

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
POLICY AND PROGRAM STUDIES SERVICE
REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

**State and Local Implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*
Volume VII—Title I School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services: Final Report**

Background

A key aim of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (*NCLB*) is to provide additional educational options to parents of students in low-performing Title I schools, specifically the opportunities to transfer their child to a higher-performing school or enroll their child in supplemental educational services. In Title I schools that have been identified as in need of improvement because they did not meet the state's targets for adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two consecutive years, the district must offer students the option to transfer to another school that has not been identified for improvement. All students in the school are eligible for this option, and the district must provide transportation for participating students. If an identified Title I school misses AYP again (for a third time), the district must also offer low-income students in the school the option to receive supplemental educational services from a state-approved provider; the district is not required to provide transportation for supplemental educational services.

This report describes the progress that states, districts, and schools have made in implementing the Title I parental choice options based on data collected during the 2004–05 and 2006–07 school years through two federally funded studies—the Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under *NCLB* (SSI-*NCLB*) and the National Longitudinal Study of *NCLB* (NLS-*NCLB*). The SSI-*NCLB* study interviewed state education agency staff and analyzed data from Consolidated State Performance Reports and other extant data sources in all states. The companion NLS-*NCLB* study surveyed districts, principals, teachers, and Title I paraprofessionals in a nationally representative sample of 300 districts and 1,483 schools. The NLS-*NCLB* also included surveys of parents in eight school districts and surveys of supplemental educational service providers in 16 districts.

Overall, states, districts, and providers were working to implement Title I school choice and supplemental educational services. Most districts continued to report that they offered Title I school choice and supplemental educational services if they were required to do so, and the numbers of students eligible for and participating in both options (especially supplemental educational services) have increased substantially since 2004–05. Nonetheless, only a small proportion of eligible students actually participated in the choice options. Factors that may have contributed to the low participation rates include: absence of school choice and supplemental educational services available, late notification of parents about the school choice option, communication problems with parents, and parents choosing not to participate.

Eligibility, Availability, and Participation

Although the number of eligible students and participants in Title I school choice has increased since 2003–04, participation rates remained at one percent in 2006–07.

- In 2006–07, more than 6.9 million students were eligible for Title I public school choice, a four-fold increase since 2002–03.
- The number of students participating in school choice increased from 38,000 in 2003–04 to 58,500 in 2005–06, and decreased to 45,000 in 2006–07.

A similar trend is evident for Title I supplemental educational services, with the number of eligible students and participants increasing since 2004–05 while participation rates remained stable at 17 percent in 2005–06.¹

- In 2006–07, 3.3 million students were eligible for Title I supplemental educational services, a six-fold increase since 2002–03.
- The number of students participating in supplemental educational services increased from 233,000 in 2003–04 to 449,000 in 2005–06.

In 2006–07, districts were less likely to offer Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services to eligible middle and high school students than to eligible elementary school students.

- At the elementary school level, 67 percent of districts with one or more elementary schools identified for improvement offered students in those schools the option to transfer to another school. At the middle school level, 41 percent of affected districts offered the school choice option (an increase from 20 percent in 2004–05), while 22 percent of affected districts offered school choice at the high school level.
- About half of districts that did not offer the school choice option said the reason was all schools at the relevant grade level were identified for improvement. Districts typically have fewer middle schools and high schools than elementary schools: 77 percent of districts with high schools have only one high school and 67 percent of districts with middle schools have only one middle school, while 53 percent of districts with elementary schools have only one elementary school.
- More than three-quarters of districts with eligible elementary and middle school students offered supplemental educational services to these students. At the high school level, about one-third of districts offered supplemental educational services to eligible students.

Districts that offered Title I choice options generally offered parents of eligible students more schools and providers from which to choose in 2005–06 and 2006–07 than in 2004–05.

- The percentage of districts offering more than two transfer school options to parents of middle school students increased from 30 percent to 66 percent from 2004–05 to 2006–07.
- In 2005–06, two-thirds of districts (69 percent) offering supplemental educational services reported that parents could choose from at least five Title I supplemental service providers, compared with 38 percent of districts in 2003–04.

Communication With Parents

Low participation rates in school choice and supplemental educational services may be related to problems communicating with parents.

