



# Indiana Charter School Student Demographics

Report 2006-2  
December 2006



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## Executive Summary

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The Office of Charter School Research (OCSR) located in Teachers College at Ball State University was created to study Indiana's charter schools. In Report 2006-2, "Indiana Charter School Student Demographics," the OCSR reports on the demographic make-up of 28 charter schools in operation for 2005-2006. More specifically, this report illustrates the percentage of students attending charter schools from the following categories: minority status, free and reduced lunch status, and those who have been identified as having a disability.

Among the 37 charter schools currently in operation in Indiana, 19 were authorized by Ball State University, 16 by the Indianapolis Mayor's office and 2 by local school districts. Preliminary data from the Indiana Department of Education indicated an enrollment of 9,376 students in fall 2006, an increase of approximately 2,925 students over last year. At the time of this report, complete data sets were available to the OCSR from 28 charter schools that were in operation during the 2005-2006 academic year. Below is a summary of the findings.

- The majority of charter schools in Indiana have high minority enrollment, often exceeding 60%, and high enrollment of students living in poverty, with nearly half of the total charter school enrollment meeting the criteria to qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- As noted in this report and more thoroughly explored in Report 1 of this series, ISTEP+ pass rates of students attending charter schools generally reflect a positive trend in both Mathematics and English.
- The percent of students who have been identified as having disabilities ranges across charter schools from 2.9% to 41.4%. The average across the 28 schools was 10.4%.
- Of students attending the 28 reporting charter schools in Indiana who were identified as having disabilities, 233 had learning disabilities and 188 had communication disorders. These were the most common disabilities found, making up 421 of the total number of 670 or 63% of the total number of students identified with disabilities.
- Students attending Indiana charter schools who were identified as having disabilities were identified across 13 different disability categories.

From these demographic data, it is fair to say that the charter schools in Indiana include students from diverse backgrounds. In addition, students who enter a charter school are often behind academically.

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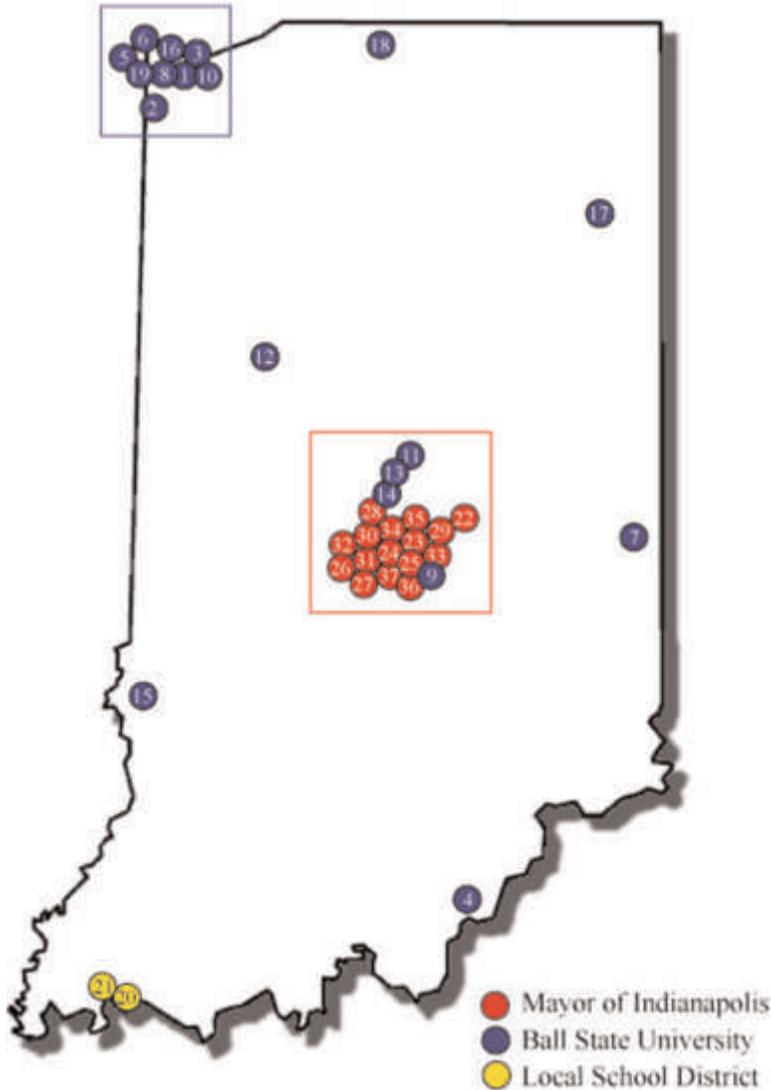
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In the fall of 2006, there were 37 operating charter schools in Indiana. Nineteen of those schools were authorized through Ball State University, 16 were sponsored by the Mayor of Indianapolis, and 2 were authorized through the local school district (see Figure 1). Preliminary data from the Indiana Department of Education indicated an enrollment of 9,376 students in fall 2006, an increase of approximately 2,925 students over last year. The Indiana charter school law allows for multiple authorizers and sets forth provisions for the expansion of the charter school movement throughout the state. It is important, then, that stakeholders understand the mission of charter schools: to provide quality, innovative education to increase student achievement.

