

# School Expansion Market Study

•Presented to:

- KUUMBA ACADEMY**
- CHARTER SCHOOL**

•**November 2012**

# Methodology

## •Focus Groups

•Strongpoint Research conducted two focus groups in downtown Wilmington. The first group took place on Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and included 11 parents of current or recent (within the past year) students of Kuumba Academy. The second group was conducted on Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and included 9 parents of school-aged children who had no previous connection to Kuumba Academy but indicated they would consider the school based on a brief description.

## •Survey Execution

•A web survey of Kuumba Parents was executed between October 15<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>. A telephone survey of non-Kuumba affiliated parents was executed between October 15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## •Sampling Frame

•The web-based survey was sent to all parents of current and recent students of Kuumba Academy for whom an email contact was available. The second survey was a random sample telephone survey of 400 New Castle County residents with at least one child between the ages of 2 and 18 in the household.

# Methodology

- Sampling Method**

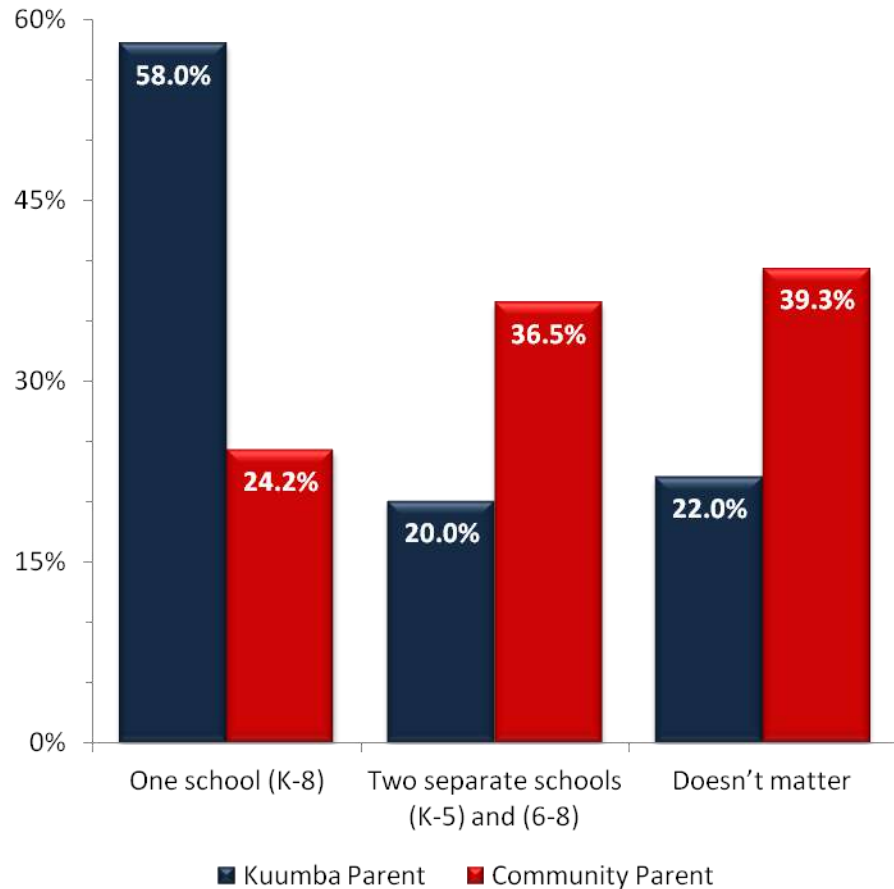
- For the web-based survey, all eligible respondents from the sampling frame were sent an e-mail invitation to participate. The e-mail included a unique link that the respondent could click on to access and take the survey. In addition, three follow-up reminder messages were sent asking participants to complete the online survey. The telephone survey was a random-sample survey of 400 New Castle County parents and has a sample error of +/- 4.9% at a confidence interval of 95%.

- Web Survey Response Rate**

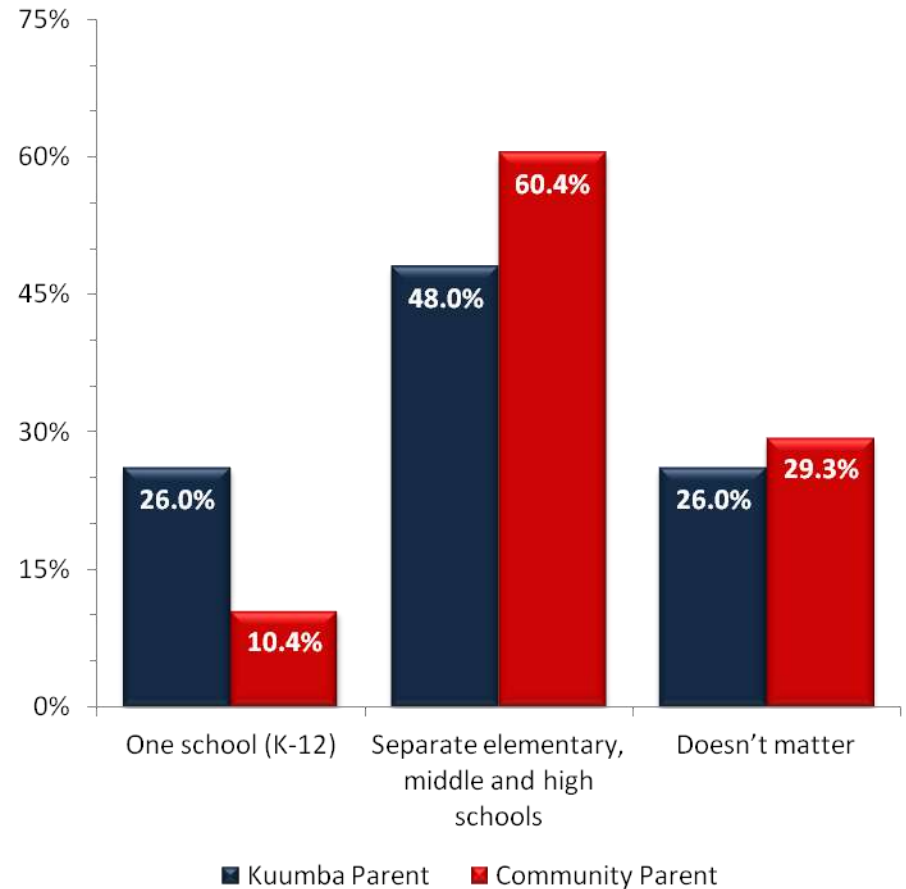
- 310 participants were on the original list provided by the Kuumba Academy, with 50 total completed responses, 55 were unreachable (e.g. undeliverable, bounce back, bad e-mail), for a response rate of 19.6%.

