



K-8 Choice in Michigan: Practices and Policies within Charter and Traditional Public Schools

Many view public and charter schools as vastly different school settings, but research rarely compares charter schools to the traditional public schools that students would likely otherwise attend. What are the different policies that affect administrators and teachers between charter and public schools? How engaged are charter school parents? What would a charter school student's educational experience be if he or she attended the neighborhood public school instead? Using the Education Policy Initiative's Michigan School Practices Survey, we answer these questions in the Michigan context by looking at practices and policies at charter schools and their traditional public school counterparts.

Authors

Susan M. Dynarski,
University of Michigan

Brian Jacob,
University of Michigan

Mahima Mahadevan,
University of Michigan

Key Findings

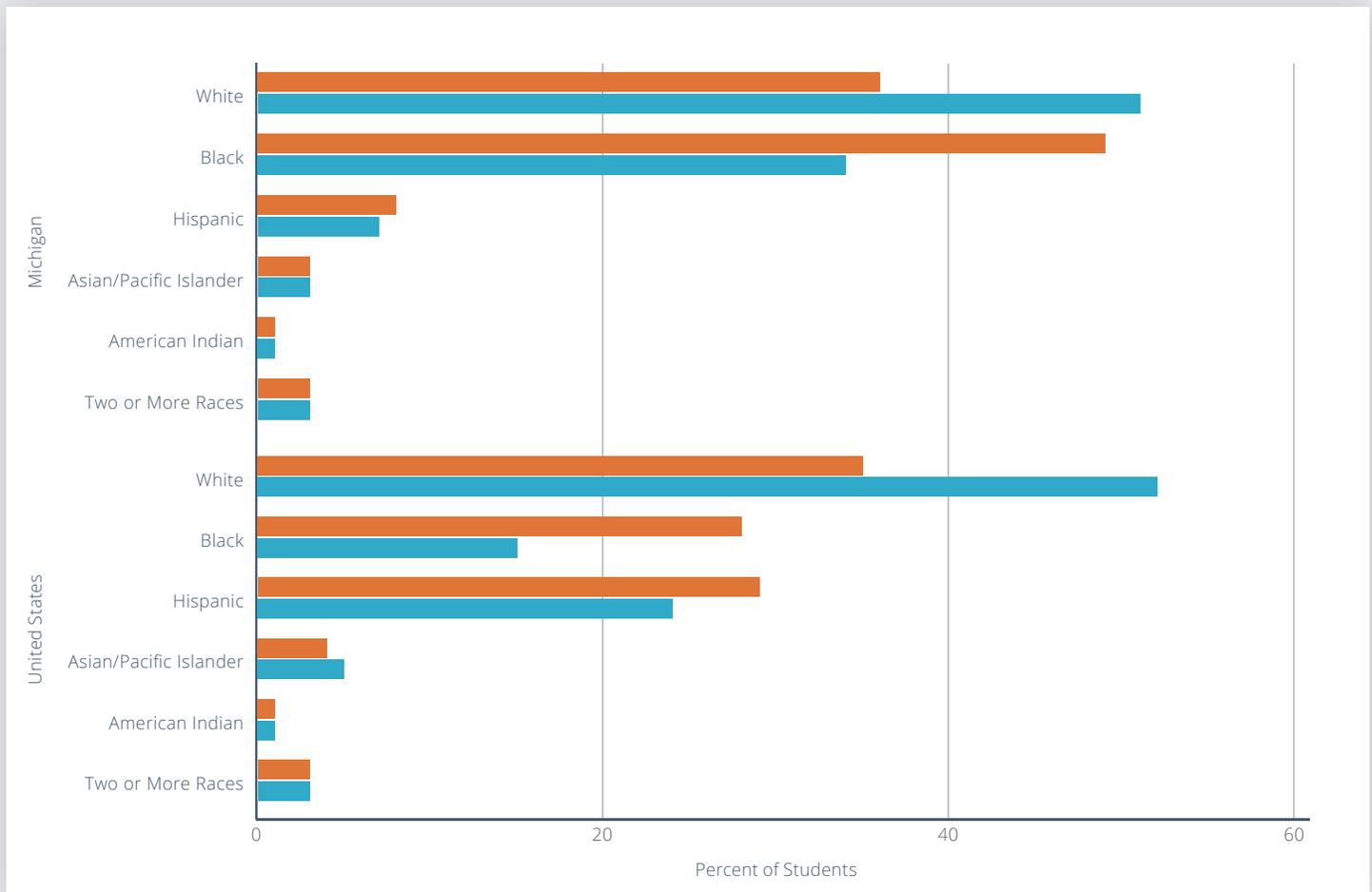
- 1 Michigan charter schools expect more from, and offer more to, their staff, giving greater authority to principals and more professional support to teachers than do their counterpart public schools.
- 2 Teacher starting salaries are nearly 10% lower in Michigan charter schools, though 66% of charter schools offer merit-based bonuses compared to 16% in counterpart public schools.
- 3 Michigan charter schools offer a slightly longer school day and provide an equivalent number of days in the school year, but devote less time to after-school tutoring than neighborhood public schools.
- 4 Michigan charter schools report slightly higher levels of parental engagement and "no excuses" school policies than neighborhood public schools.

