

From: (b)(6) on behalf of Macke Raymond
[macke@stanford.edu]
Sent: Friday, December 21, 2012 6:20 AM
To: What Works
Subject: Re: WWC Quick Review Blast of Report

Good morning,
CREDO greatly appreciates the "WWC Quick Review" of our recently released report "Charter School Performance in New Jersey." We were happy to see that our VCR methodology continues to meet WWC standards with reservations. The review advised readers to exercise caution when interpreting the results of our analysis of impacts by school because our analysis failed to control for the risk that multiple tests of statistical significance increase the probability that some results will be found significant by chance. Bullet points of our response from here on:

- We would first like to clarify what you believe to be the cause of our bias toward finding statistically significant results.

- Your concern seems to be either:
 - 1) We run multiple tests of statistical significance without a "correction factor" to adjust P values (e.g. Bonferroni) or
 - 2) We have positive correlation within our unit of assignment (charter) that does not match the unit of analysis (student), thus biasing the standard errors down, as addressed in appendix C of the WWC handbook, p.47.

- If your concern is case 1), we explored the need to adjust our numbers with the Bonferroni method. However, we think this may "doubly" bias our results against finding statistical significance for the reasons outlined below.
- If your concern is case 2), it does not apply to our data. The assumption that intra-class correlation (ICC) is positive (which is necessary to presume that our clusters have artificially shrunken SE's) is not true of our data. If anything, our data exhibits slightly negative ICC, as evidenced by an increase in t values when we cluster errors.
- We decided to err of the side of over-estimating SE's and therefore against finding statistical significance by not clustering errors in our analysis. Adding the Bonferroni adjustment on top the negative ICC would further increase SE's likely to the point of over-correction.

- Regardless of the cause of your concern, we believe there are significant reasons to doubt whether they apply to our data. Unfortunately, due to our University's shutdown tomorrow we do not have time to explore this further with you and request a delay of your "brief review" until we have had time to explore this more deeply.

Thank you for your consideration; we look forward to continuing the discussion in January.
Wishing you good holidays in the meantime.

Best,

Macke Raymond

On Thu, Dec 20, 2012 at 7:01 AM, What Works <whatworks@mathematica-mpr.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Raymond:

We are emailing to inform you that a What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) quick review blast of your report, "Charter School Performance in New Jersey" will be posted on the WWC website tomorrow, 12/21/2012. As part of this process, we are sharing with you a courtesy copy of the quick review blast (attached as a PDF to this e-mail). This quick review blast is embargoed until tomorrow, 12/21/2012 at 10am Eastern Time and cannot be circulated until that time.

WWC is using a new format for quick reviews to allow for a faster release. WWC quick review blasts are intended to provide a timely and objective initial assessment of recent research. The WWC will also conduct a more detailed review of all eligible studies included in quick review blasts. Therefore, if we need additional information for the full review, we will contact you again.

Because of the volume of correspondence the WWC receives, questions regarding quick review blasts should be submitted to the Help Desk at info@whatworks.ed.gov. Your questions will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member on the WWC team and you will receive an e-mail response.

Sincerely,

The What Works Clearinghouse Team