**Kuumba parents are more likely to prefer a K – 8 school, while Community parents do not have a strong preference. When including high school grades, there is a shift in preference to separated schools, by both parent groups.**

- Preferences for singular or separated schools K – 8 model

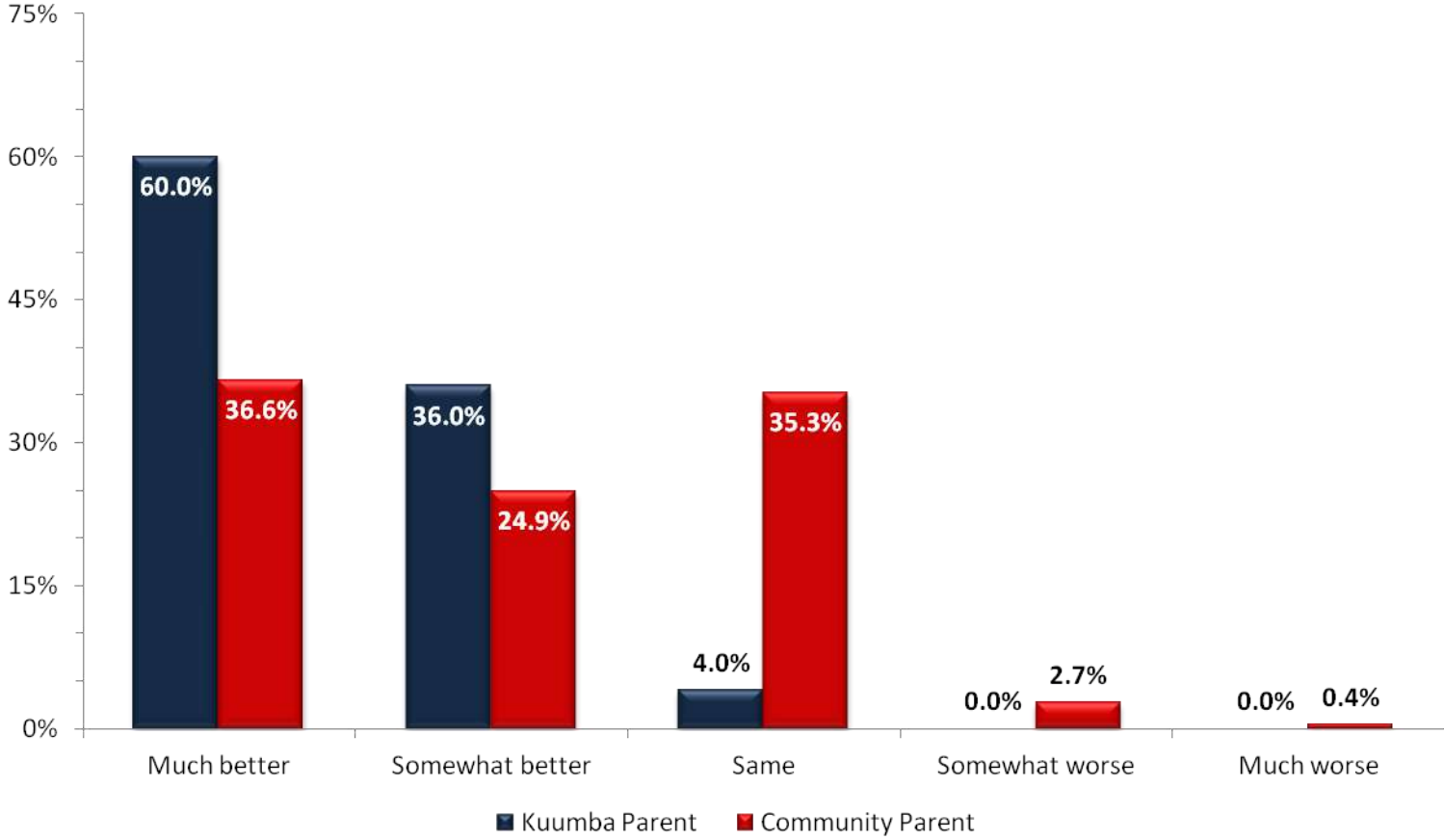


- Preferences for singular or separated schools K – 12 model



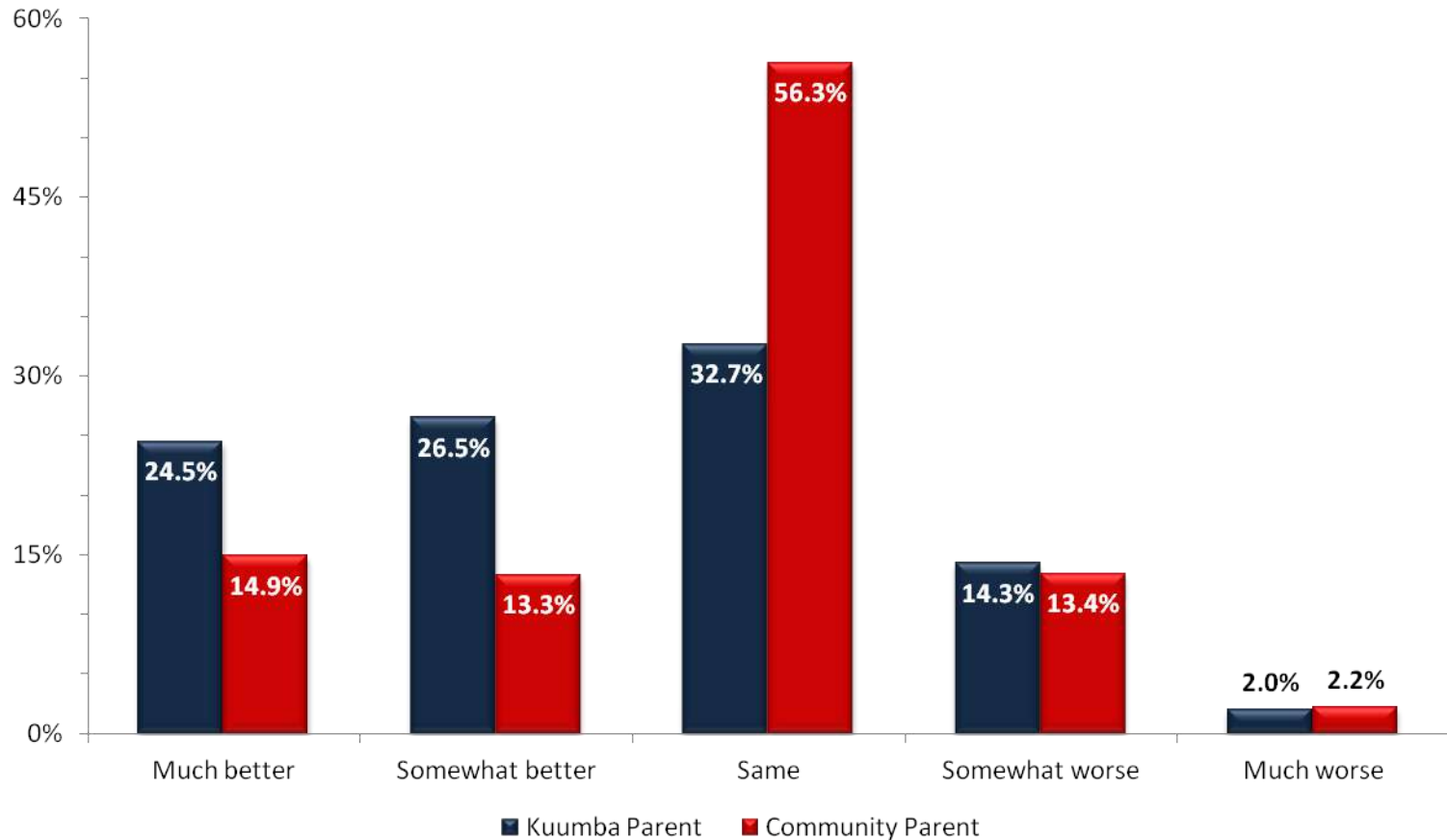
# Charter schools are perceived as being superior to public schools by the vast majority of Kuumba parents as well as a majority of community parents – few think public schools are better

