



The Indianapolis 2022 CREDO Report is Not the Flex Some School Choice Proponents Think It Is

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One day, when I was a child, my grandmother told me to complete a task. Before I went off, she asked me to repeat what she said. I repeated it. Then she said, “You have selective listening.” She repeated her directions with emphasis on the parts I had left out, had me repeat them again, and she sent me off to complete the task.

I assert some people in Indianapolis have selective reading skills. I've seen post after post praising the [Indianapolis 2022 CREDO report](#) as proof that public charter schools in Indy are better than traditional public schools in Indy. Maybe people are wearing glasses with dirty lenses because that is not what I read in this report; this is not my conclusion.

Give me a moment to put on my English teacher hat. (My children claim I never take it off.) Once people learn how to read, they use their reading skills to gain knowledge from the text they read. Sometimes this requires reading a text more than one time. Before you respond to my thoughts about this report, please at least do this.

Next, let's review "right there in the text" information. This is when I would encourage students to underline, circle, or highlight significant statements or information in the text.

Take a moment and identify key points before continuing to read my thoughts.

Here is information that stood out to me:

(1) Students in Indianapolis posted weaker learning gains compared to the state average in both reading and math throughout the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.

(2) For reading, Indianapolis charter students made similar learning gains than the state average over the two growth periods.

(3) Students in Indianapolis innovation schools posted weaker learning gains in 2017-18, while grew on par with the statewide average in 2018-19 school year.

(4) Traditional district students in Indianapolis lagged behind an average student in the state throughout the both growth periods.

(5) For math, Indianapolis charter and innovation school students grew on par with the state average, while Indianapolis district students exhibited weaker learning gains than an average student in the state over the two growth years.

(6) Comparisons of sectors within Indianapolis indicate that there is no significant difference in growth in reading across sectors over the two growth periods.

(7) For math, charter schools exhibited greater learning gains than district schools in 2018-19, while no significant difference in growth was found between innovation and district schools or between charter and innovation schools.

(8) Students attending Indianapolis independent charter schools grow on par with the average student in the state in both subjects

(9) Overall, Indianapolis black students make weaker learning gains in both reading and math compared to the state average black student.

(10) Black students enrolled in charter schools post stronger growth than district school black students in both subjects. There is no significant difference in learning gains in reading or math between black students in Innovation schools and black students in district schools within Indianapolis.

(11) Sector breakout analyses reveal that Hispanic students in Indianapolis charter schools make similar progress in both reading and math relative to the average Hispanic student statewide.

(12) No significant difference in reading and math growth is found between students in Indianapolis innovation school Hispanic students and district school Hispanic students.

(13) Comparisons of sectors within Indianapolis demonstrate charter school students in poverty outperform district school students in poverty in both reading and math, while no significant difference in learning gains is found between innovation school students in poverty and district schools students in poverty in either subject.

(14) Cross-sector comparisons within Indianapolis indicate that ELLs students show similar learning gains in both subjects, regardless of the sector they are enrolled.

(15) The only significant difference surfacing from cross-sector comparisons within Indianapolis is that special education students in charter schools make greater gains in reading than special education students in traditional district schools.

(16) Within Indianapolis, male students in charter and innovation schools exhibit similar growth in both subjects compared to male students at district schools.

(17) Comparisons of sectors within Indianapolis reveal stronger growth in both subject among female students at charter schools when they are compared to average female student in district schools in Indianapolis. Female students enrolled in innovation schools show similar gains in both subjects compare to their counterparts in district schools.

Next, I ask students to annotate their findings. This means asking questions, making comments, or making inferences about the important information. Depending on the topic, as I did here, I categorized the topics to make connections with my analysis. Indiana English teachers know these skills tie into the reading nonfiction standard 2.1.

In yellow, the data shows that Indianapolis students in all sectors: charter, innovation, or traditional are doing worse than students in Indiana outside of Indianapolis. Indy is the capital of the state. It is seen as a place where there are more resources than other cities in Indiana, and yet, our students' data lags behind students' data in other cities in the state.

In green, I highlighted every time the report said, "exhibits similar growth" or "shows similar gains" because it is prevalent throughout the report. No sector in Indianapolis: charter, innovation, or traditional is doing as well as they should. No one should read this report and brag.

Last, the areas I didn't highlight are the ones people are touting as success and proof that charter schools and innovation schools are really doing a great job. Touting that districts schools are lagging behind as proof the innovation schools and charter schools in Indy really work is ridiculous. All the data is dismal. In reality, everyone is lagging behind. No one should be patting themselves on the back.

Yes, I still support school choice, but that choice should be quality not barely above the achievement of the school the student is leaving. Our Indianapolis kids deserve the best. I know there are success stories in all sectors when it comes to individual students; however, this report should be a message to every educator that we ALL need to do better and no one should be running a celebration lap yet.