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# Literature Review

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Charter Schools

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# Report Objectives Were to Provide--

- A background of charter schools
    - History
    - Data tables
  - A balanced presentation, including many points of view
  - Short summaries of the best research we could find in the time available
    - Questions
    - Methods
    - Results
  - Suggestions for programs & program evaluation
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# Characteristics of Charter Schools

- More autonomous; freedom from conventional program constraints and mandates
  - Admission by choice
  - Market accountability
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# Charter Schools

- Are public schools of choice
  - Receive public funds based on the number of students who attend
  - Enroll almost one million children in 3,300 schools in 40 states (6 states account for 62% of schools & 63% of students)
  - Grew faster in 2004 than in any of the previous four years
  - Represent 3% of all public schools, 2% of public school students & 0.3% of Kansas students
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# Four Goals of Education Systems Voiced by Multiple Audiences

- **Freedom of Choice:** The liberty to ensure that schools are chosen that are consistent with family preferences
  - **Productive Efficiency:** Maximization of educational results for any given resource constraint
  - **Equity:** Quest for fairness in access to educational opportunities, resources, and outcomes
  - **Social Cohesion:** Provision of a common educational experience that will orient all students to grow to adulthood as full participants in the social, political, and economic institutions of our society
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<b>Ed.Goals</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
<b>Choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Small, intimate learning environment</li> <li>-Family preferences</li> <li>-Behavior/opportunity to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enough options must be available to meet needs</li> <li>-Adequate transportation and other resources are important to widespread choice</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Innovation</li> <li>-Competition</li> <li>-Higher achievement per dollar spent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Conversion schools/proven providers cannot be the only alternatives</li> <li>-Schools need adequate time to get established</li> <li>-Adequate resources are needed for quality</li> <li>-Should counsel parents about effects of transitions</li> </ul>
<b>Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Quality schooling opportunities available for all children</li> <li>-Competition that encourages all schools to be better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Dollar amount/other resources must be large enough to provide access to all students</li> <li>-Adequate parent information/training is critical</li> <li>-Segregation by race/SES/ability should be monitored</li> <li>-Schools should choose some portion of students by lottery, if there are more applicants than openings</li> </ul>
<b>Social Cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Civic socialization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students need to be exposed to peers from variety of backgrounds</li> <li>-Common elements are needed in curriculum (test)</li> <li>-There should be a possibility of engaging in community service</li> </ul>

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# Problems with Education Research

- Act of assigning meaning to facts often subjective/peer reviews uncommon
  - Absence of any clear identification of curricular or instructional differences existing between the traditional schools and charter schools (among schools in general)
  - Nearly impossible to have randomized design
  - Seldom pre-charter achievement scores
  - Seldom universal & longitudinal academic measures
  - Students in charter schools may not be representative of students in general
  - Aggregates can mask heterogeneous school differences
  - Study questions and research may not adequately represent goals of program/school
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# Results of charter school achievement studies done since 2000

National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP)

<b>Direction of result</b>	<b>Mean-to-mean comparisons, no controls</b>	<b>Multivariable analysis</b>	<b>Regression analysis, randomization, multi-year student scores</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Positive</b>	4	3	8	15
<b>Neutral/mixed</b>	4	0	6	10
<b>Negative</b>	5	2	3	10

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# Suggestions from RAND

- Equity
    - Require that all participating schools practice open admissions and lottery systems (if more applicants than slots)
    - Target specific students, especially those most in need
    - Provide generous funding, including supplemental funding, for students with special needs
  - Efficiency
    - Do not expect charter programs to create substantial savings if they are to provide high-quality choices to a substantial number of children
    - Avoid over-regulation
    - Give all public schools the autonomy they need to perform in a competitive educational market
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# Suggestions Continued

## ■ Efficiency Continued

- ❑ Enforce requirements for student achievement testing
- ❑ Impose consequences on schools that do not perform at acceptable levels
- ❑ Develop a statewide student-level record system that can track the performance of individual students and allow needed program evaluation/research

## ■ Choice

- ❑ Disseminate information to parents about mission, values, curriculum, and outcomes of each school
- ❑ Create multiple chartering authorities
- ❑ Actively inform parents about schools and school effectiveness

## ■ Social Cohesion

- ❑ Assess state curriculum standards
  - ❑ Expose students to peers from variety of backgrounds
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## Suggestion for Research

- Conduct longitudinal analyses, following the same students over time
  - Use research designs that allow for multiple variables to be entered simultaneously
  - Consider the goals, curricula, and grade configurations of schools when doing analyses/match schools with like schools
  - Allow new programs & schools time to transition before expecting significant achievement growth
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