**Figure 1**  
**Map of Indiana Featuring Charter Schools**



1. 21st Century Charter School (Gary)
2. Campagna Academy (Scherverville)
3. Charter School of the Dunes (Gary)
4. Community Montessori (New Albany)
5. East Chicago Lighthouse Charter School (East Chicago)
6. East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy (East Chicago)
7. Galileo Charter School (Richmond)
8. Gary Lighthouse Charter School (Gary)
9. Irvington Community School (Indianapolis)
10. KIPP LEAD College Preparatory Charter School (Gary)
11. Montessori Academy at Geist (McCordsville)
12. New Community School (Lafayette)
13. Options Charter School (Noblesville)
14. Options Charter School (Carmel)
15. Rural Community Academy (Graysville)
16. Thea Bowman Leadership Academy (Gary)
17. Timothy L. Johnson Academy (Fort Wayne)
18. Veritas Academy (South Bend)
19. West Gary Lighthouse Charter School (Gary)
20. Joshua Academy (Evansville)
21. Signature School (Evansville)
22. Lawrence Early College High School (Indianapolis)
23. 21st Century School Fall Creek (Indianapolis)
24. 21st Century School Fountain Square (Indianapolis)
25. Andrew J. Brown Academy (Indianapolis)
26. The Challenge Foundation Academy (Indianapolis)
27. Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School (Indianapolis)
28. Christel House Academy (Indianapolis)
29. Decatur Discovery Academy (Indianapolis)
30. Flanner House Elementary School (Indianapolis)
31. Herron High School (Indianapolis)
32. Hope Academy (Indianapolis)
33. Indianapolis Lighthouse Charter School (Indianapolis)
34. Indianapolis Metropolitan Career Academy 1 (Indianapolis)
35. Indianapolis Metropolitan Career Academy 2 (Indianapolis)
36. KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory (Indianapolis)
37. Southeast Neighborhood School of Excellence (Indianapolis)

