

From: (b)(6) on behalf of James (Lynn) Woodworth
[jwoodwor@stanford.edu]
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014, 9:13 PM
To: info@whatworks.ed.gov; Macke Raymond
Subject: WWC single study review of "National Charter School Study
(2013)"
Attachments: CREDO Response to the What Works Clearinghouse
01_27_2014.docx

Please see attached reply to WWC single study review of "National Charter
School Study
(2013)".

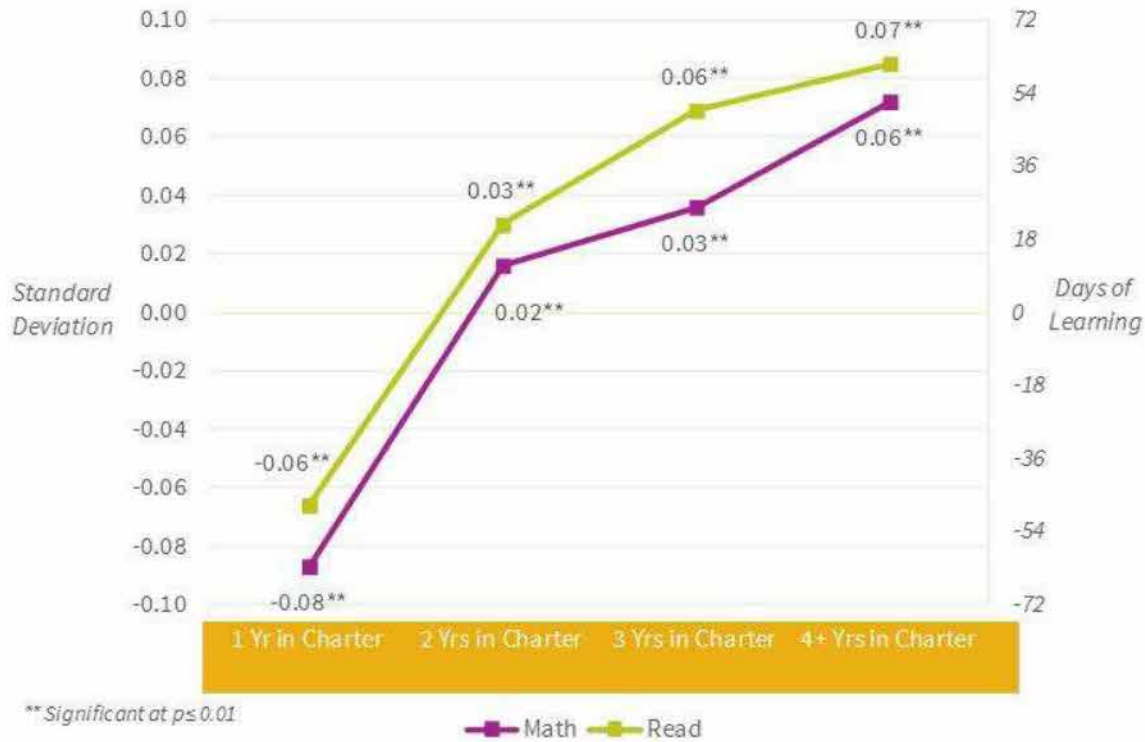
Best Regards,

James (Lynn) Woodworth, PhD
Quantitative Research Analyst
CREDO
Stanford University
650-725-1823

From: James L. Woodworth, PhD, CREDO
 To: What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
 Date: 01/27/2014
 Subject: WWC single study review of "National Charter School Study (2013)"

This memo is in response to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Single Study Review of the "National Charter School Study: 2013" by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO). In the textbox explaining the WWC rating, one of the reasons listed for giving the study a rating of "meets WWC evidence standards with reservations" is that "the study's results do not have a straightforward interpretation because they blend the 1-year gains students experienced during their first year of charter school attendance and 1-year gains during subsequent years."

CREDO feels this was addressed on pages 78-79 of the study. CREDO specifically included a model with indicator variables for consecutive years of charter enrollment for one year, two years, three years, and four or more years in length. This model differentiated the impact of gains by first year charter students from students in their second, third, and fourth years. This "years in charter" model used a limited sample compared to the base model. This was necessary due to the need to see the students enter the charter sector within the data window (to ensure we did in fact capture a student's first year in a charter school). The results of this model were shown in Figure 42, *Impact by Students' Years of Enrollment in Charter School* which is included below:



The analysis of the model results showed “that students who persist in charter schools for a longer period of time have stronger growth in both reading and math.¹ Students with one year of charter enrollment realize smaller learning gains than their peers in TPS in both reading and math, with the disadvantage equal to 43 and 58 fewer days of learning, respectively. Learning gains improve significantly for charter students by their second year of enrollment – seeing about 22 more days of learning in reading and 14 more days in math. Once a student is enrolled for four or more years, their learning gains outpace TPS by 50 days in reading and 43 days in math per year.”

