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Attached please find the Qualifying Exam for the K-12 Doctoral Program. The exam is divided into five main parts (I – V below).

- Before you begin, create a header for each page with your student ID number (found on the label of this envelope), the name of the exam you are taking (K-12/Executive Ed.D. Qualifying) and today’s date.

- For each response, please indicate the number and title of the question (i.e. Part II — Focused Policy Perspectives, etc.)

- When you complete a section, insert a page break before starting the next section.

- As you develop your responses, organize them in a logical and coherent way. You should apply and cite relevant and current research and literature in each response.

Part I
Curriculum

Part II
Focused Policy Perspectives
(Choose One Question)

Part III
Organization

Part IV
Research
(Choose One Question)

Part V
Statistics
(Answer All Questions)
K-12 QUALIFYING EXAM

I. CURRICULUM

DIRECTIONS: Answer this question thoroughly.

You are asked to prepare a critique of the following professional journal article. In doing so, be certain to include in your discussion the relationship of this article to current literature and related research on this topic. It is also important to employ higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in writing your critique.
Part I-Curriculum

“ASSESSING ASSESSMENT: ARE ALTERNATIVE METHODS MAKING THE GRADE?”
Assessing Assessment

Are Alternative Methods Making the Grade?

John Franklin

Ken O’Connor knows the story well. A student in his school, after struggling as a freshman, turned around during her sophomore year and began steadily improving. By her junior year she was a motivated learner, and in her senior year she became an above-average achiever who regularly earned high marks.

Unfortunately, when her class rank was calculated, the student finished lower than many colleges and universities were willing to accept. “She was penalized for that freshman year,” says O’Connor, an education consultant and author of the book How to Grade for Learning: Linking Grades to Standards. “Despite her growth and outstanding improvement, that freshman year was held against her.”

O’Connor’s story illustrates the trouble many educators have with traditional grading methods and rankings. Although such approaches may be helpful for gauging students’ progress, they fail to take into account students’ growth and development and, in so doing, can inhibit their progress. For teachers, traditional grading also presents a frustrating challenge as educators try to accurately summarize students’ achievement with simple letter grades and a few words of condensed commentary. “There’s so much that students have to know and be able to do,” says Mary Kay Armour, a consultant with 15 years of experience dealing with assessment-related issues. “You want to evaluate students’ higher-order thinking skills, problem solving, attitudes, and other abilities, but many of those things just can’t be quantified very easily.”

In an effort to address this challenge, and to bring their instruction in line with state standards, some school systems have begun moving toward alternative methods of assessment that do not include letter grades. Student portfolios and presentations replace paper-and-pencil tests, and the traditional A, B, C, D, or F report card is replaced with one that provides more in-depth analyses and that separates achievement from such behavior factors as tardiness or lateness of assignments. Yet the transition to such systems often remains controversial for educators and parents, many of whom view new approaches as either an affront to teacher authority or a tiresome exercise that only results in “information overload.” As schools and districts move further toward standards-based education, what is the future for alternative assessment strategies?

Exploring the Alternatives

“It’s important to distinguish the difference between assessment and grading when talking about them,” says Patricia Schenck, an official with the Assessment and Accountability Program for Bay District Schools in Panama City, Fla. “Assessment involves how teachers find out what students know in relation to the standards so that they can evaluate the students; grading involves procedures for compiling data so that an evaluation can be made for reporting to parents.” Teachers’ exercises with students can involve essays, discussions, classroom projects, and other programs designed to show material to students and impart knowledge that the teachers can then observe and measure. Such measurements and observations, however, do not always translate easily to exams, according to teachers.

In fact, as more and more U.S. states have adopted standards—49 out of 50 currently have
state-mandated requirements indicating what students should know by certain grade levels—schools and teachers have found themselves struggling to bring their teaching and grading practices up to speed for tests. The solution, many have found, is to design different performance tasks around state requirements that call for students to demonstrate their knowledge of particular subjects according to a set of criteria agreed upon by the faculty.

"One of the standards that we’re supposed to measure in social studies is ‘belief and value of different cultures,’” says Armour. Measuring understanding in a classroom setting can be accomplished in a number of ways, she says, but quantifying it for a letter grade poses challenges. “You can observe the student, discuss the subject with the student, and develop projects that allow the student to demonstrate what he or she knows, but when it comes to grading, you’re going to be creating items that are either right or wrong. You have to be very precise with these and determine what’s correct and what’s not rather than valuing an attitude or a skill.”

Moving from classroom testing to formalized state testing presents even greater challenges. "Formalized assessments take a lot of time and a lot of money to develop, and the things you can assess locally or in a classroom can’t necessarily be demonstrated as easily on a pencil-and-paper state test,” Armour asserts. “You can measure things like emotional development and attitude through observation and discussion, but testing for them is something else.”

Armour’s concerns about testing and grading are shared by many educators. "By definition, when you give out a letter grade, you’re not giving out a lot of information,” says Tom Hoerr, the director of the New City School in St. Louis, Mo. "An A can mean above-average work, but it doesn’t necessarily anchor anything. A student could be the best in the class, for example, but if that entire class is struggling, then the student might not have learned as much as we might think she did.”

"There’s no real meaning associated with traditional practice in terms of learning,” concurs Elliott Asp, the assistant superintendent for research and assessment of Douglas County Schools in Castle Rock, Colo. “A child may work hard and earn a B in one class if the teacher values homework, but if that child’s grade is determined largely through his homework completion, and he doesn’t actually learn the lessons, then the next year his parents may be wondering how he can be struggling in reading when he got all As the year before.”

