

Education Choice and Competition Index Scoring Guide

The Education Choice and Competition Index (ECCI) provides information on the extent to which parents can choose schools for their children and the degree to which the procedures for school choice promote competition within large school districts. School districts are scored within each of thirteen categories of policy and practice that are thought by experts to be important to the availability and quality of choice and to the extent to which choice creates competition among providers of education services. The data on which districts are scored are derived from best available sources. Federal statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics are preferred. For categories for which no federal data are available information is derived from school district websites or interviews with district staff. The following table includes definitions for each of the thirteen categories and their scoring rubrics. The derivation of the overall score for individual districts is explained at the end of this document.

Category 1	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Availability of Alternative Schools</i>	<p>A. Alternatives to traditional public schools include charters and at least two of the following: magnets, vouchers, affordable private ($\geq 75\%$), and tax credit scholarships</p> <p>B. Alternative options include two of three from part A.</p> <p>C. Alternative options include one or none from part A.</p> <p>Number of students enrolled in Alternative schools [Charter + Magnet + Private (including vouchers, affordable private, tax credit scholarship participants)]/Number of students enrolled in traditional Public + Alternative schools</p> <p>D. $\geq 45\%$ E. 44% to 25% F. $< 25\%$</p>	A & D	A or D (with any combination) Or B & E	B & F Or C & E	C & F
<p><i>Notes: Traditional, charter and magnet school counts are based on 2011-2012 Common Core data. The determination for “affordable” is based on private school data from the 2009-2010 Private School Survey and the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey, and an expected family contribution based on median income within each district. Expected family contributions were based on the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. Districts were unable to provide a consistent measure of full-time-equivalent virtual school enrollments from outside providers, therefore virtual school enrollments are not included in this measure.</i></p>					

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Category 2	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Virtual schools</i>	A) Publicly available policies allowing students to enroll in a variety of virtual courses that count towards graduation or matriculation B) At least 2% of the total student population is enrolled in at least one virtual course C) No substantial costs borne by student or family	All	A & B or A & C	A or B	None
<i>Notes: Virtual school enrollment is determined by individual student and not by individual enrollment (i.e. a student enrolled in three courses only counts once).</i>					

Category 3	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Popularity of Schools Reflected in Funding</i>	A) Clear definition of weighted student funding/fair funding B) At least 75% of a districts operating budget is allocated through the weighted student funding formula C) At least 50% of a district’s operating budget is allocated through the weighted student funding formula	A & B	A & C	A	None

Category 4	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Restructure or Close Undersubscribed Schools</i>	A) Published policy citing low or declining enrollment due to parental choice as a reason for closing or restructuring schools B) District has closed schools that represent 3% or more of the total number of the district’s schools in the last five years or has closed at least 10 schools	All	B	A	None
<i>Notes: A district receives credit for “due to parental choice” if at least 10% of the student population is enrolled in alternative schools (see Alternatively Available Schools”).</i>					

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Category 5	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points	Points
		4	3	2	1	0
<i>Assignment mechanism</i>	<p>A) Students are assigned to schools through an application process in which parents express their preferences (rather than through geographical attendance zones)</p> <p>B) Students receive a default school assignment based on a geographical attendance zone but parents can easily express their preferences for other schools</p> <p>C) Assignment to schools that engage in preferential admissions, e.g., magnets, maximizes the match between school preferences for students and parent preferences for schools * *The presence of schools that carry out preferential admissions is necessary for C to be relevant</p> <p>D) Assignment to oversubscribed schools that do not engage in preferential admissions maximizes parental preference</p> <p>E) Assignment to oversubscribed schools that do not engage in preferential admission is by lottery****This condition applies to regular public schools, not to charter schools for which a lottery is required by federal regulations.</p> <p>F) Assignment to oversubscribed schools that engage in preferential admission is through a competitive process that does not take parental preferences into account</p> <p>G) Assignment to schools out of the students' geographical attendance zone is difficult, unclear or substantially disadvantages parents</p>	A & C & D	B & C & D	A & C & E or B & C & E or A & E & F	B & E & F	G
<p><i>Notes: If a district requires students to meet certain circumstances in order to transfer to another traditional public school parents cannot "easily express their preferences." A district with a default assignment must allow students to attend any traditional public schools with available space to qualify for part B.</i></p>						

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Category 6	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Application</i>	A) A common application for all regular public schools within a district’s boundaries B) A common application for all public schools within a district’s boundaries, including charter schools* C) No default of a neighborhood or district assigned school D) Different applications for different schools	B & C	A & C	D	None
<i>Notes: If a district has a default of a neighborhood or district assigned school they can only receive no more than one point. Charter schools must be present for B to be relevant.</i>					

Category 7	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Comparable standards and assessments</i>	A) Private schools supported with public funding through student vouchers or tax credit scholarships are subject to an assessment system with public reporting requirements B) Public and publicly supported private schools can be directly compared in terms of their performance because they either participate in the same assessment regimen or different assessment regimens that are normed and standardized and thus directly comparable in terms of percentiles C) Private schools supported with public funding engage in voluntary and idiosyncratic public reporting of student progress	A & B	A	C	None
<i>Notes: Publicly supported private schools must be present for A or B to be relevant and for “Comparable standards and assessment” to count towards total score.</i>					

