

2-1-2008

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Baseline Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

Brian Kisida
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Laura I. Jensen
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

James C. Rahn
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Patrick J. Wolf
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/scdp>



Part of the [Education Policy Commons](#), [Public Policy Commons](#), and the [Social Policy Commons](#)

Citation

Kisida, B., Jensen, L. I., Rahn, J. C., & Wolf, P. J. (2008). The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Baseline Descriptive Report on Participating Schools. *School Choice Demonstration Project*. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/scdp/44>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Education Reform at ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in School Choice Demonstration Project by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact scholar@uark.edu, uarepos@uark.edu.

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Baseline Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

Brian Kisida
Laura Jensen
James C. Rahn
Patrick J. Wolf

SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation Report #3
February 2008





The University of Arkansas

was founded in 1871 as the flagship institution of higher education for the state of Arkansas.

Established as a land grant university, its mandate was threefold: to teach students, conduct research, and perform service and outreach.

The College of Education and Health Professions established the Department of Education Reform in 2005. The department's mission is to advance education and economic development by focusing on the improvement of academic achievement in elementary and secondary schools. It conducts research and demonstration projects in five primary areas of reform: teacher quality, leadership, policy, accountability, and school choice.

The School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP), based within the Department of Education Reform, is an education research center devoted to the non-partisan study of the effects of school choice policy and is staffed by leading school choice researchers and scholars. Led by Dr. Patrick J. Wolf, Professor of Education Reform and Endowed 21st Century Chair in School Choice, SCDP's national team of researchers, institutional research partners and staff are devoted to the rigorous evaluation of school choice programs and other school improvement efforts across the country. The SCDP is committed to raising and advancing the public's understanding of the strengths and limitations of school choice policies and programs by conducting comprehensive research on what happens to students, families, schools and communities when more parents are allowed to choose their child's school.

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Baseline Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

Brian Kisida

Laura Jensen

James C. Rahn

Patrick J. Wolf

SCDP Comprehensive Longitudinal Evaluation of the
Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

Report #3

February 2008



**SCHOOL CHOICE
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

School Choice Demonstration Project

Department of Education Reform

University of Arkansas

201 Graduate Education Building

Fayetteville, AR 72701

479-575-6345

<http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Research.html>



Executive Summary

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) began as the nation's first urban school voucher initiative in the fall of 1990. Initially, seven secular schools were authorized to enroll the 341 students who first participated in the program. By the 2006-07 academic year, a total of 17,749 voucher students were attending one of the 122 private secular and religious schools that participated in the MPCP or "Choice" program for the entire year.

The MPCP students made up a large portion of the total enrollment for most participating schools. The average school-level percentage of MPCP students in these schools was 77.1 percent. More than 60 percent of participating schools had student enrollments that were greater than 80 percent Choice students, while 54 percent had MPCP enrollment percentages above 90 percent.

Collectively, private schools participating in the MPCP in 2006-07 offered the full range of grade options, from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Eighty-seven percent of schools served elementary students, while 78 percent served middle school students. Twenty-one percent offered high school.

The participating schools represent at least ten distinct religious affiliations, non-religious schools that follow a religious tradition, and purely secular schools. Of the 120 schools whose religious identity could be discerned:

- 95 of the schools identified themselves as religious (79.2%)
- 7 were classified as non-religious with a religious tradition (5.8%)
- 18 identified themselves as non-religious (15%)

Private schools participating in the MPCP offer an array of programs typically found in traditional public schools. High percentages of schools offer music programs (83.3%), arts programs (79.8%), after-school programs (72.9%), and programs for students with learning problems (67.7%). Roughly half of the schools incorporate student government, foreign language programs, and programs with special instructional approaches. Fewer schools offer gifted and talented programs and programs for non-English speakers.

Many private schools participating in the Choice program incorporate support staff and facilities typically found in traditional schools. Most provide individual tutors (70 percent), slightly fewer than half provide guidance counselors (46 percent), while one-fourth have a school nurse. More than 80 percent of the schools have a computer lab, gym, and a cafeteria. Slightly fewer have a library (73 percent) and lunches prepared at the school (69 percent).

Compared to MPS schools, MPCP schools are much smaller and have a lower student-teacher ratio. Both MPCP and MPS schools enroll a high percentage of minorities. However, the MPCP schools exhibit modestly lower school-level percentages of minorities—an average of 78 percent compared to 88 percent in MPS.

Compared to MPS reported data, the teachers at participating MPCP schools exhibit different attributes when it comes to certain common measures of teacher quality. On the one hand, an average of 43% of the teachers at MPS schools have a Master's Degree, while only 29% of the teachers at MPCP schools who responded to the

SCDP survey did. On the other hand, surveys from Choice schools indicated that the average teacher at an MPCP school had more years of experience than is typical of MPS teachers.

