

A WIN-WIN SOLUTION PART I: ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF CHOICE PARTICIPANTS



What opponents say: School choice does not improve academic outcomes for choice participants.

What the facts say: School choice does improve academic outcomes for choice participants by allowing students to find the schools that best match their needs.

What the studies show: There have been 18 studies using random-assignment methods to examine how school choice affects the academic outcomes of participants. This body of evidence shows that school choice benefits students. Fourteen studies find positive effects on school choice participants: six find choice had a positive effect across all students participating and another eight find choice had a positive effect on some student groups and no visible impact on other students. Two studies find no visible effect from choice. Two studies on Louisiana’s voucher program find that it had a negative effect.

Location	Author	Year	Results			
			Positive Effect		No Visible Effect	Negative Effect
			All Students	Some Students		
Louisiana	Mills & Wolf	2016				X
Louisiana	Abdulkadiroglu et. al	2016				X
New York	Chingos & Peterson	2015		X		
New York	Bitler et. al.	2015		X		
New York	Chingos & Peterson	2013		X		
D.C.	Wolf et. al.	2013	X			
New York	Jin et. al.	2010		X		
Charlotte	Cowen	2008	X			
Toledo	Bettinger & Slonim	2006			X	
New York	Howell & Peterson	2004		X		
New York	Krueger & Zhu	2004			X	
New York	Barnard et. al.	2003		X		
New York	Howell & Peterson			X		
D.C.	Howell & Peterson	2002	X			
Dayton	Howell & Peterson			X		
Charlotte	Greene	2001	X			
Milwaukee	Greene et. al.	1998	X			
Milwaukee	Rouse	1998	X			

Note: This table shows all empirical studies using random-assignment methods.

Breaking down the Louisiana studies: Two random-assignment studies published since the previous edition of this report, both examining the Louisiana Scholarship Program (LSP), find a negative effect on academic outcomes for participating students. The first study was conducted by Atila Abdulkadiroglu, Parag Pathak, and Christopher Walters. It finds that in the first year, the voucher program had a negative effect on participants' math, reading, science, and social studies scores. The negative effect on math scores was 0.4 standard deviations—a large effect, in this case equal to a 50 percent increase in a student's chance of receiving a failing grade. The second study, by Jonathan Mills and Patrick Wolf, finds that the program had a negative effect on math and no visible effect on reading in its first two years. The negative effect in math was 0.34 standard deviations over two years.

The most likely explanation for this anomalous finding is low private school participation in the program due to poor program design and fear of future action from hostile regulators. In sharp contrast to other choice programs, only a small minority of eligible private schools in Louisiana participate in the voucher program. Less than one-third of Louisiana private schools chose to participate in the program in its first year. Survey research finds that fear of "future regulations" was the number one reason cited by private schools choosing not to participate.

Source: Greg Forster, *A Win-Win Solution: The Empirical Evidence on School Choice*, 4th ed. (Indianapolis: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, 2016).