

NEWS STORIES AND REPORTS ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS  
JUNE 2010 TO JUNE 2011

These are just a few of the highly concerning reports published just within the past year about a large number of charter schools across the nation, in a wide variety of states. Full citations given at <http://parentsacrossamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/FULL-CITATIONScharterprobs2011.pdf>

**Charter schools are increasing segregation and excluding children with the greatest needs.**

- “One out of eight charter schools has a student body with 90 percent or more of a single race or ethnicity, an Orlando Sentinel analysis of the state's 456 taxpayer-financed charters shows. That compares with one out of 12 traditional public schools.” *Orlando Sentinel* (FL) 4/30/2011
- In a study last month published in the *Journal of School Choice*, researchers from NYU found that the schools do serve fewer English language learners. *WNYC News* (NY) 4/25/2011
- “‘The charters seem to have a larger share of the kids who are the less poor among the poor,’ [Bruce Baker, an associate professor at Rutgers' graduate school of education] said...57 percent of the students at a typical charter school in New York City receive free lunch compared to 68 percent in the typical regular elementary school. Students who receive a free lunch are much closer to the poverty limit than those who qualify for reduced-price meals...” *WNYC* (NY) 1/16/2011
- “Some charter school officials decide not to serve [lunch] at all, even if that might mean that the nutrition needs of some of the state's poorest children are not being met...Attempts to get answers directly from charter schools met with no response in dozens of cases... the lack of a lunch program might be keeping some of the poorest families from sending their kids to the school.” *Los Angeles Times* (CA) 1/1/2011
- Charter schools...are exempt from the federal law requiring public schools to provide needy students with at least one nutritionally adequate meal a day at a reduced price or for free...Advocates for low-income families are concerned that this could force some parents to choose between the educational and nutritional needs of their children... *Los Angeles Times* (CA) 10/22/2011
- “In July, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) filed a legal complaint against the Louisiana Department of Education alleging that schools have been turning away parents with disabled children and shirking their responsibilities to ensure that the special-needs students they do serve actually benefit from academic instruction. The complaint asserts that New Orleans schools are in violation of the federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), particularly in terms of excessive punishment of children with emotional and behavioral problems.” *Newsweek* 10/6/2010

- “KIPP charter middle schools enroll a significantly higher proportion of African-American students than the local school districts they draw from, but 40 percent of the black males they enroll leave between grades 6 and 8, says a [new nationwide study](#) by researchers at Western Michigan University.” *Education Week* 3/31/2011
- “About one out of every 10 charter school students (2,700 out of 24,659) who were enrolled in 2009 either transferred to another school or otherwise failed to return in the fall of 2009...Traditional schools do not have comparable statistics...Charter schools expelled 146 students in 2009, or 5 of every 1,000—a higher rate of expulsion than traditional schools, which posted an expulsion rate of 1.5 for every 1,000 students. In 85 percent of charter school cases, students were expelled for less serious offenses that are not eligible for expulsion under CPS rules. Once expelled, charter students are sent back to their neighborhood school by the district’s Office of Adjudication.” *Catalyst Chicago* (IL) 11/9/2010

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**Too many charter schools have come under state and federal investigation. This is consistent with a March 2010 report by the Office of Inspector General which stated, “There has been a steady increase in the number of charter school complaints for our office to examine.”**

- “The Texas Legislature ordered an investigation on Tuesday of the largest charter school network in the state [33 schools] after news organizations reported potential ties to a Muslim organization and misuse of public funds.” *CBS News Dallas / Fort Worth*, 6/29/2011
- “In Philadelphia, 19 of the 74 charter schools in the city are under federal investigation.” *WHYY* (PA) 6/27/2011
- “...federal agencies - including the FBI and the Departments of Labor and Education - are investigating whether some charter school employees are kicking back part of their salaries to a Muslim movement founded by Gulen known as Hizmet, or Service, according to knowledgeable sources.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/20/2011
- “A Dallas Morning News review of public records and databases found nepotism in charter schools across Texas, along with many administrators earning six-figure salaries to run charter schools with only a few hundred or a couple of thousand students.” *Dallas Morning News* (TX) 12/19/2010
- “More than 20 percent of Texas' charter schools have some kind of religious ties...‘The church-state line is beginning to blur,’ said Bruce Cooper, a professor at Fordham University's Graduate School of Education, who has studied religious charter schools.” *Dallas Morning News* (TX) 11/22/2010
- “But even though Chicago’s charter schools brought in \$21 million in private money from foundations, corporations and wealthy individuals in 2007 — the last year for which complete

information is available — half have run an average of \$700,000 in deficits in recent years, with some of the shortfalls reaching \$4 million...” *New York Times* (NY) 8/13/2010

