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Causes and Solutions**

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Research Adviser: James Lehmann, Ed. D.

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Abstract

This research paper will attempt to identify the reasons for the overrepresentation of 11th and 12th grades African American students in charter schools compared to traditional public schools, and the negative consequences this trend has on African American students, since charter school provide less of adequate education than traditional public schools. The paper will also attempt to provide solutions to that problem. The first phase of the paper will analyze comprehensive data collected by Ron Zimmer, Brian Gill, Kevin Booker, Stephane Lavertu, Tim R. Sass and John that demonstrate that African Americans prefer to attend charter school in higher proportion than their White and Hispanic counterparts. The paper will then identify some of the possible causes of this phenomenon, which can be explained by new public policies implemented by policy makers that help exacerbate inequalities, the structure of charter schools

itself and the promotion by public policy makers. Finally it will be demonstrated through review of data from researches that students in charter schools do not fair better than traditional public school counterparts.

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Chapter I: Charter Schools: A Background

The condition of the school system has always been of great interest to the American public. Often the subject of many contentious debates, such as the role of religion and sex education, the public rightfully recognize that there are many things at stake when it comes to the education of their children. Parents identify the most important factor for social mobility is education, explaining their investment in the educational system.

Since its establishment, the United States emphasized the importance of a public education. Even prior to the independence of the United States, the first settlers provided religious education to the children of the first settlements. With the influx of new comers from various land, a need to fulfill the educational needs of this diversifying population prompted the creation of private educational institutions (Thattai, 2001). After gaining independence from the United Kingdom, the founding fathers established schools free of religious bias under the control the government, thus the beginning of the American public school system. Despite the good intentions of the founding fathers, the public education was essentially reserved to the wealthy class. Only in the middle of the 19th century that public education became more widespread when most states make public school attendance mandatory. A century later states consolidated their control over school district and imposed uniformity to the school system. States also started to hold responsibly for the funding of schools. In the 1980s the deterioration of public schools increased concerns among parents and public officials, culminating with the *A Nation at Risk* report, drastic reforms were imposed on the public system. As the report had warned that test scores among American students were lower than in many other countries, standardized tests were introduced and individual schools were held additionally accountable.

The reforms failed to redress the test scores of American, since it failed to address the root of the problem which was inequalities among the educational systems. Indeed, schools that had the lowest scores were schools located in the poorest areas, whether in urban areas often populated by disenfranchised minorities, such as African American and Latinos, and rural areas often lacking basic school equipment. The fact that the austerity measures imposed by administration of Ronald Reagan during the majority of the decade of the 1980s had drained the financial support for public schools (Clabaugh, Edwards, 2004), in particular the poorest ones, adding to it the property tax system of financing public schools, would always live the richest schools better off than the poorest school. The gap would only grow between the richest and poorest school districts (Kazol, 1992).

Facing this problem, many intellectuals and public officials proposed that instead of solely reforming public school, an alternative to those schools must be offered to poor students, often minority students. Thus a push by politicians, businessmen and public policy makers were made to institute a new category of schools which would become charter schools. Many attribute the modern concept of charter school to Ray Budde (Saulny, 2005). His interest in organizational theory led him to rethink the organizational structure of school districts. Due to the lack of alarm about the state of public schools during the 1970s, his work was more than often ignored by public policy makers. But with the arrival in the 1980s of the Reagan administration and its economic ideology to the White House changed the fate of the public system. The new prevalent idea dominating the oval office was an idea that accepts as true the private sector being inherently more efficient than the public sector. This attempt to transfer control of economic and social life from the public sector to the private sector has effectively weakened traditional public schools. Due to the new restriction on the government to run deficit,

funding for public school drastically decreased, in terms bringing the gradual privatization of public institutions and the subsequent introduction of marketing completion into the public sector. With the White House eager to implement a new economic and social program along with the deterioration of the public institutions, particularly the school system, calls for reforms become more insistence and gained public and support, especially after the *A Nation at Risk Report*. Within such a context, Ray Budde's became relevant and his vision gained support among policy makers. Subsequently Budde's work was expanded by Al Shanker. Charter schools ultimately were born in the state of Minnesota in 1992 (Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, 2011). After Minnesota, many states followed suites to pass legislation supporting the implementation of charter schools in their states. With the support of the Federal government now a majority of states implemented similar legislations.

