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The Cost of Success: The Significance of Funding in the Academic Success of Charter Schools' Minority Students

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The Cost of Success

The Significance of Funding in the Academic Success
of Charter Schools' Minority Students

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Abstract

Since the state of Minnesota first began charter schools nearly three decades ago, they have slowly become a major part of public education throughout the United States. Often times strategically placed in communities of low socioeconomic status, charter schools have offered alternative options to at-risk, low-income students who would otherwise attend the traditional public school within their school zones. In New York City today, there are almost four times the number of charter schools than there were ten years ago. Across the city, at-risk students who have the opportunity to attend charter schools are reaching higher levels of educational achievement and succeeding in more varied fields than their public-school-attending counterparts. It is not possible to say that any single factor contributes to the success of charter schools; however, in my investigation I hypothesize that one major contributing factor to New York charter school success is funding. As such, I compared the annual state revenue brought in by charter schools versus that of traditional public schools. In analyzing both total funding for two specific charter networks and six individual public schools, as well as funding per-pupil, I found that funding discrepancies have most likely made a difference in the differing education systems.

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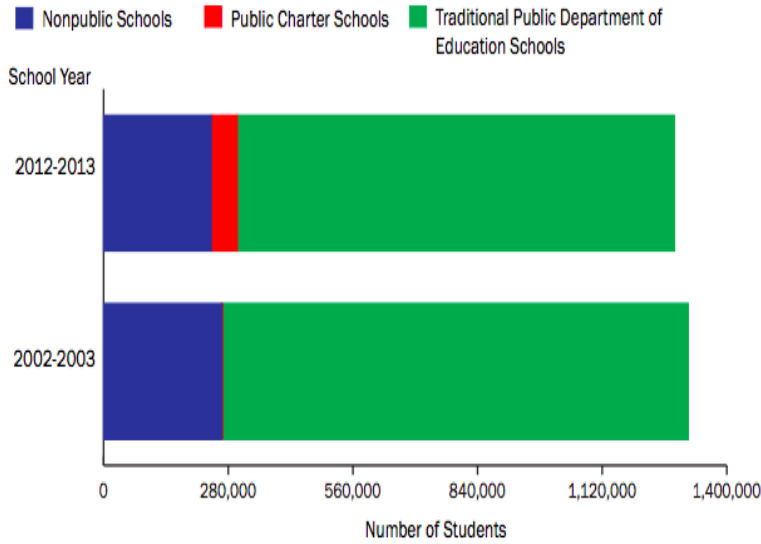
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Introduction: A Brief History of Charter Schools and NYC Public Schools

According to the New York State Education Department, the five boroughs of New York City have over 2,100 schools that serve 1.1 million students from pre-kindergarten to high school, (NYSED, 2017) making it the largest school district in the nation. Of those schools, 1,800 are traditional public schools – a part of the New York City Department of Education (DOE) – while 216 are public charter schools, which are not a part of the DOE. The city adds, on average, twelve charter schools per year, and from the years 2003 to 2013, public charter schools added more than 56,000 students (“New York City by the Numbers”), as seen in Figure 1. During the same time period, enrollment in traditional public schools of NYC declined by 65,000 and nonpublic school enrollment declined by 23,100 (“Non-public K-12 Schools in NYC”).

New York City has a unique hierarchical system where the mayoral position has full control over the public school system. With the exceptions of Chicago and New York City, the majority of school districts across the nation are run by an elected board of education that executively runs the school district and handles responsibilities such as appointing a superintendent, expulsions, and the hiring and firing of teachers. New York City is instead operated by the New York City Panel for Educational Policy consisting of thirteen members, each of whom are appointed by borough presidents (each president appoints one board member), while the mayor appoints the remaining eight members, plus the chancellor. The chancellor appoints deputy chancellors to run the six subsections of New York City’s department of education: The Divisions of Strategy and Policy, School Support, Operations, Specialized Instruction, Teaching and Learning, and English Language Learners (NYC DOE, 2016).

Figure 1: NYC Schools by the Numbers



NY state authorizes a yearly budget for all public schools. The state’s proposed budget for the 2016-2017 school year was \$23.1 billion for New York City. This not only funds salaries, textbooks, and supplies, but also funds standardized testing, after-school programs, transportation, maintenance, and school lunches for both public and charter schools. The current five-year budget – the Capital Plan Budget – was put in place by the city in 2014. It allocated \$14.9 billion to cover the cost of building new schools and renovations to existing schools, and \$1.7 billion to fund charter schools (NYC DOE, 2017). The \$1.7 billion is supposed to cover charter school tuition, but because tuition has been rising, some fear that the state will enact a budget freeze on charter schools – leaving them short of funds and possibly limiting the number of students they can accept – as they have done in the past (Domanico and Smith, 2017).

Charter schools became a part of the state’s public education offerings with the enactment of the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998, which authorizes “a system of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to

establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and school districts” (NYS Charter Schools Act). Although charter schools are publicly funded, the mayor, chancellor, and Panel for Educational Policy do not have authority over their operations or curriculum. Charter schools are run completely independent of the NYC Department of Education, and so have the freedom to develop their own curriculums and disciplinary codes. Each charter school can develop a curriculum for each grade level that will best suit the specific students in that grade level. This is significant because curriculum can be tweaked to accommodate unique patterns in student advancement, allowing for more academic growth within one school year. In contrast, traditional public schools are restricted to uphold and follow the curriculum set by the DOE, regardless of student achievement levels. Charter schools define their own goals for student achievement, such as testing scores and reading levels, and are then responsible for attaining those goals. If they do not attain their goals, each charter school is at risk of being shut down (NYCCS).

Literature Review

I. From Low-Income to At-Risk

Poverty can have a number of negative impacts on public life. Common concerns include an increase in crime and drug use, but poverty can also have serious implications for educational achievement. In his book, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*, Eric Jensen demonstrates how poverty affects students and how a child’s future academic performance can be attributed to a myriad of factors that begin at birth. An “at-risk” student is one who is at risk for academic failure due to a number of societal level factors, such as poverty, race, or location. Poverty affects living

conditions, the food a child eats, parental support, and overall mindset – all factors that contribute to a child’s chances of becoming at-risk.

Jensen’s research found that the attachment formed between parent and child at birth can determine the nature of the relationships a child will later form with his or her teachers. Parent-child attachment continues to develop well after birth, especially in the first 24 months of life. Because low-income parents tend to go back to work earlier after the child’s birth and work longer hours, children are often left in the hands of a daycare or other caregiver, which interrupts the process of parent-child bonding. By the time overworked parents return home, they don’t have enough energy or emotional stability to give the child the attention he or she needs. A safe, predictable, and stable environment is a crucial contributor to a child’s emotional health, cultivated by the parent-child bond and when a child is without his or her parent for the majority of the day, their emotional development is hindered. The child then sees a non-familial person as their main provider of food and nourishment, which displaces the parent-child bond. When a child’s environment is lacking, the production of new brain cells can be hindered as well as the maturation process, because their focus becomes their unstable environment, as opposed to learning and growing mentally (Jensen, 2009, Ch. 2).

