schools scattered throughout San Diego County. In 2012, San Diego voters passed Proposition Z, a \$2.8 billion construction bond measure that allocated \$350 million for charter facilities. However, in recent years the district school board (which authorizes forty-nine of the city's fifty charters) has shown limited support for new schools.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**SAN DIEGO RANKS EIGHTEENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This low ranking is largely due to the lukewarm support for school choice expressed by state and local officials. Although the local media have generally supported school choice, the mayor, city council, school board, and superintendent have remained relatively neutral. At the state level, the governor of California has not mentioned school choice in his speeches.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

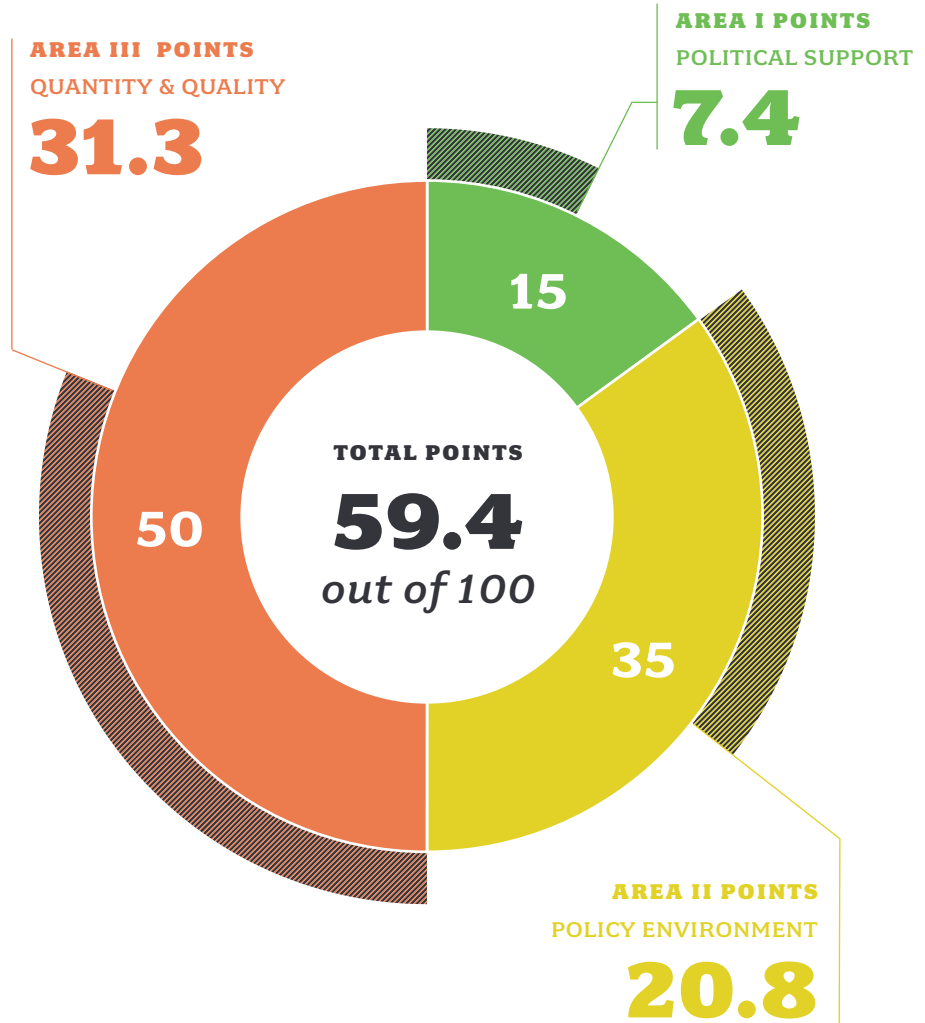
**35 POINTS**

**SAN DIEGO RANKS TWENTY-SECOND** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-one points out of thirty five. The city receives high marks for its accountability system and the number of charter schools that are located in district facilities. However, it receives low marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support (few major philanthropies that support school choice are active in the city). Moreover, California's inequitable funding for charter schools makes it difficult for them to compete. Finally, because San Diego does not provide transportation to schools of choice, it is difficult for families to access the choices available to them.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**SAN DIEGO RANKS TWENTY-FIRST** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-one points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as attendance waivers and interdistrict and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options. However, because California does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for San Diego families. Finally, although San Diego's charters outperform district schools in reading and math, a comparatively small percentage of the city's public schools are schools of choice.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**SAN DIEGO RANKS TWENTY-THIRD OUT OF THIRTY CITIES**

**OVERALL**, with low to middling marks for all three areas: political support, policy environment, and quantity and quality of choice. Although the city's charter sector is now well established, its schools of choice need a broader network of state and local partners to provide them with financial and operational support and pressure government officials to adopt more enlightened policies (such as choice-friendly transportation).

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS SAN DIEGO? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of San Diego's principal newspaper?	Positive	3.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 17.67

**AREA I SCORE: 17.67/36.00 x 15% = 7.36**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does California charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	State has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in San Diego?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is San Diego's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does California have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of San Diego charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Between 25% and 50%	3.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in San Diego (of 7 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 7 possible)*	2.44
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in San Diego?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does California law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in San Diego?	Modest state and local NGO support	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in San Diego support schools of choice?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in San Diego for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in San Diego support schools of choice?	**	**
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in San Diego for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in San Diego (of 4 possible)?	2 (of 4 possible)*	1.11
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in San Diego?	None	0.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are San Diego charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are San Diego charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for San Diego's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	9.69	3.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a policy for closing schools but no history of doing so	1.33

AREA II continued on next page...



...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in California's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for San Diego schools of choice?	Mostly comprehensive	3.25
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in San Diego (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	2.68
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does San Diego have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does San Diego provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are San Diego's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; charter students have limited eligibility	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 91.39) = 54.31

AREA II SCORE: 54.31/91.39 x 35% = 20.80

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in San Diego?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in San Diego?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in San Diego?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in San Diego?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in San Diego?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in San Diego?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waivers	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in San Diego? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in San Diego? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does California have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for San Diego students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in San Diego are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in San Diego enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a San Diego charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a San Diego charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 25.00

AREA III SCORE: 25.00/40.00 x 50% = 31.25

TOTAL SCORE: 7.36 + 20.80 + 31.25 = 59.41

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “San Diego” refers to the city as a whole or to San Diego Unified School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, San Diego has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 0.89 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	42,439
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	40,152
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	2,287
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	5%

# 24 Tulsa

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Tulsa and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS TULSA?

Thanks to a historically contentious relationship with the local school board, Tulsa's charter sector is still small. However, recent developments suggest that change may be on its way. In 2015, Tulsa Public Schools announced a plan to partner with charter incubator Building Excellent Schools to open three "in-district" charters, and the plan's prospects were boosted by the passage of HB 1691, which legalized the proposed arrangement. The bill was only the most recent victory for school choice advocates, who were already celebrating the passage of SB 782, which expanded the right to authorize charters to every district in the state, while also granting the State Board of Education the authority to close low-performing charter schools.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT

23

**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

11

**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY

28

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**TULSA RANKS TWENTY-THIRD** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This low ranking reflects a number of factors, including lukewarm support for school choice among local officials and a mix of support and opposition within the broader Tulsa community. Although the superintendent and parent groups have supported school choice, the mayor and city council have remained relatively neutral, while the teachers' union has been unsupportive. Tulsa's leading newspaper has also adopted a negative tone in its coverage of school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

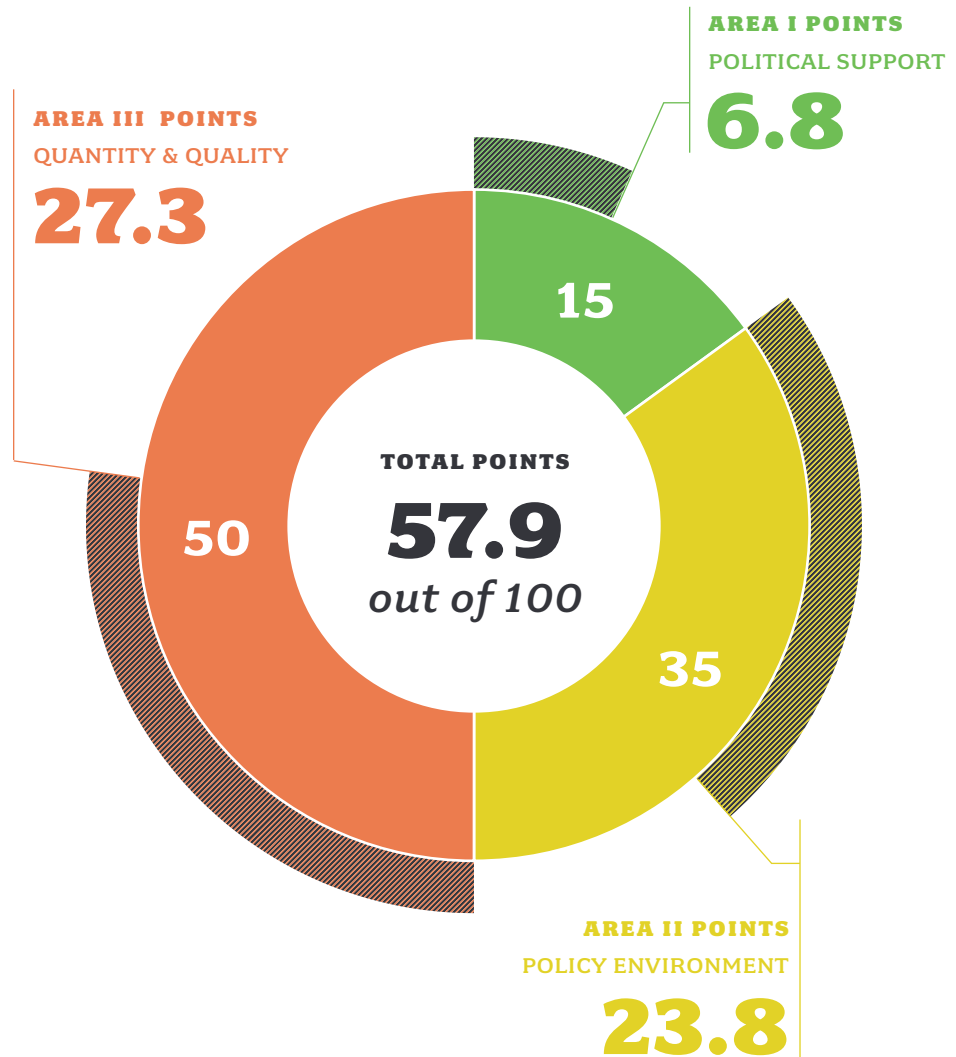
**35 POINTS**

**TULSA RANKS ELEVENTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-four points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for philanthropic and business support and the number of charter schools located in district facilities. It also benefits from Oklahoma's flexible teacher policies, which exempt charter schools from collective bargaining and teacher certification requirements. However, the lack of a common application for schools of choice makes it difficult for families to navigate the system, and the district (which authorizes about half of the city's charters) does not engage in many of the practices associated with quality authorizing, according to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**TULSA RANKS TWENTY-EIGHTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of twenty-seven points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of options to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Most Tulsa students are eligible for Oklahoma's tax credit scholarship program; however, because funding for the program is capped at just \$5 million, the number of students it serves is small. Similarly, although there are some interdistrict and dual enrollment programs, the lack of intradistrict open enrollment limits the options available to families. Finally, compared to the other cities in our study, Tulsa has few public schools of choice, and a very low percentage of students enroll in charter schools.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**TULSA RANKS TWENTY-FOURTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its low scores for political support and the quantity of choice outweighing its higher marks for choice-friendly policies and practices. Recent developments suggest that both Tulsa and Oklahoma are becoming more choice-friendly, but it remains to be seen if the current momentum will translate into a larger and more dynamic array of options going forward.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS TULSA? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree/Disagree	0.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Tulsa's principal newspaper?	Very negative	0.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 16.34