According to many, the introduction of private sectors principles into the school system would render it more efficient. As Milton Friedman put it "...by enabling a private, for-profit industry to develop that will provide a wide of variety of learning opportunities and offer effective competition to public schools" (Friedman, 1995, p. 1).

Charter schools would offer another alternative to parents unsatisfied with services of public institutions. The proposed changes were to implement structural and philosophical modifications to the organization charter schools were different in terms of their structure and visions. The philosophy is more oriented to market concepts of supply and demands, accountably and competition being the best condition to offer the most favorable terms for individuals involve, society. In other words if the charter school failed to meet the strict requirements it set itself to concerning students' academic success, it would hold itself accountable and shuts down. Charter schools also compete for funding and students with other

public institutions. Parents and their children are regarded more as consumers. With the push of many politicians, Republican and Democrats, charter schools have increased drastically since its first appearance in the early 1990s.

A noteworthy characteristic of charter schools is the higher proportion of African American students within the student body compared to student population of traditional public schools. Studies by Ron Zimmer and Richard Budding and many more have shown that charter schools, in particular in urban poor areas; tend to serve African American in higher proportion than their White, Hispanic and Asian counterparts. Why is such a trend occurring? The answer to this question is very important giving the fact that studies have shown that charter schools do not provide better services than conventional public schools. However, giving the fact that there are many factors that determine students score and that data are scarce and not ambiguous and vary from states to states.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to examine the reasons behind a disproportional attendance of High School age African Americans in charter schools, the negative impact it has on student achievement and what concrete solutions can help solve the problem.

Definition of Terms

Organizational Theory. It is the study the systematic study and careful application of knowledge about how people act within organizations.

White Flight. A term designated large-scale migration of whites of various European ancestries from racially mixed urban regions to more racially homogeneous suburban or exurban regions

Limitations

The main limitation to the study is that charter schools organizational structure varies not only among states but also among individual schools. Data collected on students achievement data can at some time not be precise and not measure consistently. Furthermore the polarizing nature of the debate has also played a role in many studies on the subject. Another problem is with the measure of student achievement? Is standardized testing an adequate measure of student academic level? It is very difficult to measure the performance of schools because performance can be measured by a diversity of yardsticks and because the data required to cover all statistical bases is very problematic to obtain. Furthermore empirical evidence about the influence of charters on traditional public school performance has been relatively limited and very diverse. Compared to the charter school performance literature, which has been widespread, the literature on the impact of charter school competition on traditional public school outcomes is pretty new. Two methodological problems contribute to the inconclusive findings of this literature. First, selection problems associated with the fact that students self-select into charter schools complicate the measurement of competition just as they complicate the measurement of performance. The specific methodology that one chooses to deal with these selection problems influences the findings regarding the competitive impact of charter schools.

Chapter II: The Overrepresentation of African Americans in Charter Schools and its Reasons

The autonomic nature of charter schools is what greatly separates it from its traditional public schools counterpart. This autonomy created a wide array of different charter schools. Some of them are targeted towards area in needs such as poor urban areas where minority population are very much present. What impacts does it have on the student population of these schools? How can it be effective to fight inequalities?

African American Students in Numbers

The table below (Table 1), which was obtained from the work of Ron Zimmer in 2009, displays the proportion of African American, White and Hispanic students in both charter schools and traditional public schools. The data collected from 8 different cities across the United States show different trends among the ethnic groups.

Table 1:

Charter and Traditional Public School Racial Representation Across All Years in Our Data (%)

<u>School</u>	<u>Charter School</u>			<u>Traditional Public</u>		
Location	Afr. Am	White	Hispanic	Afr. Am	White	Hispanic
Chicago	72.9	2.7	23.5	52.7	9.4	34.8
Denver	31.7	20.4	44.8	19.6	20	56
Milwaukee	40.7	23	27.1	63.8	14.1	14.4
Philadelphia	66.1	19.3	12.3	64.2	15.2	14.8
San Diego	22.9	20.4	40.4	14.5	27.1	39.4

Ohio	55.3	38.7	2.6	15.4	77.9	2.5
Texas	35.8	22.5	39.4	15.7	42.4	39.2

(Zimmer, p. 13)

Based on the data of Table 1, there is no constant trend to observe, since the proportion of them in charter schools compared to conventional public schools are lower or bigger depending on the city. On the other hand, African Americans represent larger proportion of the student body in charter school compared to traditional public school in six out of the eight cities where the data were collected.