Another factor connecting income and educational achievement are the disciplinary methods used in the home. As income decreases, the use of corporal punishment increases. One Cornell University study done on childhood poverty reveals that blue-collar parents are twice as likely to use physical punishment than white-collar parents (Evans, 2004). Home is not the only place where impoverished children experience physical aggression. According to the same study, impoverished preschool-aged children have 70 percent more contact with aggressive children than affluent preschoolers have. All of this contact with physical aggression can negatively

impact academic achievement because it can cause behavioral and emotional issues within young children. Young children who are accustomed to violence may become aggressive in school which can lead to punishments that remove them from the classroom and learning environment, thus hindering their academic achievement. Some students may not become violent themselves but experience emotional trauma from the violence encountered at home. This emotional trauma can also affect a child's academic performance.

Impoverished families are also more likely to face challenges like teen motherhood, inadequate healthcare, and the inability to afford wholesome nutritious foods. Studies show that the nutritious, and often expensive, whole foods that affluent children typically eat, and have access to, are helping them to outperform their impoverished peers (Jensen, 2009, Ch. 2). The National Center for Disease Control and Prevention has proven that food choices can affect everything from energy levels, to behavior, to mental health. Inadequate meals, lack of essential vitamins, and lack of fruits and vegetables are all correlated with lower grades and an inability to focus ("Health and Academic Achievement"). This explains why whole and nutritious foods can make such a difference in a child's academic performance.

Environmental factors also contribute to students' risk for academic failure. Because schools are funded primarily through property taxes, poorer neighborhoods with lower property values tend to have poorly-maintained schools. They also have less money to pay for teachers' salaries, meaning they are often forced to recruit amateur teachers with less training and experience, and have less money for teaching supplies. This directly impacts the quality of education students receive. In such public schools, 51 percent of teachers instructing math classes and 42 percent instructing English are teaching outside of their subject expertise. In contrast, those numbers are 36 and 33 percent, respectively, throughout all public schools

nationwide (Jensen, 2009, Ch. 2). As such, when families in these poorer school zones have the option of sending their children to charter schools, parents see an opportunity for a style of education that was created to help low-income children and may work for their child who is struggling.

II. Benefits of NYC Charter Schools

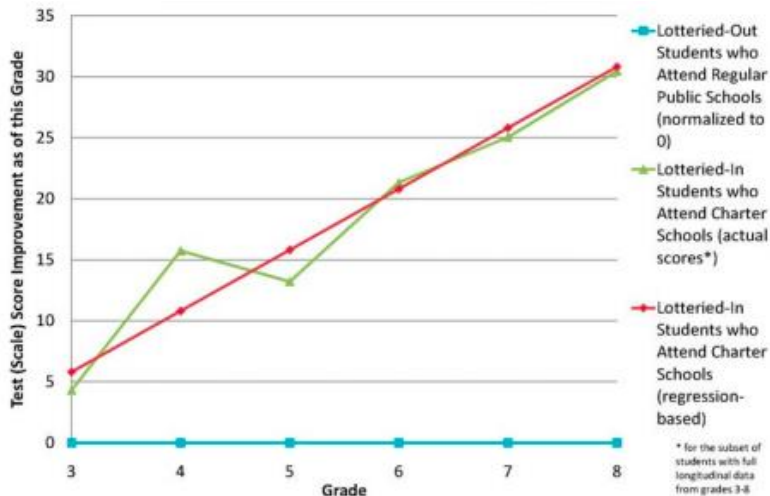
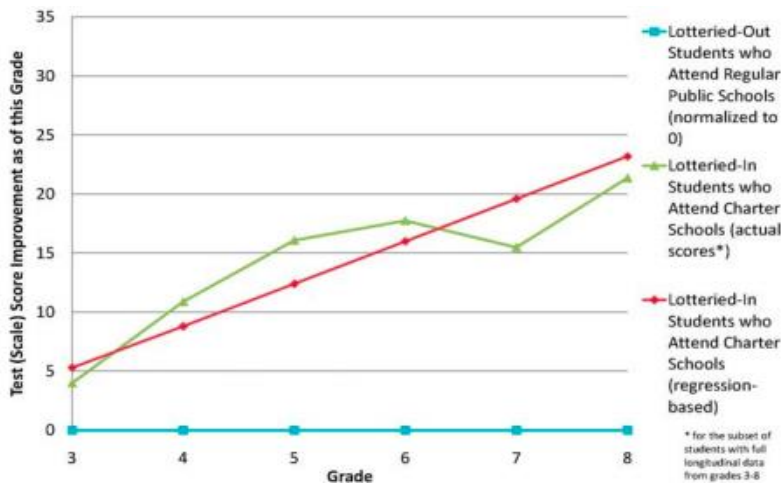
Although many people may be unaware of the effects of poverty on a student's academic performance, it is the focus of many charter school founders and directors. Throughout New York City, charter schools are strategically placed in typically low-income communities in order to give the children of those neighborhoods an alternative to the historically low performing and underfunded traditional public schools. In order to increase student achievement, particularly in comparison to that of the more well-funded areas, NY charter schools work to reduce the Scarsdale-Harlem achievement gap – the gap between traditional public school kids in Harlem and the students of the affluent New York suburb, Scarsdale. In Scarsdale, zero students are considered to be low-income, which gives them an academic boost over the students of Harlem, who are mostly low-income. The gap clearly demonstrates that income plays a role in the academic achievement of the students. This particular achievement gap is well-known throughout New York City schools and is measured solely by state test scores.

The New York City Charter Schools Evaluation Project was a 2009 Stanford University study that researched how charter schools affect achievement in New York City. It also examined where NYC charter schools fall in the Scarsdale-Harlem achievement gap. The research includes a longitudinal analysis of once-lottery students in NYC charter schools versus their traditional public school (TPS) counterparts who would have otherwise been charter school students if they had succeeded in the lottery system. This is a true “apples to apples” comparison

because both types of students desired to go to a charter school, but only half of those studied were given the chance.

The results of the lottery-based study support the speculation that charter schools provide a better education for at-risk students. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the average child who attended a charter school for all of grades kindergarten through eighth grade closed about 66 percent of the Scarsdale-Harlem achievement gap in English, and 86 percent of the gap in math. In contrast, there was little change in achievement for those students who “lotteried-out” and attended traditional public schools (Hoxby, Muraka, and Kang IV-1).

