Setting Enrollment and Retention Targets as Required by the NYS Charter Schools Act

- **Overview of Extensive Work-to-Date**
- **Presentation of Proposed Methodology**
- **Launching a Public Comment Period**

Joint Presentation by the New York State Education Department and the SUNY Charter Schools Institute

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT /
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

2010 Amendments to the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998

- **§ 6. Subdivision 4 of section 2851:**

  (e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the Board of Regents or the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York shall ensure:

  1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and

  2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

Goals

- **Create a balanced methodology that:**
  - Accurately portrays enrollment/retention rates of each district where charter schools are located;
  - Relies on valid and accepted statistical practices;
  - Is consistent with statutory requirements;
  - Recognizes the challenges of comparing individual charter schools to entire school districts; and
  - Is actionable by New York State's charter authorizing entities

Limitations

- **ELL populations are not evenly distributed within school districts and generally are concentrated in particular neighborhoods**
- **Special education services can be consolidated within specific district schools and are often not evenly distributed among schools in a district**
- **Charter schools, per the Charter Schools Act, may not contract with BOCES for the provision of special education services**
- **Districts control Committees on Special Education, which can determine program placement**

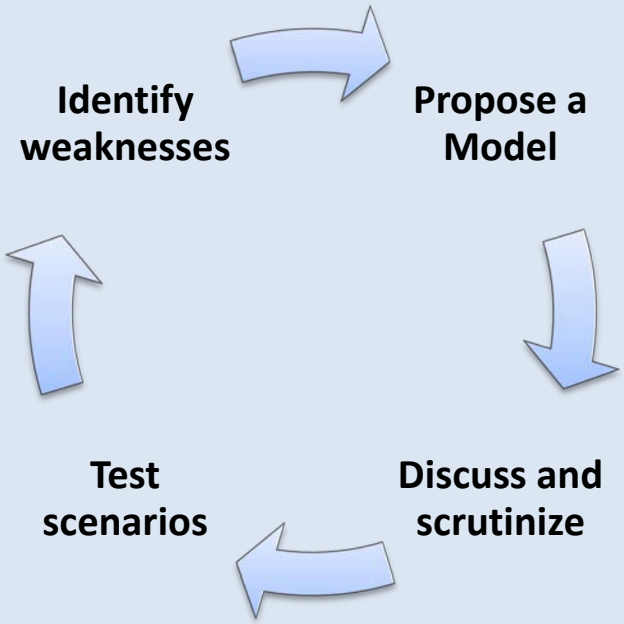
Limitations

- **Some charters, as an educational strategy, seek to mainstream as many students as possible**
- **Lag time in the processes of classifying students with disabilities**
- **Charters schools can have limited capacity to "catch up" on targets as they generally have few openings each year**
- **SED historically has not reported enrollment of students with disabilities by school or (in NYC) by Community School District**

Process

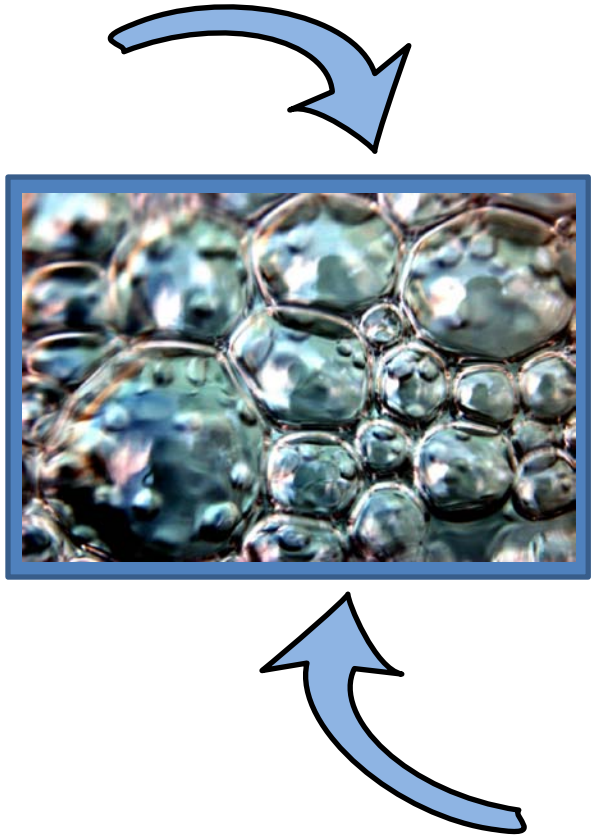
- **Gathered input from diverse corners:**
  - Researchers
  - NYSED and Institute staff
  - Independent statistical and public policy consultants
- **Developed and tested numerous approaches**
  - Checking for fidelity to 'Goals'
- **Modified/adjusted along the way**

