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State and Local Implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*

Volume VII—Title I School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services: Final Report

A report from the National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind* (NLS-NCLB) and the Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under *No Child Left Behind* (SSI-NCLB)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A key goal of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* is to provide new educational options to parents whose children attend Title I schools¹ that are identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring because the schools have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward meeting state standards for two or more years. The first of these options is the opportunity for parents to transfer their children to another school in the district that has not been identified for improvement. The second option is the opportunity for parents to enroll their children in supplemental educational services such as tutoring, remediation or other academic instruction that are offered by a state-approved provider and are in addition to instruction provided during the school day. This option is available to low-income families whose children attend a Title I school that is in Year 2 (or a later year) of improvement.

This report presents trends on the implementation of Title I parental choice options from the National Longitudinal Study of *No Child Left Behind (NLS-NCLB)* and the Study of State Implementation of Accountability and Teacher Quality Under *No Child Left Behind (SSI-NCLB)*. The report uses data from state-level interviews; surveys of a nationally representative sample of district officials, principals and teachers; surveys of parents in eight school districts; and surveys of supplemental educational service providers in 16 districts to examine the implementation across the country of the school choice and supplemental educational service components of Title I through 2006–07. It is based on data collected in 2004–05 and 2006–07. This report updates findings from the interim report that was based on data collected in 2004–05.

FOCUS OF THE REPORT

This report addresses three broad areas in evaluating the Title I provisions for providing public school choice and supplemental educational services for students in schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring:

1. Trends in who is eligible for and participates in public school choice and supplemental educational services under Title I and what choices are made available.
2. Trends in how states, districts and schools provide information to make parents aware of their options and what information parents have and use to make decisions about their Title I public school choice and supplemental educational service options.
3. Trends in how states, districts and schools support, monitor and collaborate in the implementation of supplemental educational services under Title I.

KEY FINDINGS

In 2006–07, 6.9 million students were eligible for Title I public school choice, a fourfold increase since 2002–03, and more than 3.3 million were eligible for Title I supplemental educational services, a nearly sixfold increase since 2002–03. However, participation rates remained low at 1 percent for the Title I public school choice option and 17 percent for supplemental educational services. Public school choice was constrained at the middle and high school levels because large numbers of school districts have only

¹ Title I schools are schools that operate programs funded under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*, the largest federal program supporting elementary and secondary education (funded at \$12.7 billion in FY 2006). Title I, Part A, targets-poverty districts and schools where the needs are greatest and includes the two parental choice options that are the subject of this paper. The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* is the most recent reauthorization of the *ESEA*.

one middle school and one high school. Eligible high school students also continued to have fewer Title I supplemental educational service providers from which to choose.

In 2005–06, districts spent \$375 million for Title I supplemental educational services and \$56 million for transportation of students who transferred to an alternate school under Title I public school choice.

Districts that offered Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services showed an increase in the number of transfer options and providers that parents could choose from over the time period covered in this study. For example, 69 percent of districts offering supplemental educational services in 2005–06 reported that parents could choose from at least five Title I supplemental educational service providers, up from 38 percent in 2003–04.

Communication with parents about Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services continued to be an issue in 2006–07. Forty-three percent of districts that were required to offer Title I public school choice in 2006–07 notified parents before the start of the school year. However, many parents surveyed in eight large, urban districts continued to report that they had not received any information about the Title I public school choice or supplemental educational service options.

By 2006–07, 42 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico had developed systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Title I supplemental educational service providers, but only eight states had databases containing student achievement and participation information that would permit rigorous evaluations of achievement effects of providers on a statewide basis.

OTHER FINDINGS

Eligibility, Availability and Participation

The number of students participating in Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services increased substantially from 2002–03 to 2005–06, but the percentage of eligible students participating remained constant, with most eligible students not participating.

Participation in Title I public school choice increased from 38,000 in 2003–04 to 58,500 in 2005–06 and then declined to 45,000 in 2006–07. Participation in supplemental educational services increased more rapidly, from 233,000 in 2003–04 to 449,000 in 2005–06.² The yearly public school choice participation rate remained at about 1 percent of eligible students, and the supplemental educational service participation rate remained at about 17 percent throughout the time period.³

In 2005–06, as in 2004–05, high-poverty, high-minority and urban Title I schools were more likely to have students who were eligible for Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services than low-poverty schools outside of urban areas.

