

NATIONAL CENTER ON
School Choice

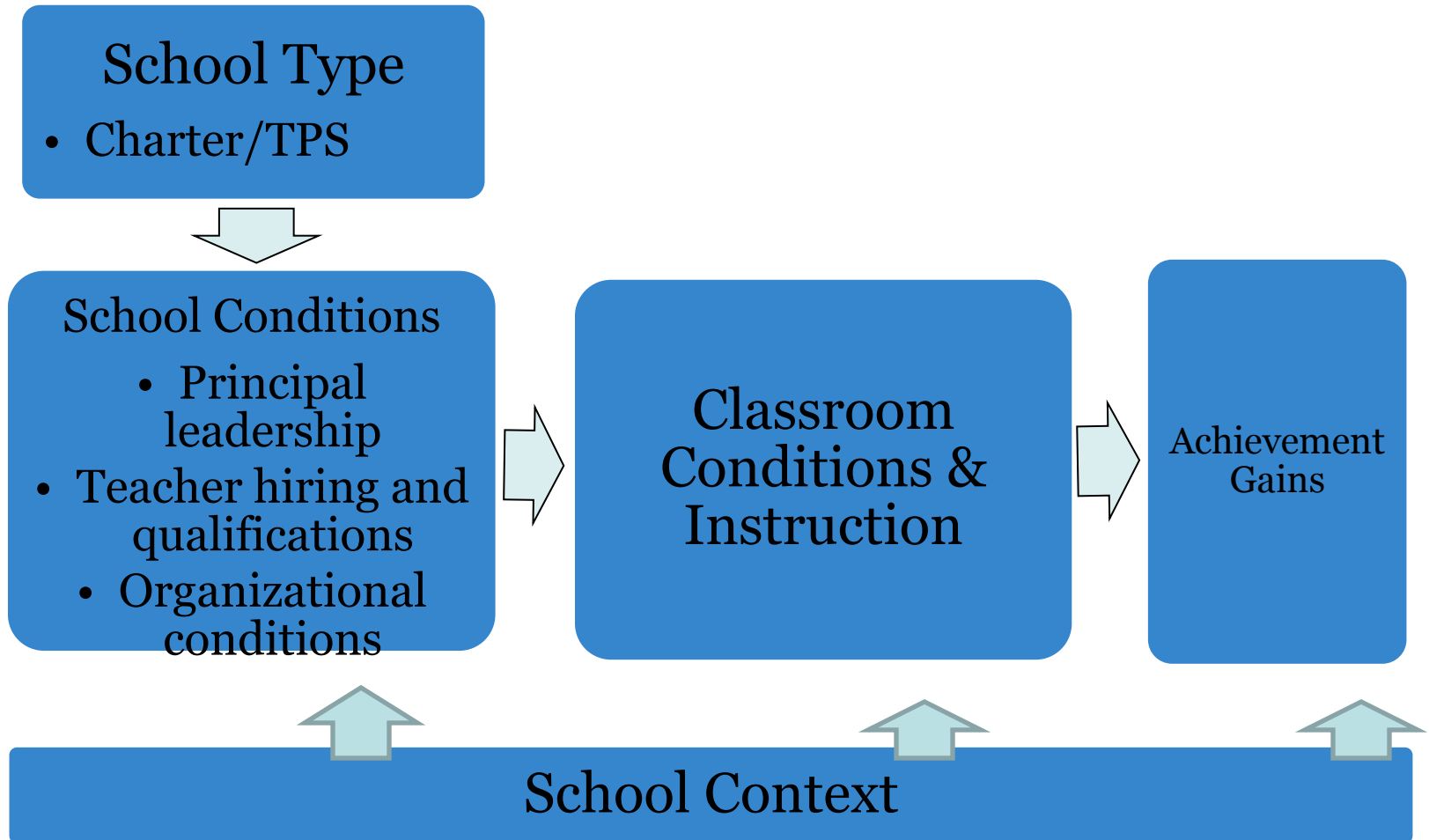


What Makes Schools Work? Lessons from the National Center on School Choice

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Guiding Framework



Research Questions

- Do principals in charter and traditional public schools report differences in their leadership practices and teacher hiring behavior?
- What do we know about the labor market for teachers in charter schools?
- How do instructional practices and conditions differ between charter and traditional public schools?
- What are the mathematics and reading gains of charter school students compared with students in traditional public schools?

