



# TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

## FAQ: HOW WOULD AN ESA HELP STUDENTS?

### PROVEN SUCCESS

Studies over the last 25 years show that increasing education options improves proficiency and education attainment for participating students and the local public schools. Choice programs also have high satisfaction rates and improve social and economic mobility. A list of studies is below.

### BENEFITS TO STUDENTS IN THE PROGRAM

1. A 2021 study found that San Antonio students in charter schools made significantly greater gains in reading compared to district schools.<sup>1</sup>
2. A 2021 report shows that 8<sup>th</sup> grade black students in Florida charter schools outperform black students in all states in both Reading and Math.<sup>2</sup>
3. A 2010 peer reviewed study from Harvard University scholars found that New York public school students in choice programs improved their math and reading scores. Math scores of students who came from low performing public schools increased by 4–5 percent, and reading scores increased by 2–3 percent.<sup>3</sup>
4. A 2009 study found that students in the Washington, D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) gained the equivalent of an extra 3.7 months of instruction over 3 years.<sup>4</sup>
5. A 2006 Brookings Institution study found that African American students in Washington, D.C., Dayton, OH, and New York, NY, scored six percentile points higher on their Iowa Tests than students who remained in their former school.<sup>5</sup>
6. A 2001 study by Education Next (a non-profit journal) found that choice students in Charlotte, NC, scored 5.9 percentile points higher on math tests and 6.5 percentile points higher on reading tests.<sup>6</sup>
7. A 2003 peer reviewed study by scholars at Johns Hopkins, Columbia, and Harvard found a 3-percentile point increase in math scores for African American children and stated that choice programs have “greater potential benefit for children in lower-scoring schools.”<sup>7</sup>
8. A 1999 peer reviewed study by UT Austin and Harvard scholars found that, in Milwaukee, reading scores of students in the fourth year of their choice program had improved by six percentile points; math scores improved by 11 points.<sup>8</sup>
9. A 1998 peer reviewed study by MIT scholars found that math scores of Milwaukee school choice participants improved by 1.5 – 2.3 percentage points. Reading scores were not affected.<sup>9</sup>
10. The Academic Freedom Index, a measure of government regulated educational choices offered to families in each state, has a strong association with both academic scores and academic gains.<sup>10</sup>

### BENEFITS TO NEARBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

11. From 2005 to 2022, all Florida 4<sup>th</sup> graders improved from 32<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> in Math and from 28<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> in Reading.<sup>11</sup>
12. A May 2021 study showed that the Florida school choice program reduced behavioral problems in public schools, including suspensions and absenteeism, by up to 9%.<sup>12</sup>
13. From 1998 to 2019, NAEP outcomes show that Florida’s elementary school reading proficiency for low-income students increased from #33 in the US to #1.<sup>13</sup>
14. A 2014 study showed that the CEO Horizon Scholarship Program near San Antonio had small, positive effects on public school performance due to competitive pressures.<sup>14</sup>
15. A 2010 Study in Florida showed that the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship improved public school performance<sup>15</sup>
16. A 2002 by Stanford economists found that programs in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Arizona improved school district achievement in Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies.<sup>16</sup>

### LONG-TERM BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

17. Participation with Milwaukee’s choice program (MPCP) was associated with lower rates of conviction for criminal activity and lower rates of paternity suits. Students who participated in the

choice program had 56% fewer drug convictions and 86% fewer property damage convictions after leaving the program.<sup>17</sup>

18. MPCP students had higher on-time graduation rates than Milwaukee Public Schools students, 69% to 75%, and were more likely to enroll and persist in a 4-year college.<sup>18</sup>
19. Participation in Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship program increased college enrollment rates by 6%.<sup>19</sup>
20. A 2010 study by the Federal Department of Education found that the school choice program in Washington D.C. increased high school graduation rates from 70 percent to 82 percent.<sup>20</sup>
21. A 2012 joint study by the Brookings Institution and Harvard University looked at New York's school choice program. They found that college enrollment by African American school choice students increased by 25%. They also found that African American enrollment in selective colleges (which have an average SAT of 1100 or greater) more than doubled.<sup>21</sup>
22. Participants in Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship program are 20% more likely to earn bachelor's degrees.<sup>22</sup>

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