This difficulty in assigning grades has been one of the primary incentives behind the push for finding new ways to report student learning. Rather than rely on an average of quiz and test scores to indicate whether a student has mastered a particular subject, schools like New City have moved to alternative assessments such as student portfolios, student-involved conferences (three-way discussions where students review their portfolios of projects and assignments to show parents and the teacher what they have learned), and exhibit projects that give children a chance to demonstrate their learning in more creative ways. “We use P-E-P-S at New City,” says Hoerr. "This stands for Projects, Exhibitions, and Portfolios. Every child compiles a portfolio that includes all kinds of work—works in progress, significant achievements, annual projects, and so forth. We feel these are the best way for parents to see their child’s progress, and they’re also very helpful in getting children to develop self-knowledge.”

One New City assignment that demonstrates these concepts is the yearlong study of a particular theme, such as Native American history or the Civil Rights movement. Students focus on the subject and, depending on the grade level, produce an annual project summarizing what they have learned. Students then give presentations on their projects, explaining what they are intended to show, and then teachers and other students judge both the projects and the students’ presentations to determine whether the students have met specific project criteria. "Our 3rd grade theme is Native Americans," says Hoerr. "The dioramas that the students assemble have to show certain things, such as the environment, the rituals that were practiced, how people ate, and so on.”

New City also uses technology in its presentations and evaluations. "We videotape many of the sessions so that classes can analyze them," Hoerr says. "Students have copies of the rubrics so that they can evaluate the presentation according to consistent criteria. Did the presenter make eye contact? Were the major points clear? Was the presentation summarized at the conclusion? These are the things we look for, and they give the children a chance to present what they’ve learned beyond what they might otherwise be able to show on paper.”

**Breaking with Tradition**

Yet even though alternative assessment methods may be popular in some areas, they still meet with stiff opposition in others, according to educators. The causes for the resistance are many,
but they frequently boil down to three primary reasons: parental unfamiliarity with the goals of alternative assessment, teacher preferences for traditional methods, and the greater amounts of time required when starting an alternative assessment program.

"My experience over the last 12 years of working with nontraditional assessments is that parents may have a lot of apprehension about them at first because they aren't what the parents grew up with," says Sue McKenzie-Robbiee, the principal of Minchau School in Edmonton, Alberta. "Parents are used to the system that they remember, where children were given an A, B, C, or D depending on how well they did."

Breaking that mind-set of viewing the grade as all-important indicators is difficult, according to experts. "Even with all the benefits of alternative assessment, you'll still get that very vocal percentage that wants to know what the 'final result' means," Armour says. In addition to being a frame-of-reference factor for parents, the perspective is also an outgrowth of information overload. "With so much to read and keep track of, parents often feel frustrated," she says. "Their perspective is, 'Don't give me 10 pages of assessment on how my child's doing, just give me something concise! Is this an A, B, or C?' Other issues such as class rank or grade point averages become even more critical to parents when children reach middle and secondary school and college applications enter the picture (see "What Colleges Want" on page 4).

Addressing such concerns, supporters of alternative assessment assert, requires making sure parents understand both the goals and the benefits of alternative assessment at the outset. "We've had a number of parents who opposed [alternative assessments] initially," McKenzie-Robbiee says. "But we've found that with enough communication and support, that opposition usually dissipates." Parents who express reservations about alternative assessment strategies often find that after seeing their children making video presentations, explaining what they've learned through projects, and demonstrating what they have learned in a definitive manner, it is difficult to go back to more traditional methods like standard report cards. "I had one parent who left our school who said she kept waiting for a [student-involved] conference with her child's new teacher, and it never came," says McKenzie-Robbiee. "Instead, she found herself going to more traditional parent-teacher conferences at her child's new school, and she said she left feeling that she didn't know any more than when she came!"

Communicating with parents is not just necessary, educators argue, it is critical if an alternative assessment program is to succeed. "We devote a lot of attention to parent education," says Hoerr. "We have an orientation every August and coffees every September, and I send letters home with the children every Friday so that parents can hear from me as well as from their child's teacher. It's essential that the parents be our partners in their child's learning."

Parental concerns, however, are only one of the hurdles that schools face when they introduce alternative assessments. In some cases, officials seeking to implement such a system need to overcome faculty resistance as well. "Some teachers feel that implementing a new system infringes on their turf to a certain extent," Aps says. "In the past, it was always up to the teacher to determine what constituted an A. Now, under a new system, they have to be consistent across their classrooms and use the same criteria that are established to conform to the state standards. So it's a change, and adjusting to change takes time."

That time, experts say, is probably the biggest challenge with alternative assessments because it affects parents and teachers alike. "Time is a big factor for everyone," says Hoerr. "Under more traditional systems, it was easy to create a sheet, compute an average, and give out a number. But if we're talking about genuine understanding and using skills and knowledge in a new situation, that's going to require more time."

Despite the obstacles, however, many view the experience as worthwhile. "Once you get over the hump of switching to a nontraditional system, parents and teachers tend to prefer it," says Kathryn Anderson Alvestad, author of Developing Parent and Community Understanding of Performance-Based Assessment. "I've known quite a few parents who required a fair amount of clarification about nontraditional assessments and what they involved. I've also been in many conferences where the parents were just very concerned about the grade. Once they understand what is involved and realize that there's so much more they can 'sink their teeth into' about their child's learning, however, they have a change of heart."

