



DO VOUCHERS PROMOTE CREAMING?

Claims that vouchers will create a “creaming” effect lack merit, unless you can cream from the bottom.

FACT: MILWAUKEE STUDENTS WITH THE LOWEST STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES IN BOTH READING AND MATH WERE THOSE WHO APPLIED FOR VOUCHERS

Claims have been asserted that Utah’s current voucher law will create “creaming.” The facts clearly show that the students who are struggling the most are the ones who will be applying for and taking advantage of vouchers.

Bottom line, vouchers **will not** lead to private schools “creaming” the best students out of public schools.

LESSONS FROM MILWAUKEE

For four consecutive years in the City of Milwaukee voucher program (1990-1993), students with the lowest standardized test scores in both reading and math were those who applied for vouchers (see table below).

In 1990, the voucher applicant students’ scores were between 5.4% and 13.3% lower; in 1991 they were between 6.7%

and 18.1% lower; in 1992 they were between .5% and 12.4% lower; and, in 1993 they were between 4.8% and 12.2% lower. (Witte, 1998) A corroborating study found a “statistically significant” relationship between applying for a private school voucher and lower standardized test scores in reading and math. (Goldhaber, Brewer, and Eide, 1998)

ENDNOTES

Witte, John. 1998. “Milwaukee voucher experiment.” Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 20 (Winter): 229-251.

Goldhaber, Don D., Brewer, Dominic J., and Eric R. Eide. 1998. “School choice in Milwaukee: Are private schools creaming off the best students?” Developments in School Finance-Fiscal Proceedings from the Annual State Data Conference (July): 33-44

	Voucher Applicants		Low-Income Public		Public	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
1990	39.1	39.7	40.1	42.0	43.6	45.8
1991	37.5	37.9	40.2	42.9	43.7	46.3
1992	40.0	40.3	40.2	42.4	43.9	46.0
1993	38.0	40.0	40.2	42.0	43.3	45.2