- Charter vs. public schools based on academic achievement



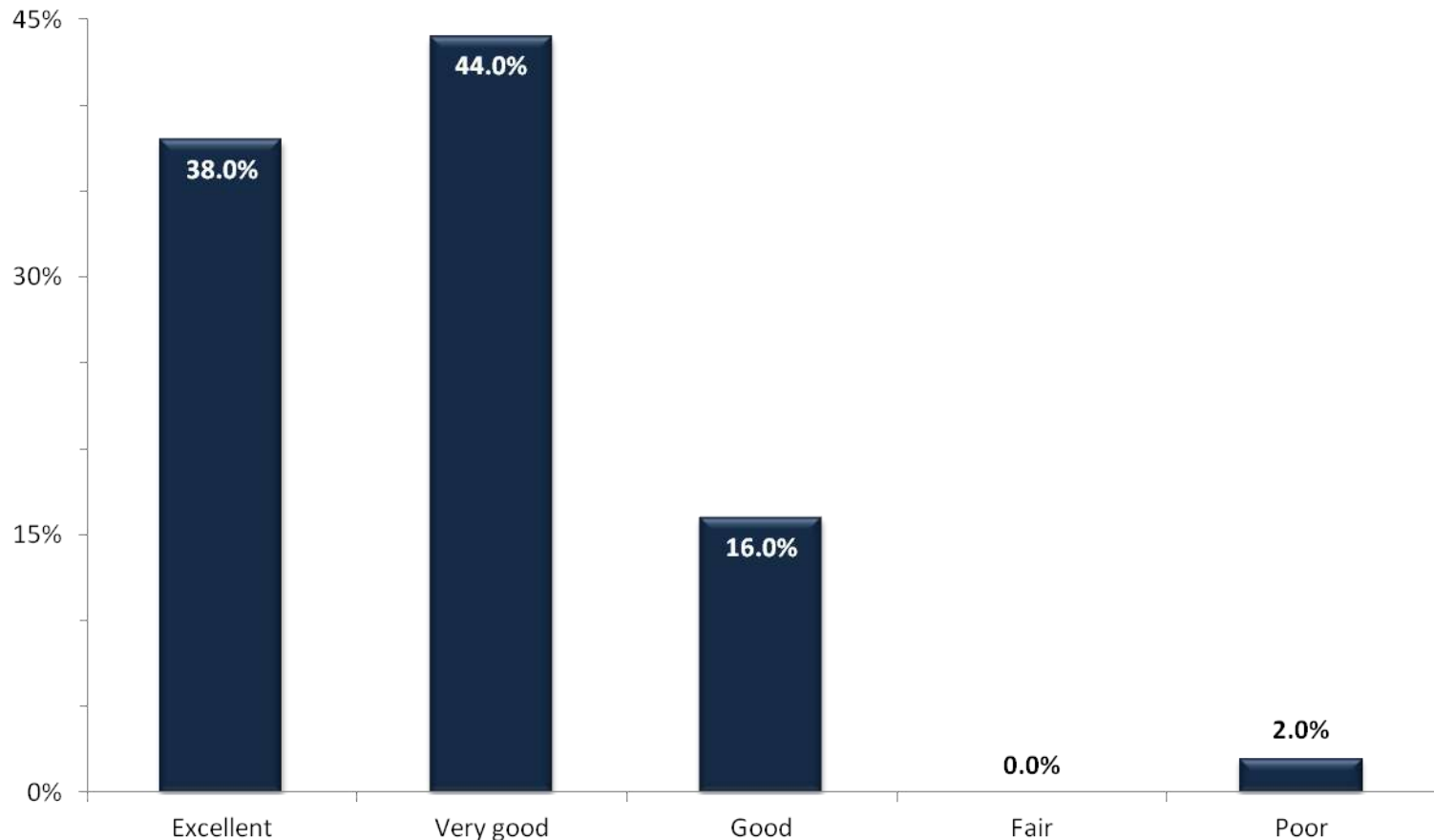
# The majority of Kuumba parents view charter schools as being better than private schools, while most community parents perceive the schools to be academically similar

