



BELLWETHER
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Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration

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Virginia Commission on Youth

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Agenda

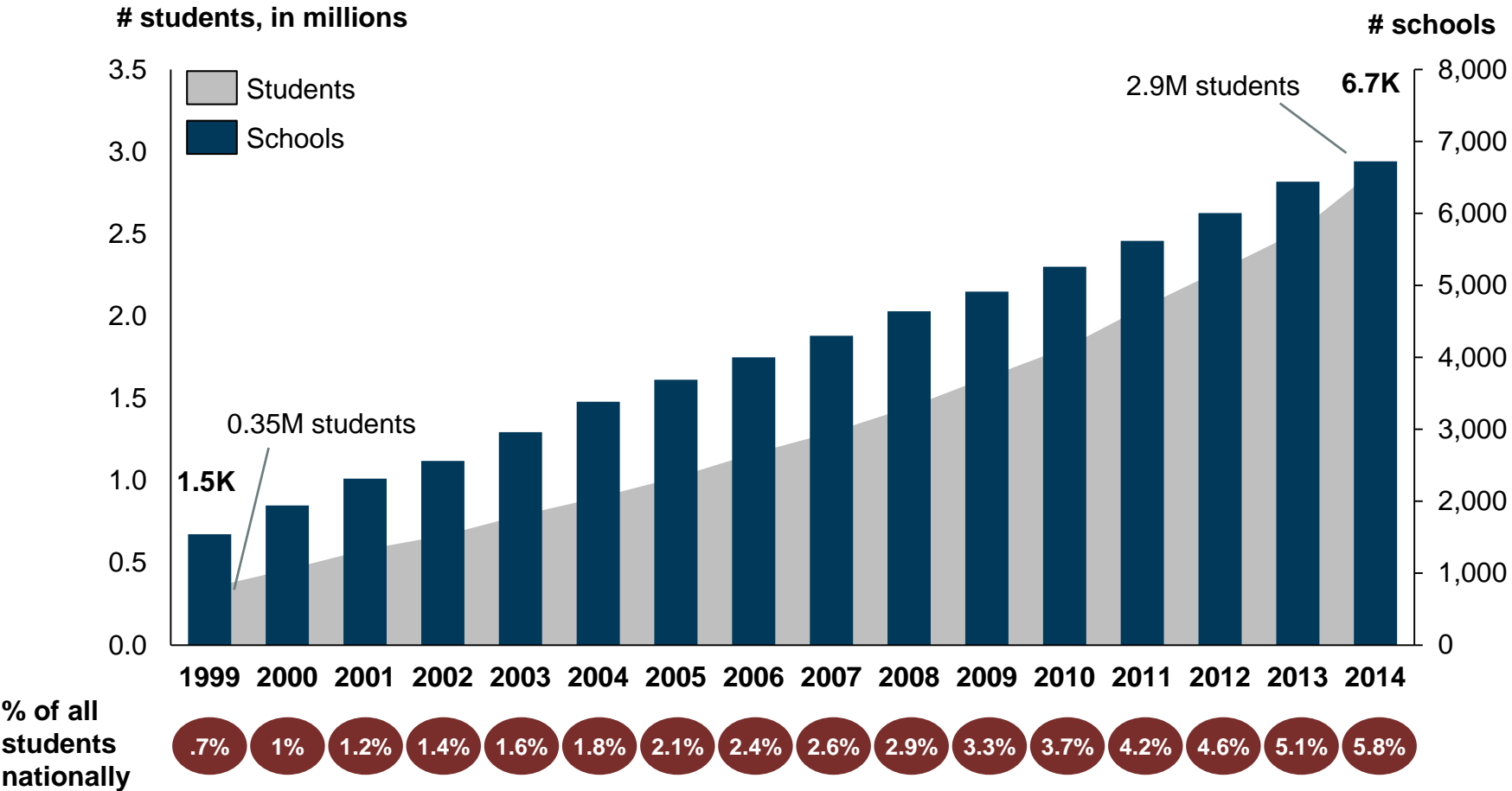
Overview

Key Barriers

Recommendations

Nationally, the number of charter schools and students has grown rapidly over the past 15 years

