

THE EFFECTS OF A PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL ON THE ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT, DISCIPLINE, AND ATTITUDES OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

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By
Roland H. Davis
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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by
Roland H. Davis

Dr. John Borba
Professor of School Administration

Date

Dr. Granger Dinwiddie
Professor of Education

Date

Dr. Daryl Camp
Superintendent of Riverbank Unified School District

Date

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank God who has guided me throughout this journey. I dedicate this dissertation to my mom because she inspired me to pursue the field of education. I watched her passion and dedication to helping her students achieve success. I also dedicate this dissertation to my wife who is my rock. Thank you and I love you Jacalyn for continually encouraging, pushing and sometimes even demanding me to keep going when I thought I would never finish. Also I want to thank my children, Zaire and Roland Jr. You two have been patient and understanding when I had to miss your activities or I could not spend time with you because I was studying. Thank you for being great kids who continue to motivate dad (the old man) to finish what he started.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of public charter high schools by comparing state assessment data, discipline records, and survey responses of African American students who attend a public charter high school with African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The study used scores from the 2012-2013 California Standards Test (CST) in English language arts and mathematics. A t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a difference in mean scores in English language arts and mathematics between ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high and ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. Also, a t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a difference in mean suspensions and expulsions between the two groups. Randomly selected 12th grade African American students from both groups participated in a survey to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of the schools they attend. The survey responses were analyzed using a Chi Square test for independence. The results showed that students in the charter school performed better on the state assessment than the traditional school students. Also, charter school students were suspended at a higher rate than traditional school students. The perceptions of both charter and public school students were similar among a majority of the survey statements regarding the effectiveness of their respective schools. However, charter school students ranked their schools effort to establish high expectations and preparation for college significantly higher than traditional school students.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Presented in five chapters, this dissertation explores this researcher's goal of examining the efficacy of charter schools in California, and more specifically, whether charter schools can effectively mitigate the achievement gap for young African American students. This researcher collected and examined data describing two groups of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade African American students attending a public traditional comprehensive high school or a public charter high school. Qualitative data were gathered through California Standards Test (CST) scores in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics from the 2012/2013 academic year, through discipline records from the same year, and surveys that explored student perceptions and opinions of their schools. Using a multiphase design plan, this researcher conducted independent sample t-tests to determine whether significant differences between the two groups existed in terms of academic achievement and discipline, followed by Chi Square analyses to examine the distributions of survey responses to questions about school effectiveness.

This first chapter will provide justification for the necessity of this study by examining the historical context of African American educational opportunities following with a description of one specific attempt to address issues in modern public school education, the charter school. The chapter also presents research questions, hypotheses, and operational definitions and finishes with a discussion of the significance of this study. The second chapter will examine the current research literature focused on the evolution of the charter school, describe various charter

school models, and provide demographic and assessment information. The third chapter will outline the research methodology and data analysis procedures. The fourth chapter will discuss the results of this study and the fifth and final chapter will provide critical reflections and conclusions. The following section will provide a historical overview of education in the United States for African Americans.

Inequalities in Educational Opportunity

The United States has struggled with its responsibility to educate African Americans (Anderson, 2005; Carter, 2003; Green, 2001; & Haycock, 2001). During the three decades before the Civil War, most Northern States provided some sort of public education for the children of slaves or former slaves though the schools were segregated and taught by African American teachers. The Southern States did not provide any formal education to African American children as White Southerners believed that educated slaves would revolt against the slavery system. In a few instances, slaves were taught on the plantation and by the end of the Civil War about 5% of the slave population was literate (Altman, 1997). After the Civil War, Congress enacted the Bureau for Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Land.

The Freedmen's Bureau, as it was known, supervised the relief and educational activities of newly freed slaves in Confederate States, states that bordered the Confederate States, Indian territories, and Washington, D.C. (Freedmen's Bureau, 2012). Altman (1997) wrote that during a five year period, the Freedmen's Bureau spent \$5,000,000 building 4,329 schools and hiring 10,000 teachers. Over 247,333 African Americans were served by these schools. Also, the passage of the Reconstruction Act of 1867 ensured tax funded public schools for all Americans.

Unfortunately, the system created two types of public schools, those for Whites and those for African Americans.

In 1896, the Fourteenth Amendment was challenged in American courts in the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. In 1890, the Louisiana legislature adopted a law requiring railroads to have “separate but equal” accommodations for African American and White passengers (Klarman, 2006). An African American passenger from New Orleans, Homer Plessy, defied this law by sitting in the White section of the train. Plessy was arrested in New Orleans for this act. The United States Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Louisiana legislature by stating that the Thirteenth and Fourteenth amendments were not violated because although the two races were separate, both were treated equally (Klarman, 2006).

The outcome of this case led to the beginning of the Jim Crow era, in which African Americans and Whites were separated on the basis of their race. In 1899, the “separate but equal” practice was put to a test with the U.S. Supreme Court case *Cummings v. the Board of Education of Richmond County*. In Richmond County, Georgia, a high school had allowed the admission of only White students while the county claimed that it could not afford another school for African American students. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Richmond County (The History of the Supreme Court, 2012). Justice for African Americans would not be obtained for another 55 years.

In 1946, Herman Sweat sought admission to the University of Texas Law School but he was denied because of his race. Sweat filed a suit challenging the University of Texas for establishing a law school at Texas State University for

African Americans instead of enrolling African Americans at the University of Texas. Sweat did not apply but rather tried to re-enroll at the University of Texas Law School. He was denied and the Texas Appellate Court ruled in favor of the University. In 1950, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the *Sweat v. Painter* case that Texas did not provide Sweat with an opportunity to study law that was consistent with the White students who sought admission to the University of Texas Law School (LawHigherEducation.com, 2012).

McLaurin v. the University of Oklahoma was a similar case that was decided the same year. George McLaurin was a student with a master's degree who applied for a doctoral program in education at the University of Oklahoma. The University of Oklahoma denied McLaurin's admission because of Oklahoma law, which made it a misdemeanor to operate, teach, or attend a school at which both African American and White students were enrolled. McLaurin sued and the case went to the district court, which ruled in favor of McLaurin. African Americans were permitted admission to institutions of higher education that enrolled White students. McLaurin was admitted to the doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma. McLaurin's enrollment was on a segregated basis; he was not to come into contact with White students. In addition, McLaurin ate his lunch at a separate facility, took classes in adjoining rooms rather than in the classroom and he sat in a designated seat in the library. The case went to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled that the conditions McLaurin endured at the University of Oklahoma deprived him of his personal and present rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment (Gooden, 2004).

On May 17, 1954, in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the United States Supreme Court voted unanimously against the “separate but equal” doctrine. Oliver Brown was refused when he tried to enroll his third grade daughter, Linda, in a neighborhood school that consisted of all white students. Instead, Mr. Brown was told that he had to enroll Linda in an all Black school that was a mile away from their home. Mr. Brown took the case to the United States Supreme Court with the help of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation created unequal educational opportunity among the races and deprived African American students of equal protection under the law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution (Gooden, 2008). In 1955, the Supreme Court followed up with a decision in *Brown II* that segregation was unconstitutional and instructed school authorities to “...admit students on racially nondiscriminatory basis with all deliberate speed.” The decision gave federal district courts the authority to monitor and eliminate segregation in public schools (Stephen, 1980).

However, African American students continued to experience segregation in public schools while school boards reluctantly made plans that complied with the *Brown* decision (cited by Gooden, 2008). An example of resistance to integration occurred when nine African American students enrolled in Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. On September 4, 1957, the students attempted to enroll but were blocked by the National Guard on the order of the Governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus. Governor Faubus was prohibited from using the National Guard to withhold African American students from attending a public school. Three weeks after school

began, the students again tried to attend school; however a large White mob formed outside of the school and began to threaten the students. Local police were called to escort the African American students into the school for their protection (Beals, 1994; as cited by Gooden, 2008). President Eisenhower sent federal troops to Arkansas to stop the violence directed towards the nine African American students. On November 27, 1957, the federal troops replaced the National Guard for the remainder of the year. On February 20, 1958, the school board postponed desegregation due to public hostility. The board proposed that the African American students return to segregated schools. African American parents sued under violation of the Brown Act. In 1958, the case, *Aaron v. Cooper*, was heard by the United States District Court for Eastern District of Arkansas. The district court granted the request to postpone the desegregation of the school. That same year, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit Appellate Court reversed the district court's decision (Gooden, 2004). In 1958, the United States Supreme Court upheld the rule of law, stating that resistance and community violence does not justify delays in desegregation (Civilrights.org, 2012).

The pace of desegregation accelerated in the 1960s because of civil rights activists and the decisions of the United States Supreme Court. The NAACP assisted African American parents in suing school districts that failed to desegregate. The Freedom Riders protested segregation in schools and local businesses by having sit ins. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. protested the inequalities of African Americans through rallies, speeches, and marches in various cities. In 1964, the United States Congress passed the Civil Rights Act which prohibited discrimination in employment

due to race, color, religion, national origin, or sex (Milestonedocumnets.com, 2012). In 1966, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) threatened to withhold federal educational funds to states that continued to segregate (Klarman, 2006). The percent of African Americans in desegregated schools went from 1.18% in 1964 to 90% in 1973 (Karman, 2007).

In 1971, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* addressed the hot issue of the busing of African American and White students to desegregate schools in urban areas. The case involved the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina where African Americans made up of 29% of the student body. Fourteen thousand of the 24,000 African American students in this district attended schools that were completely segregated. The Court adopted a desegregation plan that involved the busing of 13,300 students (lawbrain.com, 2012). The ruling gave guidance to school districts that involved faculty reassignments, redrawing school attendance zones and the public transfer of funds to minority students. As a result of the ruling, school districts throughout the United States used busing for the purpose of desegregation in the 1970s (lawbrain.com, 2012).

In 1974, the United States Supreme Court in *Millikin v. Bradley* halted a plan for busing in Detroit and the surrounding areas. Busing within the city limits of Detroit was not conducive since 75% to 90% of the student population was African American at this time. The feasible solution was to bus students in the surrounding communities of Detroit (lawbrain.com 2012). U.S. District Judge Stephen Roth agreed and developed an integration plan that mandated 54 school districts in metropolitan Detroit to begin busing White students into the city (Aisner, 2011).

Freeman v. Pitts (1992), which covered the schools of DeKalb County, Georgia, focused on the phasing out of court supervised desegregation programs. In the case of Freeman v. Pitts, the Court determined three factors to end court supervision of desegregation: (1) whether the school system adhered to the desegregation decree's provisions, (2) whether the judicial system was necessary to achieve compliance, and (3) whether the school district demonstrated good faith to follow the desegregation decree (lawbrain.com, 2012). The Freeman case established that courts would gradually end desegregation, returning function and decision to local authorities (lawbrain.com, 2012).

By 2003, most school districts had been released from federal court supervision. School districts had abandoned busing to achieve desegregation. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District dropped busing in 1999 after the federal judge ended supervision. In 2004-2005, 52% of African American students and 58% of Hispanic students attended schools where 75% or more of the students were minorities. Nine percent of African American students and 8% of Hispanic students attended schools where 25% of the students were minorities (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

These landmark court cases highlight a history of marginalization that has led to achievement gaps along lines of ethnicity and socioeconomic status. While current legislation appears to favor the prospect of reform for public education, economic circumstances often cause obstacles that require creative solutions to complex problems. One such potential solution is the charter school which attempts to offer specialized programs for potentially at-risk students.

The Rise of the Charter School

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. Its intent was to improve the achievement of low-performing, economically disadvantaged students. Over the years, the ESEA has been reauthorized several times. The most recent reauthorization was the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) which mandated state academic content standards in reading and mathematics from 3rd grade through high school graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The goal of NCLB was that 100% of public school students would be proficient in the academic content standards of English language arts and mathematics by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. The cornerstone of the NCLB, the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), represents the annual academic performance targets established by each state. NCLB mandated annual increases in AYP targets in the hopes that all students would be proficient in English language arts and mathematics by the end of 2013-2014 (Gardiner, Canfield Davis & Anderson, 2009). Each year, the AYP targets were set for districts, schools and their significant subgroups (defined by socioeconomic status, English proficiency, ability and ethnicity).