Another study supports the previous findings. Richard Budding reviewed charter schools in California found the ethnic makeup of charter schools differ from traditional public schools. Charter schools in California have higher percentage of African American and Caucasian and a lower percentage of Asian and Hispanic students than traditional public school (Budding, 2003).

Table 2:

*Traditional Public School (TPS) and Charter School Peer Environments:
Comparison by Student Race*

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
# of Students	14,210	1,834	5,342	5,641	524
Whites at TPS (%)	14.7	44.9	7.5	11.7	22.5
Whites at Charter (%)	14.7	37.5	7.4	13.1	31.7
Difference	0	-7.4	-0.1	1.4	9.2
Blacks at TPS	26.1	12.9	39.1	19.5	20.2

(%)					
Blacks at Charter (%)	39.7	18.5	50.8	30.1	22.8
Difference	13.6	5.6	11.7	10.6	2.6
Hispanics at TPS (%)	47.9	28.0	46.0	61.4	36.6
Hispanics at Charter (%)	36	32.2	25.0	49.4	31.7
Difference	-11.9	4.2	-21.0	-12.0	-5.1
Asians at TPS (%)	11	13.6	7.2	7.1	20.3
Asians at charter (%)	9.2	11.0	6.5	7.0	17.2
Difference	-1.8	-2.6	-0.7	-0.1	-3.1
Herfindahl at TPS	.523	.442	.508	.582	.409
Herfindahl at charter	.518	.347	.579	.562	.336
Difference	-.005	-.095	.071	-.02	-.073

The above table (Berends, 2008, p. 167) examines the peer environment in both types of schools in California. Peer environment consists of the ethnic/racial makeup of a school and how those different groups relate statistically to each other. Column two of the table shows the overall results for all students, the other columns show detailed results by White and African American groups. Students are moving to charter schools with a higher percentage of black

students and lower percentage of Hispanic students than the traditional public schools they previously attended.

The Herfindahl index is a tool that can help us examine the ethnic or/and racial makeup of charter schools. The index is determined by the sum of the squared shares of each racial group on a scale from 0 to 1. The value 1 represents the total concentration of enrollment in one racial group. The higher the index, the less diversity is present in the student body. The table also shows that the average African American transfer student is more likely to move from a traditional public schools that is 39% black to charter school that is 51% black. In other words the index shows African American students transfer to less diverse a charter school with a Herfindahl index of .579 higher than any other ethnic groups. This pattern is also observed with charter school transfer in the state of North Carolina.

Segregation among charter schools is also widespread in the state of Minnesota. A study made by the University of Minnesota's Institute on Race and Poverty (2008) examines charter schools in the state of Minnesota's main urban area, the Twin Cities. The data only focuses on students of color (mostly African Americans and Hispanic). The result of the study show since at early as 1995 charter schools have always been considerably more segregated than traditional public schools. Chart 1 demonstrates that although the proportion of non-white segregated traditional schools has sharply increased from 1995 to 2002, it has stayed steady until 2008. Yet compared to charter schools the proportion of non-white segregated traditional schools has never even reached half of the proportion of non-white segregated charter schools.

Chart 1:

