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Opinion: Philanthropic Backing Does Not Buy Success at Charter Schools

June 10, 2011, 9:22 am

Charter-school networks with the biggest philanthropic support are not performing better than their less-generously supported peers, according an [Orange County Register](#) opinion column.

While donors have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into major charter chains, writes Andrew Coulson, head of the Center for Educational Freedom at the libertarian Cato Institute, the top performers among 68 California charter groups on standardized tests rank well down the list in terms of philanthropic aid.

Citing successful for-profit tutoring services in Korea and Japan as examples, Mr. Coulson contends countries “where educational excellence is scaling up” have succeeded because educational enterprises operate in a free market.

“Could it be that philanthropists have failed to consistently fund the best charter schools because they do not expect a return on their investment, as hard-nosed venture capitalists do?” he writes.

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