detroit k-12 enrollment

detroit k-12 enrollment represents a critical metric for understanding the educational landscape within the city of Detroit. As one of the largest urban school districts in Michigan, Detroit's K-12 enrollment figures not only reflect the demographic and socio-economic dynamics of the region but also influence funding, resource allocation, and policy decisions. This article provides a comprehensive overview of Detroit K-12 enrollment trends, key factors affecting student numbers, and the implications for educators, families, and policymakers. Additionally, it explores the enrollment process, challenges faced by the district, and ongoing efforts to improve educational access and quality. The discussion includes detailed insights into public, charter, and private school participation, highlighting how these options shape the overall enrollment landscape. Following this introduction, a clear table of contents guides the reader through the main topics covered in this analysis of Detroit K-12 enrollment.

- Overview of Detroit K-12 Enrollment Trends
- Factors Influencing Enrollment Numbers
- Enrollment Processes and Requirements
- Impact of Enrollment on Educational Resources
- Challenges and Opportunities in Detroit K-12 Enrollment

Overview of Detroit K-12 Enrollment Trends

Understanding the enrollment trends in Detroit's K-12 education system provides valuable insight into the city's changing population and educational priorities. Over the past decade, Detroit has experienced fluctuations in student enrollment driven by factors such as population shifts, school choice policies, and socio-economic changes. The total number of K-12 students enrolled in Detroit schools has seen periods of decline and stabilization, reflecting broader urban demographic trends including migration patterns and birth rates.

Detroit's public school system, which includes traditional district schools and a growing number of charter schools, serves the majority of K-12 students. Meanwhile, private schools also contribute to the overall enrollment figures, offering alternative educational environments. These enrollment trends have significant implications for funding formulas, staffing decisions, and the implementation of educational programs.

Historical Enrollment Data

Historically, Detroit public schools experienced a peak in enrollment during the mid-20th century, followed by a steady decline as population outflow and economic challenges impacted the city. Recent years have seen efforts to stabilize and potentially increase enrollment, particularly through the expansion of charter schools and school choice initiatives.

Current Enrollment Statistics

As of the latest data, Detroit K-12 enrollment comprises approximately 50,000 to 60,000 students across public and charter schools, with private school enrollment adding to this figure. The distribution among school types reflects the evolving educational landscape, with charter schools accounting for a significant and growing proportion of total enrollment.

Factors Influencing Enrollment Numbers

Several key factors influence Detroit K-12 enrollment figures. These elements range from demographic shifts to policy decisions and community engagement. Understanding these drivers is essential for stakeholders aiming to address enrollment challenges and optimize educational outcomes.

Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors

Population changes within Detroit directly impact K-12 enrollment. Factors such as birth rates, family migration patterns, and economic conditions shape the number of school-age children residing in the city. Economic hardships and housing instability can affect both the number of students and their consistency in school attendance.

School Choice and Charter Schools

The introduction and expansion of charter schools have significantly affected enrollment distribution. Families in Detroit increasingly exercise school choice options, selecting from traditional public schools, charter schools, and private institutions based on perceived quality, specialized programs, and accessibility. This diversification of school options has led to more dynamic enrollment patterns across the district.

Policy and Funding Impacts

State and local policies related to school funding formulas, enrollment reporting, and capacity limits also influence enrollment numbers. Funding tied directly to enrollment motivates schools to attract and retain students, while policies on enrollment deadlines and documentation requirements can either facilitate or hinder student registration.

Enrollment Processes and Requirements

The enrollment process in Detroit for K-12 students involves several administrative steps designed to ensure proper placement and compliance with educational regulations. These procedures vary somewhat between the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD), charter schools, and private institutions.

Enrollment in Detroit Public Schools

Enrollment in DPSCD schools typically requires proof of residency, birth certificates, immunization records, and previous school transcripts where applicable. The district offers online and in-person registration options to accommodate families. Priority is often given to students residing within the district boundaries, although some schools may have specialized program lotteries open to out-of-district applicants.

