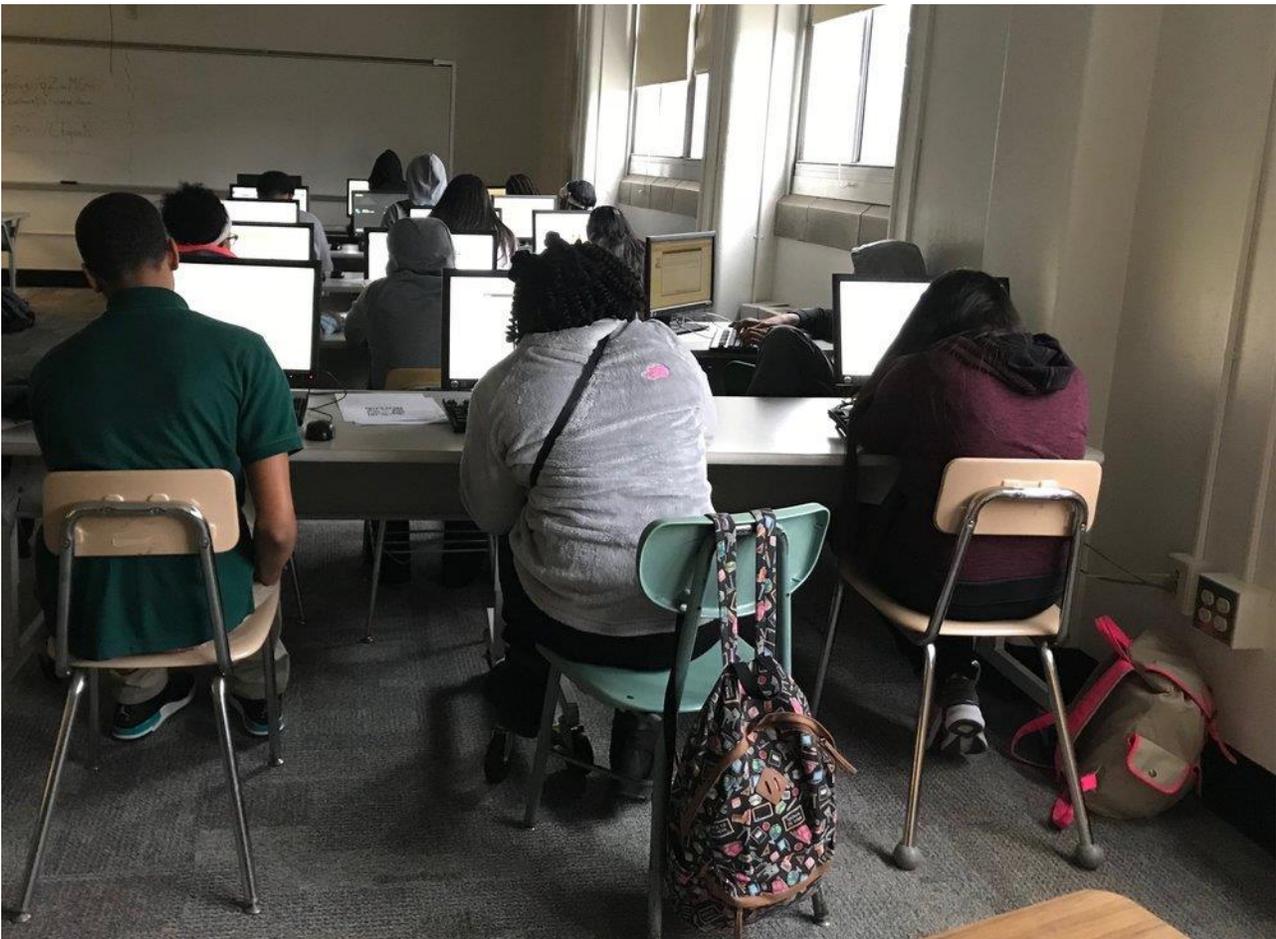


Address Old Issues Before Implementing New School Models

By [Shawnta S. Barnes](#) - Posted on [July 6, 2018](#)



“Charter schools are privatizing education.” That’s a loaded statement and if you hear it, you know a debate is about to pop off. Regardless of how you feel about this statement, it is important to note that public charter schools were able to enter the educational scene because there were (and still are) too many schools failing students especially poor students and students of color.

Admittedly, I have worked for both traditional public and public charter schools, so I can confidently say there are crappy schools in both categories. So, why are some charter schools able to sweep in with a new model and new plan and raise achievement and other charter schools can't. I assert it is because we fail to address old issues.

Let me set the scene...you have a school where the majority of students qualify for free and reduced lunch; this means they are poor. The students are majority minority. Every couple of years, there is a new principal. The school is never fully staffed. Vacancies are filled with long-term subs. If the school does manage to be fully or nearly fully staffed, some of the teachers and classified staff (custodians, cafeteria workers, assistants, etc.) will quit at some point during the year. Then, new people, if they can be found, are hired mid-year. The teachers that stay the entire year consist of some veterans teachers, a lot of teachers in their first or second year, and also quite a few teachers from those teach for a minute programs. The school might be lucky enough to have an assistant principal or dean, but these people could quit mid-year too. When it comes to resources to teach the students, they are old, damaged, or missing and don't ask about ordering new materials because it isn't in the budget.

When you look at a school like this, it's no wonder why academic achievement is lacking. Veterans teachers, if they are good and haven't given up trying to help students, get tired of carrying the load or helping new teachers or teachers from instant teacher programs. Even if they have stayed through several administrations, they reach their breaking point and eventually walk away. If you get a few rock star teachers from another school, they leave just as quickly as they came because rock star teachers want to be sharpened by other rock stars; they don't want to carry the load either. With a revolving door of teachers, principals not being given enough time to implement their plans, and lack of materials, of course, the school is failing.

I believe parents are intelligent enough to know what is best for their children and should have the right to choose a public charter, traditional public, or private school. They should be able to homeschool too. But at the end of the day, if the next leader, traditional public or public charter, can't

address previous problems, the new model or vision he or she implements doesn't matter because failure will be imminent.