The Percentage of Non-White Segregated Schools in the Twin Cities Region

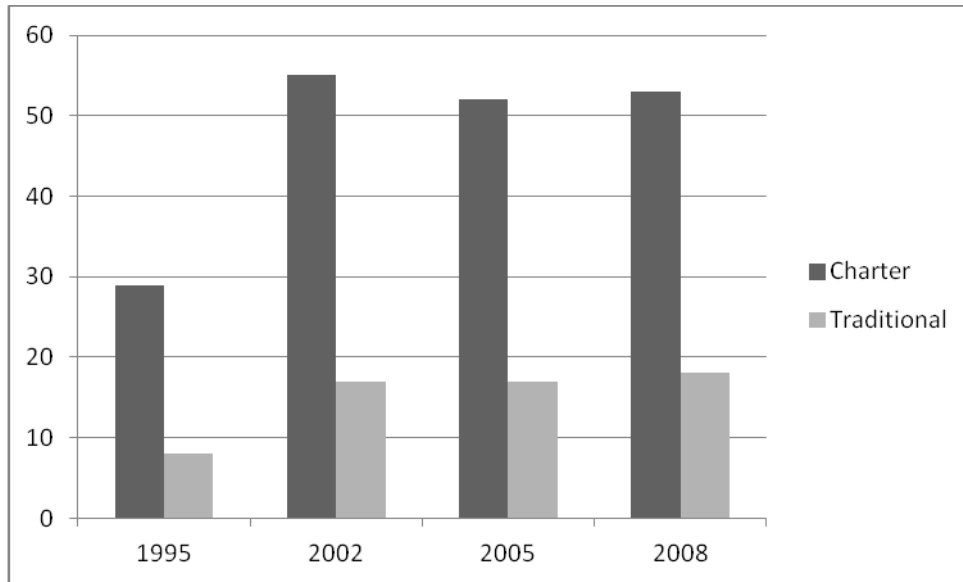
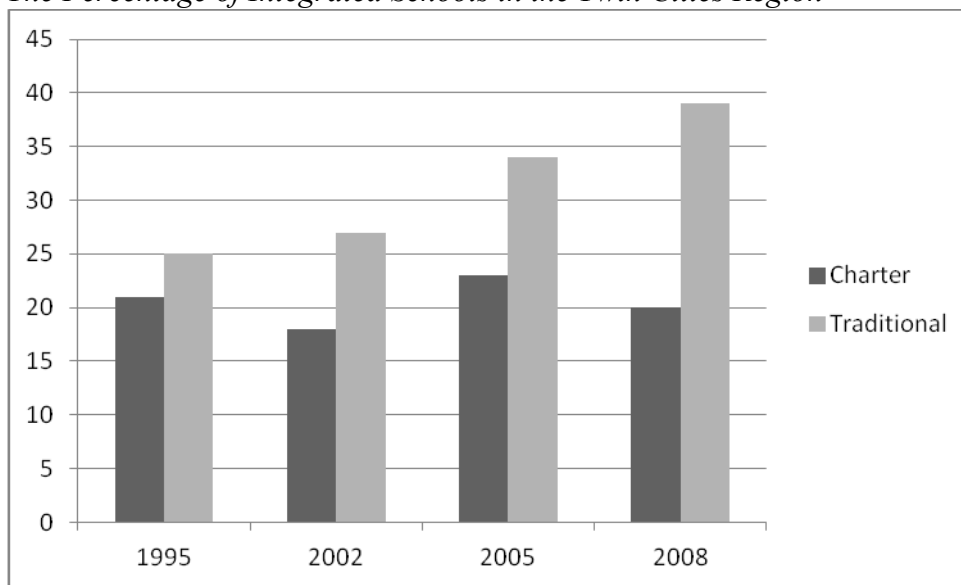
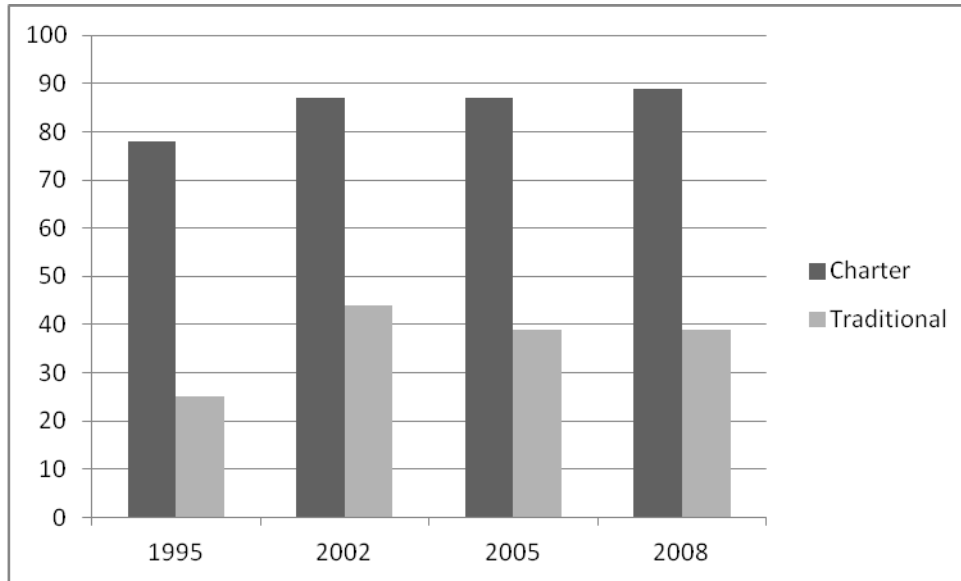


