

**U. S. Department of Education
Policy and Program Studies Service
Report Highlights**

**State and Local Implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*: Volume I—
Title I School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services, and Student Achievement**

Background

A key aim of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) is to provide new educational choice options to parents whose children attend Title I schools that were identified for improvement because the schools did not make adequate yearly progress toward meeting state standards for two or more years. The first of these options is the opportunity for parents to transfer their children to another school in the district that has not been identified for improvement, and the second is the opportunity for low-income parents to enroll their children in supplemental educational services—such as tutoring, remediation, or other academic instruction—that are offered by a state-approved provider and are in addition to instruction provided during the school day.

This report examines the impact of participation in Title I school choice and supplemental educational services on student achievement, as well as the characteristics of participating students. The analysis was conducted as part of the National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind*, using data from nine large urban districts. These districts were selected based on two main criteria: 1) availability of the necessary longitudinally linked student-level assessment data, and 2) relatively large numbers of students participating in the two choice options. The nine districts are: Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Palm Beach, Philadelphia, San Diego, and Washington, D.C.

For the achievement impact analysis, the study used a quasi-experimental “difference in differences” design to examine within-subject pre-post comparisons and comparisons between students participating and not participating in the choice options. In essence, this approach examines differences in achievement trajectories for the treatment and comparison groups, over a period that extends before and after treatment (i.e., before and after students changed schools or enrolled in supplemental services).

The analysis relies on student-level participation and assessment data for a period of up to five years, from 2000–01 through 2004–05, depending on data availability in each district. Although nine districts were included in the study, the impact analyses are based on a smaller subset of districts (six to seven) due to data issues.

Key Findings

In the sample of nine large urban districts, participation in both Title I school choice and supplemental educational services was highest in elementary grades.

- For supplemental services, 24 to 28 percent of eligible students in grades 2 through 5 participated, while in high school, fewer than 5 percent of eligible students participated.
- For school choice, average participation rates in grades 2 through 5 were between 0.6 and 1.0 percent, while high school participation rates were between 0.2 and 0.4 percent.

In the nine districts, African-American students had the highest rate of participation, compared with other racial or ethnic groups, in Title I supplemental educational services and an above-average participation rate in school choice.

- Hispanic students had a higher participation rate than white students in supplemental services but a lower participation rate in school choice.
- Limited English proficient students and students with disabilities had relatively high participation rates in supplemental services and relatively low participation rates in school choice.
- Transferring students tended to choose schools that had lower concentrations of minority students and greater racial/ethnic balance than the schools that they left.

Across the nine districts, students participating in the Title I school choice and supplemental educational services options had lower prior achievement, on average, than other students in their districts.

- Students participating in supplemental services had lower prior achievement than eligible students who did not participate. Students participating in the school choice option had similar prior achievement levels to eligible nonparticipants.

Across the nine districts, the average achievement levels of the schools chosen by students using the Title I school choice option were consistently higher than the average achievement levels of the schools from which they transferred.

In the sample districts, student participants in supplemental educational services experienced gains in achievement that were statistically significant.

- Across seven districts with a sufficient sample of participating students, participation in supplemental educational services had a statistically significant, positive effect on students' achievement in reading and math.
- There is evidence that effects may be cumulative: students participating for multiple years experienced gains twice as large as those of students participating for one year.
- African-American students, Hispanic students, and students with disabilities all experienced positive achievement effects from participating in supplemental educational services.

For Title I school choice, the study did not find a measurable impact on student achievement, but sample sizes were small.

- Across six districts with a sufficient sample of participating students, participation in Title I school choice produced no statistically significant effect on achievement, overall or after multiple years in the chosen school.
- However, sample sizes for the school choice analysis were substantially smaller, due to the relatively small number of participants, which reduced the power of the analysis to detect effects and suggests that caution is warranted in interpreting these results.

This report is available on the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html#title.