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Antidote to White Flight: Charter and Private Schools

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Liberal activists concerned about the “white flight” from cities over the past four decades may want to consider a new approach that relies upon charter and private schools to reverse the flight pattern.

Santa Ana, California, which Forbes rated as the 4th safest city in the U.S., is 90% minority. Why is the city so safe? At the Cato Institute recently, North Carolina State University professor Bartley Danielson attributed the safety rating to a mayor who brought in charter schools, where now there are 1,000 children on a waiting list for one charter school in the city because of its performance and reputation.

Another example is the state of Vermont’s Winhall district. Overall, Vermont has 93 school districts without a public school, but Winhall’s small district of 36 students once “spent 180% of the state average” on education and on their school district. But, voters decided to shutter the public school and invited a private school to fill the void. The result was a private school that housed 80 students, performed better on tests and spent “about 82% of the state’s average.” What is the school district’s flight rate? A plus 14%, meaning families are moving to the school district.

It now stands at plus 14 percent, which means that families are moving into the school district for a change.