

Report shows range of schooling options in New Orleans under charter system

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kbrannon@tulane.edu

Phone: 504-621-2724

In New Orleans, families have a wider range of public school options than in other cities, according to a new report by the [Education Research Alliance for New Orleans](#) at Tulane University.

Researchers collected local data on length of school day, extracurricular activities, whether schools had a specific theme and other important school characteristics and programs. They also collected data from school web sites in three other Southern cities that have similar student populations: Atlanta, East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Jackson, Mississippi.

Key findings include:

- New Orleans has the widest range of schooling options among the cities considered. More generally, the districts in the study that had more charter schools had a wider range of options.
- Within New Orleans, schooling options vary even within specific charter management organizations and within the two agencies that authorize charter schools: the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) schools and the state Recovery School District (RSD).
- OPSB offers a wider variety of schooling options compared with RSD.

“One of main arguments for more charter schools and expanded school choice is that this gives families more options,” said lead author Paula Arce-Trigatti. “Our analysis suggests that families do have a variety of options, at least on the factors we could measure.” The other authors of the report are Jane Lincove, associate director of ERA-New Orleans, Huriya Jabbar of the University of Texas at Austin, and Douglas Harris, Tulane professor and ERA-New Orleans

director.

The researchers suggest that the greater variation with OPSB schools could be related to their higher School Performance Scores, which means OPSB schools may be under less accountability pressure. RSD schools, which serve more disadvantaged students and have lower School Performance Scores, face a real threat of being closed and this may lead them to focus their attention on a common set of strategies for increasing test scores.

The report is available at <http://educationresearchalliancenola.org/>.