

Approved June 26, 1992
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by SENATOR JOSEPH C. HARDER at
Chairperson

1:00 ~~xxx~~/p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 1992 in room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present:

Mr. Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
Ms. Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
Mr. Dale Dennis, Assistant Commissioner of Education
Mrs. Millie Randell, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

SB 633 - Schools, G.I. bill for kids act.

Proponents:

Senator Eric Yost, co-sponsor of SB 633
Senator Phil Martin, co-sponsor of SB 633
Mr. John McDonough, Lenexa, Kansas
Mr. Robert Runnels, Jr., Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference
Mr. Clay Aurand, farmer, Courtland, Kansas
Sister Michelle Faltus, Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Kansas
City in Kansas; Chairperson, Kansas Association of Non-Public Schools
Mr. Nick Campagnone, Superintendent of Schools, Salina Catholic Diocese
Mr. Daniel J. Elsener, Superintendent of Schools in the Wichita Diocese

SB 730 - Teaching profession, establishing professional teaching board.

After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Joseph C. Harder, announced that the Committee first would consider bills that have been heard previously. He informed members that some concern had arisen regarding the constitutionality of SB 730, relating to establishing a professional teaching board. He said, however, that according to another opinion on SB 730 constitutionality is not a concern. Some discussion indicated that the question of constitutionality should not be a deterrent to passage of SB 730 and that perhaps passage of SB 730 would precipitate a clarification of the Opinion on the Peabody case.

Following the Chairman's call for possible amendments, Ms. Swartzman, revisor, advised the Committee that a technical amendment is needed on page 2, line 18, by striking the word "standards" and inserting, in lieu thereof, the word "teaching". Senator Walker moved, and Senator Parrish seconded the motion to adopt the technical amendment, as proposed by the revisor, to strike the word "standards" on page 2, line 18, and insert, in lieu thereof, the word "teaching". The motion was seconded by Senator Parrish, and the amendment was adopted.

Senator Ward moved that SB 730 be amended by striking, on page 3, under Sec. 10., any reference to subsection (e) of K.S.A. 75-3223. Senator Parrish seconded the motion.

Ms. Swartzman, revisor, explained that subsection (e) of K.S.A. 75-3223 limits compensation to subsistence and travel, but if subsection (e) is removed, then members also would be entitled to per diem compensation.

Responding to a question, Ms. Swartzman said that she thought most of the advisory boards are limited to subsection (e) amounts of compensation, but she described the professional teaching board as a policy-making board which, she felt, most likely would receive per diem compensation, also.

When the Chair called for the question, he ruled that the motion had carried and the amendment was adopted.

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
room 123-S, Statehouse, at 1:00 ~~xxx~~ p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 19 92

Other Committee concerns included staff costs and the nominee process for selecting members to the professional teaching board.

Senator Parrish moved that SB 730, as amended, be recommended favorably for passage. Senator Walker seconded the motion. Following a call for division, the Chair ruled that the motion had failed.

SB 747 - Teachers, nonrenewal or termination of contracts, professional improvement policies.

The Chair referred Committee attention to SB 747, relating to teacher due process, and called upon Senator Dave Kerr, sponsor.

Senator Kerr explained that he feels the current due process system is not targeted toward including the quality of instruction in the classroom. He said that implementation of SB 747 would be a major step in due process being child or classroom teaching centered, and he does not believe it is a significant erosion of due process rights which currently exist. He described the additional protection it would give to career status teachers and stated that he would be amenable to incorporating the provisions (agreed upon by both the Kansas Association of School Boards and the Kansas-National Education Association) the Committee had amended into SB 109 earlier this year. He made specific reference to the one person hearing panel. Senator Kerr affirmed that the basic length of time required to obtain career teaching status in SB 747 is three and not six years. Opposition by conferees, he noted, was focused upon teachers and not the students.

Senator Kerr cited three changes in SB 747 as it relates to due process: 1) Shorter time lines, 2) no depositions provided for in preparation for the hearing, and 3) the hearing is before the local board instead of before a hearing panel for the continuing contract teacher.

Senator Kerr moved to amend into SB 747 the one person due process hearing provision of SB 109 and making it applicable to a career status teacher. Senator Frahm seconded the motion.

Senator Walker made a substitute motion that the provisions of SB 109 which are being inserted into SB 747 apply to both the continuing teacher and the career teacher. Senator Parrish seconded the motion. Senator Walker explained that the purpose of his motion is to mirror more closely the intent of SB 109.

Due to conferees waiting for today's scheduled hearing on SB 633, the Chair interrupted the meeting to inquire if members could meet tomorrow, Friday, March 6, at 12:15 p.m. to continue discussion and/or action on SB 747. Although members agreed to meet tomorrow, some members of the Committee who said they had expressed interest in the bill conceptually, were concerned that the bill might be too complex to be considered thoroughly by the Committee this year due to other bills on which they still must act. Some interest was expressed in sending the bill to an interim committee for study. Senator Kerr recommended that SB 747 be referred to the Ways and Means Committee to extend the deadline for Committee consideration.

Senator Kerr withdrew his primary motion, and Senator Frahm withdrew her second.

Senator Walker withdrew his substitute motion, and Senator Parrish withdrew her second.

Senator Kerr moved that SB 747 be referred to the Ways and Means Committee for rereferral at a later date. Senator Frahm seconded the motion.

Senator Karr made a substitute motion that SB 747 be recommended for interim study. Senator Walker seconded the motion.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
room 123-S, Statehouse, at 1:00 ~~am~~/p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 1992

In order to proceed with today's hearing on SB 633, the Chair announced that he would hold the two motions on the table until tomorrow's meeting at 12:15 p.m. when members would have additional time for discussion on SB 747.

SB 633 - Schools, G.I. bill for kids act.

The Chair referred Committee attention to SB 633, an act enacting the G.I. bill for kids act, and yielded chairmanship to Vice-Chairman Sheila Frahm.

Vice-Chairman Frahm recognized Senator Eric Yost who, with Senator Phil Martin, co-sponsor, testified in support of SB 633.

Senator Yost explained that SB 633 would establish a statewide program of providing education vouchers to all low-income students in Kansas and would be used to gain admission to any public or private school in the local school district. (Attachment 1)

Senator Martin, referring to funding of the voucher system, affirmed that SB 633 is intended to improve the quality of the education system in Kansas and is not focused on making the education system less expensive.

Responding to constitutionality of SB 633, Senator Martin noted that the voucher is given to parents to choose the school which they wish their children to attend. He pointed out that the voucher system has been implemented in other states, and its constitutionality has been upheld. The schools, he said, must be accredited by the state.

The co-sponsors noted that although the bill broadens the voucher system to include all students in its third year, they, agreeably, would not oppose a pilot program for low-income students at its inception.

Mr. John McDonough, Lenexa, proponent, pointed out the monetary savings to state and local budgets by enactment of SB 633. (Attachment 2)

When Vice-Chairman Frahm recognized Mr. Robert Runnels, Jr., Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference, Mr. Runnels stated that higher achievement scores and lower cost are two big bonuses that can occur for poor children should SB 633 be passed. (Attachment 3)

Mr. Clay Aurand, a farmer from Courtland, Kansas, informed members that he has had a long time interest in educational choice since high school days after he had read Free to Choose by Milt Freeman. He said current happenings seem to indicate that the country is starting to move in that direction. He said he had noted, as previous speakers have pointed out, that in spite of more money and raising graduation requirements over the past approximately nine years since the "A Nation at Risk" report was published, there has been little change in test scores and drop out rates. He assessed that of all the problems facing society today he has never seen such a wide array of people across the political spectrum focused in one direction, that of educational choice. He noted that competition is what drives this country and said he does not think that education is any different. He labeled SB 633 a choice bill, not a voucher bill - which he likened to food stamps. He supported the fact that parents of children affected by SB 633 would make wise choices in selecting a school that would fulfill their child's needs and felt they should be afforded some of the same choices that wealthier parents already have. Kansas, he said, should be among the leaders in helping our less fortunate.

Sister Michelle Faltus, Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, and Chairperson-Kansas Association of Non-Public Schools, stated that "educational choice has gained its greatest impetus from parental

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

room 123-S, Statehouse, at 1:00 ~~am~~ p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 1992

concerns about control and accountability of public schools". She said that it is in the public school system that parents lack control over content, discipline and values, not to mention their tax dollars. Opponents of choice, she assessed, are opposed to competition. (Attachment 4)

Although SB 633 has been cited as the Kansas G.I. Bill for Kids, said Mr. Nick Compagnone, Superintendent of Schools, Salina Catholic Diocese, he emphasized that the focus of the bill is on the parents of those kids. SB 633, he stated, advocates the parents' role as primary educators and is designed to help parents fulfill their primary role. (Attachment 5)

Mr. Dan Elsener, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Wichita Diocese, emphasized that in the other Western democracies most countries have a school system which allows choice, and choice has not destroyed their educational systems. In fact, he affirmed, they are much better than ours. Mr. Elsener questioned the calamities people have predicted would happen should Kansas implement the system outlined in SB 633. Mr. Elsener described the workings of his organization's school system in inner city areas which are basically low income and minority populated and doubted their survival without some additional help. The children, he said, attend either free of charge or give little support. These options, he said, could soon vanish under current circumstances. (Attachment 6)

Vice-Chairman Frahm, noting Committee time constraints, requested the remaining conferees to return at 12:15 p.m. tomorrow, March 6, to present their testimony, and they replied that they could do so.

When Vice-Chairman Frahm called for approval of the minutes, Senator Langworthy moved, and Chairman Harder seconded the motion that minutes of the meeting of Monday, March 2 be approved. The motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

Vice-Chairman Frahm adjourned the meeting.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TIME: 1:00 p.m. PLACE: 123-S DATE: Thursday, March 5, 1992

GUEST LIST

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Michelle Bechtelheimer	207 N. Young	Page
Andrea Qualls	862 N. Shafford	Page
Jessica Bechtelheimer	207 N. Young	Page
Briella Scott	Topeka	USA
Kim Collins	Topeka	KNEA
Craig Grant	Topeka	HNEM
Jacquie Oakes	Topeka	SQE
Mark Tallman	Topeka	KSB
Wick Compton	304 E. Cloud Clinic	KANS
Bob Furrows	8900 Mottawa Rd	U.S. Cath. Conf.
Dan Elsener	2820 Sennett	Wichita Catholic Schools
Cindy Kelly	Topeka	KASB
Gerald Henderson	Topeka	USA of K
Connie Huesee	Topeka	St Bd of Ed
Nancy P. Green	Topeka	SBE
Eric Post		reg.
John McDonough	Topeka	self
Rod Bieber	Topeka	KSD
Bull Musick	Minneapolis	St Bd of Ed
S. Michelle Fattus	K.C. KS.	KOK Catholic Schools
Chuck Tilman	Topeka	KNEA
Barbara Cole	Topeka	KNEA
Ken Cole	McPherson	Guest
David W. ...	Wichita	Ks Working ...
...	Topeka	KCOVE
...	...	GOV's office

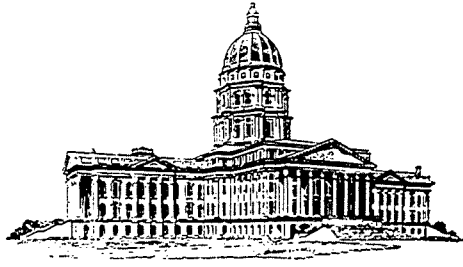
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TIME: 1:00 p.m. PLACE: 123-S DATE: Thursday, March 5, 1992

GUEST LIST

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Mary Nichols	723 Acourton	ZSO 3F3
Doug Bowman	Topeka	Children & Youth Advisory
Gary Condra	2204 Crossgate Dr. Lawrence KS 66047	SELF
Jonathan Arzon	616 Florida Lawrence KS 66044	Intern for Rep. Roe
Mary Mulyan	2122 SE 36th, Topeka 05	Catholic School parent
Richard Mulyan	2122 SE 36th, Topeka 05	Catholic School parent
Nerise Apt	Topeka	U.S.D. # 500
Clay Anderson	RR1 Courtland, KS	Self
Kim Vickers	Topeka	Sen. Karr

STATE OF KANSAS



TOPEKA

SENATE CHAMBER

Testimony on Senate Bill 633.

Senate Committee on Education, Thursday, March 5, 1992

Senate Bill 633 would establish a statewide program of providing education vouchers to all low-income students in Kansas. Those vouchers could then be used to gain admission to any public or private school in the local school district. Senator Martin and I have named this legislation the GI Bill For Kids Act, since the GI Bill was the original voucher program in America, permitting veterans to attend the public or private college of their choice.

Choice in education is gaining wide acceptance as a necessary first step to enacting meaningful school reform. But if the only choice that is permitted is within public schools, the program is doomed to fail. Parents must have a wide range of choice in education, and this legislation would provide that. To argue that there should be choice in schools, but only within public schools, is like arguing that we must all buy Buicks, but that we can have any kind of Buick we want. I think it is highly unlikely that the president of Buick will ever agree to significant changes in the way his company does business until the people have the right to go elsewhere to buy their cars. Education is no different than any other service or product. Competition is good for the soul.

As we would envision it, the program would work as follows: the parent or parents of any student who would qualify for the free lunch program would be eligible to receive a voucher, and could then attend any public or private school. Any school that elects to participate in this program would be required to accept the voucher as full and complete tuition for

EDUC
5/5/92
A1-1

the applying student. The voucher would then be redeemed by the school, and the amount of the voucher would be equal to the per pupil state aid and income tax rebate for the school district in question. Although the bill does not so specify, we think we should require that the participating schools provide transportation to the applying student.

We are very much aware of the arguments that have been raised against the voucher system. In fact, we have enclosed a paper prepared by the Heritage Foundation which deals with the arguments one at a time, from the "church-state" argument, to the "creaming" of the top students argument. You might want to glance through this paper and see what the Heritage Foundation has to say about each of the arguments that has been raised against the voucher system. Our personal opinion is that many of the arguments raised against the voucher system are done so by people who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Senate Bill 633 provides that for the first two years, low-income students would receive the voucher as I have described it. Beginning in the third year, all students would be eligible to participate in Kansas. We believe that the state of Kansas has an obligation to begin looking for ways to improve the quality of education in Kansas. Surely there must be a better way to do business, and we are convinced we will have a disaster on our hands if we do not make the necessary reforms in education. Maybe choice in schools is not the answer. Maybe a voucher system is not the answer. But we think this committee, and this legislature, have an obligation to at least consider those options. We happen to believe that providing parents with the choice of where to send their children to school would force our system of education in Kansas to change for the better.



Sen. Eric Yost



Sen. Phil Martin

EDUC
3/5/92
1-2

September 13, 1991

NINE PHONEY ASSERTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL CHOICE: ANSWERING THE CRITICS

INTRODUCTION

Free market economics works well for breakfast cereals, but not for schools in a democratic society. Market-driven school choice would create an inequitable, elitist educational system.

So said Keith Geiger, President of the National Education Association, in September 1990.¹

Similar arguments that education and consumer choice, like oil and water, simply do not mix are espoused by many other critics of educational choice. These criticisms of school choice programs have grown louder and more shrill as school choice programs proliferate. To date, some eleven states have adopted some type of plan, ranging from limited choices among public schools in several states to a program including private schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Ballot initiatives and legislative battles are pending in another fourteen states, and many of these proposals would give parents the option of sending their children to private schools.

1 Keith Geiger, "Choice That Works: Transforming Public Schools at the Local Level," Advertisement, *The Washington Post*, September 30, 1990.

With growing support for choice in education,² it is hardly surprising that the National Education Association and other opponents of reform step up their attacks on educational choice. The criticisms against choice constitute nine broad categories:

ASSERTION #1

The Undermining-America Argument: Choice will destroy the American public school tradition.

ASSERTION #2

The Creaming Argument: Choice will leave the poor behind in the worst schools.

ASSERTION #3

The Incompetent Parent Argument: Parents will not be capable of choosing the right school for their child.

ASSERTION #4

The Non-Academic Parental Neglect Argument: Parents will use the wrong criteria, such as sports facilities, in choosing schools for their children.

ASSERTION #5

The Selectivity Issue: There will be insufficient help for students with special needs.

ASSERTION #6

The Radical Schools Scare (or the Farrakhan-KKK Theory): Extremists, like Louis Farrakhan or the Ku Klux Klan, will form schools.

ASSERTION #7

The Church-State Problem: Choice is unconstitutional.

ASSERTION #8

The Public Accountability Argument: Private schools are not sufficiently regulated.

ASSERTION #9

The Choice is Expensive Argument: There are high hidden costs associated with school choice.

2 See, for example, Jeanne Allen and Michael J. McLaughlin, "A Businessman's Guide to the Education Reform Debate," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 801, December 21, 1990; Clint Bolick, "A Primer on Choice in Education: Part I — How Choice Works," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 760, March 21, 1990; Clint Bolick, "Choice in Education, Part II: Legal Perils and Legal Opportunities," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 809, February 18, 1991, p. 6.

These criticisms too often go unanswered, and thus begin to gain currency in the press and among many Americans. Even some business leaders are prone to accept arguments against consumer choice and competition in education, despite lauding it as the key to efficiency in the rest of society. Fearful of backing an issue that may be controversial, and lacking precise and accurate information about educational choice, these business executives prefer to err on the side of caution and take no position in the debate.

This reluctance is costly, however, because American business pays heavily for the failures of the school system. U.S. firms, for instance, last year paid out \$40 billion to finance remedial education for their employees. The businessmen's reluctance to back choice in the debate also is misplaced because the criticisms of educational choice either are completely spurious or no longer are valid because they have been addressed in modifications of the original choice concept.

NINE PHONEY ASSERTIONS AGAINST SCHOOL CHOICE

ASSERTION #1) THE UNDERMINING-AMERICA ARGUMENT: Choice will destroy the long tradition of common schools in America by subsidizing private schools at the expense of public schools. These schools, which embody the classless and democratic principles of the United States are enshrined in the public school system.

Says Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction Herbert Grover: "[T]he private school choice program is not a solution but a program that is in conflict with the intent of the common schools established for the common good of our society."³

RESPONSE:

The term "public education" was first used in 1837 by Horace Mann, then chairman of the New York State Board of Education, to describe the goal of an educated citizenry, seen in part as an effective way to knit together the millions of immigrants from many lands who were coming to America. Charles Glenn, educational expert, author, and former director of equal opportunity for the state of Massachusetts writes that, "At the heart of this vision was the idea of the common school, a school in which the children of all classes and representing all levels of society would be educated together and would thus acquire the mutual respect essential to the functioning of a democracy."⁴ Indeed, opponents of choice often talk of the notion of the common school and frequently invoke the name of Horace Mann.

3 Herbert Grover, "The Milwaukee Choice Plan," *Wisconsin Choice News*, August 1990, p. 4

4 Charles L. Glenn, *The Myth of the Common School* (Amherst, MA.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

As University of Chicago sociologist James Coleman has discovered in his research, however, public schools rarely conform to the common school tradition.⁵ They tend, rather, to be the most exclusive and segregated schools. Ironically, private religious schools are more consistent with the common school philosophy than are public schools. Private, inner city Catholic schools in such cities as Chicago and New York bring together children of widely differing social and economic strata.

Choice, in fact, affords Americans the best chance of re-creating the common school by returning all children to a level playing field and ensuring that schools are representative of diverse communities. Parents of all colors, socio-economic levels, and classes should be able to choose among the widest range of schools possible, rather than being segregated out of a particular school because its cost may be prohibitive. Similarly, taxpayers required to subsidize their local school districts should have some say over what occurs in the schools. While choice opponents boast of "public accountability" in the schools, in reality the schools are no longer accountable for their employees, their product, or their daily operations. Choice makes schools accountable directly to consumers.

Choice would recreate Mann's notion of the common schools by restoring quality education and accountability for results. In the 19th century, the local public school epitomized the ideals, providing education which long ago ceased to respond to the needs of American children.

ASSERTION #2) THE CREAMING ARGUMENT: Choice will "leave behind" the poor and most difficult to educate, while good students will be "creamed" into the best schools.

Says California Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig: "The voucher approach risks creating elite academies for the few and second rate schools for the many."⁶

RESPONSE:

The creaming argument supposes that poorer and less able children will tend to be left behind in the worst schools when parents have a choice of schools. Adherents of this view presume that most minority or lower-income parents do not know the difference between good and bad schools and that their children thus will end up in bad schools. Hence, the argument goes, choice plans are unfair because they separate the "haves" from the "have-nots."

5 James Coleman, *Public and Private Schools* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1987).

6 Bill Honig, "School Vouchers: Dangerous Claptrap," *The New York Times*, June 29, 1990.

While the "creaming" theorists are concerned about inequality under a choice plan, they seem to ignore that today's education system is extremely unequal. The "haves" already have choice because they have the money to choose a private school for their children. The "have-nots," meanwhile, are trapped in major urban school systems in which the quality of education is appalling despite heavy spending by the school districts.

Successful Magnet Schools. Choice is a tool to reduce this inequality. The evidence shows that choice improves all schools, not just a few, and that poor parents are quite able to find the best schools. This is very clear in the case of magnet schools, which are specialized schools offering unique programs. They are designed to attract children of all races. They constitute a limited form of parental choice, in that parents opt to send their children there in place of the school to which they were assigned. They post significantly better results than other public schools. Large magnet school systems have been functioning for more than a decade in over 100 cities nationwide.

Adherents of the creaming argument contend that magnet schools nationwide can boast success simply because they attract smart children of smart and very involved parents.⁷ Yet the evidence on many long-established magnet schools suggests this is not the reason. These schools credit their success to the child's excitement at being in the school and the school's ability to tailor its lessons to the needs of individual students.⁸ Magnets do not, in fact, selectively enroll children. Indeed, since demand is high, they operate generally by lottery, to ensure that all parents have an equal opportunity at a limited number of spaces. Moreover, refuting the assertions of choice critics, parents of these children are not necessarily the most involved and better educated parents.

Evidence suggests, meanwhile, that poor and disadvantaged parents are just as capable as better-educated or higher-income parents of distinguishing between good and bad schools. The problem today is that poor parents are rarely given the opportunity to do so. When they have the opportunity and are given full information about the choices open to them, they choose well.

Harlem Turnaround. Consider the case of East Harlem in New York City. Children in East Harlem School District 4 in 1974 scored the lowest of any New York City school district in state assessments. Central office officials blamed their students' failure on the bad influence and lack of involvement of parents. Then a bold district administration instituted a plan that gives teachers authority to design and run their own schools and gives parents the right to choose among them. Teachers joined administrators in launching a comprehensive outreach program to inform parents about the diversity of options then available. By 1986, students from District 4 ranked sixteenth out of 32 in reading and math scores. When

7 Suzanne Davenport, "School Choice," *Designs for Change*, 1989.

8 U.S. Department of Education, "Choosing Better Schools: A Report on the Five Regional Meetings in Choice in Education," December 1990.

asked to choose among a variety of schools for their children, the poorest and most desolate of East Harlem parents in fact made good choices for their children, usually based on academic criteria.

The same has been true in Milwaukee. There the parental choice program gives low-income students state "scholarships" worth \$2,500 to cover tuition at the private, nonsectarian school of their choice. In its first year of operation, parents of almost 400 students exercised their choice and sent their children to institutions such as the highly respected Urban Day School, which boasts a 98 percent graduation rate. A majority of parents participating in the choice program are single parents, and many are unemployed. They are virtually identical to their public school counterparts according to most socio-economic measures.⁹

Proponents of the creaming view assume that there is a static pool of schools and that choice plans will allow good schools to drain away the better students; the bad schools will continue to educate the worst students and deteriorate. This criticism overlooks one of the most fundamental dynamics of choice: the ability of parents to choose schools forces existing public schools to change. Another dynamic is that good schools expand and new schools emerge. If bad schools cannot or will not improve, their students can go elsewhere. The assertions about "bad children being left behind" simply do not take into account the dynamics of a school choice plan.

ASSERTION #3) THE INCOMPETENT PARENT ARGUMENT: Since some parents are truly incapable of making choices, such as those who abuse drugs, some parents also are incapable of wisely exercising their choice option, thus consigning their children to sub-standard education.

Says Urban Institute scholar Isabel Sawhill: "The emphasis on choice...conflicts with the rising body of evidence that poor families are often beset with any multitude of problems, making it difficult for them to cope with the added responsibility—such as evaluating different schools or owning a home."¹⁰

RESPONSE:

The evidence actually suggests that the opportunity to make a real decision—possibly for the first time in years—can shake an individual out of a life of despair and dependency. This notion undergirds the philosophy of empowerment, and its dramatic effects can be seen in the success of tenant management of public housing and similar empowerment strategies.¹¹ According to New York University political scientist Lawrence Mead, allowing or requiring the poor to make de-

9 "Parents are happy with choice program," *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 12, 1990, p. 1.

10 Isabel V. Sawhill, Raymond J. Struyk, and Steven M. Sachs, "The New Paradigm: Choice and Empowerment as Social Policy Tools," *Policy Bites*, The Urban Institute, February 1991, p. 5

11 John Scanlon, "People Power in the Projects: How Tenant Management Can Save Public Housing," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 758, March 8, 1990.

cisions renders them just as capable of good decisions or work habits as someone who is better off. Writes Mead, "The poor are as eager to work [and participate in decisions] as the better-off, but the strength of this desire appears to be unrelated to their work behavior...most clients in workfare programs actually respond positively to the experience of being required to work, not negatively as they would if they truly rejected work."¹²

The ability to choose leads to one of two outcomes. In very many instances, as supporters of empowerment contend, it leads to parents gaining the self confidence to exercise control over their lives. But even if this does not happen, and parents do not bother to choose a school for their children, they are still assigned a school under choice plans. The assigned school is not likely to be worse than the one now attended by the child. Indeed, it is likely to be better because of the improvements forced by increased pressure from other parents.

Deeply troubled or dysfunctional children, meanwhile, are likely to do better under a choice system because it will make available a wider range of schools, especially if private schools are included in the choice program. Explains Abigail Thernstrom, adjunct Associate Professor of Education at Boston University and author of *School Choice in Massachusetts*, "... Already many private schools meet the needs of dysfunctional children."¹³

To be sure, a ready availability of information is more important to poorer and less able students than to sophisticated parents. For this reason, choice plans such as those crafted by Brookings Institution senior fellow John Chubb and Stanford University professor Terry Moe would require parent information centers and parent liaisons to help parents who need assistance in making choices.¹⁴ But even if such source of information were not available, the worst that could happen is that children for whom no choice is made would be assigned to a school—which is no different from what occurs today.

ASSERTION #4) THE NON-ACADEMIC PARENTAL NEGLECT ARGUMENT: Parents will use such criteria as a school's location or its athletic facilities, rather than the quality of the education it provides, in deciding what school their child will attend.

Asks American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker, "Do most [parents]—rich, poor or in the middle—really want rigorous standards for their children? And if they don't, would they choose rigorous schools?"

12 Lawrence Mead, "Jobs for the Welfare Poor," *Policy Review*, Winter 1988, p.65

13 Abigail Thernstrom, "Hobson's Choice," *The New Republic*, July 15, 1991, p. 13.

14 John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990), p. 221.

RESPONSE:

Choice critics like Shanker argue that most parents would not bother to choose a school or if they did, they would do so on the basis of non-academic concerns. They point to public school choice plans in Minnesota, where only a small percentage of students actually switched schools when state-wide open enrollment was instituted last year. The most common reasons given by parents for switching schools included transportation, proximity to work and child care, and athletics.

Minnesota is not a valid example. For one thing, its choice program is limited. In most grades the choice of school is restricted entirely to the public sector. For another thing, there are few academic differences among public schools in Minnesota's mainly suburban, sprawling communities. Significant differences may emerge, of course, as schools begin to make major improvements to meet competition.

The law creating the open-enrollment plan, moreover, did not include mechanisms to make change easy in the organization of Minnesota schools. Thus superintendents function as they did before and principals and teachers have not seen their autonomy increased. As such, schools cannot respond easily to parental choices. Minnesota and other states with open-enrollment policies also have not taken sufficient steps to make information available to parents. In Iowa, for example, no money has been allotted from the annual state school budget for outreach information. The result: parents find it hard to obtain academic information on which to base decisions.

Parent frustration in Minnesota already is prompting changes in the law. The Minnesota legislature this June enacted the Charter Schools Act, making it possible for teachers to form their own school, and be free from most state oversight.¹⁵

Gauge for Achievement. Shanker's argument in any case unwittingly underscores the need for choice. The fact is that parents routinely are kept in the dark about how well public schools perform because hard performance information generally is unavailable. The need for such information has led an increasing number of choice advocates to support calls for state and national testing to give schools performance standards and to give parents a gauge by which to measure their children's achievement.

Once an accurate and dependable system of accountability is in place, parents will become smart consumers and can demand improvements—even if they choose not to change schools. Of course, even with clear performance testing and with precise information on which to make choices, some parents may, as Shanker fears, decide that a neighborhood school or a school with an emphasis on team sports is better for their child than one which excels in mathematics. But that

15 Ted Kolderie, "Minnesota's New Program of 'Charter Schools'" (Center for Policy Studies: St. Paul, MN), June, 1991.

should be their choice to make as parents. It is a choice made routinely by affluent parents. Choice plans allow poor parents the chance to make that same decision.

ASSERTION #5) THE SELECTIVITY ARGUMENT: Private schools in the choice plan will admit only easy-to-teach children, leaving difficult, less academically gifted children in the public schools. Such selectivity is the reason for the private schools' vaunted ability to outperform public schools.

Says Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the Massachusetts Democrat, choice has the potential to be "a death sentence for public schools struggling to serve disadvantaged students, draining all good students out of poor schools."

