

# EXITING DETROIT FOR SCHOOL: INEQUITABLE CHOICE SETS AND SCHOOL QUALITY

## 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, called the Detroit Education Research Partnership. 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.

Nearly a quarter of the students who live in Detroit, Mich., attend a public school outside the city. In choosing to exit Detroit, families take on the burden of enrolling in a nonresident school system or charter school, typically travel further to get to school, and take their state per pupil funding with them. Fewer students means fewer dollars have been available to invest in improving city schools by raising teacher salaries, remediating facilities, and purchasing instructional materials. The large number of students who exit also signals to prospective residents and businesses that Detroit may not be a desirable place to live and raise a family. It is critical for Detroit educational and political leaders to better understand what is pushing students to exit Detroit for school and what school qualities may be pulling students toward suburban schools.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

- Students who exited had lower quality schools (test score performance, teacher and student stability, new teachers, discipline) in Detroit than students who stayed.
- Students who attended a non-Detroit school enrolled in schools that had, on average, higher discipline rates, more new teachers, lower teacher retention, and higher test scores than their choice sets in Detroit.
- The physical and cultural geography of students' neighborhood choice sets varied dramatically across the city. Students who lived in neighborhoods where most of their neighbors went to just a few schools were less likely to exit.
- Black K-8 students had, on average, lower quality choice sets than non-Black students in Detroit and they attended lower quality schools than non-Black students when they exited.

Download the full report and see all of our research at <http://go.wayne.edu/DetEdResearch>

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