

A Summary of Results from School Choice Research

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Do Voucher Recipients Benefit by Being Able to Attend a Private School? *Yes, According to 5 Random-Assignment Studies.*

- Charlotte** 5.9 percentile point gain in math after 1 year
6.5 percentile point gain in reading after 1 year
(Jay P. Greene, "Vouchers in Charlotte," *Education Next*, Summer 2001.
<http://educationnext.org/20012/46greene.html>)
- Dayton** 6.5 percentile point gain for African-American students after 2 years
(William G. Howell and Paul E. Peterson, *The Education Gap*, Brookings, 2002, p. 161)
- Milwaukee** 6 percentile point gain in reading after 4 years
11 percentile point gain in math after 4 years
(Jay P. Greene, Paul E. Peterson, and Jiangtao Du, "Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment," *Education and Urban Society*, February 1999)
- 8 percentile point gain in math after 4 years
(Cecilia Elena Rouse, "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 1998)
<http://www.jourdan.ens.fr/piketty/fichiers/enseig/ecoineg/articl/Rouse1998.pdf>
- New York** 4.7 percentile point math gain for students from low achieving schools after 1 year
(John Barnard, et al, "Principal Stratification Approach to Broken Randomized Experiments: A Case Study of School Choice Vouchers in New York City," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, June 2003.
<http://biosun01.biostat.jhsph.edu/~cfrangak/papers/sc/vouchers.pdf>)
- 2.2 percentile point gain (not statistically significant) for African-American students after 3 years
(Alan B. Krueger and Pei Zhu, "Another Look at the New York City School Voucher Experiment," Working Paper, March 2003.
http://www.irs.princeton.edu/pubs/pdfs/470_h.pdf)
- 9.2 percentile point gain for African-American students after 3 years
(William G. Howell and Paul E. Peterson, *The Education Gap*, Brookings, 2002, p. 159. See
<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/pdf/Estimating%20Impact%20of%20Test%20Scores%2006.12.03.pdf>)
- Wash., D.C.** 9.2 percentile point gain for African-American students after 2 years
(William G. Howell and Paul E. Peterson, *The Education Gap*, Brookings, 2002, p. 161)

Do Public Schools Improve in Response to the Challenge Vouchers Pose? *The Preponderance of Evidence Says They Do.*

- **Three Analyses of the A-Plus Accountability and Choice Program in Florida**

According to Greene and Winters, public schools whose students are eligible for vouchers made gains that were 5.1 percentile points greater on a math test than schools not forced to compete for their students. Schools facing the prospect of having to compete for their students if they failed again made gains that were 3.0 percentile points greater. Studies by Chakrabarti as well as West and Peterson confirm these positive effects.

(Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters, "Competition Passes the Test," *Education Next*, Summer 2004. <http://www.educationnext.org/20043/66.html>; Martin West and Paul Peterson, "The Efficacy of Choice Threats Within School Accountability Systems," Harvard PEPG Working Paper 05-01, March 23, 2005. http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/pdf/papers/West_Peterson_ChoiceThreats.pdf)
- **Two Analyses of the Milwaukee School Choice Program**

Hoxby finds that schools that were most exposed to voucher competition increased math scores by 7.1 percentile points between 1999 and 2000 compared to 3.7 percentile points for schools not exposed to the challenge. Similar gains in science and language results. The study by Greene and Forster confirm these positive effects.

(Caroline Minter Hoxby, "The Rising Tide," *Education Next*, Winter 2001. <http://educationnext.org/20014/68.html>; Jay P. Greene and Greg Forster, "Rising to the Challenge: The Effect of School Choice on Public Schools in Milwaukee and San Antonio" *Manhattan Institute Civic Bulletin* 27, October 2002, http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cb_27.htm)
- **Two Analyses of Competitive Effects from Charter Schools**

In Arizona Hoxby finds that municipalities that faced the most competition from charters made annual improvement of 3 percentile points on 4th grade math scores compared to 1 percentile point gain for those facing no charter challenge. This trend would close the achievement gap between Phoenix and its suburbs in under 10 years. In Michigan Hoxby finds that districts facing serious competition from charters had scores that climbed by 2.4 scale points more per year in 4th grade reading and 2.5 scale points more per year in 4th grade math than districts that did not face competition. If this trend continued the gap between Detroit and Grosse Point's score's would close in under two decades.