**AREA I SCORE: 16.34/36.00 x 15% = 6.81**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Oklahoma charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Tulsa?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Tulsa's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Oklahoma have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Tulsa charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	More than 50%	4.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Tulsa (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 9 possible)	2.30
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Tulsa?	**	**
	2.3.C Does Tulsa law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state NGO that supports school choice in Tulsa?	Yes*	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Tulsa support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	6 (of 9 possible)	2.59
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Tulsa for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.67
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Tulsa support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	3.04
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Tulsa for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.67
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Tulsa (of 9 possible)?	9 (of 9 possible)	4.00
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Tulsa?	1 (of 5)	1.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Tulsa charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Tulsa charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	No	4.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	No	0.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Tulsa's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	4.00	0.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools due to low enrollment and a history of doing so?	**	**

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Oklahoma’s accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Tulsa schools of choice?	Minimally/Moderately comprehensive	1.75
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Tulsa (of 8 possible)?	7 (of 8 possible)	3.43
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Tulsa have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Tulsa provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	**	**
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Tulsa’s homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	No	0.00

AREA II POINTS (out of 86.00) = 58.45

**AREA II SCORE: 58.45/86.00 x 35% = 23.79**

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Tulsa?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Tulsa?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Tulsa?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Tulsa?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Tulsa?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Tulsa?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	No	0.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Tulsa? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Tulsa? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	
	3.2.D Does Oklahoma have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Tulsa students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Tulsa are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Tulsa enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	0.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Tulsa charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Tulsa charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 17.50

**AREA III SCORE: 17.50/32.00 x 50% = 27.34**

**TOTAL SCORE: 6.81 + 23.79 + 27.34 = 57.94**

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Tulsa” refers to the city as a whole or to Tulsa Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Tulsa has only partial information for indicator 2.4.A, so we subtracted two points from the 2.4.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	185,818
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	159,242
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	26,676
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	14%



# Dallas

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Dallas and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS DALLAS?

With a student population that is 23 percent black and 70 percent Hispanic, Dallas Independent School District offers a compelling glimpse of Texas's demographic future. In addition to thirty-three selective magnet schools, the district has eight public schools of choice with open enrollment policies, and it plans to create thirty-five more by 2020. However, Dallas's charter sector (which includes networks such as Harmony, Uplift, and KIPP) is still modest, accounting for just 15 percent of the city's total public enrollment. Most Dallas charters are authorized by the Texas Education Agency, which has been cracking down on the sector's bad actors since 2013, when the passage of SB 2 made it easier to close low-performing schools. In 2014, TEA revoked the charters of two Dallas schools, Prime Prep Academy (founded by famed Dallas Cowboy football player Deion Sanders) and Honors Academy, but it has since approved the applications of three new schools in the city.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**DALLAS RANKS EIGHTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of ten points out of fifteen. This high ranking is due to a number of factors. For example, the governor of Texas has publicly supported school choice, as have the editorials and op-eds in Dallas's leading newspaper. Still, support for choice is not universal. Although the mayor, superintendent, local media, and parent groups have generally supported school choice—the city council, school board, and teachers' union have been neutral or unsupportive.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

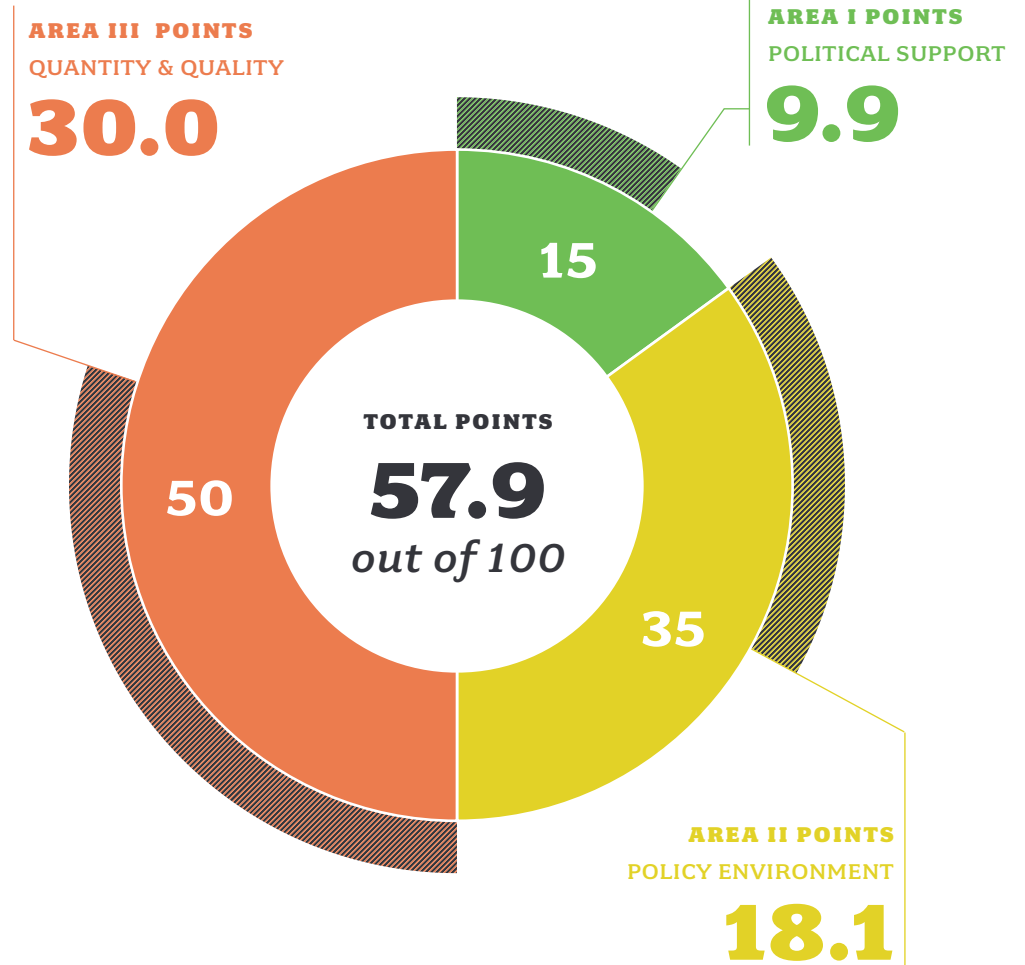
**35 POINTS**

**DALLAS RANKS TWENTY-EIGHTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of eighteen points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for its willingness to close schools with low enrollments, and average marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support. However, none of Dallas's charter schools are located or co-located in district facilities, and many schools of choice are not included on the city's common application, making it difficult for families to navigate the system. Finally, because Dallas does not provide transportation to schools of choice, many families have trouble accessing the choices available to them.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**DALLAS RANKS TWENTY-SIXTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as dual and interdistrict enrollment programs provide families with a variety of public options. However, the district does little to encourage intradistrict choice among its non-magnet schools, and because Texas does not have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Dallas families. Finally, though Dallas charters outperform district schools in reading and math, they account for a comparatively modest percentage of total public enrollment.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**DALLAS RANKS TWENTY-FIFTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its low marks for policy environment and the quantity of choice outweighing its high scores for political support. To better support its schools of choice, the city must grant them equitable access to district facilities and provide families with better logistical supports (such as transportation and a common application). Dallas families would also benefit from the creation of a private choice mechanism at the state level, such as a voucher or tax credit scholarship program.**



HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS DALLAS? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Dallas's principal newspaper?	Positive	3.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 23.67

**AREA I SCORE: 23.67/36.00 x 15% = 9.86**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Texas charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Dallas?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Dallas's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Texas have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Dallas charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	0%	0.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Dallas (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	3 (of 9 possible)	1.56
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Dallas?	Between 5% and 20%	2.00
	2.3.C Does Texas law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Dallas?	Strong state NGO support; modest local support	3.33
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Dallas support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	2 (of 9 possible)	0.89
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Dallas for schools of choice?	Yes, for most/all types of schools of choice	3.67
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Dallas support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	7 (of 9 possible)	2.89
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Dallas for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Dallas (of 9 possible)?	8 (of 9 possible)	3.41
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Dallas?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Dallas charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charters schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Dallas charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	No	0.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Dallas's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	12.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	Yes	4.00

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Texas's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Dallas?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Dallas (of 8 possible)?	6 (of 8 possible)	2.88
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Dallas have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Dallas provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Dallas's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 104.00) = 53.63

AREA II SCORE: 53.63/104.00 x 35% = 18.05

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Dallas?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Dallas?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Dallas?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Dallas?	Yes	
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Dallas?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Dallas?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waiver	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Dallas? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Dallas? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Texas have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Dallas students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Dallas are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Dallas enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Dallas charter school on learning gains in reading?	Positive	3.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Dallas charter school on learning gains in math?	Positive	3.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 24.00

AREA III SCORE: 24.00/40.00 x 50% = 30.00

**TOTAL SCORE: 9.86 + 18.05 + 30.00 = 57.91**

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Dallas" refers to the city as a whole or to Dallas Independent School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	51,010
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	51,010
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	0
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	0%



# Seattle

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Seattle and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS SEATTLE?

After rejecting similar measures in 1995, 2000, and 2004, Washington voters finally approved Initiative 1240 in 2012, which legalized charter schools and established a statewide cap of forty schools over five years. In 2014, the first charter school, First Place Scholars, opened its doors to at-risk youth in the Seattle area, and six more Seattle charters were scheduled to open in 2015. However, the future of school choice in Seattle was thrown into a tailspin in September 2015, when the Washington Supreme Court ruled that charter schools violated the state's constitution. (Note that data in this profile are accurate as of July 2015, to be consistent with the remaining cities in the study. Recent implications of the Supreme Court hearing are not reflected in our findings.)

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**SEATTLE RANKS THIRTIETH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of five points out of fifteen. This low ranking primarily reflects the lack of support for school choice among state and local officials. The mayor, city council, school board, superintendent, teachers' union, and parent groups have all been unwilling to support school choice (as has the governor). Of the institutions and groups included in this category, only the city's principal newspaper has supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