Charter Sector Well Established in Michigan

With over 300 active charter schools enrolling approximately 10% of its school-age population, Michigan ranks fifth in charter enrollment in the nation.¹

Even more striking is the high percentage of charter school enrollment in urban areas. With 55% of its students enrolled in charter schools, Detroit is second only to New Orleans nationally in the share of students attending charter schools. Two other Michigan cities, Grand Rapids and Flint, also rank among the top seven cities nationwide in charter school enrollment.²

Figure 1: Racial Composition of Public and Charter Schools

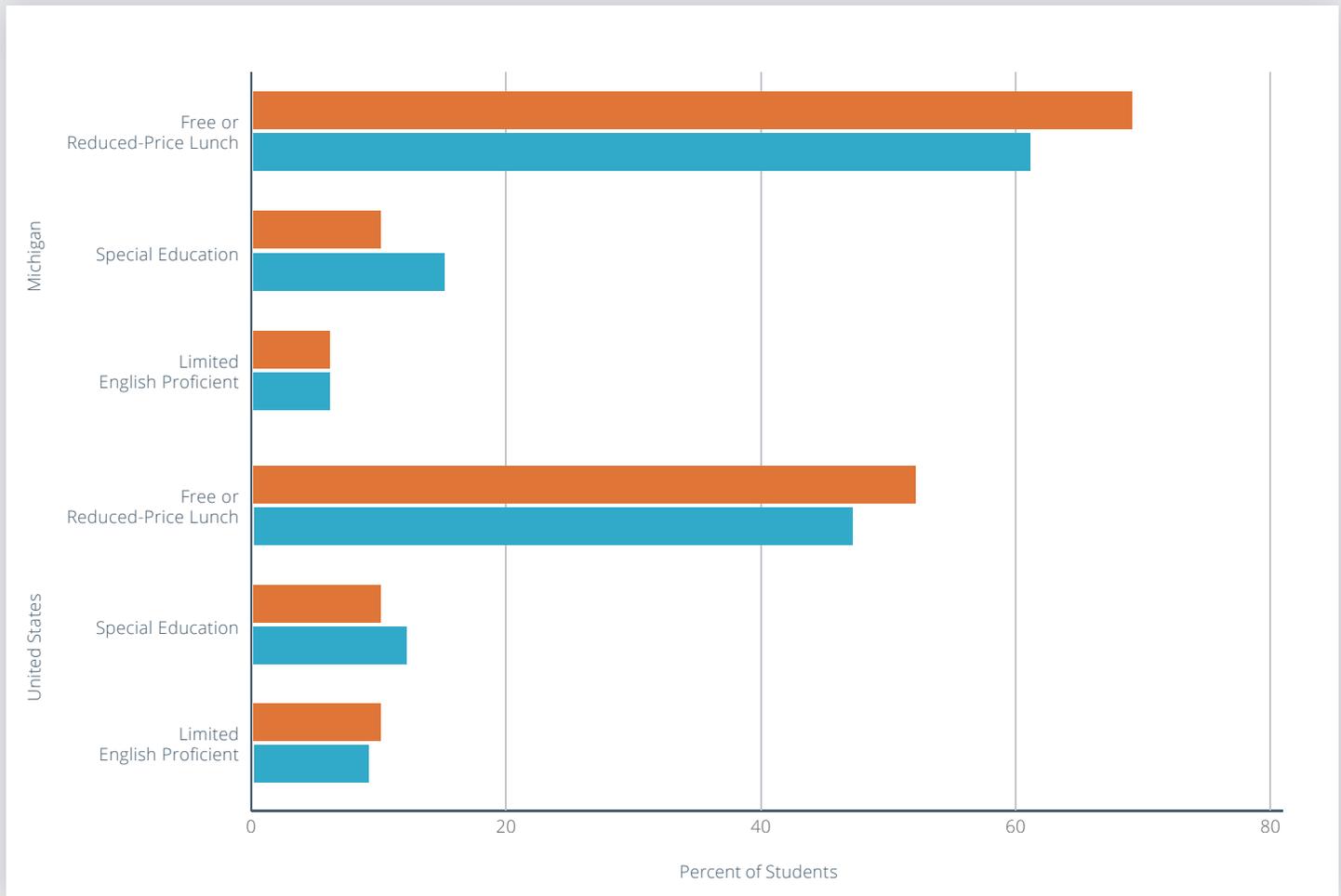


Public Charter

Note:
For Michigan, "Charter" and "Public" refer to our sample of charter and comparable traditional public schools.

Source:
National statistics from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 1999-2000 through 2012-13. Michigan statistics calculated using Common Core of Data (CCD) 2012-13 school level data files.

Figure 2: Demographic Composition of Public and Charter Schools



Public Charter

Note:
For Michigan, “Charter” and “Public” refer to our sample of charter and comparable traditional public schools. Michigan statistics on special education and limited English proficient calculated at the district level.

Source:
National statistics from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School and Private School Data Files,” 2011–12. Michigan sample statistics calculated using Common Core of Data (CCD) 2012–13 school level data files.