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Category 8	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Gain scores calculated</i>	<p>A) Student achievement gains are presented based on longitudinal data on academic growth of individual students, or</p> <p>B) Student achievement gains are presented based on longitudinal changes in school level means</p> <p>C) School performance is described based only on disaggregated cross-sectional achievement status for a given year</p>	A or A & B	B	C	None

Category 9	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Accessible on-line information</i>	<p>A) School choice-related performance information is clearly accessible and presented in an uncluttered and relevant manner. “Clearly” defined as organized “at each level of the Web site so that it shows a clear and logical structure to typical users” such as a parent page, enrollment, or schools page</p> <p>B) On-line resources provide a step by step choice process that includes contextual variables and definitions that allow parents to weigh important information</p> <p>C) Information to support school choice by parents is complete (parents with previous experience with the school choice process or parents with more access to informal networks of knowledgeable parents do not possess information unavailable to other parents that substantially advantages them in the choice process) and includes performance data from the previous year during the time period in which parents exercise school choice</p>	All	Two	One	None

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Category 10	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Relevant performance data</i>	<p>Information elements required under federal law are augmented with additional performance information from categories including:</p> <p>A) School popularity (e.g., popularity as measured through open enrollment; parental satisfaction surveys; transfer-out rate for students)</p> <p>And;</p> <p>1) Student characteristics (absentee rates for students; rates of detention and disciplinary actions; gain scores on district-wide assessments; availability of accelerated and advanced courses and levels of student participation and performance in advanced courses; and for high schools, graduation rates and college enrollment and persistence rates)</p> <p>2) Teacher characteristics (e.g., percentage of inexperienced teachers; absentee rates for teachers)</p> <p>3) Principal characteristics (e.g., tenure of principal; past performance of schools in which that principal served)</p> <p>4) Course offerings and resources (curriculum focus in key subjects; availability of extra curricular and afterschool programs; and annual operating budget of the school expressed as per pupil expenditure)</p> <p>5) Additional performance information includes charter schools</p>	A and four or more categories; or five categories	A and three categories; or four categories	A and two categories; or three categories	Less than 3 categories
<p><i>Notes: Only one type of data within an element is required for credit (i.e. if the percentage of inexperienced teachers is available but the absentee rate for teachers is not, the district still receives credit for part 2.</i></p>					

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Category 11	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Understandable performance data</i>	A) Provides text explanations providing parents enough information to interpret performance data. B) Allows for side-by-side comparison of schools. C) Provides performance information in graphical or tabular form with minimal or confusing text explanations	A and B	A or B	C	None
<i>Note: "Enough" refers to information regarding terms, calculations, and other explanations of performance data needed for a parent to be fully informed.</i>					

Category 12	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>Transportation</i>	A) Students are provided transportation to any school of their choice within district borders on the same terms as for a district assigned school. B) District subsidizes the cost of transportation to a school of choice but parents bear substantial costs C) District provides transportation or subsidizes transportation to schools of choice but excludes charter schools	A	B	C	None
<i>Note: "Substantial costs" are more than 25% of the total transportation cost.</i>					

Category 13	Definition	Points	Points	Points	Points
		3	2	1	0
<i>District School Quality</i>	District school quality is a measure of the performance of the average public school within a district on state assessments. A score for each school in the district is calculated by averaging that school's performance for all grade/subject combinations for which state assessment results are available. That score represents the school's percentile ranking in the state distribution of schools in terms of the percentage of students scoring proficient on the state assessments. District ratings are calculated by averaging the rating for each school in the district, weighted by the number of students enrolled at the school.	7-10 rating	4-6 rating	0-3 rating	None
<i>Notes: District quality ratings are based on district profiles from GreatSchools.</i>					

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Overall Scoring:

Districts receive points based on the number of criteria they meet in each category. The category score is the proportion of possible points received for that category. For three of the categories (Alternatively Available Schools, Assignment Mechanism, and Application) the proportion is doubled to reflect the importance of those categories to school choice relative to the other categories. Category scores are summed over all the categories and divided by the total points available¹. The resulting proportion is translated into a letter grade as follows:

A	>.75
A-	.71-.75
B+	.66-.70
B	.60-.65
B-	.55-.59
C+	.50-.54
C	.45-.49
C-	.40-.44
D	.35-.39
F	<.35

¹ 16 total points are available to districts in which students attend private schools with publicly funded scholarships whereas only 15 total points are available to districts without scholarship-aided private school attendance -- the scoring category "Comparable Standards and Assessments" is not applicable in the latter case

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Scoring Example: New York

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
Alternatively Available Schools	
Points	1
Category score (total points/3)	.33
Virtual Schools	
Points	3
Category score (total points/3)	1
Popularity of Schools Reflected in Funding	
Points	1
Category score (total points/3)	.33
Restructure or Close Undersubscribed Schools	
Points	3
Category score (total points/3)	1.00

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Assignment Mechanism	
Points	4
Category score (total points/4)	1.00
Application	
Points	2
Category score (total points/3)	.67
Comparable standards and assessments	
Points	N/A
Category score (total points/3)	N/A
Gain score calculated	
Points	1
Category score (total points/3)	.33
Accessible on-line information	
Points	3
Category score (total points/3)	1
Relevant performance data	
Points	3

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Category score (total points/3)	1.00
Understandable performance data	
Points	2
Category score (total points/3)	.67
Transportation	
Points	3
Category score (total points/3)	1
District School Quality	
Points	2
Category score (total points/3)	.67
Overall Score (category scores/15)	.73
Grade	A-