Special Education In Charter Schools

Joint Legislative Task Force on Special Education
Sarah McKenzie, PhD and Sivan Tuchman
Office for Education Policy
University of Arkansas
oep@uark.edu

June, 2016
Context

- Charter schools are required to accept all students until oversubscribed, then lottery winners must be accepted.
- Disproportionate charter enrollment of students with disabilities raises concerns.
- “Counseling out” and “pushing out” may be issues.
- Competing mission of charters.
# Arkansas K-12 Public School Enrollment 2009 and 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Public Schools (TPS)</th>
<th>Open-Enrollment Charter Schools (Charter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 2009: 460,323</td>
<td>• 2009: 4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2015: 465,455</td>
<td>• 2015: 10,271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charter is a small percentage of state-wide K-12 enrollment (2.2% in 2015).
Percent of Enrollment Identified as Special Education, by school type and year, 2009-2015

Charter rates are lower but increasing
Special Education Enrollment by Disability and School Type, 2009-2015

Charter types are similar to TPS
Special Education Enrollment by Disability and School Type, by year 2009-2015

Charter reports greater percentage of Autism than TPS.
Special Education Placement by School Type, 2009-2015

Charter more likely to place in Inclusion
Special Education Placement by School Type, by Year 2009-2015
Suggested Research

- Mobility and de-identification trends in charters
- Revenues and expenditures in special education
- Student recruiting strategies used by charters
- District/charter collaboration practices
- Special education expertise and training needs