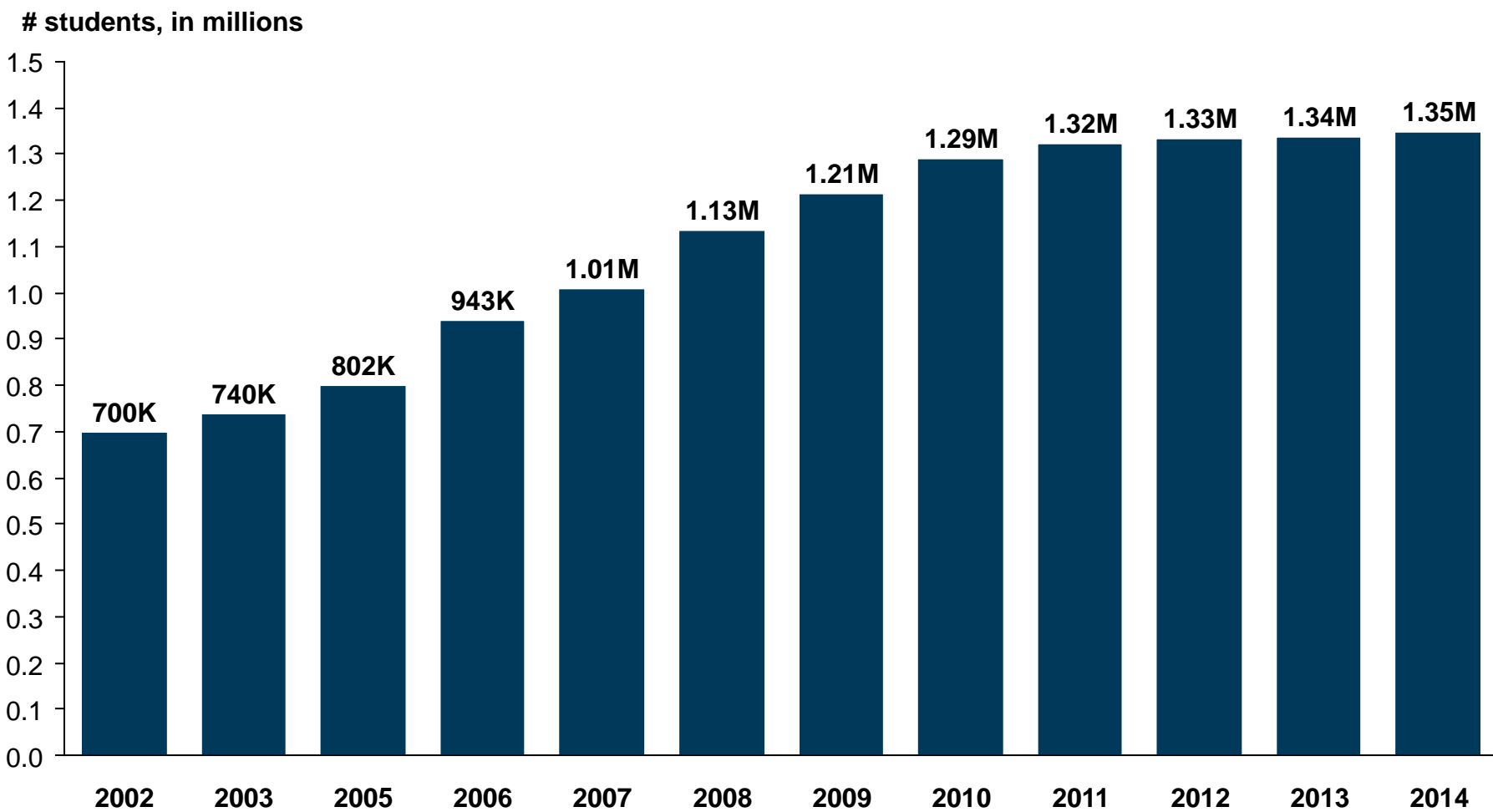
Number of Charter Schools and Student Enrollment by Year



Sources: NAPCS National Data, 1999-2014; NCES 2013, 2014.