Charter School Enrollment Procedures

Charter schools in Detroit operate independently but must adhere to state regulations regarding enrollment. Many charter schools use application and lottery systems to manage demand. Parents must submit necessary documents and meet deadlines to secure enrollment, with some charters offering enrollment fairs and informational sessions to assist families.

Private School Admissions

Private schools follow their own admissions criteria, which may include entrance exams, interviews, and financial aid applications. These schools generally require early application and provide fewer public resources for enrollment assistance, making the process more selective and competitive.

Impact of Enrollment on Educational Resources

Enrollment levels directly affect the allocation of educational resources within Detroit's K-12 system. Funding, staffing, classroom sizes, and program availability are all contingent upon accurate and stable enrollment figures.

Funding Allocation

Public school funding in Detroit is closely tied to student enrollment numbers through state and federal formulas. Higher enrollment can lead to increased financial resources, enabling schools to enhance instructional programs and support services. Conversely, declining enrollment may trigger budget cuts and program reductions.

Staffing and Class Size

Enrollment trends influence staffing decisions, including the hiring and retention of teachers and support personnel. Maintaining optimal class sizes is critical for effective instruction, and significant enrollment shifts require schools to adjust their workforce accordingly.

Program Development and Availability

Programs such as special education, advanced placement courses, and extracurricular activities

depend on sufficient enrollment to justify their continuation. Enrollment fluctuations may lead to the expansion or reduction of these offerings, impacting student opportunities.

Challenges and Opportunities in Detroit K-12 Enrollment

Despite ongoing efforts to improve Detroit K-12 enrollment outcomes, several challenges persist. Addressing these issues presents opportunities for enhancing educational access, equity, and quality across the city.

Challenges

- Population decline and economic hardship affecting student numbers
- Enrollment barriers related to documentation and registration processes
- Competition among traditional public, charter, and private schools
- Resource constraints limiting school capacity and program diversity

Opportunities

- Expanding outreach and enrollment support services for families
- Leveraging technology for streamlined registration and data management
- Enhancing school choice options with equitable access initiatives
- Collaborative efforts between district and charter schools to optimize resource use

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the current enrollment trend for K-12 schools in Detroit?

Detroit K-12 enrollment has experienced fluctuations over recent years, with some schools seeing declines due to demographic changes and others growing due to new educational initiatives and school choice programs.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Detroit K-12 enrollment?

The COVID-19 pandemic led to temporary declines in Detroit K-12 enrollment as some families opted for homeschooling or delayed school entry, but enrollment is gradually stabilizing with the return to in-person learning.

What are the demographics of students enrolled in Detroit K-12 schools?

Detroit K-12 student demographics are predominantly African American, with a growing percentage of Hispanic and multi-racial students, reflecting the city's diverse urban population.

How does Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) enrollment compare to charter schools?

DPSCD enrollment has generally declined over the years, while charter schools in Detroit have seen increased enrollment, reflecting the city's expanding charter school sector.

What initiatives are in place to boost K-12 enrollment in Detroit?

Initiatives include improving school facilities, expanding specialized programs like STEM and arts, increasing access to early childhood education, and promoting school choice options to attract and retain students.

How does Detroit's K-12 enrollment affect school funding?

School funding in Detroit is closely tied to enrollment numbers; declines in enrollment can lead to reduced funding, impacting resources, staffing, and program availability.

Are there significant differences in enrollment between Detroit's public and charter K-12 schools?

Yes, charter schools in Detroit have grown in popularity and enrollment, often offering specialized curricula and smaller class sizes, while some public schools have faced enrollment declines.

What role does population change in Detroit play in K-12 enrollment numbers?

Population shifts, including urban migration patterns and birth rates, significantly influence Detroit's K-12 enrollment, with population decreases in some neighborhoods contributing to lower student numbers.

