

Report on Ohio vouchers overstates benefits and downplays negatives.

The Fordham Institute hired a couple OSU professors to conduct a study of the impact of Ohio's EdChoice voucher program on school district enrollments, finances, and academics. Fordham staff wrote the forward to the report, which may not have accurately reflected the findings in the research report. The research report was not peer-reviewed. The National Education Policy Center engaged Professor Joshua Cowen to review the Fordham report. The review is attached.

BOULDER, CO (February 21, 2023)—A recent report from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute considers the impacts of vouchers as related to competition in Ohio public schools, increased racial segregation, and local district financial resources. It presents these three issues as the chief concerns of voucher critics and finds few harmful impacts.

In Michigan State University professor Joshua Cowen's [review](#) of *The Ohio EdChoice Program's Impact on School District Enrollments, Finances, and Academics*, he finds that the questions it asks are far too limited. While the report is methodologically sound for the narrow questions it poses, Professor Cowen contends that they are outdated with respect to current concerns raised by voucher critics, which focus on substantially decreased student achievement among students using vouchers.

The report also relies on more permissive standards for statistical inference than peer-reviewed articles would typically allow. Moreover, the Foreword, written by Fordham staff, gives the clear impression that the report is merely an effort to provide new data for privatization advocates, rather than to respond to legitimate concerns raised by voucher critics. The Foreword dismisses criticisms as "Chicken Little" and "sky-is-falling" histrionics, and in doing so undermines the work of the authors it hired to write the study.

Ultimately, Professor Cowen concludes, those who are ideologically predisposed to embrace voucher policies will doubtless find much to appreciate in this report. It does little, however, to assuage the primary concerns of those dedicated to serving children through community-based public education, and thus has little value in the debate over the use of vouchers as a public policy tool to improve education.

Find the review, by Joshua Cowen, at:

<https://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/edchoice>

Find *The Ohio EdChoice Program's Impact on School District Enrollments, Finances, and Academics*, written by Stéphane Lavertu and John J. Gregg and published by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, at:

<https://fordhaminstitute.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/>

[edchoice-impact-report-12-14-22-web-final.pdf](#)