

Charter Schools in Paterson



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What are charter schools?

- All charter schools are
 - Publicly funded and regulated
 - Privately managed

What are charter schools?

- All other aspects of charter schools are different in each state
 - How new charter schools are approved
 - How charter schools are governed
 - How charter schools are funded
 - Whether charter schools may be run for profit
 - Whether charter school teachers may be unionized

All Publicly-Funded Schools in New Jersey

- Must give standardized tests mandated by the State
- May not teach religion
- May not discriminate based on a child's special needs status, income, race or ethnicity, religion

**How do charter schools differ
from most New Jersey
public schools?**

Who Governs

Most Public Schools

- Governed by local Board of Education (BOE) whose members are elected by local residents or appointed by local elected officials
- Board members must live in the community
- BOE hires a Superintendent, who runs the school district

Charter Schools

- Governed by private Board of Trustees, initially chosen by the founders of the charter school, then elected by charter parents or appointed by charter management
- Board members do not have to live in the community the charter school serves or to have children at the charter school
- Board hires a Head of School, who runs the school

Opening and Closing Schools

Most Public Schools

- New schools are opened or closed by the locally elected or appointed Board of Education

Charter Schools

- New schools are opened or closed by the State Commissioner of Education
- Local community has no ability to decide if a new charter school opens or closes in the community

Teachers

Most Public Schools

- Teachers are unionized
- Teachers' pay, benefits and all other conditions are determined by a contract negotiated between the local Board of Education and the local teachers union
- Tenure is governed by state laws

Charter Schools

- Teachers may be unionized
 - About 15% of New Jersey charter schools are unionized
- Non-unionized teachers must negotiate their job conditions individually with charter school management
- Tenure is governed by different state laws than for traditional public schools

What is Taught

Most Public Schools

- Must meet State and Federal standards
- Specific methods of teaching and text books are determined by Superintendent and local Board of Education

Charter Schools

- Must meet State and Federal standards
- Specific methods of teaching and text books are determined by Head of School and Board of Trustees
 - Must meet the intent of the school's charter

Who Pays for Education

Most Public Schools

- Funding is provided by local taxpayers and State and Federal Governments
- Additional local funding must be approved by the Board of Education
 - If exceeds +2% a year, must be approved by local taxpayers

Charter Schools

- Receives funding from each child's sending school district, based on a formula of 90% of average per pupil spending

Who Pays for Transportation

Most Public Schools

- Provided by local school district

Charter Schools

- Charter school does not pay
- Provided by each child's sending school district

Who Attends

Most Public Schools

- Children who live in the surrounding community
- If not enough space for all children, community must approve additional tax funding to build new schools or expand existing schools

Charter Schools

- Children who live in the “district or region of residence”, and students from non-resident districts
- If more children want to attend than spots available, the charter school selects children through a lottery run by the charter school
- Siblings of existing students may be given preference

How Children Leave the School

Traditional Public Schools

- May suspend or expel children based on State criteria

Charter Schools

- May suspend or expel children based on State criteria
- May ask child to leave school based on criteria outlined in the school's charter

What Needs to be Reformed?

- Communities have no control as to whether a charter school opens or closes in their midst
 - State control
 - Is Undemocratic
 - Corrupts
 - Encourages patronage & rewards “connections”
 - Divides communities
 - Has a disparate Impact on children of color
 - Charter schools being approved primarily in black and brown communities.
 - Majority white communities able to block new charter schools that residents do not support

Policy Recommendations

- Allow district voters to decide if a new charter school may open in the district or an existing charter school in the district must close
 - NJ DOE screens applications and makes recommendations
 - Local communities make final decision

What Needs to be Reformed?