Additional Resources

1. Detroit K-12 Enrollment Trends: An Analytical Overview

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of enrollment patterns in Detroit's K-12 schools over the past two decades. It examines demographic shifts, policy changes, and their impacts on student populations. The data-driven approach offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders seeking to understand evolving educational needs in Detroit.

2. Challenges and Opportunities in Detroit K-12 Education Enrollment

Focusing on the unique obstacles Detroit faces in maintaining and growing K-12 enrollment, this book explores factors such as economic hardship, school choice, and urban migration. It highlights innovative strategies schools and districts have employed to attract and retain students. Readers will gain a clear understanding of both the systemic challenges and potential solutions for Detroit's educational landscape.

3. Equity and Access: Detroit's K-12 Enrollment Landscape

This volume delves into issues of equity and access within Detroit's K-12 enrollment system. It discusses disparities in enrollment among different communities and the efforts to create more inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. Through case studies and policy analysis, the book advocates for reforms to ensure all Detroit children have access to quality education.

- 4. The Impact of Charter Schools on Detroit K-12 Enrollment
- Exploring the rise of charter schools in Detroit, this book analyzes how they have influenced overall K-12 enrollment figures. It assesses both positive outcomes and controversies related to school choice, funding, and student distribution. The book provides a balanced perspective on how charter schools fit into Detroit's broader educational ecosystem.
- 5. Detroit Public Schools Enrollment: Historical Perspectives and Future Directions
 Tracing the history of Detroit Public Schools' enrollment from its origins to the present, this book offers a detailed narrative of changes over time. It considers social, economic, and political factors that have shaped enrollment trends. The concluding chapters suggest pathways for the district to adapt to current and future demographic realities.
- 6. Parent and Student Decision-Making in Detroit K-12 Enrollment

This book investigates how families in Detroit make choices about K-12 enrollment, including factors influencing school selection and transfer decisions. Drawing on surveys and interviews, it reveals the priorities and concerns of parents and students. The findings provide important insights for schools aiming to better meet community needs.

7. Policy and Reform: Detroit's K-12 Enrollment Strategies

A critical examination of the policies and reforms aimed at managing and improving K-12 enrollment in Detroit, this book highlights key initiatives and their outcomes. It evaluates the effectiveness of efforts such as enrollment caps, marketing campaigns, and resource allocation. The book serves as a guide for policymakers looking to refine enrollment strategies.

8. Demographic Shifts and Their Effects on Detroit K-12 Enrollment

This book focuses on how demographic changes, including population decline and migration patterns, have impacted Detroit's K-12 enrollment. It uses census data and educational statistics to paint a detailed picture of shifting student populations. The analysis offers predictions and recommendations for future enrollment planning.

9. Community Engagement and Detroit K-12 Enrollment Growth

Highlighting the role of community involvement in boosting K-12 enrollment, this book explores partnerships between schools, families, and local organizations. It presents successful case studies where engagement efforts led to increased enrollment and improved educational outcomes. The book underscores the importance of collaboration in addressing enrollment challenges in Detroit.

Detroit K 12 Enrollment

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Detroit K-12 Enrollment: A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding the Trends, Challenges, and Future of Education in the Motor City

This ebook delves into the complex landscape of Detroit K-12 enrollment, examining its historical trends, current challenges, the impact of various factors, and potential solutions for improving educational outcomes within the Detroit Public School Community District (DPSCD) and the surrounding charter school system. We will explore the socioeconomic factors influencing enrollment, the role of school choice, and the implications for the future of education in Detroit.

Ebook Title: Navigating Detroit's Educational Landscape: A Deep Dive into K-12 Enrollment

Outline:

Introduction: Setting the stage and defining the scope of Detroit K-12 enrollment.

Chapter 1: Historical Trends in Detroit K-12 Enrollment: Examining past enrollment patterns and identifying significant shifts over time.

