

Quality Seats

Arizona not only has a large and diverse charter environment, we increasingly have become more focused on quality. The following chart shows the results in quality seats for Arizona charter schools from FY12-14. As the number of total students enrolled has increased, **the percent of those students in quality (Tier 1) seats has also increased, while the percentage of students in low quality (Tier 3) seats has decreased.**

Quality	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Tier 1 (A,B)	75,936	58%	90,160	63%	136,320	72%
Tier 2 (C)	41,557	32%	36,592	26%	29,711	16%
Tier 3 (D,F)	12,005	9%	12,529	9%	9,649	5%
None	2,236	2%	2,892	2%	14,525	8%
Total	131,734	100%	142,172	100%	190,205	100%

In the last three years, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, our main state authorizer, has focused on enhancing their practices to effectively evaluate new and veteran charters. In June 2011, the Board revised its mission and developed a strategic plan that reflects its determination to increase the quality of the charter schools in its portfolio, thus improving the quality of educational choices in Arizona.

Additionally, beginning in 2010, the first Arizona charters matured and approached expiration. Thus far the charter board has processed 186 renewal applications, and another 101 charter holders will become eligible for renewal over the next three years. Of those that have been considered for renewal, **8% did not meet the Board's academic performance expectations, failed to submit a quality renewal application package, and were denied renewal.** Another 32% were only offered a conditional renewal contract. In many cases, our Center for Student Achievement is now contracted to provide intensive consulting and coaching with these schools.

Since Arizona began rating its schools A-F, the state authorizer has taken the following action. In 2013, the first year Arizona issued F letter grades, all five charters given an F were closed by the State Board. In 2014, 17 charters were rated F, and with the Association's urging with school leaders, 11 decided to voluntarily surrender or close, and six came before the State Charter Board. Of the six F-rated schools in FY15, one showed tremendous student growth and was allowed to operate without probationary restrictions. The other five were put on strict probation. This change was due to the fact that the Charter Board, who oversees approximately 630 charters with a staff of eight, was spending 80% of its time in Court. The strict probation allows tighter contractual terms, so the legal noose is much tighter if student achievement is not shown – and shown quickly.

As we continue a shared focus on quality with our state authorizer, we believe the next few years will be even more promising. In accordance with the Academic Intervention Schedule included in the State Board for Charter School's Academic Performance Framework, the Board anticipates that they will conduct 211 five-year interval reviews, assign 38 improvement plans, and review as many as 300 improvement reports. The Board will conduct as many as 240 site visits in its monitoring of schools. Based on the effectiveness of the Charter Board's intervention schedule thus far, they anticipate that the majority of monitored schools will improve. However, using the past as a predictor, they also anticipate that **as many as 25 charter contracts will be considered for revocation in the next three years.**