Forty percent of high-poverty Title I schools had students eligible for school choice compared with 6 percent of low-poverty Title I schools. Similarly, 29 percent of high-poverty Title I schools had students eligible for supplemental educational services, compared with 3 percent of low-poverty Title I

² The 449,000 students using Title I supplemental educational services may include an unknown number of students not eligible for such services under the law because some districts notified a larger pool of students than the law required.

³ The yearly participation rate includes only those students participating in Title I parental choice in a specific school year. Over multiple years, the cumulative participation rate can be expected to be higher.

schools. Urban schools likewise made up a disproportionate share of those required to offer Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services.

Private providers (which includes both for-profit and nonprofit providers) served 76 percent of students participating in Title I supplemental educational services in 2005–06, compared with 58 percent in 2003–04; another 13 percent of students received supplemental educational services from districts or public schools in 2005–06, a decline from 34 percent in 2003–04.

The number of providers steadily increased from 1,024 in May 2003 to 3,234 in May 2007 and has remained roughly at this level (3,050 in 2008). Private providers accounted for 88 percent of all state-approved providers in May 2008, up from 60 percent in May 2003. Ten percent of providers were school districts and public schools, a decrease from 32 percent in 2003.⁴

As the number of Title I supplemental educational service providers increased from 2004–05 to 2006–07, their size and staff characteristics also changed.

The average size of Title I supplemental educational service providers in a subsample of 16 districts more than doubled between 2004–05 and 2006–07 from an average of 36 staff to an average of 79 staff members per provider. At the same time, the experience levels of their staff members decreased. The average tutoring experience of staff members declined from an average of 10 years in 2004–05 to an average of seven years in 2006–07. Providers also became less likely to rely on full-time teachers tutoring in their school's district.

In 2006–07, Title I supplemental educational service providers reported offering an average of 45 hours of services per student per year.

Providers in the subsample of 16 districts reported offering an average of 2.4 sessions per week and 76 minutes per session, suggesting a weekly average of about three hours of services per student. They also reported offering an average of about 36 sessions to students annually, suggesting an average duration of services of 15 weeks. Districts and parents reported a similar intensity of weekly services as that reported by providers.

Communication With Parents

In 2006–07, 95 percent of districts required to offer Title I public school choice or supplemental educational services reported that they notified parents of eligible students of these options. Nonetheless, most parents of eligible students in a sample of eight large, urban districts continued to say they had not been notified.

In 2006–07, 95 percent of the districts required to offer Title I public school choice reported that they notified parents of the options available to their children, an increase from 64 percent in 2004–05. All districts required to offer supplemental educational services also reported they had notified parents of this option in 2006–07, as nearly all did in 2004–05.

Nonetheless, in both 2004–05 and 2006–07, in a sample of eight large, urban districts, only one out of five parents of students eligible for Title I public school choice indicated they had been notified of their

⁴ Determined by a Policy and Program Studies Services review of state education agency Web sites.

option to move their child to another school. Fifty-nine percent of eligible parents said they were notified of the Title I supplemental educational service option.

Of the parents who reported that they were notified that their child was eligible for the Title I public school choice and supplemental educational service options, about 90 percent reported that the information they received about their choices was somewhat easy to very easy to understand.

The majority of parents indicated, however, that the information received did not contain basic information such as how to apply to move their child to another school, whom to contact with questions, or availability of transportation.

In 2006–07, 78 percent of Title I supplemental educational service providers in the subsample of 16 districts reported that they communicated with the parents of participating students at least a few times monthly.

Similarly, about two-thirds of parents of supplemental educational service participants in eight large, urban districts reported that they (or another adult in the household) discussed their child’s learning needs, educational progress and/or attendance with the provider (parents were not asked about the frequency of contact with providers). Student progress and student attendance related to supplemental educational service activities were the most frequently discussed topics.

