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Abstract

As an avenue of educational reform and organizational restructuring within public education, school choice has gained in popularity over the last twenty years. The charter school movement, in particular, has enjoyed a high growth rate since its introduction in 1992. Advocates of charter schools claim the schools’ regulatory freedom and unique structure foster improved academic performance and educational success. However, the literature shows charter school students’ performance is typically below and, at best, on par with that of neighboring public school peers. Given this mismatch of purported academic advantage and observed performance, this study aims to add to the literature by explaining why parents choose charter schools and remain in charter schools. Using the Texas Education Agency’s 2006 Survey of Charter School and Traditional School Parents this study will examine why parents consider different aspects of schooling more important than others. Survey responses will be analyzed to explain possible relationships between factors affecting charter school enrollment, race, and socioeconomic status.
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