

## **New report argues that charter schools' political success is a civil rights failure**

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Charter schools continue to stratify students by race, class, and possibly language, and are more racially isolated than traditional public schools in virtually every state and large metropolitan area in the country.

Today, the [Civil Rights](#) Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA issued "Choice Without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards," a nationwide report based on an analysis of Federal government data and an examination of charter schools in 40 states and the District of Columbia, along with several dozen metropolitan areas with large enrollments of charters. The report found that charter schools continue to stratify students by race, class, and possibly language, and are more racially isolated than traditional public schools in virtually every state and large metropolitan area in the country.

"President Barack Obama just delivered his budget to the U.S. Congress which increases both incentives and resources to create more charter schools," Erica Frankenberg, co-author of the report said. "This report should be considered in evaluating new federal incentives to states that encourage the expansion of charter schools, such as the Race to the Top initiative."

The study's key findings suggest that charter schools, particularly those in the western United States are havens for white re-segregation from public schools; requirements for providing essential equity data to the

federal government go unmet across the nation; and magnet schools are overlooked, in spite of showing greater levels of integration and [academic achievement](#) than charters.

"The charter movement has flourished in a period of retreat on civil rights," stated UCLA Professor Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project. "The vision of a successfully integrated society - one that carries real opportunities for historically excluded groups of students to enter the mainstream - ought to be a defining characteristic of charter schools. Federal policy should make this a condition for charter school support and should support other choice programs which pursue this goal."

The study offers several recommendations for restoring equity provisions and integration in charter schools, including establishing new guidance and reporting requirements by the Federal government; federal funding opportunities for magnet schools, which have a documented legacy of reducing racial isolation and improving student outcomes; and incorporating some features of magnet schools into charter schools. The report also recommends heightened enforcement of existing state-level legislation with specific provisions regarding diversity in charter schools, and monitoring patterns of charter school enrollment and attrition, focusing particularly on reporting the demographic information of charter school students on low-income and ELL characteristics.

**More information:** [Download the report](#), "Choice without Equity: Charter School Segregation and the Need for Civil Rights Standards," by E. Frankenberg, G. Siegel-Hawley, and J. Wang

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