Chapter 2: The Current State of Enrollment: DPSCD and Charter Schools: A comparative analysis of enrollment numbers and demographics within the DPSCD and the city's numerous charter schools.

Chapter 3: Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Enrollment Decisions: Exploring the impact of poverty, housing instability, and access to resources on student enrollment.

Chapter 4: The Role of School Choice in Shaping Enrollment: Analyzing the impact of school choice programs and the factors influencing parents' decisions.

Chapter 5: Addressing Challenges and Improving Enrollment Outcomes: Discussing strategies to attract and retain students, improve school quality, and address systemic inequalities.

Chapter 6: The Future of Detroit K-12 Enrollment: Projecting future enrollment trends and exploring potential scenarios based on current patterns.

Chapter 7: Data Analysis and Interpretation of Key Metrics: Detailed examination of relevant statistics and their implications.

Conclusion: Summarizing key findings and offering final thoughts on the future of Detroit's educational system.

Detailed Explanation of Outline Points:

Introduction: This section will provide background information on the Detroit Public School Community District (DPSCD), the charter school landscape, and the overall context of K-12 enrollment in the city. It will also clearly define the scope of the ebook and outline the key themes to be explored.

Chapter 1: Historical Trends in Detroit K-12 Enrollment: This chapter will present a historical overview of enrollment numbers, charting changes over several decades. It will analyze reasons for past fluctuations, such as population shifts, economic changes, and educational reforms. Key data visualizations will be used to illustrate these trends.

Chapter 2: The Current State of Enrollment: DPSCD and Charter Schools: This chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the current enrollment situation, comparing and contrasting enrollment figures for the DPSCD and the various charter schools within the city. It will examine demographic breakdowns within each sector and identify any significant disparities.

Chapter 3: Socioeconomic Factors Influencing Enrollment Decisions: This chapter will explore the profound impact of socioeconomic factors on student enrollment. This includes examining the correlation between poverty rates, housing instability, access to healthcare, and student enrollment patterns. It will also delve into the effects of transportation challenges and parental work schedules.

Chapter 4: The Role of School Choice in Shaping Enrollment: This chapter will analyze the significant role of school choice in shaping enrollment trends. It will discuss the various school choice programs available in Detroit, examining their effectiveness and impact on enrollment distribution across different school types. Parental preferences and decision-making processes will also be considered.

Chapter 5: Addressing Challenges and Improving Enrollment Outcomes: This chapter will address the key challenges facing Detroit K-12 enrollment and propose potential solutions. It will discuss strategies for improving school quality, attracting and retaining students, addressing systemic inequalities, and promoting equitable resource allocation. Examples of successful interventions from other cities will be examined.

Chapter 6: The Future of Detroit K-12 Enrollment: This chapter will attempt to project future enrollment trends based on current patterns and anticipated changes. It will explore potential scenarios and discuss the implications for the future of education in Detroit, considering factors like population growth or decline, and changes in school choice policies.

Chapter 7: Data Analysis and Interpretation of Key Metrics: This chapter will provide a detailed analysis of relevant data, such as graduation rates, test scores, and student demographics, offering a deeper understanding of the factors influencing enrollment trends. Statistical analysis and data visualization will be employed to support the analysis.

Conclusion: This section will summarize the key findings from the previous chapters, highlighting the most significant trends and challenges. It will offer concluding thoughts on the future of Detroit

Keywords: Detroit K-12 enrollment, Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD), Detroit charter schools, school choice Detroit, Detroit education, K-12 enrollment trends Detroit, Detroit student demographics, socioeconomic factors education Detroit, education inequality Detroit, Detroit school funding, improving Detroit schools

(The following sections would continue in the ebook, with detailed analysis, data, and supporting evidence. Due to word count limitations, this is a skeletal structure for the ebook.)