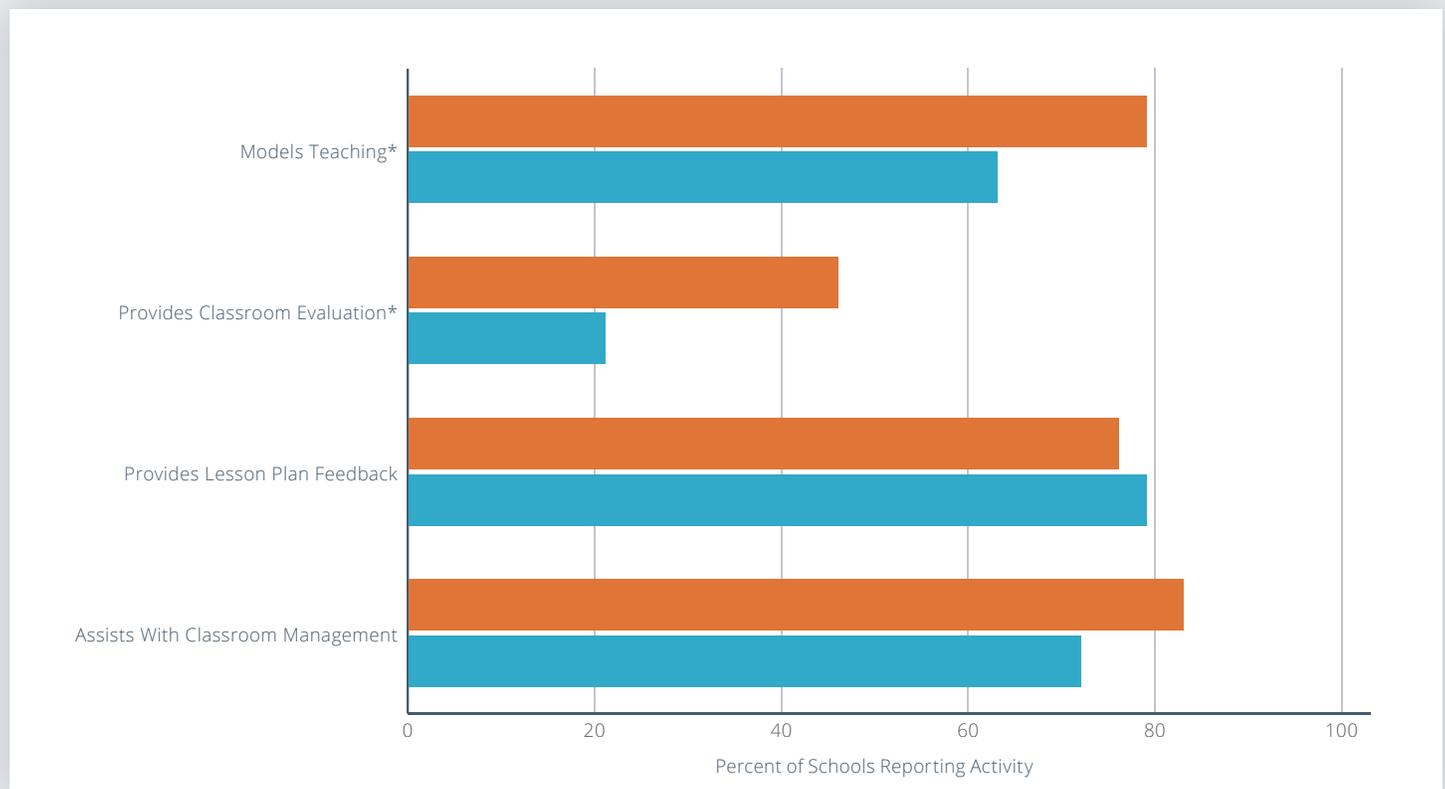
Michigan charter schools serve a different population from both the public schools that their students would likely otherwise attend and from charter schools nationally (see Figure 1). In Michigan, charter schools educate a higher proportion of black students (49%) than their counterpart public schools (34%) as well as charter schools nationally (28%). Michigan charter schools also enroll a smaller proportion of white students (36%) than public schools (51%). They enroll a nearly identical

proportion of Hispanic students (8% and 7%), though lower than Hispanic students enrolled nationally in charter (29%) and public schools (24%). Michigan charter schools also serve a higher percentage of low-income students, measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch (69% vs. 61%), a lower percentage of special education students (10% vs. 15%), and an equivalent percentage of limited English proficient students (6%) when compared to traditional public schools (see Figure 2).³

Detailed Findings⁴

In fall 2013, the Education Policy Initiative fielded the Michigan School Practices Survey to administrators in both charter and traditional public schools throughout Michigan. We included all general education charter schools in Michigan that were open during the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years as well as the traditional public schools that each charter school's students would most likely have attended based on their neighborhood.⁵ School leaders responded at very high rates, with 85% of charter school leaders and 76% of traditional public school leaders participating in the survey. A total of 435 schools, including 226 charter and 209 traditional public schools are represented in the study.⁶ The survey revealed several characteristics of these charter schools, which we explore at length in this brief.

Figure 3: Teacher Mentor Activities



Public Charter

*The difference is significant at the 5% level

Note:
Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan.

