

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Evidence suggests charter schools are a failed reform, report concludes

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Thursday, May 19, 2005)—Charter schools appear to have failed as a school reform strategy, according to “Charter Schools’ Performance and Accountability: A Disconnect,” a policy brief released by the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University.

The brief’s author, Gerald Bracey, conducted a comprehensive review of charter school evaluations across the country. He found that instead of being a highly accountable and nimble method of raising student achievement, charter schools are no better than the public schools to which they purport to be superior. In fact, Bracey says research that credits charter schools with raising achievement has frequently used faulty methods.

Bracey suggests that where charters continue to be promoted, support appears to be based on the assumption that “deregulation is a sufficient condition for declaring success.”

Although charter schools “have not lived up to their promise of increased achievement,” Bracey says, “this failure is hard to understand given the advantages that charters enjoy in their freedom from the rules, regulations, and contracts that are said to bureaucratically burden the public schools.”

Charter schools are alternative schools, funded by tax dollars, open to public school students, and generally exempted from the regulations governing other public schools. Inherent in their original conception was the promise by promoters that charter schools that failed to increase student achievement would be swiftly closed down. However, that has not been the reality.

Bracey finds that “As it stands, only a tiny percentage of charters have been shut down, and those overwhelmingly had their charters terminated because they misspent the money, not because they failed to educate their students.”

Find this document on the web at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSTL-0505-113-EPRU.pdf>

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The Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University offers high quality analyses of national education policy issues and provides an analytical resource for educators, journalists, and citizens. It includes the Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI), the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU). The EPSL is directed by Professor Alex Molnar.

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