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# Online education as a toll good: An examination of the South Carolina virtual school program

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### Abstract

Education has long been considered merit good; however, inequitable distribution has made it more akin to a toll good. This was most recently demonstrated by [Henry, Fortner, and Thompson \(2010\)](#). Choice requirements designed to remedy the inequitable distribution of education, have largely been confined to brick and mortar schools. Subsequently, they face challenges comparable to traditional programs. With shrinking state budgets and an increasing achievement gap, online choice options are growing in popularity as means of satisfying choice requirements specified in No Child Left Behind. This paper considers whether online options facilitate education as a merit good, or if they extend education as a toll good.



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## Keywords

Virtual schools; Poverty; Online education; Economics

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