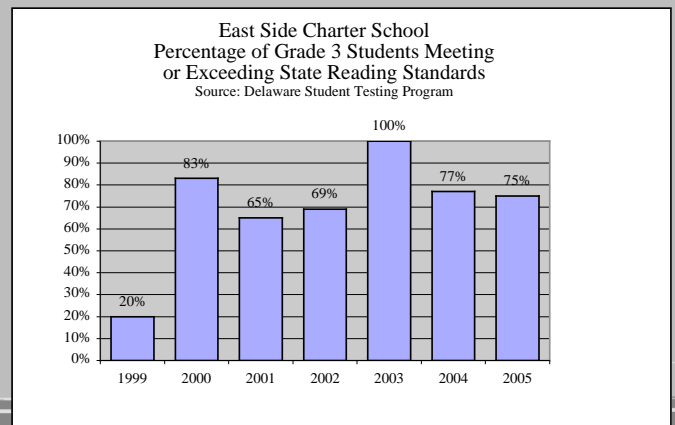


## Delaware Charter School Students Maintains High Reading Scores

After opening its doors in 1997 to some of the state's most economically and educationally disadvantaged children, East Side Charter School has amassed a prestigious academic record. The school was recognized with a State Congressional Statement honoring student achievement in 2002. It also received the Title I Distinguished Schools Award in 2001, given to Title I schools that best demonstrate how educational programs can result in significant achievement of the school's most academically disadvantaged students. In 2004 it received a Pride of SRA Academic Recognition Award for showing dramatic academic success.

After adopting the Direct Instruction programs *Reading Mastery*, *Reasoning and Writing*, and *Spelling Mastery* school-wide in 1998, Grade 3 test scores on the reading portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program dramatically improved – from 20% of students meeting/exceeding state reading standards in 1999 to 83% in 2000.

By 2003, 100% of Grade 3 students (88% of whom came from low-income families) outscored every school in the state on standardized performance tests in both reading and math! In 2004 and 2005, the percentages dipped slightly, but Principal Will Robinson said those scores were more consistent with previous year's scores.



“We look forward to yet another year when our students outscore every school in the state,” Robinson said. “In the meantime, we’re still very happy that our students continue to improve their reading skills each year.”

### Disadvantaged Children Find Success

Robinson said more than 75% of East Side Charter School students live in poverty with only one parent, few of whom completed any college education. Many children live in neighborhoods with high incidences of violence and crime, and some are without proper nutrition and health care.

Robinson stated, “Statistically our kids are considered at-risk, but we don’t use the at-risk designation. Instead, we look at our kids and see the promise in their eyes.”

Facing these social and academic circumstances, Robinson chose to implement Direct Instruction after he was hired as principal and executive director in 1998, one year after the school opened. “I used Direct Instruction programs successfully when I taught special education students in Baltimore and Wilmington,” he explained. “So I didn’t see why we couldn’t use them with general education students.”

Robinson was right. Five years after implementation, each child in Grade 3 met or exceeded state reading standards, achieving the highest score in the state. Now he shares success story after success story involving children who arrive at East Side Charter School reading one to two grade levels below average. After using Direct Instruction’s *Reading Mastery*