

New Study: Private School Students Ahead of Their Public School Peers by Two Years

Last year [a report](#) from the Friedman Foundation found that only 9% of parents send their child to a private school. However, if given the means and opportunity to send their child to the school of their choice, 41% of parents would pick a private school.

Those numbers seem especially important with the release of a British study which examined achievement between state-funded school pupils and independent (private) school pupils. According to [The Guardian](#):

“The study by [Durham University](#) – the most sophisticated of its type to date – found that independent school pupils in England gained an advantage worth nearly two-thirds of a GCSE [England’s prominent high school exam] grade higher once the effects of income, gender and prior attainment were stripped out.

‘This difference equates to a gain of about two years’ normal progress and suggests that attending an independent school is associated with the equivalent of two additional years of schooling by the age of 16,’ the research says.

...

The Durham research, funded by the [Independent Schools Council](#), suggests that the attainment gap is larger than previously thought and can be found among all age groups, starting from the first years of primary school where pupils are aged four.”

Like England, the U.S. also suffers from a number of achievement gap differences driven by social and economic background. If British private schools can boost educational achievement by two years even after controlling for background differences, could the U.S. do the same? Should we consider making private school a more feasible option for disadvantaged students by allowing their publicly-allotted education dollars to follow them to the school of their choice?

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