(Caroline Minter Hoxby, "The Rising Tide," *Education Next*, Winter 2001. <http://educationnext.org/20014/68.html>)
- **Two Analyses of Competition Between School Districts**

Hoxby finds that a one standard deviation increase in school district competition produces a 17% decrease in per pupil spending and a 3 percentile improvement in test scores. Greene and Winters confirm these positive effects, finding higher graduation rates when school districts are made smaller.

(Caroline M. Hoxby, "Analyzing School Choice Reforms," in *Learning from School Choice*, Peterson and Hassel, eds, Brookings, 1998; Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters, "The Effect of Residential School Choice on Public High School Graduation Rates," *Education Working Paper* 9, April 2005. http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ewp_09.htm)
- **Belfield and Levin's Review of the Research Literature**

After reviewing more than 200 analyses they conclude that "a sizable majority of these studies report beneficial effects of competition across all outcomes, with many reporting statistically significant correlations," and "The above evidence shows reasonably consistent evidence of a link between competition (choice) and education quality. Increased competition and higher educational quality are positively correlated."

(See Clive R. Belfield and Henry M. Levin, "The Effects of Competition on Educational Outcomes: A Review of US Evidence," *National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education*, March 2002, pp. 2, 11. http://www.ncspe.org/publications_files/688_OP35V2.pdf)

Does Choosing Private Schools Increase Racial Segregation? *The Best Evidence Suggests School Choice Actually Improves Integration.*

■ **Private School Classrooms are Better Integrated than Public School Classrooms**

55% of public school 12th graders are in racially homogenous classrooms compared to 41% of private school 12th graders
(Jay P. Greene, "Civic Values in Public and Private Schools," in *Learning from School Choice*, Peterson and Hassel, eds, Brookings, 1998.)

■ **Private School Lunchrooms are Better Integrated than Public School Lunchrooms**

79% of private school students sit in racially mixed groups during lunch compared to 43% of public school students
(Jay P. Greene and Nicole Mellow, "Integration Where it Counts," *Texas Education Review*, Spring 2000.
<http://www.educationreview.homestead.com/integration.html>)

■ **Voucher Students Attend Less Segregated Schools**

61% of Cleveland metro area public school students attend racially homogenous schools compared to 50% of students attending Cleveland private schools receiving vouchers
(Jay P. Greene, "Choice and Community: The Racial, Economic, and Religious Context of Parental Choice in Cleveland," Buckeye Institute, November 1999. <http://www.buckeyeinstitute.org/greene.pdf>)

58% of Milwaukee public elementary school students attend racially homogenous schools compared to 38% of Catholic elementary school students
(Howard Fuller and George Mitchell, "The Impact of School Choice on Racial and Ethnic Enrollment in Milwaukee Private Schools," *Current Education Issue*, no. 99-5, December 1999)

■ **Two Recent Contrary Findings**

Sean Reardon and John Yun, "Private School Racial Enrollments and Segregation," Harvard Civil Rights Project, June 26, 2002.

Gary W. Ritter, Rush, Alison, & Rush, Joel, "How Might School Choice Affect Racial Integration in Schools? New Evidence from the ECLS-K," *Georgetown Public Policy Review*, Spring 2002.

Why Do Other Reviews Of Choice Research Claim Inconclusive Results?

- They Select the Least Positive Analytical Model

For example, Alan Krueger's re-analysis of the New York data finds positive but statistically insignificant results only after failing to control for background characteristics and defining student race in a way prevented by federal research standards. Of the 120 different ways that Peterson and Howell analyzed the data, all produced positive results of which 108 were statistically significant.

- They Arbitrarily Exclude Positive Studies

For Example, RAND Review Excludes All Studies of Effects on Public Schools and Then Concludes: "Whether the introduction of vouchers/charters will help or harm the achievement of students who stay in conventional public schools remains for the moment entirely unknown."

- They Mischaracterize the Results They Do Include

For Example, Martin Carnoy Characterizes Rouse's Math Results from Milwaukee as "statistically significant but relatively small." Yet the Math Gain Would Cut the Black/White Test Score Gap Almost in Half in 4 Years.

- Any Research Limitation Supports "Inconclusive" Claim

Some people dwell on emptiness in glasses that are even three-quarters full.