

Facts and Fallacies

Equality In Education May Require More Choice

(NAPSA)—According to the U.S. Constitution, all Americans are created equal, but some education experts say that all Americans may not get an equal chance at a decent education.

Many low-income students lag behind their middle- and high-income counterparts when it comes to getting an education—and they have for decades. Recent results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that fourth graders who were eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program (185 percent of the poverty level) continue to score, on average about 30 points below other students. Sixty percent of low-income children did not even achieve a level of “basic,” indicating they are essentially illiterate. Only 14 percent scored proficient or better.

Many say this problem is made worse because low-income families don't have the education options that others do. They are usually trapped in a chronically failing public school. More affluent families can move to areas with better schools, or they can send their children to private schools.

In America, school choice is widespread—unless you're poor.

Organizations such as The Black Alliance for Educational Options work to expand the options available to low-income African-American and other families. When parents have choices, schools respond and work to become competitive.

Some of the options being explored are charter schools, publicly financed scholarships



Parental school choice is widespread—unless you're poor, say some educational experts.

(vouchers) and private scholarship programs. Thirty-eight states now have charter school laws, more than 80 cities have privately funded scholarship programs for low income children, and five states have taxpayer-supported voucher programs.

Harvard economist Carolyn Hoxby has shown how competition from charter and voucher schools improves the effectiveness of public schools.

Voucher programs have also resulted in significant and well-documented gains for the students who participated in them.

For more information, visit www.BAEO.org or call toll-free 1-866-865-BAEO.