

Charter schools can lead families to buy homes nearby

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Credit: IDuke, via Wikimedia Commons.

In North Carolina, charter schools are not subject to school district boundaries and accept students regardless of where they live. But a new study finds that families with children enrolled at a charter school are likely to move closer to the school anyway. The finding may have relevance for urban renewal efforts.

"It's long been understood that, in urban areas, people with school-age children will move to areas that have the best schools – if they can afford

to do so," says Dr. Bart Danielsen, an associate professor of [business management](#) at NC State and lead author of a paper on the study. "But charter schools are open to any student in the state. We wanted to see if the presence of a charter school made a community more attractive to home buyers.

"The answer appears to be that a community with a charter school does attract the families whose children are enrolled at that school," Danielsen says. "The charter school is not just appealing, it actually draws people in. We found that these families moved much closer to the school than one might expect them to, even though they didn't have to."

The researchers looked at data from 12 years, covering all 662 families who had at least one child attending a K-12 charter school in Wake County, North Carolina. Specifically, the researchers tracked whether and where these families moved while their children attended the school.

The study found that 176 families moved, with the majority moving significantly closer to the school. And of the families who moved further away from the school, almost all of them moved less than a mile. The closer a [family](#) lived to the school, the less likely they were to move at all. A video illustration of the movement can be viewed below:

What's more, the study found that families were significantly more likely to move closer to the charter school than they were to move closer to parent workplaces. A follow-up survey found that families moved to the area because of the school, rather than applied to the school because they were moving to the area.

"This study only looked at families in one charter school," Danielsen says. "However, the findings were exceptionally powerful and suggest that charter schools may be a good focal point for urban renewal efforts. In short, charter schools may be a good way to draw families back into

urban communities and limit sprawl."

Danielsen has a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to do additional work on the impact that [charter schools](#) for the arts have had in southern California.

The paper, "It Makes a Village: Residential Relocation after Charter School Admission," is published in the journal Real Estate Economics. Co-authors include Dr. Jing Zhao, an assistant professor of business management at NC State, and Dr. David Harrison of Texas Tech University.

More information: "It Makes a Village: Residential Relocation after Charter School Admission" [DOI: 10.1111/1540-6229.12074](https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6229.12074)

Provided by North Carolina State University

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