- Charter schools educate different population of students than most public schools
 - Fewer low-income
 - Fewer special needs
 - Very few or none with severe needs
 - Fewer with limited knowledge of English

Poverty

- Free and Reduced Lunch
 - Paterson District Average 89%
 - Charter School for Science & Technology 77%
 - Community Charter School of Paterson 68%

Source: NJ Department of Education 2010-11

Special Needs

- Paterson District Average 14%
- Charter School for Science & Technology 7%
- Community Charter School of Paterson 9%

Source: NJ Department of Education 2010-11

Limited English Proficiency

- Paterson District Average 18%
- Charter School for Science & Technology 3%
- Community Charter School of Paterson 0%

Source: NJ Department of Education 2010-11

Two Separate & Unequal School Systems

- More challenging students concentrated in traditional public schools
- Traditional public schools left with fewer resources to provide for their education

Policy Recommendations

- Weighted lottery system
 - If district 20% special needs and charter applicant pool only 10% special needs, those children's names are entered into the lottery twice
- Lottery conducted by host districts
 - Eliminate potential for charters “screening” candidates
- Charter schools compensated for percentage of overall demographic that reflects the district
 - If charter is 10% free lunch and district is 20% free lunch, charter is only compensated for 10%.

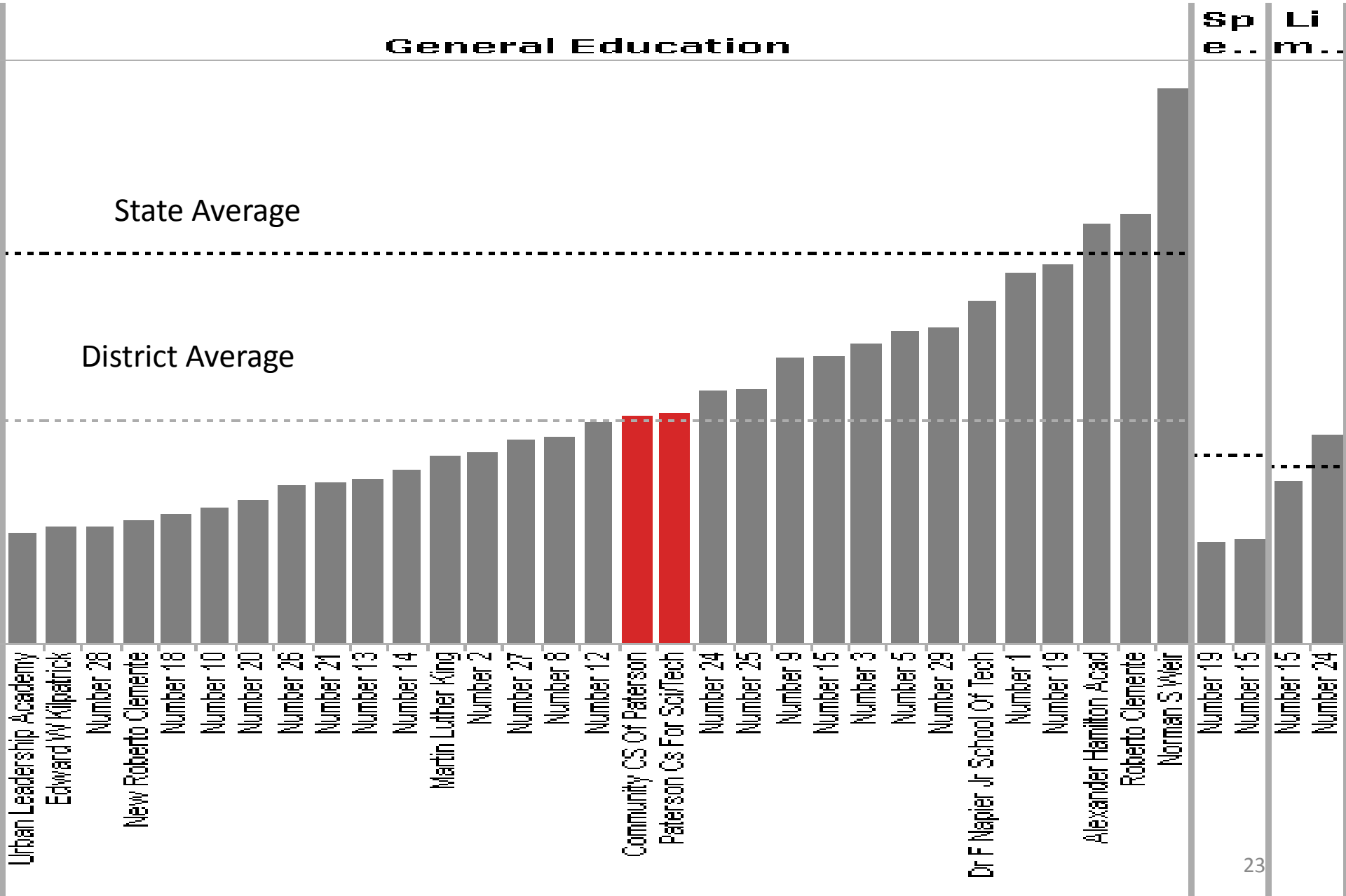
Standardized Test Results 2010-11 Academic Year*

