

**U. S. Department of Education  
Policy and Program Studies Service Report Highlights**

**State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act  
Volume IV—Title I School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services: Interim Report**

**Background**

A key aim of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 (*NCLB*) is to provide additional educational options to parents of students in low-performing Title I schools, specifically the opportunities to move their child to a higher-performing school or enroll their child in supplemental educational services. The purpose of this report is to examine the implementation across the country of the Title I school choice and supplemental educational services provisions in the 2003–04 and 2004–05 school years. The report presents findings on the implementation of parental choice options from the first year of the National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind* and the Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under *No Child Left Behind*. Findings in this report are based on data from state-level interviews, surveys of nationally representative samples of district officials, principals, and teachers, surveys of parents in eight districts, surveys of supplemental service providers in 16 districts, and student-level demographic and achievement data in nine districts.

**Key Findings**

Overall, states, districts, and providers were working to implement Title I school choice and supplemental services, and many parents were selecting these options for their students. Most districts reported that they offered Title I school choice and supplemental services if they were required to do so, and the number of students participating in both options (especially supplemental services) has increased substantially. Nonetheless, only a small proportion of eligible students actually participated in the choice options available to them. Three notable issues that may have contributed to reduce participation: Absence of available options, timing of notification of parents about school choice and supplemental educational services options, and problems with communication with parents.

**Title I school choice and supplemental educational services participants represented about 1 percent and 17 percent, respectively, of eligible students in 2003–04.**

- In 2004–05, nearly 6.2 million students were eligible for Title I school choice and as many as 1.8 million students were eligible for supplemental educational services.
- Although more students were eligible to participate in the school choice option, a larger number actually participated in the supplemental services option. In the most recent year with available data, 233,000 students received supplemental services (in 2003–04), while 45,000 students used the school choice option to transfer to a school not identified for improvement (in 2004–05). These numbers represent substantial increases from 2002–03, when 18,000 students used the Title I school choice option and 42,000 enrolled in supplemental services.

**In a sample of nine large urban districts, students participating in the Title I school choice and supplemental services options had lower prior achievement, on average, than other students in their districts.**

- In these nine districts, students participating in supplemental services had even lower prior achievement than eligible students who did not participate. Students participating in the school choice option had similar prior achievement levels to eligible non-participants.
- In the nine districts, the average achievement levels of the schools chosen by students using the school choice option were higher than the average achievement in the schools that they left.

**In the nine districts, students who were eligible for the Title I school choice and supplemental services options were more likely to be minority students, compared with students who were not eligible for these options.**

- Among eligible students in the nine urban districts, black students were more likely to participate in both of the two choice options, while Hispanic students were less likely to participate.
- Students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities were well-represented among supplemental services participants, although students with limited English proficiency were under-represented among school choice participants.
- Transferring students in the nine districts tended to choose schools that had lower concentrations of minority students than the schools that they left.

**Most districts required to offer Title I school choice reported that they did offer this option to eligible students; however, districts were more likely to provide options at the elementary level than at the middle and high school levels.**

- In 2004–05, 70 percent of the districts required to offer school choice to elementary students reported doing so. At the middle school level, only 20 percent of affected districts reported offering the school choice option to parents, while at the high school level only 17 percent did.
- Most districts that did not offer the school choice option said it was because all schools at that grade level were identified for improvement. Districts typically have fewer total schools available at the middle and high school levels: 77 percent of districts with high schools have only one high school and 67 percent of districts with middle schools have only one middle school, while 53 percent of districts with elementary schools have only one elementary school.

**A majority of districts (63 percent) reported that parents could choose from at least three supplemental service providers, and 38 percent reported five or more.**

- In a subsample of 16 districts, provider survey results indicated that high school students eligible for supplemental educational services had fewer options available. In reading, for example, 91 percent of the providers reported offering services at in grades K–5, while only 49 percent reported offering services in grades 9–12.

**Low participation rates in school choice and supplemental services may be related to problems communicating with parents.**

- Sixty-two percent of the districts required to offer Title I school choice and 97 percent of districts required to offer supplemental educational services reported that they notified parents of the options available to their children. Most districts that did not notify parents of their eligibility for school choice were not offering school choice.
- In 2004–05, less than one-third (29 percent) of districts required to offer school choice notified parents of eligible students before the beginning of the school year. Districts that notified parents about the Title I school choice option before the first day of school had higher participation rates (2.9 percent) than districts that notified parents on or after the first day of school (0.2 percent).
- Parents surveyed in eight urban districts were often unaware of the Title I school choice and supplemental educational services, even though all eight districts provided evidence that they had sent a parent notification letters about these options. Only half (53 percent) of parents with a child eligible for supplemental services said they had been notified about this option, and only 27 percent of parents eligible for school choice said they had been notified.

**Most participating students received supplemental services from a private provider, but school districts and public schools that had been approved as providers also served a substantial share of students.**

- From May 2003 to May 2005, the number of state-approved supplemental service providers in the nation more than tripled, from 997 to 2,734. The largest increase occurred among private providers.
- Private providers accounted for 76 percent of all state-approved providers in May 2005, up from 60 percent in May 2003. Meanwhile, school districts and public schools declined in their proportion of all providers, from 33 percent in May 2003 to 17 percent in May 2005.
- Private providers served 58 percent of students participating in supplemental services in 2003–04 and another 34 percent of participating students received supplemental services from districts or public schools.

**Supplemental service providers, in a subsample of 16 districts, described their services as consisting, on average, of about 57 hours per student per year.**

- Providers reported an average of four sessions per week and 84 minutes per session. They also reported an average of 41 sessions provided to students annually, suggesting an average duration of services of 12 weeks.
- Seventy percent of supplemental educational service providers reported that they communicated with the classroom teachers of their students at least a few times per year. However, a non-negligible minority of providers (19 percent) reported no contact with classroom teachers.

**Districts reported spending an average of \$875 per participating pupil on Title I supplemental educational services in 2003–04.**

- Total spending on Title I supplemental educational services was estimated to be \$192 million in 2003–04.

**Parents surveyed in eight of the large urban districts reported satisfaction with the school choice and supplemental services options.**

- Among parents who transferred their child to a school not identified for improvement, the most common reasons were that they thought the quality of teaching was better at the new school (52 percent), discipline and safety (49 percent), and because the previous school was not meeting their child's needs at the new school (47 percent).
- Among parents choosing supplemental services, 60 percent said their reason for participating was because their child needed extra help, and 52 percent said their child's teacher thought the child should get this extra help.
- Nine out of ten parents enrolling their child in supplemental services said they were satisfied with the services. More than eight out of ten parents who took advantage of the Title I school choice option were satisfied with that decision.

**As of early 2005, most states were working to develop and implement systems for monitoring and evaluating Title I supplemental service providers' effectiveness, but few had databases that would permit statewide examination of the achievement results of participating students.**

This report is available on the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oepd/ppss/reports.html#title](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oepd/ppss/reports.html#title).