



The Truth About School Vouchers – 5 Vouchers Foster Integration

“Vouchers add another means to segregate our citizens, this time using public money.”

Education Policy Project
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Versions of this claim frequently surface in the public dialogue about school choice programs. The facts tell a different story.

For example, evidence from the country’s two largest voucher programs shows that school choice can foster higher levels of racial integration. At the same time, according to the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, America’s *public schools* “remain largely segregated and are becoming more so...More than 70% of the nation’s black students now attend predominantly minority [public] schools.”

In Cleveland and Milwaukee, targeted voucher programs let low-income parents, mostly of color, choose public or private schools for their children. Through these programs, thousands of Black and Hispanic parents have chosen schools that previously were attended mostly by white students. The result? More integration at many schools participating in choice programs.

Here are some specifics.

CLEVELAND. Jay Greene of the Manhattan Institute studied whether choice students were more likely than public school students to attend schools that were racially representative of metropolitan Cleveland. He found that nearly one-fifth of voucher students attended such schools, compared to only 5 percent of public school students. As Greene observed, “The amount of integration is not great in either system, but it is markedly better in the choice program.”

Parental School Choice is Widespread — Unless You’re Poor.

MILWAUKEE. Howard Fuller of Marquette University compared levels of racial isolation in Milwaukee public schools with private schools in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Fuller found that less than a third of voucher students at private religious schools attended “intensely segregated” schools, compared to half of Milwaukee public school students. Reflecting a standard used by the Harvard Civil Rights Project, Fuller defined an “intensely segregated” school as one where 90% or more of the enrollment was white or minority.

In summary, evidence from the country’s two largest voucher programs directly contradicts claims that school choice increases segregation. To the contrary, more integration is a clear result of targeted school choice programs.



Black Alliance for Educational Options

For more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org