Table 1: Teacher Professional Support

	Charter	Public
Hours Per Month for Formal Teacher Collaboration*	5.4	4.1
Hours Per Month for Mentorship	3.9	3.2
Days Per Year of Professional Development for Inexperienced Teachers*	8.0	6.6
Days Per Year of Professional Development for Veteran Teachers*	7.2	5.5
Minutes Per Year of Formal Principal Observation of Inexperienced Teachers*	288	139
Minutes Per Year of Formal Principal Observation of Veteran Teachers*	255	98

*The difference is significant at the 5% level

Note:
Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan.

Principal Autonomy

In our sample, charter school principals enjoy significantly more decision-making autonomy in the critical areas of curriculum design and staffing than do public school principals, despite having slightly less teaching and administrative experience (15 versus 18 combined years). Forty-five percent of charter schools give their principals and teachers the authority to adapt the curriculum. In contrast, only 16% of public school principals report curriculum decision-making authority; the majority report that curricular decisions are made by district office personnel. This school-level autonomy extends as well to teacher hiring, where 83% of charter school principals make final teacher hiring selections, while only 53% of public school principals do the same. Further, only 30% of charter school principals identify difficulty in firing low-quality teachers as a factor preventing school improvement, while 79% of public school principals report such challenges.

Teacher Professional Support

Charter schools in our sample offer more professional support to their teachers. Much of this support comes from principals, who dedicate

considerably more time to mentorship and coaching than their public school counterparts. For example, charter school principals spend more than double the amount of time per year formally observing teachers than their public school counterparts (see Table 1). Charter principals are also more likely to be formal mentors to teachers, with 45% of charter school principals reporting that they served in such a role compared to 23% of public school principals. And while both sectors offer mentorship support, more charter school administrators report offering teachers the opportunity to observe and be observed in the classroom (see Figure 3). Finally, charter schools allot more time for teacher development, with an additional hour per month for formal teacher collaboration and an extra day and a half per year for professional development (see Table 1).

Teacher Salary and Financial Incentives

Charter schools in Michigan offer a lower starting salary for teachers but are more likely to supplement this salary with skill- and performance-based

financial bonuses (see Table 2). The difference in pay between a new teacher without a master's degree at a charter school and a public school is \$3,279. Charter schools compensate somewhat

for this shortfall with financial incentives; 66% offer a merit-based bonus and 30% offer financial incentives for teaching hard-to-fill subjects.

Table 2: Teacher Salary and Financial Incentives

	Charter	Public
Dollar Amount of Starting Salary for New Teacher*	\$33,151	\$36,430
Financial Incentives Offered for Hard-to-Fill Subjects (% Schools)*	30%	3%
Dollar Amount of Financial Incentive	\$2,250	**
Merit-Based Bonus Offered (% Schools)*	66%	16%
Dollar Amount of Bonus	\$1,488	\$1,068

*The difference is significant at the 5% level

** Unable to report due to low response rate

Note:

Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan.

Table 3: Academic Time

	MI Charter	MI Public	National Charter	National Public	NYC Charter	MA Charter
Instructional Days Per School Year	179	179	180	179	192	187
Instructional Hours Per School Day	6.6	6.3	6.8	6.7	8	7.6
English Language Arts Instructional Minutes Per Day	111	97	NA	118	112	85
Math Instructional Minutes Per Day	87	77	NA	67	NA	81

NA: Data not available

Note:

Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan. All differences statistically significant at 5% level between MI charter and public except Instructional Days Per School Year and English Language Arts Instructional Minutes Per Day.

Source:

National statistics from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Principal and Private School Principal Data Files," 2007-08 and Kolby, T., Partridge, M., & O'Reilly, F. Time and Learning in Schools: A National Profile. <http://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/sass.pdf>. New York City statistics from Hoxby, C. M., Murarka, S., & Kang, J. (2009). How New York City's Charter Schools Affect Achievement, August 2009 Report. Cambridge, MA: New York City Charter Schools Evaluation Project. Massachusetts statistics from Angrist, J., Cohodes, S., Dynarski, S., Fullerton, J., Kane, T., Pathak, P., & Walters, C. (2011). Student Achievement in Massachusetts Charter Schools. Cambridge, MA: Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.

Table 4: Academic Tracking

	Charter	Public
Assign to Reading Classes by Ability	40%	42%
Assign to Math Classes by Ability	51%	42%
Assign to Reading Groups Within a Class by Ability	81%	78%
Assign to Math Groups Within a Class by Ability	83%	75%
Pull Out for Reading Enrichment Instruction	56%	60%
Pull Out for Math Enrichment Instruction	53%	57%
Pull Out for Reading Remedial Instruction	86%	77%
Pull Out for Math Remedial Instruction	84%	74%

Note:

Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan. None of the above differences are statistically significant at the 5% level.

Academic Time

In Michigan, both charter and neighborhood public schools have a 179-day school year, on par with the national average. This school year length is lower, however, than in studies of charter schools in New York City and Massachusetts (see Table 3) that are featured in the literature. While Michigan charter schools spend 18 minutes more per day on instruction than public schools, both lag behind national averages in instruction time per day. And Michigan charters offer an hour less of instruction per day than charter schools in New York City and Massachusetts. Only 9% of Michigan charters offer extended academic time (at least 7.5 hours per day), compared with about 33% of charters nationally and 9% of public schools nationally.⁷ Michigan charters also spend slightly more time on math and English instruction than the neighborhood public schools, though the difference in English is not statistically significant. Both types of schools trail public schools nationally on time for English instruction but exceed national averages for math instruction.

