Making Sense of New Evidence on Private School Vouchers

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Beth Blaufuss is president of Archbishop Carroll High School, a diocesan Catholic high school in Washington, DC, with a tradition of social justice. She previously was vice principal for academic affairs and launched the school’s International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, in which almost 70 percent of students participate. Before her work at Archbishop Carroll, Blaufuss taught English and was an administrator at public, independent, and Catholic high schools in Nashville, Tennessee; Prince George’s County, Maryland; and Sydney, Australia. She holds degrees from Yale University and Vanderbilt University.

Matthew M. Chingos is director of the Urban Institute’s Education Policy Program. Chingos is an executive editor of Education Next and coauthor of Game of Loans: The Rhetoric and Reality of Student Debt and Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America’s Public Universities. His work has been featured in major media outlets and has been published in academic journals, including the Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, and Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Before joining Urban, Chingos was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He received a BA in government and economics and a PhD in government from Harvard University.

Douglas Harris is professor of economics, the Schleider Foundation chair in public education, and founder and director of the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans (ERA-New Orleans) at Tulane University. His research has influenced policy and practice on charter schools and market-based reforms, test-based accountability for teachers and schools, value-added measures, and college access programs. His work with ERA-New Orleans focuses on the unprecedented post-Katrina school reforms. He is also conducting an Institute of Education Sciences–funded randomized trial of a “promise scholarship” in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Harris’s first book, Value-Added Measures in Education: What Every Educator Needs to Know, was nominated for the national Grawemeyer prize in education and praised by national leaders such as Randi Weingarten and Bill Gates. The Washington Monthly college rankings have incorporated his work (with Robert Kelchen) about value-added at the higher education level. He has advised governors in six states, testified in the US Senate, and advised the US Department of Education and White House on multiple education policies. Harris’s work is also widely cited in national media, including CNN, MSNBC, NPR, the New York Times, Washington Post, National Journal, and the Wall Street Journal and commentators such as David Brooks and Malcolm Gladwell.

John White was named Louisiana state superintendent of education in 2012. That year, he launched Louisiana Believes, the state’s plan to ensure every child is on track to college or a professional career. White has worked to unify the state’s fragmented early childhood system, modernize expectations and
curriculum for all students, professionalize the preparation of educators, provide pathways to prosperity for all high school graduates, and provide families expansive school options irrespective of their financial means. Before being named state superintendent, White was superintendent of the Louisiana Recovery School District, overseeing the nation’s first system of publicly funded charter and nonpublic schools in New Orleans and launching the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone. Before moving to Louisiana, White worked in New York City under Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel Klein. White was deputy chancellor, launching the Innovation Zone, a network of 100 21st-century schools that use technology to personalize student learning, and leading the city’s efforts to turn around more than 100 failing schools and start 500 new charter and district schools. White previously was executive director of Teach For America–Chicago and Teach For America–New Jersey. He began his career as an English teacher in Jersey City, New Jersey. He is chairman of the independent nonprofit advocacy organization Chiefs for Change and is an academic visitor to the Harvard Kennedy School.

**Patrick J. Wolf** is distinguished professor of education policy and 21st century endowed chair in school choice at the University of Arkansas. He received his PhD in political science from Harvard University and previously taught at Columbia University and Georgetown University. Wolf leads and assists rigorous longitudinal evaluations of private school voucher programs. He has coauthored or coedited four books and over 130 journal articles, book chapters, and policy reports on school choice, public finance, public management, special education, and civic values.