



# Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building ■ (202) 225-4527

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch>

March 26, 2001

## School Choice Programs Push Struggling Schools to Change

State school choice initiatives similar to the one in H.R. 1, President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* bill, have had a positive impact on student achievement. Indeed, programs in states such as Florida, Wisconsin, and Ohio have proven that school choice can push struggling schools to improve student performance in reading, math, and science.

Florida's A-Plus Program, like President Bush's, offers parents of children in chronically failing schools the option of sending their children to another school, public or private. Harvard University's Jay P. Greene, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, writes in the *New York Post*, "Florida student test scores have improved across the board" since the program began.

The study by Greene also finds that struggling public schools made exceptionally large gains in student performance when faced with the last-resort option of parents being empowered to send their children to other schools.

Moreover, a September 1999 report conducted by the Indiana Center for Evaluation found that participants in Cleveland's scholarship program scored up to five percentile points higher than their public school counterparts in language and science assessments.

The bottom line: School choice works. And President Bush's plan will guarantee that students across the nation will have the same opportunity to fulfill his or her educational potential.

### Message of the Day

**School choice works. Studies have proven that state choice programs increase student achievement in reading, language, math, and science.**

- *The No Child Left Behind plan will extend school choice opportunities to students in chronically failing schools.*
- *President Bush's plan provides special assistance to failing schools; the school choice option is only a last resort for students in chronically low-performing schools.*
- *No child should be forced to remain trapped in a school that will not teach and will not change.*

### DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- School choice programs benefit underprivileged minorities -- of the 61,000 students eligible for scholarships in Florida last year, more than 80 percent were low-income minorities. (*Gov. Jeb Bush, "Choice Leaves No Child Behind," School Choice 2000: What's Happening in the States, Heritage Foundation, Dec. 7, 2000*)
- A study of Cleveland's school choice program found that it substantially improved scholarship parents' perceptions of and satisfaction with their children's schools. (*Survey conducted by Prof. Paul Peterson, John F. Kennedy School of Government, June 1999*)

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"[T]he undeniable truth is that a consensus has developed among respected researchers that school choice programs help students, particularly black students."* **Howard Fuller, Distinguished Professor of Education, Marquette University, "School Choice Helps Black Students"**