Data from New Jersey Department of Education

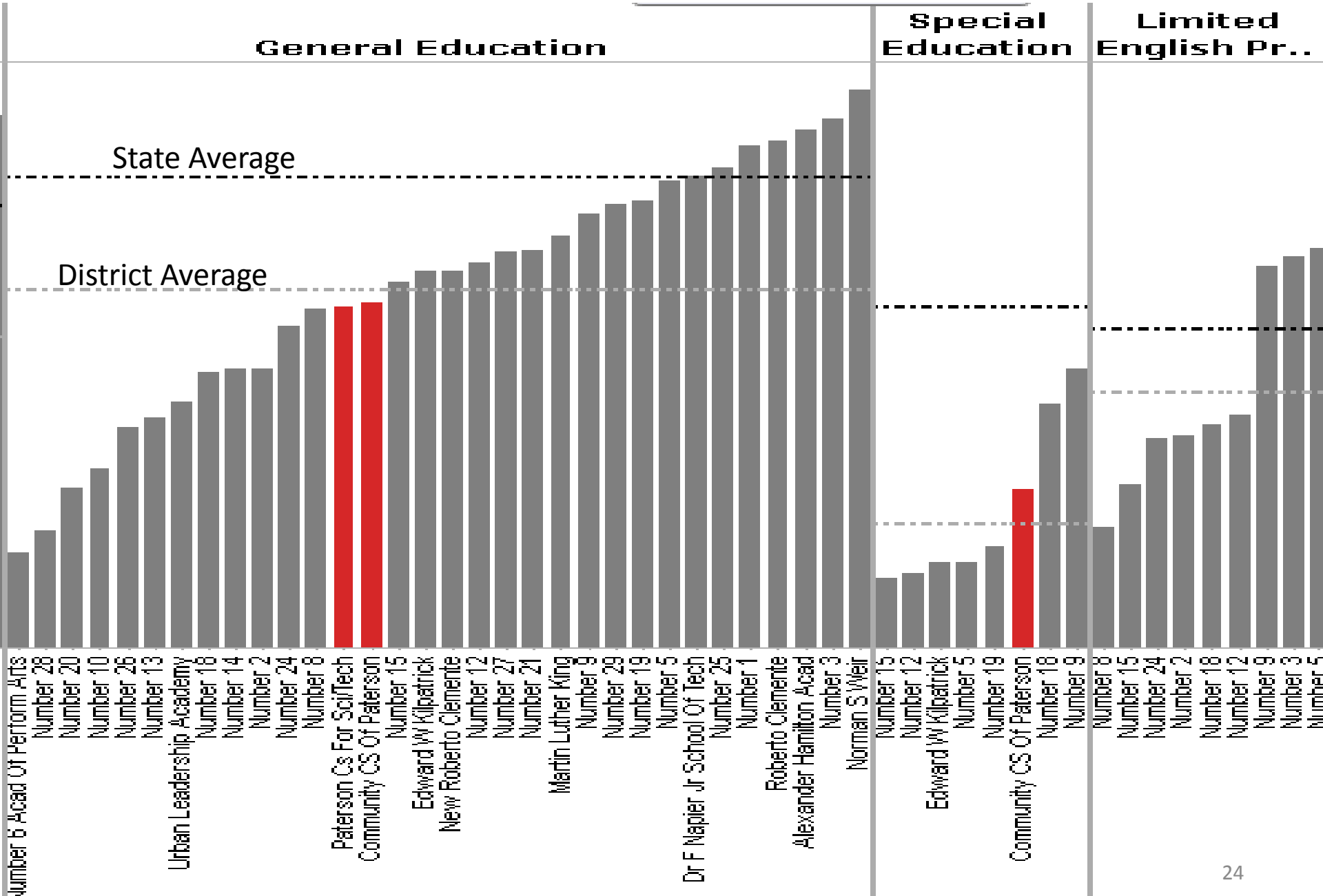
Source: <http://www.edlawcenter.org/research/charter-school-data.html>