FAQs

- 1. What is the current enrollment in the DPSCD? (Answer would require up-to-date data from DPSCD official sources.)
- 2. How does Detroit's K-12 enrollment compare to other major cities? (Comparative data analysis would be needed.)
- 3. What are the main reasons for declining enrollment in some Detroit schools? (Address socioeconomic factors, school quality, and school choice.)
- 4. What role do charter schools play in Detroit's K-12 system? (Discuss the number, types, and impact of charter schools.)
- 5. What are the biggest challenges facing Detroit's education system? (Funding, teacher shortages, student achievement gaps, etc.)
- 6. What initiatives are being implemented to improve Detroit schools? (Highlight specific programs and strategies.)
- 7. What is the impact of poverty on student enrollment and academic achievement? (Statistical analysis and data would support the answer.)
- 8. How can parents make informed decisions about school choice in Detroit? (Provide guidance on accessing information and resources.)
- 9. What is the long-term outlook for Detroit's K-12 education system? (Project future trends based on current data and initiatives.)

Related Articles:

1. The Impact of School Choice on Detroit's Educational Landscape: Examines the effects of school

choice policies on enrollment and student outcomes.

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- 3. Funding Challenges and Resource Allocation in Detroit Schools: Discusses the financial challenges facing Detroit's schools and explores potential solutions.
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- 7. The Future of Education Technology in Detroit Schools: Discusses the role of technology in improving educational outcomes.
- 8. Addressing the Achievement Gap in Detroit Public Schools: Explores strategies for reducing the achievement gap between different student groups.
- 9. Detroit's Educational Reforms: Progress, Challenges, and Future Directions: Provides an overview of past and present educational reforms and their impact.

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detroit k 12 enrollment: Reinventing Public Education Paul Hill, Lawrence C. Pierce, James W. Guthrie, 2009-02-15 A heated debate is raging over our nation's public schools and how they should be reformed, with proposals ranging from imposing national standards to replacing public education altogether with a voucher system for private schools. Combining decades of experience in education, the authors propose an innovative approach to solving the problems of our school system and find a middle ground between these extremes. Reinventing Public Education shows how contracting would radically change the way we operate our schools, while keeping them public and accessible to all, and making them better able to meet standards of achievement and equity. Using public funds, local school boards would select private providers to operate individual schools under formal contracts specifying the type and quality of instruction. In a hands-on, concrete fashion, the authors provide a thorough explanation of the pros and cons of school contracting and how it would work in practice. They show how contracting would free local school boards from operating schools so they can focus on improving educational policy; how it would allow parents to choose the best school for their children; and, finally, how it would ensure that schools are held accountable and academic standards are met. While retaining a strong public role in education, contracting enables schools to be more imaginative, adaptable, and suited to the needs of children and families. In presenting an alternative vision for America's schools, Reinventing Public Education is too important to be ignored.

detroit k 12 enrollment: Detroit Lewis D. Solomon, 2014 As America's most dysfunctional big city, Detroit faces urban decay, population losses, fractured neighborhoods with impoverished households, an uneducated, unskilled workforce, too few jobs, a shrinking tax base, budgetary shortfalls, and inadequate public schools. Looking to the city's future, Lewis D. Solomon focuses on pathways to revitalizing Detroit, while offering a cautiously optimistic viewpoint. Solomon urges an economic development strategy, one anchored in Detroit balancing its municipal and public school district's budgets, improving the academic performance of its public schools, rebuilding its tax base, and looking to the private sector to create jobs. He advocates an overlapping, tripartite political economy, one that builds on the foundation of an appropriately sized public sector and a for-profit private sector, with the latter fueling economic growth. Although he acknowledges that Detroit faces a long road to implementation, Solomon sketches a vision of a revitalized economic sector based on two key assets: vacant land and an unskilled labor force. The book is divided into four distinct parts.