Districts and schools that receive Title I funds have been held accountable for meeting annual AYP targets. Title I districts and schools were placed in program improvement if AYP targets were not met for two consecutive years. These districts and schools were required to inform parents of their program improvement status and inform them that their children could attend non-improvement schools if space was

available. In year two of program improvement, schools provided tutoring services. In year three, outside reviewers made visitations to observe and interview school personnel and parents and make recommendations for academic improvement. In year four, a restructuring plan was developed. In year five, the plan was implemented (California Department of Education, 2011).

One of the goals of NCLB was to close the achievement gap between underrepresented students and their White counterparts. The reauthorization of the ESEA under NCLB attempted to hold schools and districts accountable for the progress of minority students (Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, & Anderson, 2009). However, schools were not on track to meet the national goal of 100% proficiency in 2013-2014. According to the Center on Educational Policy (2011), half or more of the public schools in 24 states and the District of Columbia did not make AYP in 2011. This is an increase from 12 states in 2010. One example of the “achievement gap” is the disparity in academic performance among African American and Hispanic students as compared to White students. Carter, Hawkins and Natesan revealed the achievement gap as evident in grades, test scores, and graduation and dropout rates. African American and Hispanic students are at the lower end of the performance scale when compared to their White peers (as cited by Banks, 2004).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) examined and compared standardized test scores in reading and mathematics of African American and White students in fourth and eighth grade from 1978 to 2007 in four year intervals. Their results indicated that although African Americans experienced the same amount of progress as White students in reading and mathematics, the achievement gap still

exists. The achievement gap has decreased in mathematics for fourth grade students, declining from 31 points in 1978 to 26 points in 2007. The same trend happened with eighth grade students in mathematics as the achievement gap declined from 41 points in 1978 to 31 points in 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

In February 2009, President Obama signed into Law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This law supported innovation to improve academic achievement, providing \$4.35 billion for competitive grants designed to encourage and reward states to create conditions for reform. States were encouraged to tackle the problem of closing the achievement gap (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The competitive grant led to Race to the Top which consists of the following four elements that are necessary for closing the achievement gap:

- Adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy.
- Build data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction.
- Recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most.
- Turn around the lowest-achieving schools. (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 2)

The charter school movement may be one approach to closing the achievement gap. Charter schools are organized by a group of teachers, parents or community-based organizations (CDE.ca.gov, 2012).

Charter schools have more autonomy than traditional schools in selecting instructional materials, designing curriculum, and focusing on a theme. Charter schools are usually sponsored by an existing school district or county office of education. Goals and operating procedures are detailed in a program agreement between the sponsoring board and the charter organizers. Since charter schools are public and not private schools, they are prohibited from excluding students from admission on the basis of race, ability, or gender (CDE.ca.gov, 2012). Charter schools are independent and contract with the state or the local school district to provide education for students. Charter schools are exempt from many of the state regulations in exchange for strict accountability of results and contract implementation if approved by the State (U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2006).

Minnesota was the first state to pass a charter school law which allowed for the formation of student-centered public schools. The first was City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1992, California passed legislation that authorized the establishment of charter schools. The first California charter school opened in 1993 (California Education Code 47601). The California Charter School Association (2012) reported that California has the highest number of charter schools in the United States: a total of 982 that serve 412,000 students. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2012), there are approximately 5,600 charter schools in the United States that serve an estimated two million students. Charter schools have encountered some obstacles over the years and some have closed because of financial problems, accreditation issues, low enrollment, and low

academic performance. The curriculum of charter schools varies. There are site based schools, independent schools, and schools with themes that include art, technology, and online instruction. San Joaquin County in Central California houses 34 charter schools, eight of which are non-classroom independent schools; the other 26 schools are site based schools – six kindergarten through fifth grade schools, ten K-8th grade schools, seven K-12th grade schools, two middle schools (6-8), and nine high schools (9-12) (California Department of Education.gov, 2012).

Alternative schools were established to address the diverse needs of students that traditional schools may not address. The flexibility of charter schools allows educators to cater to the special needs of all significant subgroups of students including African Americans and more importantly, African American males. One example is the African American Male Achievement Initiative in Oakland. In 2010, Oakland Unified School District and the East Bay Community Foundation came together with the Urban Strategies Council and established the African American Male Achievement Initiative (AAMAI) to focus on the education of African American males. The seven goals of the AAMAI are aimed at reducing suspensions, the achievement gap, and incarceration rates while increasing graduation rates and literacy. AAMAI plans to achieve these goals by improving the education of African American males through higher quality instruction and the increased involvement of the Oakland community (urbanstrategies.org, 2015).

Problem Statement

The history of denial and discrimination in the educational system has created a national crisis for African Americans in which academic achievement is low and

school failure is disproportionately high (Achilles, Finn, & Gerber 2000). African American students are consistently outperformed by their White counterparts (Mickelson, 1990). According to the National Assessment of Education Progress, the average proficiency level of an African American twelfth grader is roughly the same as a White eighth grader (Roach, 2004).

In 2008, Jack O'Connell, the California Superintendent of Instruction, acknowledged the achievement gap in a press release. The release stated that 12 of every 20 White students in grades second through eleventh were proficient in English language arts according to the California Standards Test as compared with fewer than 6 of every 20 African American, Hispanic or economically disadvantaged students. The press release further stated that in 2006 nearly two thirds of the Asian American students and half of White students were proficient in mathematics. Only about 5 of every 20 African American students and 6 of every 20 Hispanic students met the same performance standard.

According to Kim & Sunderman (2005), national policy specifically aims to reduce, if not eliminate, racial disparities in academic performance through increased accountability of public schools through the No Child Left Behind Act and Race to the Top. NCLB's goal was to have every student proficient on state defined academic content standards by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. To reach that goal, every state developed assessments to measure student progress. States are required to disaggregate student achievement data in order to hold districts and schools accountable for reducing if not eliminating achievement gaps of significant subgroups of students (NCLB toolkit, 2004). The goal was to reduce or close the

“achievement gap between minority and non-minority students and between disadvantaged students and their more advantageous peers” (NCLB, 2001, sec. 100). This researcher has chosen to examine whether these objectives have been achieved by proposing a study that responds to the following Research Questions (RQs) and hypotheses (H):

- RQ1: What is the difference in academic achievement between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?
- H1_A: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between ninth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.
- H1_B: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between ninth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.
- H1_C: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between tenth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and tenth-

grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_D: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between tenth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and tenth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_E: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_F: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

RQ 2: What is the difference in discipline between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

H2_A: There is no significant difference in suspension rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African

American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H2_B: There is no significant difference in expulsion rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

RQ 3: What are the differences in perceptions and opinions regarding school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

H3_A: There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses regarding perceptions of school effectiveness between twelfth grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and twelfth grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

The first question and hypotheses will explore the topic of differences in academic achievement between charter schools and public schools. The second question will focus on differences in discipline between the two, and the third question will focus on student perceptions of the efficacy of charter schools and traditional schools.

Significance of the Study

African American students continue to experience difficulty benefiting from the traditional system of American education. The achievement gap between African American students and White students underscores emphasizes the problem. In order

for African American students to be more successful in American's public schools, they enroll in charter schools hoping for an educational environment that is more receptive to their cultural differences. This study compared the academic achievement of African American high school students who attend a public charter high school with the academic achievement of African American high school students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The study also sought to determine if African American high school students experience less discipline problems in a public charter high school as compared to a public traditional comprehensive high school. Finally, this study examined differences in perceptions regarding school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

The findings of the study may have an impact on the education of African American students. Charter school educators have more autonomy over curriculum and this enables them to address student needs in nontraditional ways. For example, there are charter high schools that focus on one or more of the following themes: performing arts, project-based learning, college preparation, career readiness, language immersion, cultural engagement, and on-line learning and independent learning. With the variety of approaches to charter schools, African American parents do not have to settle for the traditional public high school. The findings of this study may be useful to school districts that are considering charter high school models. The study may be relevant to charter school educators in determining if nontraditional

approaches to the American system of education benefit African American high school students.

Definitions

Achievement gap: The difference in academic performance and test scores between groups that significantly favor White students (Ed.gov, 2012).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB): A federal act that was designed to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards. Standards were set by each individual state. NCLB focused on reducing class and racial gaps in school performance by creating common expectations for all. NCLB required schools and districts to focus their attention on the academic achievement of traditionally underserved groups of children, such as low-income students, students with disabilities, and students of racial and ethnic subgroups (USlegal.com, 2011).

California Standards Test: A test that measured the degree to which students were mastering the academically rigorous content standards adopted by the California Board of Education. The test reported performance according to one of five levels for each student. These levels were Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic. The performance levels for each grade and subject were based on scale scores that ranged from 150 and 600 (CDE.ca.gov, 2012).

Ethnic group: A category that most closely reflects a person's recognition in the community. In 1998-99, the following racial and ethnic categories were modified to reflect the new federal standards and current use: American Indian or Alaska

Native; Asian; African American, Not of Hispanic Origin (formerly known as *Black, Not of Hispanic Origin*); Filipino; Hispanic or Latino; Pacific Islander; White, Not of Hispanic Origin; and Multiple or No Response (CDE.ca.gov., 2012).

Comprehensive high school: Any three to six-year secondary school serving students about 14–18 years of age. Four-year schools are by far the most common; their grade levels are designated freshman (9th grade), sophomore (10th grade), junior (11th grade), and senior (12th grade). Comprehensive high schools offer both general academic courses and specialized commercial, trade, and technical subjects. Most U.S. high schools are tuition-free and supported by state funds (merriam-webster.com, 2013).

Public charter school: An independent public school that is allowed freedom to be more innovative while being held accountable for improved student achievement. A partnership is fostered between parents, teachers and students to create an environment in which parents can be more involved. Teachers are given the freedom to innovate and students are provided the structure they need to learn (publiccharter.org, 2013).

Online education: Education that takes place over the Internet where the teacher and student are geographically separated. Students can receive personalized learning and instant feedback in a digital environment (ed-data.k12.ca.us, 2013).

Independent study: An individualized instructional plan based on specific needs. The student enters into an agreement (contract) with the district to complete specific assignments under the supervision of a teacher (ed-data.k12.ca.us, 2013).

Suspension: A restriction from attending school or any portion of a student's school program for a stated period of time. Short-term suspension lasts up to 10 consecutive school days. Long-term suspension lasts more than 10 consecutive school days (Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010).

Expulsion: A restriction from attending school or any portion of a student's school program (such as a single course) for an indefinite period of time. An expulsion is essentially permanent unless it is reversed or amended by a school official or the school board (Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2010).

Summary

In the first chapter of this dissertation, this researcher has provided a contextual background highlighting the history of discriminatory educational practices against people of color and has presented a point of view that is often overlooked in history books. This researcher identified the complex educational problem of African American students not receiving the same opportunities as those born into social positions affording more privileges. This gap in achievement and opportunity provided a catalyst for this study, as this researcher's objective was to determine whether charter schools are viable options for reducing the achievement gap between White and African American students. The next chapter will present a review of the current research literature. This will be followed by a discussion of the research design, the results of the study, and finally an analysis and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of public charter high schools on the achievement, discipline, and attitudes of African American students. The study focused on two groups of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade African American students. One group attended a public charter high school and the other group attended a public traditional comprehensive high school. This chapter covers the evolution of public charter schools in the United States. This includes Minnesota's efforts to establish the first US charter schools and California's aggressive approach to the expansion of charter schools. This chapter will also provide demographic information and discuss the performance of public charter schools as compared to traditional public schools.

Evolution of the Charter School Movement

The concept of the charter school was originated by New England educator Ray Budde. Budde advised school districts to establish charters that granted new authority in exploring, discovering and establishing new pathways to teaching and learning (Budde, 1988). Budde believed that the school board should use charters to identify and apply innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Today, a charter school is a public school which provides instruction in grades K-12. Specific goals and operating procedures for the charter school are detailed in an agreement (or "charter") between the sponsoring board, a local public school board, or county board of education and charter organizers (California Department of Education.org, 2013).