RESPONSE:

The selectivity issue argument challenges choice advocates. Few are willing to deny a private school the right to set admissions standards. But while some private schools set high admission requirements, the fact is that parochial schools—the private schools serving most children in cities with or considering choice plans—actually are less selective than public schools. Explains Reverend Vincent Breen, superintendent of education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, the claim that selection is normal at Catholic schools is "a completely false statement that's repeated over and over again. Catholic schools are just as open to the needs of the urban child."

According to sociologist James Coleman, Catholic schools in particular boast success in raising the academic achievement of population groups that do poorly in public schools, including blacks, Hispanics and children from poor socio-economic backgrounds. "The proximate reason for the Catholic schools' success with less-advantaged students from deficient families appears to be the greater academic demands that Catholic schools place on these students."¹⁶ Research by Brookings scholars Chubb and Moe further shows that private schools in general excel because of their organization, not because they weed out less able students through set admissions criteria. After controlling for all of the variables used to explain away the performance of private schools such as selection criteria, as well as socio-economic status, student ability, and the influence of peers, Chubb and Moe find that private schools still outperform public schools.¹⁷

To avoid the possibility of private schools rejecting students who are particularly costly to teach or accommodate, such as handicapped children or those with pronounced learning disabilities, Chubb and Moe recommend that choice plans offer more valuable scholarship certificates for such children to encourage schools to create programs suited to their needs. Many school systems in fact already contract with private centers to provide extra assistance to public school

16 James Coleman, *Public and Private Schools*, Basic Books, New York, 1987. p. 148

17 Chubb and Moe, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

EDUC
3/5/92
1-11

children with special needs, indicating that private institutions by no means shun such children.

ASSERTION #6) THE RADICAL SCHOOLS SCARE: A choice system will lead to “fly by night” schools, which take public funds without providing adequate education. Worse still, schools espousing radical or extremist dogmas would emerge, perhaps even those run by the Ku Klux Klan or by black extremists.

According to critic Isabel Sawhill, “Diploma factories might be established in the inner cities to take advantage of the government funding, it is argued, similar to the recently exposed examples of vocational schools that exploit low income students to profit from federally sponsored student loans.”¹⁸ Adds California Superintendent Bill Honig, choice “opens the door to cult schools. Public schools are the major institutions transmitting our democratic values. By prohibiting common standards, [choice proponents] enshrine the rights of parents over the needs of children and society and *encourage tribalism* [emphasis added]. Should we pay for schools that teach astrology or creationism instead of science? Should we inculcate racism?”¹⁹

RESPONSE:

Most states have imposed minimum academic standards on private as well as public schools. Most education choice proposals, moreover, require the government to play some role in enforcing federal anti-discrimination laws and ensuring contractual obligations to students. If governments fail to do this effectively, as the federal government is accused of doing for trade schools, this is a deficiency of government, not of consumer choice. As it is, a good number of public schools today would be found delinquent in complying with a government regulation requiring good value for money.

While many for-profit trade schools abuses have been documented, the vast majority of schools of higher education currently operate in a choice system and state or federal assistance follows needier children to the school that they choose. Unlike its public education system, American higher education is considered world class.

As to the claim that bizarre or extremist schools will proliferate under a choice system, nothing prevents such schools from opening and attracting customers today in the private sector. The fact is that few exist. Fewer, if any, would be established under choice programs. One reason is that schools are banned from discrimination on the basis of race under the 14th Amendment. Another reason is that a school accepting government funds under a choice program would be sub-

18 Isabel V. Sawhill, Raymond J. Struyk, and Steven M. Sachs, "The New Paradigm: Choice and Empowerment as Social Policy Tools," *Policy Bites*, The Urban Institute, February, 1991, p.5

19 Honig, *op. cit.*

ject to some additional constraints. In short, Honig's vision of "cult schools" is mere fantasy.

ASSERTION #7) THE CHURCH-STATE PROBLEM: Choice plans that include private, religious schools are unconstitutional because they violate the First Amendment's establishment clause.

Robert L. Maddox, Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, claims that public funds cannot be used at religious schools without "violating the constitutional separation of church and state." He adds that "A long line of Supreme Court cases has repeatedly found that the First Amendment bars the expenditure of tax money to support religion or religious schools."²⁰

RESPONSE:

This claim, though widely believed, simply is wrong. As the *Congressional Quarterly* notes in an April article on school choice: "The federal government already provides Pell grants to students at private, religiously affiliated colleges, notes Michael W. McConnell a law professor at the University of Chicago. The GI bill even covers tuition at seminaries."²¹ The journal also points out that Harvard Law School's Lawrence Tribe, one of America's most liberal constitutional scholars, says that the current Supreme Court would not find a "reasonably well-designed" choice plan a violation of church and state. He agrees there may be policy concerns about choice, but that the constitutional concerns have been addressed in a litany of cases.

The Supreme Court generally has applied three tests in "establishment clause" cases, to determine whether legislation to support private schools is constitutional. First, the program must serve a secular purpose. Second, its "primary effect" must neither advance nor inhibit religion. And third, it must not foster an "excessive entanglement" between government and religion.²²

In practice, as long as a school choice program puts the decision of where the funds are spent in the hands of individual students or parents, and as long as the program does not discriminate in favor of religious schools, the program is likely to survive any constitutional challenge.

20 Robert L. Maddox, Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times*, May 10, 1991

21 The *Congressional Quarterly*, April 27, 1991.

22 Bolick, Part II, *op. cit.* The study provides details of key court cases on choice.

ASSERTION #8) THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY ARGUMENT: Private and parochial schools in a choice system would not be regulated by state and federal laws, and therefore would not be accountable to public authority.

Asks Boston University Professor of Education Abigail Thernstrom: "Would taxpayers have an adequate say in how their money is spent?" Claims a *New York Times* editorial, choice among both public and private schools would "undermine the accountability and morale of public schools."²³

RESPONSE:

The irony of the accountability argument is that in most cities it is the public schools, not the private schools, that are not accountable to parents or even taxpayers. The private schools, by contrast, are directly accountable to their customers. The editors of *The New York Times*, for instance, need only consider the abuses of public funds in New York City schools, which their newspaper has documented, to appreciate that limiting the use of public funds to public schools is no guarantee of accountability.

Residents of Chicago also know that government control of a school does not guarantee fairness or equity. This is why in 1989 they backed a radical overhaul of the city's schools, giving control to parents to run schools. Most private institutions constantly feel forced by competitive pressure to provide a regular accounting of expenditures and receipts, and to detail the achievements of their students.

The accountability argument is also used to advance claims that private schools, left to their own devices, will discriminate. Yet all constructive choice proposals require that schools follow legal accountability requirements and federal anti-discrimination laws.

ASSERTION #9) THE CHOICE IS EXPENSIVE ARGUMENT: There are large hidden costs associated with school choice programs. Transportation costs, for instance, would be so prohibitive as to offset benefits.

Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum, the Kansas Republican, fears that "transportation costs alone could grow and grow, making choice programs infeasible."

RESPONSE:

Choice does not imply higher costs, even higher transportation costs for large districts. "A system of educational choice need not cost more than current educational systems, and might cost less," says Brookings' John Chubb. "If the supply of schools is allowed to respond to demand, the supply is likely to expand, with relatively small numbers of large comprehensive schools being replaced by larger numbers of small, specialized schools. This expansion could easily occur without

23 "Skimming the Cream Off Schools," *The New York Times*, July 26, 1991.

the construction or acquisition of new facilities if several schools shared a building."²⁴

Chubb's view is firmly grounded in experience. The choice program in East Harlem District 4 in New York City was created among 20 pre-existing school buildings. Today students can choose from 52 alternative schools, many of which share a building with other schools. Thus wider choice does not necessarily mean increased overhead on transportation costs. This schools-within-a-school concept would be very appropriate for rural areas where transportation costs could indeed mount if students needed to travel farther to their chosen school.

Choice plans actually may reduce transportation costs in many instances because demand might lead to new schools. And overhead administrative costs very likely would fall since, as Chubb explains, "There is every reason to believe that the administrative structure of a choice system would be less bureaucratized than today's public school systems, and look more like private educational systems, where competition compels decentralization and administrative savings."

CONCLUSION

There is ample evidence that a market-driven education system would spur improvements in the way schools operate, and thus improve education for America's children. Despite this evidence, school choice has its critics. Many are motivated by the challenge to their bureaucratic power that is posed by choice. Others, though, are motivated by misunderstandings and misplaced concerns.

Some critics worry that parents cannot, or are not equipped with the necessary information to make wise choices about their children's education. This view enormously underestimates the common sense of ordinary Americans. It also conveys the startling suggestion that today's bureaucratic schools are in the best interests of students. And to the extent that information is unavailable to parents, this has been the explicit policy of public school districts determined to cover up their failure to educate and to use money well. In New York City, for example, few parents know that of the \$6,100 allocated per child, only one-third ever reaches the classroom.

Other worries stem from the belief that some schools, particularly if private schools are included in a choice program, will cream off "profitable" students or discriminate in other ways, and may shortchange students. These worries too are baseless. Not only do schools participating in choice programs abide by non-discrimination policies, but they have a history of providing a more integrated environment and a higher caliber of education than traditional government schools.

24 John Chubb, "Educational Choice, Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Mediocrity in American Education and What Can Be Done About It." The Yankee Institute for Public Policy Studies, July 1989, p. 22

Refuting Arguments. Even though the concerns may be erroneous, they are in most instances sincerely held. Yet, when presented with the facts, most Americans can see that most of the arguments raised against school choice are spurious. Without the facts, however, Americans can be taken in by arguments like NEA President Keith Geiger's dismissive "breakfast cereal" analogy. Thus if reform based on choice is to succeed, those committed to choice, including George Bush and Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, as well as business leaders and reform organizations pressing for choice at the state and local level, must step up their efforts to explain the facts about choice. While the intellectual debate on school choice is over when it unites all ideological viewpoints, its supporters must demonstrate repeatedly that choice works and is the key to restoring a world class educational system in America.

Jeanne Allen
Manager
Center for Educational Policy

All Heritage Foundation papers are now available electronically to subscribers of the "NEXIS" on-line data retrieval service. The Heritage Foundation's Reports (HERPTS) can be found in the OMNI, CURRNT, NWLIRS, and GVT group files of the NEXIS library and in the GOVT and OMNI group files of the GOVNEWS library.

John McDonough 8530 Brookshaw Lane 66

Mr Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen

After some six hours of work, I couldn't get my presentation out of my computer last night, or this morning --- & visiting my computer store this morning. So I ask your indulgence on this rough writing & presentation. I hope to get the "beautiful" one to you in a few days.

First, a copy of SB 633, showing a suggested amendment. Money is important --- and 633 will help the state & local budgets a lot. I ask you again to investigate the massive savings potential --- enough to most but increases for schools.

Third, a speech by a justice, & chief justice of the Missouri supreme court. I have a complete copy for the committee --- & some highlight points for each member. Please follow as I read from pages 1, 2, 3, 4.

633 passes Constitutional tests

EDUC

3/5/92

A2-1

And on pages 15+16.
READ

Refer to
Pg 17+18+19

Again 633 passed
Constitutional number.

And recent polls show, by majorities,
that Americans want school Vouchers

I have here an official copy of the re-
port to the state legislature of Wisconsin
on how Rep Polly Williams schools are
doing there in Milwaukee --- not bad
for openness --- and saving about \$3,000
per student/voucher

Second, a copy
of a W.S.J. Abund
cup of Choice ac-
tivity around the
nation. Why should
Kansas not par-
ticipate.

Why don't you folks?
go there for a look!

Lastly, a copy of each of my recent pre-
sentations to the House Education + Tax
Committee --- where I explained what we're
left with, without school Vouchers.

SENATE BILL No. 633

By Senators Yost, Martin, Bogina, Doyen, Ehrlich, Kanan, Reilly, Salisbury and Strick

2-12

9 AN ACT enacting the Kansas G.I. bill for kids act.

11 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

12 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
13 Kansas G.I. bill for kids act. It is the purpose of this act to establish
14 a statewide program under which the parents of eligible children
15 may exercise choice in the selection of schools for attendance of such
16 children and to provide a means for evaluation of the program in
17 order to ascertain whether the program enhances the quality of
18 elementary and secondary education in this state.

18a *whether the program saves school funds*
18b *get funds in the school districts.* *And also,*

19 Sec. 2. As used in this act:

20 (a) "Program eligible child" means any person who is (1) a res-
21 ident of this state, (2) school age and eligible for enrollment in school
22 and attendance at kindergarten or any of the grades one through
23 12, and (3) for the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years, a member of
24 a family that has a total family income that does not exceed an
25 amount equal to 1.75 times the poverty level determined in accor-
26 dance with criteria established by the director of the federal office
27 of management and budget. For the 1994-95 school year and each
28 school year thereafter, the term program eligible child means any
29 person who meets the requirements of provisions (1) and (2) of this
30 subsection. The force and effect of provision (3) shall expire on June
31 30, 1994.

32 (b) "Parent" means and includes natural parents, adoptive par-
33 ents, stepparents, and foster parents.

34 (c) "Participating school" means any school that enters into an
35 agreement with the state board in accordance with the provisions of
36 section 5.

37 (d) "School" means a public school or a nonpublic school.

38 (e) "Public school" means any school that is operated by a unified
39 school district organized under the laws of this state.

40 (f) "Nonpublic school" means any nonpublic school which (1) is
41 located within the state of Kansas, (2) is accredited by the state
42 board, and (3) maintains an open enrollment policy.

43 (g) "Open enrollment policy" means a policy which provides the

SB 633

2

1 opportunity of enrollment in school for any child without regard for
2 race, gender, religion, creed or national origin.

3 (h) "Per pupil state aid entitlement" means an amount equal to
4 the quotient obtained by dividing the amount of the sum of the
5 amount in the aggregate of general state aid to which school districts
6 in this state are entitled and the amount in the aggregate that such
7 districts are entitled to receive from the school district income tax
8 fund by the enrollment in the aggregate of all school districts in the
9 state.

10 (i) "State board" means the state board of education.

11 Sec. 3. In order to achieve the purpose of this act, the state
12 board of education shall establish and effectuate a program under
13 which the parent of any program eligible child receives from the
14 state board, on request, a voucher that may be exchanged for the
15 provision of educational services at a participating school selected
16 by the child's parent. No such parent shall request or receive a
17 voucher to be exchanged for the provision of educational services at
18 a participating public school which the child is entitled to attend
19 under any other provision of law.

20 Sec. 4. (a) Each public school operated in this state shall become
21 a participating school unless the state board determines that excep-
22 tional circumstances render the participation of any such school con-
23 trary to the public interest. The governing authority of each
24 nonpublic school shall decide whether that school shall become a
25 participating school.

26 (b) Subject to the provisions of subsection (c), a participating
27 school shall admit program eligible children who have received
28 vouchers and who apply, up to the limit of the school's capacity after
29 reserving places for children required or entitled to be admitted to
30 the school, for admission.

31 (c) A participating nonpublic school shall establish criteria for the
32 admission of program eligible children. Such criteria shall be con-
33 sistent with the admissions criteria that the school regularly applies.
34 In the case of a participating public school, the state board shall
35 establish criteria for the equitable allocation of places for program
36 eligible children if there are insufficient places to serve all such
37 children requesting placement.

38 Sec. 5. (a) A participating school shall enter into an agreement
39 with the state board containing such terms as may be established
40 by rules and regulations of the state board. Such agreement shall
41 provide that the participating school shall furnish a program eligible
42 child who is admitted to the school and who tenders a voucher
43 received under this act an education equivalent to that provided to

1 all other children attending the school. If the participating school is
2 a public school, the agreement shall provide that a program eligible
3 child shall not be charged tuition and that the amount of fees charged
4 by the school will be not greater than the amount of fees regularly
5 charged by the school. If the participating school is a nonpublic
6 school, the agreement shall provide that the amount of tuition and
7 fees charged by the school for enrollment of a program eligible child
8 will be not greater than the amount of tuition and fees regularly
9 charged by the school or an amount equal to the maximum value
10 of a voucher for the current school year, whichever is the lesser
11 amount.

12 (b) If a program eligible child attends a participating public school
13 operated by a school district in which the child does not reside, the
14 child shall be counted as regularly enrolled in the school district
15 operating the participating school for the purpose of computations
16 under the school district equalization act.

17 (c) In each school year, the state board shall prepare a list of all
18 participating schools and shall determine the maximum value of a
19 voucher which shall be an amount equal to the amount of the per
20 pupil state aid entitlement for the school year. Such list and deter-
21 mined value of a voucher for the school year shall be maintained
22 on file in the state department of education and shall be made
23 available to members of the public upon request.

24 Sec. 6. (a) The parent of a program eligible child may use a
25 voucher received under this act in exchange for educational services
26 at a participating school only if the child is admitted to the school.
27 The parent shall present the voucher to the participating school and
28 the school shall present the voucher for redemption to the state
29 board in accordance with its rules and regulations. Upon redemption
30 of the voucher, the participating school shall credit immediately the
31 account of the child by the amount of the voucher.

32 (b) The amount of any voucher redeemed under this act shall
33 not be considered gross income and shall not be taxable for Kansas
34 income tax purposes.

35 Sec. 7. (a) (1) Each participating school shall:

36 (A) Satisfy the terms of the agreement entered into with the state
37 board in accordance with the provisions of section 5; and

38 (B) publish or otherwise make available information regarding the
39 school's participation in the parental choice program, the program
40 of instruction provided, achievement data regarding children at-
41 tending the school (which data may be stated in the aggregate by
42 grades maintained by the school), incidence of drug abuse, school
43 discipline and safety, and any other matters which may be specified

SB 633

4

1 by the state board.

2 (2) Each participating nonpublic school shall provide to the state
3 board assurance that the school maintains an open enrollment policy.

4 (b) The state board shall monitor the academic performance of
5 program eligible children attending participating nonpublic schools.
6 If the state board determines in any school year that the children
7 attending any such school are not demonstrating significant academic
8 progress or that the school is not meeting the requirements of sub-
9 section (a), the school may not participate in the program in the
10 succeeding school year.

11 Sec. 8. Upon completion of each school year, commencing with
12 the 1994-95 school year, the state board shall evaluate the program
13 established under the Kansas G.I. bill for kids act, assess the impact
14 the program has had on the quality of elementary and secondary
15 education in this state,

15a *And also assess the impact
the program has had on state & local funds;*

16 and make a report to the governor and the
17 legislature with regard to the effectiveness of the program.

18 Sec. 9. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after
its publication in the statute book.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-3

Charles Blackmer

SPEECH 1-29-92

MO-CAPE (MISSOURI COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION)

Dr. Chubb, Sister Eckoff, Father Dowling, members of the House and Senate, and members of this conference.

I am very happy that I was asked to participate in this program and I want to publicly thank Russ Butler and his associates for inviting me.

My purpose here is to provide some background with respect to some perceived constitutional problems that will probably be encountered with respect to a parental choice voucher system statute. My conclusion is that you should feel encouraged about this and continue with the dialogue aimed at resolving, or at least greatly alleviating, the current problem of inadequate public education at the primary and secondary level. This matter has gained a high profile due to public reaction to current educational levels of high school graduates; the experience that business and industry has had in their efforts to employ young people recently graduated from our public high schools; and the publicized

viewpoints and criticisms of teachers and other professionals. [REDACTED]

These problems have led people, such as you, who have an expertise in this field, to develop a mechanism through a type of voucher system whereby the education of all our children would be substantially enhanced. I say all our children, and I specifically use that term, in order that it would be clear that the benefits of the voucher program would not be restricted to, nor for that matter, even designed, for the purpose of simply benefitting students enrolled in private or parochial schools. Rather it would open up a vista of choices for the parents of all children, regardless of their religious affiliation and including those who would choose a public school to attend. Parents and students could make those choices based upon information that they would have as to the quality of education and other facets of any particular school.

I understand that some think that this dialogue might get bogged down at the very beginning by somber predictions by some that their efforts would be in vain, that some court, somewhere,

EDUC
3/5/92
2-5

would strike that type of legislation down as violative of either the establishment clause at the First Amendment or the provisions of a state Constitution.

In my opinion such "crepe" hanging as that is not called for, and is unjustified under court decisions I have reviewed as I believe a voucher program, properly crafted so as to permit universal freedom of choice could pass constitutional muster under the United States Constitution and, should the litigation arise in the Missouri courts, would stand a very good chance of surviving constitutional scrutiny by the Supreme Court of Missouri.

633
fits
the
criteria

There is a problem to be solved. You are all aware of it. It has been addressed by other speakers at this conference. It is a general societal problem with reference to primary and secondary education, not only in Missouri, but throughout the country. It is a problem that is in need of solution. Given those circumstances it would simply be wrong to not utilize your minds and energies in quest of a method to solve the problem - to improve the quality of education in the primary and secondary schools, or, put another

EDUC
3/5/92
2-6

way, to provide parents and students with a freedom of choice, which is totally compatible with the free enterprise system that works in all other aspects of our society and which, given the dynamic forces that are always at work in such a system, will produce quality products. In this instance quality education for all students, or, at the very least, the opportunity to obtain quality education is the sought after product.

It is not my purpose to delineate any specific program. I am not a professional educator and I fully realize that although dialogue has been going on in this field for some time, it is still somewhat in its infancy and needs further exploration before any specific proposal could emerge that would satisfy the needs and be acceptable under our constitutions.

The dynamics of the changes in court decisions, including United States Supreme Court and Missouri Supreme Court give me great encouragement that a school choice/voucher law would be upheld in the courts.

Here are a few examples of changes in court decisions and

EDUC
3/5/92
2-7

ballot. Again an example of the court's willingness to look at old issues coming forward under different circumstances and facts.

In 1976 shortly after the textbook decision, the Missouri Supreme Court decided Americans United, etc. v. Rogers (538 SW2d 711). The issue was the constitutionality of a Missouri financial assistance program providing tuition grants to college students at public and private colleges with payments made directly to the students. The court held that the statute did not violate either the Federal or State Constitutions, and that the grants served a public purpose.

Federal child care programs for pre-school day care are in place and working in Missouri and the children can be placed by the parents in either public or church connected day care centers.

The School Lunch and Breakfast programs have been in existence since 1947 and provides benefits to public and parochial school children in Missouri. These are really choice/voucher type laws and programs.

The key to these, from a constitutional standpoint, is that

EDUC
3/5/92
2-8

the benefit is conferred upon the child or student - not upon the
particular school and also these were universal access benefits,
which means that they were available to all children attending
public and private schools alike.

A recent article in the Harvard Journal on Legislation
addressed the child care program as a "voucher" program.

In that article the Journal referred to the 1977 Supreme Court
case of Americans United for Separation of Church and State v.
Blanton decided by a three judge federal court and affirmed by the
United States Supreme Court in 1977. Tennessee had enacted a cash
assistance program for needy college students and the benefits were
available to students attending all colleges including religious
colleges. The court noted that the program provided needy students
with the opportunity to attend the higher educational institution
of their choice be it public, private, sectarian or non-sectarian.
The Supreme Court of United States affirmed that judgment. That's
a freedom of choice voucher type program too.

In 1983 the United State Supreme Court in Mueller v. Allen

FROM:

JOHN McDONOUGH

3/5/92

(WISCONSIN
VOUCHER
SYSTEM)

**Wisconsin Legislature
Assembly**



**ANNETTE POLLY WILLIAMS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
17TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT**

In response to your recent request.

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed material.

Tracy

Capitol Address: State Capitol, P.O. Box 8953, Madison, WI 53708 • (608) 266-0960
Residence: 3237 North 14th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53206 • (414) 374-7474
Legislative Hotline • 1-800-362-9696

EDUC

3/5/92

2-10

**FIRST YEAR REPORT
MILWAUKEE PARENTAL CHOICE PROGRAM**

John F. Witte

Department of Political Science
and
The Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs
University of Wisconsin-Madison

© November 1991

EDUC
3/5/92
2-11

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	iii
Acknowledgments	vii
I. Introduction	1
II. Choice Families and Students	3
III. The Choice Schools	10
IV. Preliminary Outcomes	17
V. Legislative and Administrative Recommendations	24
Appendix A	
Appendix B	
Appendix C	

EDUC
3/5/92
2-12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a *preliminary* report on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, enacted by the Wisconsin legislature in spring 1990, provides an opportunity for students meeting specific criteria to attend private, nonsectarian schools in Milwaukee. A payment from public funds equivalent to the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) per-member state aid (approximately \$2,500 in 1990) is paid to the private schools in lieu of tuition for the student. Students must come from families with incomes not exceeding 1.75 times the national poverty line. Choice students must not have been in private schools in the prior year or in public schools in districts other than MPS. The total number of Choice students in any year was limited to one percent of the MPS enrollment (approximately 980 in 1990). Schools must limit Choice students to 49 percent of their total enrollment. They must also admit Choice students without discriminating. Both the statute and administrative rules specify that pupils must be "accepted on a random basis." This was interpreted to mean that if a school was oversubscribed, random selection was required. A court ruling in August 1990 found that the private schools did not need to comply with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

The report is divided into four sections: (1) an analysis of the families and students who participated in the Choice Program in 1990-91; (2) a description and analysis of the schools in the program; (3) a very preliminary analysis of outcomes of the program; and (4) recommendations to amend the statute and administrative rules.

Because of the short time the program was in operation, and because of the small number of students participating, the report is preliminary. *The basic conclusion of the report is a recommendation to continue the program for at least several more years. Expansion is not currently needed or recommended. We also recommend that future evaluations include monitoring the areas of concern expressed in this report.*

Choice Families and Students. The program appeared to satisfy the intent of offering low-income families a choice other than the public schools for their children's education. Results of the evaluation revealed the following about the participating students and their families:

- Prior test scores and parent responses to survey questions about prior schooling indicated that the students were not succeeding in the Milwaukee Public Schools and probably had higher than average behavioral problems.
- Of the participating families, 59 percent were receiving public assistance.
- Seventy-six percent of those participating were single-parent families.

- Participating parents were, on average, more active in the schools than MPS parents, somewhat more educated, and expressed more alienation from the schools.
- Parents were seeking a better learning environment with a better disciplinary climate.

Rather than skimming off the best students, this program seems to provide an alternative educational environment for students who are not doing particularly well in the public school system.

The Choice Schools. In the summer of 1990, ten private schools expressed interest and were certified by the Department of Public Instruction to enroll students in the Choice Program. Seven schools enrolled 341 students, with the majority of the students (317) enrolled in five prekindergarten-to-8 schools. There was clearly variation in quality among the Choice schools in the program. One of the original schools, Juanita Virgil Academy, had severe difficulties and was closed in the middle of the year. Thus merely being a private school does not necessarily insure an adequate educational environment. The remaining schools in the program did not exhibit the severe problems of Juanita Virgil.

The most serious institutional problems were high staff turnover due to low pay, and dealing with recent changes in location and affiliation for several of the schools. The schools also had difficulty hiring minority teachers.

In general, the schools have elaborate and refined organizational structures that involve parents heavily. Parental involvement, which was already high for Choice parents in their prior schools, generally increased in the private schools, especially in the areas of volunteering and fund-raising.

Classes that we observed were generally small, with a high proportion of student time spent on task. The curricula in the schools were relatively rich in terms of art, music and dance, languages, and computer use. Most of the instruction we observed was very similar in substance and style to instruction in public schools. The schools are not well equipped to meet the exceptional needs of learning disabled and emotionally disturbed students. In summary, there were problems in the Choice schools, but on balance, the schools provided adequate education.

Preliminary Outcomes. Preliminary outcomes after the first year of the Choice Program were mixed. Achievement test scores did not register dramatic gains and the Choice students remained approximately equal to low-income students in MPS (higher on reading, slightly lower on math). Based on individual changes in national percentile rankings, approximately as many Choice students gained as declined. All these results are based on a small number of students.

Student attendance, parental attitudes toward Choice schools, opinions of the Choice Program, and parental involvement were all positive. Attendance was slightly higher than the average elementary school attendance in MPS. Parental

attitudes toward their schools and education of their children were much more positive than their evaluations of their prior public schools. This shift occurred in every category (teachers, principals, instruction, discipline, etc.). When parents of students who did not finish the year in a Choice school were included, the results were similar, although not as pronounced. Similarly, parental involvement, which was more frequent than for the average MPS parent in prior schools, was even greater for most activities in the private schools.

Attrition during the first year appeared to be high. During the school year, most students leaving the program were from Juanita Virgil Academy, which closed in February 1991. The educational experience of Juanita Virgil students was undoubtedly negative. But a considerable number of students who completed the school year in the Choice schools did not re-enroll in Choice schools in September 1991. Of the 249 students in Choice schools in June, 86 did not return in September. Forty of those students enrolled in MPS. Our report expresses uncertainty as to why. It is possible that problems in the schools, especially only modest achievement gains, could have been a factor. That, however, is at odds with survey results that indicate parent satisfaction with child learning. This attrition may reflect the uncertainty of the program's future due to legal challenges.

Recommended Changes in the Statute and Administrative Rules. To improve information available to and accountability by parents, we recommend the following program changes:

Governance. Schools in the Choice Program should be required to have a formal governance structure, including a board of directors, suitable committees, and bylaws. They must also adhere to state open meetings laws.

Financial Reporting. Schools should also be required to conduct an annual financial audit which meets the accounting standards for private, nonprofit organizations. The report should be public and filed annually with the Department of Public Instruction.

Added Accountability. Schools should be required to meet all current and future state outcome requirements, including statewide tests, dropout reporting, and a school report card when it is required.

Review Accountability Standards. We recommend that the legislature review the current standards of accountability as specified in the statute. At present, schools may meet any one of four standards (attendance, achievement, grade advancement, or parental involvement). We suggest that the schools meet more than one of these standards. We would also suggest flexibility in the standards based on the level of the school.

Program Information. To facilitate parent knowledge of the program and the Choice schools, we suggest the legislature consider making information on the Choice Program available through the extensive school selection process in MPS.

