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Abstract

This paper examines the position of charter schools in prospective elementary teachers' job search decisions. Using a labor market segmentation framework, it explores teacher applicants' decisions to apply to charter schools. The data come from a mixed-methods longitudinal study of prospective teachers looking for their first job. This paper finds moderate support that there is a segmented labor market for charter and traditional public school teachers. The institutional status of the school and teacher applicants' lack of familiarity with charter schools was related to their disinclination to apply to charter schools, there is no evidence that these barriers led to lesser qualified teachers in charter schools. Further, charter schools were desirable for prospective teachers that wanted to serve predominantly minority students.

Keywords: Charter schools, teacher career decisions, teacher labor market

Charter Schools and the Teacher Job Search in Michigan

Charter schools have been the subject of much educational policy research. Research about student achievement, governance, funding, and student composition in charter schools has proliferated in recent years (see, for example, Buckley & Schneider, 2005; Buddin & Zimmer, 2005; Bulkley & Hicks, 2005; Frankenberg & Lee, 2003; Lubienski & Lubienski, 2006). As the educational success of any school requires high quality teachers, it is surprising that less research exists on charter schools' ability to recruit and retain teachers than other school operations. Indeed, as teachers are the most important school resource for student learning, we need to understand who teaches in charter schools and why they teach there.

Previous research suggests that charter school teachers tend to come from more selective colleges than their peers in traditional public schools, but they are also more likely to be inexperienced and lack certification (Author et al, 2004; Baker & Dickerson, 2006; Guarino, 2003; Hoxby, 2002; Podgursky & Ballou, 2001; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2003). Charter school teachers also earn lower salaries and have higher attrition (Harris, 2006, 2007; Miron & Applegate, 2007; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2003). There is conflicting evidence on whether charter schools have lower class sizes (Fuller, Gawlik, Gonzales, Park, & Gibbings, 2003; Gruber, Wiley, Broughman, Strizek, & Burian-Fitzgerald, 2002). There are also ambiguous findings on the conditions inside charter schools, with charter school teachers reporting more autonomy and professional community, but less influence over schoolwide decisions (Author, 2007; Bomotti, Ginsberg, & Cobb, 1999; Crawford & Forsyth, 2004; Johnson & Landman, 2000; Vanourek, Manno, Finn, & Bierlein Palmer, 1998)..

The different qualifications and work experiences of charter and traditional public school teachers raise questions about whether the teachers who seek jobs in charter schools are similar to or different from those that seek employment in traditional public schools. Despite the existing research on teacher qualifications and work experiences, we know little about the overall impact of charter schools on the teacher labor market. Research on working conditions in charter schools tends to come from asking current charter school teachers what they like or do not like about working in their school or from retrospective accounts of their motivation for working in the charter sector. While these studies are valuable, we can only infer from their findings how charter schools fit into the larger landscape of schools as teachers search for a job and make decisions about where to teach.

This paper explores how prospective elementary teachers think about charter schools during their first job search as they enter the teacher labor market, apply for teaching jobs, and decide where to work. Using a framework of labor market segmentation, it develops a model for understanding the interaction between institutional structures and informal boundaries in school sectors and teachers' job search processes. In doing so, this paper analyzes teachers' decisions to apply to charter schools and how the presence of charter schools affects prospective teachers' job search decisions and outcomes. As such, this paper is a first step in analyzing the potential impact of charter schools on the teacher labor market.

Labor Market Segmentation

Why should we expect teachers to treat charter schools any differently than traditional public schools in their job search? Traditionally, the teacher labor market is considered a monopsony as districts with centralized hiring, staffing, and compensation practices serve as the single employer of teachers within a particular geographical area (Merrifield, 1999; Vedder &

Hall, 2000). Even though districts may compete with each other for prospective teachers, the degree of centralization and the influence of teacher unions may restrict the possible competitive effects on the labor market. Charter schools have the potential to inject more competition into the labor market as they offer additional employment opportunities for teachers. Thus increasing charter schools should be a boon to teacher applicants, giving them more diversified employment options in an environment in which employers must compete more strongly for their skills.

The effect of these added opportunities, however, may depend on how prospective teachers view charter schools and the presence of frictions in the labor market. Search-theoretic models and labor market segmentation theory provide useful frames for exploring the relationship between charter schools and the teacher labor market because they focus attention on how individuals approach the job search and the difficulties that may arise when jobs are segmented into distinct groups. Labor market search theory argues that the decisions teachers make during a job search depend on the relative costs—from engaging in the job search process—and benefits—working in a job with particular characteristics or remaining unemployed and collecting unemployment benefits or enjoying more leisure time (Petrongolo & Pissarides, 2001). Job seekers weigh the costs involved in particular job search activities, the probability that those activities will lead to a job offer, and the characteristics of potentially available jobs when making decisions while on a job search (Devine & Kiefer, 1991; Holzer, 1988; Petrongolo & Pissarides, 2001; Rogerson, Shimer, & Wright, 2005; van den Berg, 1999). This search-theoretic model of the labor market emphasizes that frictions are created as it takes time and resources for workers to find a job and for employers to find workers (Rogerson et al., 2005). These frictions suggest that actual labor market outcomes are not well explained by traditional labor supply and demand models. Paying attention to these frictions is important as

the processes teachers use to find jobs structures the opportunities they see available to them and ultimately where they end up working (Author, in press). Studies of the teacher labor market in particular have found that search-theoretic models more accurately estimate teachers' preferences for certain job features than traditional competitive wage models (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006).

These complexities are amplified in the presence of a segmented labor market. A segmented labor market develops when there are institutional rules or informal boundaries that limit movement of workers between subgroups within the labor market. Certification or union membership may structure labor markets into distinct sectors that have different compensation and employment structures (Dickens & Lang, 1992; Kerr, 1954; Reid & Rubin, 2003). An important implication of a segmented labor market is that employment relations differ between the primary and secondary sectors (Baffoe-Bonnie, 2003; Beck, Horan, & Tolbert, 1978; Dickens & Lang, 1985, 1992; Osterman, 1975; Reid & Rubin, 2003). The primary—or core—sector offers jobs in larger organizations with higher salaries and more job security. The secondary—or peripheral—sector, however, is composed of jobs in smaller organizations with temporary employment contracts and lower wages. The primary sector has clear rules for promotion, a tight link between skills and salary, and tends to be highly unionized (although there are exceptions such as tenure track professors in higher education). The secondary sector, on the other hand, is less likely to be unionized and has unpredictable wages (Beck et al., 1978). While the primary sector may appear to offer more enticing conditions for workers, institutional rules limit movement between sectors or create queues as more workers demand jobs in one sector (Dickens & Lang, 1992; Kerr, 1954). Informal boundaries, including cultural distinctions, also contribute to labor market segmentation (Bauder, 2001). Without these barriers to

movement between sectors, salary and working conditions will equalize across sectors as workers seek out more favorable conditions and employers improve conditions to attract the most qualified applicants.