The first provides background and context, with a brief overview of the city's numerous challenges. The second examines Detroit's immediate efforts to overcome its fiscal crisis. It proposes ways Detroit can be put on the path to financial stability and sustainability. The third considers how Detroit can implement a new approach to job creation, one focused on the for-profit private sector, not the public sector. In the fourth and final part, Solomon argues that residents should pursue a strategy based on the actions of individuals and community groups rather than looking to large-scale projects.

detroit k 12 enrollment: Reinventing America's Schools David Osborne, 2017-09-05 From David Osborne, the author of Reinventing Government--a biting analysis of the failure of America's public schools and a comprehensive plan for revitalizing American education. In Reinventing America's Schools, David Osborne, one of the world's foremost experts on public sector reform, offers a comprehensive analysis of the charter school movements and presents a theory that will do for American schools what his New York Times bestseller Reinventing Government did for public governance in 1992. In 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, the city got an unexpected opportunity to recreate their school system from scratch. The state's Recovery School District (RSD), created to turn around failing schools, gradually transformed all of its New Orleans schools into charter schools, and the results are shaking the very foundations of American education. Test scores, school performance scores, graduation and dropout rates, ACT scores, college-going rates, and independent studies all tell the same story: the city's RSD schools have tripled their effectiveness in eight years. Now other cities are following suit, with state governments reinventing failing schools in Newark, Camden, Memphis, Denver, Indianapolis, Cleveland, and Oakland. In this book, Osborne uses compelling stories from cities like New Orleans and lays out the history and possible future of public education. Ultimately, he uses his extensive research to argue that in today's world, we should treat every public school like a charter school and grant them autonomy, accountability, diversity of school designs, and parental choice.

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reform Board member, and parent and community activists--engage in a no holds barred conversation about testing, teacher preparation, and what is and is not working in Detroit schools, including a school for pregnant and parenting teens and Timbuktu Academy. Concrete suggestions for research and practice are offered. 0-8058-5625-0 [Video] / 2005 / \$10.00 A Charge to Keep [Video] The Findings and Recommendations of te AERA Commission on Research in Black Education Edited by Joyce E. King Georgia State University This 50-minute video documents the findings and recommendations of the Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE), including exemplary educational approaches that CORIBE identified, cameo commentaries by Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Kathy Au, Donna Gollnick, Adelaide L. Sanford, Asa Hilliard, Edmund Gordon and others, and an extended interview with Sylvia Wynter. 0-8058-5626-9 [Video] / 2005 / \$10.00

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detroit k 12 enrollment: Detroit Public Schools Detroit (Mich.). Board of Education, 1911 detroit k 12 enrollment: Dismantled Leanne Kang, 2020 All across America, our largest city school districts have been rapidly and dramatically changing. From Chicago to Detroit in the Midwest to Newark and New York in the East, charter schools continue to crop up everywhere while traditional public schools are shuttered. In what remains of public schools, school boards are increasingly bypassed or suspended by state-appointed managers who are often non-local actors and public services are increasingly privatized. This book tells the story of how as early as the 1980s, reform efforts-both state and federal-have essentially transformed Detroit's school system by introducing new education players like Betsy DeVos, who have gradually eclipsed local actors for the control of schools. I argue that Detroit's embittered school wars are fought between two fronts: a dwindling regime of native school leaders and local constituents (i.e., teachers, parents, students, community activists, etc.) against the ascension of new and outside managers. It is a story that captures the greatest school organizational change since the Progressive Era--

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wrong with the African/American Schools in the U.S. This article holds no punches inregards to what's needed to change the decades of negative behavior from the Administration on down to the lives of African/American Children across this country. This is a WARNING to you the reader! You may adamantly disagree but hopefully you will come away with what is said here in this article needs to be said.