Changes in either statutes or administrative rules are also recommended to facilitate easier enrollment for parents and Choice schools. These could include an early enrollment period and summer school programs. Transportation problems and the issue of reimbursement also need to be addressed.

Finally, we recommend that the legislature consider problems of incorporating learning disabled students in the program, second semester enrollment of Choice students, and a study of administrative costs of the program borne by the Choice schools.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is being submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) which has statutory responsibility to evaluate the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. DPI appointed the author as an independent evaluator of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program in September 1990. The author gratefully acknowledges the opportunity to evaluate this new program.

The research was funded by a start-up grant from the Robert La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, and by a substantial and continuing grant from the Spencer Foundation in Chicago. The funding covered all expenses, including all student wages, project assistantships, and partial release time for the author. No consulting fees have been paid. Without the support of the Spencer Foundation as well as the administrative support of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, this research would not have been possible.

Numerous people aided in the research. Most important are the members of the research team. With one exception, all are or were students, both graduates and undergraduates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Some worked for brief periods, others have been with the project for most of the time. Only Mark Rigdon has been with this project from the beginning. His contributions as leader of the research team have been too numerous to list. Other past or present members of the team include: Andrea Bailey, Nadine Goff, Chris Kennedy, Brian Kroger, Zina Lawrence, Steve Little, Tamara Louzecky, Lori Mauer, Larissa Ripley, and Julie White. Stephanie Fassnacht and Chris Thorn provided computer programming support. Alice Honeywell supplied much needed editing.

I would also like to thank Superintendent Herbert Grover, Bambi Statz, Gus Knitt, and Roger Sunby of the Department of Public Instruction. Their involvement was very beneficial and completely supportive of the research.

We also received considerable help from employees of the Milwaukee Public School System. They include Gary Peterson, Stan Pauli, George Renniecke, George Krieger, John Berg, Acquine Jackson, and India Gray.

Finally, and most important, I would like to thank all the individuals connected with the private Choice schools: students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Those bearing the most burden and responsibility for cooperatively opening up their schools were Zakyia Courtney, Karl Pölm-Foudrey, Sister Callista Robinson, Susan Wing, Vincent Castellanos, Dennis Alexander, Walter Sava, and Cleveland Lee.

I. INTRODUCTION

This is a *preliminary* report on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. The report is preliminary for three reasons. First, the program was modest, carefully targeted to a very small number of students and schools. Second, the program has been under a legal cloud since its inception. Legal challenges began in the summer of 1990 and continue as this report is prepared. Uncertainty about the program's future undoubtedly affects decisions by parents and schools to participate and continue in the program. Third, one year is an inadequate period of time to evaluate educational outcomes in this or any other program. That problem is compounded by the limited sample sizes and uncertainty about the future.

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, enacted in spring 1990, provides an opportunity for students meeting specific criteria to attend private, nonsectarian schools in Milwaukee. A payment from public funds equivalent to the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) per-member state aid (approximately \$2,500 in 1990) is paid to the private schools in lieu of tuition for the student. Students must come from families with incomes not exceeding 1.75 times the national poverty line. Choice students must not have been in private schools in the prior year or in public schools in districts other than MPS. The total number of Choice students in any year was limited to one percent of the MPS enrollment (approximately 980 students in 1990).

Schools must limit Choice students to 49 percent of their total enrollment. They must also admit Choice students without discriminating (as specified in s. 118.13, Stats.). A court ruling in August 1990 found that the private schools did not need to comply with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Both the statute and administrative rules specify that pupils must be "accepted on a random basis." This was interpreted to mean that if a school was oversubscribed, random selection was required. Administrative clarifications in the first year limited random selection to grades which were oversubscribed. In addition, in situations in which one child from a family was admitted to the program, a sibling was automatically allowed to enroll even if random selection was required in that child's grade.

The program was designed to prevent public subsidies to nonpoor families, students attending religious schools, and students already attending private schools. It was also structured to limit the selection criteria of the private schools. This program and the results outlined in this report cannot be generalized to the more unconstrained "voucher" programs—those that would subsidize private school education in much broader circumstances. The spirit and the letter of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program are a stark contrast to public subsidy of elite or exclusive private education. Rather the intent is to provide alternative educational opportunities for families that cannot easily exercise choice by changing residence or purchasing private education.

The study on which this report is based employs a number of methodological approaches. Surveys were mailed in the fall of 1990 to all parents who applied and were accepted for enrollment in one of the private Choice schools. Similar surveys were sent in May and June 1991 to a random sample of 5,438 MPS parents. The surveys were designed to assess parent knowledge of and evaluation of the Choice Program, attitudes toward their children's educational experiences in their prior public schools, and the extent of their parental involvement in MPS schools.

A second, follow-up survey of Choice parents assessing attitudes relating to their year in private schools was mailed in June 1991.¹ Surveys have recently been sent to 407 Choice parents whose children enrolled in the second year of the program for the first time. An additional 75 surveys were sent to continuing first-year parents who failed to respond to last year's survey. The results of that survey are not included in this report.

Detailed case studies were completed in April 1991 in the four private schools that enrolled the majority of the choice students. These case studies involved approximately 30 person-days in the schools, 56 hours of classroom observation, and interviews with nearly all of the teachers and administrators in the schools. Questionnaires were completed by 341 students in the fourth through eighth grades.² Researchers also attended and observed parent and community group meetings, and board of director meetings for several schools.

The research also included analysis of first-year outcome measures, including data on achievement test scores, attendance, and attrition from the program. Prior MPS test data were available for approximately half of the 347 students who began the Choice Program in the fall of 1990.

In accordance with normal research protocol, and in agreement with the private schools, reported results are aggregated and schools are not individually identified in order to ensure confidentiality. Thus these findings should not be construed as an audit or an assessment of the effectiveness of the educational environment in any specific school.

This report is divided into four sections: (1) an analysis of the families and students who participated in the Choice Program in 1990-91; (2) a description and analysis of the schools in the program; (3) a very preliminary analysis of outcomes of the program; and (4) a set of recommendations that the legislature might consider in amending the existing law or in the event that they are required to reenact the program as a result of the pending Wisconsin Supreme Court decision.

¹Response rates are indicated in Appendix Table A1. Although the response rate for the MPS control group is low compared with national mail surveys, it is high relative to MPS surveys (on which surveyors get approximately a 20 percent return rate). Differences of means compared with the system as a whole indicate no statistical differences for our group on race or qualifications for free lunch.

²Third graders were given questionnaires in one of the schools that employed third and fourth grade combined classes.

The *bottom line* of this report is a recommendation to continue the program for at least several more years. Despite some problems and difficulties, engendered both by the uncertainty of the program's future (because of court challenges) and by limited demonstrated educational success to date, it is clear this program continues to offer opportunities otherwise unavailable to some Milwaukee parents. We also recommend that future evaluations monitor areas of concern expressed in the report.

This program is not now, nor probably will it ever be, *the answer* for the extensive and complex problems associated with providing a quality education for Milwaukee children. It is equally difficult to believe, as some opponents have argued, that given the current size and limitations of the program, it poses a serious threat to the public school system. It offers the seeds of innovation, opportunities for poor parents that are already available to most other parents in our state, and marginal support for nonsectarian private schools, schools that for a number of years have been working to provide education under some of the most adverse conditions.

II. CHOICE FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

The first year of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program provides limited and inconclusive evidence on the demand, popularity, and ability of parents to take advantage of the program. On May 30, 1990, following enactment of the program as part of the Wisconsin budget in the spring of 1990, a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the statute (s. 119.23) was filed in Dane County Circuit Court. Because of the suit, throughout the enrollment period in the late spring and summer, there was great uncertainty about whether students would be allowed to attend certified private schools in the fall. An affirmative ruling by the court on August 6, 1990 allowed students to begin classes. The uncertainty continued as that ruling was appealed and then overturned by the appeals court in November 1990. That ruling was appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which heard oral arguments on October 5, 1991. At this writing, the Supreme Court has not yet decided the case.

Enrollment. Enrollment in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program in September 1990 was 341. Another 217 students were refused admission because of space limitations in the schools. Of the students enrolled, 74 percent were African-Americans, 19 percent Hispanic, six percent white, and one percent other minority or unknown.

Enrollment in September 1991 was up to 562. One hundred thirty-three applied but were not accepted by the schools. The 1991 enrollment is 73 percent African-American, 23 percent Hispanic, four percent white.

Four schools—Bruce-Guadalupe Bilingual Community School, Harambee Community School, Urban Day School, and Woodlands School—accounted for 253 of the 341 choice students enrolled in September 1990, and they account for 521 of the 562 students enrolled in September 1991. Juanita Virgil Academy, which no longer exists, had 63 choice students in 1990. SER-Jobs for Progress, an alternative school

and job training facility for high school students who are considerably behind in credits, enrolled 24 students in September 1990, and 37 students in September 1991. The other school involved in the program, Lakeshore Montessori School, enrolled two students in 1990 and four in 1991.

Enrolling in the Choice Program. Table 1 indicates the primary reasons people gave for enrolling in the Choice Program in 1990. The single most important factor was educational quality, followed closely by the disciplinary and general atmosphere in the chosen private school. Location and having siblings in the school were less important factors.

In the first year, the Choice Program was hastily advertised in community newspapers, radio and television advertisements, community centers, and churches. In response to a survey question asking how parents heard about the program, however, the largest number of parents (52 percent) indicated that they learned of the program from friends or relatives. Thirty-six percent said they heard about it on television and another 33 percent from newspapers. Information obtained from the schools themselves, churches, or community centers were mentioned by only 18, 5, and 3 percent, respectively.

As indicated in Table 2, parents were generally satisfied with the amount and accuracy of information about the program. They were less pleased with the information about the schools, despite the fact that they were generally pleased with the assistance they received from the schools. There was greater dissatisfaction with the assistance parents received from the Department of Public Instruction, although the majority was still satisfied or very satisfied. Of more concern are the results from our random sample of MPS parents who are not enrolled and did not apply for the Choice Program. When we asked if they had heard of the Choice Program, only 51 percent (779 of 1537) said they had heard of it in June 1991—one year and numerous news stories after it was enacted. Although applications were up in the second year, and in both years exceeded the slots available in participating schools, the program is still not well known among Milwaukee parents. Recommendations for improving the enrollment process and increasing parent knowledge of the programs are included in Section V of this report.

Family Demographics

Income, Employment, and Family Status. The Choice Program is targeted to low-income families and survey results confirm that Choice families are less well-off financially than the average MPS family. In terms of family income, 78 percent earned less than \$15,000 in 1989 and only 7 percent earned more than \$25,000 (see Table 3). For the 1513 respondents who answered this question in our MPS control group, 47 percent were below \$15,000 per year and 35 percent were above \$25,000.

MPS families that qualify for free or reduced lunch were very close in income to Choice families, with 71 percent below \$15,000 and only 10 percent above \$25,000.³

Employment and public assistance status are depicted in Table 4 and are consistent with the income data. Although 66 percent of the Choice mothers indicated full or part-time employment, 57 percent were receiving AFDC or general assistance. Less is known about the fathers, although their participation in the labor market was higher. MPS parents were more likely to be employed and had a much lower rate of receiving assistance. The low-income group was very close to the Choice parents in the likelihood of being on assistance (59 percent). In terms of family status, 76 percent of the Choice respondents were not married. This compares to 49 percent not presently married for the full MPS sample and 64 percent not married for the low-income group.

Education. To the degree our small sample size is indicative, there was a distinct difference between Choice and MPS parents, particularly mothers, in terms of education. As Table 5 shows, only 24 percent of the Choice mothers did not receive a high-school diploma as compared to 33 percent of the MPS parents and 46 percent of the low-income parents. The same pattern is true for female parents or guardians receiving some college training. Among mothers and female guardians, 55 percent of Choice women, 40 percent of MPS, and 30 percent of low-income MPS women had at least some college. Fathers or male guardians of Choice students are not as well educated as mothers, and are very close to the average male education in MPS as a whole (33 percent less than high school, 42 percent some college).⁴

Age. There is less difference among parents in terms of age. As shown in Table 6, only 9 percent of Choice mothers are younger than 26 and only 33 percent younger than 31. That makes them slightly younger than MPS parents--5 percent are under 26 and 26 percent are below 31. The average ages indicate that both mothers and fathers in Choice families are slightly younger than in MPS as a whole.

Summary. Choice families appear to be considerably less well off than the average MPS family in terms of employment, income, and being on public assistance or AFDC. They are also less likely to come from two-parent families. As a group,

³The income match between the Choice Program and free or reduced lunch is fairly close. The Choice Program has a limit of 1.75 times the poverty line. Qualification for free lunch is 1.35 times the poverty line and reduced-free lunch 1.85 times the poverty line. Throughout the report, when it is appropriate and there are substantial deviations between the total MPS parent sample and low-income parents, we will include data on the low-income group.

⁴Although, as in all surveys, there is probably some exaggeration in reported education, we have to assume that inflated reports would be characteristic of all groups, and thus the differences remain.

Choice parents share more characteristics with low-income parents in MPS than with the population as a whole. This is what the program intended. The exception appears to be education. For both mothers and fathers, but more so for mothers, Choice parents were more likely to have graduated from high school and received some college training than the average MPS parent.

Experience of Choice Parents in Prior Schools

Parent Satisfaction With Public Schools. There is considerable evidence that parents enrolling in the Choice Program were not fully satisfied with their prior schools in MPS. There is also evidence, based on achievement test results, that the students were, on average, not doing well in these schools. Parent satisfaction levels for those families whose children attended MPS in prior years is portrayed in Table 7. The list is ordered from most to least satisfied based on the addition of the first two columns ("very satisfied" and "satisfied"). What is distinctive is that the factors with which parents are most satisfied have little to do with the operation or outcome of the school (textbooks, school location, etc.). They expressed least satisfaction with what their child learned and the degree of discipline in the prior MPS school. These latter issues were at the top of the list for why parents said they enrolled in the Choice Program (Table 1).

Again there is a sharp contrast between Choice and average MPS parents. In every category, *Choice parents were less satisfied than the average MPS parent with public schools.* The magnitude of differences in satisfaction between MPS and Choice parents was greater in those areas where Choice parents were least satisfied. Thus while only 12 percent fewer Choice parents are satisfied with textbooks than the average MPS parent, 32 percent more Choice parents are dissatisfied with "the amount their child learned" and 26 percent are more dissatisfied than MPS parents with discipline.

This dissatisfaction carries over into a very simple, but widely used measure which asks parents to grade schools on an A to F scale. The results are depicted in Table 8.⁵ Choice parents graded their child's prior public school much more harshly than did all MPS parents or low-income MPS parents. Only 32 percent of the Choice parents graded their schools as an A or B. In contrast, and providing a somewhat different perception of MPS than is usually portrayed, 66 percent of the MPS parents and 65 percent of the MPS low-income parents gave an A or B rating to their child's school. The average grade parents give their schools (2.1 for Choice parents, 2.9 for MPS parents, and 2.8 for MPS low-income parents) reflects these different perceptions.

⁵In this and several subsequent tables, measures for Choice parents based on their experience in 1990-1991 in the private schools is included in the table. Those results will be discussed in Section III and Section IV of this report.

Prior Parental Involvement. In the year prior to enrollment in private schools, Choice parents, while less happy with MPS, nevertheless were somewhat more active in the schools than the average MPS parent. Table 9 compares how often *the schools contacted parents* about their children or about participation in school activities. Choice parents report more frequent contacts in every area, although the differences are not striking.

The differences are somewhat larger when *parents contacted the school* (see Table 10). Consistent with past findings, the areas in which Choice parents were more likely than the average MPS parent to contact the school were issues related to their child's academic performance and their child's behavior. For example, 61 percent of the Choice parents reported contacting the school three or more times during the year concerning academic performance. This compares to 44 percent for MPS parents. On behavior, 50 percent of the Choice parents indicated three or more contacts, compared with 33 percent for the MPS parents.

Choice parents also reported somewhat higher activity in organized activities such as parent-teacher conferences and parent-teacher organizations and their associated activities (see Table 11). The largest differences appear to be in attending and taking part in parent/teacher organizations and activities.

Choice parents also were considerably more likely to engage in educational activities with their children at home than were MPS parents. The differences are most telling in reading, working on math, and writing. As Table 12 indicates, approximately 20 percent more Choice parents than MPS parents were likely to work with their children three or more times a week on these activities. Very few (6-9 percent) Choice parents report never working with their children in an average week on reading, math, or writing.

The Importance of Education

Although education is generally perceived as important in the United States, it is very difficult to assess the importance of education in any one family. We attempted to measure the commitment to education relative to other important family goals. The results, comparing MPS parents with Choice parents are depicted in Table 13. All parents reply that they value education as much or more than they value jobs, money, religion, family ethnic tradition, or "having a good home." The only discrepancy between the two groups is the importance of education in relation to maintaining religious faith. Only 22 percent of Choice parents think education is more important than maintaining religion, whereas 33 percent of MPS families think so.

Educational expectations are difficult to measure. Predictably, the parents surveyed expressed high expectations for their children's future education. Eighty-four percent of the Choice parents, 76 percent of the MPS parents, and 72 percent of the low-income MPS parents expect their children to have college or post-graduate education.

Prior Student Achievement

One of the major arguments against choice programs, whether public or private school choice, is that they will enroll the best students, leaving the remaining to be educated in the public school system. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program was designed specifically to prevent that from happening. Students were to come from poor families, schools were to select students randomly, and students were not to have been in private schools in the prior year. If our small samples are correct, Choice parents are clearly not well-off financially, or in terms of employment, and most students are from single-parent families. The parents are also relatively unhappy with their prior schools. The unhappiness was most pronounced in terms of their child's learning and behavioral problems or the lack of discipline of their children. The remaining question is how well they were actually achieving.

Almost all of the students in this program are elementary or middle-school students. It is extremely difficult to measure outcomes or achievement for children at those ages. Grades are rarely given or have little meaning, attendance generally varies little, suspensions are very seldom given at the elementary level, and (as is true of high school) vary from school to school depending on administrative rules and the philosophy of principals. In short, it is hard to measure achievement in the early years.

The only prior-achievement measures available for this study are standardized tests that were taken while students were in the Milwaukee Public School system. Standardized achievement tests are designed to compare students on basic subjects. The comparisons are all relative to a national sample of students at the same grade levels. The tests are multiple choice and require students to read the questions (at all but the lowest grade levels in which the teacher orally presents the questions). Because students must read the questions, reading skills become important, and thus students with poor English reading skills may also do worse on math and on other tests. On the other hand, standardized achievement scores do provide a specific and concise quantitative measure of how one set of students is doing relative to other students and to a national sample.

Because students entered the Choice program in any grade, prior tests covered a number of years. Two measures are possible. The first, displayed in Table 14, is based on the *last achievement test* the student took before enrolling in the Choice Program (80 percent of the prior tests were in May 1990). The second, portrayed in Appendix B (Table B1), is based on *all prior* tests in the student's file. Conceptually, the latter measure captures the average learning over the students' prior years in MPS. The last test is a better measure of where students were when they entered the private school.

The results add evidence to the conclusion that the Choice students were not achieving well in MPS. The first row in the Table 14 indicates the percentage of students at or above the 50th national percentile. The second row gives the median national percentile for each group. The third and fourth rows report the mean and standard deviation of the normal curve equivalent, which is a score based on a

distribution that has a normal curve shape. The normal curve for the reference population has a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06.⁶

It is apparent that for the Choice students on which we have prior test data, achievement was very low prior to their enrolling in the private schools in 1990. On the last test they took in MPS, only 25 percent were at or above the median in reading and 36 percent in math. For our control group, approximately 35 percent of the MPS students were at or above the median in reading, and 43 percent in math. Choice students were also behind comparable low-income students in MPS, although the math differences are not that large. Similar conclusions emerge from the other measures reported in the table.

The same conclusion emerges when we use all prior tests for all groups (Appendix Table B1). The comparisons between Choice students and all MPS students are similar to those using the last test only. Each group is slightly higher when all tests are used.⁷ The differences between low-income and Choice are somewhat greater than in Table 14.⁸ A major conclusion is that with either measure of prior achievement, *Choice students were not achieving as well as most students in the Milwaukee Public Schools and were slightly behind low-income MPS students.*

Summary

The picture of Choice students and parents that emerges from our initial year of research is interesting and seems to make sense. The students were not succeeding in MPS and probably had behavioral problems (based on the frequency of contacts between parents and schools on that issue). The parents, though not financially well off, were more active in the schools than average parents, and were clearly more alienated from the schools. They were seeking a better learning environment, with a better disciplinary climate. They turned to the private schools in the hope of finding that environment.

⁶Discussion of various test measures is included in Appendix A of this report.

⁷Unfortunately, this is a pattern to be expected because students on average in MPS tend to have lower national percentile scores in the higher grades. This means that using just the last test, which of course is taken in a higher grade than other prior tests, produces lower scores than an average across all tests.

⁸The differences between low-income and non-low-income MPS students are larger than when the whole control group is used (including low-income students). For illustration, the differences by income are presented for MPS students in Appendix Table B.3.

III. THE CHOICE SCHOOLS

Introduction

In the summer of 1990, ten private schools expressed interest in and were certified by the Department of Public Instruction to enroll students in the Choice Program. Seven schools enrolled students. The majority of students (317 of 341) were in five prekindergarten-to-eighth grade schools. The other two schools (Lakeshore Montessori and SER-Jobs) had fewer students and served different educational purposes. Because SER-Jobs was unique relative to the other schools in providing an alternative educational environment, we approached evaluating it in a different manner. For example, the same achievement tests used in other schools were not a useful indicator for these students. Because of the age and number of students (two four-year-old students), it was also impossible to do a rigorous evaluation of Lakeshore Montessori. Also, because of limited time and resources, we were not able to do case studies of these schools during the first year. We will complete those studies this year.

Most of the material in this section of the report is based on case studies of four schools: Bruce Guadalupe, Harambee, Urban Day, and Woodlands.⁹ As noted in Section I, to maintain confidentiality, we do not identify schools specifically, and we present aggregate data only. We do, however, discuss variation across schools without identifying schools specifically. Before discussing the four major Choice schools, we explicitly describe the problems at Juanita Virgil Academy, which closed in midyear and no longer exists.

Juanita Virgil Academy

We can provide little quantitative information on Juanita Virgil Academy, which enrolled 63 Choice students in the fall of 1990. The reason for this is that after the first semester, the school petitioned the Department of Public Instruction to be removed from the program. The reason given was that they wanted to reinstate religious training in the school. The petition was granted. Several weeks into the new semester, however, the school closed completely. The majority of students entered the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Juanita Virgil had existed as a private school for a number of years, and thus qualified for the Choice Program. The school closed before we were able to complete a case study of it, but based on several visits, parent surveys and interviews, and a long interview with the executive director of Juanita Virgil, we believe that the school was in turmoil from the beginning of the year. The principal was new, having arrived from an unsuccessful term as a principal in the Milwaukee Public Schools. When we talked to her in September 1990, she said she did not have knowledge of

⁹We will use the short names for these schools from this point forward.

the curriculum of the school, knew very few of the teachers, and had no knowledge of any standardized testing. Although classes had been in session for several weeks, she said, "I just arrived."

And she did not last long. The executive director indicated that she fired the principal in late October. Another administrator had left earlier after a conflict with both the principal and executive director. Although an existing administrator took over day-to-day leadership, there was no indication that a new, permanent principal was hired before the school withdrew from the program and later closed.

Parents complained about transportation, food service, the lack of books and materials, space problems, overcrowded classrooms, lack of cleanliness, and a major lack of discipline. One parent wrote on the back of our survey:

I'm extremely dissatisfied with the academic performance of the school, administrator changed November 1990 without notification to parents, spanking of children, poor quality atmosphere, transferring child back to public school, January 1991, lack of cooperation from school administration in regards to curriculum and after school activities--never met registration promises.

There were also allegations of theft and mismanagement of money, and no external financial audit was available. There was no governing structure in the school beyond an "advisory board" consisting of three friends of the executive director. In my interview with the executive director (after the school closed), she specifically stated that she never worked with executive boards because they can "...take over and even fire the executive director."

According to the executive director, the school closed due to a lack of funding. She also said they asked to withdraw from the Choice Program because tuition-paying parents were not happy with the school situation and they had lost their Bible classes to qualify for the Choice Program.

In summary, there is no way to interpret the Juanita Virgil experience in a positive light. It failed as a school, in the middle of the year following what had to be a questionable educational experience for more than 100 students in the prior months. *The other private schools in the Choice Program, however, have almost nothing in common with Juanita Virgil Academy.* Indeed, characteristics of the organizational and management structures of the other Choice schools--characteristics absent in Juanita Virgil--are the basis for the major regulatory recommendations presented in the final section of this report. In making these recommendations, we place priority on attempting to avoid the Juanita Virgil experience in the future. At a minimum, parents should be assured in making their school choices that a school will be able to last through the year and provide an adequate educational environment for their child.

Four Choice Schools

Organization and Personnel. Unlike Juanita Virgil, the remaining Choice schools have formal and quite elaborate organizational structures. They all have boards of directors, written operating rules, and quite extensive committee structures to handle personnel, admissions, curriculum, and other issues. The boards and committees almost all include parents, some outside community members, and members of the administrative and teaching staffs. Three of the four schools have written bylaws.

All have one or more parent groups. The parent groups meet not only on curricular matters, but also play an integral role in fund-raising, which is a formal commitment of non-Choice, tuition-paying parents in three of the schools. In two of the schools, parents sign formal contracts specifying fees, but also obligating themselves to participate in school activities, and to participate in various aspects of their child's education. In one of the schools, students sign contracts to obey rules, complete homework.

The characteristics of the teachers in the school are depicted in Table 15. The majority, but not all, of the teachers have some form of certification in Wisconsin or other states. Several of the teachers counted as noncertified have teaching certificates from other countries. Although the cultural emphasis in two of the schools is African-American and one is bilingualism and Hispanic culture, the majority of teachers are white women. The stated reason for this is that there is a shortage of minority teachers and it is difficult to compete with MPS, which has a formal commitment to increase the percentage of minority teachers in its system. Competition with MPS is difficult because the Choice schools pay teachers much less at all levels than the public schools.

Pay is also the major reason for the high teacher turnover in the schools. Average teacher seniority was 4.2 years, with 38 percent of the staff in their first year. At least six of the new teachers, however, filled expansion positions. When we asked teachers if they were going to look for other jobs for the next year, over 50 percent said they thought so. The stated reason for this was usually salaries. As one principal put it (and another concurred when I repeated the comment): "The teachers who stay here for a long time are either very dedicated or can afford to stay on what we pay."

Turnover of administrative leaders was also high. In two of the schools, the principals or executive directors had been in their positions two years. In one school, the principal had been with the school for 16 years and had been principal for 13. This year, however, there is a new principal in that school. In the final school, there was a new principal in 1990, who resigned partway through the year. The teacher who replaced him had planned to be with the school for only one year and therefore, a new principal is in that school for the 1991-92 year.

Staff continuity is a problem in these schools. With some exceptions, however, the underlying problem is not dissatisfaction with the school environment or teaching, but with the pay. Teachers and administrators went out of their way to describe

how they enjoyed the small class sizes they taught (averaging 16.5 students), the autonomy they had in the classroom, the usually congenial atmosphere in the schools, and the support they received in disciplinary matters. Other than pay, the most general complaints were lack of materials and teaching aids.¹⁰

There was also some racial tension in several schools. The source of the problems often stemmed from parent-teacher interactions in which the parents complained that white teachers were not able to convey the African-American or Hispanic cultures that were supposed to be emphasized. In the Hispanic bilingual school, there was also a problem with teachers who were not fluent in Spanish.

Finally, several of the schools were suffering from recent changes in affiliation and location. One had moved into its existing building in September 1990 (as had Juanita Virgil Academy). Another had moved two years earlier, but many of the parents were not happy with the new location. An effort to acquire adequate funds to build a new building was abandoned during the 1990-91 year. Both of these schools had long historical affiliations with churches and religiously affiliated schools. Being on their own created financial hardships. Moving meant a loss of students, teachers, and administrators, as well as the normal difficulties associated with changing facilities.

Curriculum. In many respects, the curriculum of these schools is similar to curriculum in most other elementary and middle schools. With one exception, where two grade levels are combined in classes, grade structures and teacher assignments are standard. One of the schools offers Head Start classes and two others pre-5-year-old kindergarten. The curriculum is relatively rich. Music and or dance classes are offered in each school, usually twice per week. Two of the schools have daily Spanish classes for most students (grades 3 to 8 in one school). French is offered in another school. Three of the schools also have computer labs and classes that utilize computers. Computer training occurs an average of twice a week in the higher grades.¹¹ One of the schools had health classes for all students once a week. All of the schools had physical education, usually twice weekly.¹²

¹⁰This was an extreme problem in one of the schools, which did not have adequate textbooks in some classes until well into the second semester. It was also a serious problem in other schools in areas such as science, where it was hard for the teachers to innovate and compensate for the dearth of equipment and materials.

¹¹Other than organized class instruction, students also use computers on their own and for individual projects.

¹²Recess and physical education facilities were relatively poor in the schools. One school had easy access to a city park for recess, one relied on a blocked off street, two others asphalt playgrounds with some wood chips and playground equipment. All the schools had some indoor space for physical education, but it often served multiple purposes (cafeterias, detention areas, etc.).

Two of the schools stressed African-American culture and one of the schools stressed Hispanic culture and bilingualism. Although this type of cultural emphasis has created intense debate around the country, in these schools the approach seemed positive. We never saw evidence of teaching cultural superiority or separatism. The emphasis was on understanding differences and understanding the history and accomplishments of various racial groups. In addition, although classrooms and hallways were decorated with multicultural themes, and historical and cultural examples were more prevalent than in schools without a specific cultural emphasis, instructional patterns, exercises, books and materials were not that different from other schools. For example, in one first-grade class, a male black teacher on two successive days taught "The Little Engine That Could" and "The Little Red Hen."