*The majority of charter schools have high minority enrollment.*

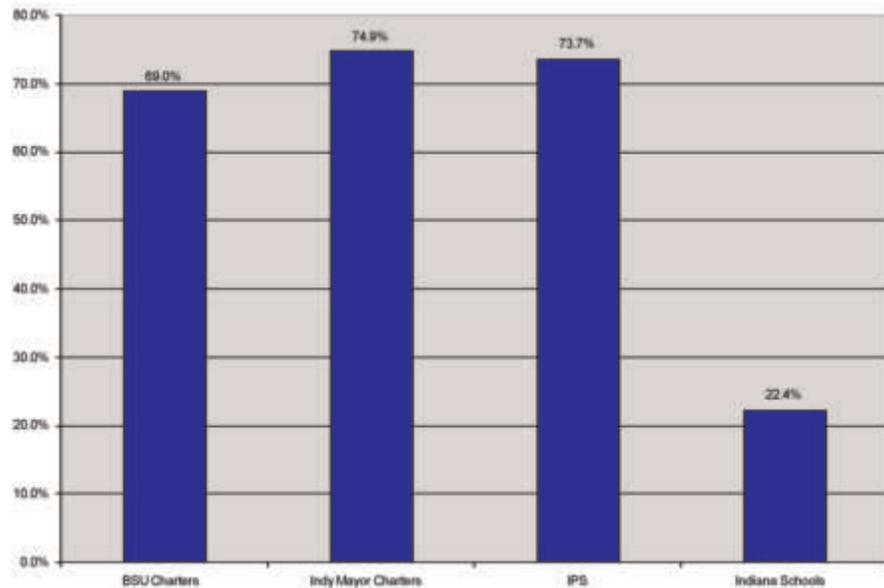
“A charter school is a public school that is nonsectarian and nonreligious and operates under a charter. Under Indiana Code, charter schools are established to serve the different learning styles and needs of public school students, to offer public school students appropriate and innovative choices, to afford varied opportunities for professional educators, to allow freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of accountability, and to provide parents, students, community members, and local entities with an expanded opportunity for involvement in the public school system.”<sup>1</sup>

One misconception about charter schools is that their enrollment is selected by “creaming” high-performing students off the population of traditional public schools. In fact, most charter schools draw students from diverse academic, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Charter schools face challenges similar to - and sometimes more pronounced than - those faced by traditional public schools.

The majority of charter schools have high minority enrollment, often exceeding 60%, and high enrollment from students living in poverty, as defined by free or reduced lunch status, with nearly half of the total charter school enrollment meeting the criteria. Figures 2 and 3 depict the percent of minority and free and reduced lunch enrollment in Indiana schools for the 2005-2006 academic year.

Minority enrollment in the charter schools is comparable to that of the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), and far exceeds minority enrollment for the state. The majority of the charter schools are located in urban areas such as Gary, Fort Wayne, and Indianapolis, and face additional challenges related to being in an urban environment.

**Figure 2**  
**Percent Minority Enrollment in Indiana Schools for 2005-2006<sup>2</sup>**

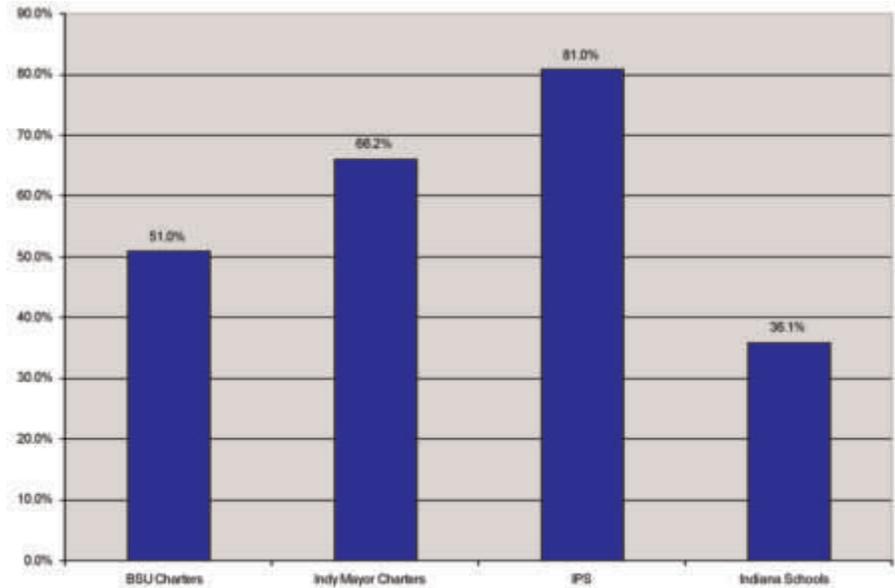


<sup>1</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Web site at <http://www.doe.state.in.us/charterschools/faq.html#1>. Retrieved December 11, 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Ibid.

