

Response to NEPC Review of “The Integration Anomaly”

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Thanks to NEPC for offering me a 500-word response to the [review](#) of my report [The Integration Anomaly](#).

My full response to the concerns of Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (SHF) will be found at www.edchoice.org/NEPCresponse.

Five-hundred words allow a few responses:

- 1) The [empirical literature](#) on American voucher programs is clear—nine of 10 empirical studies find vouchers have led to more integration. One study found no effect. SHF do not acknowledge the existence of any research on American voucher programs—despite a summary of it in my report.
- 2) The [empirical literature](#) on the effect of American vouchers on student outcomes is also clear. Of the 15 randomized controlled trials of school vouchers, 13 find better academic outcomes for voucher students. The one negative finding comes from the Louisiana voucher program larded with government regulations of the kind SHF appear to laud. One finds no effects.

[Twenty-seven of 28 studies](#) find improved academic outcomes for students who remain in public schools under a school choice program. One finds no effect.

SHF write that “arguments and solutions” should be based on evidence. I agree and look forward to SHF citing in their future research the overwhelming evidence that American voucher programs have promoted integration and been beneficial for students who choose and beneficial for students who remain in public schools.

- 3) American neighborhoods have become tremendously more racially integrated since 1970—the studies SHF cites as supposedly opposing this fact say things like, “Without question, residential integration of African Americans is increasing, continuing a trend of desegregation that has been evident for several decades.” Positive housing trends rule out residency as the source of negative public school segregation trends.
- 4) A charter school study for which SHF rebuke me for not citing misinterprets its own findings ([Renzulli and Evans](#)). Their results actually show charter schools have virtually no effect on segregation.

There are studies that find charter schools do not impact school segregation, while other studies find charters increase segregation.

I cited the largest and best study ([RAND](#)) that finds charters do not impact segregation. I also cited the best study ([North Carolina](#)) that found the largest “negative” effects—African Americans choosing charter schools with significantly more African Americans. Given the ugly history of public school districts and others restricting the choices of African Americans [and contemporary disfavoring of African Americans within individual public schools](#)—SHF should be careful when criticizing school choices made by African American families.

- 5) As discussed in my full response, I omitted some studies because of flawed data/ methods.

After careful consideration, I stand by my report. Nothing in the SHF review was compelling enough to change my conclusions:

- A well-designed school choice program will promote integration by race and class.
- The current structure of the American public education system will continue to exacerbate segregation by race and class.