Method

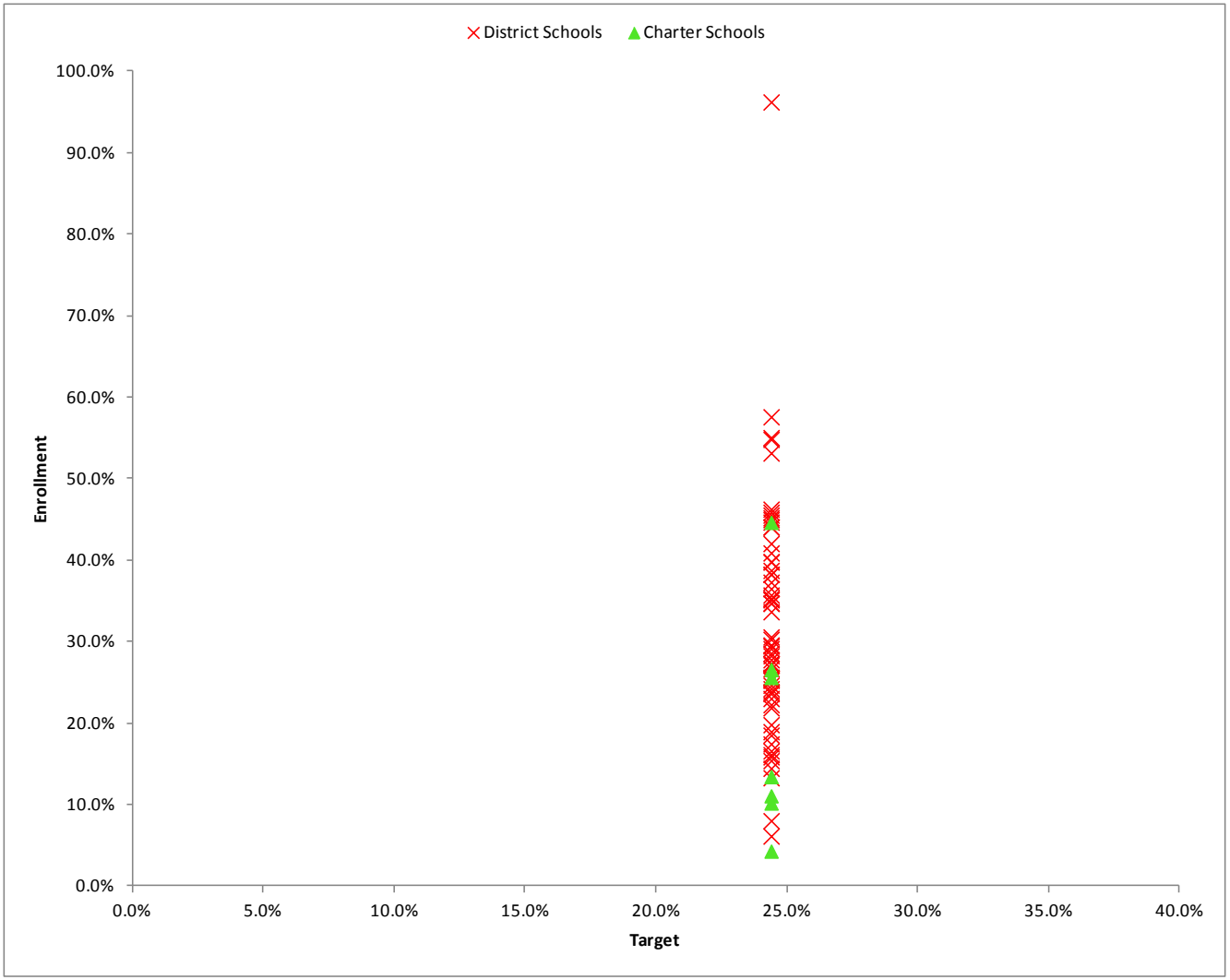


Model Development: 1st Iteration

- **Initial model development in August, 2011**
- **Means by district**
  - Student is the unit of analysis, thus school enrollment is weighted
  - School is the unit of analysis for retention



