

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program's impact on public schools

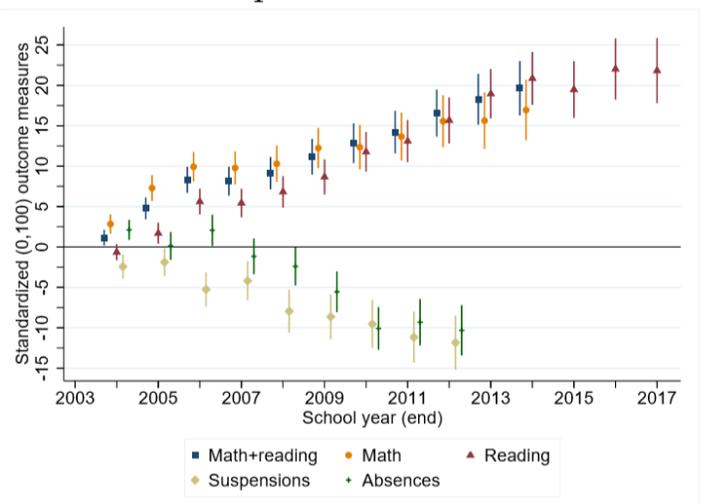
A new study of the impact of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship discovered that as the program for students in private schools expanded, students who remained in public schools also benefited. Researchers David Figlio of Northwestern University, Cassandra Hart of the University of California Davis, and Krysztof Karbownik of Emory University found:

■ **As school choice expands, public school students benefit more:** “We find evidence that as public schools are more exposed to private school choice, their students experience increasing benefits as the program scales up,” wrote the researchers.

■ **The scholarship boosts public school student reading and math scores and more:** “In particular, higher levels of private school choice exposure are associated with lower rates of suspensions and absences, and with higher standardize test scores in reading and math.”

■ **Lower income students see the biggest gains:** “Lower socioeconomic status students- measured by free or reduced price lunch designation- see larger effects across all outcomes.” Researchers note that black and Latino students are more likely to be concentrated in these lower socioeconomic schools.

B. Children ever on free or reduced price lunch



Results were consistent with past research on the programs impact on public schools. A 2010 report by David Figlio and Cassandra Hart also assessed the impact of the scholarship program on the quality of nearby public schools, although the research was limited to only test scores, it found:

■ **The Tax Credit Scholarship Program has led to improvements in public schools in Florida:** “Both expanded access to private school options and greater variety of options that students have in terms of the religious (or secular) affiliations of private schools are positively associated with public-school students’ test scores following the introduction of the FTC program.”

■ **Public schools with higher concentrations of low-income students see the biggest gains:** “The gains occur immediately, before any students leave the public schools with a scholarship, implying that competitive threats are responsible for at least some of the estimated effects. And the gains appear to be much more pronounced in the schools most at risk to lose students ...”

These studies can be reviewed here: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16056.pdf> and here <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26758> and are summarized here: <http://educationnext.org/does-competition-improve-public-schools/> and here <https://www.redefinedonline.org/2020/02/study-shows-postive-impact-of-school-vouchers-on-public-schools/>