

STUDENT EXIT, MOBILITY, AND ATTENDANCE IN DETROIT

COLLABORATIVE POLICY RESEARCH

This research is the result of a collaboration between Wayne State University's College of Education and a constellation of community partners interested in improving Detroit schools. We orient our work around the pressing policy needs of the Detroit education community, and we seek to inform the design of local educational reforms. We believe that education reform in other places has important lessons for our collective work in Detroit, but that any solution for Detroit will have to respond to the unique strengths and needs of our community.

This is the first of a series of reports in which we will apply social science research techniques, cycles of improvement on our own research methods, and feedback from community partners to explore critical policy problems and potential solutions in the Detroit education landscape. In this study, we examine the following questions: What factors affect the odds that students leave the city for school, switch schools, or miss 10% or more school days? How do the conditions in residential and school neighborhoods affect student outcomes? What else do policymakers, educators, and families need to know in order to affect positive policy change?

MAJOR FINDINGS



Nearly 26,000 Detroit students attended a public school in the suburbs in 2017-18. Most had previously attended school in Detroit. Students were more likely to have attended school outside the city when they had fewer city schools near where they lived, raising important policy questions about school locations, closures, and access.



Seventeen percent of Detroit students switched schools between school years when they were not in a transition year. Early elementary school and 9th grade students were most likely to be movers, and more than half of all non-routine moves were among students who did not change residence, suggesting that dissatisfaction, disciplinary pushout, or other school-level issues may be contributing to mobility.



More than half of students who attended school in Detroit were chronically absent, missing 10% or more of the school year. Controlling for individual student characteristics, students were more likely to be chronically absent if they attended a school with high rates of student mobility, were new to the school, commuted further to get to school, and when they lived in neighborhoods with higher asthma rates.

CONTACT

Sarah Winchell Lenhoff, sarah.lenhoff@wayne.edu

Ben Pogodzinski, ben.pogodzinski@wayne.edu

College of Education, Wayne State University

Please go to <http://tinyurl.com/WSU-education-research-survey> to share your feedback.