

# Rocky Mountain News

## Charter school lead fades in H.S.

Berny Morson, Rocky Mountain News

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Charter school students outperform conventional school students at the elementary level but not in high school, according to a state report released Monday.

The report, based on state achievement tests, shows differences of only a few points between charters and conventional schools in reading, writing and elementary school math.

But the gap is dramatic for high school math, with 10th graders in conventional schools scoring more than 12 points above charter school youngsters. The gap is more than eight points for ninth graders.

The results come as no surprise, said Jim Griffin, the director of the Colorado League of Charter Schools. Many of the high school level charters are targeted at troubled teens who do not succeed in conventional schools.

"Almost half of them are designed that way," Griffin said.

Denise Mund, the state education department's charter school coordinator, agreed the numbers were no surprise.

"There's nothing earthshaking there," Mund said. "That's what we found in the last state evaluation we did, so that's consistent."

The reports are mandated by the Colorado Legislature. The last report was issued in 2002.

The evaluations are based on the tests administered each spring under the Colorado Student Achievement Program, or CSAP.

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