Classes. Our research teams conducted classroom observations in almost every classroom in the four private schools that enrolled almost all the Choice students (56 classrooms). Classroom observation was both ethnographic and quantitative. As researchers observed the rooms, they also coded activities that took place in each of nine five-minute time periods, making up an average 45-minute class. The results of the classroom observations appear in Table 16.

Our observations indicate that classes were conducted much in the ordinary fashion. Children spent most of their time listening to the teacher, doing seat work, and engaged in nonacademic activities (to and from the bathroom, moving from one activity to the other, getting materials, fooling around, etc.). Teachers spent most of their time lecturing or instructing, and monitoring or reviewing students' work. Lessons were focused mostly on skills (e.g., reading and math problem solving) with a considerable time spent on helping students understand. In general, texts or materials were not the focus of instruction—the teacher was. Most of the instruction was in whole-class settings (83 percent of the classes were a whole class for at least half the period). Approximately half the time was spent on instruction as opposed to monitoring or reviewing student work.

Time on task—meaning the time students spent doing what the teacher and instructional environment dictated—was very high. Thirty-seven percent of the students were on task the entire period, 40 percent for more than half the period. Discipline in the classroom was modest, the time spent disciplining students taking less than half the time period in 82 percent of the periods observed. No disciplinary activity was observed in 14 percent of the classes.

The vast majority of classes were either "fairly clean" or "clean" (61 percent). Physical and social order was also high. Eighty-eight percent of the classes were physically on the "ordered" as opposed to the "chaotic" side, and 81 percent were orderly in terms of the social setting. Most of the classes were quiet (62 percent), the rest noisy, perhaps appropriately. As expected, classes were more orderly in the lower grades. Also the numbers of students in each classroom declined in higher grades. It was not uncommon to find 30 or 40 students in the kindergarten and grades one to two (but split into multiple classes), but only 15 in grades seven and eight.

In one school, teachers also consistently complained about the influx of new students and the shifts in administrative leadership. During the period in which we did our case study, the same school had a problem with discipline, primarily due to the arrival of a substantial number of "contract" students. MPS contracts with private schools to work with students with special problems, including behavioral problems. One of the schools had accepted 38 contract students (approximately 20 percent of the school enrollment) four weeks before we arrived in April. These students were creating a great deal of difficulty in the school. Parents went to the extreme of having a parent "on duty" in the office to monitor the disciplinary conditions in the school. Four of these students were returned to MPS just prior to our visit.

We also felt that in one school the instructional time was very short. This was due to a late start, early finish, and a relatively long lunch break. The late starting and early ending time was the direct result of busing arrangements. Students not from the neighborhood rode yellow buses. Given the long divergent routes, some of the most distant students were on buses for over three hours each day. To accommodate this schedule, the instructional time was short. Partly in response to this problem, we recommend in Section V that the legislature consider changes in the transportation arrangements.

What we observed in the classroom covered the range of teaching and learning styles and levels of effectiveness. I personally observed a gifted teacher who had been teaching mathematics for 15 years in almost the exact manner now being recommended by the National Association of Teachers of Mathematics. She was deservedly featured in a popular nationally televised news show on the Choice Program. I also witnessed classes taught by tired teachers who were barely holding the class together. In some classrooms, there was regimented, strict discipline that demanded complete silence and students' hands on their desks. In others, there was joking and exchange, with students split into "nonsilent" groups working in organized chaos. In others, when there were problems of discipline or arguments, timeouts were often called. In one school, these sessions, as well as a systematic program which stressed individual and communal values were called "time for living."

What we came away with, more than anything else, was a feeling that there was not any formula for teaching, but rather a diversity of styles that fit the class and the teacher. What we know is that the teachers appreciated the opportunity to select their own style.

Students Attitudes. Attitudes of very young elementary school students are not easy to tap. Table 17 contains the results of a questionnaire administered to the Choice students in our four case study schools. There are several questions asked only of the older students.

The results are generally positive, with some striking findings. Over 80 percent of the students at both grade levels believe their school gave students a good education. Students generally approved of teachers and teaching practices (see Questions 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15). Although they felt their teachers treated them fairly, however, only 39 percent and 42 percent felt that "school rules are fair"

(Question 19). Nearly all students reported that principals had visited their classrooms, which conformed to our observations as well. None of the principals were "office bound." Indeed, we had difficulty finding them and getting an hour of their time for an interview.

The environment in the school was also quite positive. Students reported they felt safe everywhere in the school, and almost no one reported drug or alcohol problems (Questions 30, 31). On the negative side, 36 percent of the older students and 40 percent of the younger students reported that fighting was a problem (Question 3). Also more students disagreed (53 and 43 percent) than agreed (40 and 39 percent) with the statement, "I trust most of the people at my school" (Question 2). Finally, students confirmed what other evidence has indicated, that expectations by both parents and teachers were very high. Ninety-four percent of the older students and 89 percent of the younger agreed that ". . . teachers expect students to do their best all the time" (Question 4). And nearly everyone agreed that their parents expect them to get good grades (Question 25).

Parental Involvement. Parental involvement is stressed in all of the Choice schools. It is part of the contracts signed by parents in two of the schools. Involvement takes several forms: (1) organized activities that range from work on committees and boards to teas and fund-raising events; (2) involvement in educational activities such as chaperoning field trips, and helping out in the classroom or with other special events. Some parents volunteer their time; others are paid as teacher aides.

Parents are also explicitly asked to work with their child on educational activities at home. As demonstrated in Table 12, Choice parents were more likely than MPS parents to work with their children at home in their prior school. Choice parents who responded to our second survey in June 1991 indicated that parental activity both at home and in the Choice schools was even higher than reported in their prior public schools. For example, as indicated in Table 11, which reports organized parent activity, every category of parental involvement except belonging to a parent/teacher organization was higher in the private schools than in prior public schools. The low response to this question by all groups may be because formal membership in PTO-type organizations is not stressed and what it means to be a member is often unclear. As discussed earlier, involvement of Choice parents was higher than the average MPS parent, and the differences increased when the parents had children in private schools.

Participation in children's learning activities at home, depicted in the lower portion of Table 12, also increased in key areas and remained substantially higher than the MPS parent group. This was true of homework in general, reading, and working on mathematics. There was slightly less involvement reported in writing, educational television, and participating in sports activities.

Differences are less clear in terms of *parents contacting schools* (Table 10). Although Choice parents were more likely to contact schools than MPS parents, both before and while in the Choice Program, the major activities that appear to have

increased for Choice parents were doing volunteer work in the schools and participating in fund-raising. Although Choice parents did not have the contractual obligations of other parents, they seemed to respond in a similar manner.

There is also an indication (Table 9) that the *private schools contacted parents* more often than the public schools had contacted Choice parents, but again the major differences are in the areas of doing volunteer work and fund-raising. Thus an interesting and positive result of schools being continually strapped financially is that it forces parents to be involved in the schools. In one area, contact by the school was less—on disciplinary problems with the student. That, of course, is not a negative result and, as will be discussed in the next section, is consistent with parents' greater satisfaction with school discipline in the private schools.

Summary

There was clearly variation in quality among the Choice schools in the program. One of the original schools had severe difficulties and was closed in the middle of the year. Thus merely being a private school does not necessarily insure an adequate educational environment. The remaining schools in the program did not exhibit the severe problems of Juanita Virgil Academy. The most serious institutional problems were high staff turnover due to low pay, and dealing with recent changes in location and affiliation for several of the schools. In other respects, the schools were more than adequate educational institutions. In general, they have elaborate and refined organizational structures that heavily involve parents in the schools. The students have a positive attitude toward their environment and teachers. Classes that we observed were generally small, with a high proportion of time spent on task. The curricula in the schools were relatively rich in terms of arts, music and dance, languages, and computer use. The cultural emphasis in several of these schools was distinct and seemed positive. And most of the instruction we observed was very similar in substance and style to instruction in ordinary public schools. Finally, parental involvement, which was initially high for Choice parents in their prior schools, generally increased in the private schools, especially in the areas of volunteering and fund-raising.

IV. PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

The outcomes reported below are based on nine months of activity, at most, and they involve small numbers of students and parents. Again, we remind the reader of the preliminary nature of this report. Each year the program continues we will learn more, and each annual report, therefore, will be more conclusive.

We discuss five types of outcome measures in this section: (1) achievement test results; (2) attendance data; (3) parent attitudes; (4) parental involvement; and (5) attrition from the program. The legislation specified that suspension, expulsion, and dropping out must also be monitored. Those measures, however, if they have any

reliability would be meaningful only at the high-school level.¹³ The only high-school level program in the Choice schools is in SER-Jobs for Progress and it is unclear, given its alternative nature, what the relevant measures or MPS comparisons would be.¹⁴ Thus we report only on the five areas indicated above.

Achievement Test Results

Table 18 provides the aggregate test results for 1991 for Choice students in the four private schools. Tests were administered in late April in two schools and in May in the other two. MPS tests were given in May.

The results may be compared with those in Table 14, which indicated prior test scores for those students on whom we had data. As stated above, those data indicated the Choice students were clearly behind the average MPS student, and also behind a large random sample of low-income MPS students. There was not a dramatic change in those results. The Choice students clearly are not yet on par with the average MPS student in reading and math skills. In comparison to the low-income students, they are slightly above them in reading scores, but below in math.

I remind the reader that all of these scores are relative to a national population. In that sense, Choice students, on average, improved in reading (Median national percentiles for the group rose from 30 to 34), but were lower in mathematics (Median scores declined from 33 to 30).¹⁵ MPS and low-income students declined

¹³For example, there is almost no dropping out at the elementary level. Dropout rates are also extremely low in middle schools. In MPS, suspensions are also rare in these grades and the policies and reporting vary considerably from school to school. For example, student fighting, which leads to a suspension in most of the private schools for up to three days, may result in a student being sent home in MPS. Whether that becomes an official suspension or not may depend on the principal and the reactions of the child or parents. The numbers of official expulsions are even smaller than dropouts or suspensions. See John F. Witte, "Metropolitan Milwaukee Dropout Report," Report of the Commission on the Quality and Equity of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Public Schools, 1985.

¹⁴The noncompletion rate for Choice students in SER Jobs for Progress was 52 percent (14 of 27) for the 1990-91 year. Of those, 4 dropped out voluntarily, 5 were dropped due to excessive truancy, 3 transferred to other schools, and 2 moved out of Milwaukee. Of those who completed two semesters, the modal number of credits they received was 5 for the year. What is difficult, given that most of these students were on the verge of dropping out, is what these numbers mean in terms of success or failure.

¹⁵The numbers reported in Table 18 are for the total groups of students in the respective categories. For a very small sample of 76 Choice students, we can compare individual 1990 and 1991 tests. For those students, the resulting changes are generally consistent with the aggregate results. Fifty-one percent of the students improved their reading scores (in terms of NPRs), 44 percent had lower scores and 5 percent scored the same. For math, 47 percent improved and 53 percent had lower scores. In terms of changes in NCEs, the average change for students was +1.82 for reading and (counter to the results in Table 18),

slightly in both areas relative to the national population.

Although the numbers of students in any grade were too small to provide much information, we did note that the first-grade class was somewhat extreme on both measures. For example, 52 percent of the 40 Choice first graders were at or above the national median in reading on the 1991 tests. Only 20 percent of that group were above the median in math.

If there is any firm conclusion from these results, and we are not sure if there is much of one, it is that when students begin as far behind as the students apparently did in the first year of this program, seven or eight months will not produce dramatic changes in test scores.

Attendance

Attendance is not a very discriminating measure of educational performance at this level because there is little school-to-school variation. For example, in the last three years, average attendance in MPS elementary schools has been 92 percent in each year. Middle-school attendance for the same years averaged 89, 88, and 89 percent. Attendance of Choice students in the private schools (excluding SER-Jobs) averaged 94 percent, which puts them ahead of Milwaukee, but the differences are obviously slight. It can obviously be concluded that overall attendance is satisfactory and not a problem in any of these schools.

Parent Attitudes

Attitudes Toward the Schools. Those Choice parents who completed a final survey in 1991 had very positive attitudes toward their schools.¹⁶ Two facts about parental attitudes toward the schools are relevant. The first is shown in Table 19 for 1991. This table may be compared with Table 7 (and C1 for all original Choice parents). The results show a striking contrast. On every item, not only are the

a slight increase (+.62) for math. None of the changes approaches conventional levels of statistical reliability.

¹⁶The survey results reported in the body of the report do not include parents who were not in the Choice program at the end of the year (mostly parents from Juanita Virgil Academy). When those 31 parents are included, the results are not as positive. We exclude those parents from the results in Tables 8-12 and 19 because of the unique conditions surrounding Juanita Virgil and because results in the rest of the report (case study and outcome measures) do not include data on these students or schools. In addition, although parents were instructed in a cover letter to answer questions relative to the private schools, we have no guarantee this was done for families whose children were attending other schools when they received the survey. *Results including the parents no longer in the Choice Program are presented in Appendix C.* Although the results are generally less positive, they remain considerably more positive overall than attitudes toward their prior (public) schools.

Choice parents considerably more satisfied than MPS parents, they are much more satisfied than they were with their prior (public) school. For example, there is a 29 percent increase in the percentage of parents who say they are "very satisfied" with "amount child learned" over the prior public school. Satisfaction with "opportunities for parental involvement" increase 41 percent in the very satisfied category. Similar gains are registered for teachers, program of instruction, and the principal's performance.

Second, these attitudes are also consistent with the general rating Choice parents give their private schools on the A to F grading system. As shown in Table 8, 84 percent give their private schools a grade of A or B, with an average of 3.3. This compares to prior school ratings that had only 32 percent in the A or B range, and an average of 2.1. If all the parents who responded to the survey are included, the rating is lower-- 71 percent A or B, with a 2.9 average. Those numbers are very close to the grades MPS parents give MPS schools.

Attitudes Toward the Choice Program. We also asked parents in the second survey if they planned to continue participation in the Choice Program and what they liked and disliked about the program. We also asked them if they felt the program should continue, and if they would continue in the Choice schools even if they had to pay their own tuition.

In spite of the attrition that occurred throughout the Choice Program's first year, nearly all of the parents remaining with the schools at the end of the year indicated they were going to continue in the program. Ninety-nine out of 102 said their children were coming back. Forty-two percent of those parents said they would continue at the school even if they had to pay their own tuition. When asked if the program should continue, 102 of 103 replied yes.

In response to open-ended questions, depicted in Table 20, concerning why they were going to stay in the program, 44 percent of the responses referred to educational qualities of the schools, while 33 percent mentioned positive qualities of the schools specifically related to their child. When we asked them what they liked about the program, we received 145 positive responses (We coded up to 3 per respondent). Most responses, again, were in the area of educational quality of the schools. Eleven percent directly said they wanted a private education, but without the Choice Program could not afford it.

The majority of dislikes, which elicited 50 responses, were very specific complaints concerning general school qualities, tuition, fund-raising requirements, etc. In that general category, the most prevalent response (8 of 50) was the fear that the program would be terminated, disrupting their child's education.

The number of positive responses decline when we analyze responses for all parents, including those parents who were no longer in the Choice schools at the end of the year. However, the positive responses are still very high. For example, 118 out of 133 parents (89 percent) indicated they would enroll their child in a Choice school in the following year. And 49 percent of that number indicated they would do so even if the Choice Program no longer paid tuition. In addition, of the 140

surveys, 128 (91 percent) indicated the program should continue, only 4 said it should not, and 8 did not respond to the question.

Parental Involvement

Changes in parental involvement were reviewed in the discussion in the last section under that heading. To reiterate, results displayed in Tables 9 to 12 (with parallel tables C2-5 for all original Choice parents) demonstrate even more impressive parental involvement than the high levels Choice parents exhibited in their prior schools. Contacts by the school, contacts of schools by parents, and participation in teacher conferences and school organizations were all generally higher. The same was true for some of the critical home activities, such as reading, mathematics, and other homework. The exception in this pattern was that there was less frequent parent-school contact over disciplinary matters, which we interpret as a positive change.

Again, the results are less positive when parents are included who began in the Choice Program but who were not in the Choice schools at the end of the year. Even with those parents included, however, participation in contrast to the average MPS parent is considerably higher. As a comparison of Tables 9 to 12 and C2 to C4 demonstrates, this is true of all forms of participation we measured.

Attrition From the Program

Other than the failure of Juanita Virgil Academy, perhaps the most troubling aspect of the results of the first year of the Choice Program is the rate of attrition. Enrollment in the Choice program was as follows:

Sept 1990	341
Jan 1991	259
June 1991	249
Returning students Sept. 1991	155
New students Sept. 1991	407
TOTAL students Sept. 1991	562

The attrition from September to June is accounted for mostly by the closing of Juanita Virgil Academy which began the year with 63 students. Excluding those students, 29 left the schools (a disproportionate number of those students were in SER-Jobs For Progress). Including Ser-Jobs, but excluding Juanita Virgil, the attrition within the first year is 10 percent (29/278). That compares favorably with mobility rates from September to June in MPS schools. The average mobility rate is 33 percent in MPS. That figure, however, includes both "in" and "out" transfers from schools between September and June. Because the Choice Program did not include "in" transfers (although several did come in), if we assume there were equal numbers of in and out transfers in MPS, the comparable rate would 16.5 percent. Thus not counting Juanita

Virgil, attrition within the year was less than MPS and is certainly reasonable given the residential mobility of inner-city families.¹⁷

What is surprising, and was not anticipated based on what the schools were informally told by parents or what parents told us on our surveys, is the sharp drop in the number of students over the summer. Utilizing information from the schools and short telephone surveys, we are currently investigating why parents withdrew over the summer. Locating these parents has been difficult. We know that of the 94 students who were in the program in June but who did not return in September, 8 graduated from Choice schools. Excluding these students, there still is an attrition of 35 percent over the summer.

That means that of the original 341 students, excluding 8 graduates, only 46.5 percent (155/333) returned the second year. If we exclude Juanita Virgil from the computations, 57 percent (155/270) returned.

The questions remaining are how to interpret these attrition rates and why the attrition was so high over the summer when so many other signs from parents were positive. Unfortunately, MPS does not routinely report comparable data for transfers in and out of schools over the summer. Future analysis of student records for the MPS control group may be of some help, although given that most Choice schools are in a prekindergarten-to-eighth grade format, and most Milwaukee schools are prekindergarten-to-sixth grade with separate middle schools, obtaining comparable data will not be easy.¹⁸

A number of factors could explain the drop over the summer. Obviously, the relatively poor results on test scores could lead to parental dissatisfaction with their child's academic progress. But that is at odds with parent responses to surveys. If those who responded to the surveys were more often parents whose children did well, the survey results would be a poor indicator of satisfaction. To test for that, we computed test results for only those students whose parents responded to the second survey. The results vary somewhat by subject matter. There were only minor differences, however, between groups and none of the differences approached statistical significance.¹⁹

¹⁷Including Juanita Virgil, the rate is 27 percent, which is higher than the 16.5 percent rate estimated for transfers out of MPS.

¹⁸The best approach is probably to compute an average grade-to-grade transfer rate, ignoring natural transitions from elementary to middle school. This would be done by computing the number of school changes (excluding sixth to seventh grade changes where appropriate) for all students divided by the years they are in the system. Because of the alternative nature of the SER Jobs program, we would do this only through the eighth grade and exclude the SER Jobs attrition from the analysis.

¹⁹In terms of NCEs, the mean of the survey group was 42.9 for reading and 40.3 for math. This compared with the nonrespondent scores of 40.7 and 38.4. Neither difference approached a standard .05 confidence level. The median NPRs for survey respondents were 35 on reading and 30 on math. This

Another explanation would be simple response bias. The respondents knew we were evaluating the program and felt we were looking for positive results. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing or measuring that possibility.

Other explanations may be that the attrition rate merely reflects the high degree of family residential mobility. We know that of the 86 nongraduating students who left over the summer, 40 enrolled in MPS schools in September. We also know that some moved out of the MPS district. Others became ineligible for the Choice Program due to changes in income status. We are investigating those who are still unaccounted for.

Finally, it could be possible that because parents were uncertain whether the program would continue, when an alternative permanent arrangement became available, they took it. Uncertainty was the leading factor that parents disliked about the Choice Program. Again, a multi-year evaluation is needed to provide more definitive answers.

Summary

Preliminary outcomes after the first year of the Choice Program were mixed. Achievement test scores did not register dramatic gains and the Choice students remained approximately equal to low-income students in MPS (higher on reading, slightly lower on math). Based on individual changes in national percentile rankings, approximately as many Choice students gained as declined. All these results are based on a small number of students.

Student attendance, parental attitudes toward schools, opinions of the Choice program, and parental involvement were all positive. Attendance was slightly higher than the average elementary school attendance in MPS. Parental attitudes towards their schools and education of their children were much more positive than their evaluations of their prior public schools. This shift occurred in every category (teachers, principals, instruction, discipline, etc.). When parents of students who did not finish the year in a Choice school were included, the results were similar, although not as pronounced. Similarly, parental involvement, which was more frequent than for the average MPS parent in prior schools, was even greater for most activities in the private schools.

Attrition appears to be high. During the school year, most students leaving the program were from Juanita Virgil Academy, which closed in February 1991. The educational experience of Juanita Virgil students was undoubtedly negative. But a considerable number of students who completed the school year in the Choice schools did not re-enroll in Choice schools in September 1991. Our report expresses uncertainty as to why. It is possible that problems in the schools, especially modest

is almost identical to the median scores (34 reading, 30 math) reported in Table 18. In addition, the sample of 1991 respondents was even less well off than those who responded to the first survey. For example, on the first survey, 57 percent of the respondents were receiving AFDC or public assistance. That compares with 63 percent for respondents in the second survey.

achievement gains could have been a factor. That, however, is at odds with survey results that indicate parent satisfaction with child learning. It is possible that this attrition reflects the uncertainty of the program's future due to legal challenges.

V. LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are premised on the general recommendation that the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program should be continued in a form similar to the current one for enough years to complete a comprehensive evaluation. Although all of the suggestions offered for consideration are subject to legislative change, some of the changes fit within the current legislation and are merely formalizing administrative practices developed during the first year, or could be added as new administrative rules. We first discuss those changes that would require some redrafting of the original statute.

Legislative Changes

A basic issue in this program is the idea of accountability. Put simply, there are two approaches to educational accountability. One is state and district regulated accountability in which legally responsible authorities require schools and/or districts to adhere to specified practices, standards, and reporting of outcome measures. The other is that parents can best exercise accountability and determine the adequacy of educational outcomes by making free choices among schools. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program was premised on the latter theory. Although we recommend for consideration modest additional regulation, this should not be interpreted as a suggestion that the legislature abandon parental accountability as the main principle of this program.

The operation and closing of Juanita Virgil Academy was the most troublesome aspect of the first year of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. There are those who would argue that the failure of that school is to be expected in a market system of education. Whether one believes that expectation outweighs the fact that approximately 150 children essentially lost a year's education is a value issue that we cannot resolve. Whatever one's values are, the price was high for those families involved.

We believe that very simple regulations requiring a formal governance structure, financial reporting, and further accountability in terms of outcomes would greatly reduce the likelihood that schools would close mid-year. These regulations are premised on the theory that parental choice remains the mechanism of accountability. The additional regulations are meant to provide enhanced information with which parents can make choices and exercise that accountability.

We recommend three sets of provisions for certifying new private schools in the Choice Program. The ideas for these regulations came from our case studies of the current Choice schools. All of the six Choice schools currently in the program

meet almost all of these suggested requirements; Juanita Virgil did not meet any of them.

Governance. All schools participating in the Parental Choice Program should have a formal governance structure including a board of directors (school board). The board can be structured by the schools as they see fit, but must include a specified and formal process for selection and terms of members. It should also include at least some members who have no proprietary interest in the school. It should also include parents. We also recommend that the school have formal bylaws. The board should have the authority to promulgate and amend the bylaws and establish whatever additional governing structure is seen as appropriate. Board meetings should be held in accordance with state open meeting laws.

Financial Reporting. All schools participating in the Parental Choice Program must conduct an annual financial audit which meets the accounting standards for private, nonprofit organizations. The report should be a matter of public record and be filed annually with the Department of Public Instruction.

Added Accountability. Schools should be required to meet all current and future state *outcome* requirements, including statewide tests, dropout reporting, and a school report card when it is required.

Review Accountability Standards. We recommend that the legislature review the current standards of accountability as specified in the statute. At present, schools may meet any one of four standards (attendance, achievement, grade advancement, or parental involvement). We suggest that the schools meet more than one of these standards. We also suggest flexibility in the standards based on the level of the school. For example, 90 percent attendance is adequate for elementary schools, but would be very high for high schools, especially alternative high schools. (MPS high schools, including specialty high schools average 82 percent attendance.)

Program Information. To facilitate parent knowledge of the program and the Choice schools, we suggest that the legislature consider making information on the Choice Program available through the extensive school selection process in MPS. Specifically, information on the Choice Program and schools should be displayed along with other MPS specialty school and program options, and the Chapter 220 program. If this is not acceptable, at a minimum, the schools should be allowed to display brochures in the pupil assignment and school information rooms at MPS headquarters. MPS should not bear any costs or be held accountable in any way for the private schools.

Selection Procedures. Currently the statutes require schools to collect applications through June 30, and then apply random selection if there are more applications than slots. This means that schools are not able to guarantee parents a position for a

new student until after June 30. In contrast, assignments are made in MPS in the early spring. To avoid this problem, it may be advisable to have an "early enrollment" period (ending, for example, on March 31) that avoids random assignment for a portion of the seats anticipated in a school.

Explicit language could be added to the statute forbidding schools from using achievement or behavioral records or information in making their enrollment decisions. The remaining seats would follow the existing timetable, but the restrictions on admission criteria would continue to apply. Schools would, however, be allowed to enroll students up to one week prior to the first class day if positions remained open and total Choice enrollment did not exceed the 49 percent limit. In addition to the current monitoring of this process by the Department of Public Instruction, the school board for each school should be required to certify that the procedures were followed.

Administrative Changes

Selection. A series of administrative decisions concerning selection that were made during the first year should be added to the formal administrative rules. For example, oversubscription was defined by grade, not by a school as a whole. In addition, siblings of already admitted Choice students were not required to be subject to the random selection process. Finally, students admitted in one year were automatically readmitted, with the only condition being that their household income had not gone above the required limit. Finally, waiting lists were established in oversubscribed schools based on the random selection process.

Transportation. Presently schools must choose either to provide busing, for which the school is reimbursed, or parents must provide transportation, for which the parents are reimbursed at the end of the year. There are numerous problems with these arrangements. First, forcing all students into one or the other of these patterns does not meet varying family needs. Some families can provide private (or public) transportation, some cannot. Reimbursement for private transportation also causes financial hardships because it comes in one payment at the end of the year. Semester payments would improve this situation. Finally, the paucity and expense of yellow buses makes for very long bus rides for some, and a short instructional day. This is a more difficult problem to solve, but alternative arrangements should be analyzed.

Summer School. One of the schools was partially reimbursed for Choice students attending summer school. That practice should be added to the rules, along with a simplified method of computing reimbursement.

Reporting. Schools should be explicitly required to submit the names, grade, gender, and race of Choice students following the third-Friday counts in September and January. For administrative and evaluation purposes, they should also be

required to submit a similar list following the end of the school year. It would also be very helpful for administrative and evaluation purposes if the schools would provide the reason a student left the school during the year and the number of graduates from the school at the end of the year. If the information is available, a similar list would be useful of students who completed the year, did not graduate, but did not return to the schools the next year.

Other Issues

Learning Disabled and Emotionally Disturbed Students. Several schools currently put in their school literature that they are not equipped to teach learning disabled (LD) or emotionally disturbed (ED) students. Because it is not always easy to detect these conditions in students, the schools end up working with more LD and ED students than their literature indicates. None of the current Choice schools, as presently configured, however, can adequately teach ED students and they would not be able to teach large numbers of LD students effectively. The legislature may wish to consider a higher per member payment if schools are willing to accept LD students and applicable state standards. Differential reimbursement could be computed based on the costs of providing public school education for LD students.

Second-Semester Admission. The legislature may also wish to consider whether students should be allowed to enter the program during the year, or at the beginning of the second semester. All other rules would apply. If the school was filled, but students have left, providing new openings, new positions would have to be offered first to those on school waiting lists.

Administrative Costs. The Choice schools report considerable added administrative costs for the program. The legislature may wish to study this problem over the current school year for future consideration in adjusting payments to cover these costs.

Expansion of the Program. Currently, limitation of the total students enrolled to one percent of the MPS enrollment is not a constraint, and thus we recommend no changes. We also do not recommend considering other cities until the legal issues are decided. In January, we will conduct a study of potential slots in existing Choice schools and other schools that would qualify. We will try to determine what factors, including levels of tuition, building capacity, and admissions practices might be preventing them from entering the program. There should be considerably more information in next year's report on the issue of program size.

Table 1. Factors Affecting Decisions To Participate
In Choice Program, 1990 (Percentages)

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	(N)
Educational Quality in Chosen School	89	8	2	1	(148)
Discipline in Chosen School	81	17	3	0	(164)
General Atmosphere in Chosen School	75	22	1	1	(145)
Financial Considerations	68	26	3	2	(144)
Frustration With Public Schools	66	17	11	7	(145)
Special Programs in Chosen Schools	62	27	4	6	(146)
Location of Chosen School	59	21	17	3	(146)
Other Children in Chosen School	36	30	15	19	(146)

Question: "Please rate all of the following issues and their importance in your decision to participate in the Choice Program."