Figures 2 & 3: Estimate-Based ELA and Math Progress of Lotteried-Out Students Versus Charter School Students (Lotteried-In)



Similar positive results are seen for high school students who attend charter schools vs. traditional public schools (TPS). All public school students, charter or traditional, in New York State are required to take the Regents examinations to graduate, but only students with scores of 65 (the minimum passing score) or higher on all five exams – English, Math, Science, Social Science, Foreign Language – qualify for a Regents diploma. In many schools, the Regents diploma is required to graduate, and a Regents diploma is what makes New York students stand out on college applications (NYC Department of Education). A high school charter student, compared to his TPS counterpart, scores an average of three points higher on his Regents exams for every year he spends in the charter school. So, four years in a charter school would place the student about twelve points higher on the exam than if he had attended a TPS (Hoxby, Muraka, and Kang IV-1), making charter school students more likely to graduate from high school with a Regents diploma.

A later 2013 study completed by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford compared the curriculum of charter school students to their counterparts in a corresponding traditional public school. The findings revealed that the average charter school student from 2007-2011 received an additional one month of reading education per year, compared to that of a TPS student, and an additional five months of math education per year (Credo, 15). The study concluded that a charter school student of four years was academically two years ahead of his corresponding traditional public school counterpart which demonstrates that charter school curriculums are more advanced and challenging than in TPS. In sum, charter schools are not only fitting more into their curriculums, but based on test scores, the students are also learning more.

III. Factoring in Race

While it is beneficial to make general comparisons between charter schools and traditional public schools, it is crucial not to overlook the factor of race in education because of the disparity in racial outcomes in academics. According to a 2015 study conducted by the National Assessment for Educational Progress, the black-white achievement gap has barely narrowed in all regions of the country, if at all. In the 50 plus years following the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, predominantly white public schools are still outperforming predominantly black public schools. The average black student in America scores in the 22nd percentile (Bohrstedt, et al. 2015).

Research shows that teachers tend to subconsciously overlook academic strengths in low-income black children, which makes them less likely to recommend those students for gifted and talented programs (Jensen, 2009, Ch. 2). The lack of recognition for high-performing minority students stunts their potential, as a result, minority students can easily become lost in the system because they lose interest in what they are learning, raising their chances of becoming at-risk. To that end, it is significant to note that the majority of NYC charter schools are populated by black and Hispanic students, as the goal of charter schools is to give specialized attention to each student.

Although many low-income minority students in traditional public schools have strong parental support, they tend to be grouped together with the minorities who lack that support, which often causes them to go unnoticed and overlooked. Because this is proven to happen less with white children, it is not as crucial for them to be put in a specialized situation. White students tend to receive a better education than their minority counterparts. At a charter school, teachers know that every student has potential and the parental support to reach that potential. Every student is considered gifted and talented. Perhaps charter schools have been able to close

the achievement gap because they separate minority children from their white peers and focus almost solely on minority excellence.

Although there is data showing that, in general, charter school students are outperforming their traditional public school counterparts, Black and Hispanic charter school students continue to test below their white peers in both Charter and TPS schools in reading. But these minority groups are performing significantly better than their TPS counterparts, including white students, in math (Credo, 22). In both reading and math, impoverished Black and Hispanic charter students are performing better than impoverished Black and Hispanic students of traditional public schools. This may be due to factors other than charter school attendance alone. Charter schools attract children from predominantly low-income minority homes because expensive private schools are not an option for such families. But not only do charters attract poor students, they attract poor students with parents who care. As mentioned above, besides the quality of education, the home life and parental influence are two of the biggest factors that go into a child's academic success. Students with engaged parents tend to do better. Furthermore, even if parents of a low-income family have to work long hours and can't assist with homework, they can be assured that at many charter schools, such as Success Academy, a tutor is assigned to every student who is behind in any given topic, which ensures that no student is left behind or going unnoticed. Involved parents and a very focused curriculum are combined factors that might contribute to the success of minorities in charter schools.

IV. Opposition to Charter Schools

While charter schools are gaining popularity throughout the country, the movement faces its fair share of backlash and opposition. Some of the biggest pushback comes from the National

Advancement for Colored People (NAACP). This may seem counterintuitive given that charter schools have proven to be extremely beneficial for students of color. The NAACP's opposition to charter schools stems from its historical opposition to the private allotment of public funds and the belief that charter schools are contributing to the segregation of schools. According to the website for NYC Charter Schools, 48 percent of students in independent charter schools are black, while 66 percent students in charter schools are low-income. The percentages for Hispanic students are 42 percent and 30 percent, respectively. Of all charter school students in the city, roughly 3 percent are white (NYCCS, 2015). This supports the NAACP's allegation that charter schools contribute to segregation.

In an October 2016 statement the NAACP explained its continued opposition to charter school expansion is based in a belief that public funds should be used to improve traditional public schools rather than funding charter schools. This is because the majority of low-income students will not have the chance to attend a charter school due to admission limitations, and so public funds should be used to improve traditional public schools for all students. Furthermore, the NAACP opposes the fact that charter schools are not subject to the same level of accountability as traditional public schools, although they are receiving public funds.

Finally, as briefly mentioned before, the organization concludes that charter schools are encouraging de facto segregation in public schools, which the NAACP argues is hindering the students of color rather than helping them (NAACP, 2016). When a minority student decides to transfer to a charter school, the former school's diversity is reduced by one student. As this becomes a trend, charter schools become predominantly black and Hispanic. Students in charter schools will, for the most part, only see children at school that look like them. Since the majority of these students are coming from low-income families, this trend continues as they go home to

their urban neighborhoods that are heavily populated by blacks and Hispanics. Eventually, black and Hispanic students are rarely forced to interact with white children, which may cause a false expectation for reality. When these students reach the professional world, they may face a rude-awakening to white culture, racism, or discrimination.

This kind of segregation also becomes detrimental to traditional public schools because the schools lose some of their brightest students with the most potential as well as the students with invested parents. So, the problems that were initially facing the public schools are worsened, such as lack of parental support and unmotivated students. This also then contributes to the lowering test scores in New York City low-income neighborhoods. While black and Hispanic charter school students may lack diversity in their lives, in charter schools they are constantly surrounded by excellence, which might mean that this type of segregation is not such a bad thing, or that segregation is not the primary determinant of an education. One only needs to look at the test scores of the minority students in NYC charter schools to realize that the NAACP's claim does not hold enough validity up against the results that charter schools are producing.

Funding Charter Schools

It has been proven that the New York City charter school movement has been, and continues to be, academically successful. The schools have outstanding test scores and advanced students. In addition to all of this, they seem to be making a large impact, specifically on low-income minority communities. With all this in mind, it is important to look behind the results and examine what it is that is contributing to the immense success of these schools.

While I have addressed many factors that may contribute to charter school success, one that can be objectively measured and that may play an outsized role in charter school performance is funding. Funding is crucial because it directly impacts all areas of education. The level of funding a school receives determines the aptitude of teacher salaries, the upkeep of the school building, the amount of extracurricular activities offered, and the quality of school supplies provided. With proper funding comes more opportunity and support for students which provides them with a greater likelihood of school success.

