

Learning from the Successes and Failures of Charter Schools

The Hamilton Project
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American public schools are in dire straits, with the nation performing poorly relative to other countries and failing to serve many of its most underprivileged and vulnerable students.

- Among 8th graders, 33 percent are proficient in reading and 34 percent are proficient in math
- 48 percent of schools did not make AYP in 2010-11
- One in five H.S. graduates does not score high enough on the ASVAB to enlist in the Army
- We spend the fourth most per pupil among OECD countries yet rank 25th in math, 17th in science, and 12th in reading

Charter schools are one of the most important innovations in education in the last half century. When originally conceived, they offered two distinct promises:



Escape Hatch

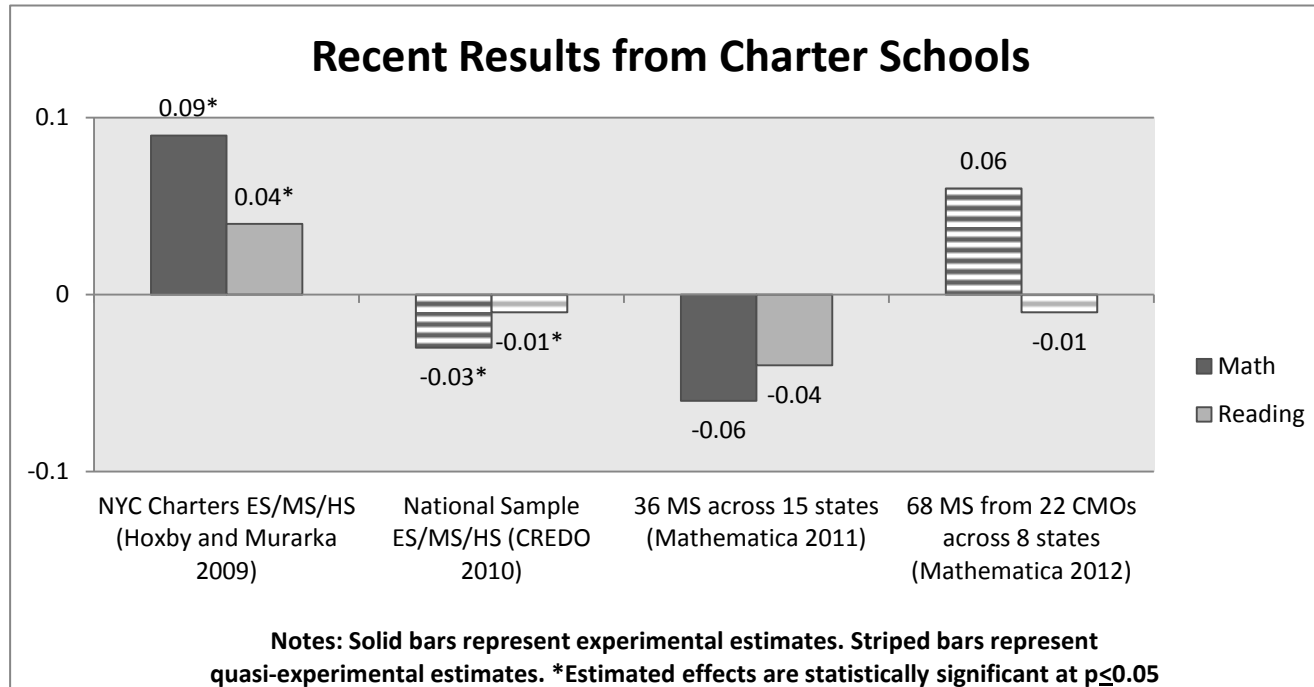
- *Give students and parents alternatives to failing schools*



Incubators of Innovation

- *Use legal and financial freedoms to create and incubate new practices*

And while the average charter school is no better at raising student achievement than the average traditional public school...



...some charter schools have availed themselves of their freedom to implement innovative educational practices and procedures.