Model Development: 1st Iteration



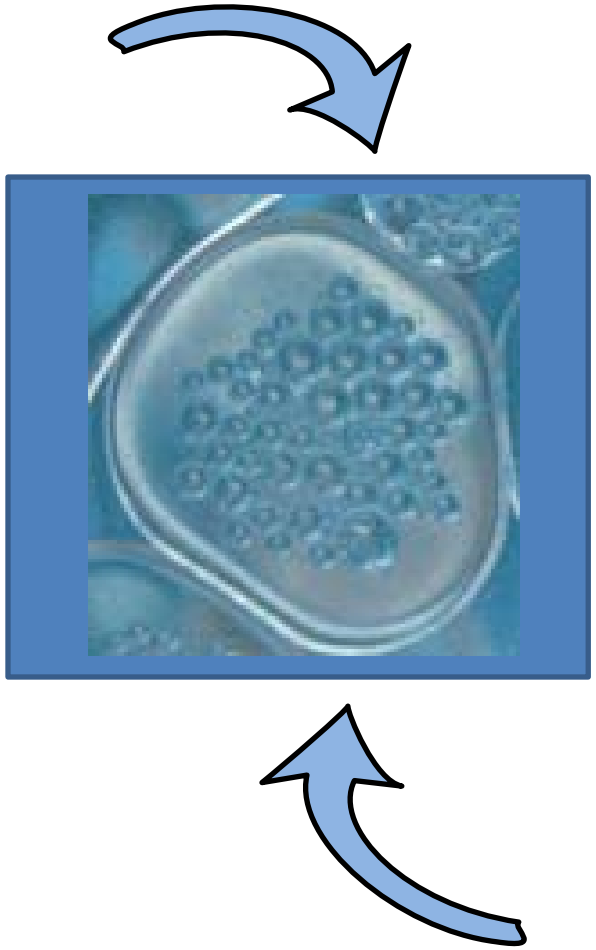
1st Iteration: Decision Criteria and Outcome

- **Strengths:**
  - A straightforward model that is easy to apply
  - Relies on valid statistical techniques