Not only do charter schools in New York City receive more public funding than traditional public schools, but they can allocate those funds in any manner that they choose due to their autonomous structure. Furthermore, because charters are privately-run, they receive private donations in addition to public funds. Often these private donations come from wealthy donors who receive a tax credit if the charter school is non-profit.

This section will compare the funding of New York City charter schools versus that of the traditional public schools. Because of a variety of factors such as size, location, and need, individual school funding levels vary dramatically. However, per-pupil funding is a clear reflection of the resources that each school spends on their students regardless of student body population size. As such, comparing per-student funding is the simplest and most effective comparison to make between charter and public schools. In order to complete this comparison one would ideally gather funding information for every public and charter school in New York. Unfortunately, such undertaking is beyond the bounds of this project given that New York City has a total of 2,100 schools.

Therefore, I will focus on two individual traditional public school districts – NYC District #9 and NYC District #4 – and the two charter school networks established in the same

areas – Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and Success Academy. The traditional public elementary schools chosen for comparison are ones that are located in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Harlem. New York City has 31 different geographical school districts within the Department of Education, so choosing schools that share communities with one another makes for a fair comparison. Had these charter schools never existed, their students of these neighborhoods would likely be attending a traditional public school within the same area.

Data and Methods

All funding information comes from the New York State Education Department and the New York City Department of Education. Because charter schools are publicly funded but privately run, they are audited each year by independent companies. These audits are publically available and provide information regarding the specific areas of funding allocation within charter schools (audits require specific receipts and information on funding). In contrast, public schools have less information available because their funds come solely from the public. However, general funding information for traditional public schools can still reveal key differences between the two categories of schools because the general amount of money each school receives from the government is still comparable.

Because multiple schools were analyzed within a network or district, the financial numbers provided for the networks were averaged out to account for each individual school within the network or district. The financial data provided for charter schools provides the public revenue for charter schools as an entire network. I calculated per-pupil funding for charter schools by taking that overall number and divided it by the number of schools within the

network, and then proceeded to divide that number by the average number of students in each school.

I chose public school districts #9 and #4 to analyze based on their geographic locations in the Bronx and Harlem. District #9 has 75 schools and District #4 has 35. I then randomly chose three elementary schools within each district to calculate specific per-pupil spending in each school. Information about a school’s per pupil funding is not publically available. Instead, NY provides a funding record for each individual school in the city on the DOE website. Each school’s funding allocation is based on the size of their student population and instructional need. This is called Fair Student Funding, and it makes up the majority of funding that schools receive from the city (Fair Student Funding, DOE). This money from Fair Student Funding is allocated at each principal’s discretion. Each school’s amount of Fair Student Funding is public information. I then visited the website of each individual public elementary school analyzed. I took each school’s overall funding number and divided that by the number of students in each school, which is provided by the school’s website. My calculations revealed that the average per-pupil spending for both Districts #9 and #4 were drastically lower than the per-pupil spending of the charter schools analyzed. Figure 4 is a graph that sums up the 2017 per-pupil funding for each district, or network.

Figure 4: Per-Pupil Funding



To calculate teacher salaries in charter schools, I took the amount charter schools spend on employee wages and divided that by the number of staff members within the network. Both sets of numbers were provided on the state website. The average salary of a traditional public school teacher was stated directly on the NYC DOE website. In the section to follow, I break down per-pupil funding, as well as teacher salaries, and allocation of school funds.

Findings

I. Success Academy

Success Academy is the largest network of charter schools in New York City with 41 different schools throughout the entire city. The K-12 charter school network was founded in 2006 by now CEO Eva Moskowitz. Success Academy today serves 15,500 students throughout 46 schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan. 93 percent of these students are racial minorities and 76 percent are low-income. Furthermore, 15 percent are special needs students and 8.5 percent are English-learning students (ESL) (Who We Are, Success Academy). All Success Academy students can choose to include extra-curricular activities such as dance, chess, and soccer in their daily schedules. Success Academy is outperforming every other charter school in New York City.

Out of all of New York state schools, both public and private, Success Academy students rank in the top one percent in math and science. In English, Success ranks in the top two percent. Among ESL students, 53 percent have passing English scores, compared to the six percent in New York City traditional public school students. Among students with disabilities, Success Academy students also outperform their NYC counterparts: 60 percent have passing percentages in English, as compared to 11 percent of TPS students, and 82 percent in math, vs 12 percent of

TPS (Results, Success Academy). Since it was founded in 2006, Success Academy will be graduating its first ever class this June. The network did not open up high schools until their oldest class reached that level of schooling. Although the graduating class is a small size of 17, every single student has been accepted into four-year colleges, including Boston College, Tufts University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Brody, 2018), a fact that demonstrates that the charter school is not only successful at the elementary school level, but achieves long-term success throughout grades K-12.

Success Academy is a rapidly growing network. It added six new locations within one year from 2016 to 2017. These additions were reflected in revenue from the state and local government, which increased by nearly \$50 million from 2016 to \$210.5 million in 2017 (New York State Education Department). This averages out to \$4.5 million per school and \$13,500 per pupil. On top of the \$210.5 million, Success Academy also receives \$15.2 million in government grants to use at their own discretion. Success Academy also received over \$1.8 million in private donations in 2017 (New York State Education Department). With all of these fundraising factors combined, Success Academy's total annual revenue exceeds \$227.5 million.

Success Academy spends the largest portion of its budget on teacher salaries and benefits. Within the network, there are 1,338 teachers and 367 administrative staff members. Success Academy allocates \$76.5 million among 1,338 general and special education teachers – which results in a \$57,200 annual average teacher salary. With over \$24.9 million to allocate among 367 administrators, administrators average, \$67,970 annually at Success Academy. Success Academy spends \$8.9 million on school supplies and textbooks, which comes solely out of their private and public revenue. Another spending point worth noting is Success Academy's \$9.3 million put toward feeding their students, which averages to about \$203,000 per school. The

network feeds every child three times a day – breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Their food is provided by Red Rabbit, a privately owned company whose mission is to provide healthy and wholesome meals for children throughout New York City. As briefly mentioned earlier, nutrition plays an important role in a student’s mental and academic performance so, the money Success Academy spends on meals and nutrition may play a significant role in their success.

II. KIPP New York City Schools

KIPP, a nationwide network of charter schools that first began in the south Bronx is home to 4,809 New York City students, grades K-12. An estimated 97 percent of these students are Black and Hispanic, and 88 percent come from low-income families (Fast Facts, KIPP NYC). A unique aspect of KIPP Academy schools is that they focus on building seven character traits through each academic lesson as opposed to focusing on specific educational outcomes. These character traits are gratitude, social intelligence, optimism, self-control, zest, curiosity, and grit. At the high school level, KIPP students outperform their traditional public school counterparts by eleven percent on the English Regents exam and fifteen percent on the algebra exam at the state level. Compared to the traditional public school students in their respective districts, KIPP elementary school students are performing better on state tests by an average of 20 percent in language arts and 24 percent in math (Results, KIPP NYC). This is a crucial statistic considering these schools are typically placed in low-income districts filled with at-risk students.

