

# Charter schools impress half of California voters

By Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times

Charter schools have won over about half of California voters, but these independent, non-traditional public schools are not widely viewed as the solution to the state's education problems, according to a new poll.

Among those surveyed in the USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times poll, 52 percent had a favorable opinion about charters; only 12 percent had an unfavorable impression.

Asked whether charter schools or traditional schools provided a better education, 48 percent gave superior marks to charters; 24 percent considered traditional schools more effective.

"As people learn more about what charter schools are, they tend to like the idea of choice," said USC professor Priscilla Wohlstetter, who directs the university's Center on Educational Governance.

The charter model appealed to Latino parents in particular. Overall, 52 percent of parents – those who have a child or grandchild age 18 or under living at home – said they would consider enrolling their children in a charter, compared to 38 percent who said they would not. Among Latino parents, 56 percent were in favor and 30% disinclined. More than half the state's public school students are Latino.

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