One key question in search theory is how potential workers and employers meet (Rogerson et al., 2005). The outcomes of any particular teacher applicant depends on the likelihood that the teacher makes a match with particular schools, which is usually considered to be either random—with prospective teachers making contact with schools at random—or directed—with prospective teachers making contact with schools that offer the highest wages or best working conditions before contacting other less desirable schools (Rogerson et al., 2005). Yet in a segmented labor market, contacts between workers and potential employers are neither completely random nor directed due to institutional rules or informal boundaries. Teachers' job searches may not be random if there are boundaries—either formal or informal—restricting their ability to make contact with both charter and traditional public schools. Likewise, prospective teachers may not always try to match with the school that offers the best combination of salary and working conditions if a segment of schools are absent from their search.

Examining whether the presence of charter schools creates a segmented labor teacher labor market focuses our attention on three key questions. First, to what extent do teachers consider charter schools alongside traditional public schools? That is, to what extent are teachers likely to compare charter and traditional public schools on an equal basis with traditional public schools? Second, are there institutional rules or informal barriers that influence whether teachers consider charter schools in their job search? Third, are there observable differences in the qualifications, salary, and working conditions between teachers who end up in charter and

traditional public schools? The remainder of this paper will explore these questions. The next section examines evidence from existing research.

Previous Research on Teachers in Charter Schools

Labor market segmentation theory focuses attention on the institutional structures that may contribute to differences between sectors. Charter schools operate in a complex institutional environment. Some institutional rules make them similar to private schools while others make them similar to public schools. As charter schools do not have defined attendance areas and students must apply to attend a charter school, they are similar to private schools. Further, most charter schools are not unionized, creating another key institutional difference between charter and traditional public school sectors. Yet charter schools are publicly funded, may not be selective in admitting students, and—in the state in which this study was conducted—require teachers to be certified, making them similar to traditional public schools.

These institutional rules are important in labor market segmentation theory because they create barriers that keep workers from moving between sectors. Thus teacher mobility between charter and traditional public schools can give us some indication that a segmented labor market is developing. Some research indicates that charter school teachers leave the profession altogether rather than moving into a new school, although among charter school teachers that do move schools, slightly more move to a traditional public school than to another charter school (Harris, 2007; The Ohio Collaborative, 2003). This suggests there is a small degree of movement of charter school teachers into traditional public schools. There is little evidence about whether traditional public school teachers move into charter schools. Some charter school teachers do have prior experience teaching in a traditional public school (Malloy & Wohlstetter, 2003; Miron, Cullen, Applegate, & Farrell, 2007), other evidence suggests that very few (near zero) of

traditional public school teachers move into charter schools, although this finding may be due to the small number of charter schools to which traditional public school teachers could move (Harris, 2007). Another study found that one-third of teachers in charter schools moved there from a traditional public school (Carruthers, 2008). This study also found a bimodal pattern in the types of teachers who move to charter schools, with traditional public school teachers who moved to charter schools as compared to other traditional public schools were both more likely to be inexperienced and have more than 30 years of experience.

The second key characteristic of a segmented labor market is the differentiated qualifications, salary, and working conditions between sectors. Several studies have documented that charter school teachers do have different characteristics than teachers in traditional public schools that mirror differences between the primary and secondary sectors. For example, charter school teachers have less experience, are less likely to be certified, are less educated, and have higher attrition rates (Author et al, 2004; Harris, 2007; Miron & Nelson, 2002; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2003). Likewise, charter school teachers are more likely than traditional public school teachers to report that their school was the only job that was available to them and that this lack of job choice was linked to their lower qualifications (Author, 2009). They also have somewhat lower salaries that are less dependent on education and years of experience (Gruber et al., 2002; Harris, 2006; Podgursky, 2008; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2003). Further, charter schools are less likely to have collective bargaining agreements with unions, resulting in less job security for teachers and higher dismissal rates (Johnson & Landman, 2000; Podgursky, 2008).

The evidence is more mixed on whether the different working conditions between charter and traditional public schools favor one sector over the other. On the one hand, charter school

teachers report feeling more empowered in their classrooms and better teaching conditions (Bomotti et al., 1999; Hoxby, 2002). Many teachers are attracted to charter schools because of the ability to work with like-minded colleagues and engage in educational reform (Johnson & Landman, 2000; Miron et al., 2007). Charter school teachers also report higher levels of teacher professional community (Author, 2007; Gawlik, 2007; Goldring & Cravens, 2008; Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1998). Indeed, some charter management companies, such as EdVisions strive to create schools that are professional partnerships of teachers (Newell & Buchen, 2004).

Yet other factors may make charter schools less desirable as workplaces. Charter school teachers report less satisfaction with the physical plants of their schools (Bomotti et al., 1999). Charter school teachers also earn lower salaries and get a lower return for each year of experience they have (Harris, 2006; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2003). Charter schools are also less likely to be unionized and some teachers may value job security and grievance procedures provided by collective bargaining (Johnson & Landman, 2000). Further, the autonomy given to charter schools may not mean that the influence over schoolwide decisions extends down to teachers (Bomotti et al., 1999; Crawford, 2001; Johnson & Landman, 2000). Despite the presence of shared values, the pressures of working in a charter school may mean teachers actually have little time for collaboration (Johnson & Landman, 2000). Overall, the existing literature suggests there are notable differences in the qualifications and work experiences of charter and traditional public school teachers. Some of these differences highlight the heterogeneity of charter schools and some may reflect institutional structures that shape teachers' job search decisions.

Data and Analytic Methods

The data come from a mixed-methods longitudinal study of prospective elementary teachers. The data include interviews with 27 teacher applicants at several points in their job search and a longitudinal survey of 160 teacher applicants.

Sampling Strategy

Elementary student teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs in six colleges in the Detroit metropolitan area were sampled. The colleges represent a diverse set of programs and include traditional undergraduate programs and programs designed for mid-career entrants, public and private colleges, and programs of varying sizes. Elementary student teachers were chosen to define a sample that would be qualified for and looking for similar types of jobs. The initial survey was administered at the beginning of the teacher hiring season in January through early March and had overall response rate of 60.7% with a sample size of 289 prospective elementary teachers. Survey administration procedures followed Dillman's (2000) tailored design method. The initial survey asked about background characteristics and qualifications, perception of the teaching field, confidence in getting a job offer, and initial preferences for where to work.