Throughout the United States only about 45 percent of low-income students go on to attend college and only nine percent of those students earn a four-year degree. Every year, 89 percent of KIPP graduates go on to attend college and 45 percent graduate with a Bachelor’s (Results, KIPP NYC). This can, in part, be attributed to the school’s “KIPP Through College”

program, which assures that KIPP properly advises every student in their college decision making process and walks them through the necessary steps and options for paying for college. This is extremely significant because KIPP mainly serves low-income students who will not be able to afford a college education without the help of scholarships or financial aid. In addition, if some of these students are the first in their families to attend college, they might not be receiving the proper guidance at home on how to finance college. In addition to college financial assistance, each student is assigned an advisor upon graduation who will visit them monthly on their college campus and mentor them throughout their undergraduate years (KIPP Through College). The KIPP charter schools are an ideal example of not only the importance of academic rigor, but the importance of nurture, which is often the difference between succeeding and failing.

Can this success be attributed to improved funding as compared to TPS? According to a 2011 study done by Western Michigan University on KIPP schools across the nation, in the 2007-08 school year, KIPP received \$12,731 per pupil in state and local revenue, which was above the national average of \$11,937 (Miron, Urschel, Saxton, 3). In a more recent report released by the New York State Education Department, data states that KIPP NYC schools receive over \$61 million in state and local revenue alone, and four million in government grants and contracts. Accounting for eleven different schools within the network, this amounts to about \$5.8 million per school, or \$13,500 per pupil. KIPP NYC's government funding had a remarkable \$32 million increase from 2016 to 2017, despite any new locations being added. This does not include their private funds and donors, which amounted to \$1.1 million in 2017, representing a 27 percent drop from their \$1.4 million intake in 2016 (New York State Education Department).

After the massive increase in public funds from 2016 to 2017, KIPP NYC went from spending \$16 million in total teacher salaries to \$38 million in total a year, according to the network's annual spending report. This leaves, on average, \$4.75 million for each individual school location to allocate amongst their employees for salaries.

III. NYC School District #9 – Traditional Public Schools

District 9 is home to 75 schools that serve 33,505 K-12 students. Of those 33,505 students, 68 percent are Hispanic, 28 percent are black, and 1 percent are white. 25 percent of the students are English language learners and 23 percent have learning disabilities.

In District 9, 32 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 earn proficient test scores in English, and math scores are even lower at 24 percent. Of the students with disabilities, 6 percent are scoring in the proficiency range for both math and English, which is below the state average of 10 percent for students with disabilities. School District 9 has a 68 percent graduation rate, compared to the state standard of 80 percent.

To analyze funding for District 9, I focused on the funding reports for three specific elementary schools randomly chosen within the district and calculated their average per-pupil revenue, using individual funding data on the NYC Department of Education website. The three schools evaluated were P.S. 132 Garret A. Morgan, Lucero Elementary School, and Grant Avenue Elementary School. According to the DOE website, each school's allocation is based on the size of their student population and instructional need. This is called Fair Student Funding, and it makes up the majority of funding that schools receive from the city (Fair Student Funding, DOE). This money from Fair Student Funding is allocated at each principal's discretion.

Garret A. Morgan spends an average of \$7,300 per pupil based on its Fair Student Funding budget of \$2.8 million with 384 students. Lucero Elementary School receives \$2.9 million a year with 392 students, which averages to about \$7,600 per pupil. And Grant Avenue Elementary receives \$2.9 million in annual revenue with 449 students, which averages to \$6,500 per pupil.

Although there is no specific data available that breaks down the number of teachers within each school building and their average salaries, according to the DOE website, teachers with a bachelor's degree and no prior experience will start off making \$56,700 annually while those with a master's degree can make up to \$85,800. These salaries are actually higher than that of charter schools teachers and administrators at Success Academy.

IV. NYC School District #4 –Traditional Public Schools

NYC School District 4 is located in Harlem, has 35 traditional public schools with a population of 3 students in grades K-12. Of these students, 61 percent are Latino and 24 percent are black. White students make up for 5 percent of the student body. 80 percent of students in this public school district are low-income, 25 percent are with disabilities, and 11 percent are ESL students.

As a whole, District 4 outperforms District 9. In math 36 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 are reaching proficiency marks, as compared to 24 percent in District 9. In English, 35 percent of students are scoring proficiently. However, only 8 percent of students with disabilities are reaching proficient marks in both English and math. District 4 also tops District 9's 68 percent graduation rate with a graduation rate of 83 percent, just above the state standard.

The three elementary schools evaluated for funding in District 4 will be P.S. 38 Roberto Clemente, P.S. 146 Ann M. Short, and P.S. 155 William Paca Elementary schools. Following the Fair Student Funding algorithm, Roberto Clemente receives \$1.2 million in annual revenue.

Divided among 219 students, this averages out at about \$5,500 per pupil. P.S. 146 has an annual revenue of \$2.5 million, which averages to \$7,192 per pupil with 356 students. And finally, William Paca Elementary receives \$2.1 million in annual revenue with 257 students enrolled. This leaves them with the highest average at \$8,272 per pupil.

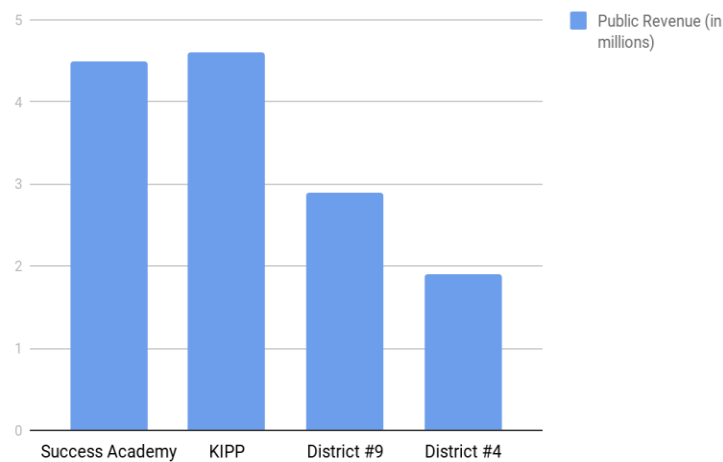
V. Analysis

Students' test scores and graduation data were reported in order to make a more direct comparison between the traditional public schools and charter schools and to focus on specific school zones that are highly impoverished. It is very clear that charter schools are more than outperforming their TPS counterparts across the board. Though charter schools are dealing with students of the same backgrounds as the public schools, they are scoring higher than the rest of the state, while many public school districts in NYC are not even coming close to state standards. Charter school students are outperforming their TPS peers by up to 24 percent across the board. Students with disabilities in charter schools are outperforming their TPS counterparts by up to 54 percent across the board. Graduation rates are higher for charter schools, which is significant given if they had attended their local TPS they had a less likelihood of graduating. Looking at funding is important because the demographics among these differing school systems are so similar, yet the results could not be more contrasting.