EDUC
3/5/92
2-45

Table 2. Satisfaction With Information on Private School Choice, 1990 (Percentages)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	(N)*
Amount Information on Choice Program	37	48	11	3	(145)
Accuracy Information on Choice Program	29	52	14	5	(146)
Amount Information on Private Schools	23	48	23	6	(146)
Accuracy Information on Private Schools	26	48	21	5	(141)
Assistance From School You Applied To	48	36	11	6	(132)
Assistance From Dept. of Public Instruction in Madison	17	42	31	10	(97)

Question: "How satisfied were you with the following?" (Please circle one number or not applicable)

* N's do not include not applicable or missing data

EDUC
3/5/92
2-46

Table 3. Household Income (Percentages)

	<u>Choice Parents</u>	<u>MPS Parents</u>	<u>MPS Low-Income Parents</u>
\$0 - \$2999	10	8	12
\$3000-\$4999	5	5	7
\$5000-\$7499	22	11	17
\$7500-\$9999	18	12	17
\$10000-\$14999	23	12	18
\$15000-\$19999	6	9	11
\$20000-\$24999	8	9	7
\$25000-\$34999	7	15	7
\$35000-\$49999	0	13	3
\$50000 and over	0	8	0
(N)	(146)	(1513)	(880)

Question: "What is your family/household income range for one year?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-47

Table 4. Employment, Public Assistance Status
(Percentages)

	Mother/ Female Guardian			Father/ Male Guardian		
	Yes	No	(N)	Yes	No	(N)
<u>CHOICE PARENTS</u>						
Employed Full Time	42	58	(137)	72	28	(87)
Employed Part Time	24	76	(129)	13	87	(69)
Receiving Unemployment Comp.	9	91	(130)	9	91	(82)
Receiving AFDC or General Assistance	57	43	(143)	5	95	(82)
<u>MPS PARENTS</u>						
Employed Full Time	44	56	(1444)	74	26	(1139)
Employed Part Time	27	73	(1140)	10	90	(733)
Receiving Unemployment Comp.	3	97	(1401)	5	95	(1049)
Receiving AFDC or General Assistance	39	61	(1473)	11	89	(1020)
<u>MPS LOW-INCOME PARENTS ONLY</u>						
Employed Full Time	33	67	(842)	59	41	(569)
Employed Part Time	22	78	(692)	11	89	(390)
Receiving Unemployment Comp.	3	97	(799)	5	95	(514)
Receiving AFDC or General Assistance	59	41	(863)	19	81	(490)

EDUC
3/5/82
2-48

Table 5. Parent Education (Percentages)

	<u>8th</u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>H.S.</u>	<u>G.E.D.</u>	<u>H.S.</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>College</u>	<u>College</u> <u>Grad</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>Post</u> <u>Grad</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<u>CHOICE PARENTS</u>								
Mother/Female Guardian	3	12	9	22	49	5	1	(146)
Father/ Male Guardian	8	14	10	25	33	7	2	(98)
<u>MPS PARENTS</u>								
Mother/Female Guardian	8	18	7	28	29	6	5	(1525)
Father/Male Guardian	9	16	8	26	27	9	6	(1127)
<u>MPS LOW-INCOME PARENTS ONLY</u>								
Mother/Female Guardian	12	25	9	25	26	3	1	(881)
Father/Male Guardian	15	22	9	25	21	6	2	(535)

EDUC
3/5/92
2-49

Table 6. Parent Age (Percentages).

	<u>20 or Less</u>	<u>21-25</u>	<u>26-30</u>	<u>31-35</u>	<u>36-40</u>	<u>40+</u>	<u>Mean Years</u>	<u>(N)</u>
<u>CHOICE PARENTS</u>								
Mother/Female Guardian	0	9	24	40	19	9	33.2	(141)
Father/ Male Guardian	4	28	32	32	17	19	35.1	(96)
<u>MPS PARENTS</u>								
Mother/Female Guardian	1	4	20	30	25	21	35.7	(1537)
Father/Male Guardian	0	2	13	25	26	34	38.4	(1153)
<u>MPS LOW-INCOME PARENTS ONLY</u>								
Mother/Female Guardian	0	6	25	31	20	17	34.6	(887)
Father/Male Guardian	0	2	17	20	23	29	37.6	(566)

EDUC
3/5/92
2-50

Table 7. Choice and MPS Parent Satisfaction With
Prior (Public) School (Percentages)

CHOICE PARENTS, 1990

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	(N)*
Textbooks	19	65	11	5	(125)
Location of School	35	38	13	13	(136)
Opportunities For Parent Involvement	21	55	16	8	(131)
Teacher's Performance	31	37	21	13	(135)
Program of Instruction	20	47	26	8	(132)
Principal's Performance	27	34	27	12	(133)
Amount Child Learned	24	27	31	18	(136)
Discipline in the School	17	32	35	17	(133)

MPS PARENTS, 1991

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	(N)*
Textbooks	29	63	6	1	(1419)
Location of School	41	44	10	5	(1511)
Opportunities For Parent Involvement	36	54	8	3	(1504)
Teacher's Performance	40	48	9	3	(1548)
Program of Instruction	33	56	9	3	(1513)
Principal's Performance	37	48	9	5	(1482)
Amount Child Learned	36	47	13	4	(1551)
Discipline in the School	27	48	17	8	(1519)

Question: "How satisfied were you with the following in last year's school?"
(Please circle one number or don't know on each line)

EDUC
3/5/92
2-51

Table 8. Choice And MPS Parent Grades For Prior Public Schools

	<u>Choice Parents Grade For Prior (Public) School, 1990</u>	<u>MPS Parents Grade For Public Schools, 1991</u>	<u>MPS Low-Income Parents Grade For Public Schools, 1991</u>	<u>Choice Parents Grade For Private Schools, 1991</u>
A	14%	27%	26%	44%
B	18%	39%	39%	41%
C	32%	22%	24%	15%
D	24%	8%	8%	0
F	14%	3%	3%	1%
Avg. Grade	2.1	2.9	2.8	3.3
(N)	(139)	(1591)	(932)	(103)

Question: "What overall grade would you give to your child's school (last/this past) year?"

EDUC
3/5/82
2-5.2

Table 9. Choice and MPS Parents Frequency of Being Contacted By Their Schools (percentages).

CHOICE PARENTS, PRIOR (PUBLIC) SCHOOL 1990

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	38	35	17	10	(132)
Child's Behavior	36	28	22	14	(134)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	59	18	15	9	(135)
Participating In Fund Raising	46	35	11	7	(134)

MPS PARENTS, 1991

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	49	30	14	7	(1591)
Child's Behavior	48	29	12	11	(1600)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	64	23	8	5	(1581)
Participating In Fund Raising	60	28	8	4	(1581)

CHOICE PARENTS, PRIVATE SCHOOL 1991

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	33	38	15	14	(102)
Child's Behavior	39	31	16	14	(104)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	28	34	24	15	(101)
Participating In Fund Raising	16	43	30	12	(102)

Question: "During your child's last year in school, how many times, not counting report cards, did someone at your school contact you about the following?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-53

Table 10. Choice and MPS Parents Frequency of Contacting Their Schools (Percentages)

<u>CHOICE PARENTS, PRIOR (PUBLIC) SCHOOL, 1990</u>					
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	13	27	34	27	(134)
Class Your Child Took	37	29	19	14	(134)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	46	26	15	13	(133)
Participating In Fund Raising	31	45	16	7	(134)
Providing Information For School Records	24	47	15	14	(131)
Child's Behavior	26	25	21	29	(132)
Helping In The Classroom	52	27	15	6	(134)
<u>MPS PARENTS, 1991</u>					
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	24	33	25	19	(1596)
Class Your Child Took	45	36	11	7	(1568)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	63	21	7	9	(1579)
Participating In Fund Raising	54	32	9	4	(1577)
Providing Information For School Records	32	45	16	7	(1568)
Child's Behavior	36	32	17	16	(1588)
Helping In The Classroom	68	20	5	7	(1584)
<u>CHOICE PARENTS, PRIVATE SCHOOL, 1991</u>					
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	20	31	24	26	(105)
Class Your Child Took	34	31	23	12	(103)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	27	34	15	24	(103)
Participating In Fund Raising	14	42	31	13	(102)
Providing Information For School Records	24	49	22	6	(101)
Child's Behavior	24	44	14	17	(104)
Helping In The Classroom	40	38	13	10	(103)

Question: "During your child's last year in school, how many times did you (or someone in your household) contact the school about the following?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-54

Table 11. Parental Involvement, Choice and MPS Parents
(Percentages)

<u>CHOICE PARENTS, PRIOR (PUBLIC) SCHOOL, 1990</u>			
	Yes	No	(N)
Attend Parent/Teacher Conference	92	8	(133)
Belong To A Parent/Teacher Organization	22	78	(133)
Attend Meetings Of Parent/Teacher Organization	52	48	(132)
Take Part In Activities Of Parent/Teacher Organization	51	49	(133)
Belong To Other Organizations Dealing With School Matters	22	78	(133)
<u>MPS PARENTS, 1991</u>			
	Yes	No	(N)
Attend Parent/Teacher Conference	84	16	(1593)
Belong To A Parent/Teacher Organization	21	79	(1579)
Attend Meetings Of Parent/Teacher Organization	64	36	(1587)
Take Part In Activities Of Parent/Teacher Organization	35	65	(1585)
Belong To Other Organizations Dealing With School Matters	16	84	(1573)
<u>CHOICE PARENTS, PRIVATE SCHOOL, 1991</u>			
	Yes	No	(N)
Attend Parent/Teacher Conference	98	2	(105)
Belong To A Parent/Teacher Organization	20	80	(104)
Attend Meetings Of Parent/Teacher Organization	74	26	(104)
Take Part In Activities Of Parent/Teacher Organization	63	37	(104)
Belong To Other Organizations Dealing With School Matters	24	76	(104)

Question: "Did you and your spouse/partner do any of the following at your child's public school last year?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-55

Table 12. Parents Participation In Educational Activities, 1990 (Percentages)

CHOICE PARENTS, PRIOR (PUBLIC) SCHOOL, 1990

	Times/Week				(N)
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	
Help With Child's Homework	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Read With Or To Your Child	6	20	42	31	(144)
Work On Arithmetic Or Math	5	24	40	31	(143)
Work On Penmanship Or Writing	9	31	31	29	(144)
Watch Educational Program On T.V. With Your Child	15	40	29	17	(143)
Participate Together In Sports Activities	25	36	26	13	(142)

MPS PARENTS, PUBLIC SCHOOL 1991

	Times/Week				(N)
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	
Help With Child's Homework	13	26	24	37	
Read With Or To Your Child	20	26	25	29	(1596)
Work On Arithmetic Or Math	20	30	23	27	(1587)
Work On Penmanship Or Writing	33	29	19	20	(1575)
Watch Educational Program On T.V. With Your Child	23	39	20	18	(1603)
Participate Together In Sports Activities	30	36	17	18	(1577)

CHOICE PARENTS, PRIVATE SCHOOL 1991

	Times/Week				(N)
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	
Help With Child's Homework	3	20	32	45	(105)
Read With Or To Your Child	9	29	29	34	(105)
Work On Arithmetic Or Math	6	31	30	34	(104)
Work On Penmanship Or Writing	15	35	27	23	(104)
Watch Educational Program On T.V. With Your Child	15	55	19	11	(104)
Participate Together In Sports Activities	25	48	13	14	(104)

Question: "How many times in a normal week did you participate in the following activities with your child?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-56

Table 13. Importance of Education Compared To Other Goals (Percentages).

	Education More Important	Education As Important	Education Less Important	(N)
<u>CHOICE FAMILIES, 1990</u>				
Having A Good Job	53	46	1	(149)
Having Enough Money In The Family	41	59	1	(148)
Maintaining Religion/Faith	22	61	17	(148)
Maintaining Family Ethnic Tradition	35	60	5	(148)
Having A Good Place To Live	33	64	3	(148)
<u>MPS FAMILIES, 1991</u>				
Having A Good Job	47	49	2	(1582)
Having Enough Money In The Family	41	54	5	(1560)
Maintaining Religion/Faith	33	54	12	(1553)
Maintaining Family Ethnic Tradition	42	51	7	(1549)
Having A Good Place To Live	34	60	6	(1566)

Question: "How would you rate the importance of education in your family compared to other goals?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-57

Table 14. Prior Achievement Test Scores (1990), Last Test Only*

	<u>CHOICE</u> <u>STUDENTS</u>		<u>MPS STUDENTS</u>		<u>LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Percent of Students At Or Above 50th National Percentile	25.8%	35.9%	34.8%	42.8%	27.2%	36.2%
Median National Percentile	30	33	37	42	32	37
Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)	39.3	41.1	43.4	45.8	40.1	42.3
Standard Deviation NCE	16.2	19.3	18.5	20.3	17.0	19.2
(N Tests)	(171)	(167)	(3231)	(3130)	(2136)	(2117)

* Data includes the last Iowa Test of Basic Skills taken by students through May 1990 in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Statistics based on the latest test in the student's file.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-58

Table 15. Choice School Teacher Characteristics.*

	<u>Wisconsin</u>	<u>Other States</u>	<u>Specialty</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>(N)</u>				
Certification	62%	8%	6%	24%	(50)				
	<u>Less Than 1 Year**</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5-9</u>	<u>10 or more</u>	<u>Mean Years</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Seniority	14%	22%	18%	20%	4%	8%	12%	4.2	(50)
Gender:	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>			<u>(N)</u>				
	88%	12%			(58)				
Race:	<u>African American</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>			<u>(N)</u>			
	15%	13%	72%			(54)			

* Based on interviews and observation. A small number of teachers are missing.

** Began teaching at a school after 9/1/90. For mean year computations seniority = 1 year.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-59

Table 16. Classroom Observations, All Schools (Percentages).

CHILDREN'S INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

	<u>None of the Time</u>	<u>Less than Half of the Time</u>	<u>Approx. Half of the Time</u>	<u>More than Half of the Time</u>	<u>All period</u>
Children Were					
--listening to teacher	12	35	42	11	0
--watching teacher demonstrate	67	32	2	0	0
--engaged in hands-on work with the teacher	51	39	9	0	2
--engaged in discussion	56	33	9	2	0
--answering questions	25	58	16	2	0
--asking questions	60	39	2	0	0
--engaged in other academic activities	44	33	18	2	4
--engaged in other non academic activities	12	63	18	7	0
--taking a test	88	9	2	2	0
--reading	67	18	14	0	2
--doing seat work	46	26	16	11	2
--oral drill	60	21	18	2	0
--composing written work	75	19	5	0	0
--art or music	75	14	5	2	4

CHILDREN'S SUMMARY ACTIVITY

	<u>None of the Time</u>	<u>Less than Half of the Time</u>	<u>Approx. Half of the Time</u>	<u>More than Half of the Time</u>	<u>All period</u>
Children Were					
--on task	0	11	12	40	37
--being disciplined	14	68	18	0	0

EDUC
3/5/92
2-60

TEACHER'S ACTIVITY

	<u>None of the Time</u>	<u>Less than Half of the Time</u>	<u>Approx. Half of the Time</u>	<u>More than Half of the Time</u>	<u>All period</u>
Teachers Were					
--lecturing, group instruction	14	42	33	9	2
--asking closed questions	30	54	12	4	0
--asking open questions	42	58	0	0	0
--providing feedback	54	39	4	4	0
--engaged in discussion	44	46	5	5	0
--monitoring students' work	14	42	37	5	2
--reviewing students' completed work	60	35	48	2	0
--telling students to stop doing something/ disciplining	16	79	4	2	0

LESSON CONTENT

	<u>None of the Time</u>	<u>Less than Half of the Time</u>	<u>Approx. Half of the Time</u>	<u>More than Half of the Time</u>	<u>All period</u>
Focused on facts	35	37	18	7	4
Focused on skills	12	26	32	25	5
Focused on understanding	25	37	25	11	4
Was comprehended by students	26	7	23	19	25

MATERIALS

	<u>None of the Time</u>	<u>Less than Half of the Time</u>	<u>Approx. Half of the Time</u>	<u>More than Half of the Time</u>	<u>All period</u>
Texts or workbooks	40	21	11	23	5
Other books	84	14	2	0	0
Chalk board	61	26	7	5	0
AV	86	5	5	3	0
Manipulatives	56	32	11	2	0
Other materials	44	28	16	5	7

EDUC
3/5/92
2-61

INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

	<u>None of the Time</u>	<u>Less than Half of the Time</u>	<u>Approx. Half of the Time</u>	<u>More than Half of the Time</u>	<u>All period</u>
Whole class	7	11	28	23	32
Groups	51	26	12	5	5
Individual	35	37	21	7	0
Time spent on instruction	26	25	12	18	19

CLASSROOMS

Cleanliness	<u>Dirty</u> 2	<u>Fairly Dirty</u> 9	<u>Fairly Clean</u> 28	<u>Clean</u> 61
Physical Order	<u>Chaotic</u> 4	<u>Somewhat Chaotic</u> 9	<u>Fairly Orderly</u> 41	<u>Very Orderly</u> 47
Social Order	12	8	52	29
Sound Level	<u>Quiet</u> 26	<u>Fairly Quiet</u> 36	<u>Fairly Noisy</u> 22	<u>Noisy</u> 16

EDUC
3/5/92
2-62

Table 17. Choice Grades 7 and 8 and Grades 3 To 6
Student Survey (Percentages)

	<u>7 AND 8 GRADE</u> <u>STUDENTS</u>		<u>3-6 GRADE</u> <u>STUDENTS</u>	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1. My school gives students a good education.	83	10	80	6
2. I trust most of the people at my school.	40	53	39	43
3. Fighting is a problem at my school.	36	39	40	37
4. In my school, teachers expect students to do their best all the time.	94	7	89	8
5. I am satisfied with how I am doing at my school.	48	45	57	34
6. My teachers plan fun activities for us to do.	33	63	63	28
7. Many teachers at my school don't care about students.	3	87	26	61
8. There are places in my school I don't go because I am afraid of other students.	10	90	7	89
9. I like my teachers.	65	19	62	30
10. My teachers are usually fair to me.	81	13	62	32
11. My teachers usually tell me how to correct the mistakes in my work.	83	17	87	11
12. My teachers usually tell us ahead of time what we are going to be learning about in class.	42	39	79	11
13. Students in my school usually do their homework.	48	42	36	40
14. Most of the students pay attention to the teacher.	48	39	45	36
15. My teachers check and return my homework.	87	10	80	15
16. The principle has visited my classroom.	97	0	89	2
17. When I have a problem in class, I can talk to the principal.	45	45	43	36

EDUC
3/5/92
2-63

	<u>7 AND 8 GRADE</u>		<u>3-6 GRADE</u>	
	<u>STUDENTS</u>		<u>STUDENTS</u>	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
18. Our principle does a good job of running this school.	55	29	70	17
19. School rules are fair.	39	55	42	49
20. Teachers treat girls the same as boys.	48	45	26	64
21. My school spends too much time teaching reading and math.	42	55	36	51
22. My school spends too much time teaching social studies and science.	26	68	30	61
23. My school spends too much time teaching subjects like music and art.	7	79	15	76
24. If I have a personal problem, there is someone at school that I can talk to.	53	43	61	30
25. My parents expect me to get good grades in school.	97	3	98	2
26. My parents have met and talked with my teachers.	84	16	83	11
27. Teachers in my school put too much pressure on students to get good grades.	42	48	33	56
28. This school provides the type of courses I am most interested in.	29	58	NA	NA
29. This school makes it easy to participate in outside activities like sports and clubs.	26	65	NA	NA
30. Alcohol use is a problem at this school.	3	94	NA	NA
31. Drug use is a problem at this school.	0	97	NA	NA
32. My mom and dad talk to me everyday about school.	52	45	60	34
33. My mom and dad help me often with my schoolwork.	45	52	82	17

(N=31)

(N=54)

Question: FOR EACH STATEMENT PLEASE FILL IN ONE CIRCLE TO SHOW IF YOU "AGREE," "DISAGREE" OR "DO NOT KNOW."

EDUC
3/5/92
2-64

Table 18. Achievement Test Scores, 1991.

	<u>CHOICE</u> <u>STUDENTS</u>		<u>ALL</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>		<u>LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS*</u>	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Percent of Students At Or Above 50th National Percentile	27.6%	27.5%	32.3%	40.0%	24.9%	33.4%
Median National Percentile	34	30	35	40	31	35
Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)	41.6	39.1	42.0	45.2	38.8	42.0
Standard Deviation NCE	17.0	19.3	17.8	20.0	15.9	18.2
(N Tests)	(188)	(196)	(1967)	(1957)	(1433)	(1419)

* Low-income students qualify for free or reduced-free lunch.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-65

Table 19. Choice Parent Satisfaction With
Choice Private School (Percentages)

CHOICE PARENTS, 1991

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	(N)
Textbooks	54	42	2	2	(100)
Location of School	57	34	3	6	(105)
Opportunities For Parent Involvement	62	36	1	1	(103)
Teacher's Performance	67	27	3	3	(104)
Program of Instruction	62	32	4	2	(103)
Principal's Performance	55	36	4	5	(101)
Amount Child Learned	64	28	5	3	(104)
Discipline in the School	52	39	3	6	(105)

Question: "How satisfied were you with the following in last year's school?"
(Please circle one number or don't know on each line)

ED 3 e
3/5/82
2-66

Table 20. Frequent Open-End Responses of Choice Parents Concerning the Choice Program and Choice Schools, 1991 (Percentages)

	WHY CONTINUE IN THE CHOICE PROGRAM?	LIKE ABOUT CHOICE PROGRAM?	DISLIKE ABOUT CHOICE PROGRAM?
Educational Quality of the School	44	46	12
Other Qualities of the Schools	16	22	32
Child Specific Qualities of Choice Schools	31	8	0
Want Private Education, But Cannot Afford It	5	11	0
Tuition, Fund Raising, Bad Experience, Program Not Continuing, Selection Process	0	0	38
(N-Total Responses)	(64)	(145)	(50)

Question: "Why (or why not) do you plan to continue in the private school choice program?"

Key:

Educational Qualities include references to "better educational quality", programs, class size, individual attention, etc.

Other Qualities include references to values, parental involvement, discipline, teachers, etc.

Child Specific Qualities include references to better child performance, better opportunities, need for special attention, etc.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-67

APPENDIX A ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORE MEASURES

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is a norm-referenced achievement test. All tests are multiple choice, and in most grades are taken by a student reading from a test booklet. In some of the earlier grades, teachers ask the items orally. A number of measures can be derived from the test. All are related and begin with a simple raw score (the number correct on a test or subtest). That score is then transformed in a number of different ways. The most commonly referred to measures are national percentile rankings and grade equivalents. We also rely on normal curve equivalents in this report.

National percentiles refer to the placement of a student on the test relative to a national sample of students. Percentiles range from 1 to 99, with the national median being 50. Because national percentiles are not integer-level measures, they cannot be averaged or subtracted to arrive at gain scores. Some schools use *grade equivalents* as a measure. Grade equivalents do not indicate where a student ranks relative to an a priori standard of what a student should know at a certain grade. They are a relative measure directly analogous to national percentiles. When people refer to being "at grade level" in a subject, that is the equivalent of being at or above the 50th national percentile. It means precisely that the student is at or above where the median student in the national reference group ranked on the test for that grade.

Normal curve equivalents (NCE) are a different transformation that has the advantage of being an integer-level measure. Normal curve equivalents can be manipulated arithmetically. The distribution of NCEs is flatter than national percentiles. What this means is that for national percentiles, many students fall in the middle of distribution, near the median. This makes the measure of the percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile sensitive to slight fluctuations in the number of items answered correctly. Thus schools or districts that may do slightly better or worse on a test on average can show large changes in the percent at or above the median. The national percentile measure is the main measure reported by the Milwaukee Public School System, so we report it along with normal curve equivalents. When large enough samples of students are available in subsequent years, gain scores for individual students will be constructed using normal curve equivalents and will be the most reliable measure of achievement based on test score results.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-68

Table A1. Survey Sample Sizes and Response Rates.

	<u>CHOICE</u> <u>PARENTS,</u> <u>1990</u>	<u>MPS PARENTS,</u> <u>1991</u>	<u>CHOICE</u> <u>PARENTS,</u> <u>1991</u>
Surveys Mailed	360	5473	359
Surveys Returned	160	1623	139
Surveys Not Delivered	31	65	33
Response Rate Based On Delivered Surveys	48.6%	30.0%	42.6%

EDUC
3/5/92
2-69

APPENDIX B

Table B1. Prior Achievement Test Scores (1990), All Tests*

	<u>CHOICE</u> <u>STUDENTS</u>		<u>MPS STUDENTS</u>		<u>LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Percent of Students At Or Above 50th National Percentile	28.2%	34.2%	36.9%	43.4%	30.8%	37.5%
Median National Percentile	33	34	38	43	38	38
Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)	41.3	41.8	44.0	46.3	41.4	43.3
Standard Deviation NCE	15.7	18.3	18.0	19.8	16.9	18.6
(N Tests)	(436)	(429)	(8655)	(8582)	(6027)	(5975)

* Data includes all Iowa Tests of Basic Skills taken by students through May, 1990 in the Milwaukee Public School system. Statistics are based on all test records in student's file.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-70

Table B2. Prior Achievement Test Scores (1990), MPS Students,
Last Test Only, By Income Level*

	<u>HIGH-INCOME MPS</u> <u>STUDENTS</u>		<u>LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Percent of Students At Or Above 50th National Percentile	51.6%	57.1%	27.2%	36.2%
Median National Percentile	51	57	32	37
Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)	50.6	53.3	40.1	42.3
Standard Deviation NCE	19.7	20.5	17.0	19.2
(N Tests)	(977)	(970)	(2136)	(2117)

* Data includes the last Iowa Test of Basic Skills taken by students through May 1990 in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Statistics based on the latest test in the student's file. High-income students do not qualify for free or reduced-free lunch, low-income students do.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-71

Table B3. Prior Achievement Test Scores, (1990),
MPS Students, All Tests, By Income Level*

	<u>NON-LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>		<u>LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Percent of Students At Or Above 50th National Percentile	51.8%	57.6%	30.8%	37.5%
Median National Percentile	51	57	38	38
Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)	50.5	53.6	41.4	43.3
Standard Deviation NCE	18.9	20.6	16.9	18.6
(N Tests)	(2518)	(2498)	(6027)	(5975)

* Low-income students qualify for free or reduced-free lunch.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-72

Table B4. Achievement Test Scores, 1991,
MPS Students, By Income Level*

	<u>NON-LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>		<u>LOW-INCOME</u> <u>MPS STUDENTS</u>	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Percent of Students At Or Above 50th National Percentile	53.2%	58.4%	24.9%	33.4%
Median National Percentile	51.5	60	31	35
Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)	51.0	54.0	38.8	42.0
Standard Deviation NCE	19.9	22.1	15.9	18.2
(N Tests)	(500)	(1419)	(1433)	(1419)

* Non-low-income students do not qualify for free or reduced-free lunch, low-income students do.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-73

APPENDIX C

**Table C1. Choice and MPS Parent Satisfaction With
Schools, 1991, Including Parents of Students No Longer
In Choice Schools (Percentages)**

CHOICE PARENTS, 1990

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	(N)*
Textbooks	46	38	5	11	(131)
Location of School	49	33	5	13	(137)
Opportunities For Parent Involvement	55	32	5	8	(132)
Teacher's Performance	60	27	4	9	(136)
Program of Instruction	53	30	8	9	(135)
Principal's Performance	48	31	7	14	(133)
Amount Child Learned	56	29	7	9	(135)
Discipline in the School	47	33	5	15	(137)

Question: "How satisfied were you with the following in last year's school?"
(Please circle one number or don't know on each line)

EDUC
3/5/92
2-74

Table C2. Choice Parents Frequency of Being Contacted By Their Schools, 1991, Including Parents of Students No Longer In Choice Schools (percentages).

CHOICE PARENTS, PRIOR (PUBLIC) SCHOOL 1990

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	40	34	15	11	(133)
Child's Behavior	39	33	17	11	(136)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	37	31	19	13	(133)
Participating In Fund Raising	20	43	25	12	(134)

Question: "During your child's last year in school, how many times, not counting report cards, did someone at your school contact you about the following?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-75

**Table C3. Choice and MPS Parents Frequency of Contacting
Their Schools, 1991, Including Parents
of Students No Longer In Choice Schools (Percentages)**

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	<u>(N)</u>
Child's Academic Performance	19	26	25	30	(136)
Class Your Child Took	29	29	23	19	(133)
Doing Volunteer Work For The School	28	34	13	25	(134)
Participating In Fund Raising	17	39	30	14	(132)
Providing Information For School Records	22	46	22	6	(132)
Child's Behavior	25	37	18	20	(134)
Helping In The Classroom	40	35	12	13	(134)

Question: "During your child's last year in school, how many times did you (or someone in your household) contact the school about the following?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-76

Table C4. Choice Parents Parental Involvement, 1991,
Including Parents of Students No Longer In Choice Schools
(Percentages)

	Yes	No	(N)
Attend Parent/Teacher Conference	96	4	(137)
Belong To A Parent/Teacher Organization	27	73	(136)
Attend Meetings Of Parent/Teacher Organization	76	24	(136)
Take Part In Activities Of Parent/Teacher Organization	62	38	(136)
Belong To Other Organizations Dealing With School Matters	26	74	(136)

Question: "Did you and your spouse/partner do any of the following at your child's public school last year?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-77

**Table C5. Parents Participation In Educational Activities, 1991,
Including Parents of Students No Longer In Choice Schools
(Percentages)**

	Times/Week				(N)
	<u>0</u>	<u>1-2</u>	<u>3-4</u>	<u>5 or more</u>	
Help With Child's Homework	3	17	31	48	(137)
Read With Or To Your Child	9	25	29	37	(137)
Work On Arithmetic Or Math	8	26	27	39	(135)
Work On Penmanship Or Writing	16	31	24	30	(135)
Watch Educational Program On T.V. With Your Child	15	46	24	15	(136)
Participate Together In Sports Activities	23	43	15	18	(136)

Question: "How many times in a normal week did you participate in the following activities with your child?"