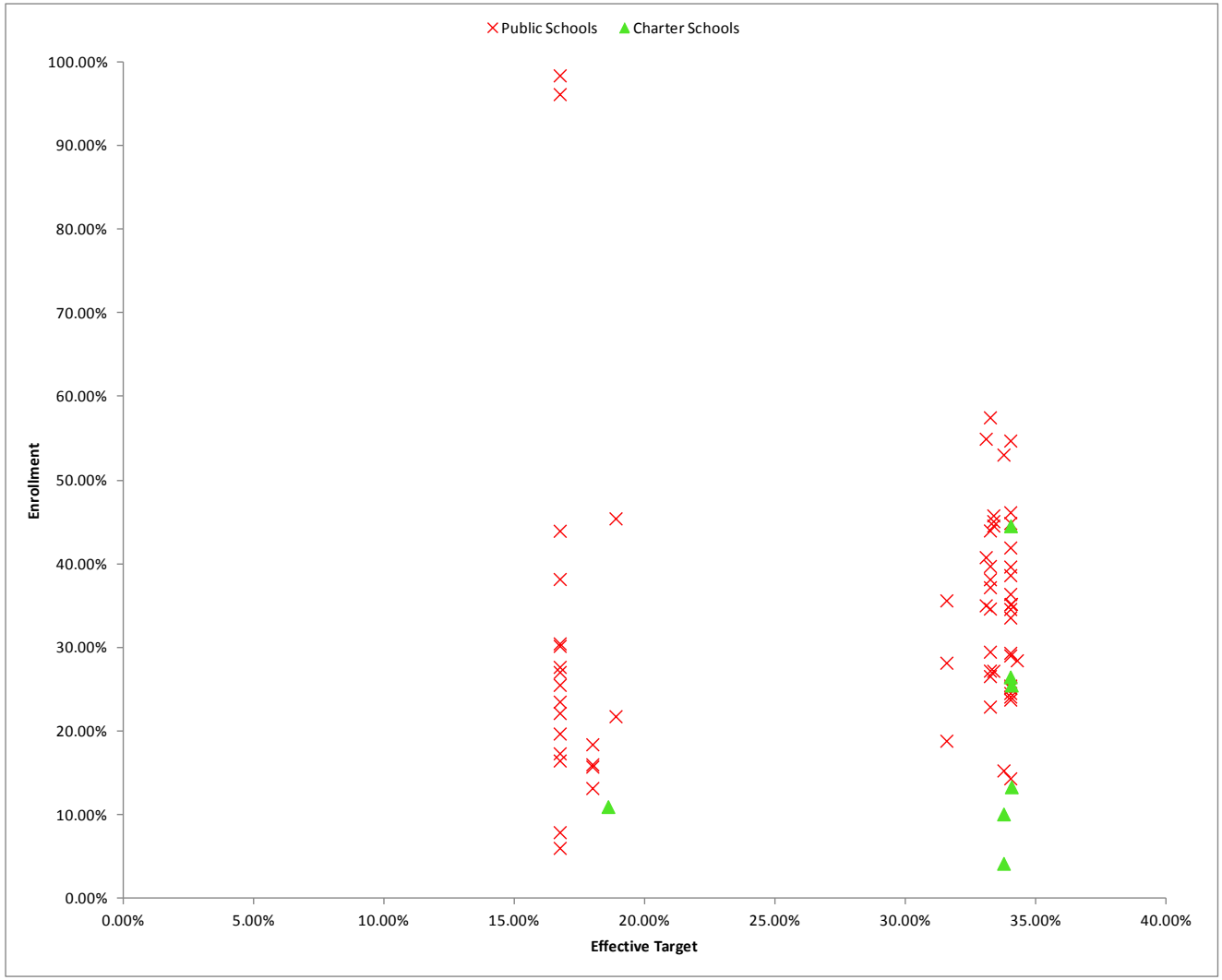
- **Weaknesses:**
  - Does not accurately portray enrollment of each district
  - Subject to influence of "outliers," especially those that are large
  - Treats all charters like mini versions of the district, with exactly the same components
  - An overly simplistic, blunt instrument

Model Development: 2nd Iteration

- **SUNY Consultant Analysis**
- **Involves calculating the proportion of identified students at every possible grade band (weighted model)**



Model Development: 2nd Iteration



2nd Iteration: Decision Criteria and Outcome

- **Strengths:**
  - Accurately portrays enrollment and retention rates at district level by grade bands
  - Relies on valid statistical techniques

- **Weaknesses:**
  - Fails to account for variability in enrollment related to school size
  - Subject to influence of "outliers," especially those that are large
  - Does not fully recognize statistical impact of school size, and thus isn't equitable

Other Models Considered: Trimmed Means

- **SED and Institute staff also considered a "trimmed mean" approach, which entailed eliminating the schools with the highest and lowest 20% subgroup enrollment from analysis**
  - Empirical sensitivity analysis yielded nearly identical results to the model that uses the full sample
  - In smaller districts, the trimming could also lead to the elimination of large numbers of students in the target subgroups

Other Models Considered: Empirical Analyses of District Schools

- **SED and Institute staff also conducted empirical analyses to determine how many district schools met the district average, and considered a number of ways to adjust the district average so that a minimum of district schools met the targets**
  - None of the adjustment scenarios considered were easily applied across districts statewide in meaningful and consistent ways
  - Each introduced new issues that made the methodology more complex and less useful

All to Reach the Current Proposed Methodology:

