
From: James Merriman |
Sent: Sunday, December 06, 2009 2:42 PM
To: White John
Subject: Fw: [NYCoRE] Fw: Fyi Wednesday's bklyn cl meeting cancelled to rally at maxwell

Fyi
James Merriman
NYC Charter School Center
111 Broadway, Suite 604
NY, NY 10006

----- Original Message -----

From: Stacey Gauthier <
To: James Merriman; murphy
Sent: Sun Dec 06 10:03:43 2009
Subject: Fw: [NYCoRE] Fw: Fyi Wednesday's bklyn cl meeting cancelled to rally at maxwell

>
> On 12/5/09, Angel Gonzalez wrote:

>>
>>
>> -----
>> -----
>>
>> From: "Charles Friedman" <
>> Date: Fri, 4 Dec 2009 18:17:30 -0500
>> To: William Kalogeras; Adam
>> Kuthe; Alan Fried; Amy
>> Zarrouk; Andres
>> Cruciani;
>> Barbara Colon; Brenda
>> Caldwell; Cecilee Rauner
>> ; Chris Renaud;
>> Dawnyelle
>> Prince; Eugenia Kelch;
>> Gaston Allen; Harold
>> Webb; Jay Wiprovnick; Jeff
>> Slater; Joe Matunis; John

>> Yanno< >> Justin Wedes<
>> Kathryn Barbuto< ; Kris
>> Macklin< ; Linda Peloquin< ;
>> Lorraine Tummings< ; Maria
>> Pascual< ; >> Robert
>> Kanyuk< ; Rocco Gentile< >> Rose
>> Robinson< >> Sharon
>> Kleinfeld< ; Tom Andros< ;
>> Wayne Tobias< ; Robert
>> Polinsky< ; Charles Friedman< ;
>> Dominique Borgella< ; Richard
>> Mangone<
>> Cc: Emma Mendez
>> Subject: Wednesday's meeting
>>
>>
>>

>> Ladies and Gentlemen: Our Chapters' Leaders on Wed. is cancelled.
>> See Tony's message below for the reason. Hope to see you at Maxwell.
>>
>>
>>

>> Best
>>
>> Charlie
>>
>>
>>

>> -----Original Message-----
>> From: Anthony Sclafani
>> Sent: Friday, December 04, 2009 4:54 PM
>> To: Charles Friedman
>> Subject: FW: TONY'S BROOKLYN HIGH SCHOOLS - MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT
>> REPRESENTATIVE - NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2009
>>
>>
>>
>>
>>

>> Colleagues,
>>
>>
>>
>>
>>

>> Also, please note - Wednesday's Chapter Leader Meeting is cancelled.
>> That's
>> right. You have to feed yourself on Wednesday, December 9th. Now-
>> the question you are asking is WHY?
>>
>>
>>

>> The answer has a more serious note to it and I need your help and
>> attention on this one.
>>

>>
>>
>> As you may know, the staff at Maxwell High School was notified this week
>> that their school was closing. The three of us, Charley, Charlie and I
>> are
>> taking this very seriously, especially Charley Turner since this is his
>> school. We are concerned about many things and some of these will affect
>> you and your schools.
>>
>>
>>
>> First, statistically, Maxwell has been on a steady road to improvement
>> over
>> the past three years. We can prove that.
>>
>>
>>
>> Second, the grading system that determined this is flawed, as everyone in
>> education agrees.
>>
>>
>>
>> Third, where will the overflow go? Jefferson Campus? Madison? Wingate
>> Campus? Transit Tech? School for the Classics? Lane Campus? Wherever
>> these
>> students go, it will have an effect on these schools since there is no
>> one
>> being admitted into Maxwell.
>>
>>
>>
>> Fourth, I believe that this closing is for one reason and one reason
>> only -
>> SPACE. Where else do we put those new Charter Schools? Or better yet,
>> where do we create empty space to justify new Charters somewhere down the
>> road?
>>
>>
>>
>> Fifth, who's next on the chopping block? Flawed data, fake reasons, a
>> determined philosophy to close large comprehensive high schools at any
>> cost
>> - all these excuses can be used against anyone of you, even some of the
>> smaller schools.
>>
>>
>>
>> Let's invest money and resources into our existing schools and make them
>> better. It can be done.
>>
>>
>>
>> So ----- instead of a Chapter Leader Meeting, there will be a rally
>> outside
>> Maxwell on Wednesday, December 9th at 4:30 p.m. Please make every effort
>> to
>> attend. Bring as many staff as you can. Let's make a presence on

>> Pennsylvania Ave. Wednesday that will attract everyone's attention.
>> Those
>> of you geographically located in Community School District 19 - Jefferson
>> Campus and Classics - please, please, please get your members to be
>> thereon
>> Wednesday.
>>
>>
>>
>> This is a battle for all of us. This is a global issue that needs our
>> response. Get your heads out of the sand. Take the excuse that "this
>> doesn't affect me" and turn it around to this is an issue that affects my
>> brothers and sisters at Maxwell as well as my colleagues in the
>> surrounding
>> schools, so it DOES affect me. And remember, your neighborhood an
>> school
>> community can be next.
>>
>>
>>
>> Thanks for understanding. See you Wednesday afternoon at Maxwell,
>> Pennsylvania Ave. and Liberty Ave.
>>
>>
>>
>> Take the "C" to Liberty Ave. Take the "3" to Pennsylvania Ave. Take the
>> "J"
>> or "Z" to Alabama Avenue. Take the B12. Take anyway you can get there.
>>
>>
>>
>> This is a real test of our solidarity. Pass it with flying colors,
>> folks.
>>
>>
>>
>> Thanks for your understanding.
>>
>>
>>
>> Fraternally,
>>
>> Tony
>>
>>
>>
>> Tony Sclafani
>>
>> UFT Special Representative
>>
>> 718-852-4900
>>
>> 718-852-9891 (fax)
>>
>>
>>
>> -----Original Message-----

>> From: Annette Devero
>> Sent: Friday, December 04, 2009 4:20 PM
>> To: Anthony Sclafani
>> Subject: TONY'S BROOKLYN HIGH SCHOOLS - MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT
>> REPRESENTATIVE - NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2009
>>
>>
>>
>> TONY: HERE IT IS.
>>
>>
>>
>> Thanks, Annette Devero
>>
>>
>>
>> United Federation of Teachers
>>
>> UFT - Brooklyn Borough Office
>>
>> 335 Adams Street, 25th Floor
>>
>> Brooklyn, NY 11201
>>
>> 718-852-4900 - Ext:
>>
>>
>>
>> *****
>>
>> The views, opinions, and judgments expressed in this message are solely
>> those of the author. The message contents have not been reviewed or
>> approved
>> by the UFT.
>>
>> *****
>>
>>
>> --
>>

>

From: James Merriman
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2009 3:59 PM
To: Klein Joel I.; White John
Subject: FW: Capitol Update: Governor to Delay School Aid Payments

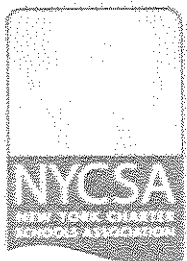
I take it that you do not intend to delay charter school payments per below. Please confirm.

.....
James D. Merriman
Chief Executive Officer

NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOL CENTER
111 Broadway, Suite 604, New York, NY 10006
T: 212.437.8302 F: 212. 227.2763
www.nycchartercenter.org

It's about great public schools

From: NYCSA Bulletins [<mailto:bulletins@nycsa.org>]
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2009 3:56 PM
To: Michelle Wagner
Subject: Capitol Update: Governor to Delay School Aid Payments



new ideas, better schools

Thursday, December 10, 2009

RE: Gov. Paterson announces delays in School Aid Payments to Districts; Potential Charter School Impact

To Charter School Members:

This week Gov. David Paterson announced he has ordered the state Division of the Budget to delay state payments of school aid to districts, along with other local assistance payments. The Governor is justifying his action to deal with the state's cash flow shortfall this month, which he blames on the state legislature's failure to enact sufficient current-year budget savings, e.g., the legislature refused to approve mid-year budget cuts in education funding.

School districts, of course, are required by Education Law section 2856(1) to pay tuition payments to charter schools their resident charter students in six installments annually, with the next payment due January 1st. Charter schools should be prepared for a possible delay of such payments by school districts in response to the state's failure to make its own timely payments of school aid. There is discussion of a potential lawsuit to block the Governor from delaying payments to districts, but we wanted to make sure you knew about the state's intercept law related to a district that fails to pay a charter school. The intercept law is completely separate from what the Governor is planning to do and it is a school district's action—failure to pay a charter school should—that would be the subject of the intercept.

In the event that a school district fails to pay a charter school the funds owed, a school may request the state Education Department to intercept future school aid payments to the district to pay the charter school. The form to request a state aid intercept can be found at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/documents/StateAidinterceptform2-20-04.pdf>

NY Charter Schools Association
120 Broadway, Albany, NY 12204
Ofc: (518) 694-3110
www.nycsa.org

SAVE THE DATE: **FEBRUARY 2, 2010**
2010 Charter School Advocacy Day!
@ the State Capitol, Albany, NY

From: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Saturday, December 12, 2009 1:13 PM
To: 'joewilliams@dfer.org'
Subject: Re: Fwd: Milwaukee bill - action this week

Great. They so bombed Naep, it's scary. Call anytime this weekend if you want.

From: williams
To: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Sat Dec 12 13:11:05 2009
Subject: Fwd: Milwaukee bill - action this week
FYI, the latest on Milwaukee. i will give you a call next week on NY stuff. have a great weekend.

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Joe Williams** <joewilliams@dfer.org>
Date: Sat, Dec 12, 2009 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Milwaukee bill - action this week
To: Jon Schnur < >, Mike Johnston < >

Bill gives Barrett mega power over schools

By Larry Sandler and Erin Richards of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Dec. 11, 2009

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett would have more power over the Milwaukee Public Schools superintendent and budget than nearly any other U.S. mayor holds over a big-city school system, under a bill the Legislature is to consider Wednesday.

"If they go ahead with the present plan, it will make for one of the most powerful education mayors in the country," said Joe Viteritti, a professor of public policy at Hunter College who led a commission to study mayoral control in New York City and has edited a book, "When Mayors Take Charge."

The bill, sponsored by state Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), would allow the mayor to appoint the superintendent without confirmation by the School Board or Common Council, and would let the superintendent set the school budget and tax levy without a vote by the board or council.

Elected School Board members - who now select the superintendent and approve the budget - would be limited to an advisory role on the budget and would control only such functions as student discipline, community outreach and adult recreation.

Supporters say the change is needed to improve student performance and to show willingness to make bold reforms, part of the qualifications for a chunk of the federal Race to the Top program's \$4.35 billion in funding. Opponents object to taking authority away from the elected board.

Gov. Jim Doyle, who backs the idea, has called lawmakers into special session to take up the bill, starting Wednesday, although he cannot force them to act.

Responding to a question from Ald. Bob Donovan, Audra Brennan, project manager for the MPS Innovation & Improvement Council, told a council committee Nov. 30 that the mayor's powers under the legislation would be similar to those in other cities where mayors have taken control of school districts.

But of the seven largest U.S. cities where mayors have a major role in running the schools, none has given a mayor or superintendent sole power to set the school district budget without school board or city council approval, a Journal Sentinel survey of districts found. And only New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley can appoint their school systems' chief executives without confirmation by a school board or city council.

In all seven cities, mayors appoint all or part of their school boards. In four of those cities, other elected officials have a role in appointing or confirming board members. Only Daley, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson can appoint full boards without confirmation.

School boards choose superintendents in four cities, with mayoral approval in Cleveland. Budgets require final approval by school boards in four cities, council approval in two cities and action by both the school board and the city council in New York City.

Of the seven cities, only Washington, D.C., has a school board without authority to hire a superintendent or approve a budget. Five of the board's nine members are elected and four are named by Mayor Adrian Fenty, with council confirmation.

Elsewhere in Milwaukee city and county government, most top administrators are appointed by the mayor or county executive and confirmed by the council or County Board. Milwaukee's police and fire chiefs are appointed to four-year terms by the Fire & Police Commission, whose members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. The Milwaukee city and county budgets are proposed by the mayor and county executive and approved by the council and County Board, subject to line-item vetoes and overrides.

Accountability stressed

Barrett said mayoral appointment of school boards effectively gives other big-city mayors control over school budgets and superintendent appointments, even if the board officially has final authority. He said Taylor's bill tries to strike a balance between retaining an elected school board and concentrating accountability in the mayor's office.

"We need accountability so we can improve the academic performance of the students," Barrett said. "At the end of the day, the question is going to be: 'Do we embrace the status quo, or do we move forward with reform?'"

Barrett described the legislation as "a work in progress" and said it was possible lawmakers could amend it to create a more powerful School Board that would be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. In fact, Barrett had suggested that idea when he first called for mayoral control of MPS in mid-August, but critics said it would be undemocratic to stop electing board members.

Viteritti said it would be unusual to keep an elected school board but severely clip its authority. He said he thought it was important to have some sort of real school board, with some powers, even under mayoral control.

But two other experts in the subject - Michael Kirst, a professor emeritus of education and business administration at Stanford University, and Kenneth Wong, chair of the education department at Brown University - said that Milwaukee's proposal could pave the way to a new and potentially positive relationship among the School Board, mayor, Common Council and the community.

"It's a unique model, but one of the things we preach is that each one of these is undertaken in a unique context and you have to tailor it to the city," Kirst said. "If the Milwaukee citizens feel strongly about electing somebody, then there's nothing to say that this doesn't make sense."

In cities with a strong form of mayoral control, Kirst said, a common downside is that the public doesn't know where to take their complaints and concerns. Parents end up going to city council members, who aren't prepared for those types of complaints, he said.

Wong said it was important not to underplay the role of an elected school board, which would still be able to hold public forums and offer transparency to citizens.

Milwaukee School Board President Michael Bonds, an outspoken critic of mayoral control, said he felt the quality of the board would dip if members knew they were mostly to play the role of community complaint center.

Taylor and state Rep. Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee), sponsor of a rival bill that would let the School Board keep more power, did not return calls seeking comment.

The Taylor legislation also calls for a referendum in seven years on whether to keep the mayor in control.

Voters in Boston and Cleveland have chosen to maintain mayoral control of their schools. Detroit voters decided to drop mayoral control, but Michigan authorities took over the school district four years later.

A court challenge blocked a mayoral takeover of the Los Angeles schools. Mayors also have a role in running schools in several smaller cities, and some other school districts have been taken over by states.