The charter school movement began in 1983 when American citizens were informed that public education was not performing up to American standards. In April 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented the report, *A Nation at Risk*. The Secretary of Education, Terence H. Bell, appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education to examine the quality of education in the United States. The report noted that the Commission was created as a result of Bell's concern about "the widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system" (p. 7). The findings were based on the input from teachers, administrators, parents, business leaders, public officials and scholars who testified at public hearings, multiple meetings, and panel discussions. Other sources were letters written by concerned teachers, administrators, parents, and a variety of commissioned papers by experts on educational issues (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Conclusions drawn from the research showed that "the declines in educational performance are in large part the result of the disturbing inadequacies in the way of the educational process itself is often conducted" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, p. 17). The report focused on indicators of the changing nature of education such as the risk of falling behind foreign companies in the workforce. Educators, students, and parents believed that students were not receiving a quality education that would prepare them for college or a career. The report recommended an increase in subject matter content, academic expectations, instructional time, and the employment of more effective teaching practices. The report raised American awareness of the decline in academic rigor when compared to

other nations and consequently discussions lead to calls for educational reform (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In March 1988, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), made a speech at the National Club in Washington, D.C. During the speech, Shanker referred to Ray Budde's *Education by Charter*. Shanker proposed a take on Budde's charter schools which was the idea of having teachers set up smaller, autonomous schools within a larger school. Shanker endorsed the charter school idea through speeches and multiple newspaper articles prior to the conference. This not only brought notoriety to Ray Budde's charter school concept but also encouraged AFT to accept charter schools. In 1988, the American Federation of Teachers endorsed the concept at the AFT conference (Nathan, 1996).

Education reform activists in Minnesota met after they attended the American Federation of Teachers conference in 1988. The activists were Barbara Zohn, President of the Minnesota Parent Teacher Student Association; Elaine Salinas, Educational Officer to the Urban Coalition in Minneapolis St. Paul; Ted Kolderie, Director of the Citizens League; and Joe Nathan, Coordinator of Improving Education with the National Governors' Association. The reform group wanted to pass a charter school bill in the Minnesota legislature. Ted Kolderie and other activists were able to bring a proposal to Senator Ember Reichgott, who was also an advocate for school change through charter schools. Senator Reichgott successfully navigated charter school legislation through the Minnesota State Senate in 1990 but it was rejected by the House of Representatives. The bill was modified and passed the following year.

In 1991, Minnesota was the first state to pass legislation that authorized the establishment of charter schools (Laws of Minnesota, 1991, chapter 265, article 9 section 3). The objectives of the legislation are presented in the following list:

1. Improve pupil learning and achievement;
2. Increase learning opportunities for pupils;
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
4. Measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes;
5. Establish new forms of accountability for schools; and
6. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

Minnesota Statue 124D.10 permitted eight new charter schools to begin operations and later the number increased to 40. Minnesota charter schools are exempt from the rules and regulations required of traditional public schools. In return for this flexibility, charter schools are subject to increased accountability by their sponsors. Each charter school must have a sponsor that is responsible for the authorization, monitoring, and evaluation of academic performance and budgeting (Evaluation Report Charter Schools, Office of the Legislature Auditor State of Minnesota, 2008). The sponsor may consist of one of the following: 1) School boards, intermediate boards, school district boards, or education districts; 2) Nonprofit organizations with an end of the year fund balance of \$2 million; and 3) Minnesota higher education institutions (Minnesota Statues 124D.10 sub. 3). These changes in Minnesota set the stage for others to follow.

California Charter Schools

In 1992, California State Senator Gary Hart introduced Senate Bill 1448 which would become the Charter School Act. This allowed the establishment of public charter schools in California. Local school boards were vested with the authority to approve charter school agreements. Hart's bill exempted charter schools from most state and local educational codes. Also, collective bargaining agreements and the certification of teachers were not required. The Hart bill allowed the conversion of traditional schools to charter schools and new start up schools. Other schools were newly created under the guidance of charter school legislation (Powers, 2009, p. 2).

Hart's Bill was supported by the California School Boards Association (CSBA) until it was passed in 1992. Later, the CSBA felt the charter school act gave more authority to the communities and reduced its influence on collective bargaining agreements (Hart & Burr, 1996). The California Teachers Association (CTA) opposed the bill because they wanted collective bargaining agreements explicitly protected by the state instead of it being determined by local charter school developers (Vergari, 2002). The bill was signed by Governor Pete Wilson and took effect January 1, 1993. California was the second state to enact charter school legislation. California Education Code Section 47601 states the following:

It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this part, to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

1. Improve pupil learning.
2. Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
4. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
5. Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
6. Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
7. Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools. (California Education Code 47601)

The charter laws in California are similar to those in Minnesota. Local California school districts, county school boards and the state board of education may authorize charter schools (calcharters.org, 2013). According to California's Legislative Analyst Office, the most common authorizer is the local district school board (lao.ca.gov, 2004). In 1998, amendments were provided to the California charter school law. One of the amendments allowed the appeal of an application denied by a school district to a county board of education or the California Board of

Education (Premack, 1999). Originally, charter schools were funded by the local districts. Under the 1998 amendments, charter schools were to be funded directly by the state with limited charges for oversight (Premack, 1999). California has a charter school revolving loan fund, which allows charter schools to receive loans for as much as \$250,000. These loans allow up to five years for repayment (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013). Low income areas are provided up to \$750 for each student from the Lease Aid Funding program. Under the charter school facilities program, the California State Allocations Board provides 50% of the funding for new construction of charter school facilities (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013).

California Charter Schools offer two general modes of instruction: classroom based and non-classroom based. Classroom based charter schools are facilities used principally for classroom instruction that require students to be in attendance at the school site at least 80% of the minimum instructional time as regulated by Education Code section 47612.5(a)(1) (Guarino, Zimmer, Krop, & Chau, 2005). A non-classroom based school, in contrast, is one in which more than 20% of instructional time is offered at a location different from the primary school site. Non-classroom based charter schools tend to rely on individualized, self-paced student learning plans. Non-classroom based instruction include independent study and home study (lao.ca.gov, 2004). According to the California Charter School Association, independent study students take the same courses as students in regular courses but the difference is that they do not attend classes daily with other students. The students are guided by a teacher, but work independently at their own pace (calcharters.org,

2013). Home study involves instruction provided by the parents who are supplied with the materials by the charter school and have limited interaction with the teachers who grade the work (Guariano, Zimmer, Krop, & Chau, 2005). According to Huerta and Gonzalez (2004), Alaska and California are the only states that have charter school laws that permit home study. Because the rise of the charter school introduces a unique moment in the history of education, it is worthwhile to examine the ways in which charter schools have affected the demographics of public education.

Charter School Demographics

One advantage of the charter school system is the variety of educational options for parents and students. Some schools are influenced by a mission, civic responsibility, and community service. Other schools focus on an instructional philosophy such as Montessori Education, Project Based Learning, and the Core Knowledge Curriculum. In 2006, 52% of the students who attended charter schools in Minnesota were minorities as compared to 22% in traditional schools. Most of the charter school enrollments are small. In 2006-2007, only one third of the charter schools had populations of more than 200 students (Evaluation Report Charter Schools, Office of the Legislature Auditor State of Minnesota, 2008). A report in 2011 from the Center of School Change in Minnesota showed that statewide K-12 public charter school enrollment had grown by almost 19,000 students from the 2001-2002 academic year to 2011-2012. The study also showed that in 2011-12, as in every year for the last decade, more than half of the students in Minnesota charter schools have been students of color. Once again, the percentage of students of color in district public schools had increased (from 17.79% to 26.24%). Nevertheless, K-12 public

charter school enrollment was at 51.06% in 2011-12 for students of color (Center for School Change, 2012). Table 1 shows the percentage of African American and White students who have attended Minnesota's charter schools since 2000. In Table 1, Minnesota's charter schools and traditional schools have experienced the same enrollment trends of African American students as California's charter schools and traditional schools. In Minnesota, African American students showed a decline in enrollment in charter schools from 2000 to 2013. However, the enrollment of African American students in charter schools was more than twice the percentage of the enrollment of African American students in traditional schools.

Table 1

Minnesota's Enrollment of African American and White Students in Charter/Traditional Schools, 2000-2013

Year	Charter students		Traditional students	
	African American (%)	White (%)	African American (%)	White (%)
2000	31	50	6	84
2001	23	52	6	83
2002	27	48	7	82
2003	28	49	7	82
2004	30	48	8	80
2005	30	48	8	80
2006	30	48	8	79
2007	29	48	9	78
2008	30	46	9	78
2009	28	49	9	77
2010	26	50	9	76
2011	27	49	8	75
2012	27	49	9	75
2013	27	49	10	75

Note. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2012

Since charter schools were implemented in 1991, enrollment in them has grown in forty-two states and African American parents are enrolling their children into charter schools in California and across the nation at a higher rate. In California, there is a higher percentage of African American students enrolled in charter schools than in traditional schools. In California, White students also have a higher enrollment rate in charter schools than in traditional schools, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

California's Enrollment of African American and White Students in Charter/Traditional Schools, 2000-2013

Year	Charter students		Traditional students	
	African American (%)	White (%)	African American (%)	White (%)
2000	18	41	8	37
2001	17	41	8	36
2002	16	40	8	35
2003	15	40	8	34
2004	11	41	8	32
2005	12	41	8	31
2006	12	39	7	30
2007	12	37	7	29
2008	12	36	7	28
2009	12	35	7	28
2010	11	33	7	27
2011	11	33	6	26
2012	10	32	6	29
2013	10	32	6	25

Note. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2012

According to the California Charter School Association (calcharters.org, 2013), African Americans are enrolled at higher rates in public charter schools than public traditional schools at all grade levels and in some cases at close to twice the

rate. Table 3 shows that in California the number of African American students enrolled in charter schools has decreased from 18 % in 2000 to 10 % in 2013. In the United States, African American student enrollment in charter schools was similar. The enrollment decreased from 2000 to 2010. However, the percentage increased in 2011. Even though African American charter school enrollment has dropped in both the United States and more specifically in California, African American students have a higher enrollment in charter schools than in traditional schools.

Table 3

Percentage of African American and White students in California and the United States Who Attend Charter Schools and Traditional Schools

	CA charter schools		CA traditional schools		US charter schools		US traditional schools	
	AA	White	AA	White	AA	White	AA	White
2000	18	40	8	37	32	41	17	60
2001	17	41	8	36	32	41	17	60
2002	16	40	8	35	32	41	17	59
2003	15	40	8	34	33	41	17	58
2004	11	41	8	32	32	41	17	57
2005	12	41	8	31	30	41	16	56
2006	12	39	7	30	32	40	17	57
2007	12	37	7	29	31	39	17	56
2008	12	36	7	29	31	38	17	56
2009	12	35	7	28	31	37	16	55
2010	11	33	7	27	30	37	16	54
2011	11	33	6	26	36	36	16	53
2012	10	33	6	26	—	—	—	—
2013	10	32	6	25	—	—	—	—

Note. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2012

Performance of Students in Charter Schools

In 2009, the Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) studied third through eighth grade students from Indiana between the years of 2004 to 2008 in order to determine if students in charter schools academically outperformed students in traditional schools. The study compared the achievement of African American students in charter schools and the achievement of African American students in traditional schools. The study also compared African American student achievement with White students in charter and traditional schools. The researchers matched records of the following data: grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, free and reduced price lunch, English language learners, special education, and prior test scores through a research design called Virtual Control Record. A longitudinal comparison was determined to test whether students who attended public charter schools fare better than students who attended public traditional schools.

The research showed that the achievement gap is narrowing between African American students and White students in both mathematics and reading ($p \leq .01$). However, traditional schools are closing the achievement gap at a quicker pace between White and African American students as compared to charter schools. This is true in both mathematics and reading. In mathematics, the achievement gap between African American traditional school students and White traditional school students is lower than African American charter school students and White charter school students .16 ($p \leq .01$). In reading, the achievement gap between African American traditional school students and White traditional school students is lower

than African American charter school students and White charter school students .15 ($p \leq .01$).