Summer and Saturday School

Over 70% of both charter and neighborhood public schools in our sample offer an average of four weeks of summer school. Saturday academic programming is not common in either setting, with less than 15% of schools offering such an option. Even in urban settings where this practice is more likely to occur, 33% of public schools and 14% of charter schools provide Saturday school, though the difference is not statistically significant. This comparatively low rate stands out from findings in New York City and Massachusetts, where 57% and 62% of urban charter schools offered Saturday classes, respectively.⁸

After-School Tutoring

Though 75% of both charter schools and neighborhood public schools offer tutoring, public schools provide more of it, averaging eight 41-minute tutoring sessions per month compared to six sessions of the same length at charter schools. Of the schools that offer tutoring, 20% of public schools and a statistically indistinguishable 30% of charter schools make tutoring mandatory, while the remaining schools keep tutoring optional.

Table 5: “No Excuses” Policies

	Charter	Public
School-Wide Policies Enforced the Same Way	67%	67%
New Student Orientation to Learn School Policies	52%	45%
Teacher Dismisses Class, Not Bell	55%	48%
Teacher Addresses Student Problems Immediately	24%	29%
Student Does Other Work If Task Completed Early*	92%	81%
Students Sit Up and Track Teacher with Eyes	21%	15%
Only Necessary Items on Student Desk	69%	76%
Silence in Hallways During Transition Time*	16%	6%
Students Silently Working on Activity at Start of Class	28%	37%
All Backpacks Consistently Stored in One Place	76%	73%
Number of No Excuses Policies in School (Out of 10)*	4.8	4.2

*The difference is significant at the 5% level

Note:
Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan. The Number of No Excuses Policies in School (Out of 10) is equivalent to .32 of a standard deviation.

Academic Tracking

Charter and public schools in our sample apply similar strategies to deal with mixed academic abilities, favoring ability grouping within classrooms over ability grouping across classrooms. Both types of schools are also more likely to pull out students for remedial instruction than for enrichment (see Table 4).

“No Excuses” and Disciplinary Policies

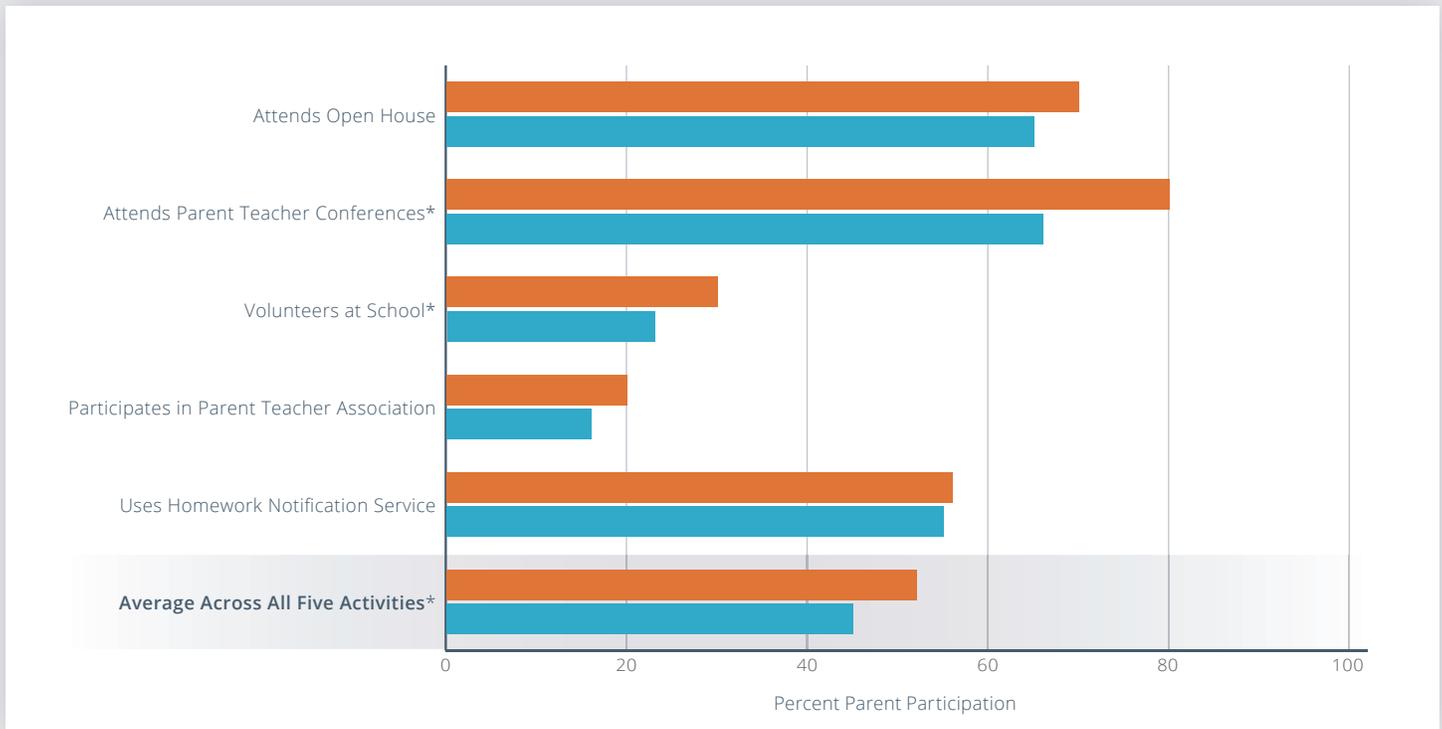
Our survey uses ten questions from a 2013 evaluation of New York City charter schools to determine the existence of school-wide policies often associated with “no excuses” schools.⁹ Charter schools scored slightly higher on this index, implying greater adherence to the “no excuses” style (see Table 5). However, administrators also reported these characteristics in many neighborhood public schools.