As the standards movement has taken hold in schools throughout the country, more and more teachers and administrators have been wrestling with different ways of ensuring that their schools and students measure up to state requirements. These new strategies require new practices and procedures for success, and that, alternative assessment supporters argue, is where newer methods stand the best chance for students and teachers seeking to meet standards.
"We've found the new methods to be very successful for us," says Schenck. "We did a lot of initial research before changing our practices, and what we found was that prior to moving to a standards-based system, many teachers had different procedures for testing and grading. Some teachers, she says, counted formative work in addition to summative work, whereas some gave makeup work and others did not. The result, Schenck says, was an inconsistent approach to teaching and learning. "Now, based on what we've heard from teachers and from students who have been involved in our pilot programs, the new system has aligned teaching and learning with standards, and that has allowed the students to return to a focus on learning rather than grading, which is what it really should be."

The Road Ahead

Other experts share Schenck's view. "I've heard of some school systems experimenting with alternative assessment and then going back to the old ways because of resistance and time demands," says Armour. "But I think that alternative assessment is the way of the future because of the greater amount of information it provides. When you can see what your child is doing and what the child has learned in an in-depth manner, and when you can see cooperative involvement with parents and teachers for the child's learning, you won't want to go back."

That kind of cooperative practice, educators say, is the key to successful learning. "Children come to school with a lot of different interests," says Hoern. "The more creative we can be about letting them show us what they know, the more they will learn. And creating lifelong learners is what we're all about."

To learn more about grading and assessment, as well as ASCD's Assessment and Evaluation Services Consortium, please visit the ASCD Web site at http://www.ascd.org.
II. FOCUSED POLICY PERSPECTIVES

You must respond to any one of the questions listed below. There is no requirement to select a particular question based upon your program K-12 or Higher Education.

Directions: Select one (1) of the six questions presented below and respond to it in a coherent essay. Be sure to draw on your knowledge of policy analysis and the current literature in higher education to frame your basic position, support the position with the best available evidence and develop your response in clear and coherent prose.

Question #1: Spiraling Cost in Higher Education: What's Going On?
There is perhaps no more urgent issue than the rapidly escalating costs of higher education, especially in the independent sector. As a scholar of American higher education, you are asked to prepare a research-based article for a popular magazine that explains why costs are escalating so rapidly and what steps colleges and universities can take to contain costs. In your response, be sure to include:

a. An analysis of how organizational structure and culture affects expenditure patterns in colleges and universities;

b. An analysis of changes in revenue streams to colleges and universities over the past decade.

c. An analysis of the impact of changing state and federal policy on institutional cost structures; and

d. How in your judgment can higher education address the spiraling cost issue most effectively?

Question #2: Quality and Access
A classic debate regards access and financing of American higher education. Prepare an essay that develops your position with respect to these four questions:

1. Who goes to higher education?
2. Who pays for higher education?
3. Who benefits from higher education?
4. Who should pay?

In preparing your response, please consider such trends as current and historical participation rates in higher education, data and perspectives on individual and societal
benefits of higher education participation, and current and historical methods for financing higher education. Be certain to address all four (4) of the questions.

**Question #3: Financial Aid Policy**
What programs does the financial aid policy in the U.S. include? How has this policy changed in recent years? What effects do the changes seem to have had?

**Question #4: NCLB**
What strategies does NCLB deploy to improve schooling for disadvantaged students? What effects has NCLB had?

**Question #5: Demonstrate your understanding of policy analysis**
Directions: you must answer parts A and B and either C or D or E

A. What is your “working definition” of policy? In preparing your definition please define and distinguish between “Policy Analysis” and “Policy Advocacy”.

B. Broadly speaking, education leaders should have a good understanding of policy that affects education. Briefly defend this assertion in 2 to 3 paragraphs

Answer one of the following: either part C or D or E

C. Theorists often refer to various models for understanding the policy process. These models include: Institutionalism, Rationalism, Group Theory, Elite Theory and Incrementalism. Identify the characteristics of three of these models and your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of those models in understanding policy development and implementation. In preparing your response you may find it useful to prepare a table to structure your response.

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<tr>
<th>Policy Analysis Model (prepare response for 3 of these models)</th>
<th>Identify / explain characteristics of model</th>
<th>Identify / explain strengths and weaknesses of model in helping education leader understand the development and implementation of education policy</th>
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<td>Incrementalism</td>
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**OR**

9
D. Some theorists speak of the “layered” concept of policy. What do you understand about this idea? Provide examples of at least 3 layers of policy and of some policy “instruments” that might be used by actors at that layer.

OR

E. Some theorists speak of the policy process or policy cycle. Chose one (1) (there are several) policy processes or cycles. State the steps and explain briefly each step, including why the step is important. (This could be arranged as a table).

**Question #6: Charter Schools and Failing Urban Schools**

In the following essay “Wave of the Future: Why charter schools should replace failing urban schools” A. Smarick presents a case for having charter schools replace failing urban schools. Drawing upon your familiarity with the policy analysis process develop a cogent analysis that:

- Develops, defines and explains in clear terms what you see to be one (1) of the key policy questions contained in the Smarick article.
- Identifies and explain one or two policy alternatives to the policy question you singled out as central to the Smarick article
- Identifies two or three groups or organizations who would be the principal actors in this policy discussion e.g., parents, principals, politicians, unions, school boards etc. and explain why they would be key actors
- Identifies the evaluative criteria that the key actors you identified in this policy discussion might be inclined to use to assess the effectiveness of any policy changes with respect to the replacement of failing urban schools with charter schools. For example, what criteria might politicians or school boards use to assess the change proposed by Smarick? Because group interests generally influence the means by which they evaluate a policy the criteria will vary by group or organization.
Part II - Policy Perspectives: Question #6

"WAVE OF THE FUTURE: WHY CHARTER SCHOOLS SHOULD REPLACE FAILING URBAN SCHOOLS"
**Why charter schools should replace failing urban schools**

**Feature**

**Of the Future**

**By Andy Smarick**

**In a decade and a half,** the charter school movement has gone from a glimmer in the eyes of a few Minnesota reformers to a maturing sector of America's public education system. Now, like all 15-year-olds, chartering must find its own place in the world.