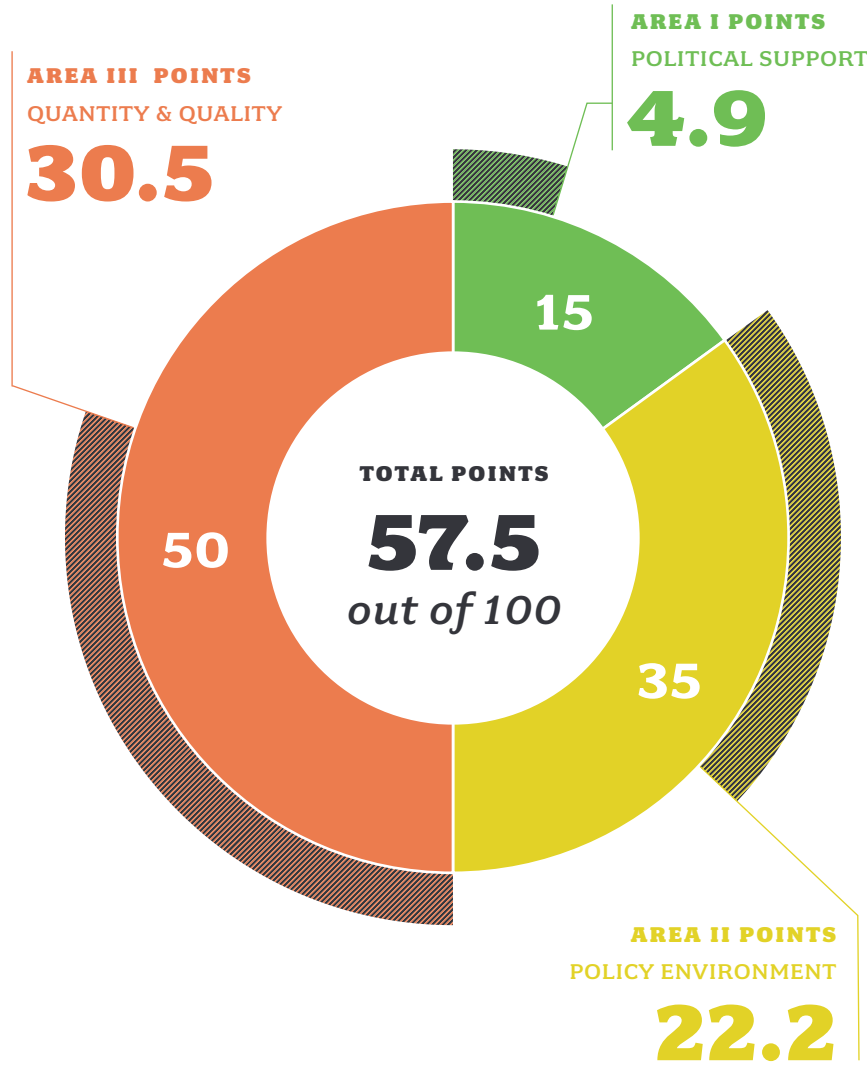
**35 POINTS**

**SEATTLE RANKS SEVENTEENTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty-two points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for NGO and business support, and for a number of choice-friendly provisions in state law (or at least provisions that were in place as of July, 2015). However, Seattle does not have a common enrollment system that extends beyond its district schools, and there are gaps in the state's accountability system because report cards do not provide comprehensive information about charters, magnets, or online schools.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**SEATTLE RANKS TWENTY-FIFTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a variety of public options. However, because neither Seattle nor Washington has a voucher or tax credit scholarship program, many private options remain out of reach for Seattle families. Finally, although more than 20 percent of Seattle students attend private schools, the city has comparatively few public schools of choice.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**SEATTLE RANKS TWENTY-SIXTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its low marks for political support and quantity and quality of choice outweighing its average score for policy environment. This low ranking is unsurprising, as the city has no voucher or tax credit scholarship programs and had just dipped a toe into the charter waters (before it was pushed back out). Nevertheless, these findings underscore the immense amount of work that must be done if Seattle is to build a permanent constituency for schools of choice and create a policy environment that supports their growth—a task that has become significantly more difficult in the wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS SEATTLE? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Strongly disagree	0.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	No	0.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Strongly disagree	0.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Seattle's principal newspaper?	Very positive	4.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 11.67

**AREA I SCORE: 11.67/36.00 x 15% = 4.86**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Washington charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Seattle?	There is only one authorizer available, but state law allows for multiple authorizers	3.00
	2.1.C Is Seattle's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Washington have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Yes	4.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Seattle charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	0%	0.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Seattle (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	1 (of 9 possible)	0.52
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Seattle?	**	**
	2.3.C Does Washington law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Yes	4.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Seattle?	Strong state NGO support; modest local NGO support	3.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Seattle support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.00
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Seattle for schools of choice?	Yes, for some/most types of schools of choice*	2.33
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Seattle support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.22
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Seattle for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Seattle (of 3 possible)?	3 (of 3 possible)*	1.33
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Seattle?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Seattle charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Seattle charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Seattle's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	10.00	3.00
	2.8.C Does Seattle have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a history of closing schools but no formal policy	2.67

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Washington's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Seattle schools of choice?	Minimally/Moderately comprehensive	1.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Seattle (of 8 possible)?	5 (of 8 possible)	2.36
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Seattle have a common application for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Seattle provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	District provides transportation to magnets; charters receive state transportation funding	2.67
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Seattle's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students must be enrolled part time; charter students have limited eligibility	2.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 92.67) = 58.77

AREA II SCORE: 58.77/92.67 x 35% = 22.20

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Seattle?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Seattle?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Seattle?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Seattle?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Seattle?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Seattle?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Districtwide lottery	4.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Seattle? Can districts opt out?	Yes; no opt out	3.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Seattle? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Washington have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Seattle students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Seattle are schools of choice?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Seattle are enrolled in schools of choice?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Seattle charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Seattle charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 19.50

AREA III SCORE: 19.50/32.00 x 50% = 30.47

TOTAL SCORE: 4.86 + 22.20 + 30.47 = 57.53

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Seattle” refers to the city as a whole or to Seattle Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Seattle has only partial information for indicator 2.4.B, so we subtracted 1.33 points from the 2.4.B and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	151,667
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	142,995
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	8,672
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	6%



# Charlotte

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Charlotte and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS CHARLOTTE?

Although the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district has forty-five magnet schools, the city of Charlotte still has relatively few charter schools, which must seek the approval of the North Carolina Department of Education (the state's only authorizer). In 2011, after the legislature eliminated the statewide cap on charter schools, the department approved a record twenty-three charter applications for the 2013 school year and another twenty-seven for 2014, effectively increasing the number of charters in the state by 50 percent in two years. However, it adopted a more selective approach in the next cycle, when it approved just eleven of a record seventy-one applications (though it did approve two statewide virtual schools). In another victory for choice, in 2015 the North Carolina Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the state's new voucher program, which the legislature now appears likely to expand.

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## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY





**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**CHARLOTTE RANKS THIRD** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of eleven points out of fifteen. This high ranking reflects the support for school choice expressed by state and local officials and the existence of local organizations outside government pressing for expanded choice. Although the mayor and city council have remained relatively neutral, the superintendent, school board, and parent groups have all supported school choice. At the state level, the governor has also publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

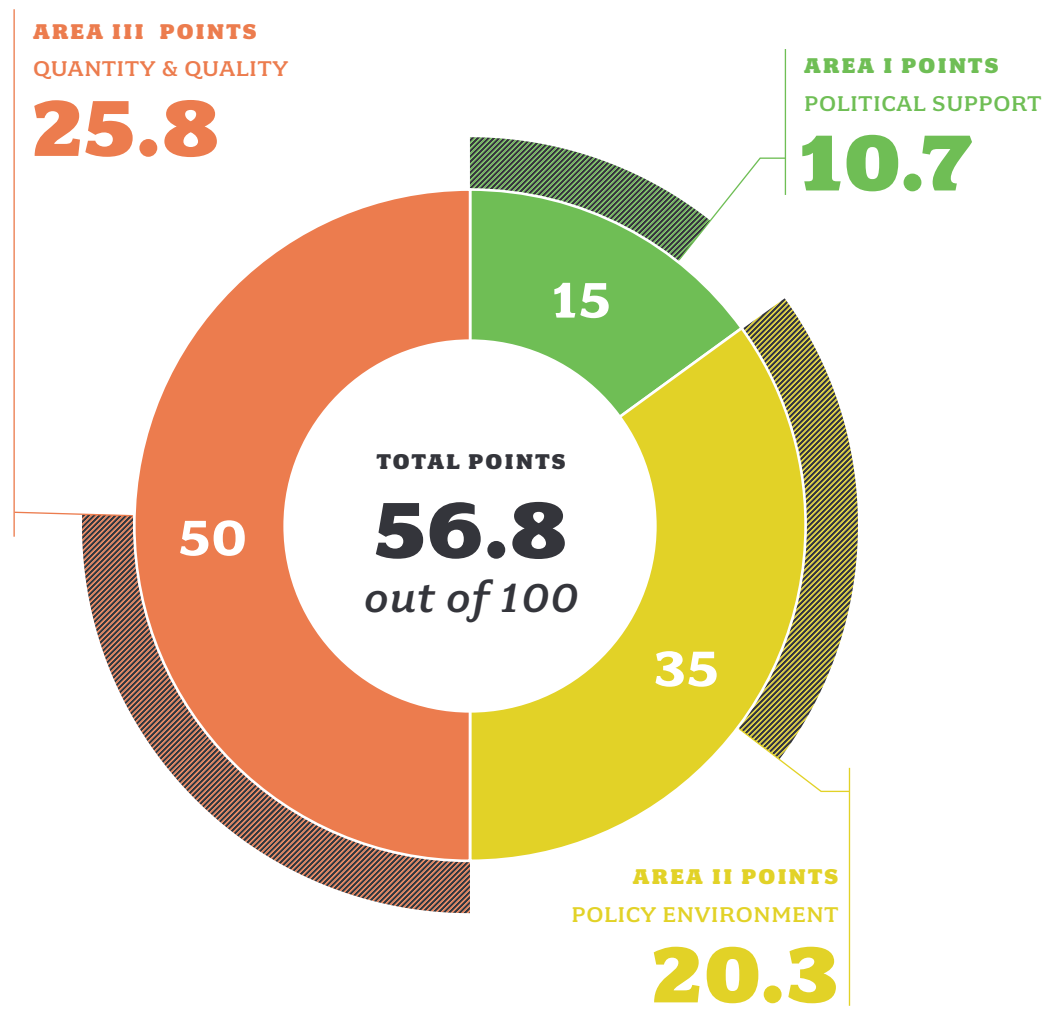
**35 POINTS**

**CHARLOTTE RANKS TWENTY-THIRD** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for business and philanthropic support. However, although there is no restriction on the number of charter schools in North Carolina, the lack of local authorizers is a barrier to growth. On the consumer side, the lack of a common application that includes charters makes it difficult for Charlotte families to navigate the system. Similarly, because the city does not provide transportation to charters, it is difficult for families to access the choices available to them.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**CHARLOTTE RANKS THIRTIETH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of twenty-six points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. However, compared to the other cities on our list, Charlotte has very few schools of choice, and only a small fraction of its students enroll in charter schools. Additionally, although two statewide voucher programs provide a small number of low-income and special-education students in Charlotte with access to private alternatives, the city lacks public choice mechanisms such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment programs. Although there is a district lottery, it is limited to magnet schools, many of which are partial magnets that enroll only a fraction of their students through the lottery.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**CHARLOTTE RANKS TWENTY-SEVENTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with low marks for policy environment and the quantity and quality of choice outweighing its high score for political support. Assuming the state does not become too stingy, the number of schools of choice in the city seems destined to grow. Still, the forward path might be considerably smoother if these schools (and their students) were provided with more local supports, such as better facilities, better transportation, and a common application.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS CHARLOTTE? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.D – To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Strongly agree/Agree	3.67
	1.1.E – Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A – To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.B – To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.C – To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree	3.00
	1.2.D – What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Charlotte’s principal newspaper?	Negative	1.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 25.67

**AREA I SCORE: 25.67/36.00 x 15% = 10.70**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does North Carolina charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charters	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Charlotte?	There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Charlotte’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does North Carolina have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Charlotte charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Fewer than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Charlotte (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	4 (of 9 possible)	1.78
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Charlotte?	Between 5% and 20%	2.00
	2.3.C Does North Carolina law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Funding is adequate but not guaranteed	2.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Charlotte?	Modest state and local NGO support	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Charlotte support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Charlotte for schools of choice?	Yes, for all types of schools of choice	4.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Charlotte support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.15
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Charlotte for schools of choice?	Yes, for all types of schools of choice	4.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Charlotte (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	2.59
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Charlotte?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Charlotte charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Charlotte charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Charlotte’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	12.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?	The district has a history of closing schools but no formal policy	2.67

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in North Carolina's accountability system?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.33
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Charlotte?	Moderately/Mostly comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Charlotte (of 7 possible)?	6 (of 7 possible)*	3.11
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Charlotte have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Charlotte provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.33
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Charlotte's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 97.28) = 56.46

AREA II SCORE: 56.46/97.28 x 35% = 20.31

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Charlotte?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Charlotte?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Charlotte?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Charlotte?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Charlotte?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Charlotte?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	No	0.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Charlotte? Can districts opt out?	No	1.50
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Charlotte? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does North Carolina have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Charlotte students?	Statewide program only	2.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Charlotte are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Charlotte enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Charlotte charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Charlotte charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 16.50

AREA III SCORE: 16.50/32.00 x 50% = 25.78

TOTAL SCORE: 10.70 + 20.31 + 25.78 = 56.79

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Charlotte" refers to the city as a whole or to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Charlotte has only partial information for indicator 2.5.B, so we subtracted 1.33 points from the 2.5.B and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	28,920
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	26,041
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	2,879
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	10%



# Pittsburgh

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Pittsburgh and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS PITTSBURGH?