- Charter vs. private schools based on academic achievement



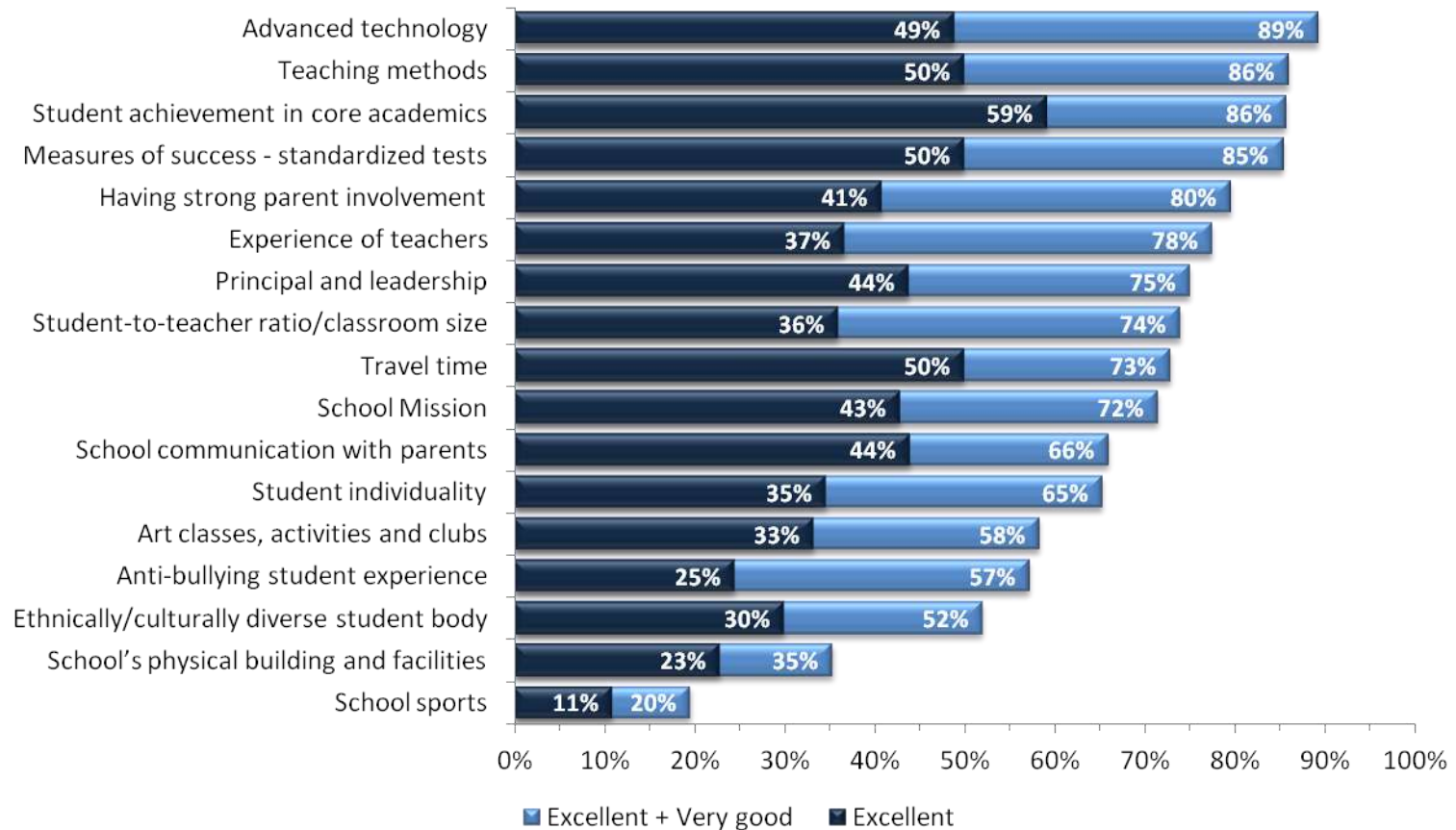
# Greater than four-fifths of Kuumba parents feel that the school is excellent/very good, with few giving a rating of fair/poor

- Overall assessment of Kuumba Academy by current parents



# Current parents give Kuumba higher marks for technology, teaching methods, student achievement and test scores, but fewer than 50% approve of the facilities and sports offerings

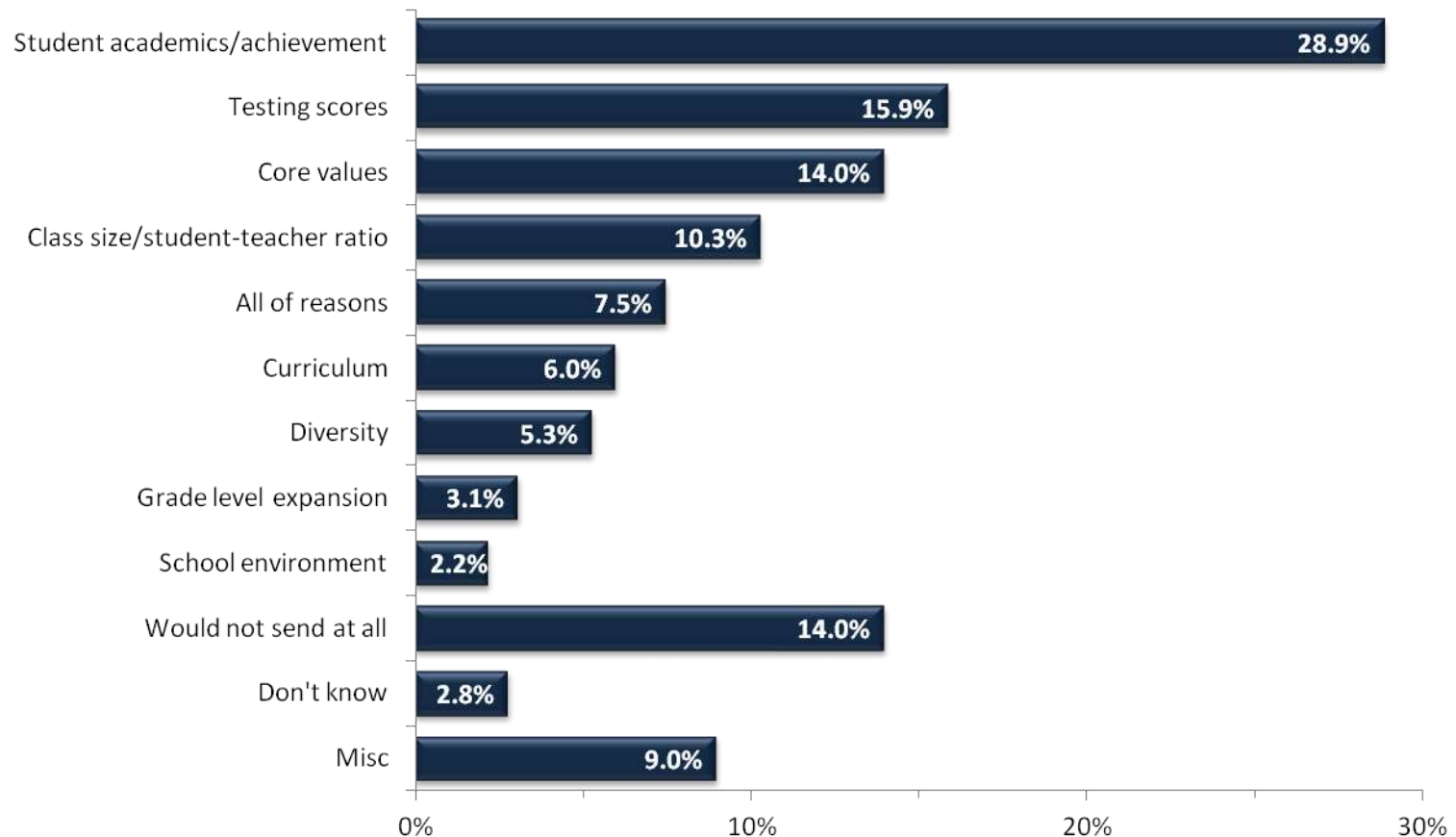
- Assessment of Kuumba attributes by current parents