The followup survey was administered at the end of the teacher hiring season in late September and October. All respondents to the initial survey were asked to complete a followup survey. The followup survey had a response rate of 59.2% and a sample size of 171 teacher applicants. Eleven teacher applicants removed themselves from the teacher labor market between the initial and followup surveys and did not apply to any teaching jobs. Thus the final sample for analyses used in this paper is 160 teacher applicants. The followup survey gathered detail

information about where teacher applicants applied, where they had job offers, and where they ended up teaching.

Data collection also included interviews with 27 prospective elementary teachers—a subset of the survey sample—at two points during the teacher hiring season. The initial survey asked for volunteers to participate in the interview component of the study. There were no demographic differences between volunteers and non-volunteers. To ensure a diversity of backgrounds and experiences in the interview sample, the college or university the prospective teacher attended, his or her racial and ethnic background, gender, and career status were considered when choosing the interview sample from among those who volunteered. The first interview took place in the spring and covered topics such as the teacher's social and educational background, their sense of themselves as a candidate, criteria for applying to schools, job search strategies, and methods for gathering information about potential schools. A semi-structured interview protocol (included in the Appendix) provided initial questions and prompts for the interview, but the interview questions were adapted to allow the participants to respond in ways that made sense for their experiences. The second interview took place in July or August, and covered topics such as evaluations of particular schools, experiences interacting with school and district staff through interviews and reasons behind the teacher's final job choice. Half of the teacher candidates did not consider their job search over by the second interview and were interviewed again in September. The second and third interviews also included questions about particular themes or experiences mentioned by participants in previous interviews.

The interviews attempted to capture teachers' job search processes in general and specific ways. First, teacher applicants were asked about their general strategies for identifying open positions, gathering information about schools, making decisions about where to apply, and

preferences for where to work. Second, teacher applicants were asked to describe specific schools in which they were pursuing jobs, including how they heard about that job, why they applied, their experiences on interviews, their perceptions of the school, and their sources of information about the school that influenced those perceptions. This dual questioning strategy was designed to help teacher applicants talk about the details of their job search. The interview protocol did not ask specifically about charter schools at the beginning of the interview. This allowed teacher applicants to talk about their job search experiences in ways that were most salient to them, rather than artificially focusing their attention on charter schools. One-third of teacher applicants mentioned charter schools prior to specific prompting about them.

To identify possible response bias, the demographic characteristics of the survey and interview samples were compared to a state administrative database. As shown in Table 1, the sample is predominantly White and female, which is expected given its focus on elementary teacher applicants. Males and African Americans were purposely oversampled in the interview sample as these groups are traditionally underrepresented in the elementary teaching force. The survey sample slightly underrepresents males due to differential nonresponse on the followup survey and overrepresents non-White and non-African American teacher applicants. Two strategies were used to evaluate the implications of these differences on the study validity. First, because the response rate for the initial survey was depressed by particularly low response from one college, the analyses were conducted with and without respondents from this one college. The results were consistent, indicating that the low response from one college did not affect the results. Second, preferences as indicated on the initial survey between responders and non-responders to the followup survey were compared and no significant differences were found.

Interview Coding and Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed at two levels. The first stage of data analysis involved creating cases for each teacher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After the first interview, an initial analytic memo was prepared for each teacher that highlighted the processes and preferences of each teacher candidate. Themes from these analytic memos were discussed with the participants to check the validity of researcher interpretations (Maxwell, 1992). For the second level of data analysis, the interviews were coded using a constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) to identify central themes in teacher's decision-making and experiences. The initial set of codes highlighted the criteria teacher applicants used to evaluate schools, how they identified available positions, and how they made decisions about where to work. In addition to codes about teachers' job search processes and preferences in general, several codes referred to charter schools, including whether teachers made positive, negative, or neutral statements about charter schools and whether they preferred or avoided charter schools.

Initial coding and analysis required revisions to the list of codes to extend existing themes, create distinctions with heavily used codes, and fill in emergent themes not present in the initial coding scheme (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In particular, teacher candidates offered reasons for preferring or avoiding particular schools that were not suggested by existing research and additional codes were created to reflect these other criteria. Further, as the lack of research on charter schools and teacher career choices offered little a priori guidance for coding, much of the coding scheme for the impact of charter schools on their career decisions, such as the reasons they provided for their attention to charter schools in their job search and what facilitated their familiarity with charter schools, was developed inductively based upon close readings of the interview transcripts. After the codes were created, two coders independently coded 12

interviews and agreed 76% of the time. In cases where the two coders disagreed, they talked about the discrepancy and came to a consensus about how the interview should be coded. To check internal consistency and possible drifting of codes over time, the researcher coded 20% of the remaining interviews twice. This internal consistency agreement was 93%. These reliability measures are in line with standards for qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Survey Analysis

Once patterns were identified in the qualitative data about why teacher applicants did or did not consider charter schools in their job search, the decision to apply to a charter school was modeled using the survey data. The distribution of the number of charter schools to which teacher applicants applied was not normally distributed; over half of teacher applicants did not apply to any charter schools. For this reason, whether teacher applicants applied to at least one charter school was modeled as a dichotomous outcome using a binomial logistic regression model with a logit link function. The dependent variable is the log odds that the teacher applicant applied to at least one charter school:

$$\text{Logit}[\pi(x)] = \ln[\pi(x)/(1-\pi(x))] = \alpha + \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\beta}$$

The independent variables used in the model were based on findings from the qualitative analysis. They are discussed in the presentation of the findings. With the exception of whether the teacher applicant applied to a private school, all the independent variables were collected in the initial survey at the start of the teacher hiring season. The study's longitudinal design allows for teacher characteristics collected at an earlier time point to predict later behavior.

Charter School Context

As the laws and practical context of charter schools vary tremendously, it is useful to know the context in which this study took place. The research design focuses on teacher applicants in the Detroit metropolitan area. At the time of this study, the Detroit area economy was suffering, with significant job losses as auto companies eliminated jobs. Overall, the area had an over-supply of teachers and the job prospects for new teachers looked dim. The labor market conditions were clearly influenced by enrollment patterns induced by declining population and stagnant per-pupil funding. Further, Michigan is historically an exporter of new teachers, with many newly prepared teachers leaving the state for other regions in the nation with an overall teacher shortage. Still, the state bureau of labor rated elementary teaching among the occupations with the largest number of annual job openings. One recent trend that eased the job market for new teachers was the presence of retirement incentives for experienced teachers. Like the rest of the country, the state teaching force is graying, with many teachers hanging on to jobs until they retire. As district budgets struggle to pay teachers at the top of the salary schedule, many districts in the area offered retirement incentives for veteran teachers, creating openings for new teachers.