This report and its companion reports are the first in a series of annual reports that will be conducted by the SCDP. Future reports will build upon this baseline report of descriptive characteristics by monitoring changes and trends at the school level within the choice landscape in Milwaukee.

The comprehensive longitudinal evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, of which this report is a part, is being conducted by the School Choice Demonstration Project at the University of Arkansas in collaboration with researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Westat. This project is being funded by a diverse set of philanthropies including the Annie E. Casey, Joyce, Kern Family, Lynde and Harry Bradley, Robertson, and Walton Family foundations. We thank them for their generous support and acknowledge that the actual content of this report is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect any official positions of the various funding organizations, the University of Arkansas, the University of Wisconsin, or Westat. We also express our gratitude to MPS, the private schools in the MPCP, and the state Department of Public Instruction for willing cooperation, advice, and assistance.



Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Baseline Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

This report is the first in a series of annual reports produced by the School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP) that will provide descriptive information about the schools participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). Following a brief history of the MPCP, this year's report contains a set of baseline descriptive statistics about schools participating in the MPCP or "Choice" program and provides comparisons to Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) whenever possible.¹

Data and Methodology

During the period of May-July of 2007 the School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP) administered a survey to the principals of the 122 private schools participating in the MPCP.² The initial set of surveys were distributed at the May 1, 2007 MPCP Pupil Assignment Council meeting in Milwaukee, WI. In order to increase the response rate, a second wave of surveys was mailed to all participating schools on May 24, 2007. Over the months of June-July 2007 the SCDP team followed up with reminders to schools that had not returned surveys through telephone calls and e-mail. At completion, the SCDP received 97 surveys from the MPCP schools, which equates to a final response rate of 79.5 percent. Known characteristics of non-respondents are detailed in Appendix A. Additional data were provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Data for the Milwaukee Public Schools were gathered from the Wisconsin DPI, Wisconsin's Information Network for Successful Schools (WINNS) database, and the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Overview of School Choice in Milwaukee

Change in the Sectors from 1990-2007

Currently, families in Milwaukee have an array of government-funded educational options. In addition to being able to choose any traditional school within MPS, estimates indicate that more than 30 percent of the city's 130,000 school-age children take advantage of non-traditional forms of government-funded school choice.

-
- 1 We gratefully acknowledge the helpful suggestions of advisory board members John E. Brandl, David E. Campbell, Anneliese Dickman, Jeffrey Henig, Tom Loveless, and Thomas Nechyba on an earlier version of this report. Any remaining errors are the responsibility of the authors.
 - 2 For purposes of this report, the schools that fall under the guidance of a larger umbrella organization are separated by their individual campus whenever possible. Furthermore, we only report on schools that remained in the MPCP until the end of the 2006-07 school year. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, seven schools closed, dropped out of the MPCP, or were barred from participating in the MPCP due to compliance issues at some point during the 2006-07 school year. See Appendix B for a list of 2006-07 MPCP schools.

Pre-1990, a federal court desegregation order largely dictated the government-funded educational options available for Milwaukee parents and children. For most students within MPS, the 1976 order meant that students were assigned to a neighborhood school or a more distant school based on their race. A select number of children attended specialty or magnet MPS schools. A voluntary racial integration aid program (Chapter 220) allowed a limited number of Milwaukee's minority children to attend schools in suburban school districts.

Beginning with the enactment of the MPCP in 1990, the Wisconsin Legislature has greatly expanded the number of educational options available to Milwaukee parents. Most notably, MPS was empowered to authorize charter schools in 1993;³ legislation to approve the participation of religious schools in the MPCP was passed in 1995 and implemented in 1998 after surviving a court challenge; and the legislature raised the enrollment cap on the MPCP in 1993, 1995, and 2005. Furthermore, in 1997 the Legislature enacted a statewide "open enrollment" program that allows all parents, regardless of race, to apply to attend public schools outside their district.

Given the history of the Milwaukee educational marketplace, it is likely the educational options available to parents will continue to change. The following section of this report will outline the various educational choices available to Milwaukee parents during the 2006-07 school year.