Uncommon Schools

- Taxonomy of classroom strategies

Match Schools

- Tutoring and teacher development

Success Academy Charter Schools

- Content knowledge as the key to rigor

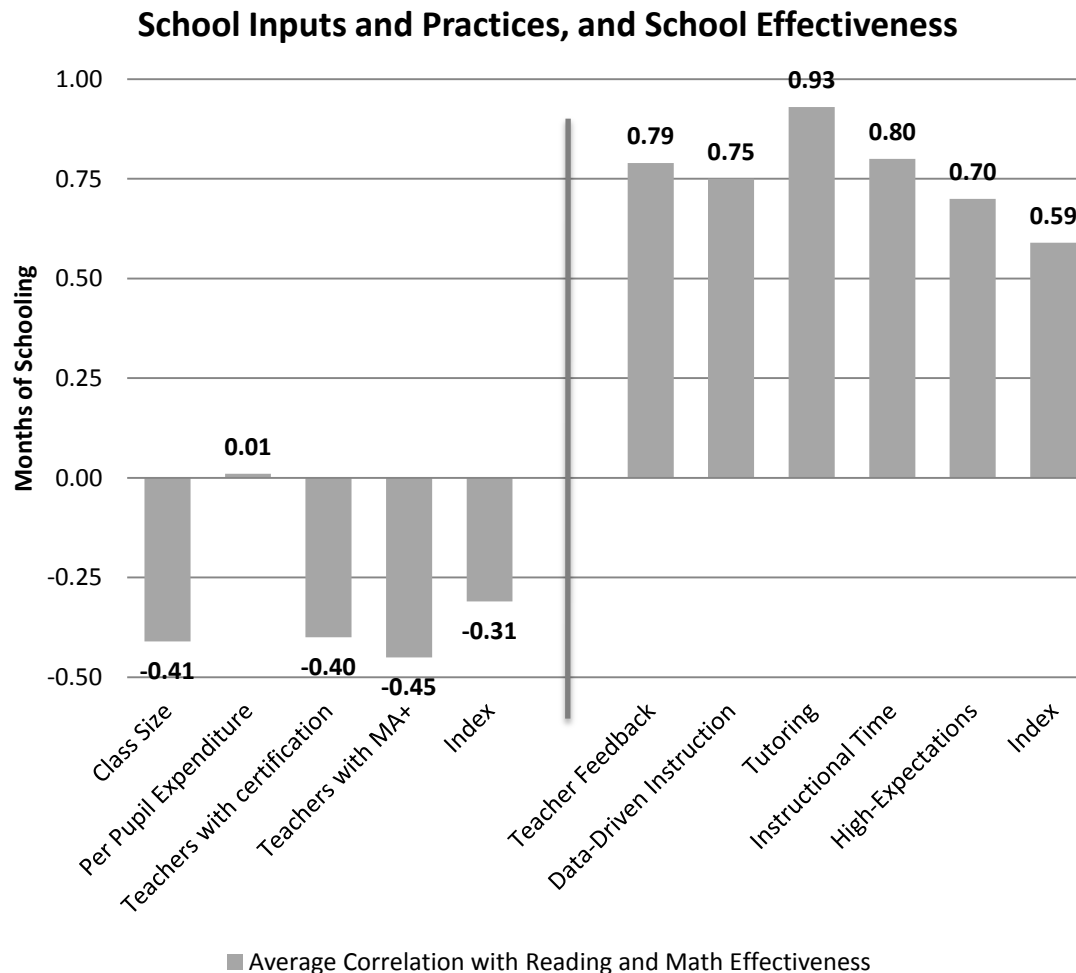
Rocketship Education

- Blended learning stressing differentiation

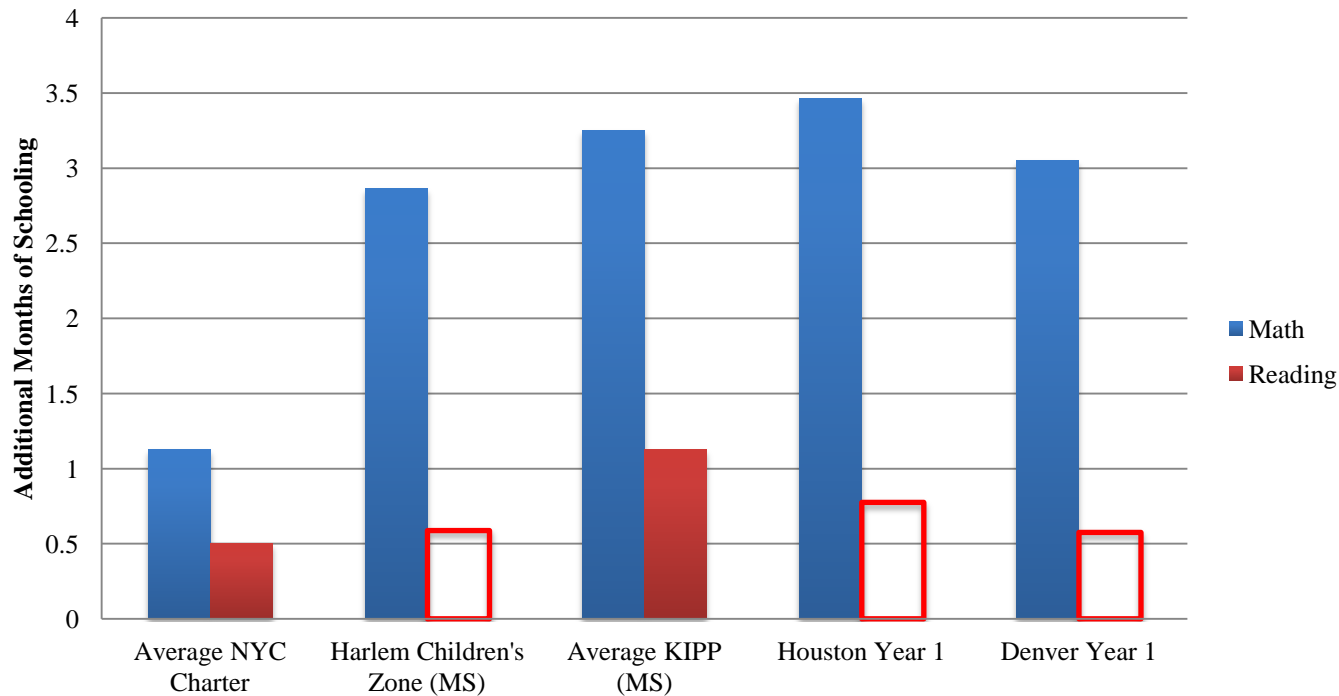
Excel Academy

- Project-based learning to build non-academic skills

We collected an unprecedented amount of data from thirty-five charter schools in New York City and correlated school practices with school effectiveness.



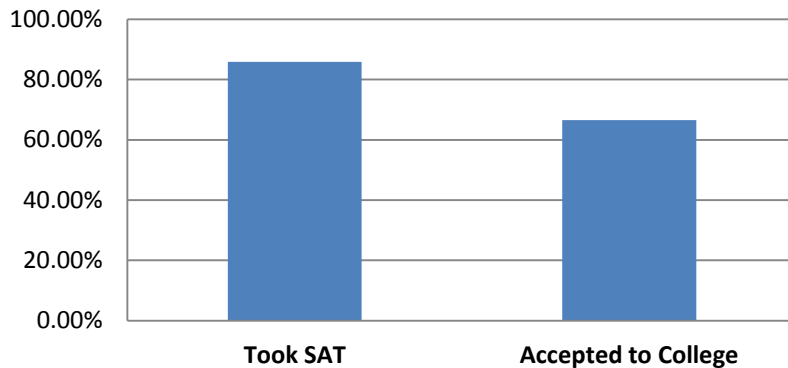
We implemented the five correlates of high-performing charter schools in traditional public schools in Houston and Denver.