The survey also asks two questions associated with school-wide discipline policy: whether the school requires student uniforms and whether the school requires students to sign behavioral contracts. Most charter schools (81%) require student uniforms compared to just 36% of their counterpart public schools. Further, 82% of charter schools require their students to sign behavioral contracts, while only 67% of public schools have instituted this policy.

Frequency of Testing

Students who attend Michigan charter schools face more frequent testing, with 28% of charter schools administering standardized assessments at least monthly compared to 10% of neighborhood public schools. Given the recent trend of students opting out of standardized tests¹⁰ and the U.S. Department of Education’s concern with

Figure 4: Parent Engagement by Sector



Public Charter *The difference is significant at the 5% level

Note: Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan.

over-testing¹¹ this finding reveals an important difference in the testing culture across sectors.

In addition to more regular standardized assessments, charter schools more frequently use internally-developed tests, such as teacher-written exams, and externally-developed tests, such as textbook exams. Fifty-one percent of charter schools report using internal tests at least monthly while 17% use external tests at least monthly. By comparison, 33% of public schools use internal exams monthly and 7% use external exams monthly.

Parental Engagement

About half of parents in both sectors engage in school activities, with parent participation rates across all measures averaging 52% in charter schools and 45% in neighborhood public schools

(see Figure 4). Charter school administrators report greater parental participation (80%) at parent-teacher conferences, compared to 66% of public school parental participation. High proportions of both public and charter schools in our sample require a parent contract, with 71% of our sample of public schools requiring them, a proportion statistically indistinguishable from the 81% of charter schools requiring a contract.

Practices by Urbanicity

Though our findings for the entire state of Michigan tell an interesting story, it is useful to explore our measures by urbanicity as well. Because charter schools play a different role in urban, suburban and rural communities, we might expect that the many attributes we have explored at the state level may

look different when examined by urbanicity. Thus, in this section we look at school demographics and practices for each location type to understand the nuances of the charter school experience for students in different areas of the state.

Student Demographics

While charter schools across the state serve a more diverse population than traditional public schools, demographic composition varies considerably between urban, suburban, and rural schools (see Table 6). Most noticeably, suburban charters enroll a higher percentage of black students and a lower percentage of white students than their counterpart suburban public schools. The difference is not as large for urban charters, but charter schools in urban areas do enroll a slightly higher percentage of black students and a slightly lower percentage of white and Hispanic students than their urban public school counterparts. Rural charters are slightly more diverse than the comparable rural public schools, enrolling a smaller proportion of white students

and a slightly higher proportion of black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian students. Charter schools in all three settings educate a larger share of low-income students and a smaller share of special education students while suburban and rural charters educate a comparable share of students with limited English language proficiency (see Table 6).

Urban Charter School Practices

Urban charter schools, which are often seen as a high-quality alternative to a struggling local school, have more practices in common with the urban public schools in our sample than one might expect. For policies most visible to a student or parent, such as school culture, learning time, discipline, and parental engagement, urban public and charter schools in our sample show no statistical difference (see Table 7).

The major differences between the two sectors are in school management and testing. In 55% of urban charter schools, principals and teachers have more influence than external authorities over school curriculum, compared to 10% of principals

Table 6: Demographic Composition of Public and Charter Schools by Location

	Urban		Suburban		Rural	
	Charter	Public	Charter	Public	Charter	Public
% White	18	21	41	55	68	84
% Black	68	63	43	29	13	5
% Hispanic	10	11	7	7	6	4
% Asian/Pacific Islander	2	2	5	6	4	2
% American Indian	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.4	5	4
% Two or More Races	2	2	3	3	4	2
% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	81	76	65	59	50	46
% Special Education	9	16	9	15	12	14
% Limited English Proficient	7	10	6	5	1	1

Note: Charter and public refer to our full sample of charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan. Special education and limited English proficient calculated at the district level.

Source: Common Core of Data (CCD) 2012-13 school level data files.

and teachers in urban public schools. Further, 85% of urban principals participate in initial screenings for teacher hiring, while just 45% of principals do so in urban public schools. Fewer principals in urban charter schools (25%) struggle with removing poor teachers than their public school counterparts (82%).