Milwaukee's Current Educational Options

In addition to being able to choose any traditional school within the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), families can also choose from the following educational options regardless of where they live in Milwaukee:

- MPS Specialty Schools
- Contracted Agency Schools
- Partnership Schools
- MPS Small High Schools
- Charter Schools
 - MPS Instrumentality Charter Schools (MPS employs staff)
 - MPS Non-Instrumentality Charter Schools (staff non-MPS employees)
 - Charter Schools Authorized by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
 - Charter Schools Authorized by the City of Milwaukee Common Council
- Chapter 220 Program
- Statewide Inter-district Open Enrollment
- Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

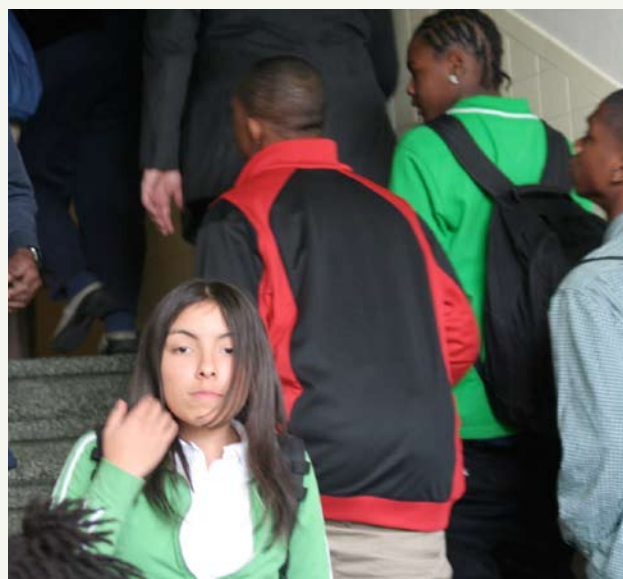
³ UW-Milwaukee, the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Area Technical College were approved as additional charter school authorizers in 1997.

MPS Specialty Schools, Partnership Schools, Contracted Agency Schools, and MPS Small High Schools

These non-traditional MPS school types provide an array of options for families in Milwaukee. For example, MPS Specialty Schools offer special programs, such as the arts. Partnership schools operate with a contract between the school district and private, non-sectarian, non-profit agencies. Specialty schools serve only those students who have been identified by the school district as potential dropouts and therefore “at-risk” of not graduating from high school. Contracted agency schools are also contracted by MPS, but unlike partnership schools, these schools are not restricted to educating “at-risk” students. Additionally, MPS’ new Small High Schools are now part of the educational landscape. They can serve up to 400 students and specialize in unique educational approaches.

Charter Schools

Open to children residing in Milwaukee, charter schools are public schools that are exempt from various rules and procedures. Milwaukee’s charter schools are sponsored by Milwaukee Public Schools (instrumentality and non-instrumentality), the City of Milwaukee, or the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. In 2006-07 there were 56 charter schools in Milwaukee enrolling 16,152 students. Of these 56 schools, there were 29 MPS instrumentality charter schools, 13 MPS non-instrumentality charter schools, 9 charter schools authorized by UW-Milwaukee, and 5 authorized by the City of Milwaukee Common Council.



School Integration (Chapter 220) Aid

The Chapter 220 program began in 1976 (Chapter 220, Laws of 1975) and was substantially expanded in 1987 as a result of a 1987 federal court-approved settlement in the Milwaukee School Desegregation Case.⁴ The purpose of Chapter 220 was to achieve some measure of voluntary racial integration. Chapter 220 allows minority students from Milwaukee to attend suburban public schools and white students from suburban public schools to attend public schools in Milwaukee. The stated purpose of Chapter 220 is to “facilitate the transfer of students between schools and school districts to promote cultural and racial integration in education where students and their parents desire such transfer and where schools and school districts determine such transfers serve educational interests.”⁵ During the 2006-07 school year 23 suburban districts and approximately 3,330 students (2,865 Milwaukee students and approximately 400 suburban students) participated in the Chapter 220 program.

4 Russ Kiva, Informational Paper 28, “School Integration (Chapter 220) Aid”, Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2007.

5 Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau’s January 2007 School Integration (Chapter 220) Aid Information paper.

Inter-district Public School Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment, first implemented in 1998 (1997 WI Act 27), allows students to attend public schools outside of their residentially assigned district if there are seats available in that district. During the 2006-07 school year 3,719 Milwaukee students participated in the open enrollment program.

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) is a tax-payer funded voucher program that allows low-income students to attend a private school (including religious schools as of 1998) in the City of Milwaukee. The MPCP, the nation's oldest and largest urban school voucher program,⁶ started in 1990 (1989 WI Act 336) with seven nonsectarian schools enrolling 341 students.