In 2013, the Center for Research in Education Outcomes studied charter schools in 27 states to evaluate student performance. The aim of the study was to find answers to the following questions: How well do African American students in charter schools progress academically as compared to their traditional public school counterparts? Also, how well do impoverished African American charter school students compare to African American charter school students who do not live in poverty? The data collected for this study consisted of student demographics, school enrollment, and test scores in reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. From each two-year combination of student data, the researchers were able to calculate a measure of academic growth (defined as the change in each student's score from one school year to the next). The collection of the data began in 2005; the researchers were able to gather growth data from the 2006-07 school year through the 2010-2011 school year.

The results showed a positive significant difference in learning gains that favor African American students who attend charter schools as compared to African American students who attend traditional schools in reading ($p \leq .01$) and in mathematics ($p \leq .05$). There is a positive significant difference in learning gains in English language arts and mathematics ($p \leq .01$) in favor of African American students in poverty who attend charter schools as compared to African American students in poverty who attend traditional schools. There is no significant difference in learning gains in English language arts and mathematics between African

American students who do not live in poverty and attend charter schools as compared to African American students who do not live in poverty and attend traditional schools (Center for Research in Education Outcomes, 2013).

Bifulco and Ladd (2006) examined the student achievement of African American charter school students in North Carolina. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study involving a cohort of third-grade students in North Carolina starting in 1996 and following them through eighth grade. The study examined the End-of-Grade (EOG) reading and mathematics tests. The EOG reading and mathematics tests are multiple-choice and measure the mastery of competencies delineated in the North Carolina's *Standard Course of Study*. The tests are administered in the spring of each year to students in grades 3-8. In the study, 5,754 charter school students who were previously enrolled in traditional schools participated. Their test scores were compared to determine if differences existed between traditional schools and charter schools. For purposes of comparison, the study estimated three basic models: a "levels" model, a "gains" model, and a "fixed effects" model, with the latter generating the preferred estimates. Individual results are reported as developmental scale scores, which are designed to measure growth in reading and mathematics, and thus are expected to increase as students move from lower grades to higher grades. In order to ensure comparability of test scores and test score gains for students in different grades, the study utilized grade-by-year-specific averages and standard deviations to convert the developmental scale scores to standard scores with means of zero and standard deviations of one.

Both White and African American students in traditional schools scored higher than White and African American students in charter schools. However, the results showed there was a significant difference in improvement for students who attend charter schools as compared to students who attend traditional schools. In reading, the difference was .062 ($p \leq .01$) and in mathematics it was .076 ($p \leq .01$). The achievement gap in reading between African American and White students who attend charter schools was .019 ($p \leq .01$) In mathematics, the achievement gap between charter school attending African American and White students was .029. $p \leq .01$ (Bifulco and Ladd, 2006).

In 2008, the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) conducted a study to examine the achievement of African American charter school students in five California school districts with high needs (Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland, Fresno and San Bernardino City Unified). They completed a close examination of school performance in Oakland. The Oakland Unified School District, a high-needs urban school district, had the highest enrollment of charter school students at 17%. The CCSA used school level data from the 2007-2008 academic school year to compare the performance of traditional school students to charter school students. The study focused on median 2008 API growth scores as well as schools' AYP scores. The study also identified longitudinal trends since 2005.

The researchers accessed and analyzed the state's Accountability Progress Report (APR) achievement data downloaded from the California Department of Education's (CDE) website. Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine charter school performance across grade levels, subgroups, and districts. The results showed

that across charter schools, API growth scores for African American students were higher than those of traditional schools; the highest differences were in Oakland (77 points higher) and Los Angeles (62 points higher). When median API growth scores for the three years of 2005-2008 were considered, African American charter school students scored higher (687, 678, 690) than African American traditional school students (647, 655, 670). African American charter school students scored higher than their African American traditional school counterparts in the three years except for San Diego in the years 2006 and 2007. The Los Angeles African American charter school median API (728, 718, 714) was higher than the Los Angeles African American traditional school median API (632, 644, 652).

The San Diego African American charter school median API (684, 673, 686) was similar to the San Diego African American traditional school median API (684, 676, 685). In 2006, San Diego's African American traditional and charter school students earned similar median API scores. In 2007, San Diego's African American traditional school students scored higher than their charter school counterparts. The Oakland African American charter school median API (635, 676, 706) was higher than the San Diego African American traditional school median API (617, 620, 629) (California Charter Schools Association, 2008).

Abdulkadiroglu et al. (2009) compared student academic performance in Boston middle and high school public charter schools and pilot schools to public traditional schools. The data were provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education from the 2001-2002 school year through the 2006-2007 school year. The study used the outcome scores of the Massachusetts

Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) during the elementary grades (3, 4); middle school grades (6, 7, and 8); and high school grade 10. The study showed the differences in average MCAS test scores for charter, pilot, and traditional schools. Raw MCAS test scores were standardized by grade, subject, and year to have a mean of zero and standard deviation of one.

In third and fourth grade, English language arts (ELA) scores of charter school students were .558 points higher than traditional school students. In pilot schools, third and fourth-grade students scored .23 points higher than traditional school students. At the middle school level, the ELA score for sixth-grade charter school students was .231 points higher than the sixth-grade traditional school students; seventh-grade charter school students scored .52 points higher and eighth grade charter school students, .622 points higher. In mathematics, test scores were the same for charter pilot and traditional school students; however, traditional middle school students scored .265 points higher than pilot middle school students. High school English language arts charter school students scored .629 points higher than traditional school students and pilot school students scored .463 points higher than traditional school students. The results are the same in mathematics. Elementary charter school students scored .256 and elementary pilot school students scored .307 points higher than traditional elementary school students. At the middle school level, charter school students scored 1.918 points higher than traditional school students. Again, traditional school students scored .255 points higher than charter school students. Charter school students scored .575 points higher than traditional school

students and pilot school students scored .359 points higher than traditional school students (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2009).

Hoxby, Murarka, and Kang (2009) conducted a lottery-based, multi-year study that involved 42 charter schools in New York City. Students in charter schools were either enrolled through lotteries or self-selection. The data were used from the New York City's Department of Education database, which included students who were enrolled in charter schools and traditional schools from the 2000-2001 school year to the 2004-2005 school year. All students from third-grade through eighth-grade take the New York State examinations in reading and mathematics each year. The essential strategy is a comparison of students who are lotteried-in and lotteried-out of charter schools using an instrumental variables regression, such as the Hotelling's T² test. The results showed that New York City's charter schools improved their third through eighth graders' mathematics scores by 0.09 points for every year they spent in school $p \leq 0.001$. New York City's charter schools raised their third through eighth graders' reading scores by 0.04 points for every year they spent in the school, $p \leq 0.02$. The study showed that for each year they spent in charter schools, the mathematics scores of students in charter schools rose from 3.75 to 3.98 points (depending on the grade) and their reading scores rose from 1.53 to 1.61 points (depending on the grade) (Hoxby & Murarka, 2009).

Greene, Forster, and Winters (2006) conducted a study to compare the achievement of students in untargeted charter schools with those in traditional public schools. Untargeted charter schools do not focus on a specific population of students nor do they subscribe to a particular theme or philosophy. The study involved

students in both types of schools from 11 states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas). These states were selected because each has a large number of charter schools. The author ran a regression analysis on academic growth for each state. The results of each of the states were combined to determine the overall effect of charter schools. The statistical tests were set at the $>.05$ and $.01$ levels of significance. The overall results of the study showed significance. Overall, charter schools are predictors of higher growth in reading as compared to traditional public schools. The results were significant at the $.05$ level. In California, where the SAT- 9 was used at the time, charter students showed higher growth in English language arts and mathematics. However, the results in both subjects were not significant. Nationally, students in untargeted charter schools score higher than traditional public school students, but the differences were moderate. Scores were not considerably higher from 2001 to 2002.

In 2008, a study was conducted by Minnesota's Office of the Legislature Auditor (OLA) to determine if students attending charter schools were performing as well as students in traditional schools. At that time, there were 143 charter schools in Minnesota and 3% of Minnesota's students attended charter schools. Since the implementation in 1991, charter schools in Minnesota have grown from one operating charter school in 1992 to 143 operating charter schools in 2008. The study analyzed the AYP of charter schools as compared to traditional schools. The AYP was based on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Series II (MCAS II). In mathematics, grades 3 through 8 and 11 were assessed. In reading, grades 3 through 8 and 10 were

assessed. The standardized scores were converted to the same scale with a statewide mean of 50 and standard deviation of 15. To determine whether the differences between the charter and traditional school students were statistically significant, they used a two-tailed t-test at the 95% confidence interval. The study showed a smaller percentage of charter schools met their AYP targets at 50% as compared to traditional schools at 66%.

Zimmerman et al. (2009) studied eight cities in the United States to answer the question: what effect do charter schools have on test-score gains for students who transfer between traditional public schools and charter schools? The researchers collected data statewide from three states and districtwide from five large urban school districts. The data were collected from San Diego, Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Ohio, and Texas, beginning in 1997 and ending in 2007. The study compared the achievement gains of students who attended charter schools and compared the same students when they attended traditional schools. The study examined students in kindergarten through eighth grade in reading and mathematics.

In Chicago, the charter schools had a .02 achievement gain in mathematics over traditional schools; however, traditional schools had a .04 achievement gain over charter schools in reading ($p \leq .01$). Denver charter schools had a .17 achievement gain in mathematics over traditional schools ($p \leq .01$). Denver charter schools also had a .04 achievement gain in reading over Denver traditional schools. There was no significant difference. In Milwaukee, charter schools had higher achievement gains both in mathematics and reading $p \leq .05$. In Philadelphia, traditional schools had higher achievement gains than charter schools in both in reading and mathematics at

.03, but neither were statistically significant. San Diego's charter schools had higher achievement gains in both mathematics at .02 and reading at .01 than traditional schools, but neither were statistically significant. Ohio's traditional schools had higher achievement gains both in mathematics at .18 and reading at .08 than traditional schools ($p \leq .01$). Texas experienced the same results as Ohio; Texas traditional schools had higher achievement gains in both mathematics at .12 and reading at .08 than charter schools $p \leq .01$ (Zimmerman et al., 2009).

In four of the seven districts, African American charter schools had higher achievement gains in mathematics and reading over African American traditional school students. In Chicago, African American charter school students showed a .02 higher achievement gain in mathematics than African American traditional school students, but not statistically significant. However, Chicago's African American traditional school students had a .04 higher achievement gain nationally in reading, although both were not statistically significant. Denver's African American charter school students had higher achievement gains both in mathematics (.13) and reading (.01) than African American traditional school students; however, the results were not significant. In Milwaukee, African American charter school students had .02 higher achievement gains in mathematics than African American traditional school students, not statistically significant, while African American charter school students scored evenly with African American traditional school students (Zimmerman et al., 2009).

Philadelphia's traditional African American students scored higher in both mathematics (.04) and reading (.01) than African American charter school students, although the differences were not statistically significant. Although not statistically

significant, African American charter school students in San Diego had higher achievement gains both in mathematics (.05) and in reading (.05) than African American traditional school students. In Ohio, also like in San Diego, African American charter school students had higher achievement gains in both mathematics (.06) and reading (.04) than African American traditional school students. Neither gains were statistically significant. In Texas, like in Philadelphia, African American traditional school students scored higher both in mathematics (.03) (not statistically significant) and in reading (.08) than African American charter school students ($p \leq .05$) (Zimmerman et al., 2009).

Clarkson and Johnstone (2011) conducted a case study that focused on an African American-centered charter school. The researchers compared the mathematics state test scores of African American students in third and fifth-grade who attended Marshall Elementary School (MES) with African American students throughout Minnesota from the years 2000 to 2005. The founders of the MES felt they would better serve African American students by implementing a philosophy focused on the African-centered seven principles of Kwanzaa. The curriculum attempts to present accurate portrayals of both Africans' past and their ongoing struggles and accomplishments. Cultural continuity is the goal of MES. In order to accomplish this goal, every new educator undergoes rites of passage ceremonies during orientation and experienced members serve as role models to the newer educators.

