

Do charter takeovers really benefit students?

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The Education Research Alliance for New Orleans released a new study on Monday (Oct. 17) that analyzes the impact of school closures and charter takeovers on standardized test scores, high school graduation rates, and college entry rates. Authors Whitney Bross, Douglas N. Harris, and Lihan Liu presented their findings at the Tulane City Center (1725 Baronne St.), and footage from the event is available on the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans' [website](#).

[The study](#) examines school closures and charter takeovers in New Orleans and Baton Rouge from 2008 to 2014. "The results vary a lot across cities," according to Bross. "This tells us that the effects on student achievement depend on policy design and implementation."

The main conclusion of the study is that closures and takeovers are effective when students end up in higher quality schools. "That might seem obvious," Harris said, "but the public debate about these policies and most prior studies have generally not considered this. Sometimes education leaders intervene in schools that are more effective than they seem, and students end up moving to schools that are struggling even more."

"Looking at the impact on current and future students, we found that the positive effects of these interventions in New Orleans account for 25 percent to 40 percent of the total effect that post-Katrina school reforms have had on student achievement," Harris said. "When school closures and charter takeovers are implemented well, there's a high probability that these interventions will be successful in improving student outcomes, but they can do damage otherwise."

This study, as well as a related report examining the charter authorization and renewal processes that often led to these closures and takeovers, is available at educationresearchalliancencola.org.

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