Some advocates must answer a fundamental question: What type of relationship should the charter sector have with the traditional district sector? The tension between the two has the heart of every political policy and philosophical tangle driving the charter movement.

For sure, supporters lack a consistent vision. This motley mix includes civil rights activists, free market economists, career public school educators, and voucher proponents. They have varied equations for the movement and feelings toward the traditional system. Such differences are part of the movement's DNA.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) study found that the nation's charter growth since the mid-1990s is attributable to different factors, including spurring competition, increasing professional opportunities for teachers, and encouraging greater use of technology.

Yet, no reform effort is immune to previous reform efforts for guidance. No K-12 reform has so fundamentally questioned the basic assumptions—school assignments

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Gaining Strength: 2006-2007

**Although charter school enrollment in America's public school districts fluctuates, the charter presence is considerably larger.**

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WINTER 2008 / EDUCATION NEXT
based on residence, centralized administrative control, schools lasting in perpetuity—underlying the district model of public education. Even the sweeping standards and assessments movement of the last 20 years, culminating in No Child Left Behind, takes for granted and makes use of the district sector.

Though few charter advocates have openly wrestled with this issue, two camps have organically emerged. The first sees chartering as an education system operating alongside traditional districts. This camp contends that the movement can provide more options and improved opportunities, particularly to disadvantaged students, by simply continuing to grow and serve more families.

The second group sees chartering as a tool to help the traditional sector improve. Chartering, the argument goes, can spur district improvement through a blend of gentle competitive nudging and neighborly information sharing.

Both camps are deeply mistaken. For numerous policy and political reasons, without a radical change in tactics the movement won't be able to sustain even its current growth rate. And neither decades of sharing best practices nor the introduction of charter competition has caused districts to markedly improve their performance.

Both camps have accepted an exceptionally limited view of what this sector might accomplish. Chartering's potential extends far beyond the role of stepchild or assistant to districts. The only course that is sustainable, for both chartering and urban education, embraces a third, more expansive view of the movement's future: replace the district-based system in America's large cities with fluid, self-improving systems of charter schools.

A Parallel System
Charter advocates are rightfully proud of their achievements. As of spring 2007, 4,046 charter schools were serving more than 1.1 million children across 40 states and the District of Columbia. In a number of cities, charters educate a significant proportion of public school students (see Figure 1). But when compared to the expense of the traditional district-based system and the educational needs of low-income families, the movement's accomplishments are modest.

Nationwide, only 2 percent of public school students attend charters. Over the last five years, an average of 335 new charters started annually. At this rate, it would take until 2020 for chartering to corner just 5 percent of the national market. Even these humble figures inflate the movement's true national standing. In 2007 nearly two-thirds of charter schools were in only seven states. Today, 24 states have less than 1 percent of their students in charter schools. Though strong expansion continues in places like California and Florida, the 2006–07 school year saw 26 states open five or fewer new schools, while 5 states—because of closures—began the school year with fewer charters than they had the year before.

None of this, however, should be taken as an assault on charters' popularity or effectiveness. In New York, 12,000 students are on charter wait lists; in Massachusetts 19,000; in Pennsylvania 27,000. Students on all of the nation's charter wait lists would fill an estimated 1,121 new charter schools.

Research on student achievement in charters is encouraging. A recent analysis of the charter school studies since 2001 that measured student or school performance over time—the ideal way to measure a school's "value added"—reported that 29 of 33 studies found charters performing as well as or better than traditional public schools. The New York Times Magazine spotlighted charter networks KIPP, Uncommon Schools, and
Achievement First in a major feature on how to close the achievement gap. Yet despite these successes, chartering’s current status and growth trajectory won’t enable it to become a parallel system large enough to serve the millions of needy students across the country within the foreseeable future.

Some might respond, “Then just accelerate growth.” But the forces that have held chartering back over the last 15 years aren’t going away. Worse, even today’s growth levels may be in danger.

Twenty-five states have imposed some type of cap on charter expansion, and in eight states those limits currently restrain growth. The battle against caps must be fought on multiple fronts, from the state by under-resourced, overextended charter advocates against entrenched opponents. In New York, an expensive and sophisticated multiyear effort by charter advocates that was supported by the governor and New York City’s mayor and schools chancellor finally resulted in legislation that raised the cap, but only by 100 schools. The new limit will be reached in just a few years.

Unequal financing is another obstacle. A Fordham Institute study found that on average charters receive $1,800 less per student than traditional public schools, despite serving more disadvantaged students. This discourages educators from starting new charters — and traditional schools from converting. It also inhibits existing charters from growing enrollment or expanding to new campuses. Facilities are a major piece of this puzzle. While traditional public schools are provided a building, charters must find, secure, and pay for a roof and walls. Only 13 states and Washington, D.C., provide some sort of facilities assistance.

The greatest impediment to growth is the wide array of political, legal, and administrative attacks. Institutional players—teachers’ unions, school boards, and state and district administrators—frequently petition state leaders to put caps and reduced charter funding and vigorously oppose alternative authorizes and facilities aid. The nationwide Democratic landslide in the 2006 elections left many state governments less charter-friendly. For example, Ted Strickland, Ohio’s new Democratic governor, made a moratorium on new charters one of his top priorities.

In a number of states, most recently Ohio and Michigan, coalitions have attacked chartering through the courts. Though these challenges have been beaten back so far, even one loss could force the closure of hundreds of schools. A 2006 Florida Supreme Court decision was foreboding. Striking down the state’s voucher plan for contravening the state constitution’s requirement of a “uniform” public education system, the court opened the door to challenges to the state’s 350 charters, which, by definition, are not uniform.

