

EDUCATION RESEARCH

**Florida Department of Education
Accountability, Research, and Measurement**

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PURPOSE OF RESEARCH ALERTS

- **Provide concise information regarding current research**
- **Provide specific Florida perspective**
- **Promote discussion of policy implications**
- **Provide an additional avenue to enhance data-driven decision making by state-level policy makers**

“GETTING FARTHER AHEAD BY STAYING BEHIND: Second-Year Evaluation of Florida’s Policy to End Social Promotion”

- Study uses three different strategies to analyze the effects of Florida’s test-based promotion policy on student achievement two years after initial retention
- Analysis shows:
 - retained students made significant reading gains relative to the control group of socially promoted students
 - academic benefits grew substantially from the first to the second year after retention

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Findings provide support for Florida's state law eliminating social promotion in third grade while providing intensive remediation to assist retained children
- Conduct evaluation of effectiveness of district-level, no social promotion policies
- Based on results of evaluation, consider implications of expanding current policies

“COMPARING PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS USING HIERARCHICAL LINEAR MODELING”

- **Goal of study:** examine differences in mean NAEP reading and mathematics scores between public and private schools
- **Report Findings:** students in private schools achieved at higher levels than students in public schools for both reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8; however, after adjusting for selected student characteristics, the results were mixed.
- **Florida Perspective:**
 - single-year snapshots of test scores reflect student standing much more than school quality
 - potential exists for large differences in how students are categorized
 - administrators at public and private schools classify students very differently
 - school choice options empower parents and provide a tool for them to make sure their children get the very best education possible

“ON THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT DEBATE”

A paper on “Comparing Private Schools and Public Schools Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling”

- Paper noted two problems with NCES adjustment for student characteristics:
 1. inconsistent classification of student characteristics
 2. inclusion of student characteristics open to school influence
- Paper found that utilizing the same data as the original study, but substituting better measures of student characteristics and using improved alternative models reveal a private school advantage in 11 out of 12 public-private comparisons
- Results are not offered as evidence that private schools outperform public schools but as demonstration of the dependence of the NCES results on questionable analytic decisions

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Data-driven decisions should be based on multiple years of comparable data
- Florida should continue to assess school quality by analyzing year-to-year changes in test scores by using learning gains to determine whether every student learns a year's worth of knowledge in a year's worth of time