EDUC
3/5/92
2-78

EDUC
3/5/92
2-79

METRO MONEY/8B

McFadden sentenced/2B

1B

• Wisconsin State Journal
Friday, October 4, 1991

School choice showdown begins

By Cary Segall
Wisconsin State Journal

Fifteen months and two lower court decisions after it refused to take the case immediately, the Wisconsin Supreme Court will hear oral arguments this morning on the constitutionality of the state's controversial school choice law.

The court will decide whether the state can continue diverting money from the Milwaukee public school system to pay private schools to teach as many as 1,000 low-income students a year.

About 500 students have enrolled in seven Milwaukee private schools this fall.

The case is being watched closely across the country because Wisconsin is the first state to experiment with the choice plan championed by Gov. Tommy Thompson and President Bush. Similar plans are under consideration in six other states.

Administration Secretary James Klausner will argue for Thompson, who is in Poland.

Wisconsin has paid \$1,091,684, about \$2,500 per student per school year, to eight private schools since the high court disregarded pleas of choice opponents, including Schools Superintendent Bert Grover, and voted, 4-3, not to take original jurisdiction of the case in June

1990 before recessing until September.

In asking the court to take the case in May 1990, choice opponents had argued the April 1990 law establishing the plan was unconstitutional and that immediate action was necessary because the state would start paying private schools in September 1990 if the plan was allowed to take effect.

But Justices Nathan Heffernan, Roland Day, William Callow and Louis Cecl voted, without explanation, not to take the case.

Heffernan, though, wrote: "I am confident that, if the petitioners bring an action in the circuit court, the chief judge . . . will assure that priority is given to its disposition."

Lower courts did act unusually quickly and on Aug. 6 Dane County Circuit Judge Susan Steingass ruled the plan constitutional.

But Steingass' was reversed in November by the 4th District Court of Appeals, which said the law was unconstitutional because it applied only to cities of the first class (Milwaukee) and

had been passed in a multisubject budget bill in violation of a constitutional provision that says "no private or local bill which may be passed by the Legislature shall embrace more than one subject."

"The purpose (of the provision) is to assure the Legislature and people of Wisconsin are advised of the real nature and subject matter of proposed legislation, and to prevent bills benefitting private or local interests from being 'smuggled' through the Legislature," the court said.

That decision was appealed to the Supreme Court in December by the private schools, along with some students and parents, all represented by Clint Bolick, of Washington, D.C.

Choice opponents, in addition to Grover, include the Milwaukee branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Wisconsin Education Association Council and several other teacher and school administrator groups.

The high court again didn't give the case priority. The justices waited until March to take the case, set it for argument in October after the last briefs were filed June 24, and then recessed



Heffernan

Please turn to Page 5B, Col. 6

School choice before court

Continued from Page 1B

for the summer.

As a result, the plan is continuing this year because the Justice Department advised the Department of Public Instruction to keep paying private schools until the Supreme Court decides the case.

The court's initial refusal to take the case still rankles Grover's lawyer, Julie Underwood, who said there's no reason the case couldn't have been resolved by now.

"I think they should have taken original jurisdiction back in June 1990," said Underwood, who is also a UW-Madison associate professor of education. "We're back on the same constitutional issues that were present in the petition for review in June 1990."

Susan Wing, principal at Woodlands School, a private school in the case, said the program's uncertain future has probably discouraged some parents from applying and has made it difficult for the school to allocate a large number of spaces for students in the program. Woodlands has 33 choice students.

But, Wing added, "I think it had to go through the process. To have short-circuited the process would have meant some of the issues wouldn't have been addressed."

Zakiya Courtney, principal at Urban Day School, another private school in the case, said the uncertainty hasn't affected enrollment at her school, which has 195 choice students. She said that if the law is ruled unconstitutional, the school would let all students continue and raise money to pay for them.

Urban Day might not have that problem if the Supreme Court rules similarly to the appeals court, because the Legislature has always had the right to pass the choice law again without putting it into a budget bill.

But Milwaukee lawyer Robert Friebert, who represents many of the choice opponents, has also argued that the law is unconstitutional because it doesn't require the private schools to meet educational standards mandated for public schools.

Friebert said in his brief that as long as the schools get public money they are required to meet state standards because of a constitutional provision that says "the Legislature shall provide by law for . . . schools, which shall be as uniform as practicable . . ."

In a related argument, Friebert argued the law is also unconstitutional under the so-called public purpose doctrine, which requires the state to impose controls on private groups that get state money.

But Bolick argued the uniformity clause applies only to public schools and that private schools aren't covered even if they receive some state money.

"If every private school that accepted any public funds was thereby transformed into a public school, we would suddenly have a tremendous number of new public schools," Bolick wrote in his brief.

Bolick also argued that the Legislature had the right to avoid "shackling these schools with excessive regulations" that would hamper their attempts to educate

3-MS-10-3-91

Education

Enrollment in choice has doubled

But fewer than half of pupils are returning from last year

By PRISCILLA AHLGREN
Journal education reporter

The number of pupils in the Milwaukee School Choice program has doubled since January, and 534 children are attending six private schools at public expense this fall, according to the state Department of Public Instruction.

Yet fewer than half of the pupils who entered schools in the choice program when it began last year returned this fall, according to official enrollment counts obtained Wednesday by The Journal. Instead, enrollments at schools in the program were bolstered by new students.

On Friday, the state Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the constitutionality of the program, which the Milwaukee School Board opposes. The board questions the way the program became law and argues that because schools in the program get public money, they should have to meet the same educational standards as public schools.

Last September, 341 pupils were enrolled through the choice program, but that number dropped significantly in December, when Juanita Virgil Academy closed and its 63 pupils had to return to Milwaukee Public Schools. When the official enrollment count was taken in January, enrollment in the choice program was down to 259.

Please see Schools page 21

Schools

From page 1

Gus Knitt, school administration consultant with the Department of Public Instruction, said that seven of those pupils graduated from eighth grade in June. Also, 155 returned to the same schools they attended last year in the choice program. The others are attending Milwaukee Public Schools or are unaccounted for.

Knitt said he did not know why more pupils did not return to choice schools this year, but she speculated that low return rates at some of the schools likely were similar to return rates in some Milwaukee public schools. He said an evaluation of the choice program that was under way would attempt to find out why pupils were not returning to schools in the program and would compare the return rates of choice and public schools.

The mobility rate — which measures the percentage of enrollment that changes at a school between September and June — averaged 33% in Milwaukee Public Schools for the 1989-'90 school year, the latest for which data are available.

The choice-program school with the best return rate was Urban Day, where 84 of last year's 101 students, or 83.2%, returned. The school with the lowest return rate was Harambee Community School, where 19 out of 79 students, or 24.1%, returned. Four of the 83 students who enrolled at Harambee last year were eighth-graders who graduated in June.

Knitt said schools in the choice program received their first aid payment from the state this week. Schools are paid \$2,586 a pupil. The money is state aid that would have gone to Milwaukee Public Schools had the pupils enrolled there.

Rep. Annette (Polly) Williams (D-Milwaukee), author of the choice bill, said she and other sup-

porters of the program planned to be in the Supreme Court chambers Friday for the oral arguments.

"I feel good," Williams said of the proceedings. "The Supreme Court is going to hear the truth about the program."

Williams has said the purpose of the choice program was to give low-income parents the financial means to move their children out of public schools that are not meeting their needs.

"It allows them to do what others always have done — leave and find something better for their children," she said.

Williams said she was not concerned that some parents had decided not to send their children back to schools in the choice program this year.

"The thing about choice is that parents can choose to go to another school," she said. "That's the marketplace for you."

Milwaukee School Superintendent Howard L. Fuller said that he had "no problem" with the choice program, which allows up to 1,000 low-income Milwaukee children to attend private, non-sectarian city schools with state money.

"I don't resent it, nor does it worry me," Fuller said. "This is the law, and parents have the option to avail themselves of the program. For those who use it, I hope their kids are eminently successful. My job is to make MPS schools the best schools they can possibly be."

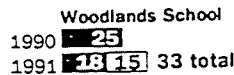
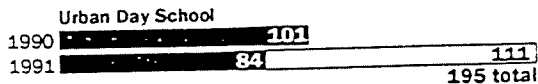
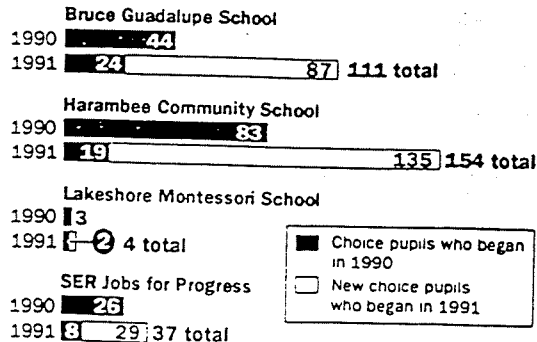
Fuller, who supports the idea of school choice, has called for more options for parents within the Milwaukee Public School system.

Fuller's predecessor, Robert S. Peterkin, had proposed an alternative to the choice program that would have required participating private schools to be under contract with Milwaukee Public Schools.

The Milwaukee School Board, which tried to kill Williams' bill, argued in a brief filed with the Supreme Court that once private schools received state money they became, in effect, public schools.

Choice enrollment grows, but many leave program

Six Milwaukee schools accepting pupils under the choice program have seen their choice enrollments grow, but many of the pupils who first enrolled last fall have since left the program.



Source: State Department of Public Instruction

EDUC
3/5/92
2-80

Milwaukee Sentinel

TUESDAY MORNING / April 23, 1991

Many black freshmen at less than 'D'

Others at MPS fare better

By GRETCHEN SCHULD
Sentinel staff writer

Black freshmen at 7 of 15 Milwaukee public high schools had first semester grade-point averages below 1.0, according to a report released Monday by the Greater Milwaukee Education Trust.

Hispanic freshmen achieved grade-point averages of less than 1.0, or "D," at two high schools, while white freshmen averaged higher than 1.0 at all the schools.

"The high failure rates and low GPAs in core curriculum forecast the picture of the next four years for these students: whether they fall out of the system or limp through it," the report said.

"The picture is alarming and should force an outcry of anger from every citizen in this city and a willingness to become actively

involved in reversing these statistics."

The report confirms the gap



Mitchell: "We know there are problems"

between the grade-point averages of those who attend school at least 80% of the time and those who attend at a lower rate. At Pulaski High School, for example, 998 students who had an attendance rate of more than 80% had a GPA of 2.08, while 691 students who attended less had a .47 GPA.

School Board President Jeanette Mitchell said, "We know

SEE PAGE 7 / Schools

EDUC
3/5/92
2-81

2081

Report says GPAs below 1.0 for black freshmen at 7 schools

Schools

FROM PAGE 1

there are problems."

"It's disturbing we have these kinds of numbers and also a cut in budget" that will affect school programs, she said.

Susan D. Phillips, executive director of the trust, said the report was meant to make people more aware of specific concerns in the school district.

"The reaction has been anything but negative," she said. "School people have been able to realize what they're dealing with individually is perhaps system-wide and demonstrates the need for change."

The report, titled, "Our Schools, Our Future: A Community Call to Action," said:

- 40% to 45% of the students who start high school graduate in four, five or six years. In 1984, the completion rate was 57%.

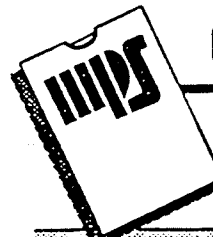
"The high numbers of students who are presently on 'failure tracks' between the 6th and 12th grades must be provided learning alternatives to achieve some success before being turned out to find employment with inadequate skills and attitudes," the report said.

- About 1,500 blacks have graduated yearly from MPS since 1980, even though ninth-grade black enrollments have increased from 3,289 to 4,461. For Hispanics, about 200 students have graduated annually, even though ninth-grade enrollments have increased from 333 to 577 students.

- Of those who do graduate from high school, 36% graduate with a "D" average.

- MPS has many high school students who are over-age for their grade level. There are about 500 18-year-olds in 10th grade.

Evidence indicates that the district is operating a "dual high school system," the report said. "The non-specialty schools are



Grade-point averages

For all courses, Milwaukee Public Schools ninth grade, first semester 1990-'91

School	Black	Hispanic	White
Bay View	.95	1.23	1.52
Custer	.98	1.27	1.71
Hamilton	.91	1.31	1.92
Juneau	1.27	1.57	1.97
King	1.68	2.59	2.97
Madison	.98	2.32	1.77
Marshall	1.23	1.79	2.06
North Division	.77	.90	1.38
Pulaski	.64	.83	1.39
Riverside	1.84	1.79	2.61
South Division	.87	1.13	1.16
Milwaukee Tech	1.38	1.58	2.01
Vincent	1.23	1.46	2.33
Washington	1.52	1.25	1.59
Milwaukee High School of the Arts at West Division	1.79	1.75	2.45

Source: Greater Milwaukee Education Trust

Sentinel graphic

filled with high percentages of over-age students. In some instances, more than 50% of the students in non-specialty schools are over-age."

- Attendance rates for "hands-on" courses such as driver's education (85% for the second marking period) and music (86%) are higher than purely academic courses such as English (79%) or social studies (78%).

A key to student success is ensuring they are able to read early in their school career, the report said. If a child has not mastered reading skills by second or third grade, the report said,

"the child not only finds himself on a 'failure track' as it relates to reading, he soon finds himself on a failure track in every other subject because of the dependency placed on reading and cognitive skills."

The community must develop solutions for those 6th- through 12th-graders who now are failing and for those younger pupils who are advancing in the system, the report said.

"The situation is criminal at best . . . stupid, if we project out the costs to society of dependency, crime rates, violence and urban decay."

EDUC
3/5/92
2-82

Vouchers, a key component of the Williams plan, allows a portion of the school tax dollars to be used by parents to educate their children in any accredited private school of their choice. In several states there is a neck and neck fight with opponents over the issue of vouchers for low and middle income students. It is the issue of vouchers that points to the real motive of some of the opponents. One parent told *Destiny* "Opponents of the Choice/Voucher plan are not really interested in what happens to the students. There have been private schools in this country for many years, and nobody gave a damn. But the day has come for parents to demand a portion of the tax dollars given to a system that has clearly shown that it does not use the money wisely. It is the *money* that all the fuss is about." With or without the badly needed relief afforded by vouchers, some low income families sacrifice all in order to give their chil-



dren the benefits obvious in private settings. Brighton Academy, located in a city classified as one of the most desirable places in America to live, operates one of the countries most advanced private schools. Nestled in the Pacific Northwest city of Grants Pass, Oregon [about 60 miles north of California], Brighton Academy has reached farther than most in the provision of a well rounded education for its students. We are told that there are parents who leave family, friends and secure employment for the opportunity to send their children to the school, nicknamed as *the school of no pressure*. It is here that the education of the child is based on a concept that is totally opposite from that of most schools. It is customary for most public schools to motivate students with the pressure to *succeed*. Public school students are educated on the principle of competition with fellow students. At Brighton Academy, the motivation is very different. They have successfully re-directed their focus to that of *excellence*. In one of the school's advertisements, asked the parent; 'IS YOUR CHILD STRESSED OUT AND OVERWORKED AT SCHOOL?' It responds by offering students the perfect alternative.

Brighton Academy is one of many schools that enjoy a natural racial mix. Terry Mathews, headmaster at Brighton has clearly demonstrated that race is a non-issue to children. "Here at Brighton academy, we enjoy a mixture of many races. Parents do not choose to send their children here on the basis of race, rather, they seek a quality education for their children without the risk associated with some of the larger public schools. It is clear to our findings that schools should function out of the same principle as the free enterprise system. Parents and students should be able to choose the

school their child goes to just as they choose the church they want to attend, or the car they want to drive. Access to a variety of educational alternatives should be that simple."

Brighton Academy, said by many to be a trend setter for advanced teaching techniques, attracts students to its independent program on the basis of their proven method of allowing children to develop at their own pace. And it does so without the usual attempts to *mold the mind of the child*. This unique form of education operates on the basis, that given the proper learning environment, children will automatically develop their own genius. This is another worthwhile school that would benefit many, given access to the vouchers for students who could otherwise not afford to attend.

There are at least three federal court battles currently being fought over the issue of who will control the education of children. Black children are in the middle of the ring in the struggle to gain financial aid to support the choice of many who would prefer to educate their children without the help of public schools. Having experienced her own hardships in life, Polly Williams weighs in for low income students who want something denied them in too many other areas of life, *they want a choice.* ■

By: Ted Mann & Emanuel McLittle

"As with any race, the future of black America is embodied in the children.

Regardless of political orientation, the need for a second look at who is teaching our children and what they are not learning, will cause any person of reason to call for free market schools."

This beautiful composite of black America's future attend the Ivy Leaf School in Philadelphia. Unlike public school students, their faces reflect their excitement about learning. Dignified uniforms reflect their seriousness about education.



EDUC
3/27/92
2-83

Profile: Polly Williams

An Enigma Fights for School Choice

Summary: Just when you think you have Assemblywoman Polly Williams of Wisconsin figured out, she'll probably surprise you. The champion of a voucher system that lets inner-city students attend private schools, she supports both conservative issues and radical black politics, and sees no incongruity.

By Mark Lawrence Ragan

If political schizophrenia were a disease, Annette Polly Williams would have a bad case of it. As the architect of Milwaukee's first-in-the-nation school voucher program, Williams has become the poster child for conservative Republicans pushing for "choice" in the nation's school districts. And why shouldn't she be? When it comes to denouncing liberal Democratic programs, Williams — a former welfare mother and a black Democratic assemblywoman — is unparalleled. "If liberals in the party are so good for blacks, why are we in such bad shape?" she asks. "Basically, I see the Democratic Party as being a leech that lives off of black folks."

Yet, just when you think Williams would make a great keynote speaker at the Republican National Convention, she pulls another ideology out of her political grab bag. "I'm basically a Jesse-crat," she confides. As evidence, the Rev. Jesse Jackson's picture hangs in her office in the state Capitol — directly across the room from the framed letter from George Bush — and is surrounded by pictures of Ted Kennedy, Jimmy Carter and Shirley Chisholm, the nation's first black congresswoman.

Similar contradictions adorn her rhetoric. Although she criticizes affirmative action programs as demeaning, she wants the city of Milwaukee to distribute its contracts on the basis

of race. She denounces welfare's cycle of dependency but acknowledges that without welfare, she never would have survived as a single mother raising four children.

Then, just when you think you have a fix on Williams, another personality pops out: the member of Milwaukee's Black Panther Militia, the 54-year-old political street fighter who believes that every social ill is rooted in racism. One week after Milwaukee police arrested Jeffrey Dahmer, charging him with multiple murders, Williams unleashed a scorching attack on the city's white community, accusing whites of "trying to clean this man up. . . . They are coming together to rally around this white monster." As evidence, Williams related rumors that a white sheriff's deputy gave Dahmer clean clothes to wear in court. "Now why do you think he did that?"

If Polly Williams had not been the architect of the nation's first school voucher program, none of this would matter outside of Milwaukee. But in the past year, Williams has become the premier political symbol for school choice.

Under her legislation, up to 1,000 students from low-income families can opt out of Milwaukee's dreadfully inadequate public schools. Parents can then enroll their children in any private, nonsectarian school that has signed up for the program. The government agrees to pay \$2,442 in tuition costs — money that otherwise would have gone to Milwaukee's public school system.

Williams's support for educational choice and voucher programs is prima facie evidence that it's not just white conservatives who favor vouchers for poor people, but the poor themselves. Her picture has been printed in *Fortune* and *Newsweek*. *60 Minutes* will air a segment on her and the voucher program in September. "She may be the most well-known politician from Wisconsin," says Mikel Holt, editor of

In the trenches for educational choice, Williams is now a political symbol.



the *Milwaukee Community Journal*, the state's largest black newspaper.

She's been to the White House more often than Wisconsin's Republican governor, Tommy Thompson, and is on a first-name basis with many Bush administration officials. Says James Pinkerton, White House policy analyst: "She is in the great American tradition of commonsense American problem solving — the kind of pragmatism that William James emphasized, the spirit of the Nike commercial that says, 'Just do it.'"

At first blush, Williams seems a lot like another Republican favorite, Clarence Thomas, whose Supreme Court nomination she supports. Like Thomas, Williams grew up in poverty and clawed her way to political success through hard work — but also by taking advantage of government programs. A daughter of Mississippi laborers, Williams recalls how her parents worked in the cotton fields near her hometown of Belzoni for \$1 a day in the late 1930s and early 1940s, earning another 50 cents "cleaning houses for the white trash down the street." The family lived in a two-room tin roof house in Mississippi Delta country. Williams and her two younger brothers shared a bed in the kitchen; the parents slept in the living room. "Every time it rained, the roof would flap," she recalls. "And we would hear it go bam, bam, bam."

Raised by strict fundamentalist Christian parents, Williams was taught that going to the movies, dancing and wearing makeup were sins. "We adhered strictly to the Ten Commandments," she says. "They ruled our lives and we took them literally." If dancing caused damnation, hard work cleansed the soul. Her rigid upbringing and devotion to the work ethic contributed in no small way to her conservative side.

"When I was a youngster, if a young lady was pregnant or had a baby, she stayed at home and that baby was part of the family and that baby grew up with Big Mama along with her own mama," says Williams. "There was no food stamps or welfare to allow these babies with babies to set up apartments on their own."

Poverty followed the family to Milwaukee in 1946. Williams wanted to pursue a career in nursing, but her mother and father, by then working as a seamstress and laborer, couldn't afford the \$375 tuition. So, at age 19, she worked as a \$35-a-week clerk at J. C. Penney's and married a machinist whom she met at a skating rink. Her 13-year marriage to Winston Williams Jr. ended in divorce in 1969, leaving

Polly with custody of their four children. Four years later, she left her job to undergo major surgery.

To support her family, she received welfare for nearly a year. "It was terrible and humiliating," she recalls. "My children wouldn't go shopping with me because they were embarrassed that we had to pay in food stamps. I hated it when that pink welfare check came in the mail."

After the children grew up, she combined odd jobs with studies and earned a bachelor's degree in community education at the University of Wisconsin in 1975. A year before her graduation, a cousin who also happened to be Wisconsin's first black

underwriter for Allstate Insurance Winston Williams III, 34, is a medical equipment technician at General Electric; and Kimberly Burns, 28, is an office worker at Briggs & Stratton corporate offices in Milwaukee.

Her experience with Urban Day led Williams to conclude that her neighbors would probably pull their children from the public schools had they the choice and the money to do so. She was right.

Although opposed by the powerful, 60,000-member Wisconsin Education Association Council, which represents public school teachers, Williams rammed through a voucher program in March 1990 by packing hearings



state senator, Monroe Swan, suggested that she run for office. After working as a foot soldier in a number of political campaigns, she took Swan's advice and ran three times against state Rep. Walter L. Ward before ousting him in 1980. Her 17th Assembly District is the largest black district in the state and is plagued by an unemployment rate of 25 percent.

Like most of her eclectic political opinions, Williams's attitude toward education grew out of her own experience. Disgusted with the inferior education her children were receiving, Williams pulled them out of the Milwaukee public schools in 1968 and placed them in the Urban Day School, a private academy sustained by corporate contributions that charged parents only what they could reasonably afford. (The school became one of the first to sign up for Williams's voucher program.)

All her children performed well at Urban Day, and either went on to college or found jobs in Milwaukee. Krystal Williams, 26, is a second-year law student at the University of Wisconsin; Mildred Davis, 32, works as an

with inner-city parents clamoring for the program. She also won by forging a coalition of Republicans, Gov. Thompson and a handful of Democratic legislators. "She fought the leadership, she fought the newspapers, she fought the establishment, and she's been successful," says Tom Hauke, a conservative Democratic assemblyman.

Entering its second year, Williams's voucher program has shown mixed results. While parents of the 252 students who completed the first year expressed overwhelming support, the number of children participating is too small to draw any firm conclusions, says University of Wisconsin political science professor John Witte, who is finishing an evaluation of the experiment. The murky outcome stems partly from the legislative compromises that were struck to get the plan approved.

Although state legislators authorized vouchers for up to 1,000 low-income students, they barred private schools that teach religion from participating. "There are not that many nonreligious private schools in the

United States," says Witte. "And those that do exist are usually preppy academies or they're not dealing with inner-city schools." Other private schools have refused to sign up until all legal challenges are exhausted, further depleting the number of spaces available. The Milwaukee program has survived two court cases. It faces another challenge before the state Supreme Court in October.

Opponents, however, say the experiment revealed its own flaws when one school — an impoverished, run-down institute called the Juanita Virgil Academy — went broke halfway through the school year. "And where did they dump all of those students?"

mend that we terminate this program," says Witte.

If the program survives, it will be largely due to Williams's passion for championing it. A fiery speaker whose rhetoric is a thick stew garnished with a bit of Malcolm X here and a pinch of Horatio Alger there, Williams doesn't face many enemies who relish taking her on. Even the teachers association endorsed her in her most recent reelection battle.

She is a master of the controversial gesture. To tweak the public school system, Williams introduced legislation that would have forced public school teachers to eat their own cooking by barring them from sending

tate: "All white folks feel the same about black folks — you don't like us."

Williams sees no contradiction in her praise for the Bush administration and her support of school choice and other conservative issues — the confirmation of Clarence Thomas, phasing out affirmative action programs and tenant ownership of government housing — and her loyalty to Jesse Jackson and radical black politics. She refuses to criticize Bush, even though other black leaders have accused him of wooing conservative white votes by opposing the 1991 civil rights bill. "When a Democrat was there [in the White House], how much better-off were we? It don't matter who's in the

Williams sees no contradiction in her praise for the Bush administration and her support of school choice and other conservative issues — the confirmation of Clarence Thomas and phasing out affirmative action programs — and her loyalty to Jesse Jackson and radical black politics.



WHITE HOUSE



MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

On the steps of the Milwaukee public schools administration building," says Richard Collins, president of the teachers association. "That certainly is not going to be helpful to the education of those children."

While acknowledging the failure of Juanita Virgil school, Williams refuses to concede any major cracks in the system she helped build. "For every person that moves out of poverty and these dismal schools, there is one less social scientist and incompetent teacher needed to lead them," she argues. "These socialcrats have built their lives around taking care of us. Now they're running scared that they'll lose their jobs. When we no longer need them to take care of us, what are they going to do?"

There have been other signs that the program is working as planned, says Witte. More than 90 percent of the parents who enrolled their children in Urban Day want their children to return next year, he says. This year, the school has received 600 applications under the voucher program for a few more than 100 spaces. "I can't imagine that my report will recom-

their children to private schools. "She sees her role as stirring the pot," says Robert Peterkin, Milwaukee's former school superintendent. "Polly is selfless, but she does deal in inflammatory statements."

She would be the first to agree. "I'm not a peacemaker," she says. "I'm confrontational. What I do is create tension to force action."

That was apparent in late July, two days after police jailed Dahmer. While most public officials refrained from finger-pointing, Williams unleashed a fury of criticism on the Police Department for returning a 14-year-old Laotian boy to Dahmer after the youth fled Dahmer's apartment building, naked and bleeding. "They wouldn't have done that if it was a white victim, you can be sure," says Williams. When the mayor asked the community to pray for the victims, she retorted: "You don't have to tell black people to pray. What we need the mayor to do is tell the white community to get on their knees and p-r-a-y and to stop p-r-e-y-ing on us." Asked whether she really believed that whites were coming to Dahmer's rescue, Williams didn't hesi-

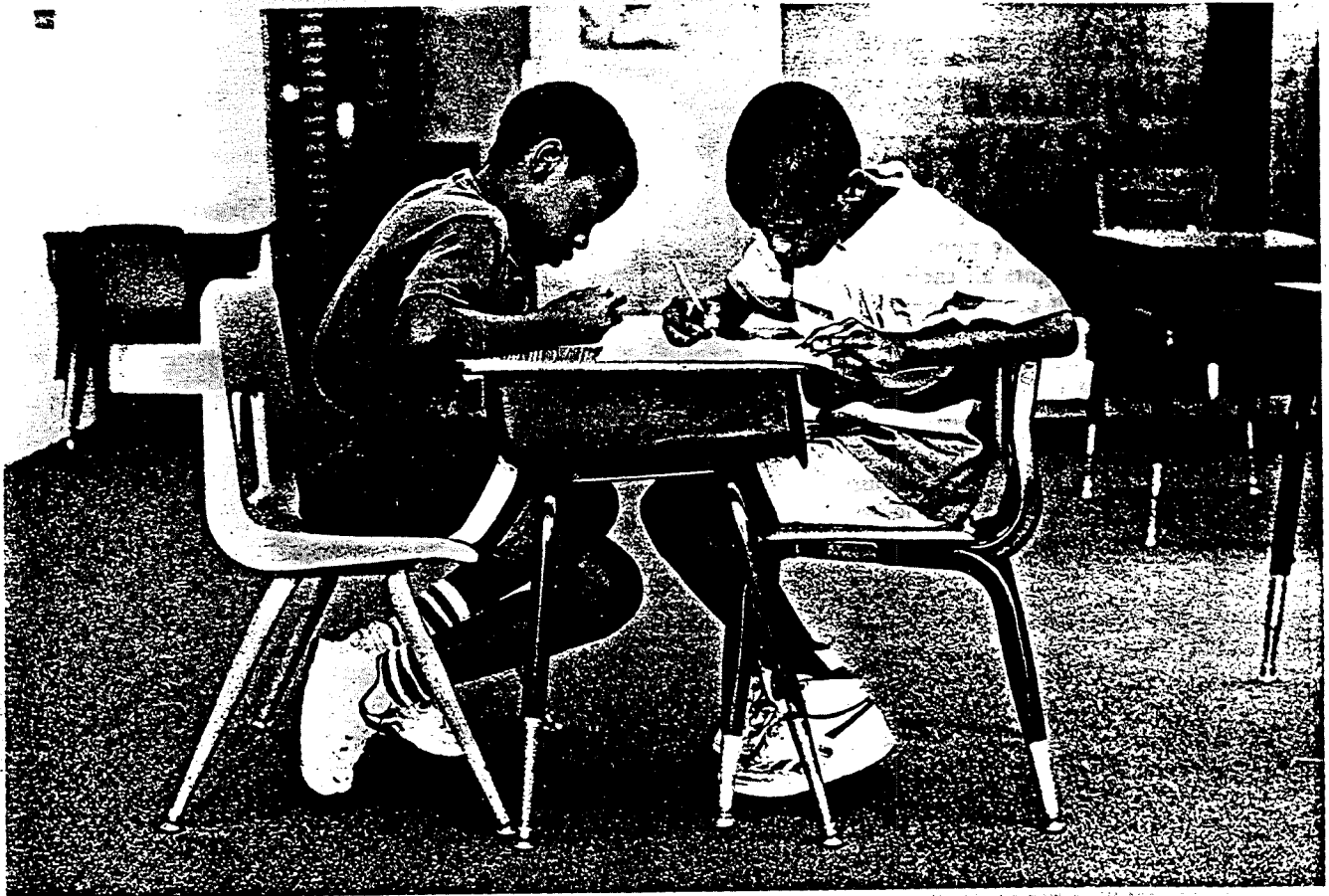
White House, because no matter who he is, he's white. And the issues in this country are based on race."