Although the entire metropolitan area is quite diverse when considered as a whole, the city and suburbs surrounding Detroit are highly segregated. The main counties around Detroit are predominantly White. Most of the African Americans who live in the area live within Detroit's city boundaries, though several suburban towns close to Detroit also have large proportions of African American residents. There is also a large population of Arab Americans. The suburbs are generally divided into a group of older, more diverse suburbs immediately surrounding Detroit and younger suburbs farther out that formed during successive population shifts as residents

move farther away from Detroit. The older suburbs tend to be less affluent—although there are some well-established and very affluent communities—and the younger suburbs are more affluent and predominantly White.

Another major factor in the enrollment trends of public school districts, and Detroit Public Schools in particular, is increasing competition from charter schools. About 45 charter schools—mostly elementary—are located in Detroit's borders and over 100 are within the Detroit metropolitan area. In 2009, 25 percent of children in Detroit attended charter schools. Thus, charter schools are a significant part of the educational landscape in the Detroit area and the presence of charter schools has impacted the teacher labor market as the loss of enrollment in some districts have forced districts to close schools and layoff teachers. At the time of this study, just less than 10 percent of public school teachers in the area worked in charter schools. While many districts in the area announced they were not hiring new elementary teachers, charter school enrollment—and thus their need for more teachers—continued to grow. Indeed, charter schools rely substantially on new teacher hires, as evident in their high proportions of inexperienced teachers and high attrition (Burian-Fitzgerald & Harris, 2004; Miron & Applegate, 2007). Personnel reports from the state administrative database indicate that in the year after this study was conducted, about 55 percent of teachers in charter schools in the counties that comprise the Detroit area were hired one year ago or less, compared to only 7 percent of teachers in local education agencies in the area (Center for Educational Performance and Information, 2007). Thus charter schools represent a considerable source of jobs for potential teachers.

Charter schools may be authorized by community colleges, universities, local school districts, and intermediate school districts. Most charter schools in the area are authorized by universities and are operated by educational management organizations (EMOs). Charter

schools' funding is tied to the per-pupil foundation grant in their host districts, but due to caps on the foundation grant a charter school can receive and difficulties in obtaining capital expenses, charter schools receive about \$1800 less per pupil than their host districts (Michigan Department of Education, 2008).

Charter schools do not have any automatic waivers from state regulations. Charter school teachers must be fully certified; although faculty at the universities and community colleges that authorize charter schools are allowed to teach in them without certification this rarely happens in practice. Charter schools that are authorized by local school districts are included in the district's collective bargaining agreement. Teachers in other charter schools are allowed to bargain collectively, but in practice few charter schools are unionized. As most charter schools are managed by EMOs, most teachers do not participate in the state teacher retirement system. Some EMOs, however, provide other retirement and insurance benefits to teachers. Salaries are significantly lower (about \$15,000 on average) in charter schools than in traditional public schools, although two-thirds of this gap is due to the fewer qualifications held by charter school teachers (Harris, 2006).

The large presence of for-profit EMOs, university authorizing structure, and Detroit area labor market make Michigan's charter schools somewhat unusual. Thus the particular context in which this study was located limits the generalizability of the findings to charter school labor markets in other locations, although this is true of all charter school research given the importance of state laws and local context in charter schooling (Betts, Hill, & The Charter School Achievement Consensus Panel, 2006).

Qualitative Findings

Table 2 presents evidence on teacher applicants' general openness to teaching in a charter school. One teacher applicant preferred to work in a charter school and, with the exception of one district near where she lived, applied exclusively to charter schools. Five teacher applicants were also quite open to teach in a charter school and were willing to give equal consideration to charter schools as to traditional public schools. These teacher applicants were in the minority, however, as most teacher applicants did not want to teach in a charter school. One third of teacher applicants did not consider teaching in any charter school at all. Slightly less than half of teacher applicants indicated they would consider charter schools if they could not get a job in a traditional public school. This includes teacher applicants who indicated they did not want to work in a charter school in the first interview, but ended up applying to some charter schools after their initial job search efforts appeared unsuccessful. The rest of this section attempts to explain the variation in teacher applicants' willingness to consider charter schools in their job search, including the institutional and informal barriers that may contribute to labor market segmentation.

Lack of Familiarity as an Informal Barrier

Two-thirds of teacher applicants expressed a general lack of familiarity with charter schools that inhibited their willingness to work in them. Teacher applicants had a general resistance to working in schools with which they were not already familiar—charter or otherwise (Author, forthcoming). As most teacher applicants were unfamiliar with charter schools, this became a negative feature of the school. For example, one teacher applicant explained his decision to not apply to any charter schools by saying, "I don't have a good reason. I'm just not looking at them. Maybe I should, but I'm familiar with public schools because that's what I went

to and that's where I did my student teaching. Maybe I'm sticking with what I know." Charter schools are still an unknown to many teacher applicants; just over one-third of teacher applicants said they really did not know anything about charter schools. Teacher applicants wanted to work in schools with which they are familiar, or were similar to those with which they were familiar—these were the schools that are most visible and most personally relevant to them. Since teacher applicants did not go to charter schools themselves and did not know many people who went to them, they were unfamiliar places and therefore not considered as an option.

There were a few teacher applicants who were familiar with charter schools, however, and these teacher applicants did seek out positions in charter schools. There are two main mechanisms that facilitated teacher applicants' familiarity with charter schools: teacher applicants' own social context and their teacher preparation institution. A small minority of teacher applicants lived in communities where charter schools were located and had contacts in charter schools. These social contexts made some teacher applicants more likely to think of charter schools as possible employment options. For example, one teacher applicant said, "I have a friend whose son goes to [charter school] and that's one of the schools I'm looking at. It's a charter school here in [city] and they had an open house last weekend. So from that and from talking to her...the school really has my curiosity." For this teacher applicant, charter schools are part of the educational landscape in her community. Indeed, her own daughter attended middle school in a charter school. Other teacher applicants who considered charter schools described similar connections with charter schools, including knowing individuals who work in charter schools and seeing them in their community. In this way, teacher applicants' social contexts and connections serve as an informal attractor that draws them to charter schools or an informal boundary that makes charter schools unfamiliar to other teacher applicants.