--
Joe Williams
Executive Director
Democrats for Education Reform
24 W. 46th St. Suite #4
New York, NY 10036
www.dfer.org

--
Joe Williams
Executive Director
Democrats for Education Reform
24 W. 46th St. Suite #4

New York, NY 10036
www.dfer.org

From: Joe Williams [joewilliams@dfer.org]
Sent: Saturday, December 12, 2009 1:11 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Fwd: Milwaukee bill - action this week

FYI, the latest on Milwaukee. i will give you a call next week on NY stuff. have a great weekend.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Joe Williams <joewilliams@dfer.org>
Date: Sat, Dec 12, 2009 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Milwaukee bill - action this week
To: Jon Schnur < >, Mike Johnston < >

Bill gives Barrett mega power over schools

By Larry Sandler and Erin Richards of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Dec. 11, 2009

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett would have more power over the Milwaukee Public Schools superintendent and budget than nearly any other U.S. mayor holds over a big-city school system, under a bill the Legislature is to consider Wednesday.

"If they go ahead with the present plan, it will make for one of the most powerful education mayors in the country," said Joe Viteritti, a professor of public policy at Hunter College who led a commission to study mayoral control in New York City and has edited a book, "When Mayors Take Charge."

The bill, sponsored by state Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), would allow the mayor to appoint the superintendent without confirmation by the School Board or Common Council, and would let the superintendent set the school budget and tax levy without a vote by the board or council.

Elected School Board members - who now select the superintendent and approve the budget - would be limited to an advisory role on the budget and would control only such functions as student discipline, community outreach and adult recreation.

Supporters say the change is needed to improve student performance and to show willingness to make bold reforms, part of the qualifications for a chunk of the federal Race to the Top program's \$4.35 billion in funding. Opponents object to taking authority away from the elected board.

Gov. Jim Doyle, who backs the idea, has called lawmakers into special session to take up the bill, starting Wednesday, although he cannot force them to act.

Responding to a question from Ald. Bob Donovan, Audra Brennan, project manager for the MPS Innovation & Improvement Council, told a council committee Nov. 30 that the mayor's powers under the legislation would be similar to those in other cities where mayors have taken control of school districts.

But of the seven largest U.S. cities where mayors have a major role in running the schools, none has given a mayor or superintendent sole power to set the school district budget without school board or city council approval, a Journal Sentinel survey of districts found. And only New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley can appoint their school systems' chief executives without confirmation by a school board or city council.

In all seven cities, mayors appoint all or part of their school boards. In four of those cities, other elected officials have a role in appointing or confirming board members. Only Daley, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson can appoint full boards without confirmation.

School boards choose superintendents in four cities, with mayoral approval in Cleveland. Budgets require final approval by school boards in four cities, council approval in two cities and action by both the school board and the city council in New York City.

Of the seven cities, only Washington, D.C., has a school board without authority to hire a superintendent or approve a budget. Five of the board's nine members are elected and four are named by Mayor Adrian Fenty, with council confirmation.

Elsewhere in Milwaukee city and county government, most top administrators are appointed by the mayor or county executive and confirmed by the council or County Board. Milwaukee's police and fire chiefs are appointed to four-year terms by the Fire & Police Commission, whose members are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. The Milwaukee city and county budgets are proposed by the mayor and county executive and approved by the council and County Board, subject to line-item vetoes and overrides.

Accountability stressed

Barrett said mayoral appointment of school boards effectively gives other big-city mayors control over school budgets and superintendent appointments, even if the board officially has final authority. He said Taylor's bill tries to strike a balance between retaining an elected school board and concentrating accountability in the mayor's office.

"We need accountability so we can improve the academic performance of the students," Barrett said. "At the end of the day, the question is going to be: 'Do we embrace the status quo, or do we move forward with reform?'"

Barrett described the legislation as "a work in progress" and said it was possible lawmakers could amend it to create a more powerful School Board that would be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. In fact, Barrett had suggested that idea when he first called for mayoral control of MPS in mid-August, but critics said it would be undemocratic to stop electing board members.

Viteritti said it would be unusual to keep an elected school board but severely clip its authority. He said he thought it was important to have some sort of real school board, with some powers, even under mayoral control.

But two other experts in the subject - Michael Kirst, a professor emeritus of education and business administration at Stanford University, and Kenneth Wong, chair of the education department at Brown University - said that Milwaukee's proposal could pave the way to a new and potentially positive relationship among the School Board, mayor, Common Council and the community.

"It's a unique model, but one of the things we preach is that each one of these is undertaken in a unique context and you have to tailor it to the city," Kirst said. "If the Milwaukee citizens feel strongly about electing somebody, then there's nothing to say that this doesn't make sense."

In cities with a strong form of mayoral control, Kirst said, a common downside is that the public doesn't know where to take their complaints and concerns. Parents end up going to city council members, who aren't prepared for those types of complaints, he said.

Wong said it was important not to underplay the role of an elected school board, which would still be able to hold public forums and offer transparency to citizens.

Milwaukee School Board President Michael Bonds, an outspoken critic of mayoral control, said he felt the quality of the board would dip if members knew they were mostly to play the role of community complaint center.

Taylor and state Rep. Tamara Grigsby (D-Milwaukee), sponsor of a rival bill that would let the School Board keep more power, did not return calls seeking comment.

The Taylor legislation also calls for a referendum in seven years on whether to keep the mayor in control.

Voters in Boston and Cleveland have chosen to maintain mayoral control of their schools. Detroit voters decided to drop mayoral control, but Michigan authorities took over the school district four years later.

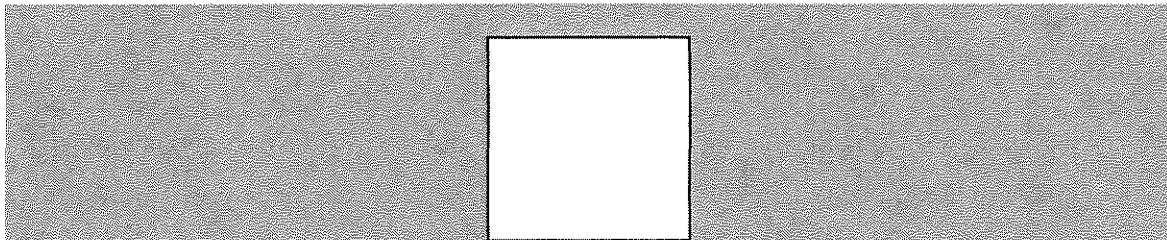
A court challenge blocked a mayoral takeover of the Los Angeles schools. Mayors also have a role in running schools in several smaller cities, and some other school districts have been taken over by states.

--
Joe Williams
Executive Director
Democrats for Education Reform
24 W. 46th St. Suite #4
New York, NY 10036
www.dfer.org

--
Joe Williams
Executive Director
Democrats for Education Reform
24 W. 46th St. Suite #4
New York, NY 10036
www.dfer.org

From: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 11:04 AM
To: White John; Lasher Micah
Subject: FW: DFER - Who would have guessed the Race would look like this?

From: Joe Williams [mailto:joewilliams@dfer.org]
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 10:46 AM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: DFER - Who would have guessed the Race would look like this?



Who Would Have Guessed The Race Would Look Like This?

Stunning. We don't know how else to put it.

Not just the New York State Board of Regents' announcement today that it fully intends to be competitive in President Obama's "Race To The Top" contest with a comprehensive reform package. (As a New Yorker whose kids attend NYC public schools, I was perplexed for months as to why we seemed so willing to walk away from hundreds of millions of dollars at a time when school budgets are being slashed all over – especially since the reforms needed to win shouldn't be considered remotely controversial if you really think about them.)

What is stunning is the tremendous wave of educational reform which has been unleashed by Education Secretary Arne Duncan and the Obama administration in such a short time.

The president was swept into office by a strong demand for change. But who would have guessed that in less than one year we would be looking at such significant coast-to-coast policy changes at

It's almost the middle of the month - have you supported DFER's "Education Reformer of the Month" yet?

For more on the federal "Race To The Top" contest, see our FAQ+A, along with a series of briefing papers at http://www.dfer.org/2009/12/new_dfers_race.php

Please consider supporting our work with a contribution to our political action committee. Every dollar helps move the needle for reform. It's easy and you can do it online.

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) is a political action committee whose mission is to encourage a more productive dialogue within the Democratic Party on the need to fundamentally reform American public education. DFER operates on all levels of government to educate elected officials and support reform-minded candidates for public office.

For more information, visit www.dfer.org.

the state level. (And thanks to Charlie Barone, our federal policy guru/spiritual advisor/occasional disc jockey for keeping tabs on the RTTP landscape.)

Consider:

California. California had been on the move. In August, the state legislature moved quickly in special session to tear down the firewall between student achievement and teacher evaluation. In November, the state Senate passed Gloria Romero's education reform plan, backed by Gov. Schwarzenegger, that would: let parent petitions shut down or convert failing schools; establish a rigorous teacher and principal evaluation system; and let parents move their children out of failing districts.

Last week, the state Assembly passed a much weaker bill that Schwarzenegger says he would veto, commenting: "This is a Race to the Top, not a race to mediocrity or the status quo." The NAACP has sided with Romero and the Governor, as has an LA based advocacy group "Parent Revolution."

Connecticut. Duncan's comments at a conference saying that states that hampered charter schools would not be competitive sparked Connecticut in June to reverse its decision to cut charter school budgets; it also moved to fully restore charter school funding.

Colorado. In the Spring, Gov Bill Ritter appointed Lt. Gov. Barbara O'Brien to serve as "Race To The Top Czar." She has held numerous hearings and has toured the state. Colorado is building on the performance pay system it pioneered a few years back in Denver, and the fact that its charter schools are some of the best performing in the country. Its poised to have a very strong application and is on the short list for those with a good chance of approval in Phase 1.

Delaware. The state published a draft of its Race to the Top plan on December 1st, and is in the middle of a 30-day public comment period. Delaware stakeholders met publicly throughout the Fall. The state has an advantage over other states because of the existing "Vision 2015" project.

comprehensive reform effort created prior to Race to the Top and supported by a broad range of players in and outside of government.

D.C. District officials are holding a community forum on Tuesday evening, December 15th to seek public comment before they draft their plan. Despite all the controversy over Chancellor Michelle Rhee's tenure, especially the ongoing contract negotiations, D.C. has bragging rights given its strong performance on recently released NAEP results in comparison to both other states and big cities. i.e., it can credibly propose that it more aggressively expand what it has already been doing re: shutting down and turning around failing schools, opening new charters, and reassigning or firing teachers and administrators.

Florida. A decade of school reforms has put Florida at the head of the pack in the Race to the Top. A laser focus on the lowest performing schools, and the lowest performing students in those schools, has boosted student achievement on both state tests and the NAEP, and narrowed achievement gaps. Florida has one of the best data systems in the nation, which has helped inform its school reform efforts, and has been a pioneer in both distance learning and dual high school/college enrollment, which has boosted the quality of courses offered to students and at the same resulted in significant cost savings and increased parental choice.

Georgia. Governor Sonny Perdue has established and appointed members to four Race to the Top policy committees, one for each of the 4 areas of RttT reforms or "assurances." The committees are comprised of higher education officials, local educators, advocates, and representatives of philanthropic foundations. Duncan is visiting the state for a public event with Perdue and committee members on Monday, December 14.

Illinois. In June, the Illinois state legislature answered Duncan's call to raise charter school caps and ended its session by approving 45 new charter schools in Chicago, and an additional 15 charter schools for the rest of the state, for a total of 13,000 new charter school slots. Since then, state

efforts have stalled. Last week, on December 10th, the education advocacy organization Advance Illinois chided the state for its inaction and told the state it was a long way away from having a competitive application.

Indiana. Indiana was another state to take early action, lifting charter school caps and taking down the teacher-student achievement data firewall back in June. The state is currently developing an ambitious alternative certification and teacher evaluation plan.

Louisiana. The state passed legislation by Rep. Walt Leger III (D-New Orleans) lifting its charter school cap in June at the end of its legislative session. Louisiana is also pioneering an accountability system that tracks graduates of teacher training programs so that they can be held accountable for the performance of the teachers they train and so that their programs can be improved and/or revamped. A "unified group" of education and community-based organizations launched a statewide RttT effort in August.

Massachusetts. At a widely publicized event in July, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick appeared with Secretary Arne Duncan to announce a big expansion (27,000 new seats) of charter schools. It was seen as particularly significant because key state leaders previously had not been charter school supporters. Here's one quote: "Formerly a charter-school critic, [Boston Mayor Thomas] Menino said he is fed up with opposition from the Boston Teachers Union. 'I'm just tired of it. We're losing kids.'"

This was just a proposal, and since then there has been some back and forth about the specifics, and a bill to address charters and a number of other reform issues is now in the legislature. Two groups - Boston Foundation and Stand for Children - there have been mobilizing actively around RttT.

Michigan. The state legislature has announced that it intends to enact, by January, a package of bills that would expand charter schools, create alternative paths to teacher certification, make it easier to fire teachers for poor performance, and

give the state more power to take over failing schools. Governor Granholm has also announced that she is holding off on making planned education cuts because it may jeopardize the state's application.

Nevada. Even though it is one of the states with a teacher/student achievement data "firewall" that would disqualify it from applying, up until two weeks Nevada wasn't planning to act. But then Senator Harry Reid (majority leader of the U.S. Senate), despite union opposition, called on Governor Gibbons to hold a special legislative session. It looks like that may now happen but no date has been set.

New York. Of the 5 states identified as having teacher/student data firewalls, New York is one of only two that has not acted (the other being Nevada; CA, IN, and WI have all repealed their firewall laws). The law is set to expire later this year, but it remains in question whether that is sufficient to make the state eligible.

New York does have some good ideas on the table for its potential RttT plan. On December 2nd, the State posted a broad framework for its Race to the Top reforms on its website, with an emphasis on turning around low-performing schools and closing those that are chronically low-performing,

In early November, Commissioner David Steiner sketched out one of the most comprehensive and ambitious teacher quality proposals of any state education official in the country. It would: set rigorous performance-based assessments for teachers; redesign education schools to focus more on classroom practice; establish report cards for education schools based on the performance of their students on the new certification exams, and on how well their graduates affect achievement in the classroom; expand alternative routes to certification; and establish merit pay for teachers in hard-to-serve areas.

In October, Assemblyman Sam Hoyt introduced a comprehensive reform bill to lift New York's charter school caps, which are projected to stymie expansion as early as next year.

Rhode Island. The state had two big education reform plays so far this year. Back in June, an ed reformer from RI asked Secretary Duncan at a public event if RI could compete given its charter school caps and de-funding of planned charters; Duncan basically said no. At the end of its legislative session in June, the legislature funded a system of "mayoral academies" that had been stuck in limbo. The first one opened outside Providence in September. This is the first of a series of such schools.