Given the analysis explicated above, the critique that “the study’s results do not have a straightforward interpretation” is incomplete. Please feel free to contact us if additional clarification or discussion is desired.

¹ It should also be noted that the results in Figure 39 are the total effects for each group. The effects are not cumulative, i.e. the total effect of four plus years in charter is 52 days more learning, not $-45 + 21 + 40 + 52$ days.

WhatWorks

From: WhatWorks

Sent: 29 Jan 2014 16:56:32 +0000

To: (b)(6)

Subject: RE: WWC single study review of "National Charter School Study (2013)" WWCPC 4503

Hello,

Thank you for contacting the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). We have received your email below. WWC staff are reviewing your request and will prepare a response.

What Works Clearinghouse

The What Works Clearinghouse was established by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education. For more information, please visit <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>.

From: (b)(6) **On Behalf Of** James (Lynn) Woodworth

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What Works Clearinghouse **WWC**

A central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education.

March 18, 2014

James L. Woodworth, Ph.D
Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO)
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-6010
Tel.: (650) 725-1823

Reference: QR2014001

Dear Dr. Woodworth:

Thank you for your email concerning the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) single study review (SSR) of the “National Charter School Study: 2013” (January 2014). In response to your inquiry, we conducted an independent quality review to address the issue you raised. The WWC quality review team responds to concerns raised about WWC reviews published on our website. When a quality review is conducted, a researcher who was not involved in the initial review undertakes an independent assessment of the study in question. The researcher also investigates the procedures used and decisions made during the original review of the study. These quality reviews are one of tools used to ensure that the standards established by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) are upheld on every review conducted by the WWC.

In your email (dated 01/27/2014), you stated “In the textbox explaining the WWC rating, one of the reasons listed for giving the study a rating of “meets WWC evidence standards with reservations” is that “the study’s results do not have a straightforward interpretation because they blend the 1-year gains students experienced during their first year of charter school attendance and 1-year gains during subsequent years.” Referring to pages 78-79 (Figure 42) of the study where this issue was addressed, you stated that “...the critique that “the study’s results do not have a straightforward interpretation” is incomplete.”

The quality review investigated the issue you raised, revisited our review of the study, and came to the following conclusions.

The quality review concluded that the WWC followed its policies and procedures when determining that the study *Meets WWC Standards With Reservations*, the highest possible rating for a well-implemented quasi-experiment. The statement that the “study’s results do not have a straightforward interpretation.....” did not figure into the determination of the study’s rating. Rather, it was intended as a caution to readers when interpreting the study’s main/primary results, as reported in Appendix C. These results do not have a straightforward interpretation for the reason specified in the SSR (that is, the results blend the 1-year gains students experienced during their first year of charter school attendance and 1-year gains during subsequent years). However, we agree that this wording could cause confusion and recommend that the WWC revise the text in the rating box in order to improve clarity (edits are shown in *italics*):

What Works Clearinghouse **WWC**

A central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education.

“In addition, the primary study results described in this report (and summarized in Appendix C), do not have a straightforward interpretation because they blend ...”

We also recommend two additional modifications. First, we suggest including the “years in charter” model results in Appendix D as supplemental findings. Second, we suggest adding an endnote to the revised sentence, stating “The authors also presented a model that differentiated the impact of gains by first year charter students from students in their subsequent years (pp. 78-79). This “years in charter” model used a limited sample relative to the base model presented in Appendix C. These findings are presented in Appendix D.”

Based on the findings of this quality review, the above revisions are recommended. You will be notified when the revised report is published to the website. I hope that this letter has addressed your concerns. If you have other concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the WWC through info@whatworks.ed.gov.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jill Constantine
Director, What Works Clearinghouse

Sent: 18 Mar 2014 20:43:00 +0000

To: (b)(6)

Cc: Joy.Lesnick@ed.gov; Vanessa.Anderson@ed.gov

Subject: RE: WWC single study review of "National Charter School Study (2013)" WWPC 4503

Attachments: QR2014001 Response_3-18-2014.pdf

Dear Dr. Woodworth,

Attached is a response to the questions you raised on January 27, 2014 concerning the What Works Clearinghouse single study review of the National Charter School Study (2013).

Thank you,

What Works Clearinghouse

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From: WhatWorks

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 11:57 AM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: RE: WWC single study review of "National Charter School Study (2013)" WWPC 4503

Hello,

Thank you for contacting the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). We have received your email below. WWC staff are reviewing your request and will prepare a response.

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