The research began when the new mathematics curriculum was introduced at the conclusion of one school year. Research extended over the course of the summer

in which educator development sessions occurred and through to the following school year when the new curriculum was implemented. For 18 months, the researchers were engaged in participant observations of curriculum trainings, monthly meetings, weekly grade level meetings, and classroom instruction. The researchers took notes and recorded interviews. They also reviewed assessments, homework, and daily assignments. Analysis of observation notes and interviews occurred every semester while the analysis of state test scores occurred at the end of the study. Collaborative decisions were made to focus on mathematics improvement. Administrators, teachers, and staff worked together to effectively achieve these goals. This approach proved to be empowering and encouraged commitment, participation, and shared accountability for student learning (Clarkson & Johnstone, 2011). Leadership plays a significant role in mathematics achievement at MES. Cultural leadership exemplifies the African-centered beliefs and values that are necessary to engage new initiatives in cultural learning (Clarkson & Johnstone, 2011).

The results of the study showed that the number of students who scored proficient on the state test increased after the 2002 professional development. In 2000, MES third-grade students scored 41% proficient and fifth-grade students scored 24% proficient in mathematics. In 2001, MES third-grade students scored 16% proficient and fifth-grade students scored 30% proficient in mathematics. In 2002, 43% of the third-grade students were proficient in mathematics and 44% of the fifth grade students were proficient in mathematics. In 2003, after a full year of engaged African-centered professional development, 85% of the third-grade students were proficient and 55% of the fifth-grade students were proficient in mathematics. In

2004 and 2005, the scores of third and fifth-grade students dropped in mathematics. Third-grade students were 64% proficient in 2004 and 59% proficient in 2005. Fifth-grade students were 44% proficient in 2004 and 63% proficient in 2005. Comparative scores in mathematics of MES African American students to African American students throughout Minnesota were higher in the three years observed. MES African American student scores were 57% proficient in 2006, 53% in 2007, and 61% in 2008 as compared to African American students throughout the state who were 50% proficient in 2006, 48% in 2007, and 52% in 2008.

Booker, Gill, Zimmerman, and Sass (2009) compared ACT test scores of charter school high school students to traditional school students in Chicago. The researchers used attainment analysis to determine whether charter high schools in Chicago have positive effects on reading and mathematics. The researchers followed five cohorts of students entering high school between 1998 until 2002. The results of the study showed that charter high school students had higher ACT scores in both categories as compared to traditional high school students. The mean reading ACT score of charter high school students was 16.5 compared to the mean ACT score of traditional high school students which was 15.6 ($p \leq .01$). The mean ACT score of charter high school students in mathematics was 16.8 as compared to the mean ACT score of traditional high school students which was 15.8 ($p \leq .01$).

Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, Dwoyer, and Silverberg (2010) conducted a study to determine the impact of charter middle schools on academic achievement. The researchers compared the achievement of charter school students who were selected by a lottery to those who were not selected by a lottery. The study consisted of 2,330

middle school students in 36 schools in 15 states. Achievement was based on the performance of students in reading and mathematics from the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. To make the test scores comparable across the different states, they were converted to effect sizes or z-scores for the analysis. The results of the study showed that on average, the charter schools were not significantly better than the traditional schools. In both reading and mathematics, students admitted to charter schools scored lower than those not admitted to charter schools. Lottery charter school students scored an average of .31 in reading and .33 in mathematics. Non-lottery students scored higher than lottery students in both subjects at .37 in reading and .39 in mathematics.

Almond (2012) examined the effects of charter schools on the academic achievement and enrollment trends of African American students. The study posed the following questions: Why are African American families choosing public charter schools? Are African American students performing better academically in charter schools as compared to African American students in traditional schools? What are the best practices of successful charter schools that serve large proportions of African American students? To answer these questions the performances of African American students on state and national tests were analyzed for six different states.

The study revealed that a larger percentage of the African American students attend charter schools than traditional public schools. During 2010-2011 school year, 16% of the African American students attended traditional schools as compared to 29% charter schools. The research indicated that African American parents choose charter schools because they want an alternative to traditional schools where the achievement

gap still exists. Charter schools have taken a “whatever need” approach in education to appeal to African American families. The research also showed that African American students attend charter schools composed of a larger percentage of their own racial makeup. According to Frankberg & Lee (2003), 70% of all charter schools have 90%-100% minority student populations. According to Almond (2012) the nationwide the data could not firmly state that African American charter students performed better academically than African American traditional students. Almond went onto state in states like California, Massachusetts and New York, African American charters students are making gains. However is states like North Carolina, African American charter students are not making gains (Almond, 2012).

May (2006) surveyed 260 urban parents who withdrew their children from public schools and enrolled them in charter schools in Ohio. The study attempted to answer the following questions: What reasons did parents and guardians provide for withdrawing their children from public schools and instead enrolling them in charter schools? What factors would most attract them back to the public schools? (p. 28). Two hundred and sixty Ohio elementary and junior high parents and guardians were surveyed and interviewed. Results of the survey were tabulated and reported as percentages.

The study revealed that 30.5% of the parents and guardians selected charter schools over traditional schools because of the overall quality of services. Also 41.5% of the parents and guardians selected charter schools due to academics. In addition, 30.9 % indicated a lack of one on one attention in traditional schools. The study also showed that 68.5% of the parents and guardians indicated they would return their

children to public schools if there was an improvement in discipline. Forty-seven percent of the parents and guardians indicated that they would return their children to public school if there was significant academic improvement. In the interviews, charter school parents continually referred to academic quality by using terminology such as “better education and high quality instruction.” However, when asked to describe what constitutes a “better education and high quality instruction,” parents referred to factors such as smaller classes, better teachers, teacher familiarity, sense of belonging, one-on-one attention, and supportive staff (p. 28).

The Braun Research Incorporated (2012) conducted a survey to evaluate Louisiana’s registered voter familiarity and views on K-12 education. The 802 participants who were randomly selected responded to 18 questions on education and 11 demographic questions. Randomly dialed telephone interviews were conducted in February 2012. Questions asked of the participants were: If you were able to select the type of school, which one would be the best for your child’s education: public schools, charter schools, home schools, private schools, or virtual schools? Are you in favor or opposed to charter schools? How would you rate Louisiana’s public schools? In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give to public schools, charter schools, or private schools?

The results of the study showed that the parents are more likely to give the highest grades to private schools and believed that private schools are the best educational option. Forty-nine percent of the parents overwhelmingly believe that private schools would give their child the best opportunity to be successful in school. Public schools were the second option at 31%, charter schools at 10%, home schools

at 8%, and virtual schools at 1%. Regarding schools in their area, 64% of the parents gave private schools an A or B, 34% an A or B for charter schools, and 34% an A or B for public schools. Although parents rated private schools as the best educational opportunity for their children in Louisiana, 61% overwhelmingly favored charter schools and 22% opposed charter schools.

McGee (2013) conducted a qualitative study on eleven high achieving African American males attending four urban charter schools in a Midwestern city. The purpose of the qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of African American male high school students who are high achievers and explore how risk and protective factors affected their schooling and life experiences. The researcher interviewed the participants and observed the students in their classrooms. They used narrative analysis procedures by using a semi-structured interview protocol and a structured debriefing protocol process to identify the participants' perceptions. The study took place during the spring and summer semesters. Recruitment for the study consisted of handing out flyers to students at the beginning of school or at the end of the school day. The flyers explained the purpose of the study. The criteria given for students who were able to participate in the study consisted of being a Black male charter school student, a junior or senior in high school, residence in an urban area and having a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in mathematics. All students who expressed interest in the study received parental consent forms. All of the students were audiotaped; ten of the eleven students were videotaped for the study.

The interview contained a two page demographics questionnaire that used the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems theory framework, which

presupposes that all humans are vulnerable and must deal with both risk factors and protections given the unavoidable interactions experienced in a variety of social environments. The interviews were conducted and professionally transcribed. An open coding system was used to analyze the participants' narrative responses. The students complained about the schools' lack of access to college credits, college-level courses, and challenging course content. Of the four high schools attended by the students in the study, only one offered AP classes. Although each student in the study intended to enroll in college, they had very limited knowledge of information related to college level academic preparation.

McLatchy-Tribue (2013) indicated that in Chicago more charter school students were expelled as compared to public school students. The 2009-2010 school year data were collected from U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The data showed that during the 2012-2013 school year, 307 (6%) of the charter school students were expelled (out of 50,000). In public schools, 182 (less than 1%) of the 353,000 students were expelled.

Cavanagh, Zubrzycki, & McNeil (2013) reported that expulsion rates at public charter schools and traditional public schools were the same at 1%. The suspension rates of traditional public schools were a little higher than public charter schools in the 2009-2010 school year. The data showed that the traditional public schools suspended students at a rate of 6% as compared to public charter schools at 4%. However, some individual urban districts differ from the national suspension rate. In San Diego, the 37 charter schools in the federal data set reported a suspension rate of 8% which is twice the 4% rate in San Diego's traditional public schools. In Newark,

the suspension rate was nearly 10% for public charter schools versus a rate of 3% for traditional public schools. In Washington, just three students in the District of Columbia's 45,000-student traditional public school system, or roughly one in 15,000 were expelled during the 2011-12 academic year. But in the city's 35,000-student charter system, 227 students, or one in every 139, were expelled.

Cavanagh, Zubrzycki, and McNeil (2013) reported how the laws that govern discipline at charters schools and at regular public schools vary by state and district, though some standards are universal, legal experts say. Paul O'Neill, a lawyer in New York City who has co-written a book on charter school law, says that most state laws exempt charter schools from district disciplinary policies, typically allowing them to devise their own standards with authorizer approval. But O'Neill noted that both districts and charter schools must also adhere to the federal disabilities law and case law which says schools must provide students with due process in disciplinary actions. Sarah Jane Forman, a law professor at the University of Detroit who runs a legal aid clinic that works with students who have been expelled, says that the fact that many charter schools set their own expulsion procedures means that it can be hard to run a neutral hearing and many parents do not know their children's rights. It is clear that not all students who leave charter schools return to regular public schools, but many do. Marielle Sainvilus, a spokeswoman for a school district in Chicago, reported that 1,999 students left charter schools as of January 2013, and 1,400 of them had returned to the 404,000-student regular public schools. In June 2013, the California court of appeal upheld a student dismissal and ruled that charter schools are exempt from California law requiring due process hearing procedures for

students undergoing an expulsion from local public school (*Scott B. v. Board of Trustees of Orange County High School of the Arts*, 2013). Dismissal from a charter school does not implicate these concerns to the same degree as expulsion. Unlike public schools, the charter school is a school of choice. No student is required to attend. When dismissed, the student is free to immediately enroll in another school without the loss of classroom time (*Scott B. v. Board of Trustees of Orange County High School of the Arts*, 2013).

Cavanagh, Zubrzycki, and McNeil (2013) described how charter school supporters counter that forcing the schools to give up their freedom to set individualized and tough disciplinary standards is a mistake. They say that many parents, particularly those in communities beset by violence and socioeconomic upheaval, choose charters because they offer safe havens that nearby regular public schools cannot. For years, critics have accused charter schools of screening out students who present disciplinary or academic challenges on the front end, or pushing or counseling them out later. They say that this process inflates the academic standing of charter schools.

Summary

This chapter presented a review of current literature that addresses the effects of public charter high schools on the academic achievement of African American students. This chapter began with the historical background of charter schools in America, most notably those programs from Minnesota and California. This researcher followed with a review of various demographic factors. Some study results favored charter school progress while others favored traditional schools, and yet

others established no statistically significant differences between the two across varying dimensions. Given the history of the charter school movement in America in combination with the mixed results of assessments and statistical analyses in numerous studies, this researcher recognizes a need to further examine African American student perceptions of the efficacy of charter schools. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology of this study.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of public charter high schools on the achievement, discipline, and attitudes of African American students. The study focused on two groups. One group was composed of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade African American students who attend a public charter high school, and the other group was composed of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The study examined California Standards Test (CST) scores in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics from the 2012-2013 school year and discipline records from the 2012-2013 school year. Also, a survey was administered to African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school to compare perceptions and opinions about their respective schools.

The research was guided by the following Research Questions:

RQ1: What is the difference in academic achievement between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

RQ 2: What is the difference in discipline between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

RQ 3: What are the differences in the perceptions and opinions of African American students who attend a public charter high school as compared to African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

The first question examines the differences in academic achievement between charter schools and public schools, the second question focuses on differences in discipline between the two, and the third question examines student perceptions.