To be eligible for the program in 1990, families were required to live in Milwaukee and have a household income equal to 175 percent of the poverty line or lower. In addition to the family's residency and income qualifications, a student's grade and enrollment status the previous school year had to meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. the child was enrolled in MPS (i.e. moving from public);
2. the child participated in the MPCP the previous year (i.e. renewing);
3. the child was enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 in a non-MPCP participating private school (i.e. moving from non-MPCP private); or
4. the child was not enrolled in any school (i.e. rising kindergartner).

The prior-year enrollment qualifications were eliminated via 2005 WI Act 125. Act 125 also modified the income guidelines. While the 175 percent benchmark was maintained for entry into the program, a household's income could subsequently rise as high as 220 percent of the poverty line before a student lost income-eligibility for the program.

Initially the MPCP was capped at 1 percent (900) of the total Milwaukee Public Schools enrollment (approximately 90,000 at that time), with the additional limit that no more than 49 percent of an individual school's students could be enrolled in the MPCP. The cap was raised to 1.5 percent/65 percent limit (WI Act 16) in 1993 and to 15%/no limit in 1995 (WI Act 27). Act 27 also made religious schools eligible for participation in the MPCP; although, that eligibility was delayed while the constitutional questions surrounding religious school participation were being determined by the courts.

The MPCP's first major enrollment surge occurred during the 1998-99 school year following the Wisconsin Supreme Court's ruling that religious schools could participate in the program. Close to 6,000 students attended one of 83 schools participating in the MPCP during the 1998-99 academic year -- a 400% increase

⁶ Since the 1870s the states of Maine and Vermont have operated voucher-type "tuitioning" programs for families in rural communities that lack public schools.

from the preceding year. Over the next seven years, enrollment in the MPCP steadily increased until a statutory cap of 16,500 students was reached in 2005. In March of 2006, Governor Jim Doyle signed SB 618 which lifted the cap to 22,500. During the 2006-07 school year 122 private schools participated in the MPCP, enrolling 17,749 students with MPCP vouchers.

MPCP Participating Schools – Basic Characteristics

Participation in the Program

Each year the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) publishes unaudited student enrollment figures for all the schools participating in the MPCP as of the third Friday in September. Based on DPI reports, there were 15,887 students using MPCP vouchers to attend 123 private school campuses that participate in the program during the entire 2005-06 school year (see Table 1). Including nine schools that joined the MPCP for the first time in 2006-07, a total of 122⁷ schools participated in the MPCP for the entire 2006-07 academic year, with 17,749 students enrolled in the schools using MPCP vouchers.

Table 1. Change in MPCP Population of Schools: 2005-06 to 2006-07

School Year	Schools Participating in the MPCP for the Entire Year	Total MPCP Student Enrollment based upon third Friday in September headcount
2005-06	123	15,887
2006-07	122	17,749

NOTES: Figures for this chart were based upon communications with MPCP administrators at the Wisconsin DPI as well as the DPI's enrollment charts which are available at <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sms/geninfo.html>. Student enrollment counts are unaudited.

According to MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey, most of the schools that participated in 2006-07 existed prior to the establishment of the program in 1991 (table 2). However, 32% of the participating schools were created after the program began. Over half of these schools (54.8%) indicated that the MPCP was a major factor in their decision to open a school, while an additional 16.1 percent said that it was a minor factor.

⁷ When known to us, we count multi-campus schools differently than does the DPI. We count each campus as a separate school, following the standard employed by the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. The DPI counts some multi-campus schools as a single school for administrative and reporting purposes. Since there were two multi-campus schools with a total of five campuses participating in the MPCP through all of 2006-07, the DPI's official count of 119 schools is consistent with our count of 122 participating campuses. Similarly, DPI's official count of 119 participating schools in 2005-06 equates to our count of 123 different campuses.