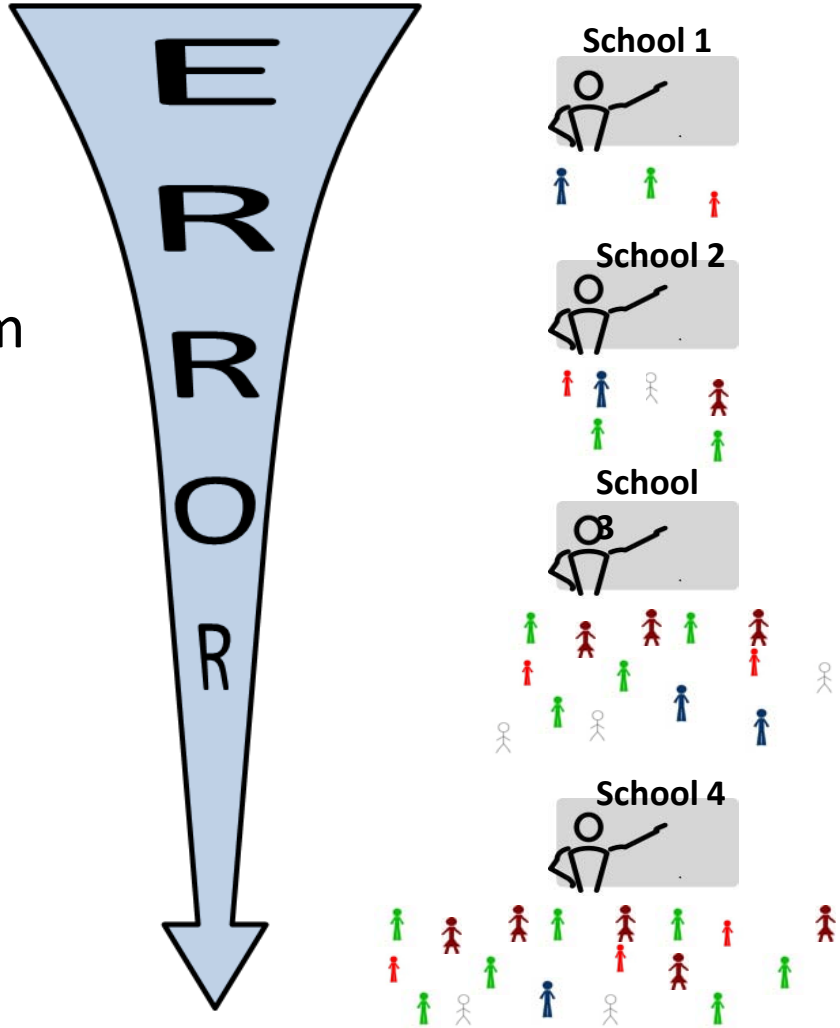
"The Effective Target Model"

Effective Target Model

- **Target setting involves:**
  - Calculating the proportion at district level by grade band (weighted model)
  - Calculating the 1-sided 95% confidence interval about the proportion
  - Setting the effective target as the 1-sided 95% confidence interval

