Equity, Quality, and Access: How Do We Create Schools Worth Choosing for All?

October 25, 2018

#GoodSchools4All
A Rich Tapestry of Choices

Choice is widespread

• 18.7 million families have access to public school choice.
A Rich Tapestry of Choices

Most choice options are managed by traditional school districts

• Themed schools, magnets, etc.
• For example, about as many students are in magnets (2.6 million) as in charters (2.7 million)
Under what conditions can choice provide:

• Higher quality public schools?

• More equitable access for all families to high-quality options?

• Greater social, racial, and economic integration?
Open Enrollment Plans

Intradistrict Choice Plans, e.g.
- New York City (small schools)
- Cambridge, MA (controlled choice)

Interdistrict Transfers, e.g.
- Hartford, Boston (desegregation initiatives)
- Minnesota (widespread open enrollment)
Magnets and New Models

Magnet Schools

• Themed schools within and across districts, typically with desegregation goals
• Positive impacts on achievement, motivation, grad rates, parent satisfaction
• But wide variation within and across districts

New Model Schools

• Networks of schools with distinctive approaches
• A number of successful examples (Success for All, EL, NYC small schools)
Charter Schools

• Fastest growing sector
• Different rules across states
• Various management structures
• Different management approaches within districts
• Outcomes highly variable
Choice is a means, not an end

- Choice can result in greater or less access for families.
- Depending on rules, choice can foster integration or segregation.
- Choice alone is not enough to produce good options. District efforts to manage choice and improve instruction are key.
- Achievement gains are associated with personalized designs, quality curriculum, and professional staffing and development.
Focus on students, not governance

- Gather data on learning opportunities across subgroups and neighborhoods
- Respond to data and community needs
- Create high-quality learning environments for all
Ensure Equity and Access

• “Control” choice
• Standardize enrollment processes
• Backfill for students who leave
• Establish common disciplinary systems
• Support and incentivize schools to serve the neediest students

#GoodSchools4All
Ensure transparency at every stage

• Expand and customize communication to parents
• Gather common input and outcome data on all schools, regardless of governance
• Ensure financial transparency
• Create transparent process for student school assignment
Build a system of schools for all

- Leave no school behind
- Provide common professional development
- Establish common school quality reviews
- Consider wraparound services based on students’ needs, not school type
Learning Policy Institute Resources

Reports
learningpolicyinstitute.org/reports

Sign up for updates
bit.ly/LPIupdates

Follow LPI on Twitter
@LPI_Learning

Contact Patrick M. Shields
pshields@learningpolicyinstitute.org

#GoodSchools4All