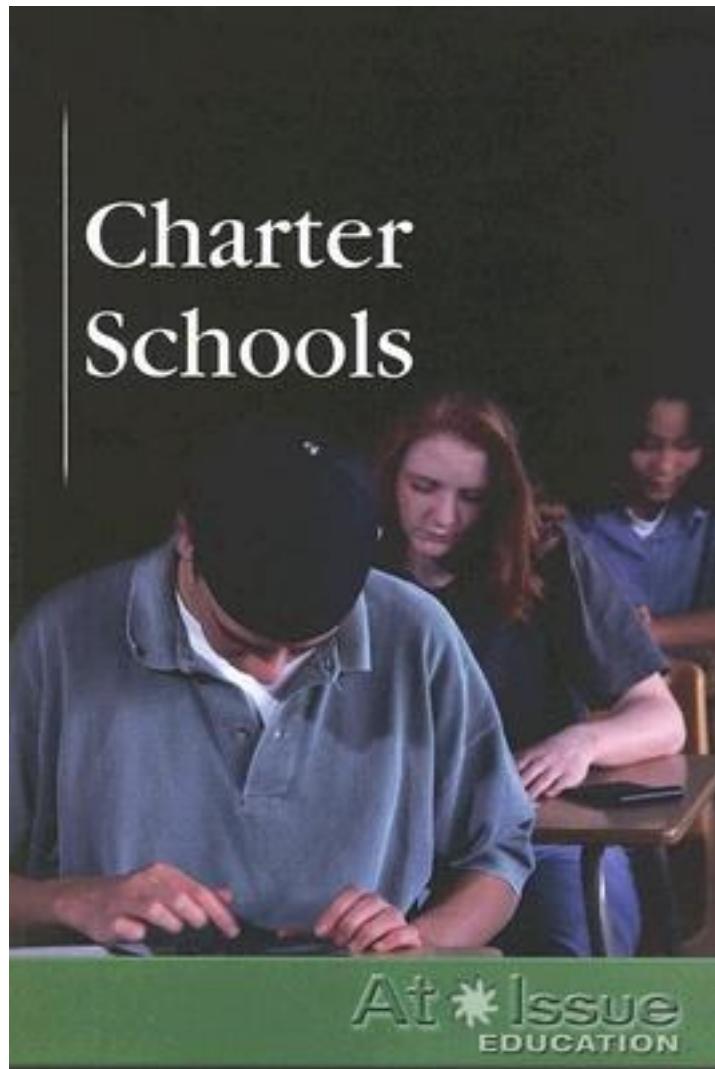


Charter Schools



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著者:Buckley, Jack/ Schneider, Mark

出版者:

出版时间:2009-7

装帧:

isbn:9780691143194

Over the past several years, privately run, publicly funded charter schools have been sold to the American public as an education alternative promising better student achievement, greater parent satisfaction, and more vibrant school communities. But are charter schools delivering on their promise? Or are they just hype as critics contend, a costly experiment that is bleeding tax dollars from public schools? In this book, Jack Buckley and Mark Schneider tackle these questions about one of the thorniest policy reforms in the nation today. Using an exceptionally rigorous research approach, the authors investigate charter schools in Washington, D.C., carefully examining school data going back more than a decade, interpreting scores of interviews with parents, students, and teachers, and meticulously measuring how charter schools perform compared to traditional public schools. Their conclusions are sobering. Buckley and Schneider show that charter-school students are not outperforming students in traditional public schools, that the quality of charter-school education varies widely from school to school, and that parent enthusiasm for charter schools starts out strong but fades over time. And they argue that while charter schools may meet the most basic test of sound public policy - they do no harm - the evidence suggests they all too often fall short of advocates' claims. With the future of charter schools - and perhaps public education as a whole - hanging in the balance, this book supports the case for holding charter schools more accountable and brings us considerably nearer to resolving this contentious debate.

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