Making Sense of New Evidence on Private School Vouchers

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HOW HAS
THE LOUISIANA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
AFFECTED STUDENTS?

A Comprehensive Summary of Effects after Three Years

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The Louisiana Scholarship Program (LSP)

• Voucher worth at most 90% of state & local per-pupil $

• Eligibility:
  – Family income $\leq 250\%$ of poverty line
  – Former public school rated “C” or below

• First year of statewide implementation
  – Nearly 10,000 eligible applicants
  – Over 50% received scholarships
NEW ORLEANS PILOT PROGRAM

FOCUS OF STUDY

Source. Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice
Eligible Applicants for the 2012-13 Cohort

Source. Authors' calculations.
Our Prior Work

• Segregation: (Egalite, Mills, & Wolf, 2016)
  – Majority of moves **improve** measures of integration at prior public school
  – Students move to schools mirroring their own ethnic background

• Competition: (Egalite, 2016)
  – Small **positive** effects of the program on math achievement of students in public schools facing competition from the program

• Test-Score Effects after 1 and 2 years: (Mills, 2015; Mills & Wolf, 2017)
  – Large **negative** effect of LSP on scores after 1 year, especially in math
  – Substantial reduction in the negative effects after 2 years, especially in math
Research Questions

1. How did the LSP scholarship affect student achievement after three years?
   Method: Randomized Control Trial (RCT)

2. How did the LSP scholarship affect identification of students to receive special education services?
   Method: Longitudinal hazard modeling

3. What types of private schools are choosing to participate in voucher programs in Louisiana and elsewhere?
   Method: Discrete choice statistical modeling
How did the LSP scholarship affect student achievement after three years?

English Language Arts

Mathematics

Notes. * indicates statistical significance at the .95 level. Results are presented for a consistent sample of students with Year 3 outcome data with baseline achievement in grades 3 through 5. ELA and math results are based on student achievement on the Louisiana state assessments (LAA) in 2011-12 through 2013-14, but are based on PARCC assessment performance in 2014-15. Dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals for the performance averages.
# Different Effects Across Subgroups

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<th>Subgroup Analysis</th>
<th>Finding</th>
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| Baseline Achievement      | • Positive ELA effects for lowest performers  
                           • All other differences are not statistically significant                                                                                  |
| Application Grade         | • Negative effect for math persists for students applying to grades 1, 2, or 3  
                           • ELA effect is not statistically significant regardless of application grade                                                            |
| Gender                    | Differences are not statistically significant                                                                                               |
| Ethnicity                 | Differences are not statistically significant                                                                                               |
LSP Students More Likely to Lose Identification to Receive Special Education Services

Notes. * indicates estimate is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The 0 line represents no difference in status between LSP scholarship users and their control group counterparts. Identification analysis is based on a subsample of legible applicants who were not identified at baseline (2011-12). De-identification analysis is based on a subsample of eligible applicants who were identified to receive special education services at baseline.
What types of private schools are choosing to participate in voucher programs in Louisiana and elsewhere?

• Private school decision involves a weighting of the benefits of participating in a voucher program relative to the costs.

• Compare characteristics of private schools participating in voucher programs in Louisiana, D.C., and Indiana with those choosing not to participate.

• Find:
  – Across all programs: Schools with low tuition, that serve a higher percentage of minority students, and that are Catholic all more likely to participate.
  – Participating LSP private schools also had lower enrollment.
  – Participation rate lowest in Louisiana (33%), partly because of state’s tuition tax-deduction policy.
Reports Available through the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans

http://educationresearchalliancenola.org/publications/research-areas/school-choice
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