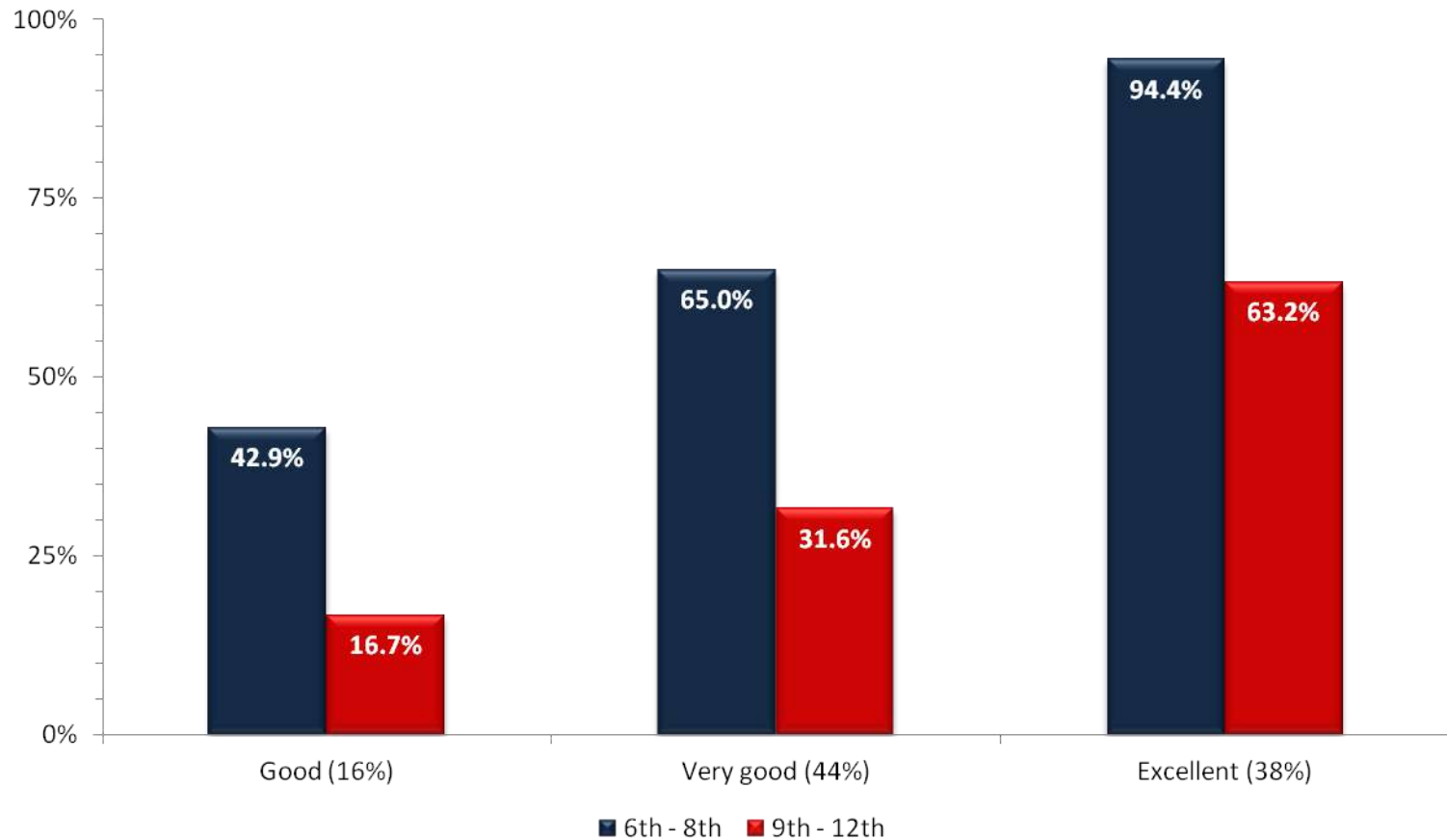
# Community parents are most likely to consider Kuumba because of their achievements in student academics and test scores. They also mentioned the school's core values and student-teacher ratio

- Why community parents WOULD consider Kuumba Academy



# Current satisfaction with the school is a predictor of how likely a parent is to continue sending their child to Kuumba Academy for advanced grade levels

- Likelihood to continue at Kuumba Academy based on satisfaction



Kuumba Academy Charter School  
Feasibility Study Summary  
November 17, 2012

Intro

Kuumba Academy Charter School is one of the highest performing elementary charter schools in Delaware, consistently outperforming its peers across the state—both charter and traditional. A small school by design with an arts focus, Kuumba’s student population is 98% African American and 80% low income; students often come into the school year 1 or 2 years behind, but leave on target. Focused on personalized learning and quality instruction, Kuumba has been designated by many across the state as “the little engine that could,” consistently surpassing expectations and pushing its students to high levels of achievement. Throughout the year, a continued stream of visitors try to discern what Kuumba’s “magic” is, and many have called for Kuumba to replicate or expand.

For years Kuumba declined to do so, opting instead to continue to refine their model and focus on serving the students they already are educating well. Now, however, the leadership has decided that the conditions are right for the school to expand enrollment in its elementary grades and add a middle school. Doing so will not only broaden the quality of elementary and middle school options in the city of Wilmington—where demand for such is quite high—but will also provide a continuation for the school’s elementary students, setting to ease a worry at the end of the school year of where the graduating 5<sup>th</sup> graders will go.

To understand the demand for Kuumba’s expansion plans and parent interest in the Expeditionary Learning academic program as a complement to Kuumba’s current academic program, Kuumba leadership in partnership with Innovative Schools conducted a feasibility study. The study analyzed enrollment trends at Kuumba, AYP ratings for elementary and middle schools in New Castle County school districts, and surveys completed by Kuumba parents who attended information sessions to learn more about the Expeditionary Learning model. Kuumba also partnered with Strongpoint Market Research Inc. to conduct a broader study, which draws similar conclusions about the school’s ability to meet proposed enrollment targets, and can also be found with this charter modification.

Taking into consideration the popularity of Kuumba’s current program, with a waiting list of 100 students in the 2011-2012 school year, the demand from Kuumba’s current families for a middle school as revealed through feedback collected by Strongpoint Market Research Inc. and through the surveys parents completed following parent information sessions on the Expeditionary Learning model, it is clear that the demand and interest for Kuumba’s expansion plans are remarkably strong and serves a larger need in the city of Wilmington, as well as greater New Castle County.