Finally, chartering is held back by its administrative arrangements. Ninety percent of authorizers are local school districts, many of which view charters as an administrative inconvenience, competitive nuisance, or worse. In a NAPCS survey of charter school leaders, nearly two-thirds said working with the district was a problem. This summer, a high-performing KIPP charter school in Annapolis, Maryland, was forced to close because it couldn’t find a permanent facility, even though the school district, according to its own study, had 900 empty seats in a nearby, underutilized school. Responding to the school’s plea for help, the district’s superintendent told the local newspaper, “It’s not my responsibility. It’s not my school.”

The “parallel system” approach to chartering’s future rests on two mistaken assumptions: first, that by simply creating new schools and not purposefully antagonizing the traditional system, chartering wouldn’t attract the ire of defenders of the status quo, and second, that if chartering proved successful and popular, the sky was the limit on growth. As it turned out, district stakeholders have fought charters tooth and nail from the beginning, and they have erected policy obstacles that have severed the link between charter demand and supply.

The District Partner

The second camp envisions a vastly improved traditional school system, achieved through charter cooperation. This group believes that consistent collaboration between the two sectors would enable charters to experiment and then share lessons learned so all students, the vast majority of whom still attend traditional public schools, could benefit.

“I believe that districts and charters will benefit by building more collaborative relationships,” says Tom Hutton, a staff attorney for the National School Boards Association and a former board member of the Thurgood Marshall Charter School in Washington, D.C.

Like Hutton, many in this camp are veterans of the traditional system who recognize the value of chartering. But they assume district immortality—districts have been the sole delivery system of public education for generations—and believe a collaborative relationship to be wise, pragmatic, and ultimately necessary. The late Appleton, Wisconsin, superintendent Tom Scullen supported charters within his district but cautioned, “Charter schooling will fail if it tries to become a second track of public education. There isn’t enough money to support two systems.” Deborah McGriff, executive vice president of Edison Schools and former Detroit superintendent, agrees: “Charters need to start thinking about how we move from suspicion and competition with districts to collaboration and cooperation.”

This collaborative relationship is becoming institutionalized. The federal Charter School Program, which provides charter start-up funds, requires that states disseminate charters’ best practices to districts. KIPP has an open-door policy for local teachers and principals; they are welcome to
visit and take away whatever lessons they can. Funders in particular are buying into this strategy. NewSchools Venture Fund, whose goal is to improve school districts, invests in charter entrepreneurs in the hope that they can “spark broader transformation in the public school system.” One of the Boston Foundation’s high priorities in its education giving is supporting the sharing of effective practices between chartered and traditional schools.

Though the move toward greater cooperation has emotional appeal, to embrace it you have to believe that districts, including major urban districts, are both willing and able to change and significantly improve student achievement at scale. Sadly, there is prima facie evidence that they are not. The achievement gap has been well documented for 40 years: in the Coleman Report, NAEP data, SAT scores, and state assessments. Given the threefold increase in per-pupil spending and countless policy changes, blue-ribbon panel recommendations, and foundation initiatives in the intervening years, it is undeniable that districts have already tried, or have been forced to try, to shape up.

Diane Ravitch recently reported in the Education Gadfly (June 7, 2007) on the disappointing achievement scores from New York City, whose much-heralded schools leader, Joel Klein, has implemented some of the nation’s most aggressive reforms. Ravitch found that during Klein’s five-year tenure academic gains have been smaller than during the previous five years and that the reading scores of cohorts of students are actually declining as they progress through the system. New York’s inability to improve despite major interventions is far from unique. NAEP’s Trial Urban District Assessment, which measured the performance of 11 large urban systems in 2005, provides compelling evidence of the futility of district-based reforms: even the highest-performing district studied (Charlotte) had only 29 percent of its 8th graders at or above proficient in reading.

It is unreasonable to believe that charter collaboration will significantly alter these stubbornly disappointing district results. High-performing low-income schools, though too rare, have been documented for decades, and yet their lessons have never been translated into comprehensive district improvement. This is despite major efforts to spread best practices widely, including the work of education schools and $15 billion spent annually on teacher professional development. All in all, the uncomfortable but unavoidable question for collaboration advocates becomes, why should chartering invest in a strategy—helping major urban districts solve the achievement gap—that has consistently failed for 40 years when pursued by others?

Many strong believers in school choice, myself included, were convinced that the competitive pressure exerted by charters would lead to a renaissance in the traditional system. The vast district improvements we expected never materialized. The clearest evidence comes from Dayton, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., two cities with significant charter sectors.

In the nation’s capital, 26 percent of students attend one of the city’s 71 charter schools. The city’s charter sector is remarkably innovative and energetic, including such standouts as KIPP KEY Academy, the SEED School, and DC Prep. Nevertheless, the District’s traditional system remains among the very worst in the nation. Of the 11 cities participating in the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment in 2005, Washington, D.C., had the lowest scores in math and reading in both grades tested. Among its 8th-grade students, only 12 percent reached proficiency in reading and 7 percent in math. A Progressive Policy Institute study of D.C.’s charter experience summarized the situation perfectly: “There is no
clear evidence that charter schools have had a direct impact on student achievement in DCPS schools or otherwise driven systemic reform.

Charters educate 28 percent of Dayton's students. Last year, the district reached only one of 25 state indicators and failed to make AYP. Seventy and 56 percent of its 8th graders failed to reach proficiency in math and reading, respectively. Residents are understandably frustrated: a 2005 Fordham Foundation survey found that 69 percent of Dayton residents are in favor of either major change from the district or an entirely new education system.