The second mechanism that facilitated teacher applicants' familiarity with charter schools was the presence of charter schools in their teacher preparation institution. One teacher applicant described knowing about charter schools because her college serves as an authorizer. She said, "I know [college] has a website for the schools, I don't think they accredit the schools, but they have some type of program where you can go to a link from our college of education and you can find out about those particular charter schools." This teacher applicant went to a college that authorized several charter schools and became familiar with charter schools through her college. Teacher applicants from two other colleges described hearing about charter schools from current teachers working in them who are also taking classes from their teacher preparation program. Thus institutions can help facilitate familiarity with charter schools. This is in contrast to teacher applicants from other institutions. One teacher applicant said, "I wish that we learned about charter schools ... cause we really don't hear anything about it at [college]." The differential attention paid to charter schools in teacher preparation programs and the role of public colleges in authorizing charter schools leads some teacher applicants to be more familiar with charter schools than other teacher applicants. Thus the teacher applicants' institutional context also influenced their familiarity with and openness to working in charter schools.

Ambiguous Institutional Status as a Barrier

Labor market segmentation theory focuses attention on institutional distinctions between sectors and the institutional status of charter schools influenced how teacher applicants thought about charter schools in their job search. In particular, most teacher applicants were confused about whether charter schools are public or private schools as they had little information about charter schools. Specific aspects of charter schools led teacher applicants to consider charter schools as more similar to private schools. For example, one teacher applicant said,

All I know is that they're, they're not run by the state. I'm pretty sure they get their funding from tuition. ... I don't know how they get public money if they do... I had heard somewhere but I don't know how true it is, that teaching in a charter school is not... It doesn't count as credits toward years of experience for your state certificate. I don't know if that's true or not at all but it just kinda set this tone in my mind that there's some separation between a public school and a charter school.

This teacher applicant had inaccurate information about charter schools and was confused about whether they were public or private schools. She recognized a distinction between traditional public schools and charter schools in their governance structures and assumed they also have distinct funding sources. Another teacher applicant described charter schools as “similar to a private school but not quite.” Just under half of teacher applicants expressed similar uncertainty about the public status of charter schools.

The institutional status of charter schools and their perceived similarity to private schools is important because teacher applicants justified their decision to avoid charter schools by stating their commitment to public education and “public” schools. They did not see charter schools as a desirable option—if an option at all—for engaging in the public mission of public education. One teacher applicant said, “I've always just been a strong advocate of public schools ... I don't know if I would necessarily apply to a private or charter school.” Another teacher explained that she was not completely opposed to working in a charter school, but preferred to avoid them because “they're in it to make a profit; not really what I think education should be about.” As charter schools were defined as outside the public sphere with goals that conflicted with the public purposes of education, they were seen as undesirable and not viable places of employment, especially for teacher applicants committed to public education.

The Michigan charter school context is somewhat unusual due to the large number of for-profit education management organizations (EMOs) operating charter schools. Thus it is possible

that teachers were confused about charter schools' institutional status due to this for-profit organization affiliated with the school. To explore whether the particular composition of Michigan charter schools was related to teacher applicants' inclination to work in a charter school, I used the survey data to see if teacher applicants who limited their job search to schools outside of Michigan were more or less likely to consider charter schools. While 51 percent of teacher applicants who applied to schools in Michigan applied to charter schools, only 13 percent of teacher applicants who only applied outside of Michigan applied to charter schools in the states they considered. All of the states to which these applicants applied had charter schools, including some states and metropolitan areas with relatively high percentages of charter schools, such as Arizona, Illinois, California, and Texas. Still, it is possible that teacher applicants were not aware that other states have fewer for-profit companies operating charter schools. The presence of for-profit EMOs may be contributing to teacher applicants' confusion about the institutional status of charter schools.

Yet some teacher applicants did seek out charter schools. It was not that these teacher applicants were less committed to public education, but that they assessed whether schools met their ideals for public education by the population served by the school rather than the presence or absence of various governance structures. Teacher applicants that wanted to work in urban schools or Detroit in particular or saw teaching as a way to give back to their community realized that they could do this in charter schools. For example, one teacher applicant said, "They're trying to knock out charter schools and as I tell people, charter schools are not private schools. They are public schools within the state of Michigan. We get your kids that you kick out of those schools, that you don't want back." This teacher applicant is pushing back on the idea that charter schools are more like private schools by noting that they are serving a population that is

not well served by more traditional schools. These are mostly racial minority teacher applicants who wanted to give back to their community, but included others with a social justice mission. For these teacher applicants, working in a charter school was acceptable because of the community or population served by the school. Another teacher applicant described how she is now considering different types of schools because she values diversity.

I pictured myself really in a large public school because that's all I had experience with. That's what I attended all my life, public schools, so that's where I thought the ideal place was. But now I see there's a need all over. In private, in public, in charter schools. In church based schools, it's a need. ... I value diversity, I need to be engulfed in it wherever I go. So it's very important that my worldview broadened, it really did and it went beyond just a large public school.

This teacher applicant applied to several charter schools because she valued the diversity of their student population. She sees a need for good teaching in many different types of schools and will work where she can fill this need and her own desire for diversity. Thus the desire to serve one's community or work in a diverse or traditionally under-served community allowed some teacher applicants to overcome the barrier created by the institutional status of charter schools.

Salary and Other Labor Market Preferences

In addition to the informal and institutional barriers that kept most teacher applicants from considering charter schools alongside traditional public schools, teacher applicants also had general preferences for the features they wanted in the school or district for which they worked. Teacher applicants cared about features such as salary, location, and school climate when making job search decisions in general (see Author, forthcoming, for a description of their general job search experiences and preferences) and these preferences interacted with their negative perception of charter schools. Although most teacher applicants expressed a lack of familiarity and confusion about charter schools, many also had perceptions of employment

conditions in them, whether through their social network, personal experiences, rumors, or media accounts. In particular, most teacher applicants described charter schools as offering lower salaries and/or benefits than traditional public schools, which contributed to their overall tendency to avoid working in them. For example, one teacher applicant said, “I just have this notion from everything else that they don’t, they’re very low on the pay scale.” Teacher applicants also had concerns that charter schools would not provide adequate retirement benefits or other benefits that came along with joining a teacher union. At least two teacher applicants, however, thought the lack of unionization in the charter schools was a positive feature.