Analytic Sample

- 98 schools with principal and teacher surveys, linked student achievement data
 - 1,959 teachers
 - 16,757 students
- Schools located in 8 states
 - CPS and TPS matched by state, geographic proximity, grade level configuration, student demographics
- Charter schools by affiliation with a management organization
 - One national organization (BEST Academy)
 - Affiliations with other management organizations
 - No affiliation

How Do Principals Spend Their Time?

- Overall, charter and TPS principals spend their time on roughly similar types of tasks.
 - Most of their time is on routine management tasks
 - Charter principals spend somewhat less time on instructional leadership
- There is variation by charter school affiliation
 - Principals in charter schools with a management organization spend more time on instructional leadership than principals in non-affiliated charter schools.
 - They also have less of a job focus on choice-related tasks such as securing a facility, recruiting students/parents, working with governance board.

What Do Principals Care About When Hiring Teachers?

Most important:

- Compassion for students
- Certification
- Team Player
- Enthusiasm
- Agreement with school mission/vision
- Ability to produce gains in student achievement
- Strong pedagogical skills
- Ability to work with at-risk students

Least important:

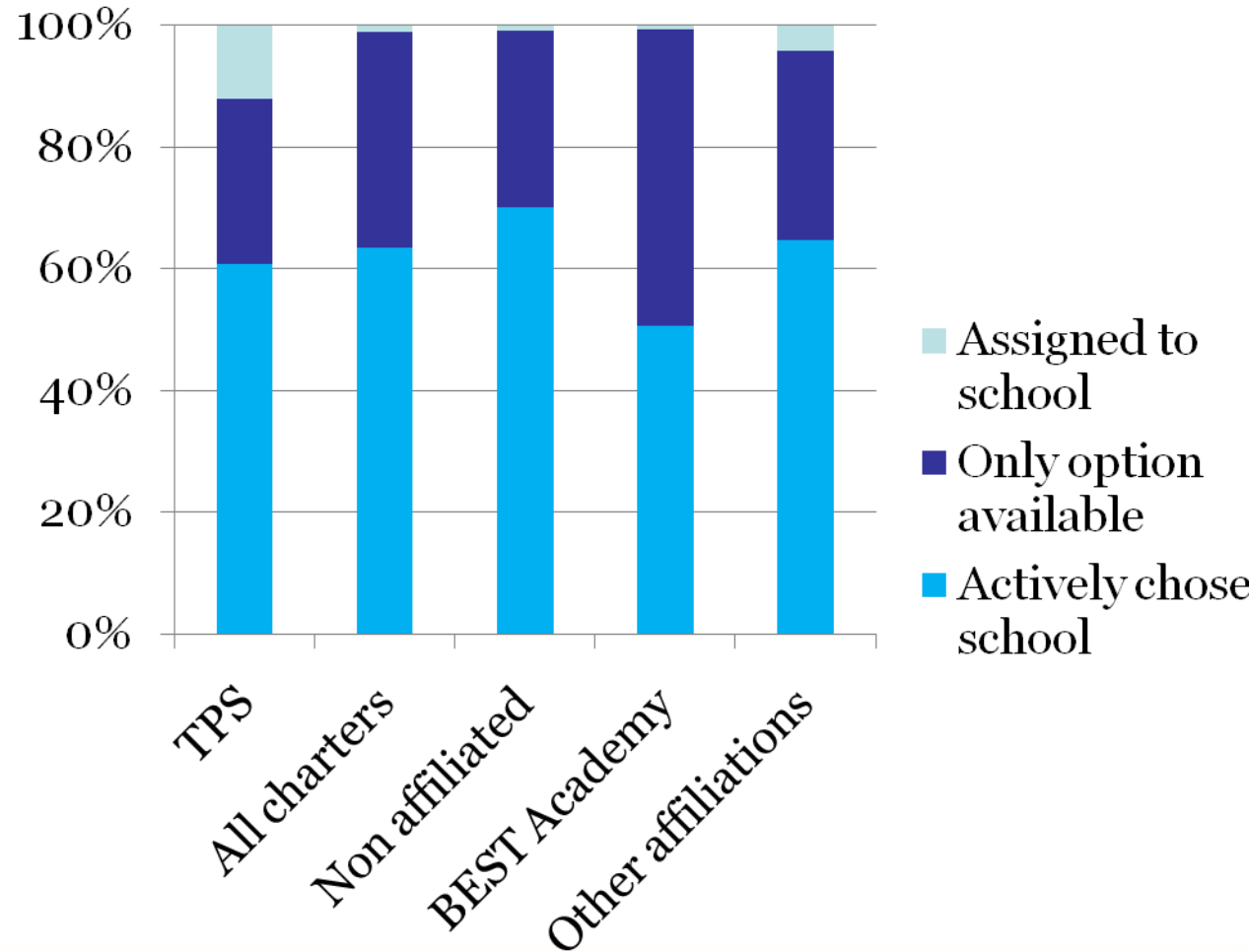
- Graduate of prestigious university
- Alumni of TFA, Teaching Fellows, etc.
- Previous work experience outside of teaching
- Shared racial/ethnic background or language with students or parents
- Previous teaching experience

