



The Choices and Challenges of Charter Schools, Revisited

Citation: Wohlstetter, P., Smith, J., & Farrell, C.C. (2015) The choices and challenges of charter schools, revisited, *Journal of School Choice*, 9(1), 115-138.

Purpose: Two years after publishing *Choices and Challenges: Charter School Performance in Perspective* in 2013, Priscilla Wohlstetter, Joanna Smith, and Caitlin C. Farrell wrote an invited essay in the *Journal of School Choice* to both look back at the predictions made in their book about the growth of charter schools, but also to look forward based on newly available research about what trends will be necessary to study going forward to best understand how charter schools function in the United States.

Findings: The researchers identified new questions that the field is facing with regards to charter schools, including the way that charter authorizers work to enforce school-level as well as system-level accountability, the manner in which charter management organizations have become an important part of the charter school landscape, and lastly, the divide between districts and charter schools when it comes to collaboration. After noting the work that has been done in these fields to track the growth of these questions, the authors make a pitch for more focused research in these three areas.

Implications: The authors have done immense work in studying the school choice environment within the United States. Their expertise gives an added air of importance to the recommendations they make in terms of areas for future study. District-charter collaboration, charter management organizations, and accountability in an era of school choice are three topics that must be better understood before practitioners, policymakers and researchers alike will be able to fully understand how charter schools impact the system. More generally, what an essay like this shows is just how much change there is in how school choice functions across the country from year to year. It serves as a reminder that all three aforementioned groups must not only work to grapple with the current challenges, but also have enough foresight to recognize what the next set is, and pre-emptively prepare to solve those as well.