For teachers, urban charters offer three more days per year of teacher professional development on average and are considerably more likely to offer merit-based bonuses and financial incentives for hard-to-fill subjects (see Table 7).

As for differences in student experience, a student in an urban charter school is more likely to sit for monthly standardized assessments (21%) than a student in an urban public school (4%), though both would experience similar frequency of teacher-written exams (37% vs. 35%) and textbook exams (14% vs. 5%).

Suburban Charter School Practices

Suburban charter schools differ from neighborhood suburban public schools across a mix of school practices, including principal autonomy, teacher support, parental engagement, a “no excuses” approach, and uniforms.

Differences in policies affecting administrators and teachers mirror those in the urban setting. Suburban charter principals have more personnel decision-making autonomy, with 89% deciding final teacher hiring compared to 49% of suburban public schools. And while only 34% of charter principals perceive difficulty in removing ineffective teachers, 72% of public principals find firing their worst teachers to be a challenge. Further, suburban charters offer more hours per month for teacher collaboration, considerably more minutes per year of teacher observation by principals, and more merit-based bonuses (see Table 7).

There is a range of differences in school practices and climate that would be noticeable to students and parents in the suburban setting. Suburban

charter parents are more likely to report that they participate in school activities than suburban public school parents, with 54% of charter parents reporting that they do so compared to 43% of public school parents. And suburban charter schools are more likely to employ a “no excuses” approach and require student uniforms.

As in the urban setting, suburban charters offer the same length of school day, school year and amount of after-school tutoring as the suburban public schools their students would likely otherwise attend.

Rural Charter School Practices

School practices of rural charter schools stand out not only from rural public schools, but also from urban and suburban schools. Rural charter administrators report no discernible difference in principal autonomy from rural public schools, in contrast to the practices in urban and suburban settings. Rural charters provide more days per year of professional development, offering inexperienced teachers 9 days compared to 7 days at rural public schools. Similarly, rural charter schools offer 7 days of professional development for veteran teachers compared to 5 days at rural public schools.

Instruction time varies considerably between rural charter and public schools. Rural charters offer a slightly longer school day and more instructional time for math and English per day than their public school counterparts (see Table 7). In contrast, rural charters offer only 3 days of after-school tutoring per month compared to 8 days at rural public schools, a considerable shortfall.

Additionally, more parents participate in open houses, parent-teacher conferences, and school volunteering at rural charters, and 71% of rural charters require a parent contract compared to 40% at rural public schools. No rural public schools in our sample require school uniforms, whereas half of rural charters require them.

Table 7: School Policies by Location

	Urban			Suburban			Rural		
	Charter	Public	Difference	Charter	Public	Difference	Charter	Public	Difference
Principal Autonomy									
Principal, Not Outside Authority, Makes Curriculum and Hiring Decisions (% Schools)	66%	20%	46%*	52%	21%	31%*	50%	39%	11%
Teacher Professional Support									
Hours Per Month for Formal Teacher Collaboration	3.8	4.4	-0.6	6.3	3.7	2.6*	4.9	4.2	0.7
Days Per Year of Professional Development for Inexperienced Teachers	9.3	6.0	3.3*	7.7	7.2	0.5	9.1	6.6	2.5*
Days Per Year of Professional Development for Veteran Teachers	7.9	5.2	2.7*	6.3	6.1	0.2	7.4	5.5	1.9*
Minutes Per Year of Formal Principal Observation of Inexperienced Teachers	232	132	100	285	141	144*	183	182	1
Minutes Per Year of Formal Principal Observation of Veteran Teachers	232	117	115	252	90	162*	146	108	38
Teacher Salary and Financial Incentives									
Dollar Amount of Starting Salary for New Teacher	\$34,963	\$39,050	\$-4,087*	\$32,758	\$36,216	\$-3,458*	\$32,023	\$35,175	\$-3,152*
Financial Incentives Offered for Hard-to-Fill Subjects (% Schools)	50%	5%	45%*	21%	7%	14%	23%	4%	19%*
Merit-Based Bonus Offered (% Schools)	66%	17%	49%*	65%	15%	50%*	57%	39%	18%
Academic Time									
Instructional Days Per School Year	182	184	-2	178	178	0	175	177	-2
Instructional Hours Per School Day	6.7	6.4	0.3	6.3	6.3	0.0	6.6	6.2	0.4*
English Language Arts Instructional Minutes Per Day	122	110	12	100	88	12	106	79	27*
Math Instructional Minutes Per Day	92	83	9	78	73	5	86	66	20*
After-School Tutoring									
Offer After-School Tutoring (% Schools)	87%	89%	-2%	85%	73%	12%	69%	79%	-10%
Days Per Month of After-School Tutoring	8.3	11.0	-2.7	7.0	7.5	-0.5	3.2	8.4	-5.2*
Minutes Per Session of After-School Tutoring	45	54	-9	47	36	11	33	39	-6
No-Excuses School Policies									
Number of "No Excuses" Policies in School (Out of 10)	5.0	4.0	1.0	4.8	3.8	1.0*	3.7	3.8	-0.1
School Disciplinary Policy									
Require Student Uniform (% Schools)	87%	71%	16%	68%	13%	55%*	50%	0%	50%*
Require Student Contract (% Schools)	77%	60%	17%	98%	73%	25%	70%	60%	10%
Frequent Testing									
Student Standardized Testing At Least Monthly (% Schools)	21%	4%	17%*	28%	11%	17%	18%	8%	10%
Parental Engagement									
Average Parent Participation in School Activities (% Parent Participation)	45%	40%	5%	54%	43%	11%*	55%	47%	8%*

Note:

Charter and public refer to responding charter and comparable traditional public schools in Michigan.