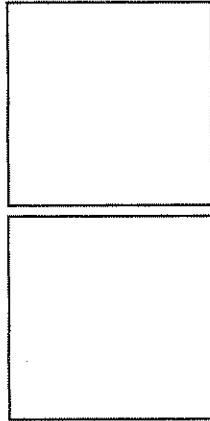
Last month, Commissioner Deborah Gist announced that RI was ending its policy of basing teacher assignments and layoffs on seniority, and instead would make them based on quality. The move garnered massive media coverage, and lawsuits were filed by the teachers union, but Gist has held firm. Gist also, through administrative action, raised the cut score for passing teacher exams from the among lowest in the nation to among the highest in the nation; schools of education are fighting it but here, too, Gist has held firm.

Tennessee. In late May, Duncan said Tennessee would "not be helping its chances" for Race to the Top funds if it continued arbitrary caps limiting the growth of charter schools. This set off a chain of events in which the state legislature held a special session and Democrats were freed to reverse their positions against charter school expansion by their leadership (and given a pass from the Tennessee Education Association), culminating in approval of charter school expansions in six school systems on a lopsided vote of 79-15.

Wisconsin. The state took down its teacher/student achievement data "firewall" in a blitz session a couple of months ago. A whole package of reform-oriented policies being pushed by Governor Doyle is now in the legislature. Mayoral control of Milwaukee schools, which Duncan has pushed for, is part of the fight. Doyle is calling for a special session to vote on his proposals on December 16th.

© 2009 Democrats for Education Reform.

This email was sent to JKlein@schools.nyc.gov.



[Unsubscribe me from this list](#)

From: Duffy Michael
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 5:58 PM
To: Duffy Michael; Klein Joel I.; Nadelstern Eric; ; Thomases Joshua; Betheil Gregg; John King; Lasher Micah; Listhaus Aaron; Meakem Nancy D; Carson Benjamin; Matos Anyeli; Khan Rana; Raza Syed Aamir; Orbegoso Yolanda; James Merriman; Veronica Davey; Niomi Plotkin; Dennis Walcott; Mayers, Gregorio; Cantor David; Forte Ann
Cc: Grant Christina; Haynes Aquila
Subject: RE: approval by the Regents

To clarify: the recommendation by Deputy Commissioner King adopted by the Regents, was for a thoughtful lifting of the cap, while not specifying a particular number.

The six charters that were approved are:

Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation

Lefferts Garden Charter School

Inwood Academy for Leadership Charter School

Dr. Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School (the first CTE charter school in NYC)

Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School

Staten Island Community Charter School

From: Duffy Michael
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 5:48 PM
To: Klein Joel I.; Nadelstern Eric; ; Thomases Joshua; John King; Lasher Micah; Listhaus Aaron; Meakem Nancy D; Carson Benjamin; Matos Anyeli; Khan Rana; Raza Syed Aamir; Orbegoso Yolanda; James Merriman; Veronica Davey; Niomi Plotkin; Walcott, Dennis; Mayers, Gregorio; Cantor David; Forte Ann
Cc: Grant Christina; Haynes Aquila
Subject: approval by the Regents

Christina Grant and Aquila Haynes of the Charter School Office were up in Albany today for the vote by the Regents on 6 of the 16 charter applications submitted by the Chancellor.

Christina reports that the Regents just voted unanimously to approve all 6 applications.

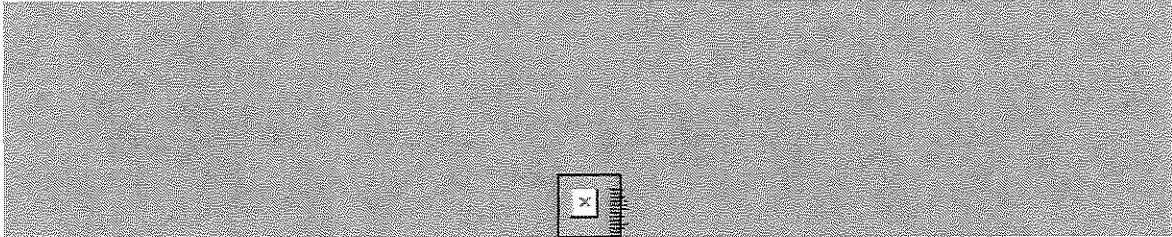
The Regents also voted to endorse all of the recommendations made by Deputy Commissioner John King:

- to lift the charter cap to 400
- to allow one charter to operate multiple schools

- to allow charters to enroll preK students

Thanks to everyone who made these breakthroughs possible.

From: Joe Williams [joewilliams@dfer.org]
Sent: Tuesday, December 15, 2009 1:31 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Three nuggets of DFER love for you and yours



Dear education reformer:

Three things for you today.

1. RTTP Clock: For those of you who are slaving away on your state's "Race To The Top" reform contest applications, working day and night to make your state competitive enough to bring home the moolah for public schools, we understand that you are feeling the pressure.

We're not trying to make it worse, but rather want to help you stay on top of EXACTLY how much time you have left before the 4:30 p.m. EST deadline for applications on Jan. 19th.

If you go to our website, www.dfer.org, you'll find a handy RTTP countdown timer - right down to the second. So don't blame DFER if your state is late to the starting line!

2. Too Much Eggnog: In our email blast from yesterday, our description of what is happening in Illinois ended up being as sloppy/aggressive as an inebriated sales guy at the company holiday party. This is what we *meant* to say about the Land of Lincoln:

Illinois. In June, the Illinois state legislature answered Duncan's call to raise charter school caps and ended its session by approving 45 new charter schools in Chicago, and an additional 15 charter schools for the rest of the state, for a total of 13,000 new charter school slots. Last week, on December 10th, the education advocacy organization Advance Illinois encouraged state leaders to pick back up the effort quickly, praising the state for developing legislation around more substantive teacher evaluations and around stronger supports for struggling schools.

3. Motor City Mo-Jo: If you're in the Greater Detroit area tomorrow evening, please join us for the launch for Michigan-DFER. Details below. RSVP at <http://www.dfer.org/events/MDFER>

It's almost the middle of the month - have you supported DFER's "Education Reformer of the Month" yet?

For more on the federal "Race To The Top" contest, see our FAQ+A, along with a series of briefing papers at http://www.dfer.org/2009/12/new_dfers_race.php

Please consider supporting our work with a contribution to our political action committee. Every dollar helps move the needle for reform. It's easy and you can do it online.

Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) is a political action committee whose mission is to encourage a more productive dialogue within the Democratic Party on the need to fundamentally reform American public education. DFER operates on all levels of government to educate elected officials and support reform-minded candidates for public office.

For more information, visit www.dfer.org.

Wednesday, December 16, 2009
MDFER Reception

You are cordially invited

Join us as we celebrate the launch of Michigan Democrats for Education Reform!

Harrison Blackmond, DFER's new state director for Michigan, will share his vision and MDFER's mission toward systematic education reform while positioning Michigan for Obama's 'Race to the Top' federal funding.

Also joining us as honored guests and leaders of Michigan's education reform movement - State Senator Buzz Thomas (Senate District 04), State Representative Tim Melton (House District 29), State Representative Shanelle Jackson (House District 09) and State Representative Bert Johnson (House District 05).

We hope you can make it!

When:

Wednesday, December 16, 2009
5:30-7:30 pm

Where:

Hermes Room
Atheneum Suite Hotel
1000 Brush Avenue
Detroit, MI 48226

*Light refreshments will be served along with a cash bar.

© 2009 Democrats for Education Reform.

This email was sent to JKlein@schools.nyc.gov.



[Unsubscribe me from this list](#)

From: Joe Williams [joewilliams@dfer.org]
Sent: Saturday, December 19, 2009 10:16 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Big, Wet, Snowy, Sloppy DFER Kiss To Michigan Dems For RTTP Vote



Big, Wet, Snowy, Sloppy DFER Kiss To Michigan Dems For Leading Passage of Historic RTTP Bill

While states all over the country continue to refine their legislative packages so that they can be more competitive in the federal "Race To The Top" reform contest, we wanted to take a brief moment on this snowy Saturday night to congratulate Michigan Sen. Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit) and Rep. Tim Melton (D-Pontiac) for leading the charge behind the passage of historic education reform legislation earlier in the day.

The leadership of Representatives Shanelle Jackson and Bert Johnson also was crucial to the legislation's passage.

As Melton noted in one press account, Michigan political leaders did about 20-years worth of reform work in one legislative package. Working around the clock for much of the last week, Michigan legislators approved groundbreaking plans to allow for the expansion of high quality public charter schools, link student performance data to teacher effectiveness, and mandate state intervention for the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state.

Charter schools that deliver exceptional academic success, especially those with high achievement among at-risk students, will have the opportunity to become 'Schools of Excellence' under the legislation, which will allow for the replication of additional high-quality charter schools and attract the nation's best charter school models to the state.

Said Michigan DFER Director Harrison Blackmond: "We salute Senator Buzz Thomas and Representatives Tim Melton, Shanelle Jackson and Bert Johnson for their leadership and courage to break the traditional mold and support something that is so critically important to Michigan families. This is the most significant education reform legislation in Michigan since 1994. We want all Democrats who supported it to know that MDFER has their back."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm, who lobbied for the passage of the RTTP legislation to better position Michigan to win a piece of President Obama's \$4.35 billion education reform prize, has indicated she will sign the bills into law. The unions representing the state's public school teachers issued a statement saying they supported most of the legislative package, except for portions that would end union protections over employment, tenure, and pay for teachers who are ineffective.

For more about the Race To The Top contest, visit www.dfer.org.

This email was sent to JStein@ed.doe.state.mi.us.



[Unsubscribe me from this list](#)

From: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2009 5:52 PM
To: James Merriman
Subject: RE: Quick update

Got it, thanks

-----Original Message-----

From: James Merriman]
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2009 5:48 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Re: Quick update

Yws, we and michael duffy got her to run nyc charter data through her methodology. You guys and she will release in jan which will work well with rttt. Best of all, the left has embraced her as their researcher of choice.

James Merriman
NYC Charter School Center
111 Broadway, Suite 604
NY, NY 10006

----- Original Message -----

From: Klein Joel I. <JKlein@schools.nyc.gov>
To: James Merriman
Sent: Mon Dec 21 17:41:40 2009
Subject: FW: Quick update

You know what mack raymond is doing?

From: Nelson Smith [<mailto:>]
Sent: Monday, December 21, 2009 5:25 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Quick update

Also, I got a briefing from Macke Raymond on her NYC findings and it looks like another home run - -congrats again.

Nelson

Nelson Smith
President & CEO
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
1101 15th Street, NW
Suite 1010
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-2700
www.publiccharters.org

From: James Merriman
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 4:49 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: RE: confidential -- advice

Dime a dozen. Have been wracking my brain for weeks over this.

.....
James D. Merriman
Chief Executive Officer

NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOL CENTER
111 Broadway, Suite 604, New York, NY 10006
T: 212.437.8302 F: 212. 227.2763
www.nycchartercenter.org

it's about great public schools

From: Klein Joel I. [<mailto:JKlein@schools.nyc.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 10:04 AM
To: James Merriman
Subject: confidential -- advice

Joe and Carol Reich want to expand BWC. They need a Dacia-Dave-Norm type to lead this. Obviously have the resources. Any thoughts?

From: Joe Williams [joewilliams@dfer.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2009 3:01 PM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: DFER - Last Minute Stocking Stuffer Idea For Ed Reform Policy Junkies!



Three things before you rush out the door for the holidays:

1. Our federal policy director Charlie Barone has spent the last year refining his list of which states have been naughty and which have been nice when it comes to progressive education reform legislation and policies. Charlie has a good idea which states are likely to receive a lump of coal when the "Race To The Top" judges eventually come sliding down the chimney in 2010 – but he's kind of treating it like it is some kind of state secret. What we have been able to pry out of him, however, is a pretty nifty 30-page write-up on what the quintessential, reform-minded state RTTP application looks like. (He got some help from lots of little elves from our partner reform organizations.) It's a working document, but if you'd like us to email you a PDF version on the down-low, drop an email to demedreform@gmail.com. It makes a perfect last-minute stocking stuffer for the ed reform policy junkie in your life!
2. Don't get caught missing that crucial 4:30 p.m. January 19th RTTP deadline. Find out how many hours, minutes and seconds until the Round One deadline on www.dfer.org.
3. All of us here at Democrats for Education Reform would like to extend our wishes for a most happy holiday. We've accomplished a great deal this year, and we couldn't have done it without you. But let's not get too comfortable in those new slippers waiting for you under the tree. We've got a lot of work to do!

Joe

This email was sent to joeklein@schools.nyc.edu.



[Unsubscribe me from this list](#)

From: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2009 7:29 AM
To: Tilson ; 'joewilliams2@gmail.com'; 'petry, _ _
curry ; ledley ; Cerf Chris
Subject: Re: Debate on charters: True idiocy from Meier and Ravitch; 20 keypractices of high-performing, high-poverty urban schools; Katzir on charters;Who's watching charter schools; Who knows best on charter schools?; A lessoneven in failure

She's been pretty consistently negative on our agenda and tends to rely on the more money, save the publics. She is also wrong on our Naep, which, as you've noted, even Diane acknowledged, showed "significant progress" in bot 4 and 8 math. That said, she does run good schools (like the old central park east in east harlem).

Best for the holidays. Joel

From: Whitney Tilson
To: Joe Williams ; John Petry ; Ravenel Boykin Curry ; Charlie Ledley ; Klein Joel I.; Cerf Chris
Sent: Thu Dec 24 06:21:39 2009
Subject: Fw: Debate on charters: True idiocy from Meier and Ravitch; 20 keypractices of high-performing, high-poverty urban schools; Katzir on charters;Who's watching charter schools; Who knows best on charter schools?; A lessoneven in failure
Joe, Chris & Joel,

Any thoughts? Does Meier fall into the same camp as Ravitch? I'll include a retraction in my next email if warranted.

WT

From: Whitney Tilson

Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2009 7:09 PM

To:

Subject: RE: Debate on charters: True idiocy from Meier and Ravitch; 20 key practices of high-performing, high-poverty urban schools; Katzir on charters; Who's watching charter schools; Who knows best on charter schools?; A lesson even in failure

Hi ,

I'm not nearly as familiar with Meier as I am with Ravitch. Based on the nonsense she wrote (which WAS moronic and idiotic; note that I did NOT call her a moron and an idiot), she seems to want to kill your school. What leads you to believe she's more like Sizer and less like dangerous crackpots like Ravitch and Kozol?