In the eighteen years since Pennsylvania passed charter-authorizing legislation, Pittsburgh's charter sector has mostly failed to launch. Although the city's parents can choose from a potpourri of district-run magnet schools, in recent years the Pittsburgh school board has denied almost every charter application that has come before it (though in a few cases the Pennsylvania Charter Board subsequently overturned these decisions). Fortunately, the picture is brighter at the state level, where the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program provides private scholarships to more than 7,000 Pennsylvanian students and where choice-friendly legislation, such as a recent bill to establish a statewide Achievement School District, continues to find support.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**PITTSBURGH RANKS EIGHTEENTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of seven points out of fifteen. This below-average ranking is due largely to the lack of support for school choice among local officials and the media. Although parent groups have shown some support for school choice, the mayor, city council, and school board have been mostly unsupportive. Pittsburgh's leading newspaper has adopted a negative tone in its editorials and opinion pieces on the subject.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**PITTSBURGH RANKS TWENTY-FOURTH**

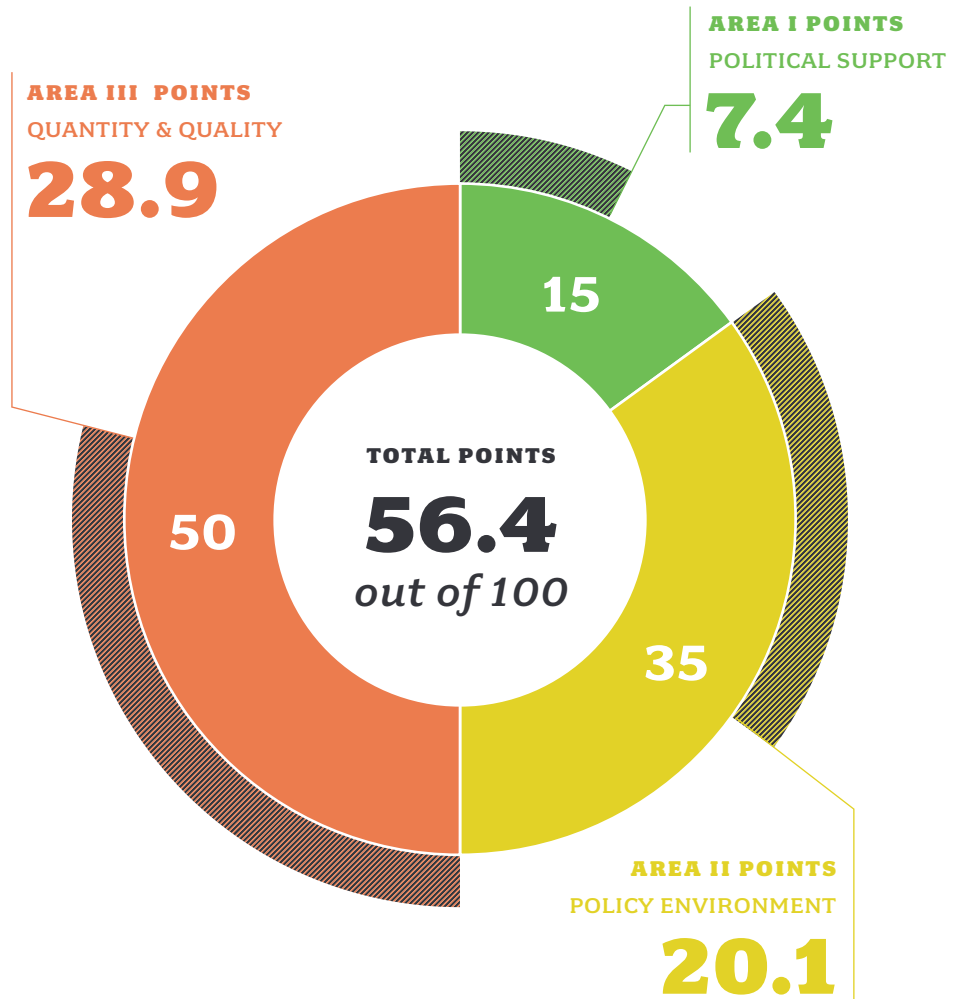
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty points out of thirty-five. Pennsylvania law exempts charter schools from collective bargaining agreements and most teacher certification requirements. However, charters receive drastically less public funding than district schools, making it difficult for them to compete. Pittsburgh also receives low marks for its unwillingness to house charter schools in district facilities and for the minimal support that schools of choice receive from the NGO, philanthropic, and business communities. Finally, the absence of a common application that includes charter schools poses a challenge for parents attempting to navigate the system.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**PITTSBURGH RANKS TWENTY-SEVENTH**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of twenty-nine points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. Pennsylvania's Opportunity Scholarship program provides some of Pittsburgh's low-income students with access to private options. However, the city lacks public school choice mechanisms that are common in other cities (such as inter- and intradistrict open enrollment). Finally, Pittsburgh's charters enroll a comparatively low percentage of the city's students.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**PITTSBURGH RANKS TWENTY-EIGHTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL**, with average marks for political support and low scores for policy environment and quantity and quality of choice. Although state policy is generally choice-friendly, the city's charters need more equitable funding, better access to facilities, and more support from local officials if they are to grow and thrive. Unfortunately, the relative dearth of NGOs, philanthropies, and other community groups advocating for school choice in Pittsburgh suggests such changes may be slow in coming.

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS PITTSBURGH? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Pittsburgh's principal newspaper?	Very negative	0.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 17.67

**AREA I SCORE: 17.67/36.00 x 15% = 7.36**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Pennsylvania charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	There is no restriction on the number of charters in the state	4.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Pittsburgh?	There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed	2.00
	2.1.C Is Pittsburgh's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Pennsylvania have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Pittsburgh charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	0%	0.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Pittsburgh (of 2 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	2 (of 2 possible)*	0.89
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Pittsburgh?	Greater than 35%	0.00
	2.3.C Does Pennsylvania law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a local NGO that supports school choice in Pittsburgh?	Modest local NGO support*	1.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Pittsburgh support schools of choice (of 9 possible)?	1 (of 9 possible)	0.22
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Pittsburgh for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Pittsburgh support schools of choice?	**	**
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Pittsburgh for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice*	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Pittsburgh (of 4 possible)?	3 (of 4 possible)	1.33
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Pittsburgh?	1 (of 5)	1.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Pittsburgh charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Yes	4.00
	2.7.B Are Pittsburgh charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Pittsburgh's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools due to low enrollment?	**	**

AREA II continued on next page...

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Pennsylvania's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for Pittsburgh schools of choice?	Moderately comprehensive	2.25
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Pittsburgh (of 6 possible)?	5 (of 6 possible)*	2.61
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Pittsburgh have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Pittsburgh provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Pittsburgh homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are eligible; charter students have limited eligibility	3.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 79.67) = 45.80

AREA II SCORE: 45.80/79.67 x 35% = 20.12

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Pittsburgh?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Pittsburgh?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Pittsburgh?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Pittsburgh?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Pittsburgh?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Pittsburgh?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	No	0.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Pittsburgh? Can districts opt out?	No	
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Pittsburgh? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	1.50
	3.2.D Does Pennsylvania have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Pittsburgh students?	Statewide program only	
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Pittsburgh are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a similar percentage	2.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Pittsburgh enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending a Pittsburgh charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending a Pittsburgh charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 18.50

AREA III SCORE: 18.50/32.00 x 50% = 28.91

TOTAL SCORE: 7.36 + 20.12 + 28.91 = 56.39

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as "superintendent," which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term "Pittsburgh" refers to the city as a whole or to Pittsburgh Public Schools, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of "schools of choice," see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Pittsburgh has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 3.11 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.



## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	91,144
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	83,071
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	8,073
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	9%



# Austin

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Austin and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS AUSTIN?

Since 1995, when Texas passed its first charter law, Austin's charter sector has grown slowly under the watchful eye of the Texas Education Agency, which authorizes the bulk of the city's forty-seven charter schools. Austin's charter operators include a number of highly regarded networks, such as KIPP and IDEA, which serve a predominantly low-income and Hispanic population. However, charters still account for a relatively small share of the local market, and future growth is constrained by Texas law, which is in the process of gradually raising the statewide cap on charter schools from 215 in 2013 to 305 in 2019, in addition to mandating the closure of low-performing charters (of which there are still too many). Efforts to create a private-school-choice mechanism—such as a tax credit scholarship program—have repeatedly stalled in the Texas legislature.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**AUSTIN RANKS ELEVENTH** out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of nine points out of fifteen. This high ranking is due in large part to the broad support for school choice among state and local officials. The mayor, city council, and superintendent have all supported school choice, while the school board, local media, and parent groups have remained relatively neutral. At the state level, the governor of Texas has also publicly supported school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

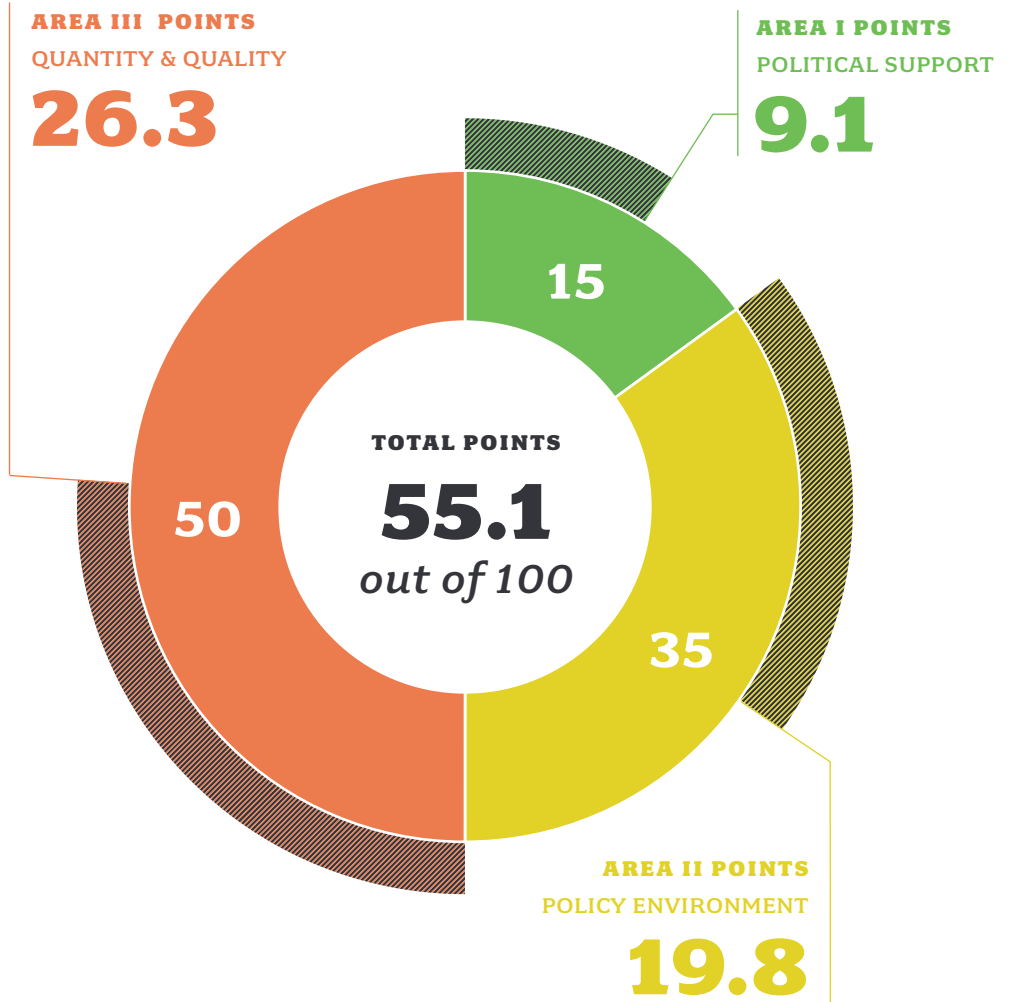
**35 POINTS**

**AUSTIN RANKS TWENTY-SEVENTH** out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of twenty points out of thirty-five. The city receives high marks for business and philanthropic support, as well as for the equitable funding provided to charter schools. However, the lack of a common application makes it hard for families to navigate the system, and because the city does not provide transportation to schools of choice, it can be difficult for them to access the choices available to them. Finally, state law provides limited support or oversight for charter authorizers, making quality control a potential concern.

