

IMPACT ON ALICE • K-12 EDUCATION

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What do families do if they don't live near a quality elementary, middle, or high school?



Increased expenses: Most high-performing schools are in areas with a higher cost of living. For instance, in the 100 largest metropolitan areas, housing costs almost \$11,000 more per year near high-scoring public schools than near low-scoring ones.³⁸ Property taxes, food, transportation, child care and other essential needs are also more expensive in these areas, making them impossible for most ALICE families to afford.

Face increased isolation due to uprooting from one's community. Leaving behind neighbors, family, and other social connections can take a toll on one's physical and emotional well-being, leading to increased health care costs.

Housing Vouchers and ALICE

Housing vouchers have the potential to enable ALICE families to move to areas of opportunity, but they have not worked well in practice because many landlords will not accept them (despite this being an illegal form of housing discrimination). Most families with housing vouchers live near a school that, on average, has 74 percent low-income students and ranks in the 26th percentile by state test scores.³⁹

▼ Commute to a School in Another Neighborhood

While options vary by location, commuting to a higher-quality, better-performing school in another community is possible. In some areas, magnet and charter schools make this a viable option for students who meet the criteria or win the entrance lottery; in other areas, students travel just as far to attend better-performing traditional public schools. In New York City, student commuting time shows how residential segregation by race and income often determines school quality: Between 2013 and 2016, the average commuting time to the nearest high-quality school was higher for Black and low-income NYC students than for other students.⁴⁰



Consequences



Long commute: Time spent commuting is time students cannot be participating in after-school activities, sports, or jobs, or doing homework; commuting also adds expense to the family budget. This is especially challenging for ALICE students as a recent report found that students living in economically disadvantaged areas face the longest commutes to school.⁴¹

Increased absenteeism: Especially when students rely on public transportation to get to school, they are more likely to face delays. Use of public transportation is also associated with increases in absenteeism.⁴²

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