Principals in Charter and Traditional Public Schools Prefer to Hire Teachers with Similar Characteristics

- They also report a similar amount of their job is focused on hiring teachers.
- Charter school principals:
 - Place *greater* importance on hiring teachers that are willing to take on extra duties
 - Place *less* importance on the ability to work with at-risk students or produce student achievement gains
- Principal preferences are driven mostly by student composition and teacher experience level in the school, not school type

Mixed Evidence About Whether Teachers Want to Teach in Charter Schools

- Varies by charter school affiliation and teacher preferences.



What Do Teachers Want in Schools Where They Work?

- All teachers: supportive principal, like-minded educators, autonomy over teaching, agree with school mission, positive reputation
- BEST Academy teachers have preferences similar to TPS teachers
- Compared to TPS teachers, teachers in other charter schools report:
 - a *lower* preference for having a supportive principal, positive reputation, and job security
 - a *greater* preference for agreeing with the school mission and autonomy over teaching

What Do We Know About Charter School Teachers?

- Less likely to be certified or have a master's degree
- Are less experienced
 - One-third of CPS teachers are in first three years of teaching
- Charter schools have higher teacher turnover
- Are slightly more likely to have come to teaching from another career
 - But this varies greatly by charter affiliation
- Mixed evidence about whether they went to more selective colleges

Instructional Conditions

- In the aggregate, charter school teachers have greater academic press than teachers in TPS.
 - Increased focus on student achievement
 - Stronger instructional coherence
 - More time on task
- This is driven mostly by teachers in BEST Academy schools.
- Charter school teachers also report greater levels of professional community.

Asking About Mathematics Instruction

- What topics do teachers cover?
- What types of expectations do teachers have for students?

	Memorize & Recall	Perform Procedure	Demonstrate Under- standing	Analyze, Prove, Generalize	Solve non- routine problem
Number sense					
Operations					
Measurement					
Basic algebra					
Etc.					

Charter and TPS Teachers Have Largely Similar Instruction

- Teachers in charter and traditional public schools cover a similar number of topics at similar breadth and depth.
- Charter schools in the aggregate expect similar levels of cognitive complexity in student work.
- But there are differences by charter school affiliation.
 - Teachers in BEST Academy schools and those with no affiliation spent relatively more time on tasks that involved students performing procedures and less time on tasks that involved solving non-routine problems.
 - BEST Academy teachers also spent more time expecting students to memorize and recall basic facts.



Similar Achievement Gains

- Overall, charter and TPS have similar student achievement gains in math and reading
- Again, there is variation by charter school affiliation.
 - Some evidence of slightly larger achievement gains in BEST Academy schools in reading.

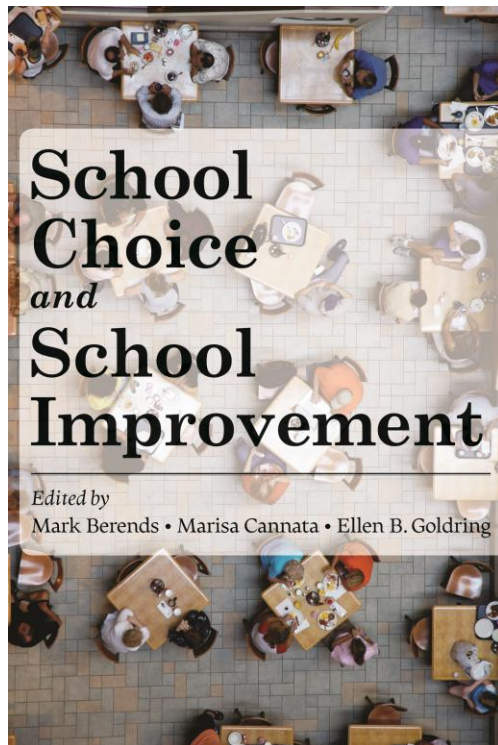


Conclusions

- In the aggregate, charter and traditional public schools are more alike than they are different.
- There is variation within the charter and traditional public school sectors.

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