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**AUSTIN RANKS TWENTY-NINTH** out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of twenty-six points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, Catholic, and virtual schools, as well as homeschooling. However, compared to other cities in our study, Austin has few schools of choice, and only a small fraction of the city's students enroll in charter schools. Intradistrict attendance waivers and interdistrict and dual enrollment programs provide families with access to a number of public options. However, because there are no voucher or tax credit scholarship programs in Texas, private options remain out of reach for many families. Finally, Austin's charter schools do not outperform district schools in reading or math, reflecting their decidedly uneven quality.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**AUSTIN RANKS TWENTY-NINTH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with its low marks for policy environment and quantity and quality outweighing its respectable score for political support. The city could take a number of steps to better support its schools of choice, such as ensuring that charter schools have equitable access to transportation and facilities and establishing a common enrollment system. Austin families would also benefit from the creation of a private-school-choice mechanism at the state level (such as a voucher or tax credit scholarship program).**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS AUSTIN? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Agree/Neutral	2.67
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Agree	2.33
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Austin’s principal newspaper?	**	**

AREA I POINTS (out of 32.00) = 19.34

**AREA I SCORE: 19.34/32.00 x 15% = 9.07**

**AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)**

**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does Texas charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with some room for growth	2.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Austin?	There is only one authorizer available, but state law allows for multiple authorizers	3.00
	2.1.C Is Austin’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	Yes	4.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does Texas have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	Limited option	2.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Austin charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	Fewer than 25%	2.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Austin (of 8 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	5 (of 8 possible)*	2.22
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Austin?	District and charter schools are funded at similar levels	3.00
	2.3.C Does Texas law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	No	0.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Austin?	Modest state NGO support; strong local NGO support	3.33
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Austin support schools of choice?	**	**
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business–community support in Austin for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Austin support schools of choice (of 6 possible)?	6 (of 6 possible)*	2.67
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Austin for schools of choice?	Yes, for most types of schools of choice*	3.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Austin (of 5 possible)?	5 (of 5 possible)*	2.22
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Austin?	2 (of 5)	2.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Austin charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Austin charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with authority to sanction authorizers?	No	0.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Austin’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	12.00	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing such schools?	The district has a policy for closing schools but no history of doing so	1.33

*AREA II continued on next page...*

...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in Texas's accountability system?	Yes, for all public schools of choice	4.00
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Austin?	Minimally/Moderately comprehensive	1.50
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Austin (of 7 possible)?	7 (of 7 possible)*	3.29
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Austin have a common application for schools of choice?	No	0.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Austin provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	No	0.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Austin's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; law is silent on charter students	0.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 93.94) = 53.06

AREA II SCORE: 53.06/93.94 x 35% = 19.77

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 – Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Austin?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Austin?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Austin?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Austin?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Austin?	Yes	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Austin?	Yes	
3.2 – Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	Attendance waiver	1.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Austin? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Austin? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does Texas have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Austin students?	No	0.00
3.3 – Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Austin are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very low percentage	0.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Austin enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a low percentage	1.00
3.4 – Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending an Austin charter school on learning gains in reading?	No impact	2.00
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending an Austin charter school on learning gains in math?	No impact	2.00

AREA III POINTS (out of 40.00) = 21.00

AREA III SCORE: 21.00/40.00 x 50% = 26.25

**TOTAL SCORE: 9.07 + 19.77 + 26.25 = 55.08**

table notes

**a** The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Austin” refers to the city as a whole or to Austin Independent School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

**b** For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be out of less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Austin has only partial information for indicator 2.3.A, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.3.A and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

## enrollment snapshot 2013-14

TOTAL PUBLIC ENROLLMENT:	11,282
DISTRICT ENROLLMENT:	8,326
CHARTER ENROLLMENT:	2,956
CHARTER MARKET SHARE:	26%



# Albany

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY ARE AMERICAN CITIES?

To answer this question for Albany and the twenty-nine other cities in this study, we combined publicly available data from federal, state, and local governments with proprietary data from a variety of education groups and a questionnaire of local stakeholders. We assigned cities scores from zero to four on multiple measures of choice friendliness, which we grouped into three areas: **political support**, **policy environment**, and **quantity and quality**. Cities received an aggregate score for each area as well as an overall score, which we obtained using a weighted average that estimates each area's contribution to a city's overall choice friendliness (more below). For the purposes of this study, we defined "choice" as any alternative to the traditional neighborhood school, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, private or religious, and online or virtual schools, as well as homeschooling or other choice mechanisms, such as vouchers and open or dual enrollment programs.

### Area I: Political Support (15%)

This area assesses the willingness of local officials and other stakeholders to use their political capital to support school choice, as well as the degree to which the local media support choice in the community.

### Area II: Policy Environment (35%)

This area evaluates the policies and practices that ease the challenges that providers and consumers of school choice face. Support for providers includes funding, facilities, and technical assistance, and support for consumers includes information about school performance and school choice writ large, as well as making the act of choosing easier via a common application for all schools.

### Area III: Quantity & Quality (50%)

This area quantifies the school choice options that are available to families (e.g., charter, magnet, and online), as well as the accessibility and quality of those options.

## HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS ALBANY?

Launched in 1998 with the support of former governor George Pataki and the Walton Family Foundation, Albany's charter sector was initially heralded for its successful network of Brighter Choice schools. The sector has faced growing challenges in recent years, however, and its increasingly hostile Board of Regents seems unlikely to support much more school choice in the future. Moreover, because Albany has made no effort to assist charter schools with their facilities (as New York City has done), the Brighter Choice Foundation was forced to borrow \$15 million in 2011 to finance the construction of its schools. The closure of two underperforming Brighter Choice middle schools in 2015 has caused financial strains for the foundation; nevertheless, the network continues to outperform Albany's district schools.

## RANK (OUT OF 30 CITIES)

**AREA I**  
POLITICAL SUPPORT



**AREA II**  
POLICY ENVIRONMENT



**AREA III**  
QUANTITY & QUALITY



\*tied

**Area I: Political Support**

**15 POINTS**

**ALBANY RANKS TWENTY-SIXTH**

out of thirty cities on political support, with a score of six points out of fifteen. This low ranking is largely due to the lack of support for school choice expressed by local officials and the absence of other local organizations pressing for expanded choice. The mayor, city council, teachers' union, and local media have not supported school choice, while the superintendent, school board, and parent groups have remained relatively neutral. At the state level, however, the governor has been a strong supporter of school choice.

**Area II: Policy Environment**

**35 POINTS**

**ALBANY RANKS THIRTIETH**

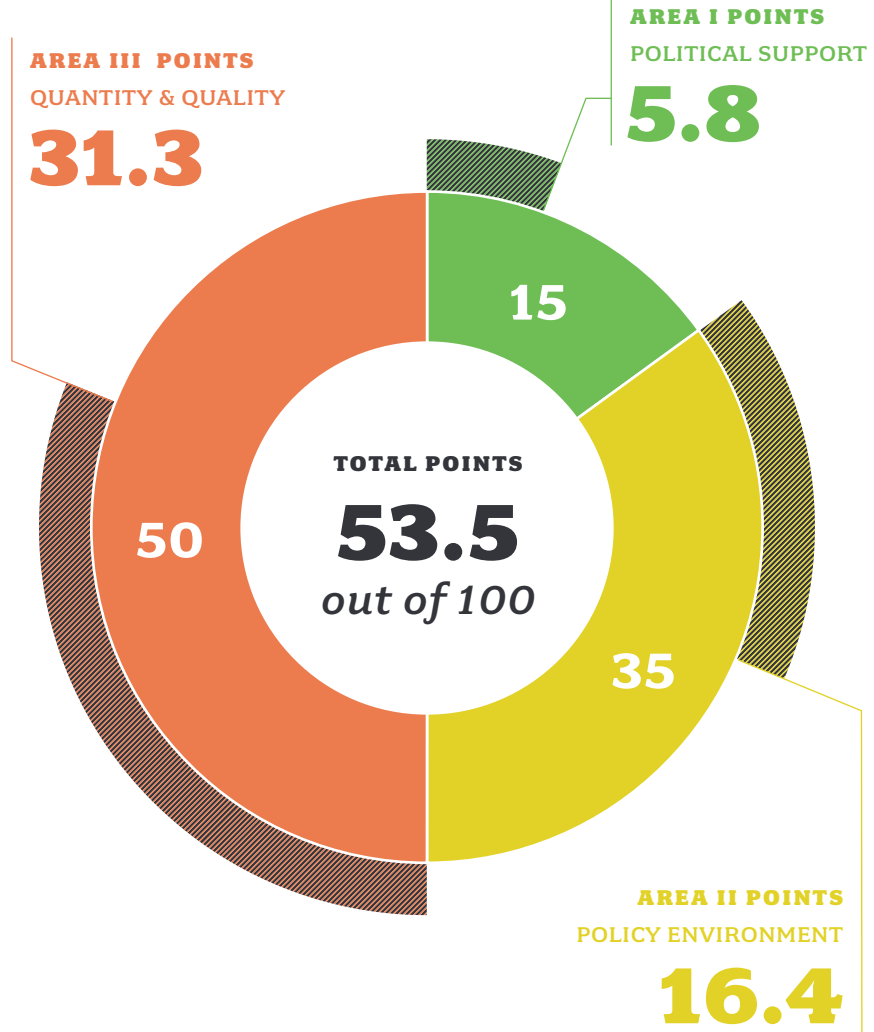
out of thirty cities on policy environment, with a score of sixteen points out of thirty-five. The city receives low marks for its refusal to locate charter schools in district facilities—a policy that imposes significant financial burdens on these schools, which already receive less per-pupil funding than their district peers. Moreover, the city also receives low marks for NGO, business, and philanthropic support for choice. (Although the Walton Family Foundation was once a major source of funding for Albany's charters, today none of the major foundations that support school choice are active in the city.) Finally, because Albany's common application only includes magnet/CTE schools, it is difficult for families to easily connect to all their options (although the city does provide them with transportation to schools of choice).

**Area III: Quantity & Quality**

**50 POINTS**

**ALBANY RANKS TWENTY-FIRST**

out of thirty cities on quantity and quality, with a score of thirty-one points out of fifty. The city offers a variety of choices to families, including charter, magnet, career and technical education, independent, and Catholic schools, as well as homeschooling. However, it is the only city in our sample that does not offer online or virtual schools. Access to public options is also limited by the lack of an intradistrict open enrollment program, though some interdistrict and dual enrollment options do exist. Additionally, because voucher or tax credit scholarship programs are prohibited in New York, private options remain out of reach for many Albany students. Still, compared to the other cities in our sample, a relatively high percentage of Albany's public schools are schools of choice, and a comparatively high percentage of Albany students enroll in charters.



*Totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.*

**ALBANY RANKS THIRTIETH OUT OF THIRTY CITIES OVERALL, with low marks for political support and policy environment and below-average scores for the quantity and quality of choice. Of the cities on our list, Albany fares the worst when it comes to laying the groundwork for the continued growth of successful schools of choice. Consequently, despite its history as a proving ground for choice, the future of Albany's choice ecosystem seems increasingly bleak.**

HOW CHOICE-FRIENDLY IS ALBANY? <sup>a</sup>		DATA	POINTS OUT OF 4*
<b>AREA I: POLITICAL SUPPORT (15%)</b>			
1.1 Official Support	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?	Neutral/Disagree	1.67
	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her "state of the state" speeches?	Yes	4.00
1.2 Community Support	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers' unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree	1.00
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Neutral	2.00
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?	Disagree/Neutral	1.33
	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of Albany's principal newspaper?	Very negative	0.00

AREA I POINTS (out of 36.00) = 14.00

**AREA I SCORE: 14.00/36.00 x 15% = 5.83**

<b>AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (35%)</b>			
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**PROVIDER ENVIRONMENT**

2.1 Public Policies	2.1.A To what extent does New York charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?	The state has a cap with ample room for growth	3.00
	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in Albany?	Yes	4.00
	2.1.C Is Albany's largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?	No	0.00
2.2 Public Facilities	2.2.A Does New York have a "right of first refusal" policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?	No	0.00
	2.2.B What percentage of Albany charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?	0%	0.00
2.3 Public Support	2.3.A In how many ways do public entities support schools of choice in Albany (of 9 possible)? <sup>b</sup>	3 (of 9 possible)	1.56
	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in Albany?	Between 20% and 35%	1.00
	2.3.C Does New York law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?	Funding is adequate but not guaranteed	2.00
2.4 NGO Support	2.4.A Is there a state or local NGO that supports school choice in Albany?	Modest state NGO support; weak local NGO support	2.00
	2.4.B In how many ways do NGOs in Albany support schools of choice (of 8 possible)?	6 (of 8 possible)*	2.44
2.5 Business Support	2.5.A Is there business-community support in Albany for schools of choice?	Yes, for one/some types of schools of choice	1.33
	2.5.B In how many ways does the business community in Albany support schools of choice?	**	**
2.6 Philanthropic Support	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support in Albany for schools of choice?	Yes, for some types of schools of choice	2.00
	2.6.B In how many ways does the philanthropic community support schools of choice in Albany (of 9 possible)?	4 (of 9 possible)	1.63
	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in Albany?	None	0.00
2.7 Teacher Policies	2.7.A Are Albany charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?	Some charter schools are exempt	2.00
	2.7.B Are Albany charter schools required to hire certified teachers?	Some teachers must be certified	2.00
2.8 Quality Control	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with the authority to sanction authorizers?	Yes	4.00
	2.8.B What is the average quality score, out of 12, for Albany's charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?	11.80	4.00
	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of closing such schools?	No	0.00

AREA II continued on next page...



...AREA II continued

CONSUMER ENVIRONMENT

2.9 Accountability	2.9.A Are student data for schools of choice included in New York's accountability system?	Yes, for most public schools of choice	2.67
	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice in Albany?	Moderately comprehensive	2.00
2.10 Information	2.10.A In how many ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents in Albany (of 8 possible)?	5 (of 8 possible)	2.62
2.11 Application	2.11.A Does Albany have a common application for schools of choice?	For magnet/CTE schools only	1.00
2.12 Transportation	2.12.A Does Albany provide or subsidize transportation to public schools of choice on equal terms as for district-assigned schools?	Yes	4.00
2.13 Extracurriculars	2.13.A Are Albany's homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?	Homeschooled students are ineligible; charter students have limited eligibility	1.50

AREA II POINTS (out of 99.56) = 46.75

AREA II SCORE: 46.75/99.56 x 35% = 16.43

AREA III: QUANTITY & QUALITY (50%)

3.1 Types of Schools	3.1.A Are charter schools available to families in Albany?	Yes	4.00
	3.1.B Are magnet and/or CTE schools available to families in Albany?	Yes	
	3.1.C Are independent schools available to families in Albany?	Yes	
	3.1.D Are Catholic schools available to families in Albany?	Yes	2.00
	3.1.E Are online and/or virtual schools available to families in Albany?	No	
	3.1.F Is homeschooling available to families in Albany?	Yes	
3.2 Access	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a districtwide lottery?	No	0.00
	3.2.B Are there interdistrict enrollment options in Albany? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	3.00
	3.2.C Are there dual enrollment options in Albany? Can districts opt out?	Yes, but districts can opt out	
	3.2.D Does New York have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for Albany students?	No	0.00
3.3 Market Share	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools in Albany are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?	Comparably, a very high percentage	4.00
	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in Albany enroll in charter schools?	Comparably, a high percentage	3.00
3.4 Quality	3.4.A What is the marginal impact of attending an Albany charter school on learning gains in reading?	**	**
	3.4.B What is the marginal impact of attending an Albany charter school on learning gains in math?	**	**

AREA III POINTS (out of 32.00) = 20.00

AREA III SCORE: 20.00/32.00 x 50% = 31.25

TOTAL SCORE: 5.83 + 16.43 + 31.25 = 53.52

table notes

a The fifty indicators reflected in the table represent the aggregation of over one hundred discrete data points. All questionnaire data are current as of November 30, 2014. References to elected officials in Area I reflect those in office as of this date as well. All terms are generic, such as “superintendent,” which can be applied to cities that have chancellors or other leaders. Depending on the context, the term “Albany” refers to the city as a whole or to Albany City School District, the largest district in the city. The latter is the case when the indicator is determined at the district level.

b For the definition of “schools of choice,” see Appendix A.

\* A few indicators may be worth less than four points due to missing data. An asterisk indicates partially missing data for a given indicator. In these cases, we subtracted an appropriate amount from the indicator and area denominators. For example, Albany has only partial information for indicator 2.4.B, so we subtracted 0.44 points from the 2.4.B and Area II denominators.

\*\* Indicates missing data for the entire indicator (see above).

For complete details on the data sources and scoring for each indicator and its component subindicators, see Appendix A.

# Detailed Methods

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This study used four types of data to calculate each city's scores: 1) information from a variety of publicly available federal, state, and local education databases; 2) data from organizations that maintained relevant databases, such as the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools; 3) primary source information such as district websites and state policies; and 4) a local questionnaire to learn about school choice in each of the thirty cities. After data collection and analysis, local insiders reviewed the data for their city and updated the data when necessary.<sup>1</sup>

For any city, if data were missing or not available for an entire indicator, that indicator was removed from the total possible number of points for the relevant area. For single indicators whose data source was a single questionnaire item, respondents' scores were averaged unless there were fewer than two responses for a particular city, in which case the entire indicator was treated as missing. For single indicators based on multiple questions, the same procedure was used for each component of the indicator: questions were dropped for an insufficient number of responses (and an appropriate amount subtracted from the number of points possible for the relevant indicator and area). Then the scores for the remaining components were averaged to determine what fraction of the remaining points for the indicator that city earned.<sup>2</sup>

Initial data collection began in December 2013 and was completed in November 2014. External review was conducted between July 1 and September 15, 2015. Specific data sources for each indicator follow.

### Area I: Political Support for Choice

Area I contains nine indicators, each of which is worth a maximum of four points for a total of thirty-six possible points. Nearly all data in Area I are gleaned from the local questionnaire, with some analyses of external documents by the authors. Area I receives the least weight in a city’s overall score (15 percent).

1.1 OFFICIAL SUPPORT	
Indicator(s)	1.1.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the mayor is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that the city council is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the superintendent is willing to use his/her political capital to support school choice?
	1.1.D To what extent do you agree/disagree that the school board is willing to use its political capital to support school choice?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	0: strongly disagree 1: disagree 2: neutral 3: agree 4: strongly agree

Indicator(s)	1.1.E Has the governor mentioned school choice in his/her “state of the state” speeches?
Source	A search of the Education Commission of the States “State of the State” database was conducted using a list of choice keywords (“school choice,” “charter,” “voucher,” “magnet school,” “online school,” “homeschooling,” etc.). The search included dates between January 1, 2012 and July 31, 2015.
Scoring	0: No mention of school choice by the governor 4: School choice mentioned one or more times by the governor

1.2 COMMUNITY SUPPORT	
Indicator(s)	1.2.A To what extent do you agree/disagree that the teachers’ unions are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?
	1.2.B To what extent do you agree/disagree that parent groups are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?
	1.2.C To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media are willing to use their political capital to support school choice?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	0: strongly disagree 1: disagree 2: neutral 3: agree 4: strongly agree

Indicator(s)	1.2.D What is the overall tone toward school choice as reflected in the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces of the city’s principal newspaper?
Source	Author’s own analysis. Using Lexis Nexis, a Boolean search about school choice in each city was conducted using editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces that appeared in each city’s largest paper. The following terms were included in the search: school choice, charter school, magnet school, school vouchers, virtual school, online school, dual enrollment, homeschool, private school tax credits, and interdistrict open enrollment. The search was bounded by the following dates: 8/1/2013 to 4/1/2014, which approximated a typical “school year.”
Scoring	Each piece was appraised as “negative” (0 points), “neutral” (2 points), or “positive” (4 points). Points were averaged by city, and curved according to the following guidelines: 0 to 1.99 points received a “0”; 2 to 2.24 a “1”; 2.25 to 2.49 a “2”; 2.50 to 2.74 a “3”; and 2.75 and above a “4.”

**footnotes**

- 1 In these cases, our data will not match the cited extant data source.
- 2 Readers interested in further details may contact the authors at research@edexcellence.net.

## Area II: Policy Environment For Choice

Area II contains twenty-six indicators, each of which is worth a maximum of four points for a total of 104 possible points. Data are gleaned from a combination of questionnaire, extant, and public sources. When calculating a city’s total score, Area II is weighted 35 percent.

2.1 PUBLIC POLICIES	
Indicator(s)	2.1.A To what extent does charter law restrict the number of charter schools in the state?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: Charter schools are not permitted in this city 1: The state has a cap with no room for growth 2: The state has a cap with room for limited/adequate growth 3: The state has a cap with room for ample growth OR The state does not have a cap but allows districts to restrict growth 4: The state does not have a cap
Indicator(s)	2.1.B Are multiple authorizers available to prospective charter school operators in the city?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: No authorizers are available to charter schools in this city 2: There is only one authorizer available and only one allowed 3: There is only authorizer available, but state law allows for two or more authorizers 4: Multiple authorizers are available to charters in this city
Indicator(s)	2.1.C Is the city’s largest school district a member of the Portfolio School District Network?
Source	Center on Reinventing Public Education, “Portfolio Strategy,” <a href="http://www.crpe.org/research/portfolio-strategy/network">http://www.crpe.org/research/portfolio-strategy/network</a> .
Scoring	0: No 4: Yes
2.2 PUBLIC FACILITIES	
Indicator(s)	2.2.A Does the state have a “right of first refusal” policy for charter schools to obtain facilities?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: No 2: Limited option 4: Yes
Indicator(s)	2.2.B What percentage of the city’s charter schools are located or co-located in city- or district-owned buildings?
Source	City-level data were gathered in consultation with the National Charter School Resource Center (NCRSC). See Jim Griffin et al., “Finding Space: Charter Schools in District-Owned Facilities” (Houston, TX: NCSRC, 2015), <a href="http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/sites/default/files/files/field_publication_attachment/Finding%20Space_0.pdf">http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/sites/default/files/files/field_publication_attachment/Finding%20Space_0.pdf</a> . Questionnaire responses and local reviewers provided additional data.
Scoring	0: No charter schools are located in city- or district-owned buildings 2: 25% or fewer of charter schools are located in city- or district-owned buildings 3: 26% – 50% of charter schools are located in city- or district-owned buildings 4: More than 50% of charter schools are located in city- or district-owned buildings