Proposed Location

As part of its expansion plans, by September 2014, Kuumba will move grades 2 through 8 to the Community Education Building, close to the current location on Market Street. In its new configuration, Kuumba will enroll 95 students per grade from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. During the first three

years, the middle school will employ a scale-up approach, adding one grade per year, with the following enrollment targets:

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total
2013-2014	31	0	0	31
2014-2015	54	31	0	85
2015-2016	83	54	31	168

At the same time, its elementary school will expand its enrollment, with the following targets:

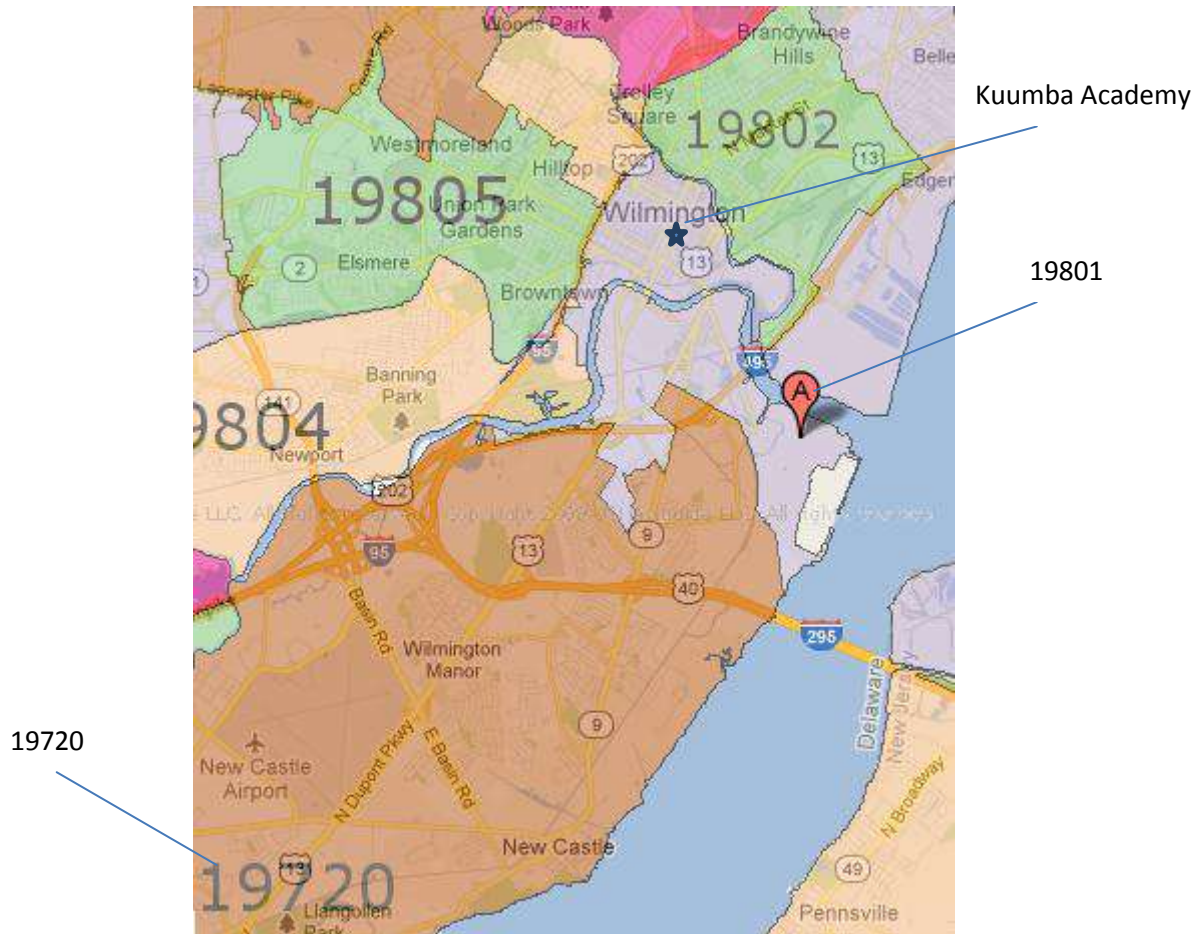
Grade	Current (2012-2013)	Target	Difference
K	52	95	43
1	53	95	42
2	44	95	51
3	35	95	60
4	45	95	50
5	34	95	61
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>307</b>

### Historic Enrollment

Historically, Kuumba’s enrollment has drawn primarily from 4 zip codes: 19805, 19801, 19802, and 19720.

Enrollment by Zip Code	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
19805	26.01%	22.66%	21.23%
19801	24.91%	25.00%	22.64%
19802	16.85%	19.53%	22.64%
19720	12.82%	12.89%	13.21%
19702	5.13%	5.47%	2.36%
19713	2.93%	2.73%	3.30%
19703	2.56%	1.95%	1.89%
19809	1.47%	1.17%	1.42%
19804	1.47%	1.56%	1.89%
19701	1.47%	1.95%	2.83%
19711	1.10%	1.17%	2.36%
19810	0.73%	0.39%	0.47%
19806	0.73%	0.39%	0.94%
19808	0.00%	0.39%	0.47%

These zip codes consist primarily of urban Wilmington:



Zip Code Enrollment

Based on historical enrollment of the existing Kuumba Academy as well as the expected location of Kuumba Academy’s middle school by 2014 at the Community Education Building located a few blocks away on Market Street, we can project that enrollment will come primarily from: 19805, 19801, 19802, 19720, 19804, and 19809.

Elementary Expansion

Based on historic enrollment and current feeder patterns, the potential impact on neighboring elementary schools is minimal:

District	School	AYP	Enrollment (2011-2012)						
			K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	Total
Brandywine	Mt. Pleasant	Met	131	146	171	187	89	81	805
Brandywine	Carrcroft	Met	93	101	60	80	87	72	493

Brandywine	Lombardy	Met	84	100	79	96	93	80	532
Brandywine	Harlan	Met	50	74	66	55	44	74	363
Brandywine	Hanby	Met	94	89	89	75	83	96	526
Christina	Bancroft	Not Met	52	61	48	53	46	43	303
Christina	Elbert-Palmer	Met	43	46	43	53	42	44	271
Christina	Pulaski	Met	84	93	64	78	77	64	460
Colonial	Colwyck	Met	51	59	53	53	54	51	321
Colonial	Eisenberg	Met	82	98	107	93	97	80	557
Colonial	Castle Hills	Met	99	119	136	133	105	117	709
Colonial	Wilmington Manor	Met	81	69	87	73	74	85	469
Colonial	Downie	Met	82	78	62	73	73	61	429
Red Clay	Brandywine Springs	Met	117	129	120	154	124	138	782
Red Clay	Highlands	Met	67	59	56	62	61	62	367
Red Clay	Warner	Not Met	95	90	91	87	104	88	555
Red Clay	Shortlidge	Met	48	36	56	51	57	63	311
Red Clay	Lewis	Met	119	92	78	66	67	53	475
Red Clay	Baltz	Met	94	93	100	90	80	75	532
Red Clay	Marbrook	Met	88	108	89	94	73	96	548
Red Clay	Mote	Met	107	104	102	104	75	63	555
Red Clay	Richardson Park	Met	70	77	67	97	74	70	455
Red Clay	Richey	Met	58	70	80	76	56	62	402
Charter	Eastside	Met	68	56	57	58	40	49	328
Charter	D CPA	Met	90	61	54	45	26		276
Charter	Edison	Met	96	107	114	90	83	76	566
Charter	Odyssey	Met	82	84	84	92	91	67	500
Charter	Gateway	Not Met				34	36	35	105
Charter	Family Foundations	Met	104	96	59	84	93	85	521
Total			2329	2395	2272	2386	2104	2030	13516
Total Not Met			448	444	406	424	406	390	2518
*PZ School - designated one of the lowest performing in the state									
**Focus School - schools with the highest achievement gaps									

At the elementary school's proposed maximum capacity, Kuumba would enroll just over 2% of the available student population, which would translate to just 2 or 3 students per grade per school. Furthermore, even if Kuumba drew just from low performing schools (based on designation and AYP)

with families that are more likely to be searching for an alternate option, it would only need 10-15% in order to reach its target enrollment.