Some studies, like those by Hoxby (see "Rising Tide," research, Winter 2001) and by Holmes, Desimone, and Rupp (see "Friendly Competition," research, Winter 2006) have found a small bump in a district's achievement when it faces charter competition. Bifulco and Ladd (see "Results from the Tar Heel State," research, Fall 2005) and Buddin and Zimmer, however, found none. There are legitimate disagreements about the influence of additional factors in these studies, such as the amount of competition, the policy environment, and the type of test data used. But when this research is considered alongside our other experience, the only fair conclusion is that competition hasn't dramatically altered district performance for the better.

Charters competition has caused one unexpected and fascinating phenomenon. When facing a growing number of charters, districts turn to advertising. In January 2006, the Boston Teachers Union and the district were in negotiations to spend $100,000 to promote the virtues of traditional public schools to families choosing charters. Also in early 2006, the Cincinnati district sent letters and held information sessions designed to have charter families reenroll in traditional public schools. In May 2007, the St. Louis district awarded a no-bid contract to a marketing firm to "drive the message of the negative impact of charter schools." Seemingly unable to improve results, districts rely on public relations to stem the migration of students to other schools.

Why is it that major urban school districts are unable to improve student learning at scale? A compelling argument, and a roadmap for charter schooling's future, can be found in Ted Kolderie's excellent and underappreciated book, Creating the Capacity for Change. Kolderie applies to K–12 education the lessons Harvard economist Clayton Christensen has drawn from the private sector. Christensen, studying how industries evolve and improve over time, found that critical advancements don't come from old firms changing their ways. They come from new firms (or independent subsidiaries) entering the market, introducing new products and systems, and responding nimbly to the demands of consumers.

When an industry experiences a major change, existing firms find themselves unable to adjust to navigate the new world. Every aspect of its identity—culture, staffing, practices, priorities—was geared toward succeeding in the old environment. When the environment changes, it's impossible for the horse and carriage to transform into a steam locomotive.

The implications for public education are profound. For 150 years, public schooling has been a one-factory town: a board- and superintendent-led district manages, staffing, and oversees an area's entire portfolio of public schools. But in this time, the world has become a radically different place and the expectations of schools have changed even more. As Kolderie points out, if private firms, which are built to respond to competition, are unable to make this kind of leap, we can't expect gigantic, byzantine school systems, which are insulated from competition, shackled by union contracts, and constrained by a sticky web of regulations, to do so.

The system is the issue. The solution isn't an improved traditional district; it's an entirely different delivery system for public education: systems of charted schools.
A Transformed System

Charter advocates should strive to have every urban public school be a charter. That is, each school should have significant control over its curriculum, methods, budget, staff, and calendar. Each school should have a contract that spells out its mission and measurable objectives, including guaranteeing that all students achieve proficiency in basic skills. Each school should be held accountable by an approved public body.

"Charter" will no longer be seen as an adjective, a way to describe a type of school, but as a verb, an orderly and sensible process for developing, replicating, operating, overseeing, and closing schools. The system would be fluid, self-improving, and driven by parents and public authority, ensuring the system uses the best of market and government forces. Schools that couldn't attract families would close, as would those that ran afoul of authorizers for academic, financial, or management failures. School startups, both the number and their characteristics, would reflect the needs of communities and the interests of students, but would also be tightly regulated to generate a high probability of school success.

So, while the government's role would still be significant, it would no longer operate the city's entire portfolio of public schools. Instead, it would take on a role similar to the FAA's role in monitoring the airline industry or a health department's monitoring of restaurants. Today, we take airline safety for granted and make our choices based on service, connections, and so on. Similarly, we know all restaurants have fire exits and meet food safety standards, so we choose based on our tastes and schedules. A well-regulated charter school system could guarantee that all public schools were providing a safe, high-quality education and properly managing operations, thereby allowing families to choose a school based on other criteria.

The government's substantial oversight role in guaranteeing safety and quality would differentiate a charter system from a universal voucher program. To many, a voucher system would undesirably blur the lines between church and state, add the profit motive to schooling, remove the "public" from K–12 education, and leave too much to the vicissitudes of the market. By contrast, in a chartered public school system, public schools would be nonreligious, managed by nonprofits, overseen by a public authority, and held to clear performance standards.

But a chartered system would capitalize on market forces largely absent from district systems, such as constant innovation, competition, and replication. Replication is arguably the most valuable. Charting has not only created some of America's finest schools, it has enabled their leaders to identify the characteristics that made those schools so remarkable and then develop systems for creating additional, equally successful schools. In addition to well-known charter management organizations like KIPP, Achievement First, and Uncommon Schools, new ones continue to emerge: Green Dot, High Tech High, Aspire, Noble Street, IDEA, and more. Major funders like the Charter School Growth Fund and NewSchools Venture Fund are helping other high-performing charters expand as well.

So how do we transform today's urban district systems into chartered systems? Absent political realities, the shift could be quite simple. Any district could decide tomorrow to relinquish day-to-day control of its schools and develop performance contracts with each. Every school could develop its own governing board and acquire control of its budget, staffing, and curriculum. The district could then change from a central operator to an authorizer, monitoring schools, closing them when necessary, and allowing new ones to open. The "every school a charter school" idea is not new; others, most prominently Paul Hill of the Center on Reinventing Public Education, have been writing variations on this theme for some time.