I'd be happy to share your email in my next email blast with your permission – either with your name or from “a friend”.

Best,

Whitney

From: Whitney Tilson

Sent: Friday, December 18, 2009 4:21 PM

To: Whitney Tilson

Subject: Debate on charters: True idiocy from Meier and Ravitch; 20 key practices of high-performing, high-poverty urban schools; Katzir on charters; Who's watching charter schools; Who knows best on charter schools?; A lesson even in failure

1) Deborah Meier and Diane Ravitch, responding to the NYT article two Sunday's ago, engage in one of the most moronic discussions of charter schools I've ever read. Here's Meier, slamming the founders of Harlem Success, with no acknowledgment (likely due to no knowledge) of Harlem Success's extraordinary success:

I'm at a loss for words because I think it shouldn't be necessary to be chilled by the above description. But I suspect that many readers will simply be delighted that these rich young men have "gotten religion"—and that the religion they've gotten is to play a role in starting their own schools for the least advantaged youngsters.

...Meanwhile, the future is not yet written, so we need to keep up the spirits of those who are roughly on "our side"—despite other disagreements. It's hard enough lately to keep up my own spirits, but.... If I believe all that rhetoric I fed kids for 47 years in our schools, I have no choice, because what Mistery Petry and Greenblatt and their friends "get" is something that I think will damage our most vulnerable future citizens.

2) And here's Ravitch with her even more deranged reply:

I understand why you were taken aback by [that article](#) in the "Style" section of *The New York Times* last week that described how charter schools have become a must-have among hedge-fund managers, billionaires, and other members of the social elite in New York City. The article bothered me, too. In fact, the more I think about it, the more it worries me. Having written the history of the New York City public schools, I was reminded of the origins of free schooling in certain northeastern cities in the early 19th Century, when wealthy men decided that it was their civic duty to help civilize the children of the poor. In their view and in their day, they were doing good deeds, but their schools were stigmatized as charity schools for children of paupers and were avoided by children of the middle class. Outside of big cities, public education emerged as a community response to a community's need to school its children, not as a charitable venture.

Today, with the proliferation of charter schools, we may be seeing a resurgence of the historic pattern as public schools are privatized and taken over by very rich men (and women) who see themselves as saviors of the children of the poor. Naturally, you find this a repellent portrait because it undermines the

democratic foundations of public education. It means that our society will increasingly rely on the good will of wealthy patrons to educate children of color. It means that education is seen as a private charity rather than as a public responsibility. Let's hope that the new owners who have taken over these schools are able to sustain their interest. After all, having 500 children in your care is not the same as having a stable of polo ponies or a vineyard in Napa Valley. If the children don't produce results that make the sponsors proud, they may pick a different hobby.

I wish I had time to rip apart these two blog posts line by line, but I don't, so I'll let Catharine Bellinger of Students for Education Reform (<http://edreform.blogspot.com/2009/12/students-for-education-reform.html>) take a shot (her comments are in red), plus I've included some other comments on charters below:

1. Today, with the proliferation of charter schools, we may be seeing a resurgence of the historic pattern as public schools are privatized and taken over by very rich men (and women) who see themselves as saviors of the children of the poor. Naturally, you find this a repellent portrait because it undermines the democratic foundations of public education...After all, having 500 children in your care is not the same as having a stable of polo ponies or a vineyard in Napa Valley.

What is she talking about? Has she EVER met some of the people involved with supporting high-quality public charter schools? Just about all of these schools represent a collaboration between parents, teachers, and donors—not some oppressive system in which "very rich men" foist their values onto unwilling children. And since when was it NOT admirable for people privileged with money to spare to donate to organizations that have proven that they are spending the money wisely and effectively? Does she want you to pour your money down the drain and donate it to the teacher's unions, like the Ford Foundation did? Finally, note how Ravitch is much more interested in the political theory of education—maintaining what some sort of idealized version of "democratic" education—than in what actually works for students. She accuses Klein of ignoring policy decisions' impact on students, but really she is guilty of it herself.

2. In the past few days, Chancellor Joel Klein has announced that he is closing nearly two dozen public schools. Some of these schools are the anchor in their communities; some have long histories as gateways for immigrant children...most could have been improved by a thoughtful plan of action, including smaller classes, better supervision, and the kinds of resources that hedge-fund managers pour into "their" charter schools.

Oh Diane...have you visited Paul Robeson High School, one of the schools that Klein announced he is going to shut down? My Breakout trip (the same group that visited you in New York) conducted college awareness workshops there for a week. First of all, Robeson certainly was not the "anchor" in its community, the Bed-Stuy neighborhood in Brooklyn—or if it was, it was merely an anchor of failure. It wasn't RESOURCES that Robeson needed, with its 40% graduation rate and only a little more than half of the students stating that they were inspired to learn. The participants on my trip cited a terrible school environment, a culture of apathy and incompetence, and students who wanted to go to college but had never been informed that they needed to take certain classes or certain exams. Even their "honors" students had never heard of SAT II subject tests. This school didn't need more money. It needed serious restructuring, and I'm confident that closing Robeson and opening new schools and giving students new opportunities will be beneficial to student achievement. It needed to follow the "habits of high performing urban schools" listed in Sweating the Small Stuff (attached). That couldn't happen with the same staff, unfortunately. Ravitch complains that closing schools "disrupts" students—true, but this is a case when you have to choose the hard right over the easy

wrong. It might be hard to send all those students elsewhere, but otherwise you are just letting a culture of apathy and low expectations persist.

3) Catharine also shared this, which I hadn't seen before (From David Whitman's *Sweating the Small Stuff: Inner-City Schools and the New Paternalism*):

20 key practices of high-performing, high-poverty urban schools

1. Tell students exactly how to behave and tolerate no disorder
2. Require a rigorous, college-prep curriculum.
3. Align curriculum with state standards and specify performance outcomes.
4. Assess students regularly and use the results to target struggling students.
5. Keep students busy in class with a clear plan and a variety of assignments.
6. Build a collective culture of achievement and college-going.
7. Reject the culture of the streets.
8. Be vigilant about maintaining school culture.
9. Extend the school day and/or year.
10. Monitor and enforce attendance.
11. Welcome accountability for adults and embrace constant reassessment.
12. Give principals and teachers more autonomy -- think "charter school."
13. Eliminate (or at least disempower) local teacher unions.
14. Use unconventional channels to recruit committed teachers.
15. Don't demand much from parents.
16. Escape the constraints hobbling traditional district schools.
17. Don't waste resources on fancy facilities or technology.
18. Keep the school small.
19. Track and support students after they graduate.
20. Help create additional schools following your model.

4) Dan Katzir of the Broad Foundation with a wise blog post on charters:

Dan Katzir blog posting on charters:

Asking whether "charters" are a solution to America's public education's woes is like asking whether medicine is a solution for illness. Only the right "type" of medicine, under the right conditions, will make a difference. But when it does, it can make all the difference in the world.

Similarly, data shows only the right type of charters – high-quality models based on proven strategies and staffed by the most effective teachers and leaders – have dramatically raised student achievement, particularly for low-income and minority students. But when charters are the right model – like KIPP, Green Dot, Aspire, Alliance for College Ready Schools, Uncommon, Achievement First, and Success Charter Network – they have proven to be one of the most successful innovations to occur in K-12 education in the last several decades.

Yes, the Obama administration is right to use federal stimulus dollars to encourage the growth of high-quality charters. The trick will be in ensuring that federal dollars support only those state and district charter efforts in which charter authorizing is well designed, charters are held accountable according to appropriate student achievement metrics, and processes are in place to shut down low-performing charters that don't deliver significant student growth.

The elements of successful charters are well known: challenging standards, more academic learning time, strategies to attract the best and brightest teachers and principals, school leaders who are empowered to make

the right hiring, firing, budgetary, curricular, instructional and school climate decisions under which students can succeed, and low central office overhead so resources actually reach children's desks.

Failure to distinguish between the outcomes of high-quality charter models and low-quality models is like assuming that the tonics and elixirs of the late 1800's are just as appropriate to "cure" cancer as the cutting edge radiation, chemotherapy and medicinal practices of today.

It's imperative that the charter movement itself – as well as federal, state and local leaders and the media – do a better job of making this "semantic" distinction. And we all need to do a better job of closing down low-performers and keeping the quality-bar high.

And the fortunate forthcoming federal support? If you'll excuse the cliché, it's just what the doctor ordered.

5) Jed Wallace rebutting some more lies about charters:

Who's watching charter schools

They face multiple layers of accountability that put them on equal footing with normal school districts.

By Jed Wallace

December 16, 2009

www.latimes.com/news/opinion/opinionla/la-oew-wallace16-2009dec16.0.5385585.story

In its Dec. 9 editorial, "Learning about ethics," The Times calls for state charter school laws to be "changed accordingly" in relation to publicly disclosing the expenditures of taxpayers' money. Readers may come away with the impression that charter operators are subject to little accountability compared to traditional public school districts.

The truth is that charter schools are public schools, and as with any other public entity, they are already required to make information available to the public. There are mechanisms, laws and regulations on public disclosure already in place to which charter schools must adhere in terms of public reporting and transparency. In other words, charters are held to standards much like those that apply to traditional public schools and districts. Also, charter schools operated by non-profit entities arguably have more disclosure requirements imposed on them than traditional public schools, as they must also comply with the requirements of non-profit corporation law.

Take, for example, the IRS Form 990, a required federal filing for tax-exempt organizations. Every year, non-profit entities that operate charter schools must file 990 forms, which contain detailed information on corporate spending, governance policy and leadership compensation, among other things. The information on these forms is accessible to the public via the non-profits' Web sites.

Charter schools receive additional layers of oversight by public agencies. Every charter is authorized to operate by a public entity such as a school district, a county office of education or the California State Board of Education. The exhaustive information these agencies collect from charter schools are also subject to public access regulations.

Public charter schools face just as much accountability as any other public entity. Our problems are not buried beneath bureaucracy, as the problems at Green Dot that have recently come to light illustrate. Our issues are brought to the surface and dealt with appropriately, proactively, judiciously and publicly.

The success of charters is made possible in part by being free of some of the bureaucratic restraints imposed on traditional public schools. Charter schools have every incentive to maintain that freedom by being effective self-policers in addition to complying with the accountability measures I've described; the situation at Green Dot, which The Times' editorial describes, is a good example. Green Dot initiated an internal review of expenses and as a result, founder Steve Barr repaid about \$51,000 to his organization. Simply stated, charter schools work well and are more able to do their jobs and get results without piling on additional layers of bureaucracy.

We anticipate that, in the future, charters will not only continue to set new standards in student performance, but they will also be an example for taking decisive, public action when problems emerge.

In other words: If it's not broken, there's no need to fix it.

Jed Wallace is president and CEO of the California Charter Schools Assn.

6) The founders of Imagine charter schools chime in:

Who knows best on charter schools?

*By Dennis and Eileen Bakke
Arlington*

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/local-opinions/2009/12/who-knows-best-on-charter-schools.html>

Regarding Jay Mathews's Dec. 14 [column](#), "When is it time to close a charter?":

Mr. Mathews is usually right on the money, but this time he was off base in several ways. First, the very nature of charter schools forces poorly performing ones to shut on their own. Charter school funding comes from the government based on how many students choose to attend the school. If the school performs poorly, parents won't send their children there, and the school won't have the funds to operate. Parents, not the government or regulators, are the best evaluator of a quality school, partly because they take into consideration qualities in addition to academic achievement (e.g., safety, character education, after-school programs, location).

Additionally, Mr. Mathews's case for closing schools based on proficiency-test results would be more compelling if those tests were the right tests. But his colleague Valerie Strauss got it right in her Dec. 11 [Answer Sheet column](#): "Average test scores don't tell us how good a school is, but rather reveal information about the family income and education of the students' parents."

Consider the case of a student who enters a school three years behind and the school helps that student advance two grades in one year — remarkable academic growth. But the student is not deemed proficient, the teacher and school will be labeled failing, and many will urge that the school be closed because of low test scores. The appropriate measure of the performance of all public schools, including charters, is same-student learning gains (i.e., how much did the students grow academically from September to June each year?).

The writers are co-founders of Imagine Schools.

7) A Boston Herald editorial with some good points about charters:

A lesson even in failure

By Boston Herald Editorial Staff | Friday, December 18,
2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Editorials

<http://www.bostonherald.com/news/opinion/editorials/view.bg?articleid=1219648>

Opponents of charter schools are, of course, taking a certain perverse glee in the possibility that two charter schools are under threat of closure by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The staff at Springfield's Robert Hughes Charter School was found to have engaged in "pervasive cheating" during the 2009 MCAS tests. Lowell's Community Charter School, education officials say, has failed to show improved academic performance and is not likely to have its charter renewed. The list of unsuccessful charter schools is short indeed. And the achievements of some 60 now operating are commendable. Seven applications for new charter schools are pending and thousands of students remain on waiting lists for those already open.

But there is a lesson even in the failures. The price of failure is that these schools will likely cease to exist. (Although some Lowell parents insist their charter school is still better than anything the city's school system has to offer.)

With a vote by the state board they may soon be history. Try going before the local school committee and demanding that a traditional public school be closed down - no matter how it may be failing its students - and see where that goes.

In traditional public schools there are few rewards for success (the unions have seen to that) and virtually no penalties for failure. Which helps explain why parents are lining up to get their kids into public charter schools.

What Do Charter Schools Do Better?

By [Deborah Meier](#) on December 10, 2009 8:38 AM | [21 Comments](#) | [No TrackBacks](#)

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/Bridging-Differences/2009/12/dear_diane_you_may_have.html

Dear Diane,

I know you saw [this article](#) in last Sunday's *New York Times*.

"*You get the religion fast.*"

"Mr. Petry, 38, and Mr. Greenblatt, 52, may spend their days poring over spreadsheets and overseeing trades, but their obsession—one shared with many other hedge funders—is creating charter schools, the tax-funded, independently run schools that they see as an entrepreneurial answer to the nation's education woes. Charters have attracted benefactors from many fields. But it is impossible to ignore that in New York, hedge funds are at the movement's epicenter.

"These guys get it," said Eva S. Moskowitz, a former New York City Council member, whom Mr. Petry and Mr. Greenblatt hired in 2006 to run the Success Charter Network, for which they provide the financial muscle, including compensation for Ms. Moskowitz of \$371,000 her first year. "They aren't afraid of competition or upsetting the system. They thrive on that."

