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STANFORD: NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS PROVIDING SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER RESULTS IN READING, MATH

CREDO Report Finds that New York City Charter Schools Do Significantly Better with Blacks, Hispanics and Students Who Had Not Previously Done Well

Stanford, CA – A new report issued today by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University found that charter schools in New York City are demonstrating significantly better results for their students in reading and in math than their traditional public school counterparts. These trends were consistent for students overall, as well as for several key groups, including Blacks and Hispanics in both subjects, for students who had not previously done well in traditional public schools, for students in poverty in reading, for students enrolled for at least two years or more in reading, and for all students in math regardless of how long they were enrolled.

The CREDO at Stanford report was commissioned at the request of the New York City Department of Education in July 2009, following CREDO's national report released in June 2009, entitled, "*Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States*." That report was the first detailed national assessment of charter school impacts. Its longitudinal, student-level analysis covered more than 70 percent of the nation's students attending charter schools.

Entitled, "*Charter School Performance in New York City*," this report drew upon the same methodological approach used for the pooled national study used to measure the effects of charter schooling on student academic performance.

On a school-by-school comparison, the report found that 51 percent of New York City charter schools are showing academic growth in math that is statistically larger than students would have achieved in regular public schools, with 33 percent with no significant difference and 16 percent with significantly lower learning. In reading, the report found that 29 percent of charter schools are showing statistically better gains, with 59 percent with no significant difference and only 12 percent significantly lower.

Specifically, the report found that new charter school students in New York are modestly but significantly behind in reading gains during their first year, but receive an immediate, significant benefit in math compared to their traditional public school counterparts. But in their second

year, charter school students have substantial gains in both reading and math, and this impact stays positive and significant through their third year of attendance.

The report also found that Blacks and Hispanics enrolled in charter schools do significantly better in charter schools in both reading and math. In both cases, their math results are stronger than reading, but both are comparatively stronger than would have been realized in regular public schools.

Students that had not previously done well in traditional public schools also showed higher academic gains, according to the report. In fact, charter schools were found to have strong performance across the range of starting scores, which indicates that charter schools are overall successful at improving student achievement regardless of academic background.

With respect to students in poverty, students enrolled in charter schools do significantly better in reading and about the same in math compared to their counterparts in traditional public schools.

“Our findings show New York City charter schools on average have provided superior academic results for their students,” said Dr. Margaret Raymond, director of CREDO at Stanford University. “Further, the spread in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing schools is consistently smaller than found in other communities.”

The report analyzed six years of achievement data, beginning with the 2003 – 2004 school year and concluding with the 2008 – 2009 school year. A total of 20,640 charter school students from 49 charter schools were followed for as many years as data was available. The students were drawn from Grades 3 – 8, with an identical number of virtual comparison students included in the analysis. For each charter school, the composite virtual students were based on students in the group of traditional public schools whose students leave to attend the charter– the charter school’s feeder pool. In New York City, it was possible to create virtual matches for 85 percent of the charter school students in both reading and math.

For the remaining groups in the analysis, including special education students and English Language Learners, there was no discernable difference between charter school and traditional public school performance.

“The study shows that it is possible to create a strong environment in which charter schools are both encouraged and required to deliver high quality education to all students regardless of background.” said Dr. Raymond. “The charter sector in New York City serves as an important benchmark for education policymakers in other states as they move forward with their own charter school policies and Race to the Top applications.”

To download a copy of the full report and executive summary, visit: <http://credo.stanford.edu>

About CREDO at Stanford University

CREDO at Stanford University was established to improve empirical evidence about education reform and student performance at the primary and secondary levels. CREDO at Stanford University supports education organizations and policymakers in using reliable research and

program evaluation to assess the performance of education initiatives. CREDO's valuable insight helps educators and policymakers strengthen their focus on the results from innovative programs, curricula, policies or accountability practices. <http://credo.stanford.edu>

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