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All the data have been reported for school year 2011-12, and although the data for 2012-13 is in the works, we decided to go ahead and do a preliminary ranking of Charter High Schools and Charter Combo Highs in Florida.

We have two rankings – one for Charter High Schools (grades 9-12) and another for combination highs (K-12, 6-12, etc.). The reason our rankings are separated this way is due to the way Florida scores their schools; Charter High Schools are rated out of a total score of 1600, while Combo Highs are rated out of 1700.

What goes into Florida's score?

Florida scores all of its high schools based off the Final Adjusted Points (FAPs) that they calculate based off a variety of matrices. Depending on the type of schools it is (Elem, Middle, HS, Combo, etc.), the FAPs will include certain Components that will account for distinct variables in each school type, and therefore provide us with a reasonably accurate "score" that can then be converted into a "grade" ranging from "A" to "F."

Florida begins the entire grading process with a Base Component score of 800 that it uses for all grade levels from kindergarten to 12th grade. Half of that score comes from Performance scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and half comes from Learning Gains since the previous year.

Performance measures are further broken out into 4 distinct subjects, and points are associated with each subject:

- 1. Reading – 300 points
2. Math – 300 points
3. Writing – 100 points
4. Science – 100 points

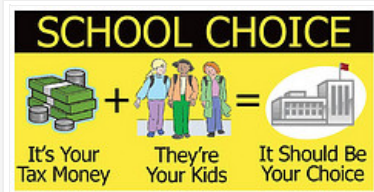
As for the Learning Gains that make up 50% of the total Base Component, only Reading and Math scores are calculated. Moreover, half of the Learning Gains portion (i.e. 25% of the 800 total points) is comprised of gains made by lowest quarter of performing students (the At-Risk students).

For those schools serving grades 6-8, there is an additional Middle School Component worth 100 points for accelerated participation and performance, meaning that a K-8 charter school would be graded out of 900 points (800 for Base Component + 100 for MS Component).

For high schools and Combo Highs, there are numerous additional factors, and the Base Component of 800 that made up 100% of a typical K-5 only makes up half of a high school's score.

The other 50% of a high school's score comes from the following five HS Components:

- 1. Participation in accelerated curricula – 150 points
2. Performance in accelerated curricula – 150 points



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3. Graduation rate – 200 points
4. At-risk graduation rate – 100 points
5. College readiness – 200 points

This brings the *HS Component* total to 800, which matches the *Base Component* total used by all schools. As we noted above, Charter High Schools are graded on a 1600 point scale (800 for *Base Component* + 800 for *HS Component*), while Combo Highs (e.g. K-12, 6-12) are graded out of 1700. The extra 100 points in Combo Highs incorporate the *Middle School Component*.

There are special weighting factors among the Combo Highs that make them peculiar enough to keep separate from Charter High School rankings. For example, K-12 schools weigh the *Base Component* (worth 800 points) as 80% and the *HS Component* as only 20%, while Charter High Schools weigh each component 50/50. Likewise, 6-12 Combo Highs weigh the *Base Component* as 70% and the *HS Component* as 30%, since the HS makes up a larger percentage of enrollments in a 6-12 than in a K-12.

### **Florida's Charter High Schools (9-12): Demographic Parity and Academic Outperformance**

Perhaps the most striking thing about Florida's Charter High School student body is the average Free & Reduced Lunch population of 52%. This flies in the face of anti-Choicers who accuse charter schools "creaming" the best kids from local public schools, whatever that means. Charter High School FRL is only slightly lower than District High School FRL, which was 53%.

Furthermore, the Charter High Schools in Florida that were rated "A" or "B" had an average FRL rate of 49%, which is identical to the District High School FRL for its "A" and "B" rated campuses.

It is clear that some affluent families do choose to attend Charter High Schools, which is evidenced by the 30% average FRL rate among the Top 5 performing Charter High Schools. However, the 67% average FRL rate among the Bottom 5 performing Charter High Schools demonstrates that charter operators are not afraid of enrolling challenging demographics, and the fact that only one Charter High School in the entire state got less than a "C" rating speaks volumes to how well Charter High Schools perform in Florida.

