Overview

- Background
- Study Design
- Analytic Approach
- Impact findings
- Takeaways and Lingering Thoughts
Key Features of OSP Under SOAR Act

- **Scholarships** (adjusted annually for inflation)
  - Up to $8,000 (K–8)
  - Up to $12,000 (9–12)

- **Student eligibility criteria**
  - Resident of DC, entering grades K–12
  - Household income at or below 185% of the Federal poverty line

- **Priority groups**
  - Siblings in program (+40%)
  - Attending school in need of improvement or previous awardee and never used scholarship (+25%)
OSP, Authorization and Evaluation

- Annual authorization
  - $20M for OSP
  - Also $20M for DCPS and charter schools

- Evaluation
  - Independent
  - Use strongest possible research design
  - Focus on specified outcomes
  - Broadly disseminate findings

Previous Evaluation Findings

A previous study of the OSP program from 2004-2009 found that the program had:

- No significant effects on reading and mathematics test scores after 4 years

- A positive impact on high school graduation, as reported by parents.

- A positive impact on satisfaction and perceptions of school safety for parents, but not for students.
Randomized Control Trial (RCT)

- Student applicants are assigned by lottery to either receive scholarship offer (treatment) or not (control)
- RCT design is considered “gold standard” for research: Aspects not measured or measurable (such as aspirations, motivation, and attitudes toward education) same for both groups
- Outcome differences between students offered and not offered scholarships are impacts of the offer
Number of Eligible Applicants and Lottery Assignment

• Lotteries for evaluation held in 2012, 2013, 2014
  – 1,771 students applied
  – 995 scholarships offered (56%)
• 70 percent of students used their scholarship in the first year it was offered to them
• Scholarship use in first year was similar to other voucher programs with lotteries
  – First OSP: 77 percent
  – New York City: 75 percent
  – Louisiana: 77 percent for first-choice school, 68 percent overall

Baseline Characteristics

• Treatment and control groups were similar at time of application on key student and parent characteristics
  – Test scores in reading, mathematics
  – Gender
  – Race
  – Attending SINI school at time of application
  – Parent college attendance
  – Parent employment
**Key Outcomes**

- Reading and mathematics test scores (*TerraNova*)
- Satisfaction: Parent or student gives school a grade of A or B
- Perceptions of school safety: Parent or student rates school as very safe
- Parent involvement in school events
- Parent involvement in education in the home

**Analytic Approach**
Approach for Estimating Impacts

• ‘Intent to treat’ impacts—regression models with baseline covariates
• Impacts of scholarship use—impact divided by scholarship use rate (Bloom adjustment)
• Impacts for subgroups—interact treatment indicator and subgroup indicator
• Weights were used to correct for differential probabilities of selection
  – Small number of control-group parents were subsampled and weighted
No statistically significant impact on reading achievement and negative impact on mathematics achievement

*Difference between the treatment group and the control group is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

No significant impact on parent or student satisfaction

Percent giving school a grade of A or B
Positive impact on parent perceptions of school safety and no significant impact on student perceptions

**Percent rating school as very safe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Student</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship offered</td>
<td>12.3*</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship used</td>
<td>16.6*</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Difference between the treatment group and the control group is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

No significant impact on parent involvement in education at school or at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>At home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship offered</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship used</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Takeaways and Lingering Thoughts

• The OSP had a negative impact on mathematics achievement after one year.

• The OSP did not have an impact on parents’ or students’ general satisfaction with the school the child attended in the first year.

• The program had a positive impact on parents’ perceptions of safety at the school their child attended in the first year.

• The OSP did not have an impact on parent involvement in education overall.

• These results are snapshot views of the OSP impacts in the early stage; future evaluation reports will address impacts after two and three years.

Questions & Comments

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