Unfortunately, for reasons having more to do with power than student learning, this scenario is highly unlikely. Most districts assiduously avoid the loss of one school, let alone all schools. When one of Washington, D.C.'s highest-performing traditional public schools pursued plans to convert to a charter in 2006, the district agreed to several of its demands in exchange for the school's agreement to stop flouting with charter status. This spring, after faculty at Locke High School in Los Angeles signed petitions to convert into a Green Dot charter, district officials scrambled to put together a counterproposal and convinced some teachers to rescind their signatures.

No government entity likes to lose control of any of its components and the budget and prestige that go with them, especially when the loss suggests a failure by the organization. But shifting from an operator into an authorizer would mean cutting hundreds of central office jobs as well: since charters handle their own transportation, facilities, staffing, and more, district employees filling those responsibilities would become redundant. Such a shift, then, would be vigorously opposed by district staff and those who represent them. Countless powerful organizations, like unions, book publishers, and service providers, would also be adversely affected by a decentralized system of schools.

Clearly we can't expect the political process to swiftly bring about charter districts in all of America's big cities. However, if charter advocates carefully target specific systems with an existing strategy, the current policy environment will allow them to create examples of a new, high-performing system of public education in urban America.

Here, in short, is one roadmap for chartering's way forward: First, commit to drastically increasing the charter market share in a few select communities until it is the
the replication of high-performing schools, and the shuttering of low-performing schools.

As chartering increases its market share in a city, the district will come under growing financial pressure. The district, despite educating fewer and fewer students, will still require a large administrative staff to process payroll and benefits, administer federal programs, and oversee special education. With a lopsided adult-to-student ratio, the district’s per-pupil costs will skyrocket.

At some point along the district’s path from monopoly provider to financially unsustainable marginal player, the city’s investors and stakeholders—taxpayers, foundations, business leaders, elected officials, and editorial boards—are likely to demand fundamental change. That is, eventually the financial crisis will become a political crisis. If the district has progressive leadership, one of two best-case scenarios may result. The district could voluntarily begin the shift to an authorizer, developing a new relationship with its schools and reworking its administrative structure to meet the new conditions. Or, believing the organization is unable to make this change, the district could gradually transfer its schools to an established authorizer.

A more probable district reaction to the mounting pressure would be an aggressive political response. Its leadership team might fight for a charter moratorium or seek protection from the courts. Failing that, they might lobby for additional funding so the district could maintain its administrative structure despite the vast loss of students. Reformers should expect and prepare for this phase of the transition process.

In many ways, replacing the district system seems inconceivable, almost heretical. Districts have existed for generations, and in many minds, the traditional system is synonymous with public education. However, the history of urban districts’ inability to provide a high-quality education to their low-income students is nearly as long. It’s clear that we need a new type of system for urban public education, one that is able to respond nimbly to great school success, chronic school failure, and everything in between. A chartered system could do precisely that.

Andy Smarick is former congressional aide and charter school founder. Until recently, he served as chief operating officer of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.
DIRECTIONS: Answer this question thoroughly.

Bolman and Deal developed a conceptual framework, organizational frames, to facilitate the analysis of organizations. The four frames they advanced were influenced by the research and theories of a myriad of authors. Identify two frames that you feel have the most direct impact on schools. Explain why you have concluded the two directly impact on the schools. Make certain that in your analysis, you connect the relevant research and literature to your analysis.
IV. RESEARCH (Research Design)

Directions: Choose and answer ONE question.

Option 1

Cedar Hill Middle School (grades 6-8) is located in a state that requires all 7th graders in public schools to take standardized math and reading tests as well as a writing test. The multiple-choice tests are administered at the end of the year (May), and the writing test is administered in March. While this testing disrupts instruction for all of the teachers who teach 7th graders, the teachers of the tested subjects (math and language arts) believe that in the months leading up to the tests, the pressure to address what will be tested and how it will be tested takes time away from their accomplishing their instructional goals. In particular, the four language arts teachers contend that improving students’ performances on the state-mandated writing test takes away from the kind of reading and writing activities that enhance students' critical literacy skills.

The principal of Cedar Hill Middle School is concerned about the language arts teachers' contention. She wonders how she might better understand what her 7th graders are accomplishing in language arts by the end of the year, regardless of how the language arts teachers feel about the tests. She would like some research assistance and has asked that you develop a study that would increase her understanding of the issue. She hasn't placed any restrictions on the design or methods of the study, so you have a great deal of latitude in framing the research problem, defining the question(s), and developing an appropriate study.
Option 2

Hillcrest Community College (HCC), a large, urban-serving college, offers a wide array of technical educational programs which prepare students for jobs in the computer and engineering fields, and also enable graduates to continue their education at four-year colleges. Some of these programs are run by a single full-time faculty member with assistance from adjunct instructors, who are generally employed in the relevant occupational field. The issue of full-time versus part-time faculty is complicated: full-time instructors tend to have more contact with students, and they contribute to the organization and governance of the college in ways that part-time instructors do not. Full-time instructors may also have more time to devote to instructional improvement activities. On the other hand, in high-tech occupational fields, changes occur so swiftly that it is difficult for individuals to keep up with cutting-edge developments when they are no longer employed in the industry.

The president of HCC is curious as to whether the current arrangement of full-time and part-time instructors in these technical programs is providing students with a high quality education. She would like some assistance in planning a study at HCC and has asked that you develop a study that would add to her understanding of the issue. She hasn’t placed any restrictions on the design or methods of the study, so you have a great deal of latitude in framing the research problem, defining the question(s), and developing an appropriate study.
V. STATISTICS

Directions:
Answer all of the following questions. Fully explain your rationale for interpreting the statistical information. The following background is provided as a context for all questions and analyses that follow. Any similarities to real programs and or data are purely coincidental and are not intended as factual.