**Figure 3**  
**Percent Free and Reduced Lunch Enrollment in Indiana Schools for 2005-2006<sup>3</sup>**

*Students who enter a charter school are often behind academically.*



Students who enter a charter school are often behind their peers in other public schools academically, as is evidenced by ISTEP+ pass rates. However, the educational opportunities offered in a charter school can improve performance rates among all students, especially those with academic challenges. Figures 4, 5, and 6 show pass rates for students in Ball State and Indianapolis Mayor-sponsored charter schools in their second, third, or fourth year of operation, and for the state of Indiana.

**Figure 4**  
**ISTEP+ Pass Rates in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Year Ball State-Sponsored Charter Schools**

Grade	English			Math			Both (English & Math)			Science		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
3rd	55%	47%	61%	45%	38%	52%	37%	31%	44%			
4th		44%	56%		43%	58%		34%	48%			
5th		51%	56%		36%	51%		31%	40%	53%	34%	42%
6th	44%	47%	66%	48%	43%	68%	43%	35%	57%			
7th		47%	54%		46%	59%		33%	43%			24%
8th			55%			43%			36%			
9th			14%			11%			3%			
10th	22%	47%	28%	22%	30%	18%	9%	28%	13%			

<sup>3</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Web site at <http://www.doe.state.in.us/htmls/education.html>.

**Figure 5**  
**ISTEP+ Pass Rates in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Year**  
**Indianapolis Mayor-Sponsored Schools<sup>4</sup>**

Grade	English			Math			Both (English & Math)			Science		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
3rd	51%	59%	67%	35%	50%	56%	30%	41%	49%			
4th		52%	65%		52%	63%		40%	52%			
5th		42%	70%		49%	72%		36%	60%	23%	27%	33%
6th	52%	59%	45%	33%	61%	53%	29%	47%	36%			
7th		61%	55%		57%	67%		43%	45%			24%
8th		47%	56%		44%	56%		34%	41%			
9th		44%	59%		30%	47%		24%	42%			
10th			53%			28%			26%			

**Figure 6**  
**ISTEP+ Pass Rates for Indiana Schools<sup>4</sup>**

Grade	English			Math			Both (English & Math)			Science		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
3rd	74%	75%	75%	71%	73%	73%	63%	65%	65%			
4th		73%	73%		73%	75%		64%	66%			
5th		72%	73%		72%	76%		63%	66%	61%	62%	64%
6th	69%	70%	71%	72%	75%	78%	62%	63%	66%			
7th		68%	68%		73%	76%		61%	63%			52%
8th	65%	67%	68%	71%	71%	72%	58%	61%	61%			
9th		67%	67%		68%	70%		59%	60%			
10th	69%	68%	68%	67%	64%	64%	60%	57%	57%			