I'm at a loss for words because I think it shouldn't be necessary to be chilled by the above description. But I suspect that many readers will simply be delighted that these rich young men have "gotten religion"—and that the religion they've gotten is to play a role in starting their own schools for the least advantaged youngsters. So, I won't explain. But I will think about it. Because I remember years ago talking with a very wealthy and respected business couple about their work on behalf of the "I Have a Dream" foundation, supporting kids after school and on Saturdays. I may even have said something about how I'd love it if they'd just put the same money into improving the regular public schools. We discussed why it is that giving to the opera is "in," but not giving to public education. And I think I even recommended that they start their own public school. They did. I visited and liked it. It was a "regular," irregular public school. I believe today it has gone charter. Along, probably, with the schools of the founders' friends. It's "in."

The oddest thing, as you note, Diane, is that New York City's mayor himself takes credit for the charters, but not blame for the public schools he directly controls. He's a fanatic for test scores, but the NAEP scores (the only psychometrically reliable tests NYC students take—in 4th and 8th grades) show no improvement since 2003 in math or reading. No closing of the gap (correction: a narrow one for low-income, but not African-American students, in 8th grade), virtually no change in the numbers who meet specific benchmarks, etc.

Meanwhile, even schools that are doing no better or worse than others are being closed and replaced with charters. It's as though Bloomberg/Klein were bragging about what they have not accomplished in their own back yards, which require them to encourage the replacement of the regular, publicly accountable system for a privately accountable one. They've relied for quality on one simple measure: Can it attract money and students sufficient to stay alive? (And, offering unprecedented public and private inducements, so that when a charter and regular public school share a building, the latter's resources are actually less than the former's—including, above all, class sizes. Apparently, in NYC charters, class size matters, but not in NYC regular public schools.) I keep feeling that I've missed something. Have the past decades convinced us that the marketplace is more accountable than public institutions of democracy? Have there been fewer scandals during these same years in charter schools than regular ones? And how would we know? What do they do better—other than attract the "in" crowd's money?

While K-12 education was made universal because it seemed important that every single potential citizen be well-educated if democracy was to flourish, we have substituted the idea of democracy with the idea of the "marketplace." The less regulated, the better—ditto for charters. "Good" charter states are those considered by their allies to be those that are least regulated. Does it sound familiar? (Actually, there is relatively little interest in charters outside of urban poor neighborhoods—by voters or hedge-funders.)

Whatever makes us think that someone is going to be a better whistle-blower in the education of largely low-income city kids than they were about what was happening to our mortgages, banks, etc.???

The next step, I think, Diane, is to convene folks committed to the preservation of directly democratically controlled schools responsible for the future of every child within their jurisdiction. Then we might "safely" discuss new ways to conceive of better educating the young for full participation in democratic life—from the polling place to the jury room and everything in between. We won't all agree, but we might initiate some well-thought-out alternatives that could catch the attention of those wealthy funders and, more importantly, those politicians who share our goal.

We need our own new, eight-year study, like the one Ralph Tyler led in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as I recall. His was a controlled study of high schools. We could do it better now.

Meanwhile, the future is not yet written, so we need to keep up the spirits of those who are roughly on "our side"—despite other disagreements. It's hard enough lately to keep up my own spirits, but... If I believe all that rhetoric I fed kids for 47 years in our schools, I have no choice, because what Misters Petry and Greenblatt and their friends "get" is something that I think will damage our most vulnerable future citizens.

Best,
Deborah
P.S. Does it remind you of how industries went south for better "business environments," and then went further "south" (overseas) for the same? Alas, it will be harder to out-source our schools.

The Race to Nowhere

By Diane Ravitch on December 15, 2009 10:14 AM | 31 Comments | No TrackBacks
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/Bridging-Differences/2009/12/dear_deborah_i_understand_why.html
Dear Deborah,

I understand why you were taken aback by that article in the "Style" section of *The New York Times* last week that described how charter schools have become a must-have among hedge-fund managers, billionaires, and other members of the social elite in New York City. The article bothered me, too. In fact, the more I think about it, the more it worries me. Having written the history of the New York City public schools, I was reminded of the origins of free schooling in certain northeastern cities in the early 19th Century, when wealthy men decided that it was their civic duty to help civilize the children of the poor. In their view and in their day, they were doing good deeds, but their schools were stigmatized as charity schools for children of paupers and were avoided by children of the middle class. Outside of big cities, public education emerged as a community

response to a community's need to school its children, not as a charitable venture.

Today, with the proliferation of charter schools, we may be seeing a resurgence of the historic pattern as public schools are privatized and taken over by very rich men (and women) who see themselves as saviors of the children of the poor. Naturally, you find this a repellent portrait because it undermines the democratic foundations of public education. It means that our society will increasingly rely on the good will of wealthy patrons to educate children of color. It means that education is seen as a private charity rather than as a public responsibility. Let's hope that the new owners who have taken over these schools are able to sustain their interest. After all, having 500 children in your care is not the same as having a stable of polo ponies or a vineyard in Napa Valley. If the children don't produce results that make the sponsors proud, they may pick a different hobby.

Though the rise of the hedge-fund managers as charter school operators may distress us, it thrills others because it dovetails so perfectly with the Obama administration's Race to the Top. I don't know about you, but I am getting sick of the rhetoric of the Race to the Top, as it implies the very opposite of "equal educational opportunity." But "equal educational opportunity" is so...yesterday, so now we shall all "race to the top," to see who can get there first. Who can privatize the most schools? Who can close the most public schools? Which district can replace the most public schools with charter schools? Who can compel their teachers to focus intently on those pesky math and reading test scores? Who can boot out the most teachers whose students didn't get higher scores than last year? Who seriously believes that this combination of policies will produce better education?

We try not to be New York City-centric, but so much is happening in this city that it is hard not to see it as a bellwether. After all, NYC not only was a faithful representation of No Child Left Behind, but it is now outfitting itself to be a faithful representation of the Race to the Top. This is not a hard transition because NLCB and the Race to the Top are really the same, except that President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan's "Race" has nearly \$5 billion as a lure to persuade states to climb aboard the express train to privatization.

In the past few days, Chancellor Joel Klein has announced that he is closing nearly two dozen public schools. Some of these schools are the anchor in their communities; some have long histories as gateways for immigrant children. In recent years, the Department of Education decided that it does not like large high schools, so it has been closing them down and sending their lowest-performing students to other large high schools, which then have lower scores and more disciplinary incidents. Some of the large high schools were beyond saving, but most could have been improved by a thoughtful plan of action, including smaller classes, better supervision, and the kinds of resources that hedge-fund managers pour into "their" charter schools. Unfortunately the data-driven MBAs at central headquarters know nothing about instruction and curriculum or about any strategies that might improve a school. They have no school-improvement strategy. What they know best is how to shut down schools, and in this they will find funding and encouragement from the Obama administration.

As soon as the central administration decides to close a school, it is a *fait accompli*. New York City has a rubber-stamp "board" of 13, with a majority appointed by the mayor, serving at his pleasure; it approves every executive decision, with only a single dissenting vote (the heroic Patrick Sullivan, a public school parent). Public hearings are pro forma; no decision is ever reversed. Parents and teachers may protest 'til the cows come home, and they can't change a thing. Their school will be closed, the low-performing students will be dispersed, and either new small schools or charter schools will take over their building. Some of the schools that will close are, funnily enough, small schools that were opened by Bloomberg and Klein only a few years ago.

Does anyone believe that this sorry game of musical chairs will improve education? Does anyone in Washington or at central headquarters grasp the pointlessness of the disruption needlessly inflicted on students, families, teachers, principals, and communities in the name of "reform"? Do these people have no shame?

Diane

From: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Saturday, January 02, 2010 10:25 AM
To: williams
Subject: Re: Happy New Year/Time Warner advocacy question

I think so. Will call their General Counsel. Also possible Gary Ginsburg would know.

----- Original Message -----

From: Joe Williams
To: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Sat Jan 02 10:23:57 2010
Subject: Happy New Year/Time Warner advocacy question

Joel:

In reading about the settlement between Fox and Time Warner this morning, started thinking about the public advocacy campaign that Time Warner ran. It was very impressive to be and seemed to very effectively back Murdoch into a corner in the negotiations. (The fact that customers of Time Warner, of all companies, felt the company was fighting for them was rather incredible.)

Do you have any way to find out who ran their campaign?

Joe
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From: James Merriman
Sent: Sunday, January 03, 2010 4:55 PM
To: Phoebe Boyer; Emary Aronson; Klein Joel I.; Joseph H. Reich; Geoffrey Canada; Duffy Michael
Subject: FW: Sunday conf call on UFT<https://webmail.nycchartercenter.org/owa/?ae=Item&t=IPM.Note&a=Forward#>

Folks,

The UFT has issued a report today on charter schools called "Separate and Unequal: The Failure of NYC's Charter Schools to Serve the City's Neediest Students" It can be found at www.edwize.org

The report is timed to affect the negotiations over the cap lift, which I believe they view as somewhat of a foregone conclusion given the RTTT leverage and need for \$700 million. Instead, as we had all along known they would, they have used the report to make a laundry list of legislative recommendations that must be addressed if a cap lift is to be put in place.

The piece represents a direct and complete attack on charter schools and their autonomy and place the UFT squarely in opposition to charter schools. John Sampson attended the press conference and would not endorse lifting cap when asked. However, in other conversations, his staff said he was there to show support for Mulgrew, not to endorse the findings. He is, unfortunately, not one to be trusted as we well know and the UFT got a statement of support out of him.

The main findings that the report makes are:

Charters do not serve representative percentages of ELL and SPED students, yet at the same time, because the per pupil is an average, they receive funds in excess of those they deserve.

While they serve equal numbers of free and reduced price lunch eligible students, they serve fewer free price lunch students and the disparity grows if you look at the demographics of the neighborhoods where charters are concentrated

Charters do not serve as many hispanic students and therefore are racially isolating African American students.

Charters are not carrying their fair share of the burden, increasing the burden on the district and some charter leaders are overpaid.

In contrast to this rather limited set of findings, the report's recommendations are far reaching and many are completely unconnected to the findings. The recommendations that can be said to emanate from the findings are:

a citywide admission system administered by SED or NYC DoE with a uniform charter application Mandate that all charters must enroll homeless, ELL, SPED and free lunch eligible students in numbers similar to the demographics of their community reform the funding formula to make it fair where charters are not serving representative numbers of ELL, SPED, etc.

Prohibit for profit companies

Salary caps for charter school leaders/management companies

The other recommendations that are thrown in for fair measure include:

mandatory unionization for all charter school workers salary caps for charter school leaders caps on management fees bans on for profit companies operating charters Board of Regents as sole authorizer (eliminating SUNY) Prevailing wage Comptroller oversight changing the way Title I funds are disbursed to mirror NYC DOE method (which will hurt charter schools by reducing their funding significantly) mandatory establishment of independent parent associations and school leadership teams Prohibit co-location of schools until and unless district school has met contract for excellence class size targets Require matching renovations for district school where renovation of space for a charter regardless of source of funding.

Pair each charter school with district school and require charters to share their best practices.

They also threw in a recommendation that TRS member schools should have the city assume pension costs and rejigger their funding formula to take this into account. This is a very clever recommendation and an attempt to peel the unionized conversion schools like Renaissance away from the charter camp as it will go a long way to making conversions viable. It is also a sop to New Visions to keep them happy as they consider whole sale conversion to charter status. It may work (Joe, Joe, are you still with us?).

Our press strategy has been and will be to not engage overmuch but keep focus and frame on winning RTTT. Geoff spoke with both the Post and DN reporters this afternoon to reiterate message that charters are serving needy students. We will work on a consolidated response for legislators which is the real game here. Will have more to report tomorrow. Until then, stay warm.

<http://www.edwize.org/>

From: Klein Joel I.
Sent: Monday, January 04, 2010 10:56 AM
To: williams
Subject: RE: Happy New Year/Time Warner advocacy question

y

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Williams
Sent: Monday, January 04, 2010 10:54 AM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Re: Happy New Year/Time Warner advocacy question

Can I ring you later today?

-----Original Message-----

From: Klein Joel I.
To: Joe Williams
Subject: RE: Happy New Year/Time Warner advocacy question
Sent: Jan 4, 2010 10:48 AM

Got the info, better to discuss. What works for you?

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Williams
Sent: Saturday, January 02, 2010 10:24 AM
To: Klein Joel I.
Subject: Happy New Year/Time Warner advocacy question

Joel:

In reading about the settlement between Fox and Time Warner this morning, started thinking about the public advocacy campaign that Time Warner ran. It was very impressive to be and seemed to very effectively back Murdoch into a corner in the negotiations. (The fact that customers of Time Warner, of all companies, felt the company was fighting for them was rather incredible.)

Do you have any way to find out who ran their campaign?

Joe
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From: James Merriman |
Sent: Tuesday, January 05, 2010 8:38 AM
To: Emary Aronson; Geoffrey Canada; Jeffrey Litt; Klein Joel I.; Joseph H. Reich; Duffy Michael; Phoebe Boyer
Cc: Veronica Davey; Christina Brown
Subject: Race to the Top update.
Attachments: NYC 2009_CREDO_EMBARGOED.PDF

Dear All:

With only two weeks left, there is not nearly as much progress as we would like and there are worrisome signs on the legislative front.

On the press front, the NY Post has predictably come out against the UFT's proposals. That editorial is attached below or is available at http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/editorials/uft_charter_chicanery_cizRDP4mU4WoW4n8Qn6RGO

NY1 covered the story for a second day and featured rebuttal from yours truly. That clip is available here http://ny1.com/6-bronx-news-content/news_beats/politics/111467/charter-school-cap-may-decide-fate-of-funds/ We expect the Daily News to editorialize tomorrow against the UFT proposals and urge the legislature to action to lift the cap and pass the other reforms.

In related news, Dr. Macke Raymond's study was released today—you may remember that Raymond was the author of what was known as the CREDO study, which measured charter school performance in 17 states, (not including NY) and that found charters in those states, in the aggregate, had a negative impact. Both the UFT and Diane Ravitch praised the methodology that CREDO used. In contrast to that data set, the NYC data set resulted in positive outcomes (though frankly not as positive as the Hoxby study). Her findings showed that after three years in a charter school, the average student had a 15 point scale score gain math; it was much lower though positive in reading. Charter schools had a positive effect for African-Americans and Latino students, but, oddly enough, no significant positive or negative effect for children in poverty. The study is attached.

The NYP carried the story http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/charters_better_at_readin_rithmetic_024bR8bAzHq4lp1iWCeeel. The original press strategy was to give Jenny Medina at the NYT an exclusive; however at the last minute they decided not to run the story due to lack of space in the metro section, supposedly. As a result, reporters only got the study late yesterday. We will spend today trying to drum up more press. We did not handle the press strategy for Macke.