Pre-k enrollment has also expanded rapidly

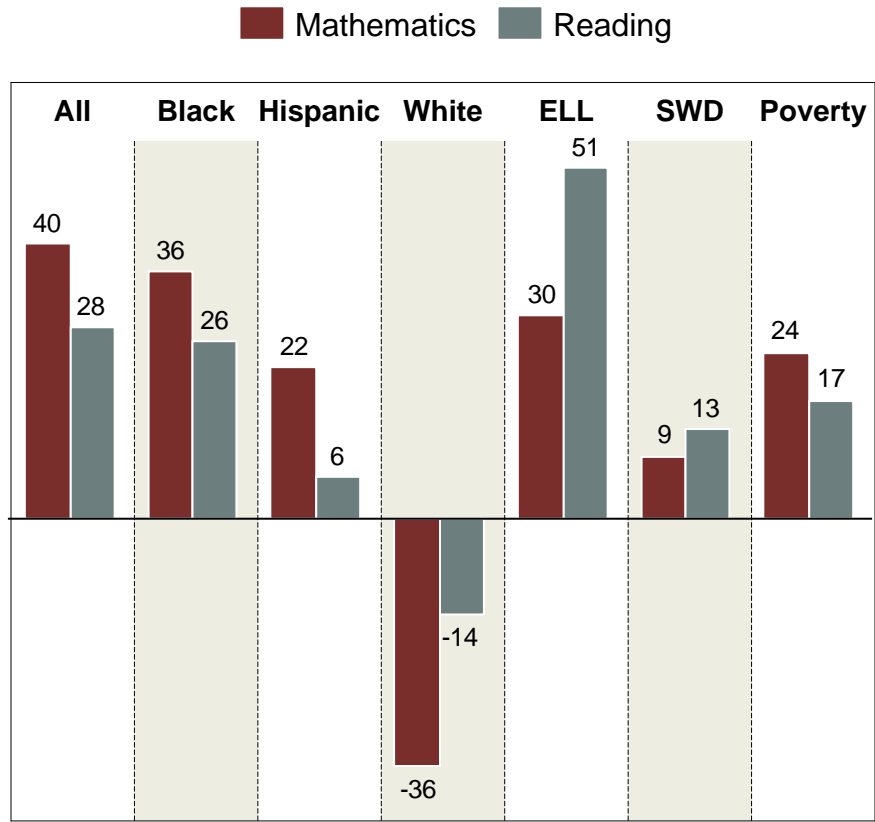
Student Enrollment in State Pre-K by Year



Both state-funded pre-k and charter schools disproportionately benefit low-income children

Urban charter schools create greatest gains for black, ELL, and low-income students

Most state pre-k programs were created to narrow achievement gaps for at-risk children



- Learning gaps for low-income children emerge as early as 9 months of age
- By age 3, children in poverty have heard 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers
- Between 1/3-1/2 of the achievement gap exists before children enter kindergarten