In fact, the average FAP for Charter High Schools in Florida for 2011-12 was 1,164, while for District High Schools it was 1,094. Considering the score was out of 1600, this is essentially saying that Charter High Schools earned 73% of their possible FAPs, while District High Schools only earned 68% of theirs.

These data show that in 2012 Florida Charter High Schools, on average, outperformed Florida District High Schools by five percentage points while still possessing comparable demographics.

### **Florida's Charter Combo Highs: Better Performance On Average than District Combo Highs**

Running a K-12 or a 6-12 campus is difficult for some districts because the model doesn't mesh well with their regular operations. Districts intentionally separate Elementary, Middle, and High School grades from one another for programming reasons, and although the K-8 model is catching on in some Florida districts (St. Lucie County is a great example), most are sticking to the model that they know.

As one of the leaders in school choice, Florida's school districts have tried out Combo Highs in their own networks, but they haven't seen the same success that charter schools do when employing the same model. For instance, of the 43 District Combo Highs in Florida, 19 of them were rated "C" or worse in 2011-12 (44% of the total). When we see that 100% of Charter Combo Highs that were rated "A" or "B," it looks like Florida charter operators are well positioned to learn a thing or two from the existing and successful Combo Highs.

Those 43 District Combo Highs averaged an FAP score of 1,123, while the Charter Combo Highs averaged an FAP score of 1,256. If calculating a percentage grade from this (using 1700 as max), we see that District Combo



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Highs scored an average FAP of 66%, and Charter Combo Highs scored an average FAP of 74%. Also, in terms of the student body, 39% of the District Combo High students were from minority groups, compared to 49% of the student body of Charter Combo Highs.

These data show that in 2012 Florida Charter Combo Highs, on average, outperformed Florida District Combo Highs by eight percentage points without “creaming” any students whatsoever.

### **The Florida Rankings**

A couple of obstacles emerged when ranking these high schools. First off, despite the transparency in how the schools are graded, there is some confusion as to how they are scored. The grading mechanics are laid out on the FLDOE’s website, but that doesn’t explain how some school got the scores they did.

For instance, [Mater Academy Lakes High School](#) earned a B-rating from the FLDOE even though it scored 1,110 Final Adjusted Points (FAPs), a higher score than the three A-rated schools listed below it. With a 72% FRL student body that is also 95% from minority racial groups (all of which is tied/higher than those same three below it), if anything MALHS appears to deserve an “A” rating. Unfortunately, MALHS did not achieve adequate progress with its At-Risk student body, which means it probably took a hit on the quarter of its 800 Base Component associated with that metric.

Another peculiarity is that the [International School of Broward](#), which was listed on the FLDOE’s high school sheet as a High school, has actually been a 6-12 Combo school since its inception in 2007. We’re unsure why it was scored out of 1600 since the FLDOE even stated that the school’s grade was weighted 70/30, but it could have something to do with the way the charter was originally written or the French American Baccalaureate (BFA) language program in which they specialize. Whatever the reason, ISB is probably an “A” school, so we’ll have to wait and see how it is ranked on the DOE’s 2012-13 report.

Regardless of the occasional anomaly, we’ve tried to make these rankings as straightforward as possible, with as little deviation from the original scoring intentions as possible. That said, some Charter High Schools may have been left off this list. We only sorted by HS type (1600 or 1700), so if you do see a school missing that you feel should be included, feel free to email us and we’ll try to add it appropriately.

