

Texas Charter School Program High-Quality Replication Grant

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Principal Author:
Benjamin Feit, J.D.

Study Team Members:
James Christensen, Ed.D.
Deborah Conaway
Jeff Edmison
Geraldine Harge, Ed.D.

Scott Reynolds
Lee J. Rutledge
Eduardo Soto

Contributing Authors:
Guodong Liang, Ph.D.
Zhaogang Qiao, Ph.D.

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Executive Summary

Background

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) received a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education through its Charter School Program (CSP) State Entities competition in 2017. TEA used this CSP funding to administer a subgrant program designed to facilitate the replication of high-quality charter schools. The purpose of Texas's Charter School Program High-Quality Replication (CSPHQR) grant is threefold: (1) to provide financial assistance for the planning, program design, and initial implementation of newly replicated, high-quality charter schools; (2) to evaluate the effects of such schools, including the effects on students, student achievement, staff, and parents; and (3) to expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to students.

To be eligible for a CSPHQR grant, an open-enrollment charter school must apply for the grant on behalf of a proposed campus that has been designated as a "high-

- Content and thematic analyses of responses to open-ended survey prompts and to interview and focus group questions; and
- A quasi-experimental analysis of student academic outcomes using a propensity score matching (PSM) methodology.

As a general rule, the non-CSPHQR-grantee campuses associated with the high-quality, open-enrollment charter schools that received CSPHQR funding were utilized as the comparison sets for grant-funded replication campuses. This methodological approach is designed to provide TEA with preliminary information regarding whether the newly opened campuses are maintaining the quality level of those that preceded them and whether grant-funde-24.4 (et)-7

Supporting Replication Campuses

The local education agencies (LEAs) examined in this evaluation report have taken divergent approaches regarding the extent to which they allow replication campuses to exercise autonomy over their instructional programs.⁶ Whereas some campuses indicated that they have autonomy to make instructional decisions they believe to be in the best interests of their students, others were expected to adhere more strictly to the curricular and assessment systems used at other campuses with which they share a high-quality model. Eighty percent of central office personnel, 79% of teachers, and 73% of campus administrators agreed or strongly agreed that replication campuses received the instructional support they needed to educate students effectively.

In addition to instructional support, LEAs also attempted to facilitate implementation of their high-quality models on replication campuses by furnishing key operational, financial, and technological supports. Central office administrators were more likely than campus administrators to agree that replication campuses received adequate financial and technological supports. This perceptual disconnect dramatizes the challenges that central offices face when attempting to support growing networks of campuses. Additionally, observational data revealed grantees to have encountered challenges when attempting to replicate key facilities-related features of their models.

Effective implementation of a replication model hinges on campus-based personnel communicating effectively with the central office teams at their respective LEAs. Eighty-three percent of both campus administrators and campus non-instructional personnel agreed or strongly agreed

Initial Impact

Preliminary findings i

replication and establish strong relationships with parents, their central offices, and TEA. Prioritizing parent communication created the foundation upon which campuses were able to co-construct distance-

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