Chart 2:

The Percentage of Integrated Schools in the Twin Cities Region



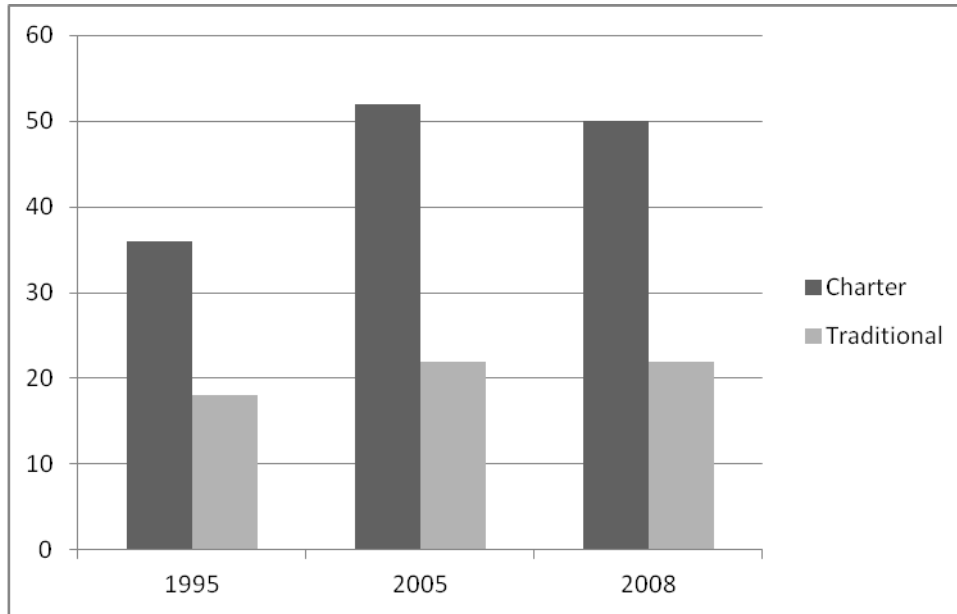
Data on Chart 2 are in concordance with findings on Chart 1. For 13 years integrated schools made up a bigger proportion of traditional schools than that of charter schools.

Chart 3:*African American Students in Segregated Schools Settings by School Type*

(University of Minnesota, 2008)

Chart 3 shows African American students attending schools in the Twin Cities region are more likely to attend segregated institutions at charter schools than at traditional schools. They are also more likely to attend a school with higher poverty rate at a charter school than at a conventional establishment.

These findings should be of concerns to public policy makers. African American students, and students of color in general, who attend charter schools are more likely to attend segregated schools. Nearly all non-white segregated public schools concentrate a high rate of poverty (Orfield, Lee, 2004). As Chart 3 shows, poverty rate is more concentrated in charter schools than in traditional public schools.

Chart 4:*Student Poverty Rates in the Twin Cities*

(University of Minnesota 2008)

Furthermore in the Twin Cities the rate of poverty, in non-white segregated schools, was more than six times the poverty rate in predominantly white schools and more than two and a half times the poverty rate in integrated schools in 2008 as Chart 4 shows.

To conclude, the last four charts show that charters schools are much more likely to be segregated than traditional public schools, that African American student are more likely to attend segregated schools in charter schools than in traditional schools and they are also more likely. This data has important ramifications since high poverty rate in school is associated with high dropout rate, lower test scores and lower tertiary institution attendance.

