



EMBARGOED UNTIL 8:00 AM ON NOVEMBER 8, 2012

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GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH TRACKS STUDENT MOVES AMONG ALL OHIO PUBLIC DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

More than one-quarter million Ohio students not in the same school building for two consecutive school years. Mobility linked to lower test scores for urban students.

The Ohio Student Mobility Research Project findings will be released at a forum at The Columbus Foundation, 1234 E. Broad St., on Thursday, November 8, from 8:00-9:30 a.m. Forum participants will include: Roberta Garber, Community Research Partners; Terry Ryan, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, Mark Real, KidsOhio.org; Nancy van Meter, American Federation of Teachers; Matt Cohen, Ohio Department of Education; and Steve Dackin, Superintendent of Reynoldsburg City Schools.

Community Research Partners (CRP) and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (Fordham) today released the findings of the Ohio Student Mobility Research Project. The research analyzes about five million student records over two school years from the Ohio Department of Education's EMIS system to provide a picture of student mobility for all Ohio public districts and buildings and public charter schools, with in-depth analysis for the Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo areas.

"We are not aware of other research that has examined student mobility at the scale, scope, and level of detail as the Ohio Student Mobility Research," said Roberta Garber, CRP Executive Director. "We found that student mobility is an issue facing not just large, urban school districts. There are also suburban, small city, and rural schools with many students moving in and out."

For the research, mobile students were defined as those in grades K-12 who change schools for reasons other than promotion from elementary school to middle school or from middle school to high school. These non-promotional moves could have occurred during the school year or in the summer between school years.

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“This is a fantastic piece of work by Community Research Partners that is sure to raise a number of important questions over the coming months about, among others, how to better coordinate services across and between schools, school and teacher accountability, school funding and reporting, and school choice,” said Terry Ryan, Fordham vice president for Ohio program and policy.

The median of K-12 building “churn rates”—number of admissions and withdrawals during a school year as a percent of October 1 enrollment—was 10.6% for all Ohio public districts and 31.5% for the 15 Major Urban districts. All Ohio public charter schools had a median K-12 churn rate of 27.2%. E-charter schools (a subset of all charters) had a median rate of 129.9%, indicating that many students move in and out during the school year.

The research found that many types of schools exchange students. In the Columbus Area, 44 public districts exchanged 18,877 students over two school years. Another 20,345 students were exchanged between public districts and charter schools. South-Western, Groveport-Madison, Westerville, Reynoldsburg, and Whitehall each exchanged 500 or more students with Columbus City Schools (CCS). CCS’s greatest charter exchange—about 1,600 students—was with Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow. In addition, a total of more than 150 students were exchanged over two school years between South-Western and Hilliard, between Dublin and Hilliard, and between Groveport-Madison and South-Western, Reynoldsburg, and Hamilton Local.

Analysis of the mobility history and test scores of students in the Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Dayton districts who took the 3rd and 8th grade achievement tests in spring 2011 found that the number of school changes over two years is an independent predictor of test scores, with more moves generally indicating a likelihood of lower scores.

“The fact that one in six urban K-8 students and one in five urban high school students switched schools during the school year has a negative effect on student performance,” said Mark Real from KidsOhio.org. “It is hopeful that twelve organizations are banding together to understand and discuss these issues.”

The research examines mobility in a variety of ways: 1) magnitude of mobility, which measures stability of students within districts and buildings (cohort stability) and numbers of movements into and out of districts and buildings (churn); 2) mobility patterns, which track the origin and destination of movement between buildings and districts; and 3) the relationship of mobility to student demographic characteristics and student achievement. It also includes an analysis of open enrollment patterns and students whose test scores are “rolled up” to the state level because they do not meet the building or district continuous enrollment criteria.

The research was made possible through the support of diverse set of funders. In addition to Fordham, they include: The Siemer Institute for Family Stability, The Nord Family Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, KnowledgeWorks, KidsOhio.org, American Federation of Teachers/Ohio Federation of Teachers, School Choice Ohio, United Way of Central Ohio, United Way of Greater Toledo, and The Columbus Foundation.

The Ohio Student Mobility Research reports and can be downloaded from the Community Research Partners website, www.researchpartners.org, or the Fordham Institute website, www.edexcellence.net. Spreadsheets with data for all Ohio districts, buildings, and charter schools can also be downloaded from the CRP website.

Community Research Partners, a Columbus-based nonprofit research organization that strengthens communities through data, information, and knowledge. Since 2000, CRP has undertaken more than 350 community data, applied and policy research, and program evaluation projects, in central Ohio, statewide, and as part of national initiatives.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute is the nation's leader in advancing educational excellence for every child through quality research, analysis, and commentary, as well as on-the-ground action and advocacy in Ohio. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute is affiliated with the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, and this publication is a joint project of the Foundation and the Institute. The Institute is neither connected with nor sponsored by Fordham University.