



May 17, 2018

<i>Research Question: Does the presence of charter schools in a community impact the degree of racial concentration (segregation) in that community? Or, are there patterns of Disproportionately white charter schools that would suggest white flight or segregation occurring?</i>		
Data Needed	Reason for Data	Data Source
Longitudinal, individual student-level data	Identify race of individuals who went from one school to another (district to the charter)	This is private student data only available at locality/State (when these are available, they are often inaccurate -they rely on self-reports from families). They are exceedingly difficult to obtain and most often require researchers to enter into a contract with the state. The data must be longitudinal to establish a pattern from before and after the school of choice existed. <i>NCES does not house these data.</i>
School-level data	Identify racial demographics of each school	State level data only; it is self-reported through districts and dependent on how states collect and report to the feds. Wildly variable. See this for how race is reported. https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/publications/96092/index.asp?sectionid=3 NCES may have this by district, not school, and it is based on <i>may</i> have these—not easy to access.
Census data on population estimate	Identify demographics of a community before/after the school of choice was available	US Census—this is referred to as Core-Based Statistical Data (CBSD) by the Census. (These data would be subject to their own analysis before being included in a comparison analysis because they don't take into account that school attendance is zoned. In the south in particular and in parts of the mid-west and west, districts once zoned to segregate are still largely in place and largely segregated.)

If the data above were available and collected they would have to be “cleansed” in numerous ways to ensure that they actually capture the number of students and the backgrounds of students who left districts for charters. From there, a very sophisticated regression analysis would allow for the best demographic comparison between charters and the larger community in which they are located. It is important to remember that this isn't just about a simple comparison between the demographics of one type of school and the demographics of another. This is where the majority of studies get it wrong because our district schools are already segregated through zoning laws (see above). This is the only kind of study that allows us to assess whether individuals (whether black or white) use a school of choice to “flee” people of different backgrounds. ***It cannot be performed without student-level data, which would not be readily available through NCES and rarely even available in the same manner across states or districts.***