



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on November 28, 2018

Black Education: What Makes Sense?

What do you think of the proposition that no black youngsters should be saved from educational rot until all can be saved? Black people cannot afford to accept such a proposition. Actions by the education establishment, black and white liberal politicians, and some civil rights organizations appear to support the proposition. Let's look at it with the help of some data developed by my friend and colleague Dr. Thomas Sowell.



The [Nation's Report Card](#) for 2017 showed the following reading scores for fourth-graders in New York state's public schools: Thirty-two percent scored below basic, with 32 percent scoring basic, 27 percent scoring proficient and 9 percent scoring advanced. When it came to black fourth-graders in the state, 19 percent scored proficient, and 3 percent scored advanced.

Dr. Sowell compared 2016-17 scores on the New York state ELA test. Thirty percent of Brooklyn's William Floyd elementary school third-graders scored well below proficient in English and language arts, but at a Success Academy charter school in the same building, only one did. At William Floyd, 36 percent were below proficient, with 24 percent being proficient and none being above proficient. By contrast, at Success Academy, only 17 percent of third-graders were below proficient, with 70 percent being proficient and 11 percent being above proficient. Among Success Academy's fourth-graders, 51 percent and 43 percent, respectively, scored proficient and above proficient, while their William Floyd counterparts scored 23 percent and 6 percent, respectively, proficient and above proficient. It's worthwhile stressing that William Floyd and this Success Academy location have the same address.

Similar high performance can be found in the Manhattan charter school KIPP Infinity Middle School among its sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders when compared with that of students at New Design Middle School, a public school at the same location. Liberals believe integration is a necessary condition for black academic excellence. Public charter schools such as those mentioned above belie that vision. Sowell points out that only 39 percent of students in all New York state schools who were recently tested scored at the "proficient" level in math, but 100 percent of the students at the Crown Heights Success Academy tested proficient. Blacks and Hispanics constitute 90 percent of the students in that Success Academy.

There's little question that charter schools provide superior educational opportunities for black youngsters. In a story *The New York Times* ran about charter schools earlier this month, "With Democratic Wins, Charter Schools Face a Backlash in N.Y. and Other States," John Liu, an incoming Democratic state senator from Queens, said New York City should "get rid of" large charter school networks. State Sen.-elect Julia Salazar, D-Brooklyn, said, "I'm not interested in privatizing our public schools." *The New York Times* went on to say, "Over 100,000 students in hundreds of the city's charter schools are doing well on state tests, and tens of thousands of children are on waiting lists for spots."

One would think that black politicians and civil rights organizations would support charter schools. To the contrary, they want to saddle charter schools with procedures that make so many public schools a



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failure. For example, the NAACP demands that charter schools “cease expelling students that public schools have a duty to educate.” It wants charter schools to “cease to perpetuate de facto segregation of the highest performing children from those whose aspirations may be high but whose talents are not yet as obvious.” Most importantly, it wants charter schools to come under the control of teachers unions.

Charter schools have an advantage that some call “selection bias.” Because charter schools require parents to apply or enter lotteries for their children’s admission, they attract more students who have engaged parents and students who are higher-achieving and better behaved.

Many in the teaching establishment who are against parental alternatives want alternatives for themselves. In Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, 25 percent of public-school teachers send their children to private schools. In Philadelphia, 44 percent of teachers do so. In Cincinnati, it’s 41 percent. In Chicago, 39 percent do, and in Rochester, New York, it’s 38 percent. This demonstrates the dishonesty, hypocrisy and arrogance of the elite. Their position is, “One thing for thee and another for me.”

Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University. To find out more about Walter E. Williams and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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