detroit k 12 enrollment: Get Out Now Mary Rice Hasson, Theresa Farnan, 2018-08-14 Should we stay or should we go? Millions of parents with children in public schools can't believe they're asking this question. But they are. And you should be asking it too. Almost overnight, America's public schools have become morally toxic. And they are especially poisonous for the hearts and minds of children from religious families of every faith—ordinary families who value traditional morality and plain old common sense. Parents' first duty is to their children—to their intellect, their character, their souls. The facts on the ground point to one conclusion: get out now.

detroit k 12 enrollment: Closing the School Discipline Gap Daniel J. Losen, 2015 Educators remove over 3.45 million students from school annually for disciplinary reasons, despite strong evidence that school suspension policies are harmful to students. The research presented in this volume demonstrates that disciplinary policies and practices that schools control directly exacerbate today's profound inequities in educational opportunity and outcomes. Part I explores how suspensions flow along the lines of race, gender, and disability status. Part II examines potential remedies that show great promise, including a district-wide approach in Cleveland, Ohio, aimed at social and emotional learning strategies. Closing the School Discipline Gap is a call for action that focuses on an area in which public schools can and should make powerful improvements. in a relatively short period of time. Contributors include Robert Balfanz, Jamilia Blake, Dewey Cornell, Jeremy D. Finn, Thalia González, Anne Gregory, Daniel J. Losen, David M. Osher, Russell J. Skiba, Ivory A. Toldson "Closing the School Discipline Gap can make an enormous difference in reducing disciplinary exclusions across the country. This book not only exposes unsound practices and their disparate impact on the historically disadvantaged, but provides educators, policymakers, and community advocates with an array of remedies that are proven effective or hold great promise. Educators, communities, and students alike can benefit from the promising interventions and well-grounded recommendations." -Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University "For over four decades school discipline policies and practices in too many places have pushed children out of school, especially children of color. Closing the School Discipline Gap shows that adults have the power—and responsibility—to change school climates to better meet the needs of children. This volume is a call to action for policymakers, educators, parents, and students." —Marian Wright Edelman, president, Children's Defense Fund

detroit k 12 enrollment: The Public School Advantage Christopher A. Lubienski, Sarah Theule Lubienski, 2013-11-07 Nearly the whole of America's partisan politics centers on a single question: Can markets solve our social problems? And for years this question has played out ferociously in the debates about how we should educate our children. From the growth of vouchers and charter schools to the implementation of No Child Left Behind, policy makers have increasingly turned to market-based models to help improve our schools, believing that private institutions—because they are competitively driven—are better than public ones. With The Public School Advantage, Christopher A. and Sarah Theule Lubienski offer powerful evidence to undercut this belief, showing that public schools in fact outperform private ones. For decades research showing that students at private schools perform better than students at public ones has been used to promote the benefits of the private sector in education, including vouchers and charter schools—but much of these data are now nearly half a century old. Drawing on two recent, large-scale, and nationally representative databases, the Lubienskis show that any benefit seen in private school performance now is more than explained by demographics. Private schools have higher scores not because they are better institutions but because their students largely come from more privileged backgrounds that offer greater educational support. After correcting for demographics, the Lubienskis go on to show that gains in student achievement at public schools are at least as great and often greater than those at private ones. Even more surprising, they show that the very mechanism that market-based reformers champion—autonomy—may be the crucial factor that prevents private schools from performing better. Alternatively, those practices that these reformers castigate, such as teacher certification and professional reforms of curriculum and instruction, turn out to have a significant effect on school improvement. Despite our politics, we all agree on the fundamental fact: education deserves our utmost care. The Public School Advantage offers exactly that. By examining schools within the diversity of populations in which they actually operate, it provides not ideologies but facts. And the facts say it clearly: education is better off when provided for the public by the public.

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schooling—and what we, as a nation, hope to accomplish with that mix of choices. Looking beyond the simplistic divide between those who oppose government intervention and those who support public education, the authors make the case for a structured landscape of choice in schooling, one that protects the interests of children and of society, while also identifying key shared values on which a broadly acceptable policy could rest.

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