If she has a unifying philosophy, it is plucked from the self-help teachings of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and Booker T. Washington that blacks will improve their lot only by taking control of institutions affecting them: family, schools, local government and social programs catering to poor blacks but administered by whites.

Since her election, she has killed several proposed grants for white-owned social service agencies in black neighborhoods. "She likes to call these people missionaries — people who get rich off black people's poverty," says newspaper editor Holt.

Ultimately, Williams wants to rid the black community of the trappings of Great Society programs, which she says imprison blacks by robbing them of motivation and dignity.

"We have this whole dependency thing brought on by our liberal-thinking friends that keeps up that dependency," she says. "We no longer have chains on our ankles; the chains are on our brains now."



OKLAHOMA CITY

Separate and Equal

To many black parents, a desegregated school is less important than a good one. A growing number even prefer to send their children to an all-black school, if it is nearby and the equal of any in the system

IN 1961, WHEN a black dentist named A. L. Dowell sued the Oklahoma City School Board for refusing to grant his son Robert admission to all-white Northeast High School, the city's black population was living under Jim Crow. Robert Dowell was enrolled in the only black high school in town—Douglass, located about a mile from Northeast. Douglass teachers from those days remember the hand-me-down textbooks they had to work with,

so tattered that they had to leaf through the first few pages to divine the subject. Former students recall trudging several miles north to school from the neighborhood where blacks were confined. There were no school buses for black children.

On a summer evening twenty-three years later, in 1984, a group of school-board members ventured up to Northeast High School to speak with parents and community leaders. In the intervening years the world had turned upside down, and it was about to turn upside down again. The first great change had taken place in 1972, when, after a decade of dithering and appeals, the school board had implemented the Finger Plan, a desegregation plan that called for the mandatory busing of both black and white children. The Oklahoma City schools followed the trajectory of desegregated urban school systems all over the country: resistance, submission, racial tension, white flight, and peace, if not always harmony. By the end of the 1970s the school bus had lost its totemic status:

it had become an inconvenience and an irritant rather than a moral affront.

And now the school board had come to propose a return to the *status quo ante*. In 1977 a federal judge had conceded that schools could be excused from the busing plan as the neighborhoods around them became integrated. By 1984 blacks were sufficiently scattered across Oklahoma City that many of the schools could be integrated without busing. A committee of the school board, led by a black man, was proposing a return to neighborhood schools at the elementary school level. The only schools that would become "racially identifiable" would be right there in the Northeast neighborhood, which had gone from all white to all black.

The striking thing about the meeting at Northeast High that evening is that the great majority of parents spoke in favor of the new plan, despite the fact that it would return many of their children to segregated elementary schools (an option of the plan allowed black parents to send their children to a white-majority school, using trans-

The photographs in this article were taken at Oklahoma City's Longfellow Elementary School and at the Milkwood School, in a nearby district.

EDUC 2-87
3/5/92 SEPTEMBER 1991

portation provided by the school board). Civil-rights activists bitterly reproached the board members for marching backward. But the activists constituted a distinct minority, and they were seen as remnants of an older order. "It was very painful," says Susan Hermes, who chaired the school board at the time and is an advocate of the plan. "Many of these people have fought for civil rights all their lives. The most difficult part for them is to let go of that and let people work together in other ways."

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund took the school board to court; as it had two decades earlier. After five years the matter landed in the Supreme Court. The case was expected to provide the most important busing decision of recent years. In mid-January of this year the Court concluded, with a restraint somewhat disappointing to both sides, that a school board can be released from court-ordered busing and can even permit some resegregation as long as it has taken all "practicable" steps to eliminate the "vestiges" of past discrimination. The case was remanded to federal court, where it remains.

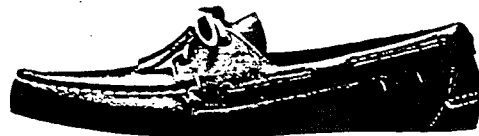
In his dissent Justice Thurgood Marshall condemned the decision as a reversal of the progress made since 1954, when the Court nullified the principle of "separate but equal" in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Many civil-rights activists, including those in Oklahoma City, have expressed fear about just this point. But most of the parents and teachers and administrators I spoke with recently during a week in Oklahoma City viewed the neighborhood plan for elementary schools in nonracial terms. Black parents often repeated what was said during the 1984 discussions at Northeast High: they believed in integration, but they were more concerned about the quality of their children's education. And they believed that their children could get an equal education in a racially separate setting—a historic change from the era of forced segregation.

I asked Arthur Steller, who came to Oklahoma City as superintendent of schools six years ago, whether desegregation had become irrelevant. Steller, a poised, dark-suited Yankee who is white, had obviously given a lot of thought to the question. He replied, "People have said historically that we need to have black youngsters in white



"To make a shoe this comfortable, there is only one way to look at leather. My Dad's way."

Like his father, Dan Marshall takes a hands-on approach to leather. He looks for consistent color character and uniform grain texture. He feels for the break that will allow each shoe to retain its look and fit year after year. He knows there are no short cuts to the one-shoe-at-a-time comfort of Sebago Classics. Like father, like son.




SEBAGO
 America's World-Class Footwear™

EDUC
 3/5/92
 2-88

schools because that's the only way they're going to get a good education. At one point in time that may have been true. However, there's nothing that makes that inherently true if you can eliminate the inequity of resources and if you put a focus and attention on reducing the achievement gaps between minority and majority students. It's more important for us to desegregate educational results than it is to physically desegregate students." When I asked Steller whether he would contemplate returning all levels of schools to a neighborhood plan, he didn't blink. "You could," he said. "We just haven't gotten in any discussion of that particular issue yet."

THE CAMPAIGN to desegregate the schools was conducted as part of the civil-rights struggle, not the education-reform movement, so most people assume that the integration of the schools was an end in itself, as was the integration of lunch counters and bus terminals. But that's not quite so. The *Brown* decision did not repudiate the doctrine of "separate but equal" as a simple violation of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Rather, the Court concluded that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." This was so because state-sponsored segregation, according to contemporary sociological research, "generates a feeling of inferiority [among excluded black children] as to their status in the community that

may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." Black children had a right to equal education, and segregated education could not be equal.

The NAACP lawyers who argued *Brown* were explicit on this score. Robert Carter, now a federal judge in Manhattan, has written, "When we fashioned *Brown*, on the theory that equal education and integrated education were one and the same, the goal was equal educational opportunity, not integration." It was mere common sense, in the world of Jim Crow, that black children could not get a decent education without access to white facilities. That segregation also had a stigmatizing effect on black children seemed no less obvious, though the proof consisted largely of controlled experiments in laboratory-like settings; one famous example was Kenneth Clark's survey of children's racial attitudes using white dolls and black dolls.

The nature of the *Brown* decision and of the expectations it raised meant that desegregation could be both a success and a failure. It could be a success because the schools were integrated and because those schools helped knit the races together. It could be a failure because blacks could continue to lag behind whites educationally. That's more or less what has happened.

Desegregation has generally taken root where courts have ordered it, notwithstanding appalling exceptions like Boston. Ten years after *Brown* less than two percent of southern black

schoolchildren were attending schools with white children. But the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President Lyndon Johnson's personal commitment to advance the civil-rights agenda despite the political costs of doing so, and a series of decisions at the federal and Supreme Court levels all worked together to compel recalcitrant school boards to design and implement busing plans. From 1968 to 1972 the proportion of southern black children attending schools that were at least half white shot from 19 percent to 45 percent. Then progress stalled; the figures have remained essentially stable.

Southern schools are in fact more desegregated than northern ones. In most of the great northern cities desegregation either was never seriously tried or was tried only after so many whites had left the city for the suburbs that there simply weren't enough of them to go around. (In a 1974 ruling involving Detroit, the Supreme Court struck down a "metropolitan solution," of a kind that had also been tried elsewhere, in which children would be bused between city and suburb.) New York's schools have never been significantly desegregated, nor have those of Chicago, Philadelphia, or Detroit. But in most cities with a more equal racial balance in the schools—among them Buffalo, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, Louisville, Nashville, and Portland, Oregon—desegregation is a fact of life.

Desegregation, though, has not brought blacks the expected educational advantages. A task force in Milwaukee found that in the system's fifteen high schools, all but one of them integrated, blacks were scoring an average of 24 on a reading test on which white students were averaging 58. At every grade level and on virtually every index blacks lagged far behind whites. In 1990 black children nationwide scored almost 200 points lower than whites on their combined math and verbal SATs.

Of course, it is unreasonable to expect the "integration effect" wholly to compensate for the socioeconomic deficit with which many black children arrive in school. The real question is, How large is the effect? Hundreds of scholars, maybe thousands, have devoted themselves to this question. Their findings do not make a strong battle cry for a cause as unpopular as mandatory busing. A study of the studies, by Robert Crain and Rita Mahard,





concluded that most evaluations of desegregation in terms of achievement are somewhat favorable; Crain and Mahard posit an average gain of four IQ points. Gary Orfield, of Harvard University, probably the leading scholar of desegregation issues, concedes that "nothing makes a huge difference" to test scores, including integration. Orfield argues that the most beneficial effects of desegregation come later, with college and career prospects. Yet another overview, from 1988, concludes that "the impact of desegregation on college attainment is positive, though not strong, for Northern blacks." Data on career attainment are sketchy.

It may be that Kenneth Clark's experiments with dolls don't have much to do with the real world of the schools. (They were widely criticized by other social scientists in the ensuing years.) Thirty years ago, when southern governors, school boards, and sheriffs were barring the way to the schoolhouse door, this question didn't really matter. As one study after another has declared the schools a national disgrace, especially over the past decade, the debate over busing has been replaced by a far more pragmatic question: What works?

IN 1972, THE first year of its school busing plan, Oklahoma City lost more than 20 percent of its enrollment. The school board had a terrible time trying to bring the composition of each school within 10 percent of that of the system overall. White parents of-

ten finagled the placement of their children in the neighborhood school, which left other schools too heavily black. Children were shuttled all over town. The burden fell most heavily on black parents, as it generally does with desegregation, because at levels up to the fifth grade all busing was from black to white areas. Blacks, few of whom had much choice, stayed in the system, and whites, especially affluent ones, left. Local private schools quickly learned to mail their literature to parents whose children were completing fourth grade and facing the prospect of being bused to schools in black neighborhoods. Enrollment in public schools has dropped from 71,000 at the time of desegregation to 37,000 today. The racial composition of the student body has gone from 75 percent white to 45 percent white. Today, as you drive along the city's ruler-straight four-lane roads, your eye is drawn to aging red-brick structures with school names incised into the masonry and real-estate signs out front: ghostly reminders of the system as it once was.

The problem wasn't just a matter of whites fleeing blacks, or even whites fleeing busing. By the mid-seventies racial hostilities had abated, and the assignment system had become less eccentric and disruptive. But the schools, like urban schools generally in the 1970s, were in a tailspin. Many of the well-to-do parents who left had been mainstays of the system, and their children had been high achievers. School administrators had focused on racial

harmony almost to the exclusion of educational matters. State legislators, who hadn't shown much concern for public education when it was segregated, lost all interest now that it was integrated. Oklahoma City today spends less money per pupil than Birmingham or Jackson, and less than half as much as Pittsburgh or St. Louis. As a result of all this neglect, children in the late seventies and early eighties were faring worse with every year they stayed in school: elementary students who scored above the national average on achievement tests were becoming below-average high school students.

Black parents as well as white voted with their feet. Millwood, a formerly all-white neighborhood that constituted a separate school district, became a middle-class black enclave. Millwood had only one school building, which housed all the grades, and it became the separate-but-equal facility of choice for black parents. Russell Perry, the publisher of Oklahoma City's black newspaper, *The Black Chronicle*, told me that "eighty percent of black parents would send their children to Millwood if they could find a way."

Many of the black parents I spoke with mentioned the Millwood school with undisguised envy. Sandra Stutson, who recalled the years she spent at the integrated Northwest Classen High School as the formative experience of her life, said nevertheless, "I would give my eyeteeth to get my kids into Millwood." School authorities, she said, have begun cracking down on nonresident parents trying to sneak their children in. "I just haven't found a way of getting an electricity bill with my name on it and an address in Millwood," she told me.

It was in this demoralized atmosphere that the school-board committee introduced its proposal to return to neighborhood schools at the elementary level. One reason the idea encountered so little resistance from black parents is that their children were the ones being bused in the first through the fourth grades. Even the Urban League, which had helped shape the Finger Plan, initially supported the proposal, though the NAACP opposed it. Leonard Benton, the head of the Urban League, recalls that parents had been complaining about the busing of young children from the outset, on grounds of equity. "The real concern

among black parents," Benton says, "was the unfairness of the one-way busing." Benton now supports the establishment of a giant "educational park" to which all children would be bused. The proposal sounds wildly expensive and cumbersome, but Benton claims that it would correct the inequity and provide quality education.

Arthur Steller took over as superintendent of the Oklahoma City public schools in 1985, the year the elementary school neighborhood plan was implemented. His previous posting had been Mercer County, in the most backward region of West Virginia. Steller was a convert to the "effective schools" movement, whose tenets had been laid out a decade earlier by the late black scholar Ronald Edmonds. Edmonds had insisted that social scientists like James Coleman and Christopher Jencks were flat wrong in concluding that, as he put it, "family background causes pupil performance." What counted, he said, were the characteristics of the school. In schools that focus on basic skills—schools with high expectations and a secure sense of authority—any child can learn, Edmonds argued. The racial composition of the school was largely irrelevant. "Desegregation," Edmonds said, "must take a backseat to instructional reform."

IN OKLAHOMA CITY, Arthur Steller committed himself to desegregating educational results. Steller instructed every school in the system to break down achievement-test results

by race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Each school would be responsible for reducing gaps to within specific limits and for applying the tenets of the effective-schools movement in whatever ways seemed relevant. Schools were encouraged to bring low achievers into before-school and after-school programs, and also programs on Saturdays and during vacations. Steller and the school board raised graduation requirements, eliminated many electives, and stressed advanced-placement courses.

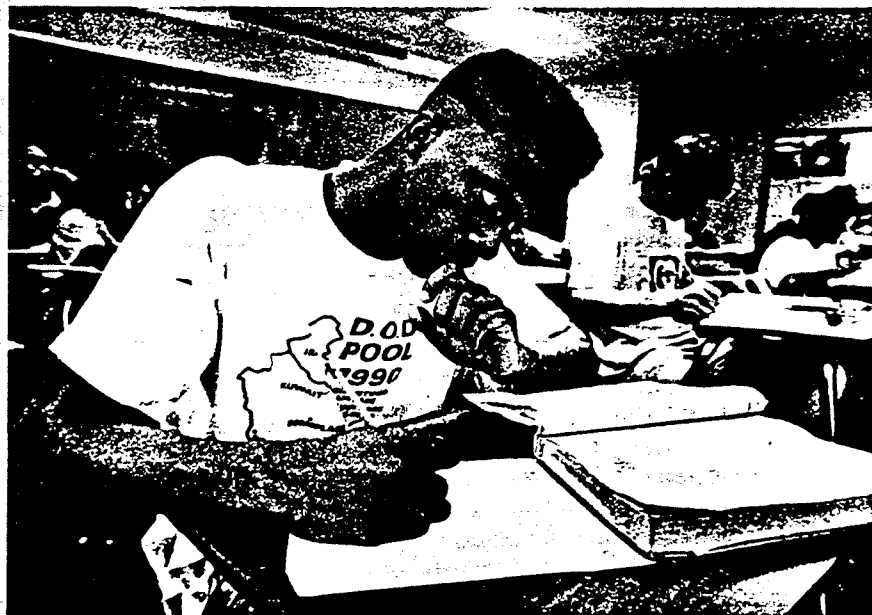
From 1988 to 1990 Oklahoma City's black students moved from the 43rd to the 49th percentile on achievement tests; blacks from the most disadvantaged backgrounds jumped from the 36th to the 45th percentile. White students also advanced—from the 65th to the 68th percentile. The "Dowell schools"—the ones that under the neighborhood plan have been effectively resegregated, so that they are virtually all-black—each receive \$40,000 in additional program funding, and students in them have recorded the largest advance, from the 34th percentile in 1986-1987 to the 48th in 1989-1990. The system-wide dropout rate has also fallen considerably during Steller's tenure. Earlier this year the American Association of School Administrators gave Steller its annual award in recognition of these changes.

The Dowell schools have become the basis on which Steller's experiment is judged. I spent a morning at Longfellow, an elementary school whose en-

rollment consists of two white, one Hispanic, and about 250 black children. Seventy percent of the children are eligible for the federal free-lunch program, which means that Longfellow is one of the least impoverished of the Dowell schools. Many, if not most, of the kids come from single-parent families, and at the end of the day a grandparent or an elder sibling is likely to come fetch them. Still, the surrounding streets are lined with houses, not apartment blocks or projects. It is not nearly so mean a setting as that of the average inner-city school. In the playground the basketball court was cracked and the rims had been torn off the backboards by middle-school students on one of their regular rampages, but the principal, Beverly Story, assured me that new rims would arrive in a few days. The school was clean and orderly and at least superficially well equipped. The students were quiet when they were supposed to be, and noisy the rest of the time.

Longfellow has become a Dowell showcase, because over four recent years achievement levels have risen from the 35th percentile to the 62nd. Teachers at Longfellow attribute the improvement to Story's focus on basic skills and her insistence on retesting and reteaching until a child has achieved mastery. Story talks about the extra funds she's able to pry loose from the school board on short notice, but even more about Edmonds's effective-schools tenets and the renewed involvement of parents, who now live much closer to where their children go to school, usually only a few blocks away. Story, who, like Steller, is white and a Yankee, acknowledges the arguments for integration, but says, "A lot of these kids weren't making progress in desegregated schools. The advantage of the neighborhood schools is that you can target aid to them much more easily."

Still, as an experiment in separate-but-equal the Dowell schools have a long way to go. Last September the Equity Committee, which had been charged by the school board with monitoring the treatment of black students once the neighborhood plan went into effect, kicked up a mighty storm by claiming that the all-black schools were worse than a group of "comparison schools" in the city, which it had selected—not only in test scores but also



in "teacher performance" and in some cases physical facilities. The report arrived a month before the school board was to defend the neighborhood plan before the Supreme Court. It was a potentially disastrous conjunction, and the board took the extraordinary step of rejecting the report and firing the paid "equity officer." Arthur Steller produced hundreds of pages of memos, statistics, and directives to refute the committee's findings, which he charged were motivated by a "personal political agenda"—to subvert the board's argument before the Court.

The report was tendentious and almost certainly unfair, given the strides made by black students and especially those in the Dowell schools, but it was also a sign that the black community intends to hold Steller to his promises. The fact is that family background *does* strongly influence pupil performance, but black parents are even less inclined than reform-minded school administrators to accept the idea of predestined outcomes. The equity-committee report also touched a sensitive nerve—the expectation of blacks that whites will deny them their fair share. Thelma R. Parks, the president of the board, who voted to accept the report, says, "There are still pockets of segregation in the system." Some black parents have seized on a supposed preponderance of inexperienced teachers in all-black schools to argue that their children are not getting the educational opportunities given to others. In the Dowell schools, Parks says, "those teachers just assume that the black children are going to fail," and thus reinforce the students' low expectations.

THE PASSION play of court-ordered desegregation remains in the memory of veteran teachers in the Oklahoma City schools, but little of it is visible in the schools themselves, and the surprise is how little attention anyone pays to the issue of integration. A few years ago a fight at a sandwich shop erupted between a white student and a black one attending Northwest Classen High School, and when the members of their respective factions joined them, a minor race riot ensued; but this was cited to me as an anachronism. Racial issues tend to be more subtle now. Charles Albritton, a guidance counselor at Classen who recalls the bad old days when black

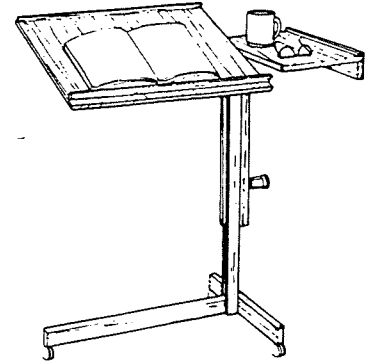
kids from the projects butted up against privileged whites in Classen's hallways, told me that although those days are gone, black students still complain of bias from white teachers.

Oklahoma City's principal gangs, the Bloods and the Crips, have members at Classen, but the principal, Richard Vrooman, has succeeded in minimizing their presence. Students at Classen say that "Northeast is a gang school," but at their own school an atmosphere of harmony appears to reign. Classen is 40 percent white and 35 percent black, with the remainder Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. No student or teacher I spoke with could remember a recent racial incident inside the school. Both the official school attitude and spontaneous comments reflected the belief that desegregation is a good thing.

One morning I asked the students in Elizabeth Grove's eleventh-grade English class what, if anything, it meant to them to be going to an integrated school. A black girl sitting up front, Katrina Watson, had just said that she had as many white friends as black friends, that race wasn't an issue, when Erin Bixler, a timid-looking pale blonde girl sitting behind her, piped up. Erin had grown up in Bethany, an all-white suburb just west of Oklahoma City. When her family moved, she was enrolled at Taft, a middle school near Classen. "I was scared to death," she said. "I didn't know anything about black people. We'd hear all these things in Bethany about how you were going to get beaten up in those schools, you were going to get killed." After a few weeks of terror she discovered that she had nothing to be afraid of. Now Erin considers her friends in Bethany hopelessly benighted. "The schools there all have air-conditioning and they're carpeted and everything else, but I like it more here."

As I was leaving, another student beckoned me over. His name was Ryan Veirs, and he had arrived just last December from the little town of Quinton, in eastern Oklahoma. His story was like Erin's only more so. "There wasn't a black within twenty miles of Quinton," he said in a deep drawl. "It was heavy, heavy KKK." When he arrived at Classen, he fully expected to have to fight for his life. He joined the wrestling team, which turned out to include only one other white kid. To his

Lay Down Your Arms



Ah, to read without aching arms and dented elbows. Now you can with our Reader's Table from Denmark. It adjusts easily to hold your book at just the right height and angle. Reading becomes surprisingly comfortable in a chair, in bed, or beside a desk. An intelligent design and a handsome piece of furniture in mahogany, teak, cherry, or black ash.

\$195 + \$9.75 shipping via UPS ground
Assembly required

MC/VISA/AMEX/Check • Florida add 6%
Money-Back Guarantee • Catalog on Request
800-544-0880 or 407-276-4141

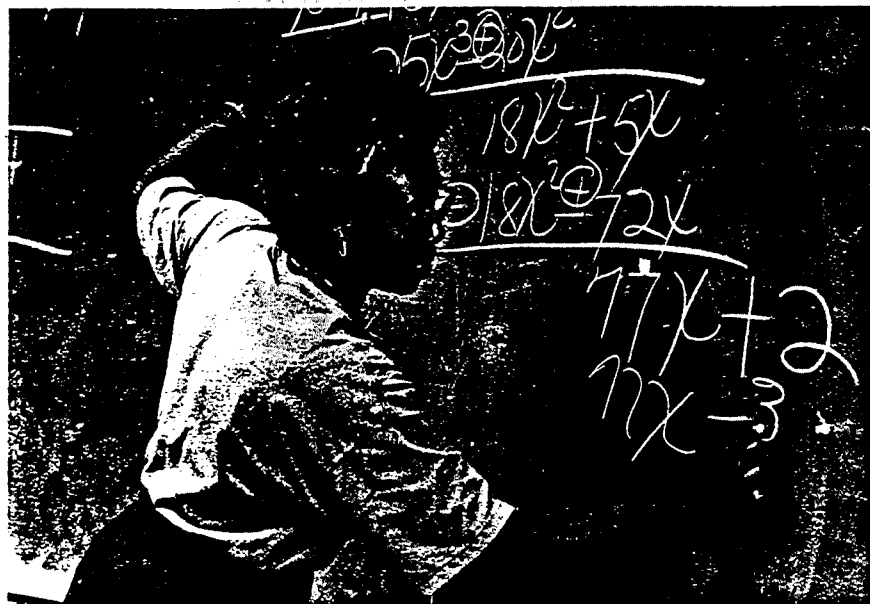
LEVENGER
TOOLS FOR SERIOUS READERS
975 S. Congress Ave., Code ART14, Delray, FL 33445



**Guess which baby's mother
smoked while
she was pregnant.**

If you're pregnant, see a doctor now.
Fight low birthweight.
March of Dimes
Campaign For Healthier Babies





amazement and utter relief, he was befriended by the other members of the team. He told me with great pride that he now regularly hangs out with his black friends.

A high school is probably one of the most highly ramified social organizations in the universe, so I was scarcely in a position to say, after a few days, exactly how integrated Classen is. In the cafeteria blacks, whites, Asians, and Hispanics generally isolated themselves; the same was true in the parking lot as the students drove home. But they thought of racial and ethnic grouping as natural. There was group identity, but there was latitude for individual nonracial choice. I heard both sides on the question of whether a black kid would come under pressure for dating a white; it was a riskier choice for a black girl.

Teachers generally seemed to take what desegregation researchers call the "color-blind" attitude. I asked one teacher of an honors class whether tracking had the effect of separating students along racial lines. No, she said; her class faithfully represented the school's racial balance. In fact I counted four black students and about twenty whites—far from the school's overall racial balance. Another teacher said that she had stopped noticing who was white and who was black. Many of the students made no such pretense. When I asked about interracial friendships, several kids said to me that only whites who "acted black" had many black friends. A ninth-grade girl

thought that it worked the other way as well, but older students assured me that there was virtually no such thing as a black who "acted white."

One day at the Taco Bell just south of Classen, I found two tables of black and white kids killing time over lunch. A black freshman, James Williams, immediately appointed himself the group's designated talker. He enjoyed a measure of fame as the wide receiver who had caught the touchdown pass that had ended the Classen Knights' astounding forty-two-game losing streak. When I asked about desegregation, James said, half jokingly, "I think it really has an effect on white people." After James's monologue wound down, one of his white friends said, with mock gravity, "I'm actually black. I'm just white on the outside." So am I, said another.

It's paradoxical, but scarcely absurd, to suggest that desegregation provides as much of a benefit to white students as to blacks. I was scarcely the first person to notice the sense of relief and pride that white students felt in having achieved nonchalance with blacks. A study of five desegregated schools by two scholars, Janet Ward Schofield and H. Andrew Sagar, found "a reduction in the almost automatic fear with which many students, especially whites, responded to members of the other race." Schofield and Sagar also criticized the predominant view of desegregation as "a procedure designed to help blacks," rather than "to foster a two-way flow of information and influence."

As a procedure designed to help blacks—as an education reform—desegregation has not been terribly successful in Oklahoma City, or in a great many other places. But as a cure for the pathology of racial hatred and racial fear, it may have accomplished a great deal. Racial familiarization may have more significance for black students than for whites, for whom the white-dominated larger world is a natural home. "Every black kid who's going to make it has to cross that line at some point," Gary Orfield, at Harvard, says. "And the sooner you cross the line, the better."

Desegregation is not an "issue" at Classen, and a number of teachers were upset that I talked about it. There are no interracial discussion groups, as there were in the early days of the Finger Plan. Nobody talks about the hardship of getting on a bus, or leaving the home neighborhood. Desegregation is simply there, a fact of life that stretches beyond the memory of all the kids and many of the teachers. Racial difference—in achievement, background, manner—is simply there too, generally acknowledged, at least among students. It's not a utopia, but it's a mingled world. This seemed to me to be more than enough justification for the pain and suffering Oklahoma City went through to desegregate its schools.

THE POSSIBILITY is not altogether remote that by the fiftieth anniversary of the *Brown* decision, thirteen years hence, school desegregation will be a historical artifact and a curiosity. The suburbanization of whites and the urbanization of nonwhites has made desegregation impracticable in an increasing number of places. In the forty-seven school systems that make up the Council of the Great City Schools, nonwhite students constitute three quarters of the enrollment; in 1988 the Hispanic enrollment overtook that of whites. At the same time, desegregation has lost its advocates, one by one—first the White House and Congress, then the courts, then the bulk of black intellectuals and activists. The sudden appearance in recent months, in New York, Milwaukee, Detroit, and elsewhere, of proposals for "Afrocentric" schools designed specifically for black students is signal proof of the declining prestige of

integration. When I called up the NAACP in Louisville to ask about the city's famously successful desegregated system, the head of the education committee, John R. Whiting, said that the chapter was looking seriously at the Afrocentric-school proposals. "We don't worship at the shrine of racial balance," he admonished me.