- “Charter authorizers...cannot account for direct services provide to charter schools...Charter school spending shows questionable or improper expenditures and late payments to vendors and to tax obligations...Charter schools have operations that have the potential appearance of conflicts of interest with regard to lease arrangements, family hiring and other contractual arrangements...Charter school administrators identified education practices they feel are innovative, but there is no formal process for sharing these practices with traditional public schools.” *New Mexico Public Education Department Report to the Legislative Finance Committee 7/23/ 2010*

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**Too many charter schools have the same or worse academic performance; they are not consistently of “higher quality.”**

- “Charter schools [in Chicago], which enroll students based on a lottery and usually receive some level of private money to operate, perform about the same as neighborhood schools.” *Chicago News Cooperative* (IL) 6/30/2011
- “Overall, charter school performance in Pennsylvania lagged in growth compared to traditional public schools...Performance at cyber charter schools was substantially lower than the performance at brick and mortar charters with 100% of cyber charters performing significantly worse than their traditional public school counterparts in both reading and math.” *CREDO Stanford* 4/2011
- “...most St. Louis area charter schools, elementary and high schools, perform worse on standardized tests than the regular public schools.” *KTVI – TV* (MO) 3/13/2011
- “New Florida data showed that students at charter schools are not significantly more proficient at reading, math and science than those at traditional public schools.” *The Florida Independent* 12/14/2010
- “In the 2008-09 school year, students in [NJ] charter and district schools passed their math tests at the same rate — 54 percent. In the language arts category, the difference was miniscule: 41 percent of charter school students passed, compared to 40 percent in district schools... ‘Charter school advocates over-exaggerate the successes of good charter schools, but underplay the significant number of failing charter schools,’ said Alan Sadovnik, co-director of the Newark Schools Research Collaborative.” *Star Ledger* (NJ) 11/10/2010
- “...Traditional public schools bested the [NY] city's charter schools on annual report-card grades -- scoring 10 points higher on average on a 100-point scale, new data shows.” *New York Post* 10/1/2010

- “...Charter schools [in New Mexico] have high costs to the state and have similar levels of student performance as traditional public schools...” *New Mexico Public Education Department Report to the Legislative Finance Committee 7/23/2010*

**Charter schools accountability and oversight is inadequate; too many charter schools engage in questionable practices.**

- “The Texas Education Agency has a total of nine people overseeing more than 500 charter school campuses. ‘They don’t have the capacity at the state level to do the job,’ said Greg Richmond, president of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.” *New York Times 6/6/2011*
  - A leading school-choice supporter says the sweeping changes proposed by House Republicans would weaken oversight of charter schools severely and threaten to turn Ohio into a “laughingstock of the nation's charter-school programs.” *Columbus Dispatch (OH) 4/30/2011*
  - “...a surprisingly large number of New Orleans charter school boards failed to comply with even basic requests for information. Many didn’t respond at all. Of the officials who did answer, some provided only partial information – and still others claimed they aren’t public officials or required to do their work in public, even though state law says otherwise...” *The Lens (LA) 10/7/2010*
  - “Auditor General Jack Wagner today called for a statewide moratorium on the creation of new charter and cyber charter schools until the General Assembly and the Rendell Administration fix a flawed funding system that bears no connection to the actual cost of educating children and is costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year in additional questionable spending...he noted that several states, including Ohio, Delaware and New Hampshire, have imposed moratoriums to address charter-school issues.” *Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General news release 10/5/2010*
  - “Ohio law ignores established governance practices and upends the relationship between charter school boards and management organizations they ostensibly hire to run their schools. Current law allows management organizations to control school revenues, set up schools and pick board members, limit board decision-making power, and reduce board ability to contract for independent services; all of this can make it next to impossible for boards to break free from the managers they ostensibly hire. With management organizations dictating terms to charter boards, we are seeing the unchecked and largely unexamined transfer of taxpayer funds to private hands.” *Policy Matters Ohio Report 9/2010*
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