Reasons

Data collected by various researchers have shown that African American students are disproportionally represented in charter schools. There must be something specific to African

Americans for them to in higher proportion attend charter schools whether it is social, political or cultural. This section will attempt to identify the main factors contributing the larger proportion of African Americans in charter schools than traditional public schools.

Peterson recognized charter schools enroll a larger percentage of African Americans, and advance than it can be in part explain by the fact that some charter schools target a “niche markets” and sometimes “organized around ethnicity.” Thus curriculum pertaining to African American culture has had a role to attract African American students to enroll in charter schools in the state of Michigan (Peterson, 2001). In a charter school located in Inglewood, California, students’ success is credited to “its unique focus on the Black student and in closing the achievement gap through culturally and linguistically responsive teaching” (Muhammad, 2006, p. 1). The curriculum has an emphasis on ethnic belonging and catering to the specific, real or not, of African American students.

A similar trend is observed in different parts of the country such as the state of Arizona. With a steady growth of enrollment reaching 82,000 in 10 years (Ryman, 2005), charter schools in Arizona have experienced great competition on the school market. As a result many charter schools were forced to shut their doors due to low enrollment. This being a result of students being enticed to attend the public schools by advertising that promotes a better success rate in public schools. Many of the others school responded by targeting a particular niches such as students learning English, students interested in Art and students pursuing vocational trainings.

Table 3 reports findings on a telephone survey in which parents where asked what parents really want to know about school in order to make their choice.

Table 3

What Do Parents Say Is Important in Defining a Good School?

	Most Important	Next most important
Teacher quality	34%	22%
Academic environment/curriculum	16%	14%
Parental involvement cooperation	13%	12%
Discipline/safety	12%	16%
Class or school size	9%	5%
Administrators/principal/staff	7%	13%
Morals and values	3%	3%
Facilities	3%	8%
After school programs/extracurricular	1%	3%
Test scores	1%	1%
Location	1%	1%
Diversity of students	0%	1%

(Buckley, 2007, p.104)

As Table 3 illustrates, the first and second most important issues for parents in defining a good school is the quality of teachers. Although in the past, it was a daunting task for parents to determine teacher quality but with the “standardization” of the school this has become possible. Furthermore findings from the study by the 21st Century Fund which assembled focus groups of parents to determine indicators of a “good” school. Parents identified as important in judging a teacher’s qualification, meeting state qualification and licensing criteria.

Since charter schools emphasize accountability of teachers and school administrators, in terms of student achievement, many stories about traditional public teachers unable to be relieved of their duties to union rights, creates this belief that better quality teachers in poor areas can only be found in charter schools. Another instructive finding in Table 3, and possible weakness of the study, is that the student diversity within a school is at the bottom of concerns of parents. While it can't be doubted that the findings are accurate, it shouldn't be concluded that "diversity of students" is the least important factor of choosing a school. Parents, of all ethnicities, would be less reluctant to pick diversity of student (i.e. racial makeup of the student body) as a reason for determining a good school even if it is the case. Social and cultural norms make it difficult for individuals to pick it as their main motivation. Nonetheless, in an investigation on segregation in the school system by Bifulco and Ladd (2006), they concluded "charter schools in North Carolina clearly increased the extent to which students are racially segregated" (p. 40). Indication of this can be observed with the changes in the ethnic makeup of schools for students who transferred to charter schools from conventional public schools. The authors demonstrated students in charter schools were "two and a half times more likely to be enrolled in a racially unbalanced school" than in a traditional public schools. Furthermore, Lubiensky and Weitzel observe that "segregated conditions in charter schools are more attributable to minority self-segregation than to white flight."

Legislation has been the most important tool in school reform; it has largest influence on the state of both charter and public schools. Legislations not only play a role in the emergence of charter schools but also play an indirect role in the ethnic composition of their students. All presidents have attempted to leave their mark on the condition of public school system, including the last two Presidents, George Bush and Barack Obama.

Since the introduction of charter schools there have been many legislative initiatives to promote charter schools. The more recent ones are the No Child Left behind of 2001 signed by George W. Bush, and Barack Obama's Race to the Top initiative. The No child Left Behind initiated by Bush emphasized setting high standards and establishing measurable goals that can improve individual outcomes in education. States were required to set basic assessment test to provide to students in certain in order for them to receive federal funding. Accountability for institutions and teachers were more stressed (Bulkley & Wholester, 2004). Compensation for teachers increasingly oriented toward student assessment was introduced. Public schools who were incapable of meeting the measurable set goals would be denied funding for the next year.