It may be that *Brown*, having served its express purpose of making equal education accessible to black children, can now safely be retired. It may be that desegregation isn't needed. At the time of the decision, the black legal scholar Derrick Bell has written, it was

a legal as well as societal impossibility to provide equality in schools that blacks were required by law to attend, in a system where such attendance was a badge of inferiority. . . . *Brown* is significant because it ended the legal subordination of blacks, removed the barriers that prevented blacks from going to school with whites, and made it possible for black parents to gain an equal educational opportunity for their children wherever those children attended school.

We should thus think of the offspring of *Brown* as including not only Northwest Classen High School but also the equity committee and the effective-schools movement and Arthur Steller's commitment to desegregating educational results.

And so school desegregation has lost its momentum, lost much of its constituency, and may even have lost its reason for being. What remains by way of justification for this cumbersome and intrusive process is the unmeasurable effect of growing up with schools like Classen. Some integrated environments might have the effect of reinforcing prejudices, and this point has been made by scholars of desegregation. But if they replace otherness with familiarity, if they help dissolve fear and contempt—is that so very little? As the age of desegregation gives way to the age of truly separate-but-equal, we might do well to recall something that Gunnar Myrdal wrote in *An American Dilemma*, almost fifty years ago: "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes on."

—James Traub

"What you'll find at the end of Bermuda's longest resort beach is no mirage."

John Jefferis, General Manager



Actually, it's more like an oasis. A bastion of taste and civility set among the palms in this 34 acre tropical (yet oh-so-close-by) getaway.

Here you'll lounge in your private room or suite and get away from it all. Enjoy 24-hour tennis courts, a sparkling pool, a complete health spa and, of course, our pink sand beach. Our highly acclaimed culinary delights are never far away, thanks to our three restaurants.

Whatever you fancy, the Elbow Beach Hotel will most surely become your personal oasis in this trying world.

THE ELBOW BEACH HOTEL & BERMUDA

For Reservations Call Toll Free, (800) 223-7434.

Elbow Beach Hotel, Paget, Bermuda. John R. Jefferis, President and General Manager. (809) 236-3535. Telex: 32-68 ELBOW BAF



SPAR FOR THE COURSE

They're contentious and contagious. They beat spar. They're The McLaughlin Group. (Clockwise from left) Jack Germond, Eleanor Clift, John McLaughlin, Fred Barnes, Morton Kondracke, and Pat Buchanan.

Made possible by a grant from GE.



THE MCLAUGHLIN GROUP
Check your local listing for station and time.

We bring good things to life.

EDUC
3/5/92
2-94

TESTIMONY

S.B. 633

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 5, 1992 - 1:30 p.m.

BY: Robert Runnels, Jr., Executive Director
KANSAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and members of the Education Committee for a chance to appear and speak in support of S.B. 633.

I have been coming before you for 10 years ... and I know your sincerity in helping young people in Kansas get an excellent education.

In the 80's you pursued with great hopes tremendous increases in dollars for education in answer to the cry that more money would buy a better education for our children.

Over 10 years have passed and achievement scores for pupils in government schools have not gone up in the critical areas of reading, mathematics and science.

S.B. 633 offers a new and different opportunity ... it offers a "bright light of hope" for both children and parents who have **no choice** ... little hope of improving the future of their children.

By supporting this bill you bring a competitive force for change into our state school system.

You have expressed a great concern for efficiency as well as achievement. Most non-government schools are educating students in grades K-12 for around \$1,500 a year per student ... less than one half the \$4,000 plus in

EDUC
3/5/92
3-1

government schools. Even so, test scores consistently show that children educated at these low costs have higher achievement scores.

Higher achievement scores and lower cost are two big bonuses that can happen for poor children if you vote for choice ... S.B. 633.

Another benefit will be a lower drop out rate of students from poor families. Yes, I know it will take some courage on your part to do the right thing for kids and parents.

Yes, it will be a brave experiment but don't you honestly believe that a change is in order. Today you have the opportunity to reach out and help some parents and children who have little hope for improvement for their children without your support and help that this legislation can bring about.

Those that preach the "gloom and doom" of government schools if any choice legislation is passed are doing so to keep the status quo in place. Competition is the very life blood of our capitalistic system. You have to ask ... why are our school administrators so afraid of it.

The old way has not worked, national leaders are calling for a change ... President Bush ... Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander and business leaders ... to name a few.

Let's educate some of these kids out of poverty ... give some of them hope of a better future. You have the power

EDUC
3/5/92
3-2

Testimony - SB 633
March 5, 1992

3

to make a real difference in these young lives ... you
have the power to make a real difference for competitively
improving government schools by reporting S.B. 633 favorably
for passage.

Thank you for your interest!

EDUC
3/5/92
3-3

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 1992

SISTER MICHELLE FALTUS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS
CHAIRPERSON-KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill #633.

The concept of CHOICE DRAWS ITS FUNDAMENTAL STRENGTH from the principal at the heart of the democratic idea. Every adult American has the right to vote, the right to decide where to work, where to live. It's time to free parents to choose the schools that their children attend. This freedom will create a competitive climate to stimulate excellence in all schools--government schools and non-government schools .

CHOICE would free up "the supply side" of education, encouraging schools, government and non-government, to design and market to parents their own distinct programs. American education must get beyond the "all things to all people" approach that suggests each school can do everything well and can satisfy all parents. They can't

Some schools might appeal to the academically gifted; some would appeal to particular interests and needs. Schools are no more likely to turn away needy students than hospitals are likely to turn away needy patients, providing funding is made available. Undoubtedly, many non-government schools would take a special interest in meeting the needs of economically and socially disadvantaged kids. Many teachers got into the teaching profession in the first place because this was their personal mission. Marva Collins in Chicago is a former public school teacher who takes disadvantaged black kids and teaches them math, science and literature in an educational environment that few public schools could match.

CHOICE is about giving parents more control over the education of their children, and this is simply not possible without also giving them control over their education dollars. Parents have lost control of their schools in part because they have lost control of their school taxes. Schools cannot be democratized and parents can't be empowered, unless control over education dollars is part of the plan. Choice is not choice without the financial means to exercise it, especially for the tens of thousands of poor people who currently opt for non-government schools.

EDUC
3/5/92
4-1

American youngsters should not be restricted to those schools owned and operated by government. In the first edition of the book "Winning the Brain Race" by Kearnes & Doyle public school choice only was supported and the authors now say, no longer. Children should have the opportunity to attend private schools at public expense. The right to attend private schools is already enshrined in law in Pierce Vs. Society of Sisters, an Oregon case from the 1920's in which the United States Supreme Court ruled that the state could not force children to satisfy the compulsory attendance law in public schools only. It is time to extend this right to poor children, for while they may have the legal right to attend religious schools, they do not have the means to exercise that right". Phi Delta Kappan 3/92

The reason non-government schools work and public schools often don't is because the non-government schools are free from external regulatory controls. Non-government institutions, threatened by the potential loss of parents and revenues, are forced to give account for school operations, expenditures and academic achievements. It is absurd to assume that non-government schools, if left to their own devices, would do anything that would result in the loss of their means of survival.

Educational choice has gained its greatest impetus from parental concerns about control and accountability of public schools. It is in the public school system that parents lack control over content, discipline and values, not to mention their tax dollars. Obviously, existing school governance, with all of its heavy regulation, has not produced the accountability that parents expect. The ultimate regulation, and perhaps the only one that will work, is the one that permits parents to vote with their feet.

The research by John Chubb and Terry Moe concluded that school effectiveness is tied to school autonomy and freedom from administrative bureaucracy and other outside political influences. They concluded that choice was necessary precisely because it would lead to the deregulation and de-bureaucratization of schools. Bad schools cannot be regulated back to health; they must be deregulated and subjected to competitive influences. Re-structure, improve or die. Monopolies, however, die slowly. Not driven by dire necessity, they hang on until they are forced by circumstances to change. Monopolies have no place in a free society.

CHOICE would partially eliminate our current unfair system of double taxation for those who opt out of the public schools. Opponents often make the argument that "it's fine for parents to choose private schools, but when they do they should pay for it themselves". Why is it acceptable to make this decision for themselves, but not to make other decisions such as where to put

EDUC
3/5/92
4-2

their tax dollars? It is apparent that the real issue opponents are concerned about is not choice but rather power and control. No one makes this same argument when people decide to use private rather than public hospitals. Why are private institutions of learning K-12 any less legitimate than public institutions serving public purpose, particularly in view of our current support for private post secondary education?

The question we ask legislators is whether it is fair for parents to be forced to support public schools with private money. The dominance of public schools is only a recent phenomenon, and many are asking whether it is fair for parents to subsidize a public system- a monopoly, in effect-that is many times fundamentally at odds with their values and beliefs.

If we had a system of CHOICE in place taxpayers would save money when parents would choose non-public schools for their children. The state interest in seeing that all children receive a good education would be accomplished while using fewer tax dollars.

Senate Bill #633 calls for a school to enter into an agreement with the state. In the case of the non-government school the agreement shall be for the amount of tuition and fees regularly charged by the school or an amount equal to the maximum value of a voucher for the current school year, whichever is the lesser amount. This means that for each child in a non-public school K-12, the state would pay a maximum of \$1,500.00. This compares to an outlay more than three times that in state reimbursements if the child were attending the public schools K-12. The cost per student in the public school is well over \$4,000.00.

Opponents of CHOICE are hard pressed to offer a reform package that costs less and represents as significant an investment in innovation.

Ten years ago the total spending for public education was almost \$1 billion dollars, this year it is almost \$2 billion dollars. Are state legislators and the general public really prepared to spend \$4 billion dollars in 1999-2000? If so, let the status quo prevail. If not, there are only two choices: develop more efficient and effective methods of educating our children or permit the present system to fiscally collapse.

No one has calculated the savings to the state if CHOICE were to significantly improve the quality of our graduates. Many of our universities would not have to provide remedial classes in reading and writing for freshman students, and our state's business would not have to spend billions annually to train unqualified workers. Where tried, choice has produced more motivated students and has reduced truancy and drop out problems.

EDUC
3/5/92
4-3

Schools exist for the excellence in education of children. Dr. Lawrence Lezotte, the father of school improvement, says "Schools are either improving or declining--there can be no status quo". The State of Kansas is in the process of designing a program of improvement for all schools, public and non-government. Some school districts and some non-government schools as well are not interested in coming on board--they don't even know they need to improve. Seems to me something like CHOICE which would produce a spirit of competition would move them to either improve or see their doors closed. They should close. Schools should exist to provide excellence in education for all students.

CHOICE opponents are attempting to turn the entire debate over educational CHOICE into a "voucher" issue. One would assume by listening to the opponents argument that they support all forms of CHOICE except that which involves "vouchers". The truth is, however, that they are as strongly opposed to competition whether it involves non-government CHOICE or is confined to public schools. They simply oppose competition. We do the public schools no favor by sheltering them from the rigors of competition.

Those who oppose CHOICE typically come from education backgrounds. It is inexplicable that these individuals who are presumably committed to research and experimentation, would suddenly become close-minded and inflexible when the idea of choice is presented. Opponents of CHOICE even oppose experimentation with choice, because it would cost money. Their argument is as inconsistent as it is simple" "try anything at any cost, pour more money into the public schools, but oppose CHOICE because it will provide competition and call them to accountability.

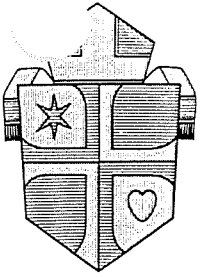
Our nation has tried every education reform that these same experts told us would work, often at great cost, and we must ask ourselves "is there is anything left to try". If this is not the time to try choice, when will it be?

In closing, I do so with several quotes, one from Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander. "Parents should be free to choose their children's schools whether public, private or parochial. How we ever got the idea in this country of telling people where they had to go to school, I'm not sure. I think it is an aberration, and alien thought, really un-American. The whole process of choice in American education could create competition, as it does in every other area of American life, and that would tend to improve all schools, not only for the rich, who already have choice; but for those without money as well".

EDUC
3/5/92
4-4

The second quote is from Reverend George Conway, Headmaster of St. Ann's Belfield School, Charlottesville, Va. and recently published in the Phi Delta Kappan. "I believe that school choice is coming. It is coming because the freedom to choose is a fundamentally American ideal. I also believe that the leadership of George Bush, the tenacity of Wisconsin state legislator Polly Williams, the intellectual persuasiveness of John Chubb of the Brookings Institute and pressure from the business community for a literate work force will bring fundamental change to education. But if I am wrong, I would like one small point about private education to be understood; private education does not need choice; America does".

EDUC
3/5/92
45



Diocese of Salina

Office of Education

103 N. Ninth
P.O. Box 825
Salina, KS 67402-0825
Phone (913) 827-8746

TESTIMONY FOR SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 633

FROM: NICK COMPAGNONE, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
SALINA CATHOLIC DIOCESE

SENATOR HARDER, AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE. I WISH TO THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE TIME TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF THE SENATE BILL NO. 633 PENDING BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE.

THE BILL HAS BEEN CITED AS THE KANSAS GI BILL FOR KIDS.

I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT FOCUS ON THE PARENTS OF THOSE KIDS.

AS THE PRIMARY MISSION OF OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WE MAKE THE BASIC ASSUMPTION THAT PARENTS ARE THE PRIMARY EDUCATORS OF THEIR CHILDREN AND HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN. OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED ON THOSE BASIC PRINCIPLES . WE VALUED THE FAMILY AND IT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FAMILY IN EDUCATING THEIR YOUNG TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

WE AS SOCIETY HAVE THE TAKEN RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THAT PARENTS HAVE THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO INSURE THAT RESPONSIBILITY. THUS WE HAVE PROVIDED ACCESS TO OUR SCHOOL SYSTEMS.

THE CHOICE BILL THAT IS BEFORE YOU ADVOCATES THE PARENTS ROLE AS PRIMARY EDUCATORS AND IS DESIGNED TO HELP PARENTS FULFILL THEIR PRIMARY ROLE. WE SUPPORT THIS BILL NOT AS A MEANS TO ADVOCATE THE DISMANTLING OF OUR CURRENT SYSTEM, BUT AS A WAY TO IMPROVE A SERVICE IN EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN.

EDUC
3/5/92
5-1

THE BILL THAT IS BEING PROPOSED WILL SUPPORT FAMILIES AT PROVERTY LEVEL WILL OPEN NEW LEVELS OF CHOICE FOR FAMILIES WHO DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE THAT OPTION. IT WILL ALSO SUPPORT FAMILIES THAT ARE MAKING AN ECONOMIC SACRIFICE TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATIONAL CHOICE.

WE HAVE SCHOOLS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE SALINA DIOCESE (WHICH ARE MAINLY RURAL SCHOOLS) WITH ENROLLMENTS HAVING AS HIGH AS 50% OF THE STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCHES. THIS BILL WOULD HELP ALLEVIATE THE FINANCIAL BURDENS TO SOME OF THESE FAMILIES .

SOME MAY ARGUE THAT PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS DO NOT OPERATE AT THE SAME LEVEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

THIS BILL ATTEMPTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE IS ACCOUNTABILITY OF ALL SCHOOLS.

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE ALL CURRENTLY ACCREDITATED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS, AND WE FULLY PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW ACCREDITATION STANDARDS MANDATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BY 1994. MANY OF OUR SCHOOLS ARE ALSO SEEKING ACCREDITATION BY THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.

WE FEEL WE HAVE QUALITY PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO OFFER TO FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE OF KANSAS.

THE SCHOOL CHOICE CONCEPT IS REALLY NO DIFFERENT THAN CHOICES IN OTHER AREAS THAT GIVE FAMILIES ASSISTANCE. TAKE A LOOK AT OUR HEALTH CARE. PRIVATE HOSPITALS OFFER A SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY. WHEN A COMMUNITY HAS TWO HOSPITALS, HEALTH CARE IS USUALLY BETTER BECAUSE EACH HOSPITAL HAS A SPECIALTY TO OFFER. MANY HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED TO INDIVIDUALS THROUGH GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE.

IN THE AREA OF CHILD CARE, THERE ARE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ASSISTS FAMILIES IN PROVIDING CHILD CARE FOR FAMILIES. I MIGHT ADD, THAT IN THE AREA OF CHILD CARE, PRE-SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS, MANY OF OUR CHURCH SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN OPERATING SUCH SERVICES FOR THE LAST

EDUC
3/5/92
5-2

TEARS. THESE PROGRAMS WOULD NOT BE IN EXISTENCE IF SOME FORMS OF ASSISTANCE WERE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO ASSIST FAMILIES WITH CHILD CARE.

AS A RESULT, WE HAVE BETTER CHILD CARE SERVICES AVAILABLE IN MANY KANSAS COMMUNITIES. COULD NOT THE SAME CASE BE MADE FOR EDUCATION?

WE FEEL THIS BILL IS FAIR.

IT IS FAIR TO OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR FAMILIES AND ALL CITIZENS OF KANSAS.

IT GIVES BACK THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT TO HAVE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE THAT ECONOMIC CHOICE.

AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRIVATE SCHOOL SECTOR, I WANT TO INSURE YOU, SENATORS THAT WE WANT TO BE PART OF EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP THAT REQUIRES COMMITMENT ON ALL LEVELS - STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, PARENTS AND ALL LEVELS OF THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE. PRESIDENT BUSH RECENTLY COMMENTED "AMERICANS DO NOT WANT TO LIVE IN THE PAST AND THINGS MOVE TOO QUICKLY, AND WE HAVE TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE FUTURE. OUR SCHOOLS MUST LEAD THE WAY ... NOT FOLLOW. WE NEED SCHOOLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - NOT MUSEUMS OF THE PAST."

THE CHOICE BILL IS CREATIVE, INNOVATIVE AND FULL OF PROMISES OF A NEW FUTURE IN EDUCATION.

EDUCATION REFORM WILL ALSO TAKE SOME COURAGEOUS DECISIONS TO INSURE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF OUR STATE.

THIS BILL IS ONE STEP TOWARD THAT SOLID FOUNDATION AND WE URGE YOUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS BILL.

THANK YOU FOR THE CONSIDERATION AND SUPPORT OF THIS BILL.

EDUC
3/5/92
5-3

TESTIMONY ON TRUE CHOICE IN EDUCATION
before the
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Daniel J. Elsener
Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Wichita Diocese
March 5, 1992

True choice in education is the effective, fair, and cost effective way to do the restructuring and reforming of schools, moreover, is the only way to ensure that every child in the State of Kansas has the opportunity for a quality education.

Choice Will Improve the Quality of Education

Over the last eight years our nation has bemoaned the poor quality of our educational system. The message of the National Commission on Excellence in Education's position is well stated in the following:

The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur -- others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments... We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinkable, unilateral educational disarmament! (1)

What has been done over the last 8 years to materially reverse this "educational disarmament"? Very Little! Consider the following:

- . Average SAT scores fell from 978 in 1960 to just 890 in 1980, rebounding only slightly to 903 in 1989, and now, the most recent scores (1990) show another decline in achievement scores.
- . The number of high school graduates scoring above 600 on the SAT verbal test fell from 116,630 in 1972 to 78,742 in 1986; the number of high scores on the SAT mathematics tests fell slightly from 179,586. (2)
- . Nearly one-quarter of government high school students drop out before graduation, one of the highest drop out rates in the Western World. Drop out rates among some minority groups and inter-city school systems reach as high as 50%.
- . The nation's most comprehensive assessment of student scholastic achievement, released in September 1990, found that "our present education performance is low and not improving: and that only 5 to 8 percent of 17 year olds are able to "carry out multiple-step problems, synthesize, draw conclusions and interpret." (3)

EDUC
3/5/92
6-1

- . The best students from the United States routinely finish at or near the bottom in international scholastic competitions. For example, the average Japanese student out-scores the top 5% of U.S. students enrolled in college-prep math courses. In biology, U.S. students ranked last, behind such nations as Singapore and Thailand. (4)

This lack of achievement sounds like a broken record; its heard over and over again in reports, newspaper articles, magazines, popular books, and recent research reports - our nation's schools are not working. Yes, there has been much talk, window dressing, and very sincere effort by some, but fundamental changes have not occurred.

If a business or industrial concern does not meet the needs of their customers, they loose those customers, and without improvement, go out of existence. Government schools, have a very strong bureaucracy protecting the position of the strong adult interest groups over the interest of the children and their families. The negative effects of the present institutional and bureaucratic control over government schools are well documented in the seminal research of Terry M. Moe and John E. Chubb. In their book, *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*, they succinctly state the thesis of their book in this way: "We believe existing institutions cannot solve the problem of schools, because they are the problem - and that the key to better schools is institutional reform." (5)

While the reports on our nation's educational system have been negative, and rightfully so, there are some examples of how schools can be more effectively organized, administered and governed to improve academic achievement. Many of these examples are found in the parochial schools of this nation. As an example, the Catholic schools in this country produce students that scored significantly better than their public school counterparts in math, science, and reading. (6)

One of the most dramatic pieces of research on the difference between public and Catholic high school achievement came from a 1987 study by Dr. James S. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer, titled *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities*. Using government generated test data Dr. Coleman found that students of similar socioeconomic status, I.Q., family background, etc. made significantly greater gain in achievement (0.9 to 1.8 grade equivalents) from their sophomore to their senior year. (7) In other words, like students can attain significantly greater academic achievement because of the nature of the school's organization, priorities, and focus. The most significant finding in this study is the fact that the Catholic schools had the greatest positive effect on the lowest achieving and most disadvantaged students. The Coleman research was further validated in Moe and Chubb's research on the effects that organization and institutional governance have on student intellectual achievement and growth. Essentially, they found that some schools were much more effective than other in producing student academic growth and reducing student dropout rates. (8) The very nature of the government schools regarding their structure and organization mitigate against the traits of the more effective schools; therefore, the nongovernmental schools were the schools that most often showed the greatest growth in student achievement.

What will vouchers do to help reorganize and restructure schools in such a way that schools will be more effective? Research and practical experience tells us much about effective schools. The traits of these effective schools are: they have a focused and understood mission (the faculty, parents, and students know why the school exists), strong parental support and involvement, high standards, and problems are owned and solved by the local school administration, teachers, and communities surrounding the school. When parents choose the schools they want for their children, the ability of the school to achieve the effective school traits is greatly increased.

Vouchers Provide Fairness and Equity in Education

A voucher plan will provide our most needy parents and students with options they do not now have. The wealthiest, most affluent in our society presently have a good deal of choice. Families with resources use private schooling or move to a neighborhood or suburb that meets the needs and desires of their children. Quality education, the most powerful vehicle to take a child where their dreams call them, should not be predicated on the neighborhood in which you live or the economic status of your parents. We need a system that allows families the choice to access the quality education they need for their children.

Additionally, the voucher system will certainly create an environment where many types of schools, meeting basic state standards, will be created. These schools will allow for parents to choose schools that have creative teaching, emphasis on certain academic content, and the values that meet the needs and goals of the family. One bureaucratic school system does not meet the needs of every family any more than one manufacturer of automobiles could meet the needs of every auto customer. Certainly, entrepreneurship and market motivation would revolutionize what is now a lethargic government dominated school system. Would government schools survive? The good ones.

It is interesting that our nation has endorsed choice in almost every facet of our social, economic, and spiritual life -- but not in education. Moreover, our government (state and nation) has a long history of financial support of choice in higher education. Most recently, the federal government's child care legislative mandates choice in child care programs. Why is it that the elementary and secondary schools have been excluded? Is it for children's well being or the well-being of the powerful teacher unions and educational establishment that families are blocked from choice in elementary and high schools? Who knows best the type of education and values a child needs, the unions and bureaucracy, or the families? The answers are obvious to many in this country. Moreover, we should not be duped into choice that is limited to choice in government schools alone. Now that choice seems inevitable, the educational establishment is trying to cut its losses in this way. That is akin to saying: buy any option of General Motor car, but not others, and be content with those choices. It is not fair and it is not adequate if we truly want to reform and improve our schools.

Finally, it is not fair, nor is it in our state's or nation's best interest to force a child to attend a school or school system that is inferior in achievement or incongruous with their needs or values. We are too great of a nation with too great of aspirations to let this education morass we find our nation in impair our future.

The "Public School" Is Not A True American Tradition - Freedom Is

Actually, the one government school system is a relatively new development in American society. Until the first few decades of the 1900's, there was really nothing that could meaningfully be called a public "system" of education in the United States. (9) There is little or no support for a monopolistic school system in the documentation or intent of our founding fathers. The good part of our history showed much greater tolerance for the teaching of religious values in schools, many various kinds of schools, and public support for many kinds of schools. The winners in creating this "one best system" of assembly line education were some elements of business, the middle class, the education establishment, especially, the later, for they would run the new bureaucratic system. The losers, the lower classes, religious minorities, and citizens of rural communities. (10) Now, it is assumed that this is the system that always was, it is not.

The Voucher System Is Constitutional

If choice legislation's focus is, materially and by intent, to benefit the child and to serve the public good, voucher bills will be constitutional. The courts have spoken in several cases regarding the constitutionality of tax dollars supporting the Catholic, Lutheran, or other denomination schools. By giving the voucher directly to the parent to spend where they deemed appropriate, excessive entanglement is avoided. It is best stated by David W. Kirkpatrick:

As for the legal or constitutional question the U.S. Supreme Court has never ruled that a general voucher system violates the Constitution's First Amendment separating church and state. A number of voucher plans have been ruled unconstitutional, but in each instance they were limited to private schools. (11)

The critics of vouchers use the constitutional concerns as a way to divert attention from the merits of vouchers.

Vouchers And Choice Will Make Education More Cost Effective

A Heartland institute study that researched the cost of education in the U.S.A. and its relationship to inflation and educational performance made some alarming findings. They are:

Most states and some localities boosted taxes and spending for government schools during the 1980's. Between 1982 and 1988, state aid to education increased by 57 percent nominally and 31 percent in real terms. Revenues produced by property tax levies also increased faster than personal income during much of the 1980's. Overall, inflation-adjusted per-pupil spending on government schools has increased 26 percent since 1980 and has nearly quadrupled since 1952. (12)

It seems that increased spending has not turned the corner for educational improvement. Highly credited researchers have made the following observations:

- . Eric A. Hanushek (Rochester University) found that "detailed research spanning two decades and observing performance in many different educational settings provides strong and consistent evidence that expenditures are not systematically related to student achievement.
- . Herbert J. Walberg (University of Illinois - Chicago), in a detailed study of school districts in New Jersey, found that "per-student financial expenditures on education are insignificantly or inconsistently associated with achievement test scores. Low spending districts on average achieve as well as high spending districts of the same SES [socioeconomic status]."
- . William Sander (DePaul University), in a study of school spending and student achievement in Illinois, concluded that "spending had a weak positive effect on student achievement, but only when higher spending was used to pay higher teacher salaries, and even then only when higher salaries were used to attract teachers with advanced degrees and more teaching experience. Higher per-pupil spending, even when used to employ better teachers, had no effect at all on student achievement in the Chicago Public Schools."
- . John Chubb (Brookings Institution) and Terry Moe (Stanford University), who conducted an extensive national study of school inputs and student achievement, found that "better schools probably do not require lots of expensive equipment or huge new buildings or vast libraries. Nor do they require paying teachers substantially more or hiring an army of them to teach a diverse array of courses. In our view, the performance problems of the public schools have little or nothing to do with inadequate funding, and they cannot be corrected by digging deeper into the public purse.
- . Richard Vedder and Lowell Gallaway (both at Ohio University), summarizing their findings in a study of spending and student achievement in 62 school districts in Ohio, say that "districts that spend more money per pupil did not, typically, have a higher proportion of students who passed the competency test, holding other factors (household income, district size, and teachers salary) constant. In fact, there was an observed negative relationship between performance and spending that was almost significant at the five percent level (that is, we are almost 95 percent certain that the negative relationship did not occur by chance)."

Merely feeding this leviathan called the educational establishment resources has not, nor will it, solve the government schools' problem. Choice is the way to fundamentally restructure and reform the way we do education in this country. Tinkering will not do, we need leadership that is willing to shift paradigms and meet the challenge of the 21st century with an educational system equal to the challenge and opportunity we face. Choice will not be without challenge, but it provides us the structure and fundamental reform of education that will make it possible for us to progress. The ultimate question, is choice better than what we have now? Research and modern experiences say yes.

ENDNOTES

1. *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, a Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 26, 1983). p.5.
2. U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education: A Statistical Report*, 1987 edition, page 22.
3. U.S. Department of Education, *Accelerating Academic Achievement: A Summary of Findings from 20 years of N.A.E.P.* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Educational Research and Improvement, September 1990, p.3.
4. Joseph Bast and Robert Wittmann, *The Case For Educational Choice*", A Heartland Policy Study, May 1991, p.3.
5. John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, *Politics, Markets and American Schools* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1990).
6. *National Assessment of Educational Progress Proficiency in Mathematics, Reading, and Science 1985-1986 Catholic and Public Schools Compared, Final Report 1989.*
7. James S. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer, *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities*, p.66.
8. Chubb, op. cit., pp. 72-96.
9. Ibid., p.3.
10. Ibid., p.4.
11. David W. Kirkpatrick, *Choice in Schooling: A Case For Tuition Vouchers*,p.4.
12. Bast, op. cit., p.31.

EDUC
3/5/92
6-7