Implementing and Monitoring Supplemental Educational Services

Although NCLB does not give districts a formal role in the monitoring and evaluation of Title I supplemental educational services, providers continued to report that a larger percentage of districts monitored their services at least a few times a year than did states.

In 2006–07, 69 percent of providers in a subsample of 16 districts reported that student attendance rates at supplemental educational services were tracked by districts at least a few times per year while only 36 percent reported a similar frequency of monitoring by states. Also, 50 percent of providers reported that districts observed supplemental educational service sessions at least a few times per year while 24 percent reported their state did so at this frequency. This pattern has not changed since 2004–05.

In 2006–07, 59 percent of providers of Title I supplemental educational services reported they had been required to renew their state certification.

In the subsample of 16 districts, 59 percent of providers of Title I supplemental educational services reported that they had been required to re-apply for state approval since they had first been approved. Most of these providers said the renewal process was more demanding than the initial application process.

Compared with 2004–05, in 2006–07, more principals of schools with students eligible for Title I supplemental educational services reported that these services were well aligned with school academic content standards.

Forty-four percent of principals reported that the services provided to their students were well aligned with school academic content standards in mathematics and reading in 2005–06, an increase from 32 and 24 percent in 2003–04 and 2004–05, respectively.⁵

In 2006–07, nearly all providers of Title I supplemental educational services reported that they were communicating with the regular classroom teachers of their students at least a few times per year.

Providers in the 16-district subsample communicated with teachers most often concerning their students' progress and about coordination of their curriculum and instruction. Teachers reported a similar pattern of communications with providers. Nearly all providers reported progress on individual students to their parents at least a few times a year. Fifty-five percent of providers did so a few times per month.

In 2006–07, as in 2004–05, 56 percent of providers of Title I supplemental educational services received some information on the students they served before beginning tutoring services.

Fifty-six percent of providers reported receiving any one of several types of information about their students' academic performance before the initiation of services. Student scores on state assessment tests were given to 43 percent of providers, while student scores on other standardized tests and report cards were given to less than 33 percent of providers. Forty-four percent of providers reported that they did not receive any of the following: test scores, report card grades, examples of student work, or Individualized Education Programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Most districts reported that they offered Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services if they were required to do so, and the number of students participating in both options (especially supplemental educational services) increased substantially from the initial implementation of *NCLB* to the most recent year with available data. Nonetheless, only a small proportion of eligible students actually participated in school choice or supplemental educational services, and the participation rates have remained relatively constant.

Four notable issues appeared to continue to contribute to low participation rates, in spite of the progress that had been made on some of these issues.

First, the supply of options for both Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services was limited at the secondary level. More than half of districts required to offer choice had no alternate middle or high schools to which students in identified schools could be transferred. Similarly, providers of supplemental educational services were less likely to offer services to high school students than to elementary and middle school students.

⁵ Although schools do not generally have their own unique academic content standards, the survey question asked about the school's standards to avoid potential confusion between state standards and district standards. The phrasing was intended to allow principals to report on the content standards in use in their schools, regardless of the source of those standards.

Second, about half of districts continued to be unable to notify parents of students eligible for Title I public school choice of that option before the beginning of the school year, despite the progress that states have made in notifying districts of the identified status of their schools early in the summer.

Third, a majority of parents (in a subsample of eight districts) of students eligible for Title I public school choice and more than one-third of parents of students eligible for supplemental educational services continued to say they were not notified of those options, even though the districts documented that they had sent out written notifications.

And fourth, even when parents said they were notified, nine out of 10 parents of students eligible for Title I public school choice and nearly half of parents of students eligible for Title I supplemental educational services chose not to participate (in eight urban districts). A primary reason for nonparticipation in Title I public school choice was satisfaction with the child's current school. Parents chose not to enroll children in supplemental educational services primarily because of a belief that their child did not need help. Inconvenient locations of alternate schools and inconvenient times at which services were provided were also frequently given as reasons for nonparticipation in Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services, respectively.

Although there continue to be issues around availability of Title I public school choice and supplemental educational services and timely notification of and communication with parents, in the end, it is parents of eligible students who will decide whether they want to avail themselves of the options offered to their children. To date, parents have shown a low propensity to do so for both public school choice and supplemental educational services.