Obama's new initiative follows in those lines. The Race to the Top Fund which stems from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act increases funding for the Federal Charter School program. The funding promotes competition among states in fulfilling certain educational policies and assessment standards (Lubiensky, 2010). States that promote charter schools are more likely to win part of the more than \$4 billion initiative. In response many of states have are attempting to lift cap on charter schools (Dickson, 2011). Recently California and Minnesota were among the states that will receive four-year grants for their extensive plan to improve education quality and close the inequality gap (Khadaroo, 2011).

These measures would more than likely have a little impact on the current situation. The case of the Twin City area schools illustrate that charter schools student body's ethnic makeup is similar to the neighborhood and district they are located in (University of Minnesota, 2008). The study also showed high poverty rate is more concentrated in charter schools which are creating an ideal environment for lower test scores. Those new laws voted would only exacerbate those conditions and not improve the academic well-being of students including African Americans.

Student Achievement in Charter Schools

The fundamental argument in favor of charter schools is that it would improve student achievement through different mechanism. Autonomy is important one of these mechanisms. This mechanism allows charter schools to receive and disburse funds, acquire real property and have a governing board to specifically govern their charter schools. Another mechanism is the accountability concept, where teachers are held responsible for students' scores. This situation would motivate teachers for fear of losing their positions or/and school closing without the protection of unions.

These mechanisms have had at best a mixed impact on student achievement. Buckley and Wohlstetter (2004) were able to make a synthesis of numerous studies on the matter. An approximation of 17 studies was done. They were made in numerous different states such as Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. The different works cover for the most part a period of 3 years. Researchers who studied the same states have not obtained contradictory report, as in one getting a positive impact and the other negative one. Out of the findings of 17 studies, only one had a positive impact (Bulkley, 2004, p. 168). Another three were seen as positive but not conclusive. The rest of the conclusions were for the most part inconclusive or negative. Similar conclusions were made on a study made on charter schools in the state of Minnesota's Twin Cities region.

Table 4:

School Performance by School Type

%Performing Better than Expected %Performing Worse than Expected

	Given Poverty Rate	Given Poverty Rate
Charter	24	76
Traditional	54	46

(University of Minnesota, 2008)

Even though geared to provide academic support to the poorest students of the nation, performances of students in charter schools in the state of Minnesota are considerably lower than that of traditional school students. Students in high poverty rate attending conventional public schools tend to score higher than expected in bigger proportion than in charter schools. They also logically tend to do less than expected at a lower rate (46%) than charter schools students (76%). Charts 3 and 4 already have shown that African American students in Twin Cities region are disproportionately attending charter schools. Furthermore charter schools disproportionately host a disproportionate amount of poor students.

Chapter III: What Can Be Done?

The findings of the studies that raise important academic and most importantly policy implications and questions: What are the real underlying problems with the public school system? Are charter schools accountable in practice? What are other alternatives to public school underperformance outside of charter schools?

A Fiscal Problem

A common knowledge concerning public schools is that they get the great majority of their funding from the government. The government collects funds through taxation that it will subsequently allocate to the public schools throughout the county. Historically, taxes that would

eventually fund schools were collected locally by the local authorities. Those taxes were called property tax. They are determined by the real property which consists of the land and the infrastructure of the building and the personal property. This revenue collected by the government has represented the majority of the funding for public schools by the local authorities (Kenyon, 2008). The usage of property tax to fund public schools has some disadvantages. First of all it may lead to inaccurate measures of wealth. But more importantly it leads to wide disparities. Collected property tax from a less financially fortunate zone would create less revenue than from a richer neighborhood. Thus it explains the great disparities of student achievement between public schools from different socio economic areas. Property-tax is obviously not the sole the mean to fund public schools. The federal government plays an important role in the financial well-being of public educational institutions nationwide. Yet even the federal government means of funding public school has been greatly reduced starting since the 1980s. While the tax rate in the United States was 70%, since the Reagan tax cut of the 1980s it has now fallen to from 30 to 40% (Mallaby, 2006). Appropriately while public schools have deteriorated in such a manner that it required a report about the United States being at risk, school funding also decreased fundamentally (Clabaugh, 2011).