2.3 PUBLIC SUPPORT	
Indicator(s)	2.3.A In what ways do public entities (school district, city government, state education agency, and/or state government agencies) support schools of choice in the city?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were given the following nine options and asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether public entities provided schools of choice with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Facilities funding</li> <li>B. Start-up funding</li> <li>C. Operational support (e.g., back office work, payroll, etc.)</li> <li>D. Lobbying</li> <li>E. Technology funding</li> <li>F. Books and supplies</li> <li>G. Fundraising support</li> <li>H. Legal support</li> <li>I. Professional development</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No” for all options</li> <li>1: “Yes” for one to three options</li> <li>2: “Yes” for four or five options</li> <li>3: “Yes” for six to eight options</li> <li>4: “Yes” for all nine options</li> </ul>
Indicator(s)	2.3.B How great is the disparity between district and charter per-pupil funding in the city/district?
Source	This measure was derived from a 2014 report released from the School Choice Demonstration Project at the University of Arkansas, entitled “Charter School Funding: Inequity Expands.” <sup>3</sup> Funding disparities were calculated as a percentage of district per-pupil revenue for the 2011 fiscal year. City funding disparities were used when possible. When the city funding disparity was not available, state data were used.
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: Greater than 35%</li> <li>1: Between 20% and 35%</li> <li>2: Between 5% and 20%</li> <li>3: Charter and district schools are funded at similar levels</li> <li>4: Charter schools receive at least 5% more funding than district schools</li> </ul>
Indicator(s)	2.3.C Does state law guarantee adequate funding for charter authorizers?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	Scores were derived from two measures: Cities received two points for adequate funding from authorizing fees (or other sources), and two for guaranteed funding from authorizing fees (or from sources not subject to annual legislative appropriations).
2.4 NGO SUPPORT	
Indicator(s)	2.4.A In addition to public, business, and philanthropic organizations, is there any other state or local organization (e.g. an NGO) that supports school choice in the city?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No,” there is neither a state nor a local organization</li> <li>2: “Yes,” is either a state or a local organization (but not both)</li> <li>4: “Yes,” there is both a state and a local organization</li> </ul>

**footnotes**

3 Meagan Batdorff et al., “Charter School Funding: Inequity Expands.”

Indicator(s)	2.4.B In what ways do NGOs support schools of choice in the city?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were given the following nine options and asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether non-governmental organizations provided schools of choice with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Facilities funding</li> <li>B. Start-up funding</li> <li>C. Operational support (e.g., back office work, payroll, etc.)</li> <li>D. Lobbying</li> <li>E. Technology funding</li> <li>F. Books and supplies</li> <li>G. Fundraising support</li> <li>H. Legal support</li> <li>I. Professional development</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No” for all options</li> <li>1: “Yes” for one to three options</li> <li>2: “Yes” for four or five options</li> <li>3: “Yes” for six to eight options</li> <li>4: “Yes” for all nine options</li> </ul>

**2.5 BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Indicator(s)	2.5.A Is there business-community support (money, in-kind donations, and/or technical support) in the city for schools of choice?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether the business community provided support to any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Charter schools</li> <li>B. Magnet schools</li> <li>C. CTE schools</li> <li>D. Online/virtual schools</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No” for all school types</li> <li>1: “Yes” for one school type</li> <li>2: “Yes” for two school types</li> <li>3: “Yes” for three school types</li> <li>4: “Yes” for all school types</li> </ul>

Indicator(s)	2.5.B In what ways does the business community in the city support schools of choice?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were given the following nine options and asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether the business community provided support to schools of choice in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Facilities funding</li> <li>B. Start-up funding</li> <li>C. Operational support (e.g., back office work, payroll, etc.)</li> <li>D. Lobbying</li> <li>E. Technology funding</li> <li>F. Books and supplies</li> <li>G. Fundraising support</li> <li>H. Legal support</li> <li>I. Professional development</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No” for all options</li> <li>1: “Yes” for one to three options</li> <li>2: “Yes” for four or five options</li> <li>3: “Yes” for six to eight options</li> <li>4: “Yes” for all nine options</li> </ul>

2.6 PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT	
Indicator(s)	2.6.A Is there philanthropic support (money, in-kind donations, and/or technical support) in the city for schools of choice?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether there is philanthropic support for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Charter schools</li> <li>B. Magnet schools</li> <li>C. CTE schools</li> <li>D. Online/virtual schools</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No” for all school types</li> <li>1: “Yes” for one school type</li> <li>2: “Yes” for two school types</li> <li>3: “Yes” for three school types</li> <li>4: “Yes” for all school types</li> </ul>
Indicator(s)	2.6.B In what ways does the philanthropic community in the city support schools of choice?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were given the following nine options and asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether there is philanthropic support for schools of choice in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Facilities funding</li> <li>B. Start-up funding</li> <li>C. Operational support (e.g., back office work, payroll, etc.)</li> <li>D. Lobbying</li> <li>E. Technology funding</li> <li>F. Books and supplies</li> <li>G. Fundraising support</li> <li>H. Legal support</li> <li>I. Professional development</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: “No” for all options</li> <li>1: “Yes” for one to three options</li> <li>2: “Yes” for four or five options</li> <li>3: “Yes” for six to eight options</li> <li>4: “Yes” for all nine options</li> </ul>
Indicator(s)	2.6.C Of 5 major national foundations (Broad, Carnegie, Gates, Joyce, and Walton), how many support schools of choice in this city?
Source	Local questionnaire.
Scoring	<p>Respondents were given the following five options and asked to answer “yes” or “no” as to whether that foundation supported schools of choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The Broad Foundation</li> <li>B. The Walton Family Foundation</li> <li>C. The Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation</li> <li>D. The Carnegie Foundation</li> <li>E. The Joyce Foundation</li> </ul> <p>For each city, responses for each option were combined and scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0: none</li> <li>1: 1 foundation</li> <li>2: 2 foundations</li> <li>3: 3 foundations</li> <li>4: 4 or 5 foundations</li> </ul>



2.7 TEACHER POLICIES

Indicator(s)	2.7.A Are charter schools exempt from local collective bargaining agreements?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: No 2: Some charters are exempt 4: Yes

Indicator(s)	2.7.B Are charter schools required to hire certified teachers?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: Yes 2: Some teachers must be certified 4: No

2.8 QUALITY CONTROL

Indicator(s)	2.8.A Is there a regular review process by an oversight body with the authority to sanction authorizers?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, “Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws,” (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: No regular review process and no authorizer oversight body 4: Yes

Indicator(s)	2.8.B What is the average “quality score,” out of 12, for the city’s charter authorizers (e.g., do they use academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions)?
Source	National Association of Charter School Authorizers, “2014 Index of Essential Practices” (Chicago, IL: NACSA), <a href="https://publicrevizit.tableausoftware.com/profile/nacsa#/vizhome/2014NACSAIndexofEssentialPractices/Map">https://publicrevizit.tableausoftware.com/profile/nacsa#/vizhome/2014NACSAIndexofEssentialPractices/Map</a> .
Scoring	To calculate a charter authorizer quality score for each city, we take a weighted average of the most recent available scores for each authorizer in the city. Specifically, we weight each authorizer based on the number of schools it authorizes in the city in question. The quality score includes twelve criteria: Have a published and available mission for quality authorizing; have staff assigned to authorizing within the organization or by contact; sign a contract with each school; have established, documented criteria for the evaluation of charter applications; publish application timelines and materials; interview all qualified charter applicants; use expert panels that include external members to review charter applications; grant initial charter terms of five years only; require and/or examine annual, independent financial audits of its charter schools; have established renewal criteria; have established revocation criteria; provide an annual report to each school on its performance.  The weighted average was then translated to a four-point scale using the following metric: 0: Less than 5 1: Less than 7, but greater than or equal to 5 2: Less than 9, but greater than or equal to 7 3: Less than 11, but greater than or equal to 9 4: 11 or greater

Indicator(s)	2.8.C Does the district have a policy for closing schools with low enrollment and a history of doing so?
Source	Grover Whitehurst and Ellie Klein, “Closures of Schools With Declining Enrollment Due to Parental Choice,” in The 2014 Education Choice and Competition Index (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, February 2015), <a href="http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2015/ecci_2014">http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2015/ecci_2014</a> ; data adjusted to fit a four-point scale.
Scoring	0: There is no published policy citing low or declining enrollment due to parental choice as a reason for closing or restructuring schools.  1.33: There is such a policy, but the district has not implemented it; OR district has closed less than three percent of the total number of the district’s schools in the last five years; OR district has closed fewer than ten schools due to unpopularity as evidenced by low enrollment.  2.67: There is no published policy, but the district has closed schools that represent three percent or more of the total number of the district’s schools in the last five years OR There is no published policy, but the district has closed at least ten schools due to unpopularity as evidenced by low enrollment.  4: There is such a policy; AND the district has closed schools that represent three percent or more of the total number of the district’s schools in the last five years OR the district has closed at least ten schools due to unpopularity as evidenced by low enrollment.

2.9 ACCOUNTABILITY	
Indicator(s)	2.9.A Are student data for public schools of choice (charter, magnet/CTE, and/or online/virtual schools) included in the state's accountability system?
Source	State and district websites; data adjusted to fit a four-point scale.
Scoring	0: No schools of choice are included 1.33: One type of school of choice is included 2.67: Two types of schools of choice are included 4: All three types of schools of choice are included

Indicator(s)	2.9.B How comprehensive are report cards for schools of choice (charter, magnet/CTE, and online/virtual schools)?
Source	State and district websites.
Scoring	<p>Report cards for charter, magnet, and online/virtual schools were scored on the inclusion of seven elements: Basic school information (e.g., name, location, and demographics), school safety data, school climate/culture, proficiency rates over time, student-level progress, teacher quality data, and comparisons of schools. The result for each type of school was then translated into a four-point scale:</p> <p>0: Neither the state nor the district issues report cards 1: Report card includes one or two of the recommended elements 2: Report card includes three or four of the recommended elements 3: Report card includes five or six of the recommended elements 4: Report card includes all seven of the recommended elements</p> <p>To arrive at the final score for this four-point indicator, individual scores for charter, magnet, and virtual school report cards are averaged then multiplied by three-quarters (to generate a score out of three points). Cities they received one additional point if either state or district report cards existed (or zero additional points if they did not).</p>

2.10 INFORMATION	
Indicator(s)	2.10.A In what ways is information on school choice disseminated to parents?
Source	Local questionnaire; state and district websites; Google search engine.
Scoring	<p>Data were collected from district and state websites, and the Google search function, on the following subindicators:</p> <p>A. Whether information is available on the district website B. Whether information is available on the State Department of Education website C. Whether a school choice fair is held</p> <p>Questionnaire respondents were asked to select how parents receive information about schools of choice from the following list:</p> <p>D. Information is available on the website of a nonprofit organization (e.g., Greatschools.org) E. A school choice directory is available from the district, state, or other organization F. Parents can come to the central district offices for more information G. Community organizers or representatives from the choice sector go door to door H. The media provides information about choice options (e.g., radio, television, advertising)</p> <p>For each city, responses for were combined and scored:</p> <p>0: No options 1: One to two options 2: Three to four options 3: Five to six options 4: Seven to eight options</p>

2.11 APPLICATION	
Indicator(s)	2.11.A Is there a common application for schools of choice?
Source	District websites.
Scoring	0: No 1: For one type of school of choice (e.g., neighborhood schools that have open enrollment) 2: For two types of schools of choice (e.g., magnet/CTE and neighborhood schools) 3: For three types of schools of choice (e.g., charter, magnet/CTE, and neighborhood schools) 4: For all public schools of choice (online/virtual, charter, magnet/CTE, and neighborhood schools)

2.12 TRANSPORTATION	
Indicator(s)	2.12.A Is transportation to public schools of choice provided or subsidized on equal terms as transportation to district-assigned schools?
Source	Grover Whitehurst and Ellie Klein, "Transportation to Alternative/Choice Public Schools," in The 2014 Education Choice and Competition Index (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, February 2015), <a href="http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2015/ecci_2014">http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2015/ecci_2014</a> .
Scoring	0: No 1.33: Students are provided transportation to any school of their choice within district borders on the same terms as for a district assigned school. 2.67: District or state subsidizes the cost of transportation to a school of choice but parents or schools bear substantial costs. 4: Students are provided transportation to any school of their choice within district borders on the same terms as for a district assigned school.