Job Market Conditions as Mediating Factor

A final component in teacher applicants’ decisions to apply to charter schools was their assessment of the job market and likelihood they can get the job they want. Teacher applicants recognized that this was an area with an over-supply of teachers. Thus the overall job market conditions mediated teacher applicants’ preference to avoid charter schools, causing more teacher applicants to apply to charter schools than otherwise wanted to do so. One teacher applicant said in the first interview, “I think what my plan is now is that I’m gonna avoid [charter schools] as long as I can and then possibly if it gets to like July/August and I really feel like I want a teaching position, I might look into it more.” For this teacher applicant, working in a charter school was something to avoid as long as possible but was better than not having any teaching position. Other teacher applicants said they would not apply to a charter school “unless I was desperate” because “a job is better than no job.” As shown in Table 2 above, about 44% of teacher applicants interviewed only considered working in a charter school after being unsuccessful in getting a job in a traditional public school. Teacher applicants also talked about getting a job in a charter school initially as a way to gain experience and then transition into a

traditional public school. For example, one teacher applicant explained that he might apply to charter school so he could “use that as a stepping stone for workable references; good job experience, on the job experience.” When looking at charter schools from the perspective of someone facing unemployment, these teacher applicants were able to overcome their initial aversion to charter schools.

Logistic Regression Analysis

The qualitative analysis revealed several factors that seemed to impact teacher applicants’ decisions to apply to charter schools. Most teacher applicants preferred to avoid charter schools because they were not familiar with them and did not think they could pursue their commitment to public education in a quasi-private school. Yet teacher applicants who wanted to work in traditionally under-served communities or who came from particular social and institutional contexts were able to overcome these barriers and the tight job market conditions made teacher applicants more willing to work in charter schools. Teacher applicants also expressed concern about low salaries in charter schools. After identifying these patterns in the qualitative data, the survey data were used to model the decision to apply to a charter school with a larger sample using a binomial logistic regression model. The dependent variable is the log odds that the teacher applicant applied to at least one charter school. The independent variables and their descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Slightly less than half of teacher applicants, 45.6%, applied to at least one charter school. Six independent variables were used to predict whether a teacher applicant applied to a charter school, based upon findings from the qualitative analysis. Because the institutional status of charter schools and the sense that they were more similar to private schools kept many teacher applicants from wanting to teach in charter schools, it was hypothesized that teacher applicants

who were willing to apply to private schools were less concerned about the institutional status of the school and thus more likely to apply to charter schools. Teacher applicants who expressed an initial preference for working in an urban school were also hypothesized to be more likely to apply to a charter school. The surveys had no measure of overall familiarity with charter schools, but did have measures of the mechanisms that appeared to allow teacher applicants to become familiar with them. Teacher applicants that lived in cities or towns with at least one charter school at the time of the initial survey were thought to be more likely to apply to a charter school because they would be more likely to have charter schools as part of their own educational landscape. The qualitative analysis also suggested that teacher preparation institutions also played a role in helping teacher applicants become familiar with charter schools, especially those that authorized charter schools or allowed the presence of current charter school teachers in the classes of pre-service teachers. One teacher preparation program from which the sample was drawn authorizes charter schools and two small programs have classes in which both pre-service teachers and current teachers (many of them in local charter schools) take the same classes. Teacher applicants from these three institutions were hypothesized to be more likely to apply to charter schools. A measure of their overall confidence that they would get a job offer was also included to explore how teacher applicants' perceptions of the job market conditions influenced their decision. This item was obtained from the initial survey at the start of the teacher hiring season and is based on a Likert scale item asking them to rate their confidence in getting a job offer. Finally, a measure of the teacher applicant's preference for having a high salary was included. This item was also obtained from a Likert scale item on the initial survey asking them to rate how strongly they prefer various school characteristics in their job search.

Table 4 presents results from the binomial logistic regression model. The logistic results generally support the patterns evident in the qualitative interviews. Applying to private schools and having an initial preference for teaching in an urban school had large and statistically significant effects on the decision to apply to a charter school. Teacher applicants who applied to private schools had over nine times the odds of applying to a charter school. Teacher applicants who expressed an initial preference for working in an urban school had over four times the odds of applying to a charter school. The social and institutional contexts that would facilitate teacher applicants' familiarity with charter schools also had an effect on their likelihood of applying to them. Teacher applicants that lived in towns with at least one charter school had 2.7 times the odds of applying to work in a charter school. Likewise, teacher applicants that attended a teacher preparation program that authorizes charter schools have 3.8 times the odds of applying for a charter school teaching job. Teacher applicants that attended teacher preparation programs where they could have charter school teachers in their classes also had higher odds of applying to teach in a charter school, but the effect is only marginally statistically significant.

Teacher applicants' confidence that they would get a job offer and their preference for a high salary, however, had no effect on their likelihood of applying to teach in a charter school. This appears inconsistent with the finding from the qualitative data that teacher applicants' sense of the job market conditions moderated their general avoidance of charter schools. This may be due to teacher applicants' lack of information about potential salaries, the confidence measure being a poor proxy for teacher applicants' perception of the job market conditions, or teacher applicants having inaccurate perceptions of their ability to get a job offer at the start of their job search. Indeed, teacher applicants who were more confident in their ability to get a job offer at the start of the job search did not have more success in actually getting a job. Due to these

possible limitations of the confidence measure, I ran the model without these variables as a robustness check. Model 2 of Table 4 presents the results from this analysis. The results are generally consistent with the full model.

Segmented Labor Markets

The previous two sections examined the extent to which institutional rules or informal boundaries created distinctions between charter and traditional public schools in teacher labor market decisions. For a segmented labor market to develop, these barriers should also lead to observable differences in the qualifications and working conditions between school sectors. Due to the sampling frame, all teacher applicants in this study had full state certification for elementary teaching. Additional teacher qualification variables were collected, such as their ACT score upon college entrance, master's degree, and additional certification endorsements. These endorsements allow teacher applicants to teach specific subjects in middle schools or may make them more competitive candidates in elementary schools. Table 5 presents the qualifications of teacher applicants on these measures according to whether they ended up working in charter schools, applied to charter schools but ended up working in a traditional public school, and those who ended up working in a traditional public school because that is all they applied to. Similar data are shown for private school applicants because if a segmented labor market is created due in part to charter schools' perceived quasi-private status, then similar differences should be apparent in private schools.