4th Grade NJ ASK Language Arts

General Education



4th Grade NJ ASK Math



4th Grade NJ ASK Science

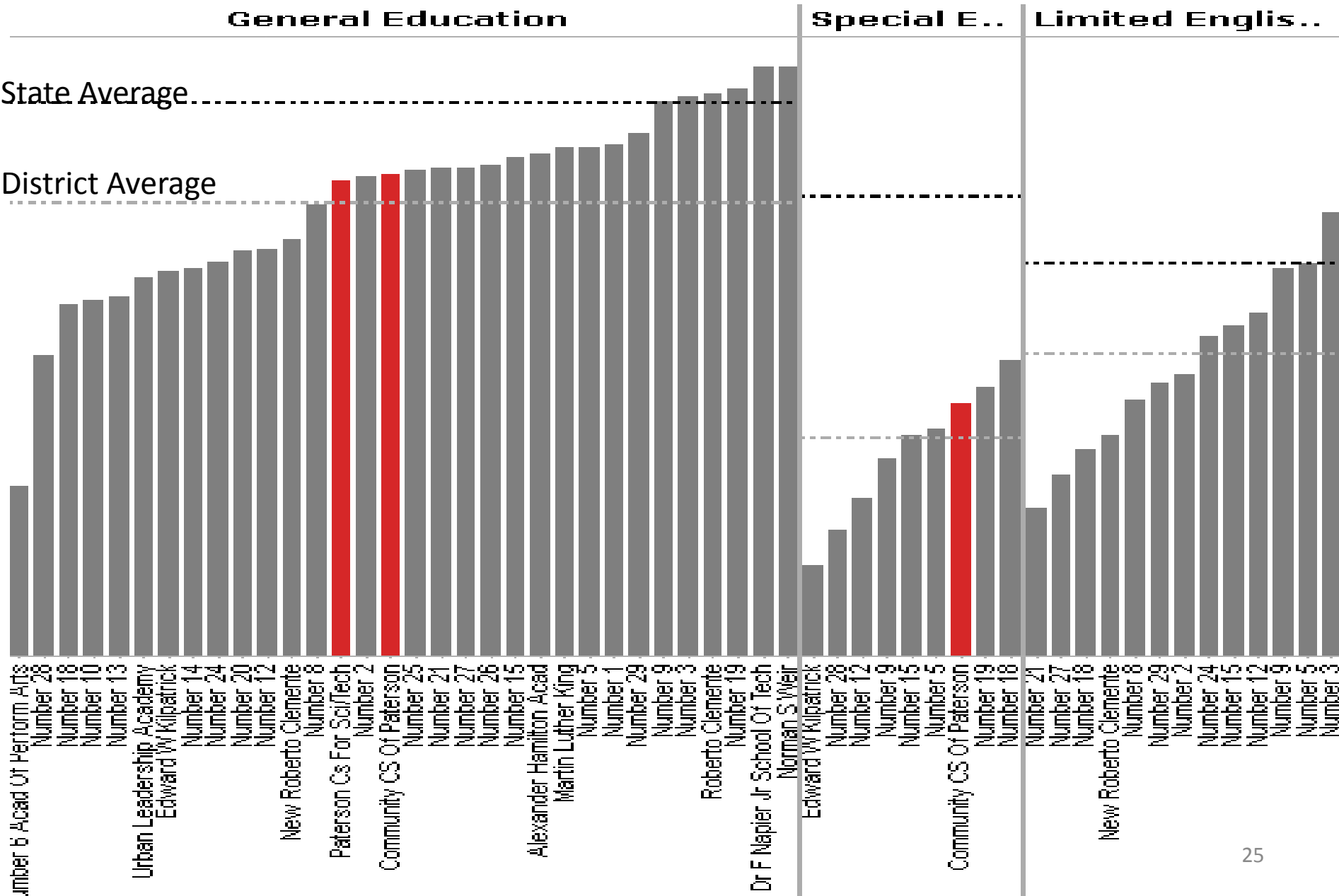
General Education

Special E..

Limited Englis..

State Average

District Average



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