Welcome to the Webinar!

Examining Special Education Enrollment Differences

We will be starting soon.
Examining Special Education Enrollment Differences

May 22, 2013
About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.
Presenters

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Examining Special Education Enrollment Differences
GAO Finds Special Education Students Under Represented in Charter Schools

Percent of special education students in public charter and district run schools
2008-09 and 2009-10

Source: GAO analysis of EDFacts data and the Common Core of Data.
GAO Also Finds Variation Across the Country

Percent by which charter schools enroll fewer or greater numbers of special education students
Different Lenses Offer Different Perspectives

CRPE analysis of New York City considers
- Full distribution of schools
- Grade span
- Authorizers
- Neighborhoods
New York State at First Glance

Charter schools appear to significantly under-enroll special education students.

- **Charter schools**:
  - Percentage: 14.33%
  - Sample Size: n=168

- **District-run schools**:
  - Percentage: 18.17%
  - Sample Size: n=1561

Note: Bars represent 95% confidence interval.

Source: crpe.org | UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Important Variation Exists

Elementary & K-8 Schools

- District-run: 18.1%
- Charter: 12.8%

Middle, High, & 5-12 Schools

- District-run: 18.2%
- Charter: 18.3%

Gray bands represent enrollment range of 90% of district-run schools. Lines indicate group means.
Important Variation Exists

Special education enrollment varies across charter schools and district schools.
Important Variation Exists

Only charter elementary schools differ from district schools in their enrollment of special education students.
NYC DOE authorized schools better reflect the distribution of district schools than do SUNY authorized schools.
Variation is Also at the Neighborhood Level

Share of charter schools with lower special education enrollment in New York City

**Elementary schools** (including K-8 combined)

**Middle & high schools** (including 5-12 combined)

Percentage of charter schools with low enrollment of students with disabilities:

- □ No charter schools in this area
- □ 0-15%
- □ 15-50%
- □ >50%

[crpe.org] [UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON]
What We Can and Cannot Say About Special Education Enrollment

We can say…

• Special education students are not represented equally across schools in either sector
• Enrollment disparities vary by state, locale, authorizer, and school
What We Can and Cannot Say About Special Education Enrollment

We cannot say…

- There is just one reason special education enrollment differs across sectors
Several Potential Sources of Enrollment Disparity

Differences in:

- Access
- Identification
- Policy Structure
Several Potential Sources of Enrollment Disparity

Differences in:

- Access
- Identification
- Policy Structure

- Charter schools don’t have desired programs
- Families don’t know about good charter programs
- Charters dissuade families
Several Potential Sources of Enrollment Disparity

Differences in:

- Access
- Identification
- Policy Structure

• Charters and district schools identify differently
Several Potential Sources of Enrollment Disparity

Differences in:

- Access
- Identification
- Policy Structure

• Charters don’t have preschool programs for students identified at a young age
• Charters aren’t located in all neighborhoods
Points of Leverage: Schools and Districts

• Charter schools
  – Awareness of responsibilities
  – Co-ops, shared expertise
  – Partnerships with early childhood providers

• Charter-district partnerships
  – Shared services
  – Differentiated services (e.g. Los Angeles)
  – Placement partnerships for low-incidence disabilities (e.g. Denver)
  – Unified enrollment systems
Points of Leverage: Oversight Agencies

- Authorizers
  - RFP for charters with specific services
  - Coordination of charter collaborations
  - Measurement and oversight

- State agencies
  - Differentiated funding for high needs disabilities
  - Risk pools for students with high needs
  - Smart regulations (e.g. Massachusetts recruiting and retention oversight)
Unresolved Questions That Deserve More Attention

- Are charter schools less likely to identify students as needing special education?
- Are charter schools better at early intervention?
- What are the academic and other outcomes for students with disabilities who do attend charter schools?
Where States Can Start

- Analyze enrollment data to understand your state’s situation
- Publish these results and start conversations about equity and access among stakeholders
- Collect data on the real costs of providing quality services for students with different needs
Questions?

Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box on the left side of your screen.
Thank you for participating.

- Learn more about future webinars in the ELL series hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center: http://registration.airprojects.org/NCSRCELL/register.aspx
- This webinar will be archived at the following website: http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.
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