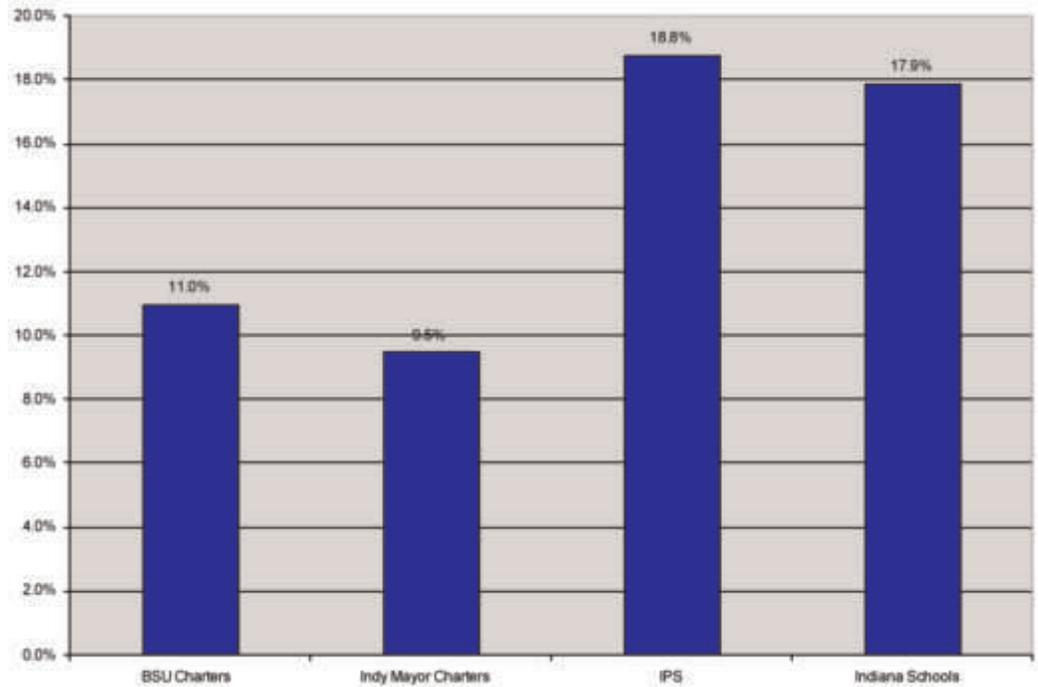
These results show patterns of performance over the years reported. With the addition of ISTEP+ testing at multiple grade levels, schools can track progress with regard to proficiency of cohorts, highlighted here in corresponding colors, over time. Because it is difficult to assess the progress of all students from state scores, charter schools also conduct other assessments throughout the year to determine growth in achievement.

In addition to minority students and students from low-income families, charter schools must also serve the needs of students with disabilities. Figures 7, 8, and 9 show the percentage of students receiving special education services in Indiana schools in 2005-2006. Based on the December 1, 2005 count for special education, 10.4% of the total charter school enrollment required special education services. Eleven percent of students in Ball State University charter schools and 9.5% of students in Indianapolis Mayor-sponsored charter schools received those services.<sup>5</sup> Figure 10 provides a breakdown of special education counts by primary disability.

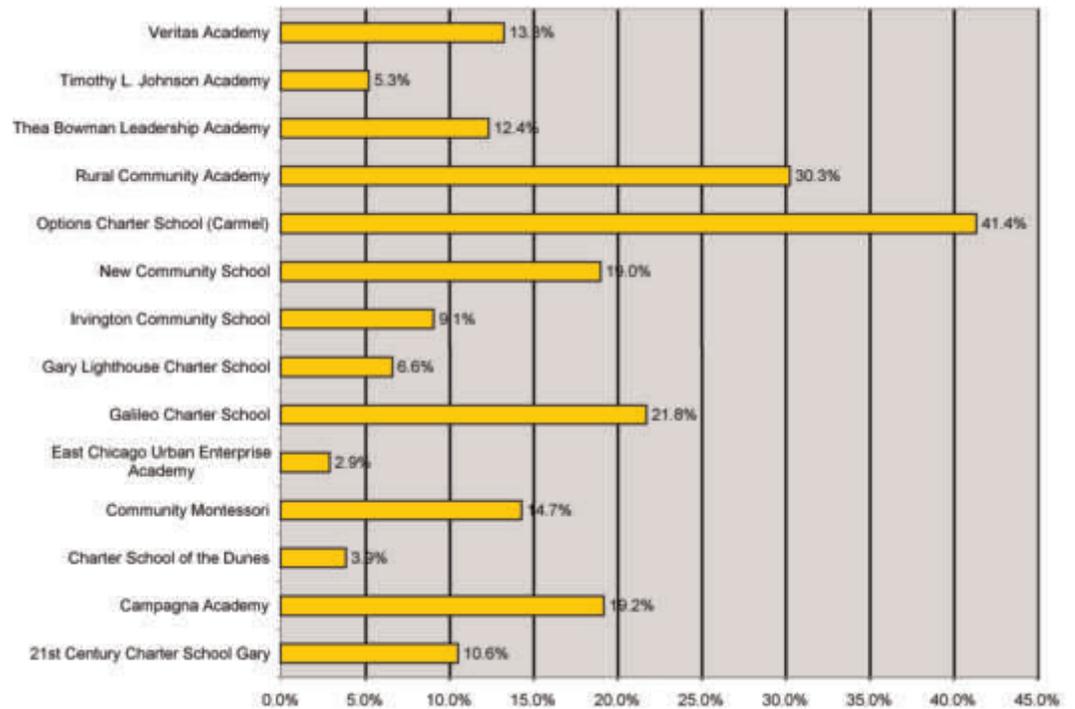
<sup>4</sup>Source: Mayor, City of Indianapolis Web site at <http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Accountability/2006/home.htm>.