Overall, there are few statistically significant differences in teacher applicants' qualifications by the sector of their current teaching job and the pattern provides mixed evidence about whether teacher applicants who ended up working in charter schools are more or less qualified than their peers who ended up working in traditional public schools. Teacher applicants

who ended up working in charter schools are more likely to have a master's degree than those who ended up working in a traditional public school, contrary to what labor market segmentation theory would predict. Teacher applicants in charter schools are somewhat less likely to have a social studies endorsement. Although not statistically significant, teacher applicants in charter schools appear to be less likely to have a math or early childhood endorsement but more likely to have a science endorsements. The pattern of results is not consistent between charter and private schools.

Although there are inconsistent findings in regards to whether teacher applicants who end up working in charter schools have fewer qualifications than their peers who end up working in TPS, the data do suggest that teacher applicants who work in charter schools have lower salaries and less job satisfaction. As shown in Table 6, teacher applicants who end up teaching in charter and private schools earned salaries that are about \$4300 and \$7000 less, respectively, than teacher applicants who end up teaching in traditional public schools. Traditional public school teachers also reported higher levels of satisfaction with teaching in their school than teachers who ended up in charter schools. There is no difference in the pupil-teacher ratio of teacher applicants who end up in charter and traditional public schools.

Table 6 also shows teacher applicants' plans to apply for a different teaching job at the end of their first year of teaching. Half of teachers who ended up working in a charter or private school indicated in late September or early October that they planned to apply for another teaching job at the end of the school year, compared to 15 percent of teachers in traditional public schools. Seven percent and ten percent of charter and private school teachers, respectively, indicated they did not plan to apply for a new teaching job at the end of the year, while half of traditional public school teachers planned to stay at their current school. While

these teachers may change their minds when the next hiring season actually begins, the data do suggest that teacher applicants who ended up working in charter and private schools were more likely to wish they were working somewhere else than teacher applicants who ended up working in traditional public schools.

Discussion and Conclusion

The first major research question asked about the extent to which teacher applicants considered charter schools alongside traditional public schools when looking for a teaching job. The data presented here indicate that only a small minority of teacher applicants gave equal consideration to charter schools and traditional public schools in the job search, with most teachers avoiding charter schools altogether or only including them in their job search if other jobs were not available. That teachers are hesitant to work in charter schools suggests these schools may face difficulties recruiting and retaining teachers beyond what might be expected given the students they serve. Indeed, charter schools do have lesser qualified teachers and lower retention than traditional public schools (Author, 2008; Harris, 2007; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2003). These findings may also explain an apparent paradox in teachers in charter schools: that charter schools appear to provide more enticing school environments on many measures yet have lesser qualified teachers (Author, 2009). Additional research should focus on charter schools' experience in teacher hiring to explore whether hiring officials in charter schools recognize this challenge and strategies they may use to overcome it.

Further, similar to how teachers' job search processes structure which traditional public schools they see as options (Author, forthcoming), characteristics of the teacher job search also limited the prominence of charter schools in their job search decisions. Both the qualitative and quantitative analyses provide evidence on the second major research question and shed light on

how institutional structures and informal boundaries influence the position charter schools hold in teacher applicants' job searches. Teacher applicants' confusion about the institutional status of charter schools and their perception that charter schools are not public served as a disincentive to work in charter schools. Yet as the logistic analysis shows, teacher applicants who were willing to work in private schools were also willing to work in charter schools. Informal boundaries, such as teacher applicants' preferences for working in a familiar setting and the social contexts that facilitate familiarity with charter schools, also shaped how teacher applicants thought about charter schools in their job search. Teacher applicants' personal and professional networks affected their labor market outcomes and—for most teacher applicants—these networks are tied to traditional public schools.

Moreover, the data presented here suggest that institutional contexts help to construct informal boundaries through their roles in facilitating familiarity with various schools and in shaping teacher applicants' social networks. Teacher preparation programs serve as an important institutional context that shapes teacher applicants' social networks and perceptions of schools (Maier & Youngs, 2009). Informal processes also contributed to teacher applicants' perceptions about the institutional status of charter schools. Teacher applicants' preferences for working with traditionally under-served populations in urban communities and their recognition that many charter schools serve these students allowed them to overcome the ambiguous public-private institutional distinction that kept others away from charter schools. The qualitative analyses suggest this is because these teacher applicants were able to see the public purposes of charter schools and so were less hampered by the institutional status of the schools.

Viewed through the lens of a labor market segmentation framework, the data suggest that institutional structures and informal boundaries between charter and traditional public schools

are contributing to a segmented labor market, in which jobs in a lower paid, less unionized sector are less preferred but easier to get than jobs in a higher paid sector (Dickens & Lang, 1992; Reid & Rubin, 2003). This points to the potentially limited impact that charter schools may have on the overall teacher labor market, even in areas with a substantial charter school sector. Increasing numbers of charter schools that compete with traditional school districts for teachers could possibly affect employment practices throughout the teacher labor market. Yet if most teachers avoid charter schools—as the evidence presented here suggests—and a segmented labor market develops, then charter schools would have a more marginal impact on teacher hiring and staffing patterns. Thus the introduction of charter schools may not change the monopsonistic tendencies of the traditional teacher labor market. This paper is a first step in understanding these patterns in teacher career decisions. Additional research should examine this more closely and also explore the amount of movement between these sectors to gauge the size of the institutional and informal boundaries identified in this paper.

Yet the labor market is not completely segmented as the institutional and informal boundaries do not appear to lead to lesser qualified teachers in the charter sector. This finding is inconsistent with previous research on charter and private school teachers and may be due to the sampling procedures that started with individuals completing teacher certification programs and thus reduced the variation in qualifications. Given differences in the certification rates across traditional public, charter, and private schools, a sample based on certified teachers may not represent the full spectrum of teacher qualifications in these schools. Indeed, Carruthers (2008) found that while charter school teachers were less likely to be certified, among teachers, charter school teachers were more qualified.

The importance of salary in teacher applicants' reasons for not pursuing jobs in charter schools also conflicts with labor segmentation theory. As previous research (Harris, 2006) and the data in this study suggest that charter school teachers did earn less than their peers in traditional public schools, teacher applicants' inclination to avoid charter schools was partly due to their preferences for where to work, rather than purely institutional or informal boundaries. Teacher applicants also care about other features in their job search, but they do give about as much consideration to salary as workers in other occupations (Baugh & Stone, 1982). Further, given teacher applicants' lack of familiarity with charter schools, salary differences may have been the most observable difference available to them. There is limited research on how teachers' preferences for where to work vary by sector, although one study found that teacher preferences help explain observable differences in employment conditions between sectors (Author, 2009).

