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Society For Quality Education

A Win-Win Proposition

November 26, 2010 by [mdare](#) at 07:41 AM

Greetings from Key Biscayne, FL, where I am on a brief visit. Being in Florida, I am paying attention to the state's various programs to make it possible for low-income parents to choose their kids' schools. One of these is the Florida State Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC) which began in 2001 and provides tax credits for corporations that make donations to scholarship funding organizations. It is the largest private school scholarship program in the US, last year sending almost 29,000 disadvantaged children to better schools, and it is set to grow to a possible 75,000 students by 2015.

[A recent study](#) sought to determine whether the FTC, by making it possible for more parents to flee failing public schools, is prompting those public schools to improve their service. Although the study is quite sophisticated, it basically compared the test scores of public schools in areas with a lot of private schools with the test scores of public schools in areas with few private schools.

The study found that "the increased competitive pressure public schools faced following the introduction of Florida's State Tax Credit Scholarship Program led to general improvement in their performance. Both expanded access to private school options and greater variety of options that students have in terms of religious (or secular) affiliations of private schools are positively associated with public-school students' test scores following the introduction of the FTC program. The gains occur immediately, before any students leave the public schools with a scholarship, implying that competitive threats are responsible for at least some of the estimated effects. And the gains appear to be much more pronounced in the schools most at risk to lose students (elementary and middle schools, where the cost of private school attendance with a scholarship is much lower and in the schools that are on the margin of Title I funding."

As a result of the FTC scholarships, everyone wins - both the students who enroll in private schools and the students who stay behind.

Don't forget to register for SQE's AGM featuring author Michael Zwaagstra ([What's Wrong With Our Schools](#)) Saturday, Dec. 4th 12:30 p.m. at Metro Hall, Toronto. It's FREE!

Register online [HERE](#).

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