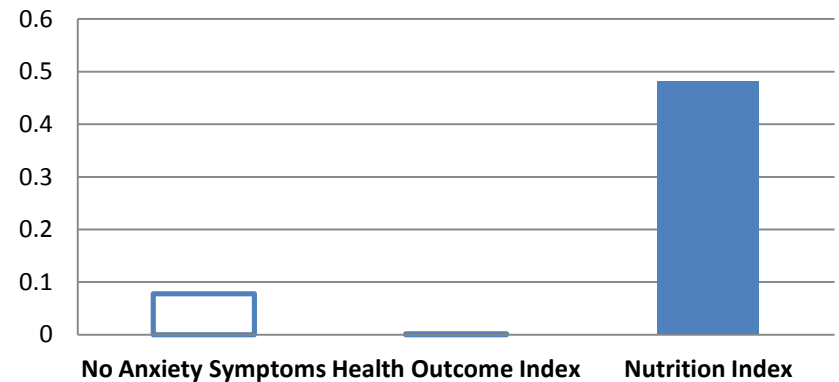
Results from demonstration projects in Houston and Denver are exciting but preliminary. The effects in math and reading are strikingly similar to those achieved by some of the best charter schools.

Based on preliminary findings from a survey of lottery applicants, the Harlem Children's Zone has a significant impact on life outcomes as well.

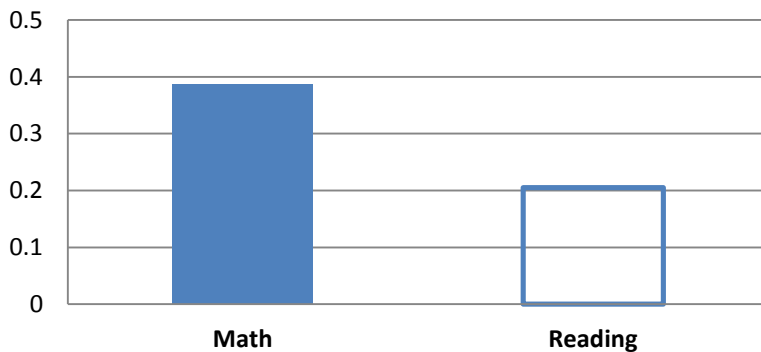
College-Going Indicators



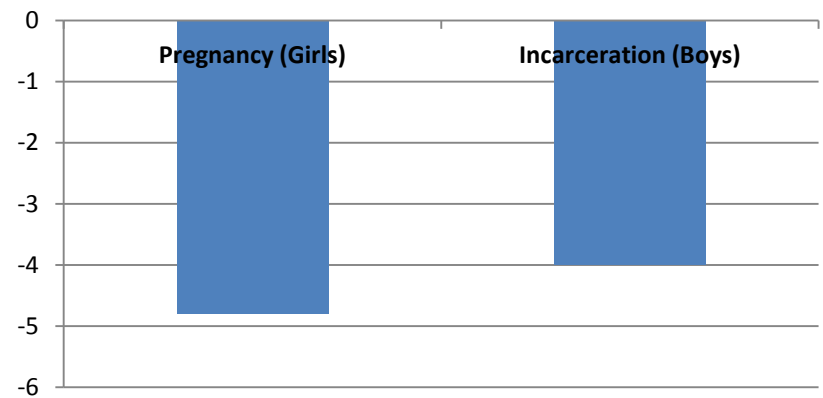
Health Outcomes and Behaviors



Woodcock Johnson (Cumulative Effects)



Social Outcomes (Odds Ratios)



- Evidence suggests that it is possible to inject the best practices of successful charter schools into traditional public schools and obtain results similar to those of America's most lauded charter schools. **That's a start.**
- It is essential to continue to evaluate and experiment with combinations of reforms.
- **Let's save three million kids by 2020.**
- Only one question remains: **Do we have the political will?**