<sup>5</sup>Source: Total percentage based on data obtained from the Indiana Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Learners and the Virtual Special Education Cooperative. All included charter schools are members of the VSEC except Decatur Discovery Academy.

**Figure 7**  
**Percent Special Education Enrollment for 2005-2006:**  
**Indiana Schools<sup>6</sup>**

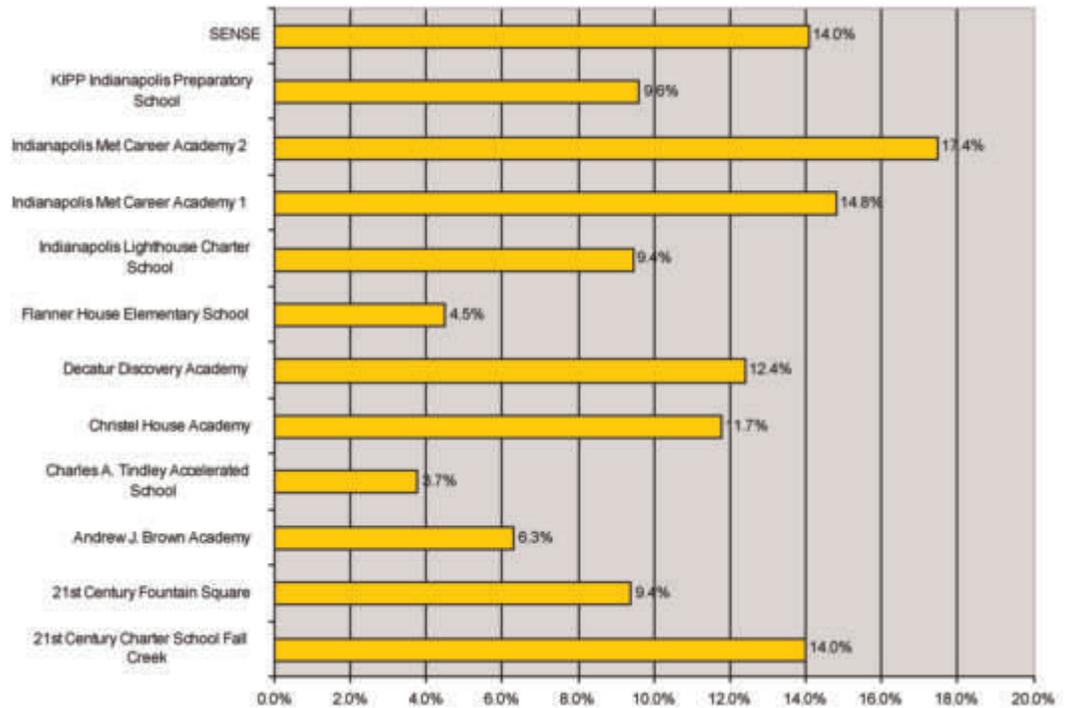


**Figure 8**  
**Percent Special Education Enrollment for 2005-2006:**  
**Ball State-Sponsored Charter Schools**



<sup>6</sup>All special education data based on December 1, 2005 count, as reported to the Indiana Department of Education. Retrieved from Indiana Department of Education Web site at <http://www.doe.state.in.us/htmls/education.html>.

