

Do College and Career Readiness and Early College Success in Indiana Vary Depending on Whether Students Attend Public, Charter, or Private Voucher High Schools?

Indiana has a robust portfolio of high school options, including traditional public schools, charter schools, and private schools that accept Indiana Choice Scholarships (private voucher schools). But little research is available on the characteristics of students who attend different types of high schools or how their college and career readiness and early college success vary by type of high school and voucher status, after other factors are adjusted for. This study used descriptive and regression analyses to address these questions. The dataset covered records for Indiana students who were in grade 9 between 2010/11 and 2013/14 and on track to begin college between 2014/15 and 2017/18. The sample included 317,367 students in traditional public schools, 5,820 students in charter schools, 2,021 students in private voucher schools who received a voucher (voucher recipients), and 15,529 students in private voucher schools who did not receive a voucher (nonvoucher students). Indiana Department of Education administrators, school district administrators, charter school leaders and authorizers, and leaders of private voucher schools could use these findings to inform the design of policies to improve college and career readiness and early college success. Key findings include:

- **Charter school students and voucher recipients were more likely than other students to belong to disadvantaged groups.** Charter school students and voucher recipients were more likely than other students to be Black or to be eligible for the national school lunch program (an indicator of low socioeconomic status), and voucher recipients also were most likely to be Hispanic or English learner students.
- **Nonvoucher students performed similarly to or better than students in traditional public schools and charter school students on most indicators of college and career readiness, after other factors were adjusted for, and voucher recipients performed similarly to or better than students in traditional public schools.** Nonvoucher students and voucher recipients were less likely than students in traditional public schools and charter school students to ever fail a course or to ever be suspended in high school and were more likely to enroll in college within one year of high school graduation. In addition, nonvoucher students were more likely than students in traditional public schools and voucher recipients to earn an honors diploma in high school and were less likely than charter school students to be absent more than 15 days a year and more likely to graduate from high school within four years. Among students who enrolled in an Indiana public college or university, students in traditional public schools were less likely than charter school students, voucher recipients, and nonvoucher students to enroll in a four-year college rather than a two-year college within one year of high school graduation.
- **Nonvoucher students were more likely than other students to complete all attempted credits in the first year of college, after other factors were adjusted for.** Nonvoucher students were more likely than students in traditional public schools, charter school students, and voucher recipients to complete all attempted credits in their first year of college. Nonvoucher students were also more likely than charter school students to persist to a second year of college. There were no differences in the likelihood of taking only nonremedial courses in the first year of college by type of high school or voucher status.