*The difference is significant at the 5% level

Conclusion

Our findings suggest that charter schools and their likely traditional public school counterparts are different but not necessarily in the ways charter schools are often characterized. We find that, on the whole, Michigan's charter school operators manage their schools differently. They grant considerable autonomy to their principals and provide more teacher professional development and financial incentives, albeit at a lower starting salary. We find a mixed picture with policies more directly affecting students. Charter schools are more likely to use standardized assessments at least monthly, though those that do are still in the minority in their sector. Traditional public schools offer more time for after-school tutoring, though the biggest disparity is between traditional public schools and charter schools in rural areas, with rural publics offering five more days of tutoring per month. Both sectors report offering similar instructional time and length of school year, a surprising finding considering the prevalence of extended learning time in the charter school literature. In the same vein, charter schools and public schools report with comparable frequency incorporating a "no excuses" approach to education, a style often associated with charter schools.

When we investigate differences by location, we see a slightly different story, with the largest number of differences between rural charters and publics. Suburban and urban charters are quite different in school management practices that affect principals and teachers from their counterpart public schools, but similar in most other regards.

End Notes

1. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 1999-2000 through 2012-13. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_216.90.asp
2. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, "A Growing Movement: America's Largest Charter School Communities, Ninth Annual Edition." December 2014. Retrieved from http://www.publiccharters.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014_Enrollment_Share_FINAL.pdf
3. These differences exist in our full sample and are not a result of differential response rates.
4. The detailed findings provide a contrast between operations in Michigan's charter schools and traditional public schools, as documented by administrators who responded to the Michigan School Practices Survey. All results reported are statistically significant at the 5% level unless otherwise noted.
5. Because a given charter school can draw students from a number of different traditional public schools, we assign each charter school a counterfactual public school based on the modal school students would likely otherwise attend. In cases where charter schools span more than one school level (e.g., a K-8 charter school), we assign each grade span (e.g. K-5 and 6-8) its own traditional public school. See online appendix at <http://edpolicy.umich.edu/publications/#policy-briefs> for further explanation.
6. Because our sample is overwhelmingly composed of elementary and middle schools (86% for charters and 78% for traditional publics), we only report findings for schools serving students in grades K-8.
7. U.S. Government Accountability Office, "K-12 Education: Federal Funding for and Characteristics of Public Schools with Extended Learning Time." November 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/673904.pdf>
8. New York City statistic from Hoxby, Caroline M., Sonali Murarka, and Jenny Kang, "How New York City's Charter Schools Affect Achievement, August 2009 Report." Second report in series. Cambridge, MA: New York City Charter. Massachusetts statistic from Angrist, Joshua, Sarah Cohodes, Susan Dynarski, Jon Fullerton, Thomas Kane, Parag Pathak, and Christopher Walters, "Student Achievement in Massachusetts Charter Schools." January 2011. Cambridge, MA: Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.
9. The questions, as summarized by Dobbie and Fryer, "...ask about whether rules are school-wide or classroom specific, how students learn school culture, whether students wait for the teacher to dismiss the class, desk and backpack rules, hallway order, classroom activities, and whether students track teachers with their eyes." Dobbie, Will, and Roland G. Fryer, "Getting Beneath the Veil of Effective Schools: Evidence from New York City." December 2011. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 5(4), 28-60.
10. Ujifusa, Andrew, "Opt-Out Activists Aim to Build on Momentum in States." Education Week, January 20, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/01/14/opt-out-activists-aim-to-build-on-momentum.html>
11. U.S. Department of Education, "Fact Sheet: Testing Action Plan." October 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-testing-action-plan>

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About the Authors

Susan M. Dynarski is a professor of public policy, education, and economics at the University of Michigan. Her research interests include the effect of charter schools, higher education financing, improving community college student outcomes and the effect of early childhood interventions on adult well-being.

Brian Jacob is the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Education Policy at the University of Michigan. His current research focuses on urban school reform, education accountability programs, teacher labor markets and virtual schooling.

Mahima Mahadevan is a Research Area Specialist for the Education Policy Initiative.

EPI Mission Statement

The central mission of the initiative is to engage in applied education policy research. The Education Policy Initiative is a program within the Ford School that brings together nationally-recognized education policy scholars focused on the generation and dissemination of policy-relevant education research. The primary goals of the initiative are to:

- Conduct rigorous research to inform education policy debates in Michigan and nationwide
- Disseminate best practices in education reform to local, state, and national policymakers, as well as to educational practitioners, parents, and students
- Train graduate students and others to conduct cutting-edge research in education
- Facilitate interactions between students and faculty from different schools and/or departments who share an interest in education reform.