Thus there are two factors that undermine public schools. One is at the local level, where public districts get their funding through collection of property-tax, which in turn can create disparities between the richer and poorer. Fiscal policies at the federal level have cut taxes to fund public institution, having the effect of making less available fund for public school, in particular the poorest ones. Today the emergence of charter schools, with their goals to provide an alternative to the shortcomings of traditional public schools, has drained available funds to public schools.

An important measure to implement would therefore be a fiscal one. Reversing the fiscal policy trend since the 1980s should be a priority. In other words, increase in federal funding for public school and limiting property tax funding would help the fight against inequalities. This change in fiscal policy should be complemented by a halt on charter schools creation.

Cap on Charter Schools

While eliminating charter schools would be an ideal solution to some. Considering the contentious issue has become the task that could end up being impossible. Some researchers have come up with alternatives. Christopher A. Lubiensky suggests a cap on charter school should be imposed, along with a restriction on current charter schools opening new schools and campuses under the same charter (Lubiensky, 2010, p 91). He goes further, suggesting that the concept of accountability be enforced and not just rhetoric. In order charter schools whose students perform poorly should be shut down. According to him this would help in three ways:

1. Increase the overall result of charter schools
2. Increase incentive for charter schools to improve
3. Change media perception

Furthermore this will help prevent government funding to the various types of public schools to be diluted through the high number of schools. This will undoubtedly have an impact on African Americans since they disproportionally attend segregated and disenfranchised public schools.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Attempts to reform the public school system to provide adequate education to underprivileged students have generated the emergence of charter schools. African Americans

have been attending charter schools at a disproportionate rate nationwide as data collected by Zimmer and other researchers illustrate (see Table 1). These study first attempts to identify the root causes of this by looking at many studies done throughout the nation.

Limitations

The study encountered a great amount of difficulty in many areas. Given the fact that charter schools are very different among themselves, showing great differences in student scores, it could be challenging to compare them to more uniform traditional public schools. Assessments of public schools are difficult because researchers have used different methods to measure them.

Findings & Conclusion

As this work has shown earlier, African Americans disproportionately attend charter schools. This phenomenon is partly due to the inequalities in the education system. In the 1980s, culminating with the release of the *A Nation at Risk* report, policy makers decided to reform the school system which in turn evolved into the concept of charter schools. Charter schools were supposed to provide an alternative to the conventional school systems. Often independent for their state they are supposed to be more adept to meet their students', often impoverished, needs. Teachers and administrators would be motivated to provide adequate education for fear of losing their jobs and schools. Yet there are no reliable findings showing charter schools have a positive impact on student achievement.

Synthesis of studies made by numerous researchers indicates that charters school student standardized test scores are lower than that of traditional public schools (Buckley & Wohlstetter, 2004). Although many researchers (Lubiensky, 2010) argue that it is too early to conclude

anyway on the impact charter schools have on student achievement it is fair to conclude that the introduction of charter schools into the school system market has not improve the fate of students and the educational system.

Further interesting findings from the University of Minnesota's Institute on Race and Poverty support this evaluation of the situation. Charter schools in the Twin Cities region do not perform better than traditional public schools. There's a higher concentration of poor and of minority students including African American in charter schools (see Charts 1, 2 & 3). Charter schools have not provided an adequate alternative to African American student in particular the poorest one. A fair allocation of federal and state funds to district is the only support to "failing schools." Public schools competition only hurt the less fortunate ones which the poorest schools, which are schools often attended by African American students.

Recommendations

The responsibility to improve public schools fall both on the federal and state authorities. Fiscal policies increasing spending for traditional public schools should be implemented as soon as possible. Local specificities should be taken into account in order to fight inequalities. Schools having a high concentration of poverty should get more funding and support. Cap on charter schools should be implemented in order to monitor the funding. Merit pay should be eliminated to limit financial incentive. Indeed teachers and establishments could be tempted to solely assist their students to fulfill state score requirement instead of providing and adequate academic education.

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