Impact of Vouchers on College Enrollment

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Motivation for Study:

- No previous experimental study has identified effects of vouchers beyond high school. Usually, test score impacts only.

- Only a few experimental studies have identified long term effects of any school intervention.

Chelsea Gil and Geanylyn Romero both graduated from high school in 2012 and are currently enrolled at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. From Education Next, XIII:3.
Experimental Study

• Best way to identify true effect of an intervention.
• Lottery determines whether one participates in the intervention. One can compare two groups that are similar except that one participated and the other could not, because it lost the lottery.
• Invitation by Cardinal O’Connor, to Rudy Crew, Chancellor of NYC public schools, to “send the city’s most troubled public school students to Catholic schools.”

• School Choice Scholarship Foundation Program
Voucher Opportunity

• In 1997, School Choice Scholarship foundation (SCSF) offered half-tuition vouchers worth up to $1400 to 1000 low-income families.
• Scholarships available to public school students entering grades 2-5 and any student entering first grade.

The foundation in New York City offered 1,300 scholarships, each worth up to $1,400 annually toward tuition at a private school. From Education Next, 1:2.
Voucher Opportunity

• Over 20,000 applicants. Vouchers given by means of a lottery.
• Original Research Findings: Voucher lifted African American test scores, but not scores of students from other backgrounds.

The lottery ensured that scholarship winners as a group were not significantly different from those who did not win a scholarship. In all three cities, the demographic characteristics and pre-lottery test scores of scholarship winners and losers resembled one another, from Education Next, 1:2.
• ALMOST NO ATTRITION FROM THE STUDY: WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ALMOST EVERYONE.

• 99 percent of students matched with data at National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).
Full-time or Part-time College Enrollment within 3 years of high school graduation, if no voucher opportunity:

African American: 36 %
Hispanic: 45 %
Effects on Hispanic Students

- 2 percentage points, not large enough of an effect to be statistically significant.
Impact of voucher use on African American full-time or part-time enrollment:

24 % increase

(Increases 9 percentage points from 36% to 45 %)
Impact of voucher use on African American full-time enrollment: 31% increase

Alyesha Taveras (left) graduated from high school in 2012 and is currently enrolled at Seton Hall University.
Selective College:
Voucher opportunity more than doubles the rate going to selective colleges.

Jason Tejada is currently in his senior year at Columbia University, on a full scholarship, from Education Next, XIII:3.
What’s the best value? Benefits--

• NYC voucher on college Enrollment (African Americans): 24 percent
• DC Voucher Program Effect on High School Graduation Rates: 21 percent
• Tennessee Class size reduction on college enrollment (African Americans): 19 percent
• Effective Teacher (one standard deviation higher for 3 years in a row): 4 percent
Costs:

• Vouchers: Money saved as Catholic schools were about half as expensive as public schools.

• Class size reduction: $12,000 per pupil (for three years).