

## **MAPP Discussion Paper #4**

### *Are Charter Schools Meeting Expectations? A Meta-Analysis on Charter School Effectiveness*

Syngen Kanassatega '08, Ntokozo Xaba '08, Philip Odusote '07

#### Executive Summary

Educational reform is one of the most important yet controversial policies for the Bush administration. In traditional public schools, state and local legislators yield greater influence on all aspects of education than parents, teachers, and school administrators. Minnesota became the first state to implement charter schools into their education system in 1991. A majority of charter schools give greater autonomy to parents, teachers, and school administrators. There has been a shift in interest from the procedures and governance of charter schools to how the money is being spent and whether academic performance is improving as a result. The goals of charter schools are to make schools more innovative in teaching techniques and improve student achievement.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties support the implementation of charter schools, but in different ways. Republicans who believe in a free market economy support charter schools because charter schools are allowed to function independently when deciding how to allocate school resources. The Democrats favor them because charter schools give parents more choices when deciding which schools best fit their children's educational needs. Since charter schools are given more freedom from government intervention regarding educational policies, community involvement is boosted because school administrators and the community act jointly on implementing educational policies.

We aim to synthesize the available studies in order to determine whether charter schools have succeeded in improving the quality of education for students. Have charter schools achieved their mission in improving the academic performance of their students? Have they produced academic success superior to traditional public schools? Ultimately, how have charter schools performed in comparison to their public school counterparts? These are the questions that should lead to important answers to help guide politicians through their policy-making process.

This study began with the use of databases and search engines. We used the educational literature-related database titled ERIC and the economic literature-related database titled EconLit. We only used studies that included regressions or quantitative data in our meta-analysis. Our total number of sources is limited because most of the available literature is qualitative research rather than quantitative.

Our results show that charter schools have a negative effect on students' reading and math scores. Therefore, we recommend that states seriously reform charter school acts or abolish them altogether.