Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding research that has been conducted on the organizational structure of charter schools compared to the organizational structure of traditional public schools and the effect on teacher and student performance. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource.

Question: *How does the organizational structure of a charter school affect teacher and student performance compared to the effect of the organizational structure of a traditional public school on teacher and student performance?*

Key words and search strings used in the search: charter school AND public OR traditional; charter school AND public OR traditional AND student achievement;

Search databases and websites:

1. ERIC: http://www.eric.ed.gov/
2. JSTOR: http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch
3. Google Scholar: www.google.com/scholar
4. Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/
5. What Works Clearinghouse: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Citations Retrieved: (NOTE: Abstracts and executive summaries are copied directly from the reports when possible to ensure accuracy):

Braun, H., Jenkins, F. & Grigg, W. (2006). A closer look at charter schools using hierarchical linear modeling (NCES 2006-460). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED493062

Abstract/summary: Charter schools are a relatively new, but fast-growing, phenomenon in American public education. As such, they merit the attention of all parties interested in the education of the nation's youth. Accordingly, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), asked the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to conduct a pilot study of charter schools. A special oversample of charter schools, conducted as part of the 2003 fourth-grade NAEP

assessments, permitted a comparison of academic achievement for students enrolled in charter schools to that for students enrolled in public noncharter schools. The school sample comprised 150 charter schools and 6,764 public noncharter schools. School participation rates were 100 percent for both charter and public noncharter schools; student participation rates were 92 percent and 94 percent for charter and public noncharter schools, respectively. Initial results employing data from the 2003 NAEP fourth-grade assessments in reading and mathematics were presented in the NCES report America's Charter Schools: Results From the NAEP 2003 Pilot Study (NCES 2004).

Chingos, M. M. & West, M. R. (2015). The uneven performance of Arizona's charter schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *37*(1), 120S-134S. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1058624

Abstract/summary: Arizona enrolls a larger share of its students in charter schools than any other state in the country, but no comprehensive examination exists of the impact of those schools on student achievement. Using student-level data covering all Arizona students from 2006 to 2012, we find that the performance of charter schools in Arizona in improving student achievement varies widely, and more so than that of traditional public schools (TPS). On average, charter schools at every grade level have been modestly less effective than TPS in raising student achievement in some subjects. But charter schools that closed during this period have been lower performing than schools that remained open, a pattern that is not evident in the traditional public sector.

Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO). (2015). Urban charter school study report on 41 regions. Stanford, CA. Retrieved from https://credo.stanford.edu/.

Abstract/summary: This report presents an investigation conducted by CREDO over the past two years. We examined charter school performance in urban areas, driven by our ongoing effort to identify successful models for educating America's students, particularly students of color and students living in poverty. We sought to determine whether urban charter schools have different performance than other schools in their communities. In addition, we asked if urban charter schools present results that differ from the charter school landscape as a whole, as estimated in the 2013 National Charter School Study. Finally, if differences were identified in urban charter schools, could we provide any insight into which elements of the urban charter sectors might correlate with differences in results? Using student level data obtained via data sharing agreements with our state education agency partners, we studied 41 urban areas in 22 states covering the school years 2006-07 through 2011-12. The outcome of interest was the academic advancement in one year's time of a typical student in a charter school compared to the same measure for a virtual peer from local traditional public schools in the same location as the charter school.

Gleason, P., Clark, M., Tuttle, C. C. & Dwoyer, E. (2010). The evaluation of charter school impacts: Final report (NCEE 2010-4029). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED510573

Abstract/summary: Charter schools, first launched in the 1990s, are an important and growing component of the public school system in the United States. As of November 2009, more than 5,000 charter schools served over 1.5 million students—approximately three percent of all public school students—in 40 states and the District of Columbia (Center for Education Reform 2009). Charter schools are intended to play a key role in school improvement under the existing Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) as well as the programs established under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. However, there remains considerable debate as to whether, how, and under what circumstances charter schools improve the outcomes of students who attend them. This report summarizes the results of a new study: the Evaluation of Charter School Impacts, a large-scale randomized trial of the effectiveness of charter schools funded by the Institute of Education Sciences and conducted by Mathematica Policy Research and its partners.1 The evaluation, which we conducted in 36 charter middle schools across 15 states, compares outcomes of students who applied and were admitted to these schools through randomized admissions lotteries (lottery winners) with the outcomes of students who also applied to these schools and participated in the lotteries but were not admitted (lottery losers). This analytic approach produces the most reliable impact estimates. But because the study could only include charter middle schools that held lotteries, the results do not necessarily apply to the full set of charter middle schools in the U.S.

Harris, D. C. (2007). Should I stay or should I go? Comparing teacher mobility in Florida's charter and traditional public schools. *Peabody Journal of Education, 82*(2-3), 274-310. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ772343

Abstract/summary: Currently, we know very little about the mobility decisions of charter public school teachers and how these compare to the decisions made by traditional public school teachers. In addition, it is unclear whether the teachers who leave charter schools tend to be weaker or stronger than their peers. Using statewide administrative data, I begin to answer these questions by studying the magnitude and nature of teacher turnover in Florida's charter public schools compared with turnover in the state's traditional public schools. It appears that Florida's charter school administrators may be better able to recruit and retain teachers with high academic skills than their traditional counterparts. In addition, the mobility patterns exhibited by Florida's charter school teachers differ from those exhibited by traditional school teachers in important ways, including greater sensitivity to accountability measures and less sensitivity to salary considerations.