- Parents surveyed in eight urban districts were often unaware of the Title I school choice and supplemental services options, even though all eight districts provided evidence that they had sent notification letters to parents about these options. In 2006–07, only 20 percent of parents whose children were eligible to use school choice said they had been notified, and 59 percent of those whose children were eligible to receive supplemental services said they had been notified.
- In 2006–07, 43 percent of districts required to offer school choice notified parents of eligible students of that option before the beginning of the school year. While this represents less than

¹ This report does not provide data on supplemental services offered in 2004–05 and 2006–07 because districts often do not have complete data about participation in this option until the end of the school year, and the surveys were completed primarily during the fall and winter of those school years. The surveys administered in 2004–05 and 2006–07 asked about supplemental services provided in the prior year, not the current year, but asked about participation in the school choice option for both the prior year and the current year.

half of school districts, it is a sizable increase from the 29 percent of districts that notified parents of eligible students of the choice option before the beginning of the 2004–05 school year. Districts that notified parents about the Title I school choice option before the first day of school continued to have higher participation rates (1.4 percent in 2006–07) than districts that notified parents on or after the first day of school (0.7 percent).

Even among parents in the eight-district sample who said they were notified of their child's eligibility for Title I school choice or supplemental educational services, a majority of parents chose not to transfer their child or to enroll him or her in supplemental services.

- Satisfaction with their child's school and convenient location of that school were the main reasons that parents of students eligible for Title I public school choice reported they chose not to transfer their child.
- The primary reasons parents of students eligible for Title I supplemental educational services did not enroll their child for these services were because parents indicated that their child did not need help and because tutoring was provided at inconvenient times for families.

Parents in the eight-district sample who took advantage of their Title I choice options often did so to improve their child's education, and over 80 percent of such parents were satisfied with their decisions.

- Among parents who transferred their child to a school not identified for improvement, the most common reasons were that they thought the quality of teaching was better at the new school (62 percent) and because the previous school was not meeting their child's needs (62 percent).
- About half of the parents who chose supplemental services gave the following reasons for participation: tutoring was free, tutoring was offered in the subject area in which their child needed extra help, and their child's teacher thought the child should get this extra help.

Implementation and Monitoring of Supplemental Educational Services

The proportion of students served by private supplemental services providers increased from 58 percent in 2003–04 to 76 percent in 2005–06 while the proportion of students served by school districts and public schools declined from 34 percent to 13 percent over these two years.

- From May 2003 to May 2008, the number of state-approved supplemental educational service providers in the nation more than tripled, from 1,024 to 3,050. The largest increase was for private providers.
- Private providers accounted for 88 percent of all state-approved providers in May 2008, an increase from 60 percent in May 2003. Meanwhile, the percentage of providers that were school districts and public schools declined to 10 percent in May 2008 from 32 percent in May 2003.

Supplemental service providers in a subsample of 16 districts reported that they provided, on average, about 45 hours of instruction per student per year.

- Providers reported that, on average, 36 sessions were provided to students annually, with each session lasting an average of 76 minutes.
- In 2006–07, nearly all supplemental educational service providers reported that they communicated with students' classroom teachers at least a few times per year. However, a non-negligible minority of providers (26 percent) never reported on the progress of individual students to teachers.

Districts reported spending an average of \$838 per participating pupil on Title I supplemental educational services in 2005–06.

- Expenditures for Title I supplemental educational services doubled between 2003–04 and 2005–06 from \$192 million to \$375 million. Expenditures for transportation of students who transferred to an alternate school under Title I school choice more than doubled from \$24 million to \$56 million. The percentage increases in expenditures were comparable to the increases in the numbers of participants.

By fall of 2006–07, nearly all states had developed systems for monitoring Title I supplemental educational service providers' effectiveness. Most states had evaluation plans as well, though the evaluation component is generally not as developed as the monitoring component.

- Forty-two states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico had documented monitoring standards. Common types of monitoring include reviewing student attendance reports, observing supplemental services sessions, and meeting with provider organizations to discuss implementation.
- Thirty-two states and Puerto Rico had begun their supplemental services evaluations by the fall of 2006–07, and another 10 states anticipated beginning evaluations later in the school year. Thirty-two states and Puerto Rico planned to use state achievement test results as a primary source of data in their evaluations; of these, 12 states planned to use a matched comparison group of students.
- Only eight states had databases containing student achievement and participation information that would permit rigorous evaluations of achievement effects of providers on a statewide basis.

Copies of this report are available at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html. Copies of other reports in the series based on the SSI-NCLB and NLS-NCLB studies are also available at this website.