Sample Population

The first research question involved comparing the academic achievement of African American students who attend a public charter high school with African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The two schools are located in a large urban area in California. The 2012-2013 California Standards Test (CST) scores in English language arts and mathematics were analyzed. As per district approval, each school provided the test scores of African American students.

The second research question involved the comparison of suspension and expulsion rates of African American students who attend a public charter high school with African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The two schools are located in a large urban area in California. As per district approval, each school provided discipline information on African American student suspensions and expulsions during the 2012-2013 school year. The same two schools that were used to answer research question 1 were used to answer question 2.

The third research question involved comparing the perceptions of school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The two schools are located in a large urban area in California. The same two schools that were used to answer research questions 1 and 2 were used to answer question 3. As per district approval, a group of students were selected from each school.

Data Collection

For research question 1, this researcher received data collection approval from the districts where the public charter high school and the public traditional comprehensive high school are located. Each students' CST ELA and CST mathematics scores for the 2012-2013 academic school year were collected from the charter school and the traditional school. The California Standards Test (CST) was state mandated and criterion referenced. The test adopted by the California Board of Education was used to evaluate student performance on academic content standards. The test reported performance at one of the five levels for each student (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic) based on scale scores that ranged between 250 and 600. A score of 350 was considered proficient (CDE.ca.gov, 2012). The charter and traditional high school data were collected by the respective district or site administrators and all students were given alternate identities to protect confidentiality. For each school, if all African American students at each grade level were not involved in the analyses, a random sampling process was used to select students.

For research question 2, this researcher received data collection approval from the district where the public charter high school and the public traditional comprehensive high school are located. For the 2012-2013 academic school year, the disciplinary information on the suspensions and expulsions of African American students were collected from the public charter high school and the public traditional comprehensive high school. The charter and traditional high school data were collected by the district or site administrators and all students were given alternate identifications to protect confidentiality. For each school, if all African American students at each grade level were not involved in the analyses, a random sampling process was used to select students to participate.

For research question 3, this researcher received approval to conduct a survey from the districts where the public charter high school and the public traditional comprehensive high school are located. The researcher met with the public charter school administrators to identify students by using either an electronic database or a hardcopy of each student's file. For each school, if all 12th grade African American students were not involved in the analyses, a random sampling process was used to select students to participate in the survey. The participants were asked to indicate their perceived level of school effectiveness regarding their attitudes, behaviors, and practices.

The following procedures were used for conducting the survey at each of the two types of schools. The survey for this study was administered in spring 2015. The following steps were taken:

- Step 1: Conducted a field test of the survey with three African American students who attend a public charter school and three African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school;
- Step 2: Used input from three school administrators, three teachers, and chair of this researchers' dissertation committee to make final revisions to the survey;
- Step 3: Established a randomly selected list of participants;
- Step 4: Conducted initial contact by meeting students;
- Step 5: Reviewed the purpose of the study and the informed parent consent form with students;
- Step 6: Responded to questions from potential participants regarding this study;
- Step 7: Sent informed parent consent letters home with students;
- Step 8: Conducted second contact by meeting students;
- Step 9: Distributed informed student consent letter to students;
- Step 10: Collected informed student consent letters from students;
- Step 11: Distributed surveys to students;
- Step 12: Collected surveys from students;
- Step 13: Reviewed surveys for completeness;
- Step 14: Tabulated data; and
- Step 15: Analyzed survey data using the Chi Square for Independence.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study consisted of test scores, disciplinary information, and student perception ratings. Data were entered in the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences, v. 20. The analyzes were conducted to answer the three research questions:

1. Determination of differences in mean CST scores in mathematics and English language arts between African American students who attend a public charter high school and students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school;
2. Determination of differences in suspension and expulsion rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school, and
3. Determination of differences in perceptions regarding school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

For research question 1, t-tests for independent samples were used to determine if there is a significant difference in mathematics and English language arts achievement on the CSTs between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school at each level for grades 9, 10, and 11. The mathematics

and English language arts mean scores for each the two groups were compared at the .05 level of significance.

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H1_A: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between ninth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional high school.

H1_B: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between ninth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_C: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between tenth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and tenth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_D: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between tenth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and tenth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_E: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H1_F: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

For research question 2, t-tests for independent samples were used to determine if there is a significant difference in suspensions (mean number of incidents) and expulsions (mean number of incidents) between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The suspensions and expulsion means were compared at the .05 level of significance. The following null hypotheses were tested:

H2_A: There is no significant difference in suspension rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

H2_B: There is no significant difference in expulsion rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African

American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

For question 3, the survey responses were analyzed using a Chi Square test for independence to determine that if there is a significant difference in the distribution of responses for each survey statement regarding school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. An alpha level of $p < .05$ was established for the statistical analysis. The following null hypothesis was tested:

H3_A: There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses regarding perceptions of school effectiveness between twelfth grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and twelfth grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

Summary

Chapter 3 presented and described the sample population, data collection and analysis. The results of the analyzes will be presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of public charter high schools on the achievement, discipline, and attitudes of African American students. The study focused on two groups. One group was composed of ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and the other group was composed of ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The study examined California Standards Test (CST) scores in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics from the 2012-2013 school year and discipline records from the 2012-2013 school year. Also, African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school were administered a survey to compare perceptions and opinions about their respective schools.

Research Questions

- RQ1: What is the difference in academic achievement between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?
- RQ 2: What is the difference in discipline between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

RQ 3: What are the differences in perceptions and opinions between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

Sample Population

The first research question involved the comparison of academic achievement between African American students who attend a public charter high school with African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The two schools are located in a large urban area in Northern California. The 2012-2013 California Standards Test (CST) scores in English language arts and mathematics were analyzed. As per district approval, each school provided the test scores of African American students.

The second research question involved comparing the faced by suspension and expulsion rates of African American students who attend a public charter high school with African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The two schools are located in a large urban area in Northern California. As per district approval, each school provided discipline information on the suspensions and expulsions of African American students during the 2012-2013 school year.

The third research question involved comparing perceptions regarding school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. A group of 100 students were randomly selected from each school to

participate in the study. The two schools are located in a large urban area in Northern California. The same two schools were used to address the three research questions of this study.

Pilot Study

Prior to data collection, this researcher field tested the survey instrument. The field testing involved six participants: three students who attend a public charter high school and three students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The students who completed the pilot survey did not participate in this study. The results of the pilot study required no changes to the survey documents.

Inferential Analysis of Test Data

In response to research question 1, t-tests for independent samples were used to determine if there is a significant difference in CST mathematics and English language arts achievement between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school at each level for grades 9, 10, and 11. The mathematics and English language arts mean scores of each of the two groups were compared at the .05 level of significance.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 1a

H1_A: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between ninth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional high school.

A t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in mean CST scores in mathematics between charter high school ninth graders and traditional high school ninth graders. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in the mean CST scores in mathematics between charter high school ninth graders and traditional high school ninth graders. The results suggest that the charter school ninth-grade students significantly outperformed the traditional school ninth-grade students (see Table 4).

Table 4

t-test for Independent Samples: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school 9th-grade students	29	280.90	34.658	-8.731	.000
Charter high school 9th-grade students	29	379.00	49.602		

$p < .01$.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 1b

H1_B: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between ninth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

A t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in mean CST scores in English language arts between charter

high school ninth graders and traditional high school ninth graders. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in the mean CST scores in English language arts between charter high school ninth graders and traditional high school ninth graders. The results suggest that the charter school ninth-grade students significantly outperformed the traditional school ninth-grade students (see Table 5).

Table 5

t-test for Independent Samples: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school 9th-grade students	29	307.00	53.555	-5.438	.000
Charter high school 9th-grade students	29	374.62	40.190		

$p < .01$.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 1c

H1c: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between tenth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and tenth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

A *t*-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in mean CST scores in mathematics between charter high school tenth graders and traditional high school tenth graders. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in the mean CST scores in

mathematics between charter high school tenth graders and traditional high school tenth graders. The results suggest that the charter high school tenth-grade students significantly outperformed the traditional school tenth-grade students (see Table 6).

Table 6

t-test for Independent Samples: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school 10th-grade students	30	274.40	41.866	-6.217	.000
Charter high school 10th-grade students	30	359.30	61.981		

$p < .01$.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 1d

H_{1D}: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between tenth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and tenth-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

A *t*-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in mean CST scores in English language arts between charter high school tenth graders and traditional high school tenth graders. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in the mean CST scores in English language arts between charter high school tenth graders and traditional high school tenth graders. The results suggest that the charter high school tenth-grade

students significantly outperformed the traditional high school tenth-grade students (see Table 7).

Table 7

t-test for Independent Samples: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school 10th-grade students	30	321.23	62.193	-2.432	.018
Charter high school 10th- grade students	30	358.77	57.226		

$p < .05$.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 1e

H1_E: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in mathematics between eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

A *t*-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in mean CST scores in mathematics between charter high school eleventh graders and traditional high school eleventh graders. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in the mean CST scores in mathematics between charter high school eleventh graders and traditional high school eleventh graders. The results suggest that the charter high school eleventh-grade

students significantly outperformed the traditional high school eleventh-grade students (see Table 8).

Table 8

t-test for Independent Samples: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school 11th-grade students	31	269.26	41.689	-6.346	.000
Charter high school 11th- grade students	28	347.18	52.454		

$p < .01$.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 1f

H1_F: There is no significant difference in mean scale scores on the California Standards Test in English language arts between eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

A *t*-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in mean CST scores in English language arts between charter high school eleventh graders and traditional high school eleventh graders. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in the mean CST scores in English language arts between charter high school eleventh graders and traditional high school eleventh graders. The results suggest that the charter high

school eleventh-grade students significantly outperformed the traditional high school eleventh-grade students (see Table 9).

Table 9

t-test Summary: Comparison of Mean Scores between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school 11th-grade students	31	313.87	49.273	-2.646	.011
Charter high school 11th- grade students	28	349.57	54.388		

$p < .05$.

Inferential Analysis of Test Data

In response to research question 2, *t*-tests for independent samples were used to determine if there is a significant difference in suspensions and expulsions between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The suspension and expulsion means of each group were compared at the .05 level of significance. The following null hypotheses were tested:

Findings Related to Hypothesis 2a

H2_A: There is no significant difference in suspension rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

A t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is difference in mean suspensions between charter high school students and traditional high school students. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in mean suspensions between charter high school students and traditional high school students. The results suggest that the suspension rate of charter high school students is significantly higher than the suspension rate of traditional high school students (see Table 10).

Table 10

t-test for Independent Samples: Comparison of Mean Numbers of Incidents between Groups

Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Traditional high school students	30	.33	.758	-2.217	.030
Charter high school students	30	.97	1.378		

$p < .05$.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 2b

H2_B: There is no significant difference in expulsion rates between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

Since there were no expulsions for either of the two types of high schools, a statistical analysis was not conducted. Consequently, there is no difference in expulsion rates between the two types of high schools.

Inferential Analysis of Survey Data

In response to research question 3, the survey responses were analyzed using a Chi Square test for independence to determine if there is a significant difference in the distribution of responses to each survey statement regarding perceptions of school effectiveness between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The level of significance was set at .05. The following null hypothesis was tested:

H3_A: There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses regarding perceptions of school effectiveness between twelfth-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and twelfth grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

Findings Related to Hypothesis 3a

Twelfth grade students from charter and traditional high schools completed a survey to determine perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their respective high schools. The survey consisted of 12 statements which were aligned with research question 3 of this study. Participants indicated their level of agreement to each survey statement by using a Likert-type scale (1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree).

1. Statement 1 was (my high school) *Provides me with high expectations for academic success*. The computed Chi square value was 16.623. Since the

computed probability ($p = .000$) was less than .05, there was a significant difference in the distribution of responses.