The legislative outlook is less hopeful in my view.

We do not yet have a comprehensive bill from either the Governor or the senate majority. For reasons that Vince and I cannot begin to understand, a Malcolm Smith/Marty Golden bill that was to be comprehensive (and bi-partisan) was introduced, with NYCSA agreement, only by Golden ("because it was easier to work with GOP staff"). The Governor says he will put out a program bill that will be comprehensive after the state of the state tomorrow. Meanwhile Silver bides his time and will engage only at the last minute.

That said, my guess is that we will have a RTTT bill that will be put out and passed next week; the question will be the price in terms of the kinds of restrictions that the UFT and friends want to impose.

We are working on the list of things that we can give on without impacting autonomy, e.g., having a uniform application standard (which will limit the kinds of information that can be required). Clearly there is an appetite in the state senate for more accountability and transparency (who can be against that?). We will have to give up some things, no doubt about it and the game is to manage what we give well and keep the price as low as possible.

Complicating things, NYCSA has a decidedly different view of the strength of our bargaining position. Bill Phillips has talked about walking away from the negotiations if the price is too high—he places a premium on the fact that a bill has to be passed and he believes us to be sitting in the cat bird seat because a bill must be passed.

Unfortunately, while I agree that a bill will be passed and legislators feel the pressure to make us eligible for \$700 million, I don't believe that legislators will walk away if NYCSA does. Vince and I believe that both republicans and democrats would vote for a charter cap lift bill that had restrictions on it that we disagree with. The unions can strip GOP members by, noting that the cap lift part of the bill will help NY get the federal dollars (while arguing that the restrictions won't hurt NYS's application) and also using their leverage, or really the threat of it, in upcoming November races. Without the purely transactional Joe Bruno to hold them in line, they are not a solid backstop. And of course are support in the democratic caucus is limited, tenuous and untrustworthy—and that's the optimistic view of it.

Our best argument to legislators, and the one we will be making, is that restrictions of the kind that UFT is asking for, while not explicitly forbidden by RTTT, will smell to high heaven and be a slap in the face to Arne and the White House. As such, even though they do not formally hurt the NY application, there is no way politically that NYS will win because the White House can't afford to be seen as giving in on this issue. This is an argument that has an obvious counter to it needless to say but its strength is that it can't be countered with hard facts. It creates fear hopefully that they are taking a risk they cannot afford.

I will keep you posted as events break.

UFT charter chicanery

Last Updated: 1:40 AM, January 5, 2010

Posted: 1:30 AM, January 5, 2010

Why has the United Federation of Teachers placed itself squarely between New York taxpayers and \$700 million in federal school aid?

Because it hates charter schools -- and it doesn't care about taxpayers, anyway.

Here's the deal:

By Jan. 19, New York must be in compliance with a variety of US Department of Education mandates, chief of which is lifting, if not eliminating, the state cap on the number of charter schools -- public schools generally run free of bureaucratic red tape and union work rules.

And failure to comply probably costs New York some \$700 million in so-called "Race To The Top" DOE grants meant to encourage educational innovation.

The UFT's power in Albany, and that of its parent, New York State United Teachers, is prodigious. But the unions do understand the importance of appearances.

And the unions certainly don't want to *look* like the bad guys if New York misses out on the federal cash.

Instead, as charter-school advocate Tom Carroll noted on these pages yesterday, the unions are pushing "poison pill" amendments to legislation meant to lift the cap. That way, they can better the odds of getting the federal money while still undermining the charter schools.

UFT boss Michael Mulgrew & Co. would make it easier to "starve" charters of funds, force them to unionize and set a percentage for the special-education and English-as-a-second-language students they must accept, among other steps.

Charters are already at a funding disadvantage compared to other public schools: They get no state money for upkeep and capital construction. Yet they *still* are more effective at teaching.

That is why Harlem charters have huge waiting lists for families wanting to get their kids into these schools.

Yet the UFT and NYSUT are trying to place even greater burdens on them.

They must not succeed.

Gov. Paterson has backed charters in the past. He must make clear that any charter-expansion legislation must be poison-pill-free.

No questions asked.

There's no price worth destroying charters -- not even \$700 million.

.....
James D. Merriman
Chief Executive Officer

NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOL CENTER
111 Broadway, Suite 604, New York, NY 10006
T: 212.437.8302 F: 212. 227.2763
www.nycchartercenter.org

It's about great public schools

CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN NEW YORK CITY

credo.stanford.edu

January 2010

EMBARGOED until January 5, 2010

SUMMARY

This report supplements the CREDO National Charter School Study *Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States*, released in June 2009, with an in-depth examination of the results for charter schools in New York City. New York City was not included in the national report but this city-specific analysis follows the approach used for the pooled national study. For the interested reader, the full report is available at credo.stanford.edu.

This document reports on the analysis of 6 years of schooling, beginning with the 2003-2004 school year and concluding with the 2008-2009 data. A total of 20,640 charter school students from 49 charter schools are followed for as many years as data are available. The students are drawn from Grades 3 - 8, since these are the grades that are covered by the state achievement testing program. An identical number of virtual comparison students are included in the analysis. The composite virtual student is based on students in competitor traditional public schools, known as the charter school's feeder pool. In New York City, it was possible to create virtual matches for 85 percent of the charter schools students in both reading and math.

Academic growth on state achievement tests is used as the outcome of interest. The analysis examines whether students in charter schools in New York City outperform their traditional public school counterparts under a variety of scenarios. In all the scenarios, a number of control factors are applied to the estimation so that the contribution of the schools themselves can be isolated from other potentially confounding influences. Each of the scenarios is summarized below and in more detail within the applicable sections of the report.

Overall the results found that the typical student in a New York City charter school learns more than their virtual counterparts in their feeder pool in reading and mathematics. In school-by-school comparisons New York City charters perform relatively better in math than in reading. In math, more than half the charter schools are showing academic growth that is statistically larger than their students would have achieved in their regular public schools. A third of charter schools show no difference, and 16 percent were found to have significantly lower learning. In reading, the numbers are not as strong, but show that nearly 30 percent outperform their local alternatives, 12 percent deliver worse results and about 60 percent are producing learning that is equivalent to their regular public school counterparts.

New charter school students show a significant loss on learning in reading but a significant benefit in math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools. In the second year, charter school students show positive improvement in both reading and mathematics compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools and this impact stays positive and significant through the third year of attendance.

The results also show that in New York City Black and Hispanic students enrolled in charter schools do significantly better in reading and math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools. Charter students from most starting points also tend to do better than their peers in traditional public schools. The results for students in poverty however, only show a statistical positive impact in reading and no significant difference in math as compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools. Special Education students and English Language Learner students in charter schools in New York City receive no significant benefit or loss from charter school attendance compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools in reading and math.

In summary, the charter school performance is generally positive in New York City compared to that of traditional public schools. These results also compare positively to our national pooled results.

EMBARGOED until January 5, 2010

INTRODUCTION

This report supplements the CREDO National Charter School Study *Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States*, released in June 2009, with an in-depth examination of the results for charter schools in New York City. New York City was not included in the national report but this city-specific analysis follows the approach used for the pooled national study. Since the methods used to estimate the effects of charter schooling on student academic performance are detailed in the larger report, they will not be repeated here. For the interested reader, the full report is available at credo.stanford.edu.

This document reports on the analysis of 6 years of schooling, beginning with the 2003-2004 school year and concluding with the 2008-2009 data. A total of 20,640 charter school students from 49 charter schools are followed for as many years as data are available. The students are drawn from Grades 3 - 8, since these are the grades that are covered by the state achievement testing program. An identical number of virtual comparison students are included in the analysis. The composite virtual student is based on students in competitor traditional public schools, known as the charter school's feeder pool. In New York City, it was possible to create virtual matches for 85 percent of the charter schools students in reading and 85 percent in math. This proportion assures that the results reported here can be considered as indicative of the overall performance of charter schools in the state. The total number of observations is large enough to be confident that the tests of effect will be sensitive enough to detect real differences between charter school and traditional school students at the $p < .05$ level.

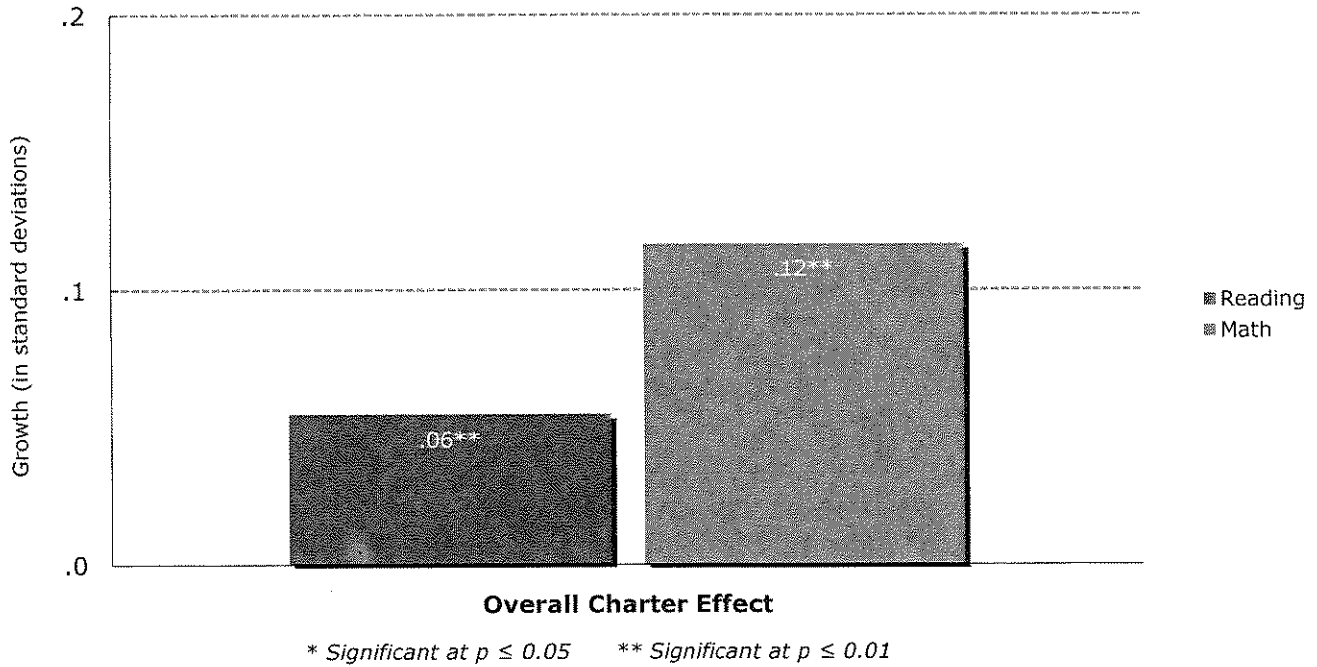
The table below gives a brief demographic profile of the New York City charter students and the subset of students for which we were able to find matches for our analysis.

	Total Charter	Matched
% Black	62.8%	64.4%
% Hispanic	31.1%	31.5%
% Special Education	13.5%	10.8%
% English Language Learners	3.1%	2.4%
% Free/Reduced Lunch	77.4%	82.4%

Academic growth on state achievement tests is used as the outcome of interest. The analysis examines whether students in charter schools in New York City outperform their traditional public school counterparts under a variety of scenarios. In all the scenarios, a number of control factors are applied to the estimation so that the contribution of the schools themselves can be isolated from other potentially confounding influences. Each of the scenarios is presented in the following sections of the report.

First, we examine whether charter schools differ overall from traditional public schools in how much their students learn, all other factors held constant. The results appear in Figure 1. The typical student in a New York City charter school learns more than their virtual counterparts in their feeder pool in reading and mathematics.

Figure 1: State Effects



The advantage for charter students in reading is about 2 scale score points. In math, charter students score about 5 scale score points higher than their counterparts.

SCHOOL-LEVEL COMPARISONS

Because the unit of analysis for public policy discussions is the school, the performance of each New York City charter schools was compared to the learning experience their students would have received had they attended their traditional public schools. This type of head-to-head comparison provides a useful summary of the performance of the sector overall that complements the student-level analysis in the rest of this report.

The test for New York City schools was slightly different than the test employed in CREDO's earlier national study. Because all the NYC schools are drawn from the same education market, there was no need to control for market differences across all the schools, as was the case in the earlier national analysis. Instead, it sufficed to use simple t-tests of each pair of schools; that is, that charter school performance against the performance of its associated comparison group. The student learning gains were averaged for each school and then compared for statistical differences. The results appear in the following table.

School-Level Comparisons of Learning Gains
(Value is the percentage of all NYC charter schools)

Subject	Negative and Significant	Not Significant	Positive and Significant
Reading	12%	59%	29%
Math	16%	33%	51%

Note: Based on t-test of means of charter school average learning gains compared to equivalent average gains in comparison records. The tests used a standard of significance at the $p \leq .05$ level.

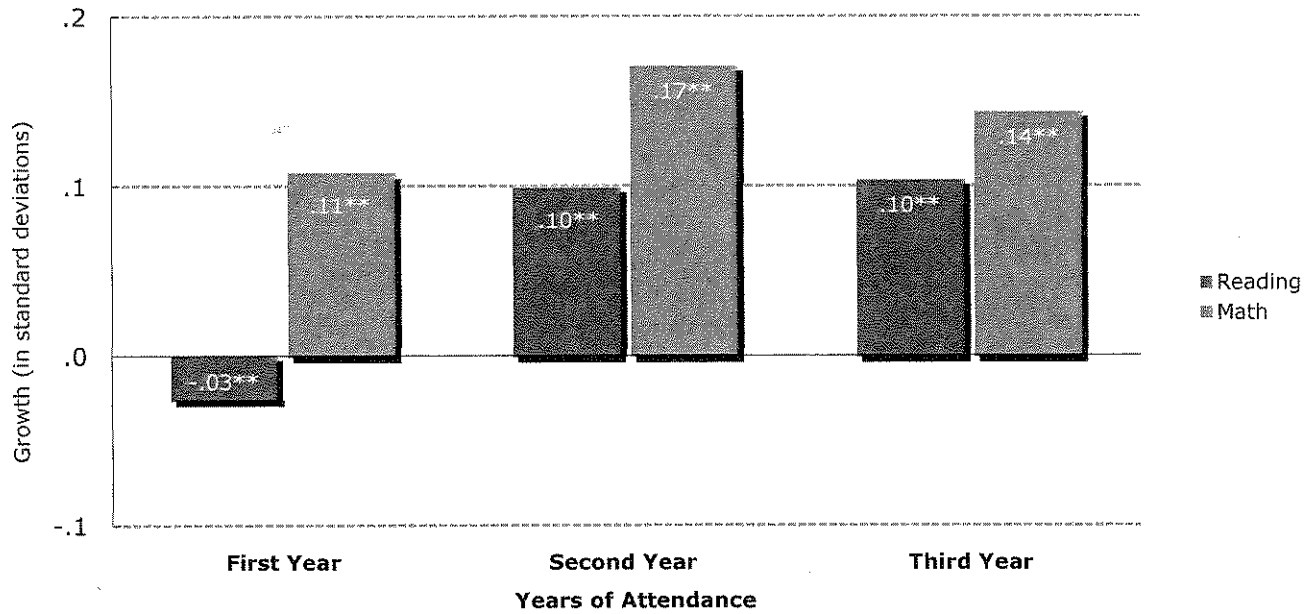
Consistent with the student-level results, the school-by-school comparisons showed that New York City charters perform relatively better in math than in reading. In Math, more than half the charter schools are showing academic growth that is statistically larger than their students would have achieved in their regular public schools. A third of charter schools show no difference, and 16 percent were found to have significantly lower learning. In reading, the numbers are not as strong, but show that nearly 30 percent outperform their local alternatives, 12 percent deliver worse results and about 60 percent are producing learning that is equivalent to their regular public school counterparts.