Based on Kuumba’s extensive waiting lists in the past (100 students in SY2011-12) and the fact that the school was opened in part specifically with the purpose of serving underserved students in low performing schools, reaching its target enrollment should not be a problem even based solely on the reputation and academic record of the school. Furthermore, from an examination of just charter elementary schools:

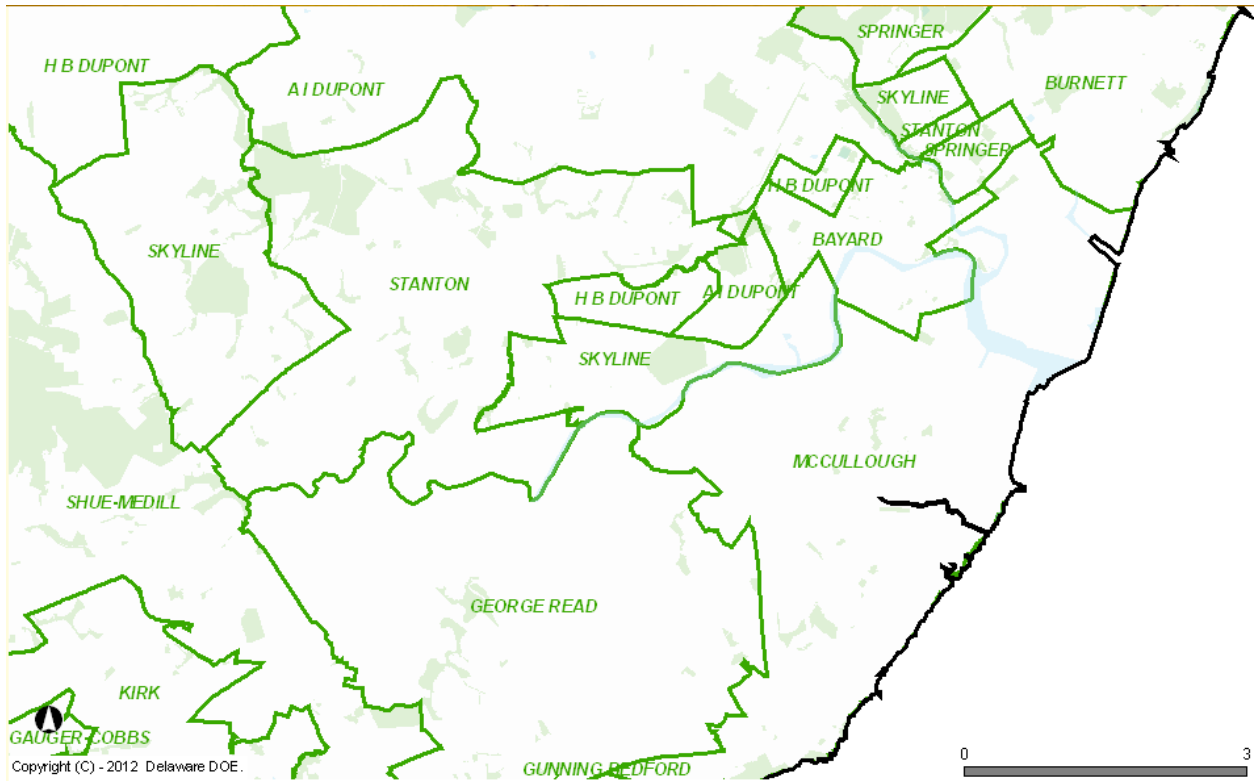
School	Capacity	AYP	Enrollment (2011-2012)						Total
			K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	
Eastside	104%	Met	68	56	57	58	40	49	328
DCPA	94%	Met	90	61	54	45	26		276
Edison	88%	Met	96	107	114	90	83	76	566
Odyssey	114%	Met	82	84	84	92	91	67	500
Gateway	102%	Not Met				34	36	35	105
Family Foundations	100%	Met	104	96	59	84	93	85	521

it’s clear that the demand for charter elementary schools is quite significant, as all charter schools in this area that offer enrollment in grades K-5 are near, at, or over capacity.

Later in this study an examination of survey results and feedback on the proposed Expeditionary Learning mode will show that the adoption of the model will likely increase demand even further.

Analysis of Middle School Choices

Based on historic enrollment and current feeder patterns surrounding Kuumba:





The alternative middle schools are as follows:

District	Middle School	AYP	Enrollment (2011-2012)			
			Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total
Brandywine	Springer	Met	269	263	286	818
Christina	Shue-Medill	Met	374	315	339	1028
Christina	Kirk**	Not Met	286	256	304	846
Christina	Gauger-Cobbs	Not Met	350	399	409	1158
Christina	Bayard**	Not Met	186	169	171	526
Colonial	Read	Met	256	240	256	752
Colonial	Bedford	Met	348	350	382	1080
Colonial	McCullough	Not Met	240	262	236	738
Red Clay	HB DuPont	Met	293	285	277	855
Red Clay	AI DuPont**	Not Met	172	171	198	541
Red Clay	Stanton*	Met	227	220	266	713
Red Clay	Skyline	Met	272	265	254	791
Charter	Eastside	Met	32	22	19	73
Charter	Edison	Met	67	50	46	163
Charter	Moyer**	Not Met	22	30	38	90
Charter	Prestige	Met	101	88	61	250
Charter	Reach	Not Met	52	41	0	93
Charter	Family Foundations	Met	112	72	46	230
Charter	Gateway	Not Met	39	39	0	78
Total			3698	3537	3588	10823
Total Low Performing			1574	1587	1622	4783
*PZ School - designated one of the lowest performing in the state						
**Focus School - schools with the highest achievement gaps						

From the data above, we can see that there are approximately 4,783 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade students attending low performing middle schools in Kuumba's vicinity. In order to fill a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class in 2013 to capacity, it is anticipated that Kuumba's current fifth grade students would take a portion of the seats and that the school would draw some students from neighboring schools. However the middle school would have to draw less than 6% of the 4,783 students attending low performing middle schools in Kuumba's vicinity; it is not hard to imagine this figure being far surpassed based on Kuumba's growing reputation and waiting list with its elementary school.

