



Insight

Charter School Success in Harlem. Who'd Object?

MARCH 6, 2010

From [Carpe Diem](#)

By: Mark Perry

From the [Wall Street Journal](#):

Today there are 24 Harlem charter schools. They select students by lottery, and they educate about 7,700 of the community's 50,000 school-age kids. Another 5,700 children matriculate at one of Harlem's 30 private and parochial schools.

"Harlem now has more school choice per square foot than any other place in the country," says Eva Moskowitz, who operates four charters in Harlem. Nationwide, the average black 12th grader reads at the level of a white eighth grader. Yet Harlem charter students at schools like KIPP and Democracy Prep are outperforming their white peers in wealthy suburbs. At the Promise Academy charter schools, 97% of third graders scored at or above grade level in math. At Harlem Village Academy, 100% of eighth graders aced the state science exam. Every third grader at Harlem Success Academy 1, operated by Ms. Moskowitz, passed the state math exam, and 71% of them achieved the top score.

This year, Harlem

39;s charter schools received more than 11,000 applications for 2,000 available slots. More than 7,000 children are on wait lists.

With that kind of success, reflected in that kind of demand, who could object to more charter

schools? Easy question.

The United Federation of Teachers and its political acolytes in the New York state legislature are hell-bent on blocking school choice for underprivileged families. Worried that high-performing charters are “saturating” Harlem, State Sen. Bill Perkins and State Assemblyman Keith Wright have bac

ked legislation that would gut state per-pupil funding at charter schools and allow a single charter operator to educate no more than 5% of a district’s students. Unions dislike charter schools because many aren’t organized. But how does limiting the replication of successful public education models benefit ghetto kids?

These obstructionists, Mr. Clark says, aren’t doing the community any favors. “The teachers unions ought to be ashamed of themselves because they know better than I do how bad these schools are,” he says. “Everybody on my block and in my building and around the corner . . . they all want charter schools. They don’t want a political debate.”

To paraphrase [Dennis Byrne](#):

If there’s ever an illustration of how “progressive” elites and organized labor are attempting to keep the very people they supposedly care about locked up on the plantation, it’s their consuming opposition to charter schools in Harlem and elsewhere.

Update: NY Times article [“In Harlem, Epicenter for Charter Schools, a Senator Wars Against Them,”](#) thanks to Colin.