2.13 EXTRACURRICULARS	
Indicator(s)	2.13.A Are homeschooled students and/or students who attend charter schools eligible for district programming, such as music or sports?
Source	Todd Ziebarth, "Measuring Up To the Model: A Ranking of State Charter School Laws," (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, January 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/StateRankings2014.pdf</a> ; Coalition for Responsible Home Education, "Let the Children Play: Homeschool Sports Access by State" (Canton, MA: CRHE, January 30, 2014), <a href="http://www.responsiblehomeschooling.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Homeschool-Athletic-Participation-Jan.-30-2014.pdf">http://www.responsiblehomeschooling.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Homeschool-Athletic-Participation-Jan.-30-2014.pdf</a> .
Scoring	0: Charter and homeschooled students are ineligible. 2: Charter students are eligible, but homeschooled students are ineligible OR homeschooled students are eligible, but charter students are ineligible. 4: Both charter and homeschooled students are eligible.

### Area III: Quantity and Quality of Choice

Area III contains ten indicators (or pairs of indicators), each of which is worth a maximum of four points for a total of forty possible points. Data in Area III are gleaned from a combination of extant and public data and the authors' own analyses. Area III is assigned the most weight in the overall score (50%).

3.1 TYPES OF SCHOOLS	
Indicator(s)	3.1.A/B Public schools of choice: Are charter and/or magnet schools available to families in the city?
	3.1.C/D Private schools of choice: Are Catholic and/or independent private schools available to families in the city?
	3.1.E/F Other options: Are homeschooling options and/or online/virtual schools available to families in the city?
Source	National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "Dashboard," <a href="http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/students/state/CO/year/2014#districts">http://dashboard.publiccharters.org/dashboard/students/state/CO/year/2014#districts</a> . Magnet Schools of America, <a href="http://www.magnet.edu/location-map">http://www.magnet.edu/location-map</a> . National Association of Independent Schools, <a href="http://www.nais.org">http://www.nais.org</a> . National Catholic Education Association, <a href="http://www.ncea.org">http://www.ncea.org</a> . Homeschool Legal Defense Association, <a href="http://www.hsllda.org">http://www.hsllda.org</a> . John Watson et al., "Keeping Pace with K–12 Digital Learning" (Durango, CO: Evergreen Education Group, 2014), <a href="http://www.kpk12.com/wp-content/uploads/EEG_KP2014-fnl-lr.pdf">http://www.kpk12.com/wp-content/uploads/EEG_KP2014-fnl-lr.pdf</a> National Center for Education Statistics ( <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi">https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi</a> ). District websites.
Scoring	Each indicator pair is scored according to the following scale: 0: No options exist 2: One of the two options exists 4: Both options exist

3.2 ACCESS	
Indicator(s)	3.2.A Does the district facilitate intradistrict open enrollment, either through attendance waivers or through a district-wide lottery?
Source	District websites.
Scoring	Cities receive one point, if there are non-lottery mechanisms for intradistrict enrollment such as attendance boundary waivers, and an additional three points, if there is a district-wide lottery that allows families to rank their top school choices.

Indicator(s)	3.2.B/C External enrollment mechanisms: Are there interdistrict enrollment options for students in the city/district? Are there dual enrollment options for students in the city/district? Can districts opt out of these programs?
Source	District websites; Education Commission of the States, "Open Enrollment: Online Database," <a href="http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/OpenEnrollment/OEDB_intro.asp">http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/OpenEnrollment/OEDB_intro.asp</a> .
Scoring	Cities receive two points if interdistrict enrollment is available to students, one-and-a-half points if it is available but districts can opt out, or zero points if the option is not available (3.2.B).  Cities receive two points if dual enrollment is available to students, one-and-a-half points if it is available but districts can opt out, or zero points if the option is not available (3.2.C).

Indicator(s)	3.2.D Does the state have a voucher or tax credit scholarship program? Is there a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for students in the city?
Source	Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, <a href="http://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/school-choice-in-america/">http://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/school-choice-in-america/</a> .
Scoring	0: No 2: Students are eligible for a state voucher or tax credit scholarship program 4: There is a voucher or tax credit scholarship program specifically for students in the city

3.3 MARKET SHARE	
Indicator(s)	3.3.A Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of public schools are schools of choice (charter, magnet, and/or CTE schools)?
Source	Charter schools: National Center for Education Statistics (2012–13). District schools of choice: District websites. District schools (total): National Center for Education Statistics (2013–13).
Scoring	Market share of public schools of choice is calculated with the following formula: (Number of charters + Number of district schools of choice) / Total number of public schools (district and charter)  District schools of choice are magnet schools, career and technical schools, or other schools with special programs that do not have attendance boundaries or that otherwise require parents to “opt-in” via an application process.  Once the market share is calculated, the group of cities is divided into quintiles. Cities are scored accordingly: 0: Lowest quintile 1: Second-lowest quintile 2: Middle quintile 3: Second-highest quintile 4: Highest quintile

Indicator(s)	3.3.B Compared to other cities in the study, what percentage of students in the city enroll in charter schools?
Source	National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, “A Growing Movement: America’s Largest Charter School Communities” (Washington, D.C.: NAPCS, December 2014), <a href="http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014_Enrollment_Share_FINAL.pdf">http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014_Enrollment_Share_FINAL.pdf</a> . Two cities (Nashville and Tulsa) were not included in the above study, so data from state department of education websites are used.
Scoring	The group of cities is divided into quintiles. Cities are scored accordingly: 0: Lowest quintile 1: Second-lowest quintile 2: Middle quintile 3: Second-highest quintile 4: Highest quintile

3.4 QUALITY	
Indicator(s)	3.4 A What is the marginal impact of attending a charter school on learning gains in reading?  3.4 B What is the marginal impact of attending a charter school on learning gains in math?
Source	Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, “Urban Charter School Study: Report on 41 Regions” (Stanford, CA: CREDO, 2015), <a href="http://urbancharters.stanford.edu/download/Urban%20Charter%20School%20Study%20Report%20on%2041%20Regions.pdf">http://urbancharters.stanford.edu/download/Urban%20Charter%20School%20Study%20Report%20on%2041%20Regions.pdf</a> .
Scoring	Cities are scored based on the average performance of their charter sectors relative to their traditional district schools: 0: District schools outperform charters by .08 standard deviations or more. 1: District schools outperform charters by between .02 and .08 standard deviations. 2: Charter and district schools perform at similar levels. 3: Charters outperform district schools by between .02 and .08 standard deviations. 4: Charters outperform district schools by .08 standard deviations or more.

# City Scores by Area

TABLE B-1 | RANK AND SCORE OF CITIES BY AREA I: POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Area I: Political Support		Overall	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Denver	11.95	1	74.61	3
Baltimore	11.39	2	65.58	17
Charlotte	10.70	3	56.79	27
Jacksonville	10.55	4	62.59	22
Newark	10.28	5	70.18	7
Chicago	10.14	6	68.88	11
Nashville	10.00	7	62.67	21
Dallas	9.86	8	57.91	25
Indianapolis	9.72	9	73.54	4
Houston	9.45	10	63.23	19
Austin	9.07	11	55.08	29
New Orleans	8.61	12	84.73	1
Boston	8.47	13	68.66	12
Atlanta	8.20	14	69.85	9
Oakland	8.13	15	70.07	8
Minneapolis	7.63	16	66.51	16
Kansas City, MO	7.57	17	64.24	18
Pittsburgh	7.36	18	56.39	28
San Diego	7.36	18	59.41	23
Detroit	7.36	18	69.10	10
Washington, D.C.	7.34	21	82.62	2
Los Angeles	7.08	22	67.21	15
Tulsa	6.81	23	57.94	24
Columbus	6.67	24	72.51	5
Milwaukee	6.09	25	71.57	6
New York City	5.83	26	68.66	12
Albany	5.83	26	53.52	30
San Francisco	5.78	28	62.71	20
Philadelphia	5.28	29	67.64	14
Seattle	4.86	30	57.53	26

■ TOP TEN    
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 ■ BOTTOM TEN



TABLE B-2 | RANK AND SCORE OF CITIES BY AREA II: POLICY ENVIRONMENT

	Area II: Policy Environment		Overall	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
New Orleans	28.62	1	84.73	1
Atlanta	27.27	2	69.85	9
New York City	26.72	3	68.66	12
Columbus	26.47	4	72.51	5
Washington, D.C.	25.94	5	82.62	2
Denver	25.79	6	74.61	3
Chicago	25.62	7	68.88	11
Los Angeles	25.13	8	67.21	15
Indianapolis	24.45	9	73.54	4
Philadelphia	24.24	10	67.64	14
Tulsa	23.79	11	57.94	24
Boston	23.31	12	68.66	12
Minneapolis	23.25	13	66.51	16
Oakland	23.20	14	70.07	8
San Francisco	23.18	15	62.71	20
Detroit	22.37	16	69.10	10
Seattle	22.20	17	57.53	26
Nashville	22.04	18	62.67	21
Kansas City, MO	21.52	19	64.24	18
Jacksonville	21.42	20	62.59	22
Newark	21.14	21	70.18	7
San Diego	20.80	22	59.41	23
Charlotte	20.31	23	56.79	27
Pittsburgh	20.12	24	56.39	28
Houston	20.03	25	63.23	19
Milwaukee	19.86	26	71.57	6
Austin	19.77	27	55.08	29
Dallas	18.05	28	57.91	25
Baltimore	16.69	29	65.58	17
Albany	16.43	30	53.52	30

■ TOP TEN     
 ■ MIDDLE OF THE PACK     
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TABLE B-3 | RANK AND SCORE OF CITIES BY AREA III: QUANTITY AND QUALITY

	Area III: Quantity & Quality		Overall	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Washington, D.C.	49.34	1	82.62	2
New Orleans	47.50	2	84.73	1
Milwaukee	45.63	3	71.57	6
Columbus	39.38	4	72.51	5
Indianapolis	39.38	4	73.54	4
Detroit	39.38	4	69.10	10
Oakland	38.75	7	70.07	8
Newark	38.75	7	70.18	7
Philadelphia	38.13	9	67.64	14
Baltimore	37.50	10	65.58	17
Denver	36.88	11	74.61	3
Boston	36.88	11	68.66	12
New York City	36.11	13	68.66	12
Minneapolis	35.63	14	66.51	16
Kansas City, MO	35.16	15	64.24	18
Los Angeles	35.00	16	67.21	15
Atlanta	34.38	17	69.85	9
San Francisco	33.75	18	62.71	20
Houston	33.75	18	63.23	19
Chicago	33.13	20	68.88	11
San Diego	31.25	21	59.41	23
Albany	31.25	21	53.52	30
Nashville	30.63	23	62.67	21
Jacksonville	30.63	23	62.59	22
Seattle	30.47	25	57.53	26
Dallas	30.00	26	57.91	25
Pittsburgh	28.91	27	56.39	28
Tulsa	27.34	28	57.94	24
Austin	26.25	29	55.08	29
Charlotte	25.78	30	56.79	27

■ TOP TEN     
 ■ MIDDLE OF THE PACK     
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