Background:
In a recent article, author Billie Donegan (2008) claims "to truly improve the freshman year [of high school], we must turn the conventional wisdom about staff and culture on its head. The “failing” high school is attributed to many factors which are widely and passionately debated. One of the initiatives that increasingly has gained attention and popularity is the “9th grade academy.” Similar to the interdisciplinary teams of the middle school movement in the 1960’s, the 9th grade academy is designed to ease the academic and social transition for high school bound students. Researchers have identified 9th grade as the most critical point to intervene and prevent students from losing motivation, failing and dropping out of school.

The recent emphasis on the use of data to inform and guide decision making has caused many high school districts which embrace new initiatives to collect and analyze data at the local level. This analysis is being completed in an effort to gain a better understanding of the impact and influence of these new programs.

The following questions are presented as hypothetical situations within the context of the “9th grade academy” initiative that that was recently initiated in Happy Valley School District in Any town, New Jersey. A Likert style survey of student perceptions of school related issues was developed by a local high school principal in Happy Valley School District (HVSC). A score of 1 reflected strong agreement and a score of 4 reflected strong disagreement. This principal was interested in studying a variety of issues since this was the first year of the new Grade 9 Academy initiative.

References
Donegan, D. The linchpin. Educational Leadership, May 2008,
Reents, J. Separate schools ease the academic and social transition for high school-bound students. The School Administrator, March 2002
**Question #1**

A Likert style survey of student perceptions of school related issues was developed by a local high school principal in Happy Valley School District (HVSC). A score of 1 reflected strong agreement and a score of 4 reflected strong disagreement. This principal was interested in studying a variety of issues since this was the first year of the new Grade 9 Academy initiative. Two of the questions on the survey involved students’ school satisfaction with their freshman year and their perceptions about consistent discipline. The principal asked her assistant to prepare an analysis of two items on a “perception” survey that was completed at the end of the first year. She wanted to know if students’ reported overall satisfaction was related to their perception of consistent enforcement. A total of 495 freshmen completed the survey. The principal and the assistant compiled and analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The data is summarized below.

What does the following output reveal to you with respect to the correlation between student overall satisfaction and their perceptions of school consistent enforcement of behavior rules by teachers.

Complete a thorough review of the SPSS Correlation analysis below. Be certain to report and interpret the Pearson ‘r’, the sign of the correlation, the reported significance, and the shared variance. Provide concrete recommendations as appropriate based on their analysis of the data!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Overall Satisfaction</th>
<th>Consistency of Disciplinary Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>495</td>
<td>495</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consistency of Disciplinary Decisions</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>.534</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>495</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>495</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question #2
After reviewing the correlation analysis, the superintendent was interested to see how the principal's current (2008) ninth grade students' satisfaction mean score compared to the satisfaction mean score on the same survey completed the previous year (2007) with different students. Despite the different group membership, she felt it worthwhile to see if the mean satisfaction score was significantly different that the previous year's mean satisfaction score (2007 mean score = 1.95057) when the ninth grade was not organized as an academy. The following SPSS output with respect to how her students (N=495) performed on average in spring 2008 compared to the mean score of those ninth grade students in the spring 2007 (1.95057). The principal was hoping to find evidence that the 9th grade academy might be effective so she was careful to complete a statistical analysis rather than simply look at the mean difference. She solicited the assistance of her assistant principal who prepared the following chart. Complete a thorough analysis of this data being certain to include the research question, null and alternate hypotheses, decision rule, reported p values, decision, and interpretation. Also include a comment on what leadership, management and/or policy decisions could be made from this data. Provide concrete recommendations as appropriate based on their analysis of the data. Be mindful that a lower score represents stronger agreement that the overall satisfaction was high (1 strongly agree, 4 strongly disagree).

**Sample Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction Spring 2008</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>1.5091</td>
<td>.73340</td>
<td>.03296</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction Spring 2008</td>
<td>-13.393</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.44143</td>
<td>-.5062 .3767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question #3

The Director of Guidance had been studying the issue of gender based classes and he wondered if there might be a difference in satisfaction perception based on gender in the new 9th grade academy. A copy of the SPSS analysis comparing the mean score of the 495 grade nine students based on gender (Male Group 1 with n=130 and Female Group 2 with n=345) is listed below. Complete a thorough analysis of this data being certain to include the research question, null and alternate hypotheses, decision rule, reported ρ values, decision, and interpretation. Also include a comment on what leadership, management and/or policy decisions could be made from this data? What should the administration report to the director of guidance with respect to gender differences? Provide concrete recommendations as appropriate based on their analysis of the data!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender M(1), F(2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008 2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction Equal variances assumed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26
Question #4

One final request from the superintendent involved a comparison of the student perceptions of the consistency of discipline responses by teachers now that the Grade Nine Academy was in place. It was a concern that students would see different standards being applied to different groups within the academy. The “team structure” might be undermining the desired goal of improved transitions. The satisfaction survey had been administered at the beginning of the fall semester 2007 to establish a baseline. The same test was again administered in the spring of 2008. A total of 480 students were common to both test administrations. An SPSS data summary is listed below. Complete a thorough analysis of this data being certain to include the research question, null and alternate hypotheses, decision rule, reported p values, decision, and interpretation. Also include a comment on what leadership, management and/or policy decisions could be made from this data. Provide concrete recommendations as appropriate based on their analysis of the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Consistency of Disciplinary Decisions Spring 2008</td>
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<td>480</td>
<td>.83852</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
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<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Consistency of Disciplinary Decisions Fall 2007 - Consistency of Disciplinary Decisions Spring 2008</td>
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<td>.76111</td>
<td>.03474</td>
<td>-7.376</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>.000</td>
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