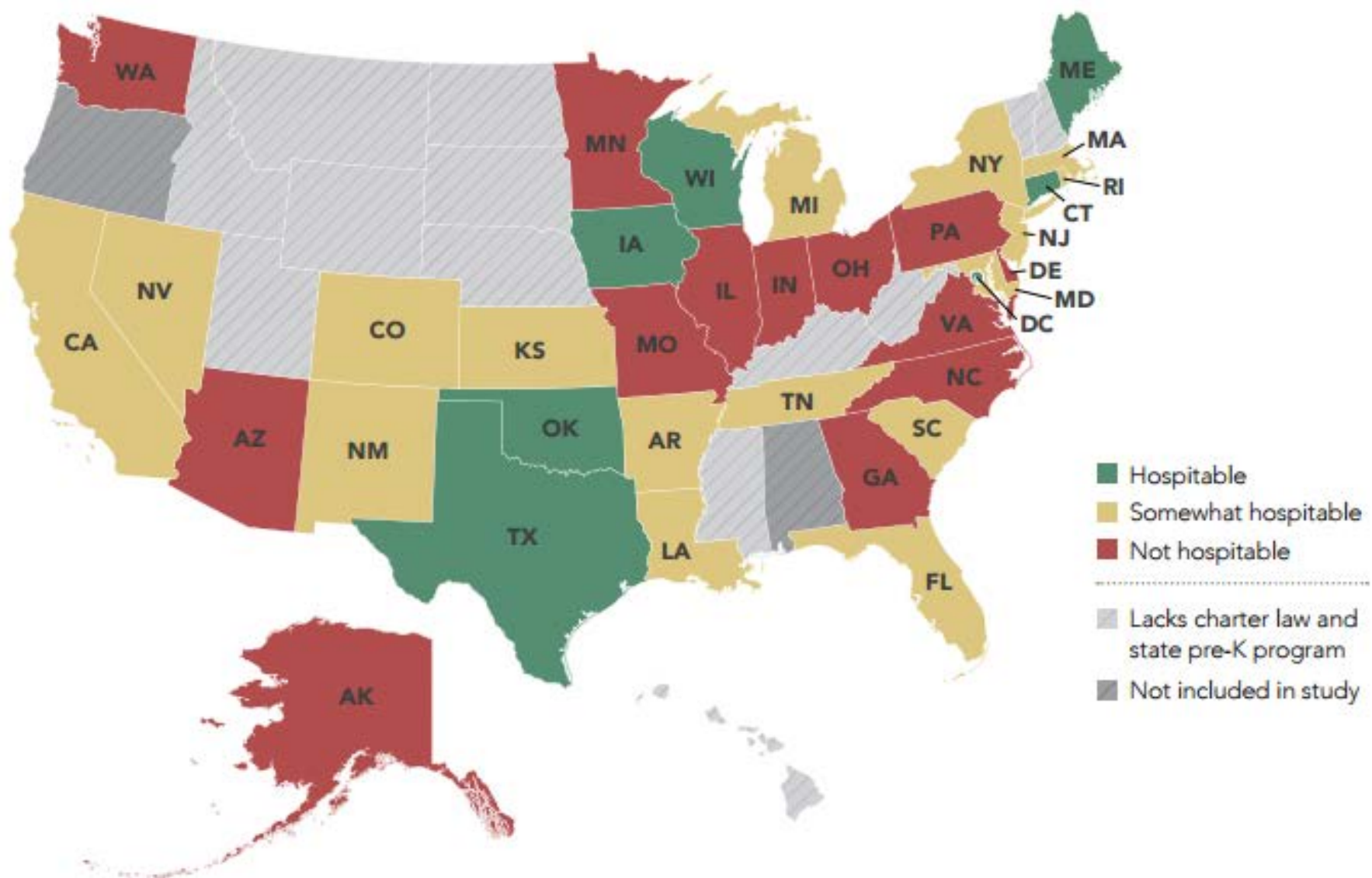
But quality preschool can narrow these gaps

- Research on universal pre-k programs in Oklahoma shows that all children can benefit from pre-k but that children in poverty and English language learners reap the greatest benefit, narrowing achievement gaps

Note: ELL: English language learners. SWD: students with disabilities. Poverty: Students who are eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. Sources: CREDO National Charter School Study (2013), CREDO Urban Charter School Study (2015).

