

Methodological Notes

Data

The data come from the following downloadable data files:

- Educational Entity Masters: 2015-16, 2016-17
- Student Count: 2015-16, 2016-17
- Grades 3-8 Assessments (i.e., M-STEP): 2016-17
- College Readiness (i.e., SAT): 2016-17
- Graduation/Dropout (i.e., HS 4yr Grad Rates): 2015-16
- College Enrollment by High School (i.e., 6 month College Enrollment): 2015-16

These CEPI Public Use datafiles can be downloaded from mischooldata.org.

Methodology

The data includes all schools in Detroit, except for schools that serve special populations (aka, "specialty" schools). Specialty schools are schools that exclusively serve a non-representative student body, such as moderate or severe special education students or pregnant teens. Analysis consisted of simple aggregation by school type. At the request of Doug Ross, DPSCD and EAA were combined even though they operated independent from each other in both 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Limitations

When comparing performance of charters and traditional public schools, educational researchers generally do not rely upon simple comparisons of averages because doing so assumes that student populations are identical. A more reliable methodology would be propensity score matching using student-level data. Due to student-level data being restricted, this more advanced and more reliable methodology was not employed for this project. But more meaningful comparisons--such as what Stanford University's CREDO Institute has done--from propensity score matching is more meaningful reliable than simple comparisons of aggregated means.