

CHARTER SCHOOL BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. INTRODUCTION

In putting together this bibliography, we have attempted to give a balanced view of the charter school movement, containing an articulation of both its strengths and weaknesses. By so doing, we have accumulated a volume of material that far exceeds the available time or interest of individual League members. Therefore, we have highlighted in bold print the materials that we consider most important to an understanding of the issue. These consist of materials explaining the Charter Act of 1998 and the Five Year Report of Charter Schools in New York State. To the extent individual study committees have the time and interest, they are encouraged to delve into the additional materials.

In reviewing this data, it important to note that New York State has both successful and unsuccessful charter schools. Studies, such as the American Federation of Teachers review of NAEP performance by charter school students, look at aggregate performance and say nothing about the performance of individual schools. In reading these studies, one must ask whether the results support a generic position in opposition to/ in favor of charter schools, or whether they support a more nuanced position, which would allow us to advocate for improvements to the existing act.

Because the charter school debate is ultimately a debate about the success of charters in New York State, and because there has not been adequate analysis of the New York State charter school data, we ask Leagues with charter schools in their catchment areas to complete the charter school data collection instrument, so that we can look at the efficacy of charters throughout New York State.

- II. GENERAL BACKGROUND READING – This section contains assorted readings about educational theory. It is not necessarily specific to the NYS situation.

The Charter School Landscape, edited by Sandra Vergari, University of Pittsburgh Press 2002.

No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning, Abigail and Stephen Thernstorm, Simon and Schuster, 2003.

Where Charter School Policy Fails, Amy Stuart Wells, Teachers College Press, 2002.

The Charter School Dust-Up, Lawrence Mishel, Martin Camoy, Rebecca Jacobson, Richard Rothstein, Economic Policy Institute, 2005.

The Color of School Reform, Jeffrey Henig, Columbia University Press, 2000.

The Schools Our Children Deserve, Alfie Kohn, Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Rhetoric Versus Reality: What We Need to Know About Vouchers and Charter Schools, Gill, Brian P., Timpane, Michael, Ross, Karen E., Brewer, Dominic J., (2001) Rand, www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1118. The summary of this early study by the Rand Corporation is useful in articulating the issues that go into assessment of charter school efficacy, including achievement, ability to provide choice, whether charters are accessible to those for whom they were intended (poor, minority, special needs students), how do charters affect integration, do charters perform the traditional civic socialization function of public schools, or will they promote intolerance and increase balkanization. The study, which consists of a review of existing literature, concluded that much additional research was needed.

IV. ON-LINE INFORMATION ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter School Institute, SUNY, www.newyorkcharters.org. List of Charter Schools, SUNY Renewal Practices, Policies, & Procedures, Inspection Reports and Charter Renewal Reports.

New York State Education Department, Dr. Darlene Mengel, 518-474-1762, SED Information about Charter Schools, www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/

New York State Education Department School Report Cards, www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard , Link to annual school report cards with performance data for all public schools, including charter schools.

V. WHAT ARE CHARTER SCHOOLS AND HOW DO THEY FUNCTION IN NEW YORK STATE? (IF YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS WE SUGGEST YOU START HERE)

Summary of the New York Charter Schools Act of New York State, available on the Summaries of Materials link of this website: A summary of the Act prepared by Betsey Swan of the Albany County League

State Education Department materials, available at www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/ . See especially the following materials:

- Charter School Act of 198
- Frequently Asked Questions about Charter Schools in New York State
- General Information about Charter Schools in New York State
- Frequently Asked Questions about Financing Charter Schools in New York State
- Charter Schools and Special Education
- Board of Regents Guidelines for Processing Complaints Received Pursuant to Education Law Section 2855(4)

Charter School Institute (SUNY) materials, www.newyorkcharters.org/charterny/index.html , under *Charter Schools in New York*, look at

- FAQ's
- Charter School Visit Reports (of SUNY Chartered Schools)
- Institute Renewal Reports
- Charter School Resources
 - Reports / Publications
 - State Test Scores – SUNY Authorized Charter Schools
 - State University Renewal Practices, Policies and Procedures

Charter Schools: Investment in Innovation or Funding Folly?, New York State School Boards Association (2003), www.nyssba.org/scriptcontent/va_custom/PDFs/charter_schools.pdf . A look at the impact of charter schools on education in New York State, along with recommendations for change. This study articulates well the financial problems that charters create for traditional public schools and articulates a number of proposals to alleviate those problems. It also looks at the failure of charters to educate their share of disabled students. While admitting that the academic success of charters varies in NYS, this study chooses to focus on the spectacular failures, in keeping with the organization's traditional public school bias.

City-wide Systems of Charter Schools: Proceed with Caution, Policy Brief by Gerald Bracey, published by the Education Policy Studies Laboratory of Arizona State University (2004) www.nyssbba.org/ScriptContent/VA_Custon/PDFs/grepsl-0403-115epru.pdf . A general review of charters nationally with recommendations for Buffalo's proposal to embrace charter schools. Because this study reviews trends nationally, it is of limited use in the New

York State debate, except as a cautionary tale of some of the pitfalls to avoid.