Confidence Intervals

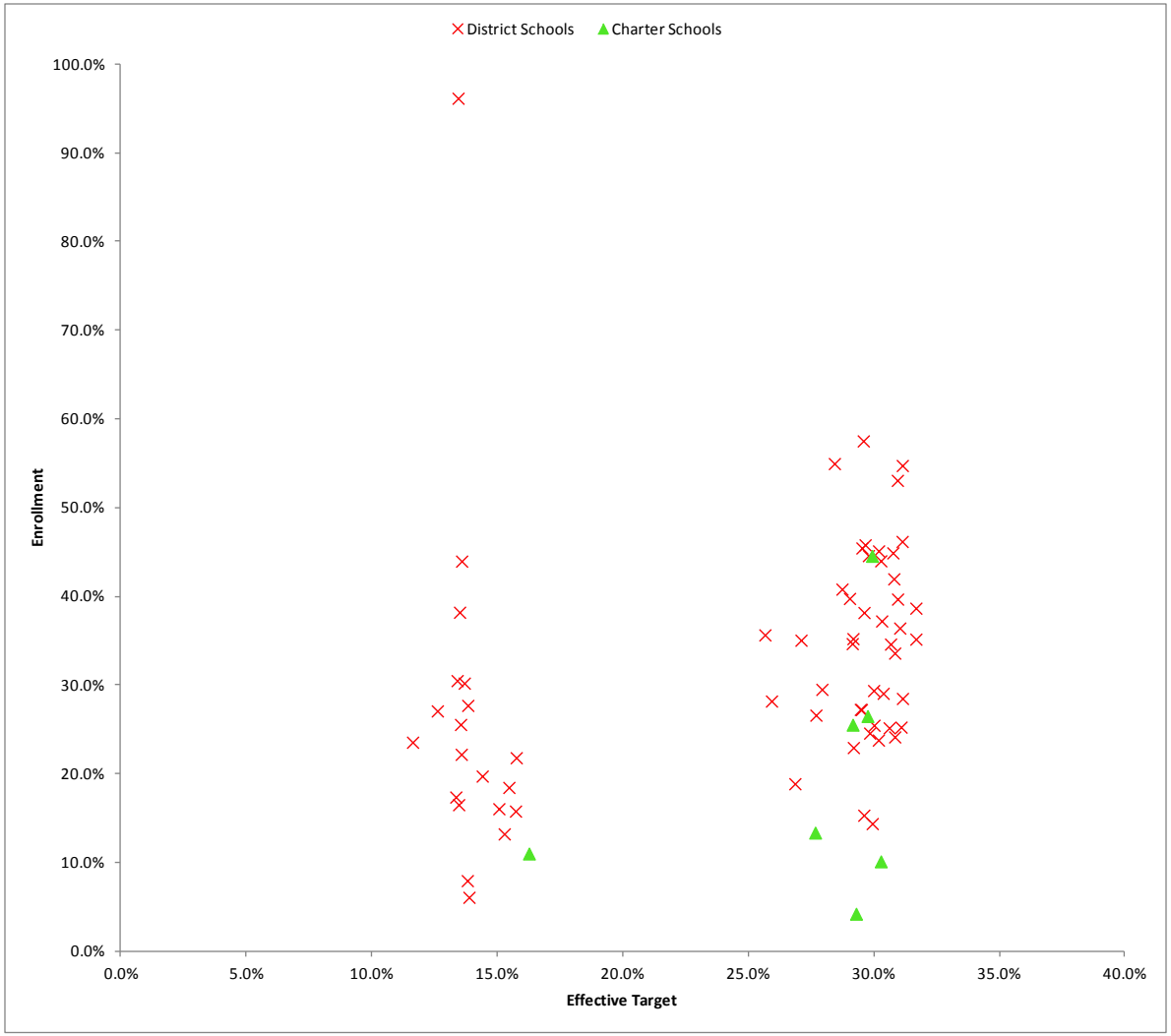
- Adjusting E&R targets statistically to make them more accurate



Confidence Intervals

- **This model considers variations in enrollment and retention rates by grade band and school size**
- **SED and Institute analysts considered several ways to generate confidence intervals**
- **Precedent for using confidence intervals**
  - Modeled after the "Effective Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) model" from NCLB