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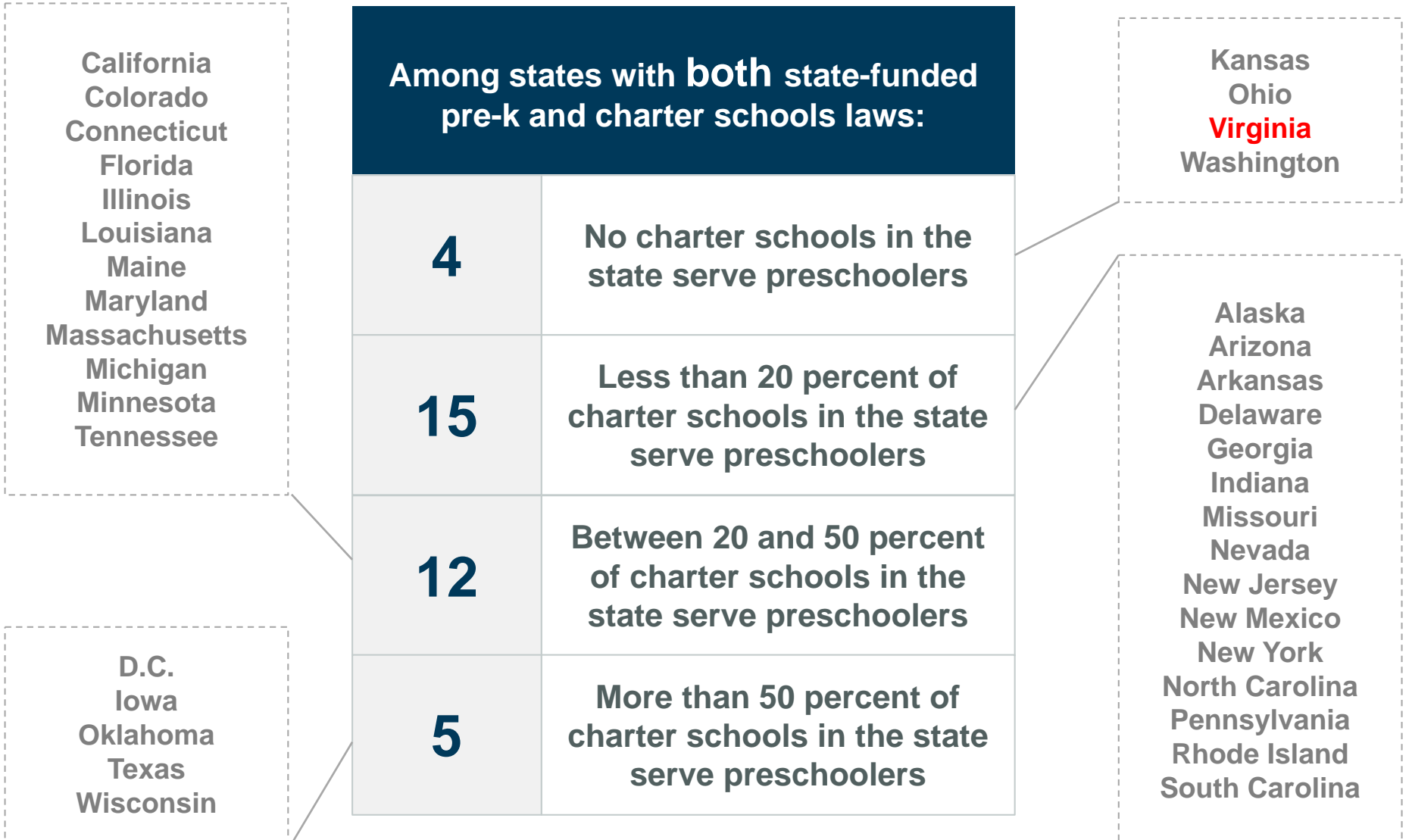
But most states are missing the opportunity to combine pre-k and charter schools to benefit students