Florida's Best Charter High Schools (9-12) in 2011-12						
Rank	District Name	School Name	FAP	2011-12 Grade	FRL%	Minority%
1	OKALOOSA	COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL AT NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE	1489	A	11	17
2	PINELLAS	ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL	1459	A	27	38
3	MARTIN	CLARK ADVANCED LEARNING CENTER	1449	A	21	20
4	DADE	ARCHIMEDEAN UPPER CONSERVATORY CHARTER SCHOOL	1398	A	42	82
5	BROWARD	SOMERSET ARTS CONSERVATORY	1390	A	47	82
6	DADE	INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1351	A	56	82
7	DADE	MATER ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH	1331	A	79	97
8	DADE	DORAL PERFORMING ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ACADEMY	1313	A	54	93
9	INDIAN RIVER	INDIAN RIVER CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1285	A	12	21
10	OSCEOLA	NEW DIMENSIONS HIGH SCHOOL	1276	A	69	86
11	BROWARD	CITY/PEMBROKE PINES CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1261	A	20	75
11	DADE	DORAL ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1261	A	60	94
12	BROWARD	SOMERSET ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH	1251	A	43	83
13	DADE	CITY OF HIALEAH EDUCATION ACADEMY	1241	A	90	98
14	LEE	OASIS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1240	A	18	25
15	SARASOTA	SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY	1212	A	33	22
16	DADE	SOMERSET ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1204	A	82	95
17	HILLSBOROUGH	BROOKS DEBARTOLO COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL	1129	A	56	76
18	ORANGE	CORNERSTONE CHARTER ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL	1126	A	22	35
19	PALM BEACH	G-STAR SCHOOL OF THE ARTS	1124	A	41	52
20	DADE	MATER ACADEMY LAKES HIGH SCHOOL	1110	B	72	95
21	PALM BEACH	SOUTH TECH ACADEMY	1084	A	72	86
22	LEE	GATEWAY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1060	A	49	55
23	BROWARD	SOMERSET ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL MIRAMAR CAMPUS	1058	A	54	94
24	DADE	MATER ACADEMY EAST CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL	1009	B	82	98
25	BROWARD	INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BROWARD	1006	B	35	74
26	DADE	ACADEMY OF ARTS & MINDS	995	B	59	81
27	PALM BEACH	INLET GROVE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	994	B	78	96
28	PALM BEACH	RIVIERA BEACH MARITIME ACADEMY	990	B	38	30
29	POLK	LAKE WALES SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	981	C	68	51
30	HILLSBOROUGH	NEWPOINT HIGH OF TAMPA	952	C	22	36

31	DADE	LAWRENCE ACADEMY SENIOR HIGH CHARTER SCHOOL	933	C	90	97
32	BROWARD	PARKWAY ACADEMY	871	C	80	99
33	PALM BEACH	LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WEST	746	F	73	82

A special note of congratulations to a few schools on the Charter High School list:

1. [Mater Academy Charter High School](#) and [City of Hialeah Education Academy](#) – Mater was able to earn its 5th A-rating in a row, and CHEA its 2nd A-rating in a row, both with historically challenging demographics
2. [South Tech Academy](#) – they earned their first A-rating ever, also with notoriously challenging demographics
3. [Somerset Miramar Charter High School](#) and [Cornerstone Charter Academy](#) - these got A-ratings their first year in operation

Florida's Best Charter High Schools (Combo) in 2011-12						
Rank	District Name	School Name	FAP	2011-12 Grade	FRL%	Minority%
1	DADE	DOCTORS CHARTER SCHOOL OF MIAMI SHORES	1370	A	24	80
2	POLK	MCKEEL ACADEMY OF TECHNOLOGY	1306	B	29	34
3	BROWARD	CITY OF CORAL SPRINGS CHARTER	1300	A	25	47
3	SUMTER	VILLAGES CHARTER SCHOOL	1300	A	27	21
4	FSU LAB SCH	FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL	1228	A	30	50
5	DADE	MIAMI ARTS CHARTER	1172	A	23	75
6	MANATEE	MANATEE SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS	1113	B	48	38

A special note of congratulations to a few schools on the Combo High list:

1. [City of Coral Springs Charter School](#), [Villages Charter School](#), and [Florida State University School](#) – these 3 schools all earned their 10th A-rating in a row
2. No school on this list has ever been rated anything less than a “B”


In summary, we'd just like to reiterate that only one chartered high school, Traditional or Combo, was rated less than “C” in 2012.

Well done, Florida. Well done.

Note: The data set we used came from the [Florida Department of Education](#), and we applaud the FLDOE for its website full of easy-to-use Excel sheets. Not all states are as transparent with data as Florida.



## 2 Responses to 2012 Florida Charter High School Rankings



**Geofree Choicer**

May 14, 2013 at 9:26 am

Reply

Correction: City of Coral Springs Charter High School received a “B” in 2003. Still, the school is part of an impressive trend.

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