



Idahoans for Choice in Education

Creating a Brighter Future for Idaho Families

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF


Home School

Harbor School


Traditional School

Charter School

Virtual School

Darrell Deide,
Chairman



Holland Johnson,
Treasurer

CHARTER SCHOOLS DON'T PICK AND CHOOSE!

By Darrel Deide, chairman

The anti-charter school folks have always made the charge that the reason charter school students typically outperform their traditional school counterparts is due to the erroneous assumption that charter schools cherry-pick the best students. Our own Idaho charter school commission chairman Bill Goesling stated in a recent interview with the Idaho Statesman, "that charter schools get to pick and choose their students." These erroneous assumptions and mis-information by charter school critics conclude that school choice is no better than our traditional monopoly. However, a new study by Caroline Hoxby, a Stanford University economist reveals data which provides great news for charter school supporters.

Her new study, "How New York City's Charter Schools Affect Achievement," shows that charter students, typically from more disadvantaged families in places like Harlem, perform almost as well as students in affluent suburbs like Scarsdale. Because there are more applicants than spaces, New York admits charter students with a lottery system. (Idaho uses the lottery as well) The study nullifies any self-selection bias by comparing students who attend charters only with those who applied for admission through the lottery, but did not get in. "Lottery-based studies," notes Ms. Hoxby, "are scientific and more reliable." According to the study, the average charter school student is scoring 5.8 points higher than his excluded by lottery peers in math and 5.3 points higher in English. In grades four through eight, the charter student jumps ahead by 5 more points each year in math and 3.6 points each year in English.

The New York results are not unique. In a separate study, Ms. Hoxby found Chicago's charters performing even better than New York's. Using the same methodology, other researchers have seen similar results in Boston. In Idaho, regardless of what test or tests you use charter school students routinely perform better than their traditional school counterparts.

Another erroneous assumption is that charter schools take more taxpayer dollars. Actually nationwide on average, charter school per-pupil spending is 61% that of surrounding public schools. In Idaho charter schools cost tax payers less per

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Freedom to choose a school that meets your student's needs... not someone else's!
Freedom to choose a school that meets your expectations... not someone else's!
Freedom to choose a school based upon its performance... not where you live!

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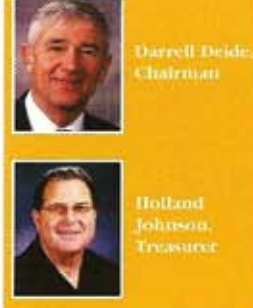
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student as charter schools do not have any property tax levying authority in the form of bond, plant facility, emergency, and supplemental property tax levies.

Little wonder President Obama is pressuring states to relax or eliminate rules that limit the number of charter schools. It is too bad that our National and State Policy makers can't or won't see the evidence to other effective school choice reforms, such as vouchers and tax credits.

That lack of vision can only be explained by the power that the education establishment, chiefly the teacher's union, has over the policy makers. It is very clear that charter schools do out perform traditional schools and that education choice is at least part of the answer to improving our schools. For that answer we look to our education leaders at all levels to eliminate those barriers to school choice. How much longer will we have to wait?bvt

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