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New report provides solutions to reverse disturbing trend of segregation in charter schools

Expansion of charter schools has led to schools being more segregated today than 30 years ago

EAST LANSING, Mich. (Feb. 21, 2012) — The expansion of charter schools has led to classrooms being more segregated today than they were 30 years ago, according to a new report released today that provides policymakers with detailed recommendations on how to ensure all students have access to a quality education.

Some of the nation's most segregated schools are charter schools, where students are often isolated by race, income, language and special education status, according to the report, authored by Julie F. Mead of the University of Wisconsin and Preston C. Green III of Penn State University. For example, 43 percent of black charter school students attend schools that are 99 percent minority, according to Mead and Green's report. Meanwhile, less than 15 percent of black students in traditional public schools attend such highly segregated schools, according to the report.

"Growth in the charter school sector for the mere sake of growth neglects the central justification for their existence: to improve the current public educational landscape for children and their families," Mead and Green wrote in their report. Improving education means serving "all children regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, disability and gender," Mead and Green wrote.

Mead and Green's report provides numerous detailed recommendations to improve access for all students. Among Mead and Green's recommendations:

- Charter schools should be required to submit detailed recruitment plans to ensure they are targeting a diverse student applicant pool representative of the broader community.
- As Congress considers the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, states should be required to submit written equal opportunity plans prior to receiving federal funding for charter schools.
- Require states to collect data regarding charter school recruitment, retention and discipline.

Released in tandem with this report is a companion report which offers model legislation to carry out those recommendations.

Both reports, *Chartering Equity: Using Charter School Legislation and Policy to Advance Equal Educational Opportunity* and *Model Policy Language for Charter School Equity* were produced by the National Education Policy Center with funding from the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. In addition, the Ford Foundation provided funding for *Chartering Equity*.

Both reports are available at: <http://www.greatlakescenter.org>.

They are also available on the NEPC website at: <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/chartering-equity>

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