2. Statement 2 was (my high school) *Improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive*. The computed Chi square value was 13.616. Since the computed probability ($p = .003$) was less than .05, there was a significant difference in the distribution of responses.
3. Statement 3 was (my high school) *Provides challenging and rigorous courses*. The computed Chi square value was 1.352. Since the computed probability ($p = .717$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
4. Statement 4 was (my high school) *Improves my performance on the CAHSEE*. The computed Chi square value was .881. Since the computed probability ($p = .830$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
5. Statement 5 was (my high school) *Offers courses that are innovative, stimulating, imaginative, and philosophical*. The computed Chi square value was 1.987. Since the computed probability ($p = .575$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
6. Statement 6 was (my high school) *Offers courses that teach me critical thinking skills and problem solving*. The computed Chi square value was 6.263. Since the computed probability ($p = .100$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.

7. Statement 7 was (my high school) *Provides me with additional help in academics when needed*. The computed Chi square value was 3.897. Since the computed probability ($p = .273$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
8. Statement 8 was (my high school) *Provides a safe and orderly environment*. The computed Chi square value was 2.755. Since the computed probability ($p = .431$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
9. Statement 9 was (my high school) *Employs teachers and other staff members who treat me fairly*. The computed Chi square value was 4.660. Since the computed probability ($p = .198$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
10. Statement 10 was (my high school) *Provides me with several opportunities to be technologically literate*. The computed Chi square value was 2.999. Since the computed probability ($p = .392$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
11. Statement 11 was (my high school) *Respects my race and/or ethnicity*. The computed Chi square value was 4.858. Since the computed probability ($p = .182$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.
12. Statement 12 was (my high school) *Provides me with life skills to be successful in the future*. The computed Chi square value was 5.334. Since the

computed probability ($p = .149$) was greater than .05, there was no significant difference in the distribution of responses.

Table 8 displays the computed Chi Square and the probability values. The level of significance was set at .05.

Table 11

Chi Square Analysis

Component	Chi-square value	Significance
High expectations for academic success (S1)	16.623	.000*
Chances of getting into a college (S2)	13.616	.003*
Challenging and rigorous courses (S3)	1.352	.717
Performance on the CAHSEE (S4)	.881	.830
Innovative, stimulating, imaginative, philosophical (S5)	1.987	.575
Critical thinking and problem solving skills (S6)	6.263	.100
Additional help in academics (S7)	3.897	.273
Safe and orderly environment (S8)	2.755	.431
Treated fairly (S9)	4.660	.198
Opportunities to be technologically literate (S10)	2.999	.392
Race/ethnicity (S11)	4.858	.182
Life skills (S12)	5.334	.149

* $p < .05$.

Descriptive Analysis of Survey Data

Mean values were computed on the basis of a 4-point Likert-type scale response to the survey items and ranked in descending order, as reflected in Table 12 and Table 13. For each group of students, four of the 12 statements reflect a means score of 3.0 or above. For each group of students, nine of the 12 statements reflect a mean score of less than 3.

Table 12

Survey Items on Charter High Schools by Rank with a Mean Score of 3 or Above

Statement (My charter high school...)	<i>M</i>
Provides me with high expectations for academic success. (S1)	3.40
Improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive. (S2)	3.38
Respects my race and/or ethnicity. (S11)	3.31
Provides me with additional help in academics when needed. (S7)	3.16

Table 13

Survey Items on Traditional High Schools by Rank with a Mean Score of 3 or Above

Statement (My traditional high school...)	<i>M</i>
Offers courses that teach me critical thinking skills and problem solving. (S6)	3.90
Respects my race and/or ethnicity. (S11)	3.40
Provides me with high expectations for academic success. (S1)	3.13
Provides me with additional help in academics when needed. (S7)	3.03

Table 14

Survey Items on Charter High Schools by Rank with a Mean Score of Less than 3

Statement (My charter high school...)	<i>M</i>
Provides a safe and orderly environment (S8)	2.94
Performance on the CAHSEE (S4)	2.90
Challenging and rigorous courses (S3)	2.88
Provides life skills (S12)	2.88
Teach critical thinking and problem solving skills (S6)	2.84
Teachers and staff members who treat me fairly (S9)	2.71
Provides opportunities to be technologically literate (S10)	2.63
Innovative, stimulating, imaginative, philosophical (S5)	2.53

Table 15

Survey Items on Traditional High Schools by Rank with a Mean Score of Less than 3

Statement (My charter high school...)	<i>M</i>
Provides me with high expectation for academic success (S1)	2.93
Challenging and rigorous courses (S3)	2.93
Teachers and staff members who treat me fairly (S9)	2.93
Provides life skills (S12)	2.93
Provides a safe and orderly environment (S8)	2.90
Performance on the CAHSEE (S4)	2.83
Provides opportunities to be technologically literate (S10)	2.77
Innovative, stimulating, imaginative, philosophical (S5)	2.73

Frequencies and percentages regarding the various levels of agreement per statement were calculated. Tables 12 and 13 present a summary of the analysis after the following narrative:

1. Statement 1 was (my high school) *Provides me with high expectations for academic success*. Responses indicated that 53.1% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree and 6.7% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree.
2. Statement 2 was (my high school) *Improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive*. Responses indicated that 43.8% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree and 13.3% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree.
3. Statement 3 was (my high school) *Provides challenging and rigorous courses*. Responses indicated that 75% of the African American students

who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 73.3% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.

4. Statement 4 was (my high school) *Improves my performance on the CAHSEE*. Responses indicated that 81.3% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 73.3% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree and agree.
5. Statement 5 was (my high school) *Offers courses that are innovative, stimulating, imaginative, and philosophical*. Responses indicated that 56.3% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 72.4% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.
6. Statement 6 was (my high school) *Offers courses that teach me critical thinking skills and problem solving*. Responses indicated that 68.8% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 93.3% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.
7. Statement 7 was (my high school) *Provides me with additional help in academics when needed*. Responses indicated that 93.7% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree

or agree and 86.7% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.

8. Statement 8 was (my high school) *Provides a safe and orderly environment*. Responses indicated that 71.9% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 66.6% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.
9. Statement 9 was (my high school) *Employs teachers and other staff members who treat me fairly*. Responses indicated that 64.6% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 86.2% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.
10. Statement 10 was (my high school) *Provides me with several opportunities to be technologically literate*. Responses indicated that 62.5% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 66.6% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.
11. Statement 11 was (my high school) *Respects my race and/or ethnicity*. Responses indicated that 84.4% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 96.6% of

African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.

12. Statement 12 was (my high school) *Provides me with life skills to be successful in the future*. Responses indicated that 71.9% of the African American students who attend a public charter high school strongly agree or agree and 70% of African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school strongly agree or agree.

Table 16

Frequencies and Percentages: Charter High School

Survey statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Academic success (S1)	17 (53.1%)	11 (34.4%)	4 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
Getting into college (S2)	14 (43.8%)	17 (53.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.1%)
Challenging and rigorous (S3)	5 (15.6%)	19 (59.4%)	7 (21.9%)	1 (3.1%)
Performance on the CAHSEE (S4)	6 (18.8%)	20 (62.5%)	3 (9.4%)	3 (9.4%)
Innovative (S5)	4 (12.5%)	14 (43.8%)	9 (28.1%)	5 (15.6%)
Critical thinking (S6)	7 (21.9%)	15 (46.9%)	8 (25.0%)	2 (6.3%)
Additional help (S7)	9 (28.1%)	21 (65.6%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.3%)
Safe and orderly environment (S8)	9 (28.1%)	14 (43.8%)	7 (21.9%)	2 (6.3%)
Treated fairly (S9)	6 (19.4%)	14 (45.2%)	10 (32.3%)	1 (3.2%)
Technologically literate (S10)	5 (15.6%)	15 (46.9%)	7 (21.9%)	5 (15.6%)
Race/ethnicity (S11)	17 (53.1%)	10 (31.3%)	3 (9.4%)	2 (6.3%)
Life skills (S12)	9 (28.1%)	14 (43.8%)	5 (15.6%)	4 (12.5%)

Table 17

Frequencies and Percentages: Traditional Comprehensive High School

Survey statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Academic success (S1)	2 (6.7%)	24 (80.0%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)
Getting into college (S2)	4 (13.3%)	19 (63.3%)	7 (23.3%)	0 (0%)
Challenging and rigorous (S3)	6 (20.0%)	16 (53.3%)	8 (26.7%)	0 (0%)
Performance on the CAHSEE (S4)	6 (20.0%)	16 (53.3%)	5 (16.7%)	3 (10.0%)
Innovative (S5)	5 (17.2%)	16 (55.2%)	6 (20.7%)	2 (6.9%)
Critical thinking (S6)	9 (30.0%)	19 (63.3%)	2 (6.7%)	0 (0%)
Additional help (S7)	6 (20.0%)	20 (66.7%)	3 (10.0%)	1 (3.3%)
Safe and orderly environment (S8)	7 (23.3%)	13 (43.3%)	10 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
Treated fairly (S9)	5 (17.2%)	16 (55.2%)	6 (20.7%)	2 (6.9%)
Technologically literate (S10)	4 (13.3%)	16 (53.3%)	9 (30.0%)	1 (3.3%)
Race/ethnicity (S11)	13 (43.3%)	16 (53.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
Life skills (S12)	7 (23.3%)	14 (46.7%)	9 (30.0%)	0 (0%)

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results of the three research questions. Chapter 5 will present the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of public charter high schools on the achievement, discipline, and attitudes of African American students. The study focused on two groups. One group was composed of ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school, and the other group was composed of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The study examined California Standards Test (CST) scores in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics from the 2012-2013 school year and discipline records from the 2012-2013 school year. Also, a survey was administered to African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school to compare their perceptions and opinions about their respective schools. This chapter will present the results of the statistical analyses performed, the conclusions drawn, and how this research can be used for future studies or program development.

Results and Conclusions

The results of this study and conclusions drawn by this researcher are discussed according to the following research questions which guided this study:

Research Question 1

What is the difference in academic achievement between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

A t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a difference in mean CST scores in mathematics between ninth, tenth and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. Also, a t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is difference in mean CST scores in English language arts between ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school.

The results showed a significant difference in the mean CST scores in mathematics between ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public charter high school and ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The results indicated that the ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a charter high school significantly outperformed the ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school ($p < .05$).

The results showed a significant difference in the mean CST scores in English language arts between ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students

who attend a public charter high school and ninth, tenth and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. The results indicated that the ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend charter public high school significantly outperformed the ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade African American students who attend a traditional high school ($p < .05$).

Research Question 2

What is the difference in discipline between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

A t-test for independent samples was conducted to determine if there is a difference in mean suspensions between African American charter high school students and African American traditional high school students. The level of significance was set at .05. There is a significant difference in mean suspensions between African American charter high school students and African American traditional high school students. The results showed that the suspension rate of African American traditional high school students is significantly higher than the suspension rate of African American charter high school students.

Since there were no expulsions for either of the two types of high schools, a statistical analysis was not conducted. There is no significant difference in expulsion rates between the two types of high schools.

Research Question 3

What are the differences in perceptions and opinions between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school?

Thirty African American students were randomly selected from a public charter high school and thirty were randomly selected from a public traditional comprehensive high school. The two schools are located in a large urban area in Northern California.

The survey consisted of 12 statements that compared the perceptions between African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school. For each survey statement, the students indicated their perceptions using a Likert-type scale (1=Strongly agree to 4= Strongly disagree). The survey responses were analyzed using a Chi Square test for independence to determine if there was a significant difference in the distribution of responses to each survey statement.

Analyses indicated significant differences in the distribution of the responses to two survey statements. The two statements are: 1. (my high school) *Provides me with high expectations for academic success* and 2. (my high school) *Improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive*. More African American public charter high school students rated their school as more effective as compared to African American students who attend public traditional comprehensive high school.

Four statements for each high school had response means of 3 or above (on a scale of 1 to 4) as a result of the experiences students have had with their respective high school. Three of the statements received ratings of 3 or above for both the charter high school and the traditional high school. Three statements showed that African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a public traditional comprehensive high school share similar positive perceptions and opinions regarding the effectiveness of their respective schools. The three statements are: 1) (my high school) *Provides me with high expectations for academic success*; 7) (my high school) *Provides me with additional help in academics when needed*; and 11) (my high school) *Respects my race and/or ethnicity*.