The funding data available for traditional public schools is not as dense or expansive as that available for charter schools, however, I do have overall funding amounts, if not a specific breakdown. With these overall amounts, calculations were able to be made for factors such as per-pupil spending and teacher salaries, and from there, conclusions can be drawn.

One of the biggest differences in the funding reports is in the annual revenue. As shown in Figure 5, the six public elementary schools analyzed receive up to \$4 million less than individual charter schools in revenue. Furthermore, public school teachers are making just as much as, if not more than, charter school teachers. On average, an administrator at a charter school is paid about \$20,000 less than a public school teacher who holds a Master's degree. This rules out the theory that greater teacher salary satisfaction is causing the spike in charter school numbers.

Figure 5: 2017 Public Revenue



With the data presented, I would hypothesize that funding is making a difference, but more so in areas such as classroom materials, field trips, and school lunches. However, with the lack of data for public school funds, this can not be proved absolute. That being said, because the funding records provided are vastly contrasting, they are worth being noted.

Conclusion

In New York City, charter schools are changing the lives of low-income minority children. Because of their commitment to excellence and their incentive-driven success, charter schools are giving these students the attention they need; attention that not only brings them up to par with their affluent peers, but launches them far beyond what is expected of them.

Across the nation, education is facing an achievement gap, lack of funds, overworked teachers, and overlooked students. The cycle of poverty is not a myth. When born into poverty it is immensely difficult to escape that state due to many factors – a lack of nurture, poor nutrition, and susceptibility to mental illness, to name a few. Adding minority status on top of poverty puts a child at even more risk for failure because of the way they are perceived by their teachers and society. More emphasis must be put on the schooling of low-income students. An education can be the determining factor in whether or not a minority student escapes poverty, or continues within the cycle. It is up to the education system to instruct the under-privileged children and guide them, not only to improve America's human capital, but to improve society in general. And that is what New York City charter schools are aiming to do.

Although the statistics show that New York charter schools may be inadvertently separating black and Hispanic children from white children, the benefits of the education outweigh the isolation. New York City charter school students are outperforming their traditional public school counterparts in almost every academic category. Black and Hispanic children are finally surrounded by other kids and adults who, not only look like them, but also succeed. But most importantly, these schools are sending minorities to college at an outstanding rate. With a charter school education, followed by a post-secondary one, these minority students are being given the most important tools needed to succeed and break their cycle of poverty.

The analysis of funding data proves that charter schools are receiving more in overall funding when schools are accounted for on an individual level. Yes, this can be attributed to the excess of private funds coming into charter schools, but these schools are receiving more in state funding as well. How charter schools allocate their money is provided in more specific detail than traditional public schools, but the fact remains the same that in general funding, charter schools are receiving more. With further research, I would hope to break down the specific allocations of public school funding.

Funding is just one of many aspects of school success. There is no easy fix to the tribulations facing our education system today. Future research should analyze parental support and involvement, disciplinary codes, and differentiation in curriculum as potential contributors to achievement. My research thus far has briefly brought all of these factors into light, but a deeper look into each factor would provide more insight as to why NYC charter schools are experiencing such success.

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Appendix A

Figure 1: Black-White Achievement Gap, Standard Deviation (1965-2013)

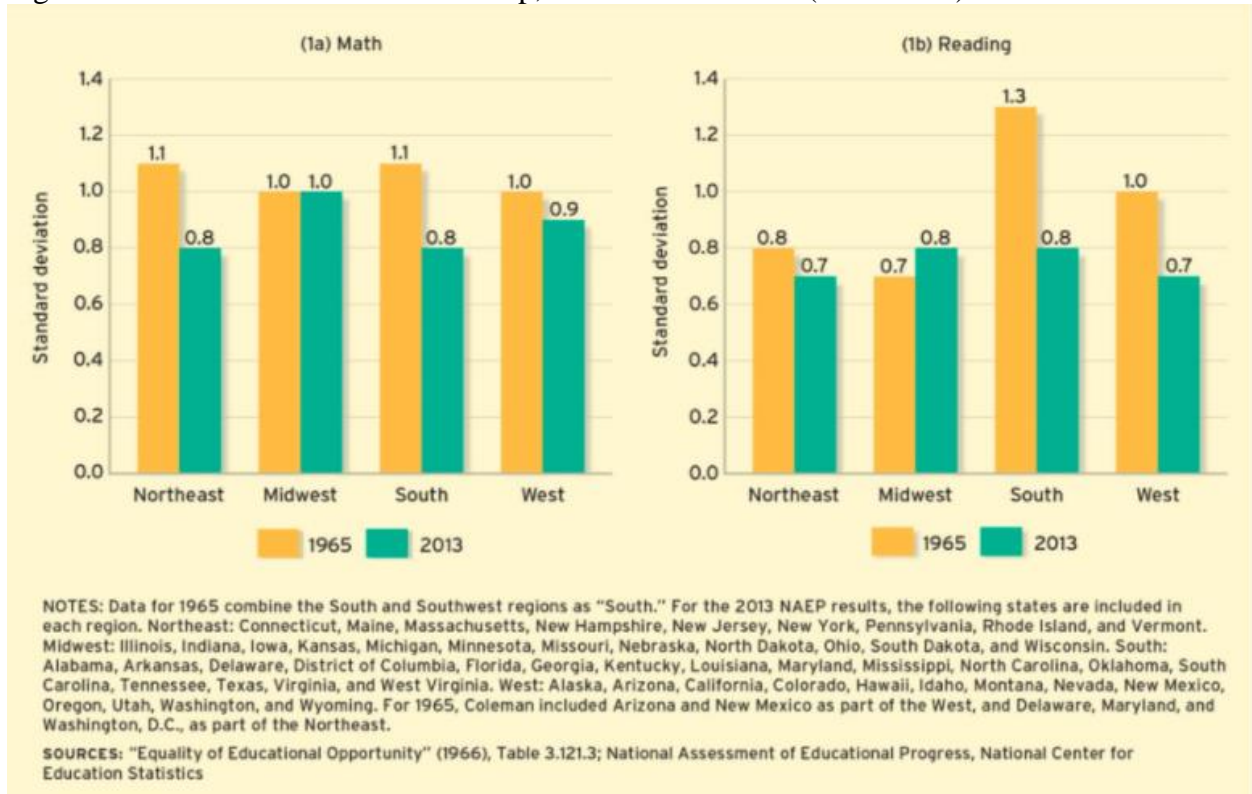


Figure 2: Stats on School Districts Evaluated

	Success Academy	KIPP NYC Charter Schools	NYC School District #9	NYC School District #4
Number of Students in Network/District	15,500	4,809	35,505	12,593
Number of Schools in Network/District	46	11	75	35
Location of Schools	The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Harlem	The Bronx, Brooklyn, and Harlem	The Bronx	Harlem