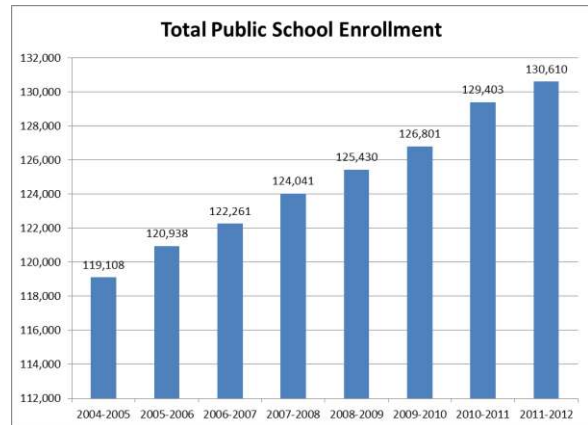
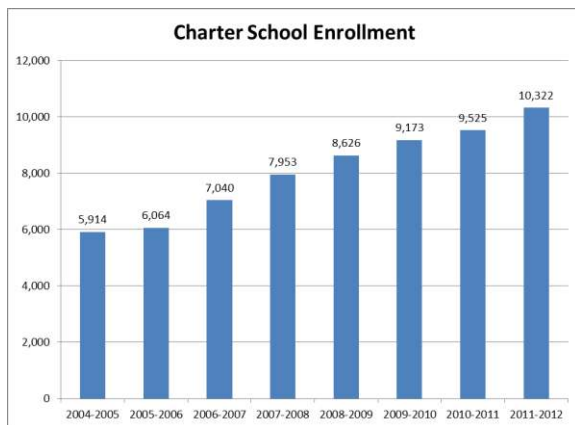
Furthermore, examining charter schools specifically serving grades 6-8 in this area:

Middle School	Capacity	AYP	Enrollment (2011-2012)			
			Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total
Eastside	104%	Met	32	22	19	73
Edison	88%	Met	67	50	46	163
Moyer	37%	Not Met	22	30	38	90
Family Foundations	100%	Met	112	72	46	230
Gateway	102%	Not Met	39	39	0	78

The data is clear—urban Wilmington has a high demand for high-quality charter middle school options. Eastside, Family Foundations, and Gateway Academy all are at or over capacity. Even if Edison Charter (a K-8 school) were to reach full capacity (with an additional 102 students spread across its grades), this would only mean approximately 12 students in each grade. There is clearly a demand for charter schools (see below for historical growth in charter school enrollment) and currently, there is not enough capacity to meet those demands (Moyer Academy is one of the lowest performing schools in the state and has had continued population flight—it is not considered a viable alternative in this narrative).

#### Historic Charter School Enrollment

Between the 2004-2005 and 2011-2012 school years, the public student population has increased by 12,833. During this time, charter school enrollment has steadily increased both in number (4,408) and as a proportion of overall public school enrollment (7.9% in 2011-2012 from 5.0% in 2004-2005).



This trend along with the earlier data again shows that Kuumba’s proposed growth is reasonable, and most likely on the conservative side, given the growth trend. This conclusion is backed by responses collected by Strongpoint Marketing Firm, that 60% of those surveyed in New Castle County felt that charter schools are superior to public schools.

## Community Feedback

Kuumba Academy's parents are highly supportive of the school, as evidenced by its year-by-year retention of over 97%. Each year, Kuumba Academy graduates approximately 40 students and every year 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents grow increasingly more concerned about where to send their child "after Kuumba." With the establishment of an aligned and high quality middle school expansion, Kuumba parents will no longer have to worry and their graduating 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be a steady source of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

As part of its exploration into its proposed expansion and specifically to determine interest in the Expeditionary Learning model that Kuumba is considering to complement its current academic program, Kuumba conducted parent information sessions on October 24 and November 15 to provide an overview of the Expeditionary Learning Model and to answer questions about the program. After going through a series of activities to model what Expeditionary Learning will be like for their child, parents were asked to complete a survey based on what they had learned to help the school determine interest and support for staying at the school through the proposed change. Information about the expansion was also featured in a News Journal story on October 8 and posted in local blogs and newsletters including the News Journal Education Blog, Brandywine Buzz, the Vision 2015 newsletter, and others to inform members of the broader community about the expansion and to allow them to provide feedback via electronic survey. In all, the school collected 21 unique responses. Of those who responded, the majority characterized themselves as parents (76%) with grandparents (5%), educators (11%) and mentors (5%) making up the rest of respondents. All respondents were from zip codes that currently feed into Kuumba with the exception of two respondents – one from 19904 and one from 19720.

Responses to the following survey questions show clear alignment with Kuumba's adoption of the Expeditionary Learning instructional program, its focus on the arts, and a clear demand for the expanded elementary and middle school:

### *Demand for the Expeditionary Learning Model*

The Expeditionary Learning model, which Kuumba will adopt as part of its expansion plan, engages students in deep explorations of a particular subject area to master core skills and content through project based learning and explorations in their local community. Those who responded to the survey indicated a clear interest for this type of program along with support for Kuumba's current program in a number of ways:

- 94% indicated that they would consider enrolling their child in a charter school that used the Expeditionary Learning model.
- 73% indicated they would consider enrolling their child in a public charter school with a heavy focus on the arts, including performing and visual arts
- 63% indicated that they do not know of another pre-K-8 public school in the area providing a similar education to that being proposed by Kuumba.

- 78% felt that their current school (Kuumba) provides a program that allows their child to learn through their own area of interest.
- In support of the Expeditionary Learning methodology, 70% indicated that their child enjoys hands-on work more than book work, and 70% indicated that their child performs best when they are able to work at their own pace.

When asked what additional information parents would need in order to consider enrolling their child in this type of a public school, parents indicated the following:

- Hard data on all schools not just top performing schools
- Quality of educators and teacher development
- Whether there was a STEM /STEAM initiative in the school
- School safety
- Quality of the facilities
- Resources to enhance education
- Curriculum
- How the arts emphasis is balanced with the academics

The survey also provides evidence that that parents support the expansion of the Christina Cultural Arts Center pre-Kindergarten program as well. Though there were only a few parents with pre-kindergarten aged children who responded to the survey, those who did indicated that they would enroll their child in a CCAC pre-K program with a heavy emphasis on the arts.

From the data above, it's clear that not only is the Kuumba expansion feasible, but there is clearly a need for the school. This data is further backed by research done by Strongpoint Market Research Inc., also included with this application. Given Kuumba Academy's track record of success, its strong community partnership with the Christina Cultural Arts Center, its anticipated partnerships with the nationally acclaimed Expeditionary Learning, and the school's partial relocation to the state-of-the art Community Education Building by 2014, the school should not have difficulty growing its student population to the proposed size and grade levels. With the school's sustained success, it is highly likely that the school will have growing waiting lists for both its elementary and middle school grades.