



Limitations of Recent Private School Choice Studies: A Deep Dive into the Gulf of Mexico

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September 26, 2017



Why the Recent “Vouchers Have Failed” Claims?

- Studies that aren’t “gold standard”
- Gold standard studies with other weaknesses
- Researcher or reporter impatience
- Policy designs that discourage school participation
- Only test scores = success

We've Gone Off

the gold standard





Figlio's 2016 Study of Ohio EdChoice

- Not “gold standard”
- Excluded students possibly most benefited by choice
- Positive competitive effects diminished participant effects
- Negative effects only in math



Lubienski & Lubienski Book *The Public School Advantage* (2014)

- Not “gold standard”
- Public school testing alignment
- Focused on negative results in math, excluded positive results in literacy

Gold Standard Studies with Problems





Dynarski et al. 2017 study of DC Opportunity Scholarship Program

- Small sample
- Parents who prioritize safety & character over achievement
- Negative effects only in math
- Results only after one year

What's the Rush?



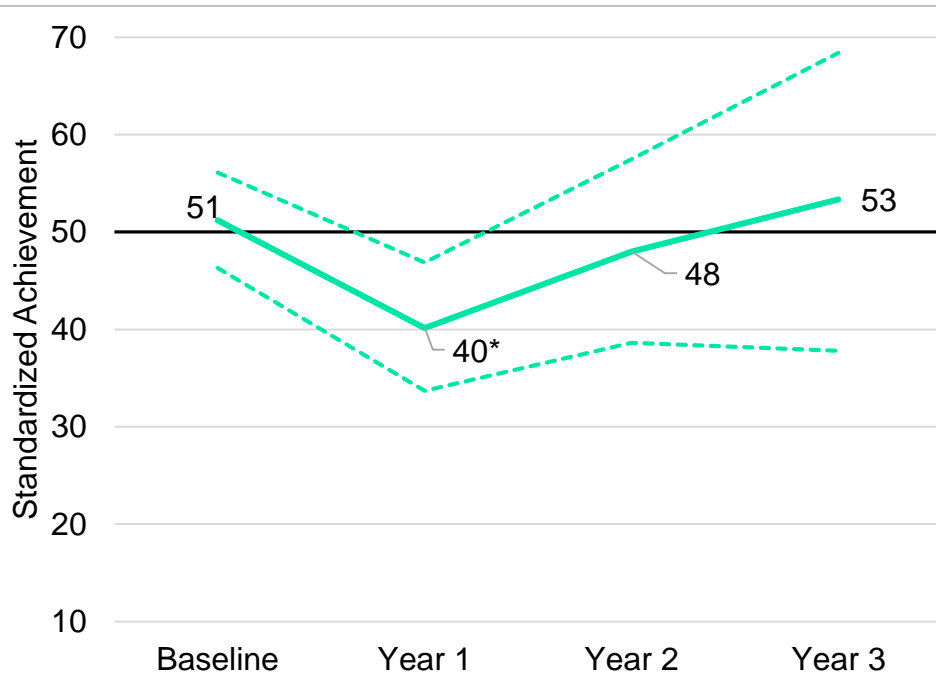


Abdulkadiroglu et al. 2016 study of Louisiana Scholarship Program (LSP)

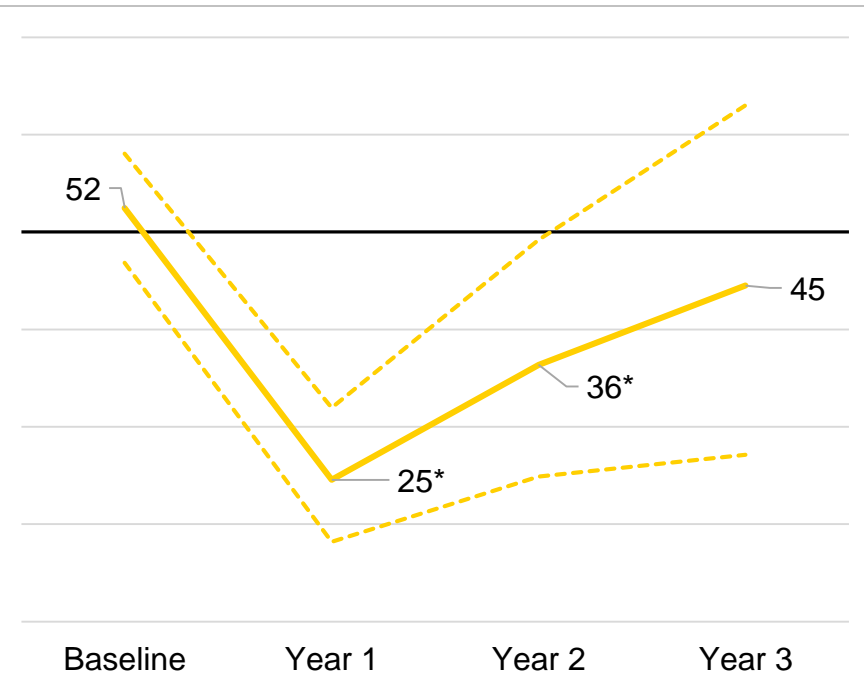
- Hurriedly published after only one year
- Student adjustment to new schools
- Initial problematic program implementation
- Private schools: 1st time for state test

LSP Achievement Impacts Over Three Years (Mills & Wolf, 2017)

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.



Berends & Waddington Study of Indiana Scholarship Program (2017)

- Agreed to wait until publication to release
- Wanted to wait for 4th year results
- Presented preliminary results at conferences
– negative in math
- Reporter forced out findings via FOIA
- Results flipped to positive in fourth year for
consistent participants

Supply-Side Considerations





Concerns about School Supply (McShane, 2014)

- More likely to participate (Sude, DeAngelis & Wolf, 2017):
 - Smaller tuition gaps \$\$\$
 - Experience with disadvantaged students
 - Catholic
- Reasons not to (Kisida, Rhinesmith & Wolf, 2015):
 - Future regulations
 - Paperwork
 - Loss of independence/identity
 - State test/curriculum required

None Examined Attainment!





Legitimate Criticisms of Private School Choice Programs

- Participant achievement effects neither large nor consistent
- Effects in math a concern
- Best to minimize disruption
- Parents need to do their homework
- Scholarship amounts are small
- Programs fail to achieve perfection ... wait a minute!



For More Information

Electronic versions of school choice reports available at:

<http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP.html>

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Go Hogs!