Figure 3: Success Academy Charter Schools - Statement of Financial Activities

<i>Year ended June 30,</i>	2017	2016
	Unrestricted	
Revenue and Support:		
State and local per pupil operating revenue	\$210,584,340	\$163,980,811
Government grants	15,202,167	15,172,060
Contributions and private grants	40,250	36,500
Donated services (Note 7)	1,025,756	833,564
Other income	704,523	783,570
Total Revenue and Support	227,557,036	180,806,505
Expenses:		
Program services:		
General education	184,131,784	149,519,355
Special education	25,108,878	20,389,000
Total Program Services	209,240,662	169,908,355
Supporting services:		
Management and general	18,338,924	13,720,917
Total Expenses	227,579,586	183,629,272
Change in Net Assets Before Forgiveness of Debt	(22,550)	(2,822,767)
Forgiveness of Debt (Note 4)	1,000,000	-
Change In Net Assets	977,450	(2,822,767)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	20,192,891	23,015,658
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 21,170,341	\$ 20,192,891

Figure 4: Success Academy Charter Schools - Statement of Functional Expenses

Year ended June 30,

	FTEs	Program Services			Supporting Services	Total	
		General Education	Special Education	Total Program Services	Management and General	2017	2016
Salaries and staff:							
Administrative staff personnel	367	\$ 21,951,676	\$ 2,993,410	\$ 24,945,086	\$ 1,877,587	\$ 26,822,673	\$ 21,539,775
Instructional personnel	1,338	67,349,989	9,184,089	76,534,078	5,760,630	82,294,708	69,678,921
Total Salaries and Staff		89,301,665	12,177,499	101,479,164	7,638,217	109,117,381	91,218,696
Payroll taxes and employee benefits		18,160,821	2,476,476	20,637,297	1,553,345	22,190,642	19,847,545
Professional development		2,530,990	345,135	2,876,125	-	2,876,125	2,840,642
Legal (Note 7)		-	-	-	1,025,756	1,025,756	833,564
Audit and accounting		-	-	-	113,138	113,138	128,568
Professional and consulting fees		69,940	9,537	79,477	5,982	85,459	463,288
Transportation		679,324	92,635	771,959	58,104	830,063	682,232
Scholar food service		8,233,846	1,122,797	9,356,643	-	9,356,643	5,429,060
Instructional supplies and textbooks		7,834,260	1,068,308	8,902,568	-	8,902,568	7,909,420
Management fee		19,129,420	2,608,557	21,737,977	5,434,494	27,172,471	21,983,041
Interest expense		86,368	11,777	98,145	7,387	105,532	85,000
Talent recruitment		1,000,953	136,494	1,137,447	-	1,137,447	747,297
Scholar recruitment		1,517,600	206,945	1,724,545	-	1,724,545	1,636,947
Scholar after school programming		678,031	92,459	770,490	-	770,490	396,793
Parent and community outreach and engagement		1,022,362	139,413	1,161,775	-	1,161,775	489,919
Uniforms and backpacks		705,562	96,213	801,775	-	801,775	568,018
Office expense		3,645,798	497,154	4,142,952	311,835	4,454,787	2,867,971
Field studies		2,338,357	318,867	2,657,224	-	2,657,224	1,990,410
School culture		1,346,456	183,608	1,530,064	-	1,530,064	885,256
Special events		103,436	14,105	117,541	8,847	126,388	100,250
Equipment lease		1,507,660	205,590	1,713,250	128,954	1,842,204	1,576,768
Student assessments		238,005	32,455	270,460	-	270,460	288,538
Telecommunications and internet		2,255,984	307,634	2,563,618	192,961	2,756,579	1,281,114
Postage and delivery		1,248	170	1,418	107	1,525	17,013
Insurance		1,213,510	165,479	1,378,989	103,795	1,482,784	1,415,859
Facilities expense		2,737,893	373,349	3,111,242	234,179	3,345,421	2,764,427
Information technology		4,067,084	554,602	4,621,686	347,869	4,969,555	1,192,664
Depreciation and amortization		13,291,745	1,812,511	15,104,256	1,136,879	16,241,135	13,473,388
Miscellaneous		433,466	59,109	492,575	37,075	529,650	515,584
Total Expenses		\$184,131,784	\$25,108,878	\$209,240,662	\$18,338,924	\$227,579,586	\$183,629,272

Figure 5: KIPP NYC Public Charter Schools - Statement of Activities

	2017			2016		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Totals	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Totals
OPERATING REVENUE						
State and Local Per Pupil Operating Revenue	\$ 61,906,955	\$ -	\$ 61,906,955	\$ 25,699,528	\$ -	\$ 25,699,528
Government Grants and Contracts	4,308,694	-	4,308,694	1,362,132	539,401	1,901,533
Total Operating Revenue	66,215,649	-	66,215,649	27,061,660	539,401	27,601,061
OPERATING EXPENSES						
Program Services	59,296,310	-	59,296,310	25,123,766	-	25,123,766
Supporting Services	7,175,910	-	7,175,910	2,955,591	-	2,955,591
Total Operating Expenses	66,472,220	-	66,472,220	28,079,357	-	28,079,357
SCHOOL OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(256,571)	-	(256,571)	(1,017,697)	539,401	(478,296)
OTHER REVENUE						
Contributions and Other Grants	471,737	111,764	583,501	1,161,805	23,793	1,185,598
Interest and Other Income – Net	666,776	-	666,776	247,826	-	247,826
Donated Goods and Services	771	-	771	2,600	-	2,600
Total Other Revenue	1,139,284	111,764	1,251,048	1,412,231	23,793	1,436,024
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS	15,832	(15,832)	-	569,461	(569,461)	-
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE MERGER	898,545	95,932	994,477	963,995	(6,267)	957,728
NET ASSETS TRANSFERRED FROM MERGER						
Transfer of Net Assets of KIPP AMP Academy to PCS	2,419,643	2,967	2,422,610	-	-	-
Transfer of Net Assets of KIPP Infinity to PCS	3,122,295	37,274	3,159,569	-	-	-
Total Net Assets Transferred from Merger	5,541,938	40,241	5,582,179	-	-	-
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	6,440,483	136,173	6,576,656	963,995	(6,267)	957,728
Net Assets – Beginning of Year	6,489,267	583	6,489,850	5,525,272	6,850	5,532,122
NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 12,929,750</u>	<u>\$ 136,756</u>	<u>\$ 13,066,506</u>	<u>\$ 6,489,267</u>	<u>\$ 583</u>	<u>\$ 6,489,850</u>

