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***PARENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM IN NORTH CAROLINA
RESPONDS TO CLAIMS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SEGREGATION***

Raleigh, NC (April 16, 2015) – This week, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) published a new study written by researchers at Duke University titled, “The Growing Segmentation of the Charter School Sector in North Carolina,” by Helen Ladd, Charles Clotfelter, and John Holbein. The study got the attention of the Washington Post, which published an [article](#) yesterday titled, “White parents in North Carolina are using charter schools to secede from the education system.”

Below is a statement from Darrell Allison, President of Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina, regarding the Duke study:

“The study from Duke University contends that public charter schools in North Carolina tend to be either overwhelmingly black or overwhelmingly white—in contrast to traditional public schools, which the study claims are more evenly mixed.

Yet, the fact is that public charter schools enroll a greater percentage of black students than traditional schools. According to the North Carolina Office of Charter Schools 2015 Executive Report to the General Assembly, during the 2013-14 academic year, black students comprised 30 percent of public charter school enrollment and 26 percent of the traditional public school student population. Moreover, since the cap was lifted on public charter schools in our state in 2011, we have seen a 20 percent increase in black students enrolled in public charter schools along with a 21 percent increase in white students enrolled – a mere 1% difference.

Even more revealing is the growth of leaders of color running public charter schools since the state eliminated the cap on public charter schools just a few short years ago: Of the 54 public charter schools that have opened in North Carolina since the cap was eliminated, 33 percent of them are being led by a black principal. In fact, our organization through the North Carolina Public Charter School Accelerator assisted two African-American females to start public charter schools in both Bertie and Halifax County – the very first public charter school for each of these counties. What was powerful about this effort is that Bertie and Halifax Counties’ academic performance for low-income, mostly minority populations, have been some of the lowest in the state for years – Halifax County being the lowest. As a result of eliminating the cap on public charter schools in our state, we now have two strong educators of color leading solid public schools, which happen to be charters, and a majority of the children they educate happen to be both low-income and mostly minority.

What does all of this data tell us about the public charter school trend in North Carolina? It tells us that families – both black and white – are searching for better school options for their children, and that public charter schools are earnestly trying to meet that demand.

More children from low-income families and from minority families are being given the opportunity to exercise school choice and to select schools that better meet their children’s needs. As well, we are also seeing more and more high-quality public charter schools emerge that serve to meet the needs of low-income students by providing transportation

and school lunches – both of which charter school critics often cite as barriers that keep low-income children from attending high-performing public charter schools.

Lastly, do we honestly think there is some grand conspiracy, according to Dr. Ladd, where we have thousands of “white parents in North Carolina using public charter schools to secede from the education system?” I find the claims that public charter schools perpetuate segregation across our state to be both false and disingenuous. To the contrary, what I honestly believe is that we have both white parents and black parents aggressively utilizing various school choice options in order to find schools that will best educate their children. For them, the only *race* they are concerned about is their child racing to the top of their class and no longer lagging behind.”

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