As a point of comparison, the math figures are starkly different from the national figures released in the CREDO national report, which found that 17 percent of schools outperformed their local schools, 46 percent were no different and 37 percent performed worse. No test was done for reading in the national study. So in both reading and math, the New York City results are more positive overall: the proportion of schools that produce significantly worse learning results than their TPS alternatives is less than half what was found nationally. Further, the proportion of charter schools that demonstrate better learning gains is larger in both reading and math, with the proportion being more than double in the case of math.

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPACT BY STUDENTS' YEARS OF ENROLLMENT

To delve deeper into the charter school effects in New York City, students were grouped by the number of consecutive years they were enrolled. This question examines whether the academic success of students who enroll in a charter school fluctuates as they continue their enrollment. In this scenario, we limit the analysis to the charter students who enrolled for the first time in the charter school between 2004-2005 and 2008-2009; although the number of students included will be smaller, it is the only way to make sure that the available test results align with the years of enrollment. The results appear in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Impact by Students' Years of Enrollment



* Significant at $p \leq 0.05$ ** Significant at $p \leq 0.01$

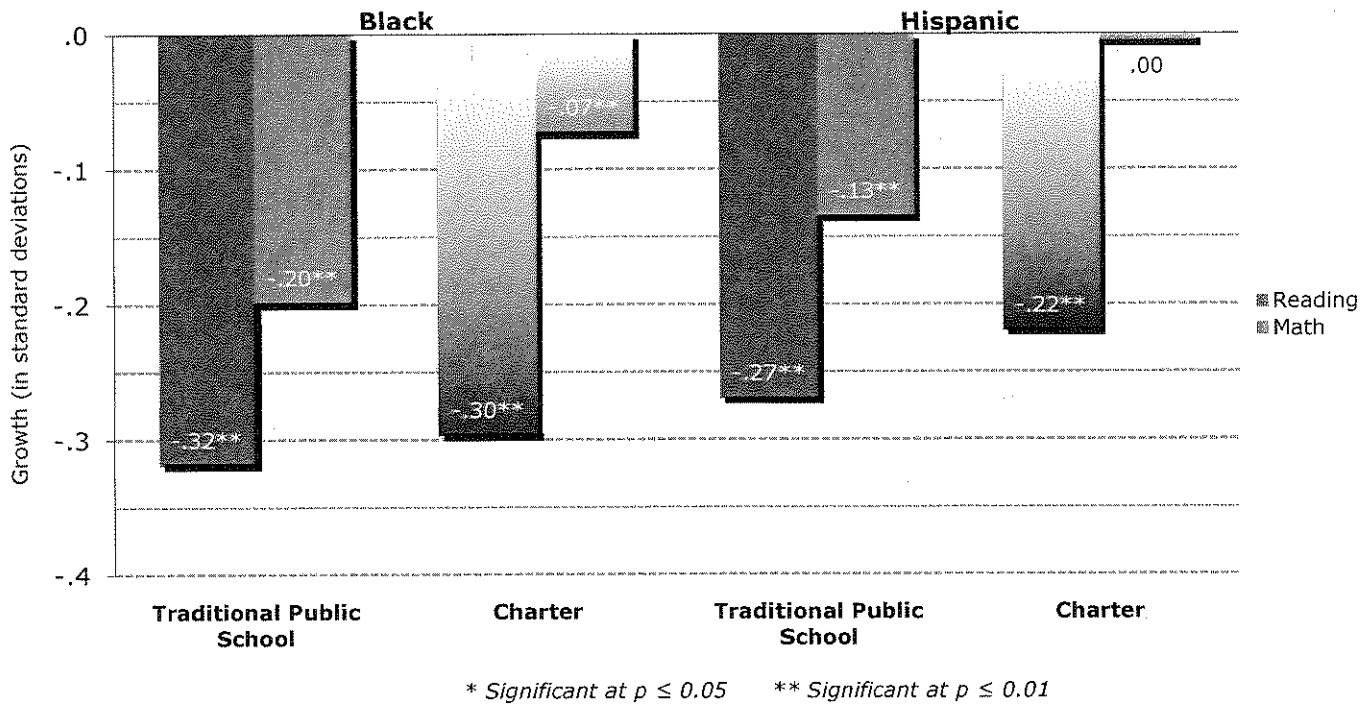
The results suggest that new charter school students receive a significant loss on learning in reading but a significant benefit in math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools. In subsequent years, charter school students have an initial gain in both reading and math from charter school attendance compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools and this impact stays positive and significant through the third year of attendance.

In scale score points, charter students lose about 1 point in reading in their first year at a charter school. However, they gain over 4 scale score points more than their TPS counterparts in math in that same year. In the second year at a charter school, charter students have a 2-point advantage in reading and a nearly 11-point advantage in math. By their third year at a charter school, students have a 4-point advantage in reading and a 15-point advantage in math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools.

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPACT BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Attention in US public education to achievement differences by racial and ethnic backgrounds has increased in recent years. The effectiveness of charter schools across ethnic and racial dimensions is especially important since so many charter schools are focused on serving historically underserved minority students. This impact of charter schools on academic gains of Black and Hispanic students is presented in Figure 3 below. The graphics show the differences between charter school students and their virtual peers. The baseline of comparison in every comparison is the performance of the average traditional public school white student who does not qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch subsidies, Special Education services or English Language Learner support.

Figure 3: Impact by Race/Ethnicity



The results show that in New York City Blacks enrolled in charter schools do significantly better in reading and math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools. The effect translates into nearly a 1 scale score point advantage for charter students in reading scale scores and over 5 scale score points in math.

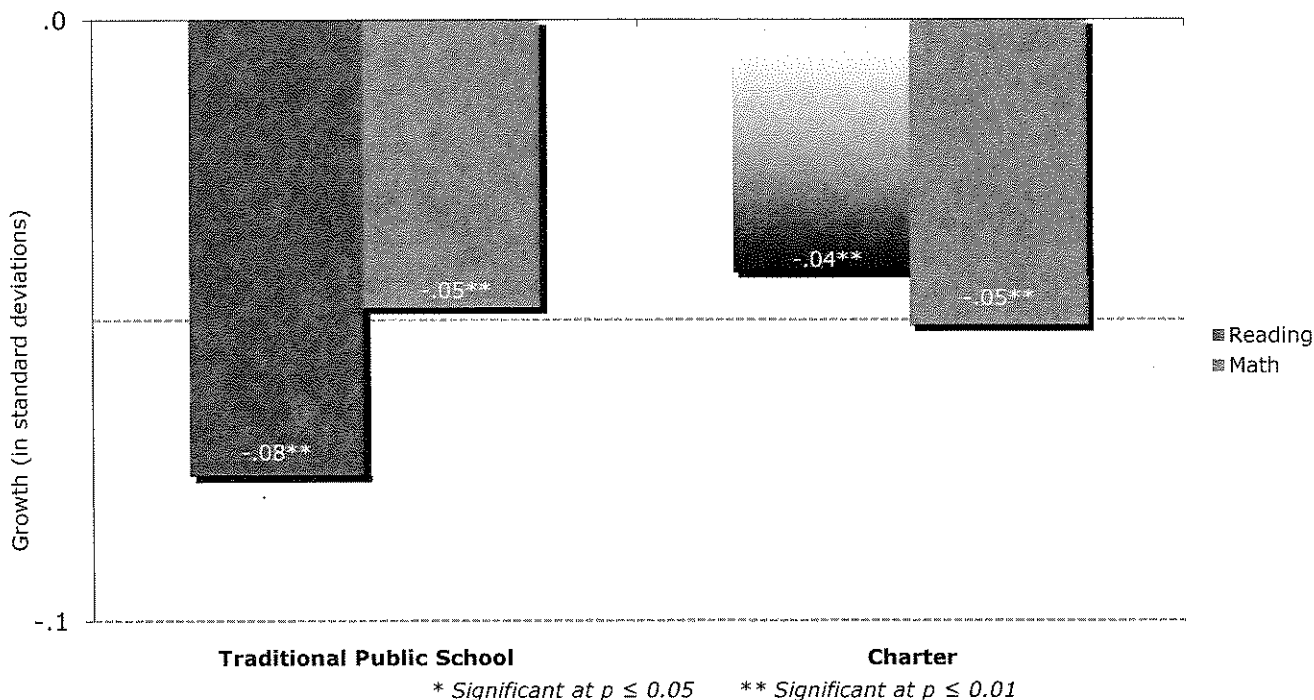
Hispanics enrolled in charter schools also do significantly better in reading and math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools. The effect translates into nearly a 2-point advantage for charter students in reading scale scores and over 5 scale score points in math.

IMPACT OF CHARTER SCHOOLING ON STUDENTS IN POVERTY

Much of the motivation for developing charter schools aims at improving education outcomes for students who are in poverty. The enrollment profiles of charter schools across the country underscore this fact; in the national pooled sample 49 percent of the students are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, a proxy for low income households.¹ Thus, the impact of charter schools on the learning of students in poverty is important both in terms of student outcomes and as a test of the commitment of charter school leaders and teachers to address the needs of the population in better ways than in other settings. Figure 4 presents the results for New York City.

¹ Claims by other researchers that charter schools under-report their proportions of FRPL eligible students appear to be unfounded in our study.

Figure 4: Impact on Students in Poverty



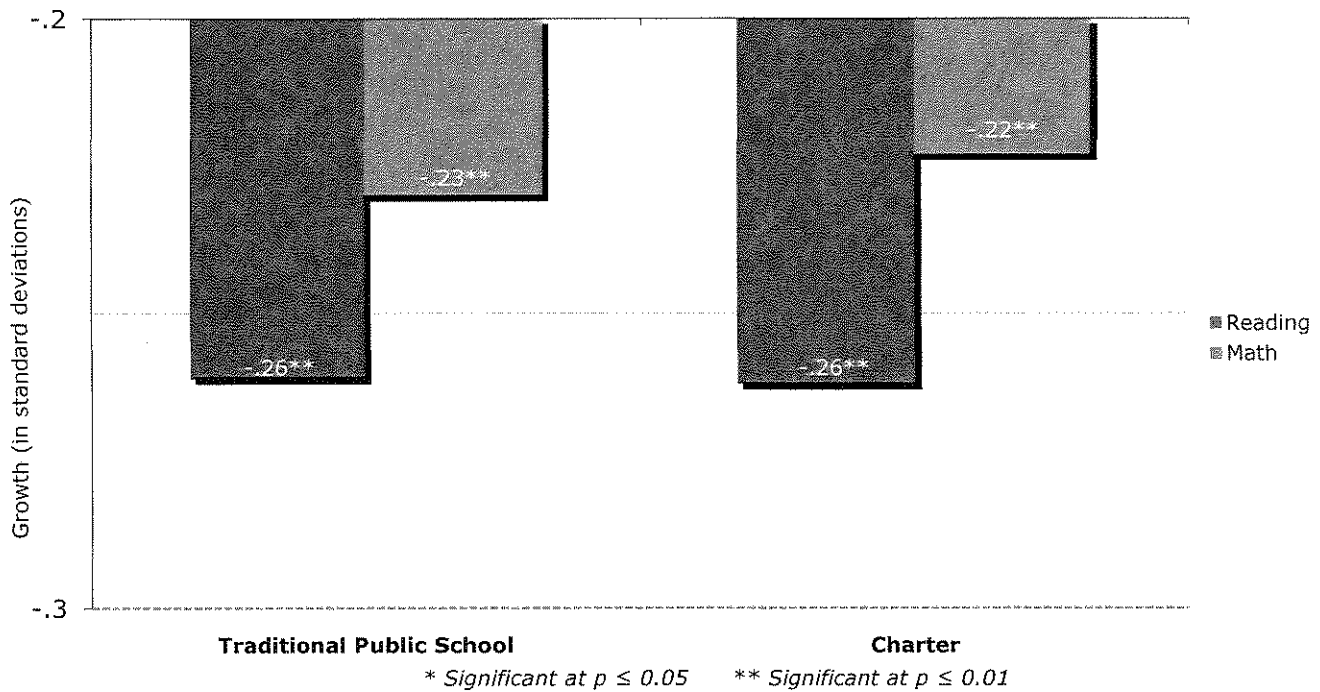
As shown in the figure above, students in poverty enrolled in charter schools do better in reading and about the same in math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools.

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPACTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION

The demographic comparisons in the full report indicate that across the charter sector, schools serve fewer Special Education students and in smaller proportions of their enrollment base than the traditional public schools. In some cases, this result is a deliberate and coordinated response with local districts, based on a balance of meeting the needs of the students and consideration of cost-effective strategies for doing so. In New York City, the overall proportion of charter school students who are Special Education is 14 percent, as compared to 16 percent citywide.