The lack of information or incorrect information that teachers held about charter schools is also noteworthy, even in an area with a large number of charter schools. The teacher applicants in this study admitted to a great deal of confusion about what charter schools or how they operated. Yet even among teacher applicants who indicated they did know about charter schools held a variety of misconceptions about their status as a public school or the requirements of charter schools. This misinformation was present despite the study occurring in a context where charter schools were in large supply and frequently in the local news. Future research should examine where teachers form perceptions of charter schools and other forms of school choice. Given the resistance of the traditional education organizations to the charter school movement (Hill, Rainey, & Rotherham, 2006), it is possible that teachers' largely negative perceptions of

charter schools stem from their participation in these organizations, such as traditional teacher preparation programs and teacher unions.

Understanding the reasons why teachers may seek out or avoid working in charter schools is vital to evaluating the educational success of the charter school movement. As teachers are important components of the educational process, a charter school's ability to recruit and retain high quality teachers is central to their success. The data presented here provide moderate evidence that charter and traditional public schools did not directly compete with each other for teachers but operate in a somewhat segmented labor market. What this study cannot answer is the extent to which this is problematic for charter schools. If charter schools seek to hire a different population of teachers—as some research appears to suggest (Podgursky, 2008)—then these findings are not necessarily cause for alarm. Further, features associated with the core sector in a segmented labor market are not related to teacher or school effectiveness, thus these differences does not imply charter schools are necessarily less effective. Additional research should focus on the hiring priorities, recruitment strategies and personnel practices used by charter schools in comparison to traditional public schools. Research in other labor market and policy contexts is also needed to see how the findings from this study in Michigan extend to other contexts.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on Survey and Interview Samples

Characteristic	Survey	Interview	State database
N	160	27	4863
Male	7.6%	22.2%	12.9%
White	82.4	66.7	90.1
African American	6.3	18.5	8.0
Other racial-ethnic minority	11.3	14.8	1.9
Mid-career entrant	34.6	44.4	n/a

Table 2

Teacher Applicants' General Openness to Teaching in Charter School

Openness	Number of teacher applicants
Preferred charter schools	1
Considered at <i>same time</i> as other schools	5
Considered <i>after</i> other schools	12
Never considered	9

Note: Data from interview sample. N=27.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Logistic Regression Model

Variable	Percent	
Applied to at least one charter school	45.6	
Applied to at least one private school	33.3	
Initial preference for urban school	10.5	
Attended institution that authorizes charter schools	22.5	
Attended institution where classmates work in charter schools	13.8	
Lives in city with at least one charter school	46.9	
	Mean	SD
Confidence in getting a teaching job	2.23	.53
Preference for a high salary	3.94	.91

Note: N=160

Table 4

Binomial Logistic Regression Results Modeling the Decision to Apply to At Least One Charter School

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Odds ratio	Std. error	Odds ratio	Std. error
Applied to private school	10.47***	4.64	11.47***	5.04
Preference for urban school	4.97*	3.57	5.33*	3.66
Attended charter authorizer	3.12*	1.50	2.79**	1.28
Institution has classes with charter school teachers	2.67~	1.55	2.56	1.50
Lives in city with charter schools	2.76*	1.14	2.63*	1.05
Confidence	0.65	0.25		
Preference for high salary	1.23	0.28		
N	158		161	
Pseudo R-squared	.248		.243	
Likelihood ratio chi-square	52.8***		50.1***	

~ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 5

Teacher Applicants' Qualifications by Sector of their Current Teaching Job and Application Status

Qualification	Charter schools			Private schools		
	Did not apply	Applied, but not teaching in charter school	Applied, teaching in charter school	Did not apply	Applied, but not teaching in private school	Applied, teaching in private school
ACT	24.5	25.7	25.4	24.6	25.6	25.7
Certification endorsement						
Math	21.2%	20.8%	7.1%	18.6%	19.1%	20.0%
Science	19.6	41.7	38.5	26.3	33.3	30.0
Early childhood	15.7	12.5	0.0	10.5	19.1	10.0
Reading/English/ Language arts	54.9	37.5	46.2	49.1~	61.9*	20.0
Social studies	31.4~	33.3~	7.7	29.8	14.3*	50.0
Master's degree	3.9**	8.3*	35.7	13.8	4.8	0.0

Note: N=89. The smaller N is due to the fewer number of respondents who were able to obtain any teaching job.

~ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01. Indicates statistically significant difference from the group teaching in a charter/private school.

Table 6

Teacher Applicants' Satisfaction, Salary, and Pupil-Teacher Ratio by Sector of their Current Teaching Job

Characteristic	Charter	Private	Traditional public	N
Salary	\$31,811.11**	\$29,030.00***	\$36,102.62	71
Pupil-teacher ratio	18.3	n/a	18.1	70
Job satisfaction	3.0**	3.4	3.6	90
Plan to apply next year				79
Yes	50.0%**	50.0%*	15.4%	
No	7.1**	10.0*	50.8	
Not sure	42.9**	40.0*	33.9	

Note: The sample size N varies due to missing data. Salary, job satisfaction, and plans to apply next year were reported on the teacher applicant survey. The pupil-teacher ratio was obtained by matching the school in which the teacher applicant obtained a job with the Common Core of Data.

~ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001. Indicates statistically significant difference from teachers who ended up working in traditional public schools.

Appendix A: Initial Study Interview Protocol

1. Could you describe your background and reasons for pursuing elementary teaching? What other careers did you seriously consider or actually pursue?
2. Thinking back to when you first decided to go into teaching, describe the school in which you pictured yourself working.
3. Could you describe to me what you think schools look for when they hire teachers? How do you think you compare to the characteristics that schools look for?
4. Please describe one of the schools to which you are applying.
5. Could you describe your job search process?
6. How will you evaluate potential job openings?
7. What features of a school are most important in determining whether or not to apply there?
Why are these features important? When did you first begin to think about these features?
(Probe for physical building, students, principal, other teachers, community, location)
8. How do you get information on these important features?
9. Do you plan to apply to any public charter schools? What about private schools? If so, how will you get information about these types of schools? (Probe for whether there is a preference for charter or private schools, what it would be like teaching there)
10. Are there schools in which you would prefer not to work?
11. Can you describe to me some of the job interviews you had at different schools?
12. Please describe the schools in which you had an interview. (Probe for characteristics, how people respond when they say they are interviewing there, how it compares to preferences)
13. Who do you talk to about your career decision?
14. In what ways, if at all, will your preparation program affect your ability to find a job?