Governance and Administrative Infrastructure in New York City Charter Schools: Going Charter Year Three Findings, Ascher, Carol, et al. Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, (2003) www.nyu.edu/iesp/publications/charter/gov_admin_may2003.pdf . This study looks at strengths and weaknesses of the governing and administrative structure of NYC charters. Included are discussions of the role of the Board of Trustees and its ability to oversee operation of the school, the role of EMOs, the role of parents, compensation and oversight of teachers, and the role of unions in charters. This study does not attempt to quantify success or failure of charters. Rather, by focusing on illustrative schools, the authors point out strengths and weaknesses of different organizational structures in the various types of charters.

Reflections from New York City's Charter Schools and Charter Authorizers: Going Charter Lessons From Two First-Year Studies, Ascher, Carol, et al., Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, (2000) www.nyu.edu/iesp/publications/charter/GoingCht12+00.pdf . An early study, comparing the experiences of NYC charters to alternative schools remaining under the auspices of the Chancellor, shows that the reality of charters is more nuanced than either proponents or detractors would indicate. In some cases, charters proved subject to greater reporting requirements and oversight than the alternative school remaining within the NYC system. The intersection of the charter movement with that of standards based reform with its mandatory high-stakes testing often conflicted with the desire of charters to experiment with innovative approaches to education.

Seeds of Change in the Big Apple: Chartering Schools in New York City, Lake, Robin J., Progressive Policy Institute, (2004), www.ppionline.org/documents/NewYork_0921.pdf . This document makes an even-handed, effective argument in favor of charter schools. Anyone who is opposed to charters should look at this because it proposes the type of traditional public school / charter collaboration that is being followed in New York City, recommends closure of charters that do not perform, and makes recommendations for changes in the Charter School Act. The downside of this document is that its pro-charter bias leads it to downplay some of the vexing problems about the charter movement, such as the very real financial effect of charters on some districts, the fact that there is an inherent tension between the demand to reduce costs and the need to develop new learning spaces and administrative structures that charters require, and the fact that at least one academically successful unionized charter fails to provide any health

care or retirement benefits to its members (essentially a subset of the potential conflict between reducing costs and improving education).

VI. FUNDING

An explanation of the funding mechanism is contained in the summary of the Charter School Act available on the League website. In addition, we will prepare materials about the financial impact of charter schools on various districts around the State. We anticipate these materials will be available in mid-July.

The Finance Gap: Charter Schools and Their Facilities – Findings From a Nine-Month Study, Ascher, Carol, et al., Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, (2004) at www.lisc.org/resources/assets/asset_upload_file678_6781.pdf . This national study looks at the difficulties encountered by charter schools in 14 states, including NYS, in the financing of facilities. It contains an in-depth discussion of facility finance and the problems created when charters, which traditionally receive extremely limited state funds for facilities acquisition, must pay up to 25% of their operating expenses for physical plant.

Charter School Funding in New York: Perspectives on Parity With Traditional Public Schools, Jacobowitz, Robin and Gyurko, Jonathan S., 2004, www.nyu.edu/iesp/publications/charter/CharterFinance.pdf . A look at funding of NYS charters, which attempts to respond to complaints of charter operators that they receive up to 30% less funding than public schools. The discussion delves into three areas – capital expenses, the differential between elementary and secondary education costs, and special education.

VII. CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

NYSED Materials, www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/specialed.htm .

VIII. CHARTER SCHOOL OVERSIGHT

Charter School Accountability in New York: Findings From a Three-Year Study of Charter School Authorizers, Ascher, Carol, et al., Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, (2003) www.nyu.edu/iesp/publications/charter/PDF_2003accountability.PDF . a good discussion of the chartering process and charter oversight in NYS, focusing on modifications that have been made to the system as it has developed. The authors describe an NYS accountability and oversight system that has been expanded to encompass contractual and regulatory accountability, as well as performance accountability and suggest that charters receive greater oversight than non-performing traditional public schools. The authors also suggest that inexperienced teachers, along

with high teacher and student turnover, over time may create the same problems for charters currently faced by poorly performing traditional public schools.

IX. EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

Achievement in Charter Schools and Regular Public Schools in the United States: Understanding the Differences, Hoxby, Caroline, 2004, www.innovations.harvard.edu/cache/documents/4848.pdf. A report by an advocate for choice that found charters outperformed regular public schools.

Charter School Achievement of the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress, Nelson, F. Howard, et al., (2004), www.asu.edu/educ/eps/EPRU/articles/EPRU-0408-63-OWI.pdf . An analysis of NAEP data that found regular schools outperformed charters.

Charter School Achievement: What We Know, Hassel, Brian, Charter School Leadership Council (2004), www.charterschoolleadershipcouncil.org/PDF/Paper.pdf . This review of studies comparing achievement in charter compared to that in regular school concludes that the research is inconclusive at best and at worst often flawed.

X. NYS REPORTS –These reports contain a wealth of data about NYS charter schools.

2003/2004 Annual Report,
www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/20032004charterschoolsannualreport.htm

2002/2003 Annual Report,
www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/annualreport20022003.shtml

2001/2002 Annual Report,
www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/annualreport20012002.shtml

2000/2001 Annual Report,
www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/annualreport20002001.shtml

Five-Year Report,
www.emsc.nysed.gov/psc/fiveyearreportedeff.shtml

XI. LEAGUE DATA COLLECTION

We have developed a data collection instrument so that we can draw conclusions about charter school performance. We are asking Leagues in

districts where charter schools are located to obtain the data and forward it to us by September 1, 2006. If you have any questions, contact Betsey Swan at 518-426-3711.