Jeynes, W. H. (2012). A meta-analysis on the effects and contributions of public, public charter, and religious schools on student outcomes. *Peabody Journal of Education, 87*(3), 305-335. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ971904

Abstract/summary: An extensive meta-analysis, including 90 studies, was undertaken on the effects of religious private schools, charter schools, and public schools. The study explores the relationship between each of these school types and student outcomes. Additional analyses were done to determine the strengths and weaknesses of these institutions in a broad sense. The results indicate that attending private religious schools is associated with the highest level of academic achievement among the three school types, even when sophisticated controls are used to adjust for socioeconomic status. Students from public charter schools, however, performed no better than their counterparts in other public schools. Supplementary analyses indicate several ways that educators from religious and public schools can learn from one another.

Kindzierski, C. M., Mhammed, A. A. S., Wallace, N. & Lesh, C. (2013). State assessments: Does a charter school truly demonstrate higher proficiency than its public counterpart? *Current Issues in Education, 16*(2), 1-12. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1016229

Abstract/summary: This project compared annual mandated assessment results for an urban charter school, two comparable urban schools and the encompassing urban district. Scores in grades three through eight in the target school were analyzed to determine the percentage of students scoring at proficiency levels three and four (scores of one and two are considered failing). These scores were then compared to the surrounding district as well as two other schools with similar demographics using a Z-test for estimation of a proportion. The results indicated although the number of students who performed at proficiency in the target school seemed to be higher, once corrected for the disparity in population size, these students perform the same, or worse than, students in comparable schools. Further, the scores are more inconsistent between grades in the target school than the scores in the lower performing schools. Suggestions for remediating the inconsistency and addressing the problems for consistently low percentage of proficiency scores are provided.

Lubienski, S. T & Christopher Lubienski, C. (2006). School sector and academic achievement: A multilevel analysis of NAEP mathematics data. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*(4), 651-698. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ759765

Abstract/summary: Using data from the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress, this analysis compared mathematics achievement in public, charter, and major types of private schools to examine whether disparities in achievement are due to differences in school performance or student demographics in various sectors. Hierarchical linear models were used to control for student- and school level demographic characteristics. The analysis indicated that the relatively

high raw scores of private schools were more than accounted for by student demographics. In fact, after demographic differences had been controlled, the private school advantage disappeared and even reversed in most cases. These findings raise questions about the basis of reform models that seek remedies in parental choice, autonomy, competition, and other attributes associated with the private school sector.

Stuit, D. A., & Smith, T. M. (2012). Explaining the gap in charter and traditional public school teacher turnover rates. *Economics of Education Review, 31*(2), 268-279. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ957641

Abstract/summary: This study uses national survey data to examine why charter school teachers are more likely to turnover than their traditional public school counterparts. We test whether the turnover gap is explained by different distributions of factors that are empirically and theoretically linked to turnover risk. We find that the turnover rate of charter school teachers was twice as high as traditional public school teachers in 2003–04. Differences in the distributions of our explanatory variables explained 61.0% of the total turnover gap. The higher proportions of uncertified and inexperienced teachers in the charter sector, along with the lower rate of union membership, were the strongest contributors to the turnover gap. Charter school teachers were more likely to self-report that working conditions motivated their decisions to leave the profession or move schools, although we found no measurable evidence that the actual working conditions of charter and traditional public schools were different.8-279.

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2014, January). *WWC review of the report: National charter school study: 2013.* http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544744

Abstract/summary: The study reviewed here examined the effect of charter schools on annual student achievement growth in reading and math in 25 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City. The study primarily used data on students in grades 3-8, but additional elementary and high school grades were included for several states. The authors reported that charter school students in the sample had annual reading score growth that was 0.01 standard deviations higher than that of students in traditional public schools. This difference was statistically significant. There was no statistically significant difference between charter school students and traditional public school students in their year-to-year gains in math. The research described in this report meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations. This study was a large, multi-year analysis in which the authors matched charter school students with traditional public school students based on observed demographic characteristics and test scores. However, unobserved differences between the two groups may have existed. In addition, the study's results do not have a straightforward interpretation because they blend the 1-year gains students experienced during their first year of charter school attendance and 1-year gains during subsequent

years. Finally, the effect sizes reported in this study (which are based on an analysis of achievement gains) are not directly comparable to effect sizes reported by other studies that analyzed achievement levels. The following are appended: (1) Study details; (2) Outcome measures for each domain; (3) Study findings for each domain; and (4) Supplemental findings by domain. A glossary of terms is also included.

Referrals

Federally Funded Resources:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES), public search engine available at: http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/
- What Works Clearinghouse: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/\\

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