Eight statements for each high school had response means of less than 3 (on a scale of 1 to 4) as a result of the experiences students have had with their respective high school. Seven statements showed that African American students who attend a public charter high school and African American students who attend a comprehensive high school share similar less than positive perceptions and opinions regarding the effectiveness of their respective schools. The seven statements for charter schools are: 3) (my high school) *Provides challenging and rigorous courses*; 4) (my high school) *Improves my performance on the CAHSEE*; 5) (my high school) *Offers courses that are innovative, stimulating, imaginative, and philosophical*; 8) (my high school) *Provides a safe and orderly environment*; 9) (my high school) *Employs teachers and other staff members who treat me fairly*; 10) (my high school)

Provides me with several opportunities to be technologically literate; and 12) (my high school) Provides me with life skills to be successful in the future.

Discussion

The results of this study support Zimmerman et al. (2009) who conducted a study on the effects of charter schools on students who transfer from traditional public schools to charter schools. The study examined differences in English language arts and mathematics achievement between the two types of schools. The study included students in kindergarten through eighth grade from five large urban school districts, beginning in 1997 and ending in 2007. In four of the seven districts, charter school students experienced higher achievement gains in mathematics and reading when compared to traditional school students.

Also, the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) conducted a study to examine the achievement of African American charter school students in five high-need districts in California (Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland, Fresno and San Bernardino City Unified). The results showed that across charter schools, API growth scores for African American students were higher than those enrolled in traditional schools.

Overall public charter schools in Stanislaus County, California scored higher than traditional public schools on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). In Spring 2015, students completed computer-adapted tests to determine their level of mastery regarding the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. The charter school students scored 59% proficient in English language arts and 65% proficient in mathematics as compared to the state

overall in which 44% scored proficient in English language arts and 33% were proficient in mathematics (Austin, 2015).

Scollo, Stevens, and Pomella (2015) conducted a study at View Park Middle School located in Los Angeles, California (a charter school with the enrollment of 344 students) which further validates that charter schools outperform traditional schools, however, through different lens. View Park Middle School is part of the Inner City Education foundation (ICEF). ICEF was one of the first charter school management organizations in Los Angeles and has become a leader in raising the achievement of African-American and Latino/Hispanic students to competitive levels in California. The ICEF operates 12 schools educating over 4,000 students in grades K through 12. According to Scollo, Stevens, and Pomella, 95% of View Park Middle School students are African American. View Park Middle school had earned an API score of over 800 and was ranked tenth among similar schools.

Additional research may explain why African American students who attend charter schools demonstrate higher academic performance as compared to African American students who attend traditional schools. It appears that the involvement of African American parents in their children's education may be a contributing factor as to why academic performance is higher and the behavior of their children is better in charter schools. The involvement and support of the parents of African American children who attend charter schools is evident in several studies. For example, Scollo et al. (2015) noted that the principal believes that academic success at View Park was due to the "parent support, excellent teachers and staff, active community organization, and the school's organization" (p. 101) which explains why, as

revealed in this study, charter school students perceive their teachers and other staff as having higher expectations. Parent involvement was prevalent. Parent meetings were held each month and they are required to attend orientation training and volunteer 40 hours per year (Scollo, Stevens, and Pomella, 2015).

Furthermore, McCulley, Mallin, and Newman (2003) surveyed parents at a charter school in New York. The authors found that parents were more satisfied with charter schools than with traditional schools. Parents were highly satisfied with the safety of the schools, parent-teacher relationships, the amount of quality homework and smaller class sizes. Other high marks were discipline and quality academics and communication, which may explain higher suspension rates as supported in this study. Buckley and Schnieder (2006) added that many charter schools are designed to improve the relationships between administrators, teachers, parents and students. Good interpersonal relationships between members of the school community and shared beliefs and values combine to promote good teaching and a positive learning environment. Charter schools have an advantage over traditional schools in that they have the opportunity to adjust to their educational environment. This is evident in a study by Clarkstone and Johnson (2011) which showed that African-centered charter schools have a positive influence on African American students in mathematics and English language arts. Students are moving forward due to culturally rich and appropriate techniques, fostered through a positive academic culture.

Implications

The parents of African American students look for educational alternatives when their children experience a lack of success in public schools. In the educational

system, the history of denial and discrimination towards Black children has created a national crisis in which academic difficulty and school failure are disproportionately high (Achilles, Finn, & Gerber, 2000; Ferguson, 2001; Green, 2001; Lee, 2002). Charter schools offer African American parents a place where their children can experience higher academic achievement. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, the core of the charter school model is the belief that schools should be held accountable for student learning. Charter schools are closing the achievement gap (publiccharters.org, 2015). African American students are leaving traditional public schools to attend charter schools because as parents indicated in the May 2006 survey: they enroll their children in charter schools because of “quality education.” African American parents believe that charter schools are more invested with the community since many are governed by community members and parents. According to the California Charter Schools Association, charter schools provide opportunities for innovation and unique curriculum options. Charter schools can adopt a curriculum that supports its vision. African American parents are attracted to charter schools because they want their children to have the opportunity to learn in an environment which reflects their culture and maintains high expectations for academic success. In this study, African American charter school students concurred with the survey statement: (my high school) *provides me with high expectations for academic success* and (my high school) *improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive*. The responses to these statements further substantiated the academic achievement of African American public charter high

school students over African American public traditional comprehensive high school students.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for future study:

1. Interview teachers and administrators of public charter schools to see what aspects of their schools help to improve the academic success of African American students as compared to public traditional schools.
2. Interview African American students and parents in public charter schools to determine why they chose a charter school over a traditional school.
3. Compare the graduation rates and college admission rates of African American students who attended public charter high schools and African American students who attend public traditional comprehensive high schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED PARENT CONSENT LETTER:

PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parent/Guardian:

During the week of May _____ 2015, I will ask twelfth grade African American students who attend a public charter high school to complete a survey. This survey will gather information for my dissertation that I am writing through the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Educational Leadership at California State University, Stanislaus. One objective of this study is to determine the perceptions of African American students regarding the effectiveness of public charter high schools. This letter is to provide the opportunity for you to excuse your student from participation in this project. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Students will be asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements about their perceptions of public charter high schools. Participation in this project is voluntary and your student may drop out any time without fear of penalty. There are no known risks associated with completing this survey. Students will not be asked to give their names when completing the survey and every attempt will be made to protect the information provided from inappropriate disclosure. All information gathered from the survey will be destroyed upon completion of this research project.

If you do not wish to have your student participate in this study, please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return it to the high school office by May _____ 2015. If you have questions regarding the project, you can contact me at (510) 396-5251 or my committee chair, Dr. John Borba at (209) 667-3260. If you have any questions regarding your student's rights as a participant, call the Campus Compliance Officer at CSU Stanislaus at (209) 667-3747. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. Return this consent letter only if you refuse permission for your student's participation in this research project.

Sincerely,

Roland Davis,
Graduate Student, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Educational Leadership
California State University, Stanislaus

I do not give my permission for my student, _____, to participate in this research project on the perceptions of African American students regarding the effectiveness of public charter high schools.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

INFORMED PARENT CONSENT LETTER:

PUBLIC TRADITIONAL COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parent/Guardian:

During the week of May _____, 2015, I will ask twelfth grade African American students who attend a public comprehensive traditional high school to complete a survey. This survey will gather information for my dissertation that I am writing through the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Educational Leadership at California State University, Stanislaus. One objective of this study is to determine the perceptions of African American students regarding the effectiveness of public traditional comprehensive high schools. This letter is to provide the opportunity for you to excuse your student from participation in this project. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Students will be asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements about their perceptions of public traditional comprehensive high schools. Participation in this project is voluntary and your student may drop out any time without fear of penalty. There are no known risks associated with completing this survey. Students will not be asked to give their names when completing the survey and every attempt will be made to protect the information provided from inappropriate disclosure. All information gathered from the survey will be destroyed upon completion of this research project.

If you do not wish to have your student participate in this study, please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return it to the high school office by May _____, 2015. If you have questions regarding the project, you can contact me at (510) 396-5251 or my committee chair, Dr. John Borba at (209) 667-3260. If you have any questions regarding your student's rights as a participant, call the Campus Compliance Officer at CSU Stanislaus at (209) 667-3747. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. Return this consent letter only if you refuse permission for your student's participation in this research project.

Sincerely,
 Roland Davis,
 Graduate Student, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Educational Leadership
 California State University, Stanislaus

I do not give my permission for my student, _____, to participate in this research project on the perceptions of African American students regarding the effectiveness of public traditional comprehensive high schools.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

INFORMED STUDENT CONSENT LETTER:

PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Student,

The survey is part of a research project that I am conducting through the doctoral program at California State University, Stanislaus. One objective of this study is to determine the perceptions of African American students regarding the effectiveness of public charter high schools. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary and you may drop out at any time without penalty. If at some time during the completion of this survey, you decide not to finish it, none of your answers will be included in the final report. There are no known risks associated with taking this survey. You will not be asked to give your name when taking the survey and every attempt will be made to protect the information gathered from inappropriate disclosure. Students will be asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements about their perceptions of public charter high schools. By completing the survey, you are granting permission to include the information in the final report. All information gathered from the survey will be destroyed upon completion of this research project. Thank you for your help in contributing to this project!

Sincerely,

Roland Davis
Graduate Student, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Educational Leadership
California State University, Stanislaus

By signing below, I understand that I am voluntarily participating in a survey conducted by Roland Davis, Doctoral Candidate at California State University, Stanislaus. I acknowledge that I have read the above consent letter.

Student name (printed):

Student signature:

Date: _____

APPENDIX D

INFORMED STUDENT CONSENT LETTER:

PUBLIC TRADITIONAL COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Student,

The survey is part of a research project that I am conducting through the doctoral program at California State University, Stanislaus. One objective of this study is to determine the perceptions of African American students regarding the effectiveness of public traditional comprehensive high schools. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary and you may drop out at any time without penalty. If at some time during the completion of this survey, you decide not to finish it, none of your answers will be included in the final report. There are no known risks associated with taking this survey. You will not be asked to give your name when taking the survey and every attempt will be made to protect the information gathered from inappropriate disclosure. Students will be asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements about their perceptions of the public traditional comprehensive high schools. By completing the survey, you are granting permission to include the information in the final report. All information gathered from the survey will be destroyed upon completion of this research project. Thank you for your help in contributing to this project!

Sincerely,

Roland Davis
Graduate Student, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Educational Leadership
California State University, Stanislaus

By signing below, I understand that I am voluntarily participating in a survey conducted by Roland Davis, Doctoral Candidate at California State University, Stanislaus. I acknowledge that I have read the above consent letter.

Student name (printed):

Student signature:

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

Please read the following statements carefully. Circle the response that best describes your opinion. All responses are completely confidential.

What is your gender? Male / Female

This public charter high school:

1. Provides me with high expectations for academic success.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
2. Improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
3. Provides challenging and rigorous courses.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
4. Improves my performance on the CAHSEE.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
5. Offers courses that are innovative, stimulating, imaginative, and philosophical.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
6. Offers courses that teach me critical thinking skills and problem solving.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
7. Provides me with additional help in academics when needed.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
8. Provides a safe and orderly environment.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
9. Employs teachers and other staff members who treat me fairly.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
10. Provides me with several opportunities to be technologically literate.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
11. Respects my race and/or ethnicity.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
12. Provides me with life skills to be successful in the future.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX F

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC TRADITIONAL
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

Please read the following statements carefully. Circle the response that best describes your opinion. All responses are completely confidential.

What is your gender? Male / Female

This public traditional comprehensive high school:

1. Provides me with high expectations for academic success.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
2. Improves my chances of getting into a college where admission is competitive.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
3. Provides challenging and rigorous courses.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
4. Improves my performance on the CAHSEE.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
5. Offers courses that are innovative, stimulating, imaginative, and philosophical.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
6. Offers courses that teach me critical thinking skills and problem solving.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
7. Provides me with additional help in academics when needed.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
8. Provides a safe and orderly environment.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
9. Employs teachers and other staff members who treat me fairly.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
10. Provides me with several opportunities to be technologically literate.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
11. Respects my race and/or ethnicity.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree
12. Provides me with life skills to be successful in the future.
1=Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree