

# Fast Facts

## *Outcomes of the School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services Provisions of NCLB*

### *What —*

*Outcomes of the School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services Provisions of NCLB*, a new CEEP Education Policy Brief by Justin Bathon and Terry Spradlin, examines two central school improvement aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act: school choice and supplemental educational services (SES). Statistics on the implementation of each policy, particularly eligibility and participation, are presented along with several concerns regarding implementation that remain almost six years after the law's enactment. Molly Chamberlin, Director of the Division of Educational Options for the Indiana Department of Education, also adds perspective on Indiana's efforts regarding SES.

### *Why —*

School choice and SES remain two of the more controversial aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act. These provisions have been inconsistently implemented across the country, and participation in these programs remains a significant concern. As the No Child Left Behind Act nears reauthorization, policymakers and practitioners should find the Policy Brief's emphasis on relevant literature, statistics, and the many remaining concerns around implementation informative.

### *How —*

School choice and SES are mandatory requirements for schools receiving federal funds that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two and three years, respectively. Under the school choice mandate, parents of students in schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two years can choose to send their child to a different public school within the district that is making progress, including a public charter school. SES, however, can be provided by either public entities, such as the schools themselves, or private providers, including for-profit private providers. The implementation of these requirements has raised challenges and impediments for schools, including communication problems among interested parties, concerns about oversight and monitoring of private providers, a lack of funding, capacity and infrastructure in some districts, and a concern over the equitable provision of these services to all student populations.

### *Recommendations —*

- All parties with an interest in school choice and SES, including schools, parents, and outside providers, need to increase intercommunication. Such communication would be greatly aided if the relevant information about choice and SES options is provided in a timely manner from the state to school districts and subsequently from the school districts to the parents of eligible children. Additionally, communication between schools and SES providers needs to be substantially enhanced to make learning during school and learning at the after-school tutoring service a seamless partnership.
- Ongoing research is needed to examine how to increase participation in these programs to optimal levels. Given the high overhead costs associated with these programs (as in the case of SES), participation rates between 20 and 30 percent for SES and rates of well below 10 percent for school choice raise the question of whether such programs are financially sound investments.
- Additional policy structures may be required to assure that school choice and SES are provided equally to all student populations and that private providers do not avoid the special education and English language learner student populations that are typically more costly to serve.
- Although states have shown a substantial increase in their efforts to monitor private SES providers, more can still be done. The expenditure of public funds on frequently for-profit educational entities demands even higher levels of accountability than that demanded of public schools to ensure against the corporate bottom-line conflicting with the public interest in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

To read this Education Policy Brief, go to:  
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