Virginia has a moderately well-developed pre-k program, but a very weak charter law and sector

	Virginia Preschool Initiative	Charter schools in Virginia
Year created	Launched in 1995	Charter law enacted in 1998
Children in state	207,218 3- and 4-year-olds in Virginia	1,543,443 school-age children in Virginia
Children served	17,295 children served 0 percent of 3-year-olds 17 percent of 4-year-olds	725 students served .05 percent of school-age children 6 charter schools
Charters offering pre-k	No charter schools in Virginia offer pre-k.	2 charter schools in Virginia offer elementary programs
Funding	Districts receive \$3,000 to \$6,000 per pupil to offer VPI	Charter schools receive \$10,969 per pupil to serve K-12 students

While most states have some charter schools offering pre-k work, Virginia has none



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In the majority of states, charters face numerous barriers to accessing state pre-k funding

1

Charters are prohibited from offering pre-k based on writing or interpretation of statute, regulation, or agency policy

2

Few state-funded pre-k program slots

3

Low per-pupil funding for state-funded pre-k

4

Charters are prohibited, in legislation or practice, from automatically enrolling pre-k students into kindergarten

5

Barriers in the application, approval, or funding processes

Policy, size, and funding barriers prevent charter schools from accessing state-funded pre-k

<p>9</p>	<p>Statutory, regulatory, or agency policy prohibitions</p>	<p>Arizona Delaware Georgia</p>	<p>Illinois Indiana North Carolina</p>	<p>Ohio Pennsylvania Washington</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Small state-funded pre-k program</p>	<p>Alaska Arizona Delaware Indiana</p>	<p>Massachusetts Minnesota Missouri Nevada</p>	<p>Ohio Pennsylvania Rhode Island Washington</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>Low per-pupil pre-k funding</p>	<p>Alaska Arkansas California Colorado Florida Georgia Illinois</p>	<p>Louisiana Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Nevada New Mexico</p>	<p>New York North Carolina Ohio Pennsylvania South Carolina Tennessee Virginia Washington</p>

Practical barriers also limit charter access to state pre-k funds

9	Local district monopoly on pre-k funding	Alaska Colorado Iowa	Kansas Maryland Ohio	South Carolina Tennessee Virginia
9	Allocation decisions privilege existing providers over new providers	California Delaware Georgia	Illinois Kansas Louisiana	New Jersey North Carolina Pennsylvania
10	Automatic enrollment from pre-k into kindergarten is prohibited	Arizona Delaware Illinois	Indiana Missouri New Jersey North Carolina	Ohio Virginia Washington

Four key barriers prevent charter schools from serving pre-k students in Virginia

Size of Sector

There are few charter schools in the state, which limits how much charter schools can serve as pre-k providers

Application Process

Charter schools interested in offering VPI can only do so by contracting with localities that receive VPI funding

Automatic Enrollment

Charter schools that contract with a locality to offer VPI are not permitted to grant enrollment preference to pre-k students

Funding

Per-pupil funding for VPI is low

- 27 percent for half-day VPI
- 56 percent for full-day VPI

Yet despite these barriers, in certain states it's relatively easy for charters to serve preschoolers

Washington, D.C.

Wisconsin

Oklahoma

Michigan

Texas

Florida

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State policymakers must play a significant role if states are to increase charter access to state pre-k funding

State Policymakers

Consider how state **pre-k**, **charter**, and **school finance** policies **interact**

Include pre-k in the **state definition** of what charter schools do



Ensure that charter schools have **equal access** to **state pre-k funds**

Require **districts** that offer **widespread pre-k** to **transfer funding** to charters for **each district student enrolling in the charter pre-k**



Allow charters with **public pre-k** to **automatically enroll** their pre-k students **into kindergarten**

Collect **better data** on charter schools that offer pre-K and on **charter school participation in pre-k programs**

Increase **authorizers' role** in **overseeing** charter pre-k programs

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