

## Improving Student Outcomes through Parent Participation

by Michael Barba, Policy Analyst

In the ongoing school finance trial, the Travis County district court found that a “disastrous” 14 - 25 percent of students fail to graduate from high school, and 18 percent of graduates from 2010 - 2013 met the SAT or ACT college-readiness standards. (Findings of Fact 205-207, 160)

Student outcomes improve when parents take an active role in their child’s education. One way parents take an active role is when they choose their child’s educational services. Several studies have been performed to measure the effect this has on students. Listed below is a summary of their findings and source citations:

1. A 1998 study by MIT scholars found that math scores of Milwaukee school choice participants improved by 1.5 – 2.3 percentage points. Reading scores weren’t affected.

Source: Rouse, Cecilia E., *Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program*, The Quarterly Journal of Economics 113, no. 2 (May 1998): 553-602.

2. A 1999 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 6 percentile points; math scores improved by 11 points.

Source: Greene, Jay P., Paul Peterson, and Jiangtao Du, *Effectiveness of School Choice: The Milwaukee Experiment*, Education and Urban Society 31, no. 2 (February 1999): 190-213.

3. A 2002 study by Stanford scholars found that public schools improved when about 6 percent of public school enrollment moved into school choice

(charter school) programs.

Source: Hoxby, Caroline, “How School Choice Affects the Achievement of Public School Students,” in *Choice with Equity*, ed. Paul Hill. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 141-177.

4. A 2003 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.”

Source: Barnard, John, Constantine Frangakis, Jennifer Hill, and Donald Rubin, *Principal Stratification Approach to Broken Randomized Experiments: A Case Study of School Choice Vouchers in New York City*, Journal of the American Statistical Association 98, no. 462 (June 2003): 299-323.

5. 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.

Source: Greene, Jay P., *Vouchers in Charlotte*, (Cambridge, MA: EducationNext, Summer 2001), 55-60.

6. A 2010 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; reading scores increased by 2-3 percent.

Source: Jin, Hui, John Barnard, and Donald Rubin, *A Modified General Location Model for*

*Noncompliance With Missing Data: Revisiting the New York City School Choice Scholarship Program Using Principal Stratification*, Journal of Educational and Behavioral Studies 35, no. 2 (April 2010): 154-173.

7. A 2010 study by the Federal Department of Education found that the school choice program in Washington D.C. had no impact on student test scores, but increased high school graduation rates from 70 percent to 82 percent.

Source: Wolf, Patrick, Babette Gutmann, Michael Puma, and Brian Kisida, *Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Final Report*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education: Institute of Education Sciences, June 2010), xv.

8. A 2008 Policy Studies Journal article confirmed the reading score improvement from the 2001 Education Next study, but didn't find a change in the math scores.

Source: Cowen, Joshua M., *School Choice as a Latent Variable: Estimating the "Complier Average Causal Effect" of Vouchers in Charlotte*, Policy Studies Journal 36, no. 2 (May 2008): 301-315.

9. A 2003 study by Princeton University scholars found that test scores of African American students in the New York school choice program did not change as a result of school choice.

Source: Krueger, Alan B., and Pei Zhu, *Working Paper 9418: Another Look at the New York City School Voucher Experiment*, (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2003).

10. A 2006 Brookings Institution study found that African American students in Washington, D.C., Dayton, OH, and New York, NY, scored 6 percentile points higher on their Iowa Tests than students who remained in their former school.

Source: Howell, William and Paul Peterson, *The Education Gap: Vouchers and Urban Schools*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002).

11. 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 more) more than doubled.

Source: Chingos, Matthew and Paul Peterson, *The Effects of School Vouchers on College Enrollment: Experimental Evidence from New York City*, (Washington D.C: Brookings Institute and Harvard Kennedy School, August 23, 2012), 12, 14, 16-17, 18.

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