It is especially difficult to compare outcomes of Special Education students, regardless of where they enroll. The most serious problem is caused by small numbers and diverse typologies in use across states; the result is that there is tremendous variation when all categories are aggregated, a necessary and messy requirement. Of all the facets of the study, this one deserves the greatest degree of skepticism. With this cautionary note, the results are presented in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Impact with Special Education Students



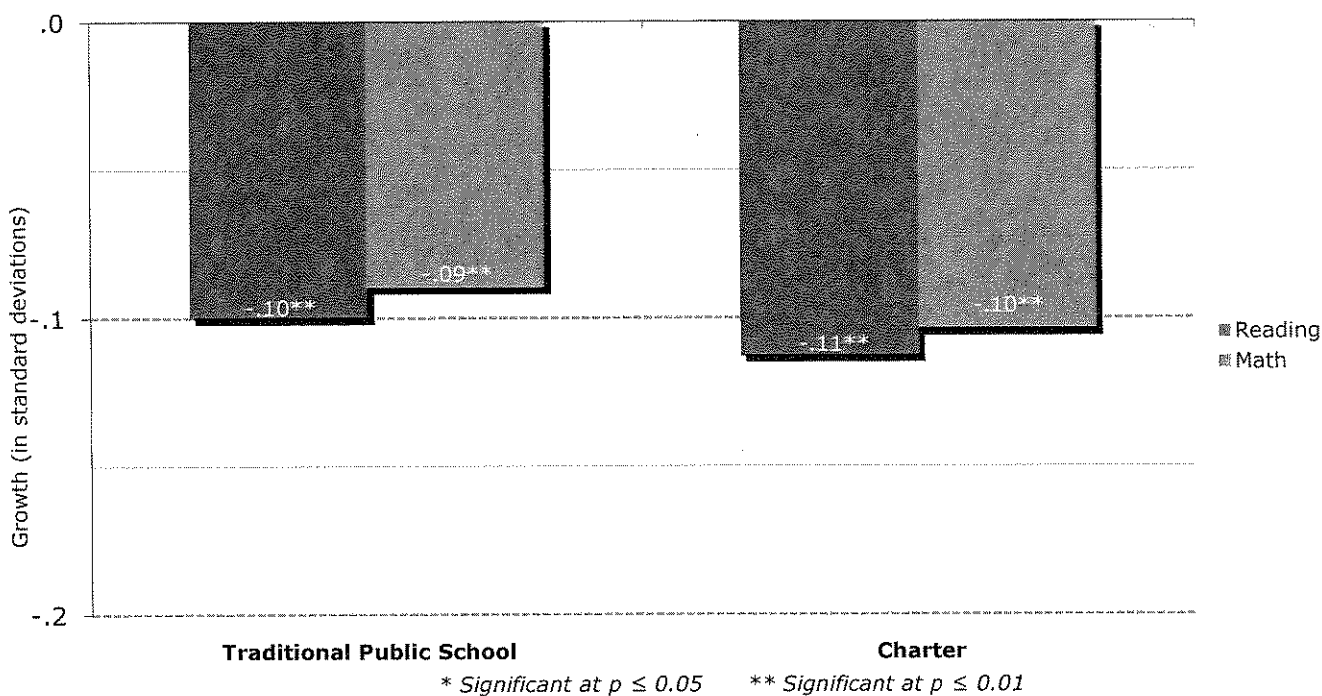
Special Education students in charter schools in New York City receive no significant benefit or loss from charter school attendance compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools in reading and math.

EFFECTS OF CHARTER SCHOOLING ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Students who enroll in school without sufficient English proficiency represent a growing share of public school students. Their success in school today will greatly influence their success in the world a decade from now. Since their performance as reflected by National Assessment of Education Progress has lagged well behind that of their English proficient peers, their learning gains are a matter of increasing focus and concern.

The comparison of learning gains of charter school English Language Learners and their traditional school counterparts in New York City appears in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Effect on English Language Learners



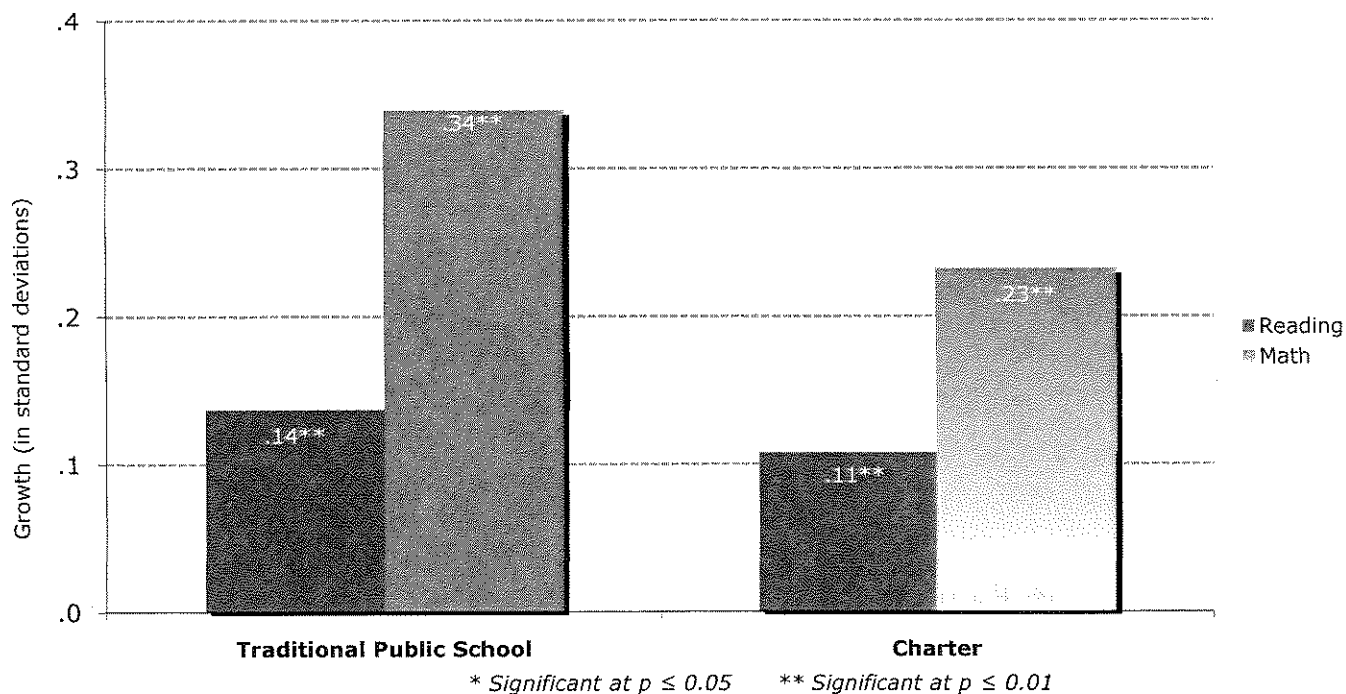
English Language Learner students in charter schools in New York City receive no significant benefit or loss from charter school attendance compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools in reading and math.

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPACTS WITH GRADE-REPEATING STUDENTS

This study examined the outcomes of students who were retained. Often a highly charged topic, the underlying premise is that additional time in grade can help students by remediating deficits and shoring up grade-level competencies. Existing research on the outcomes of students who have been retained is limited; the breadth of states included in this study provides an opportunity to examine the results generally and the difference between charter school students and those in traditional public schools in particular.

Retention practices differ widely across the country and between the charter and traditional public school sectors. The fact that retained charter students have among the lowest match rates of any subgroup in our study suggests that charter schools are more likely to retain academically low-performing students. Regardless, in both the national pooled data and in the observations of New York City students, sufficient numbers of matches were found to enable the learning gains following retention to be estimated. The results appear in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Impact with Grade-Repeating Students



Retained students in charter schools in New York City show less growth compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools in math. Retained students receive no significant benefit from charter school attendance compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools in reading.

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPACT BY STUDENT'S STARTING DECILE

A general tenet of charter schools is a commitment to the education and development of every child. Further, many charter schools, including several in New York City, have as part of their mission a specific emphasis on students who have not thrived academically in traditional public schools and whose early performance is well below average. We examined the performance of charter schools to see if they produced equivalent results across the spectrum of student starting points and in relation to the results observed for equivalent students in traditional public schools.

To do this, students were grouped into deciles based on their baseline test scores in reading and math on New York City's achievement tests. The average growth of student achievement in each decile was then computed and compared. The results appear in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8.a: Impact by Students' Starting Decile - Reading

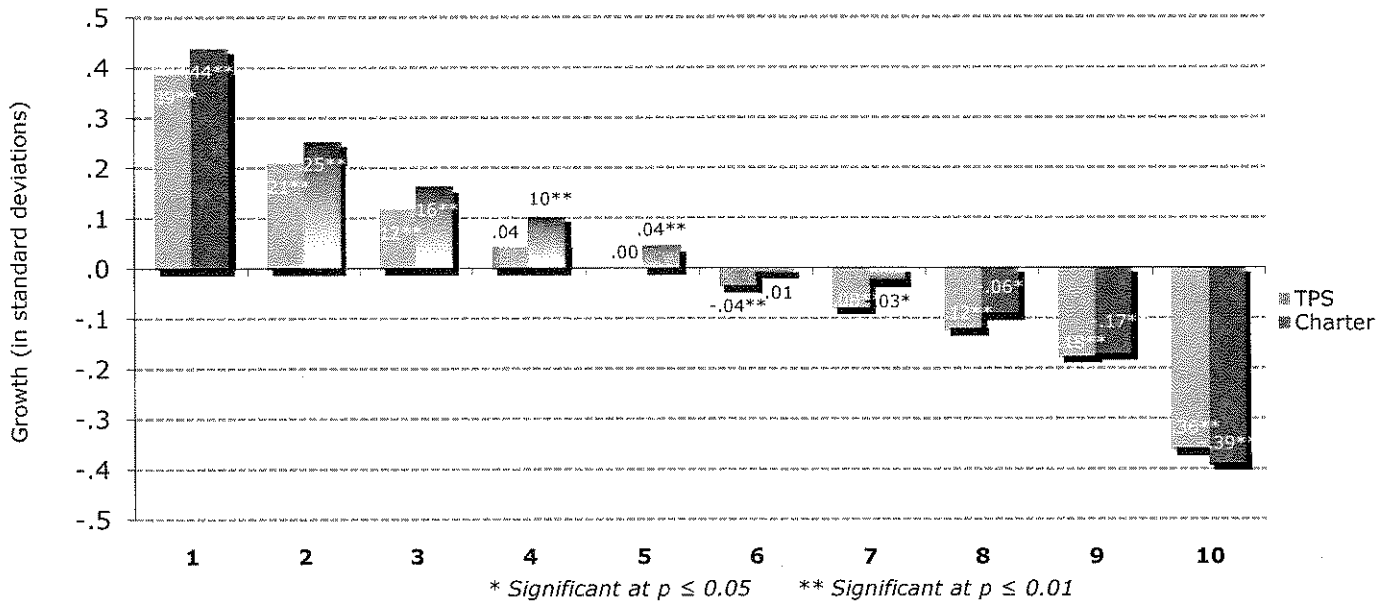
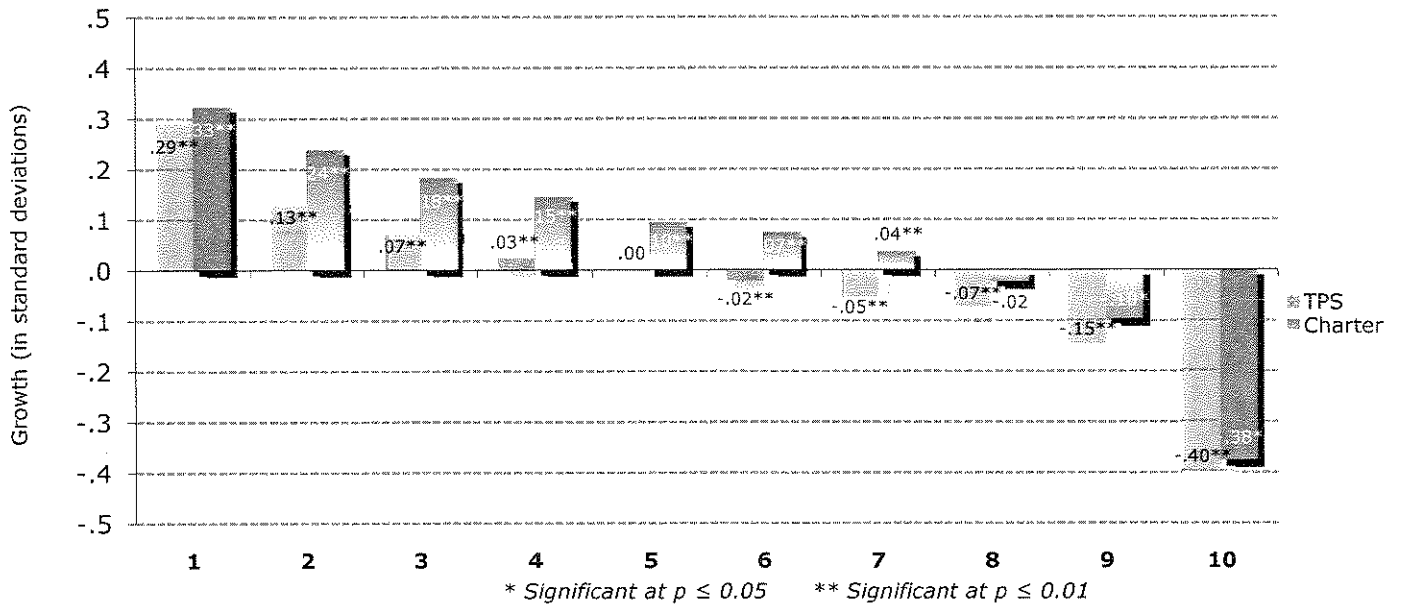


Figure 8.b: Impact by Students' Starting Decile - Math



Both figures demonstrate the expected “S”-shaped curve to the results. The overall curve reflects the typical pattern of larger learning gains for students with lower prior scores and larger learning losses for students with higher starting scores, a phenomenon known as “regression to the mean”. Here, the relative magnitudes are what is important: Do charter schools produce relatively better growth results than traditional public schools? If so, the charter curve would have larger gains on the low end and smaller losses on the high end of the distribution.

For students in New York City, Figures 8.a and 8.b show that charter schools do better than traditional public schools in most respects. The effect of charter school attendance on growth results in both math and reading is almost entirely positive across the deciles.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

With the students they have enrolled, New York City charter schools provide **significantly better** results for the following groups of students:

Reading

All Students
Students enrolled for 2 years
Students enrolled for 3 years
Blacks
Hispanics
Students in most starting deciles

Math

All Students
Students enrolled for 1 year
Students enrolled for 2 years
Students enrolled for 3 years
Blacks
Hispanics
Students in most starting deciles

At the same time, the analysis showed they performed **significantly worse** with the following groups of students:

Reading

Students enrolled for 1 year

Math

Retained students

For the remaining groups in the analysis, there was no discernable difference between charter school and traditional public school performance.