Effective Target Model

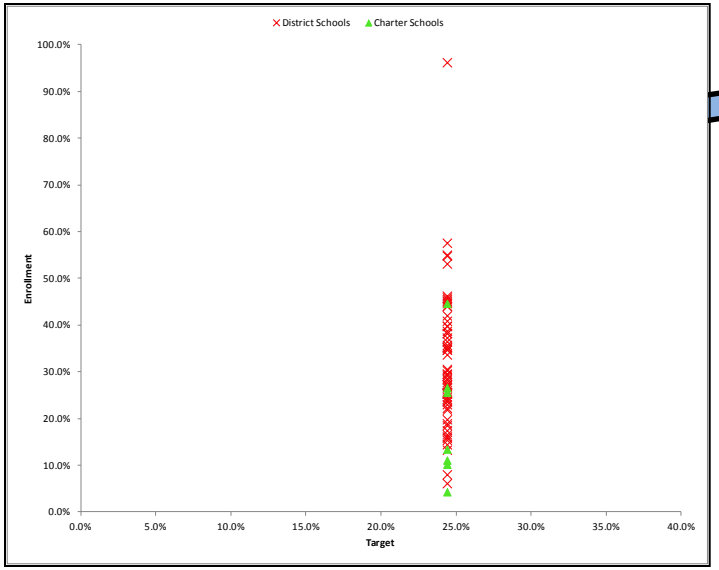


Effective Target Model: Decision Criteria and Outcome

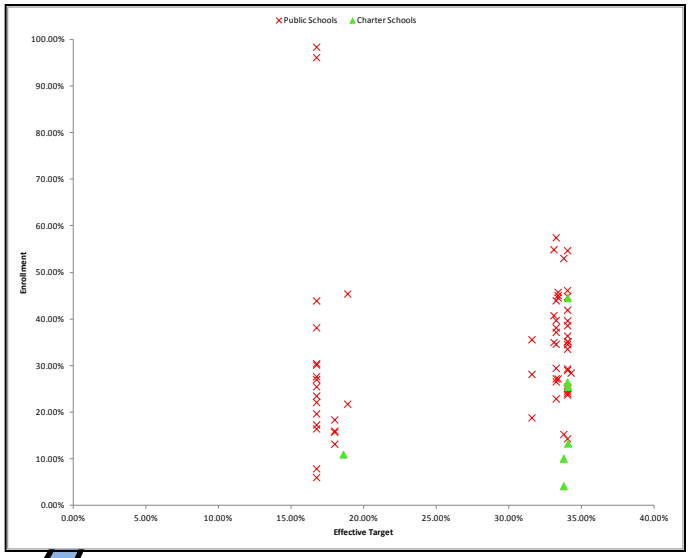
- **Strengths:**
  - Includes strengths from previous models
  - Establishes targets at the district level
  - Accounts for effects of random selection of students into school
  - Accounts for variability in enrollment rates related to school size, via the use of confidence intervals to establish an "Effective Target"

- **Weaknesses:**
  - Still subject to influence of "outliers," especially those that are large
  - In some districts, SWD and ELLs can be concentrated in specific schools, leading many other district schools to fall below district-wide targets

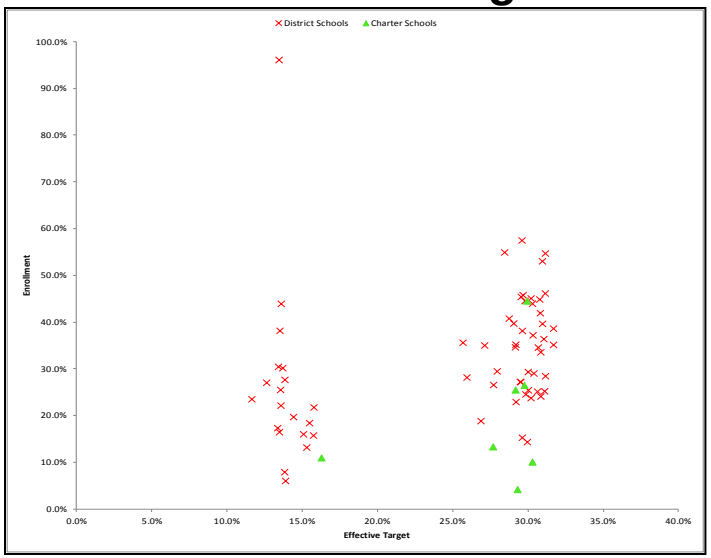
#1 - District Mean



#2 – District Mean at Grade Level



#3 - Effective Target



Proposed Approach: Setting Targets

- **Targets set to account for grade span and projected enrollment at time of renewal**
  - If the school is well established, the predicted targets will be fairly reliable
  - If the school is growing, then there will be greater variability

Monitoring and Reporting

- **Authorizer staff will:**
  - Review data at the time of application, during annual reporting and at renewal
  - Monitor schools' efforts to attract, enroll and retain students through the charter term as well as results of those efforts
    - This may require a new approach to documentation and maintaining records
- **Each authorizer will establish practices for evaluation**

Next Steps

- **Informational webinars**
- **MS Excel© files posted on SUNY and SED websites:**
  - http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/
  - http://www.newyorkcharters.org/TargetsWebinar.htm
- **Multiple avenues for feedback through May 29th**
- **SUNY and NYSED will review and incorporate feedback**
  - Plan is to present final methodology to SUNY Trustees (June 11-12) and Board of Regents (June 18-19) for proposed adoption

We Want to Hear From You!

- **Comments to both NYSED and the Institute will be accepted through May 29, 2012:**
  - **Via e-mail to: TargetsWebinar@suny.edu**
  - Via surface mail to:
    - SUNY Charter Schools Institute
      Attn: Webinar Feedback
      41 State Street, Suite 700
      Albany, New York 12207
- **FAQ posted within one week of the webinar; revised weekly**