

May 9, 2018

Word Count 231

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! – Charters Schools Are a Laboratory for Innovation Within Public Education

By Kathryn Hickok

This is [National Charter Schools Week](#). Did you know [almost half](#) of Washington, D.C.'s public school children attend tuition-free charter schools? In fact, our nation's capital now has [120 charters](#), run by 66 nonprofit organizations.

President Bill Clinton signed the legislation authorizing D.C.'s charter schools more than twenty years ago. Since then, D.C. charter school students have made significant academic gains. [A 2015 study on urban charter schools](#) by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University found that D.C. charter students are learning the equivalent of 96 more days in math and 70 more days in reading than their peers in traditional public schools.

David Osborne, director of the project Reinventing America's Schools at the Progressive Policy Institute, has called D.C. "[the nation's most interesting laboratory](#)" for public education. In an article for *U.S. News and World Report*, Osborne compares the traditional public school system with a Model T trying to compete on a racetrack with 21st century cars. "...[F]or those with greater needs," he writes, "schools need innovative designs and extraordinary commitment from their staffs."

Charter schools' entrepreneurial governance model allows them to innovate, adapt, and specialize to meet the particular needs of students. Their success in educating children who face the greatest challenges to academic achievement is fueling an even greater demand for the kind of choice in education that charter schools have come to represent.

Kathryn Hickok is Executive Vice President at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.