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## **WWC** **QUICK** Review

### “Charter School Performance in New Jersey”

#### What is the study about?

The study examined whether students in grades 3–8 attending charter schools in New Jersey made more gains in math and reading achievement than similar students attending traditional public schools.

#### What did the study report?

Based on an analysis across charter schools, the authors reported that charter school students made significantly greater year-to-year gains in math and reading than similar students in non-charter schools. Because the authors analyzed gain scores—the difference in standardized test scores from one year to the next—the computed effect sizes are not easily interpretable. The authors calculated that the effect sizes are roughly equivalent to two to three months of learning, but they indicated that this can only be estimated imprecisely and it should be interpreted with caution.

Using the same matching method and estimating an impact for each charter school, the authors also reported that the impact of attending a charter school on student math and reading achievement gains varied from school to school. Although students at some charter schools showed significantly higher or significantly lower achievement gains compared to students in non-charter schools, most charter schools had student gains that were not different from the gains of students in non-charter schools.

#### The New Quick Review

In March 2012, the WWC began using a new format for quick reviews to allow for a faster release. When a more complete review is conducted for the study described here, this information will be updated.

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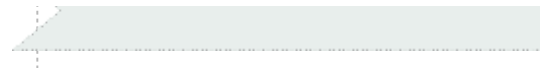
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#### Handy Definitions

- ▼ *quick review*
- ▼ *study rating*
- ▼ *meets WWC evidence standards without reservations*
- ▼ *meets WWC evidence standards with reservations*
- ▼ *does not meet WWC evidence standards*

See the *full glossary* ►



## How does the WWC rate this study?

The study meets WWC standards with reservations.

Although the charter school students were matched with traditional public school students on test scores and demographic characteristics, there may be other differences between the groups that were not accounted for in the analysis. In addition, caution must be exercised when interpreting the results of analysis of impacts by school, because the authors did not adjust for the fact that, when conducting multiple statistical tests of significance (in this case, one for each charter school), it becomes more likely that some impacts will be statistically significant by chance. Thus, the percentages of schools exhibiting statistically significant differences in gains may be overstated.

## Citation

Center for Research on Education Outcomes. (2012). *Charter school performance in New Jersey*. Stanford, CA: Author.

*Posted: December 2012*