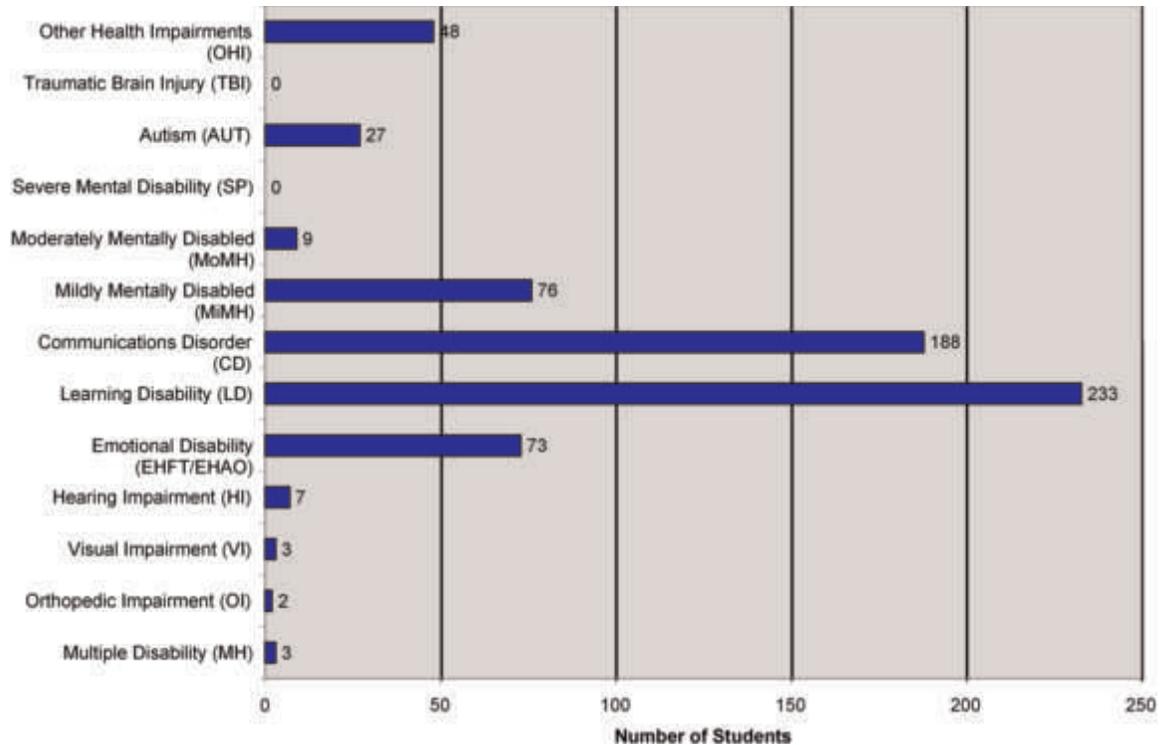
**Figure 9**  
**Percent Special Education Enrollment for 2005-2006:**  
**Indianapolis Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools**



The Virtual Special Education Cooperative (VSEC) provides support and training to member schools through consultation and direct services. The VSEC is responsible for financial oversight and accountability for services under federal special education law and state regulation.

All schools reported are VSEC member schools except Decatur Discovery Academy.

**Figure 10**  
**Charter School Special Education Count by Primary Disability**  
**for 2005-2006**



The vast majority of the students with disabilities in Indiana charter schools have a learning disability or communication disorder. Providing an appropriate educational environment for these students presents an additional challenge for charter schools. The VSEC provides regional support that ensures all member schools have access to critical services.

As charter school enrollment in general has increased, so has the number of students from minority backgrounds as well as those who qualify for free and reduced lunch. This demands that charter schools continue to meet the needs of students who often are at an educational disadvantage. The Office of Charter School Research will continue to monitor the demographic makeup of Indiana charter schools and the impact of these demographic factors on student achievement.



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