Figure 6: KIPP NYC Public Charter Schools - Statement of Functional Expenses

	2017				
	Program Services			Supporting Services	Total Expenses
	Regular Education	Special Education	Total	Management and General	
Employee Wages	\$ 32,551,697	\$ 5,715,732	\$ 38,267,429	\$ -	\$ 38,267,429
Payroll Taxes and Employee Benefits	8,182,329	1,257,862	9,440,191	-	9,440,191
Licensing and Management Fee	262,182	-	262,182	7,175,910	7,438,092
Litigation and Legal Services Fee	82,631	-	82,631	-	82,631
Accounting and Audit Services Fees	58,656	-	58,656	-	58,656
Other Professional Fees	1,268,320	-	1,268,320	-	1,268,320
Consultant Fees	160,212	70,530	230,742	-	230,742
Grants to Related Entities	1,663	-	1,663	-	1,663
Academic Programming	1,002,144	10,262	1,012,406	-	1,012,406
Alumni Programming	2,967	-	2,967	-	2,967
Field Lessons	551,727	-	551,727	-	551,727
Professional Development	704,794	697	705,491	-	705,491
Equipment and Maintenance	710,185	-	710,185	-	710,185
Student Transportation and Other Services	148,588	-	148,588	-	148,588
Supplies and Materials	1,577,500	-	1,577,500	-	1,577,500
Technology Equipment and Materials	1,270,313	174	1,270,487	-	1,270,487
Events	215,545	-	215,545	-	215,545
Printing and Publications	59,061	-	59,061	-	59,061
Occupancy	530,442	-	530,442	-	530,442
Telephone and Internet	920,563	-	920,563	-	920,563
Insurance	598,584	-	598,584	-	598,584
Memberships and Subscriptions	86,207	-	86,207	-	86,207
Postage and Shipping	14,262	-	14,262	-	14,262
Bank and Other Fees	1,893	-	1,893	-	1,893
Candidate Recruiting	8,867	-	8,867	-	8,867
Miscellaneous	9,659	50	9,709	-	9,709
Donated Goods and Services	771	-	771	-	771
Depreciation and Amortization	1,207,997	-	1,207,997	-	1,207,997
Uncollectible Receivables	29,282	-	29,282	-	29,282
Prior Period Adjustments	17,340	4,622	21,962	-	21,962
Total Functional Expenses	\$ 52,236,381	\$ 7,059,929	\$ 59,296,310	\$ 7,175,910	\$ 66,472,220

Figure 7: P.S. 132 Garret A. Morgan - Fair Student Funding 2017-18 Overview

	a	b + c + d + e + f + i		
I. FY 2017 Revised Base Allocations Excluding CB and Foundation ¹			\$2,444,929	98.54%
TL Fair Student Funding	b		\$2,810,026	
TL Fair Student Funding Intensive Support	c		\$0	
TL 09 C4E CTT	d		\$128,315	
TL Funds Over Formula	e		\$0	
Less: Cumulative Collective Bargaining	f	g + h	(\$268,412)	
FY 2017 Costs for FY 2016 Staffing	g	(\$282,030)		
Collective Bargaining for Register Change	h	\$13,618		
Less: Foundation	i		(\$225,000)	

Figure 8: P.S. Lucero Elementary School - Fair Student Funding 2017-18 Overview

I. FY 2017 Revised Base Allocations Excluding CB and Foundation ¹	a	b + c + d + e + f + i	\$2,502,088	100%
TL Fair Student Funding	b		\$2,984,903	
TL Fair Student Funding Intensive Support	c		\$0	
TL 09 C4E CTT	d		\$0	
TL Funds Over Formula	e		\$0	
Less: Cumulative Collective Bargaining	f	g + h	(\$257,815)	
FY 2017 Costs for FY 2016 Staffing	g		(\$193,811)	
Collective Bargaining for Register Change	h		(\$64,004)	
Less: Foundation	i		(\$225,000)	

Figure 9: Grant Avenue Elementary School - Fair Student Funding 2017-18 Overview

I. FY 2017 Revised Base Allocations Excluding CB and Foundation ¹	a	b + c + d + e + f + i	\$2,541,361	93.68%
TL Fair Student Funding	b		\$2,915,619	
TL Fair Student Funding Intensive Support	c		\$0	
TL 09 C4E CTT	d		\$135,444	
TL Funds Over Formula	e		\$0	
Less: Cumulative Collective Bargaining	f	g + h	(\$284,702)	
FY 2017 Costs for FY 2016 Staffing	g		(\$288,029)	
Collective Bargaining for Register Change	h		\$3,327	
Less: Foundation	i		(\$225,000)	

Figure 10: P.S. 38 Roberto Clemente - Fair Student Funding 2017-18 Overview

I. FY 2017 Revised Base Allocations Excluding CB and Foundation ¹	a	b + c + d + e + f + i	\$1,212,762
TL Fair Student Funding	b		\$1,520,145
TL Fair Student Funding Intensive Support	c		\$0
TL 09 C4E CTT	d		\$71,286
TL Funds Over Formula	e		\$0
Less: Cumulative Collective Bargaining	f	g + h	(\$153,669)
FY 2017 Costs for FY 2016 Staffing	g		(\$172,986)
Collective Bargaining for Register Change	h		\$19,317
Less: Foundation	i		(\$225,000)

Figure 11: P.S. 146 Ann M. Short - Fair Student Funding 2017-18 Overview

I. FY 2017 Revised Base Allocations Excluding CB and Foundation ¹	a	b + c + d + e + f + i	\$2,146,501
TL Fair Student Funding	b		\$2,560,671
TL Fair Student Funding Intensive Support	c		\$0
TL 09 C4E CTT	d		\$71,286
TL Funds Over Formula	e		\$0
Less: Cumulative Collective Bargaining	f	g + h	(\$260,456)
FY 2017 Costs for FY 2016 Staffing	g	(\$274,780)	
Collective Bargaining for Register Change	h	\$14,324	
Less: Foundation	i		(\$225,000)

Figure 12: P.S. 155 William Paca Elementary School - Fair Student Funding 2017-18 Overview

I. FY 2017 Revised Base Allocations Excluding CB and Foundation ¹	a	b + c + d + e + f + i	\$1,712,353
TL Fair Student Funding	b		\$2,126,040
TL Fair Student Funding Intensive Support	c		\$0
TL 09 C4E CTT	d		\$0
TL Funds Over Formula	e		\$0
Less: Cumulative Collective Bargaining	f	g + h	(\$188,687)
FY 2017 Costs for FY 2016 Staffing	g	(\$217,380)	
Collective Bargaining for Register Change	h	\$28,693	
Less: Foundation	i		(\$225,000)