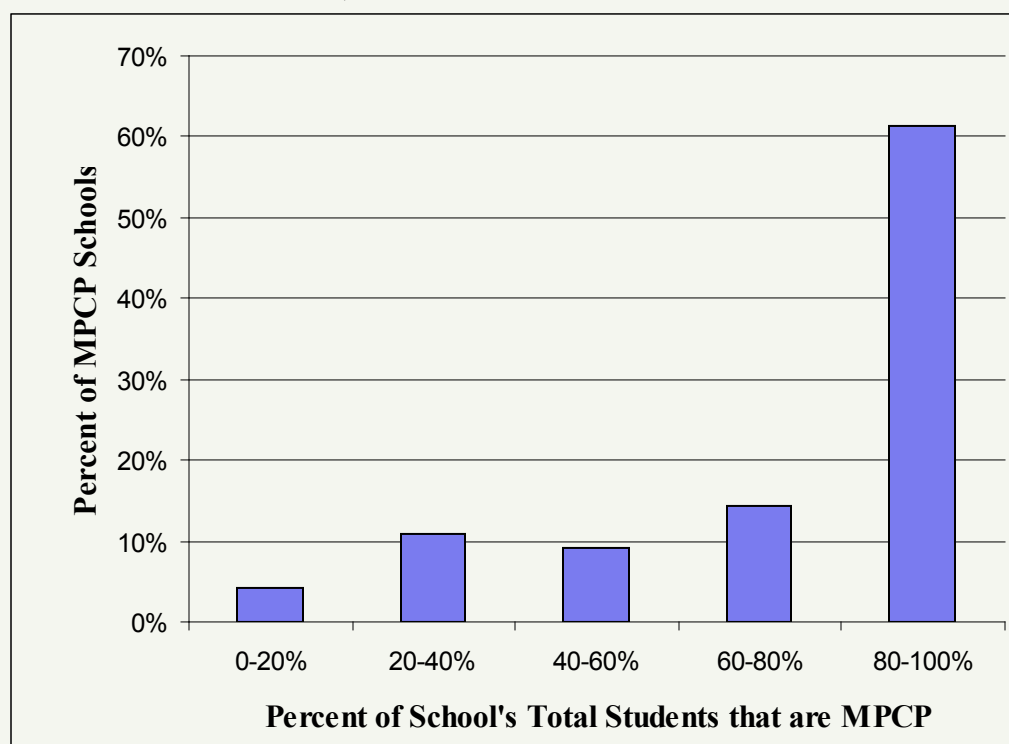
Table 2: School Participation in the MPCP

Did school exist prior to the establishment of MPCP?	Total	Percent	Valid N
Yes	66	68.0	97
No	31	31.9	97
Was the MPCP a factor in your decision to open a school?	Total	Percent	Valid N
Not a factor in our decision	6	19.4	31
A minor factor in our decision	5	16.1	31
A major factor in our decision	17	54.8	31
Don't know	3	9.7	31

NOTES: Figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses.

Generally speaking, MPCP students made up a large part of participating schools' total enrollment—the average school-level percentage of MPCP students in these schools was 77.1 percent. Over 60 percent of participating schools had student enrollments that were greater than 80 percent MPCP students, while 54 percent had MPCP enrollment percentages above 90 percent (figure 1).⁸

⁸ Because these enrollment figures are from DPI's unaudited list, it is possible that MPCP enrollment levels are slightly overestimated, as it is typical for some attrition to occur throughout the school year.

Figure 1: Percent of Schools by MPCP Percent of School's Enrollment

NOTE: N=117 schools, with multi-campus schools reported by DPI as a single entity excluded in this case.

SOURCES: Enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list available at <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sms/geninfo.html>. In the few cases where reported MPCP enrollment exceeded reported total enrollment, MPCP percentages were truncated at 100 percent. In four cases, updated administrative data from the SCDP school survey were substituted for initial DPI enrollment data.

MPCP Participating Schools – Grade-Levels Served

Collectively, private schools participating in the MPCP in 2006-07 offered the full range of grade options, from Kindergarten to 12th grade (table 3). Eighty-seven percent of schools served elementary students, while 78 percent served middle school students. Twenty-one percent offered high school.

Table 3: Types of MPCP Schools by Levels Served

School Type	Count	Percent of all MPCP Schools
Offers elementary school	108	88.5
Offers middle school	95	77.9
Offers high school	26	21.3

NOTES: Data taken from the Wisconsin DPI's Directory of 2006-07 MPCP Schools. School classified as offering elementary if they offered any grade within the K-5 range; middle school if they offered any grade within the 6-8 range, and high school if they offered any grade within the 9-12 range.

MPCP Participating Schools – Religious Status

Since the 1998 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision, private school options for the MPCP have included both religious and secular schools. While most MPCP schools have a religious character, as a group they are religiously diverse. No single religious affiliation enrolls more than 37 percent of all MPCP students.

Participants include (table 4) schools representing at least ten distinct religious affiliations, non-religious schools that follow a religious tradition, and purely secular schools.

- Ninety-five of the schools identified themselves as religious (79.2%),
- 7 were classified as non-religious with a religious tradition (5.8%), and
- 18 of the participating schools identified themselves as non-religious (15%).

Table 4: Religious Affiliations of MPCP Schools

Religious Identification of Schools	Total	Percent of participating schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	Percent of MPCP Students Attending
Religious	95	79.2	13884	78.3
Non-Religious (with a religious tradition)	7	5.8	1386	7.8
Non-religious (secular)	18	15.0	2458	13.9

NOTES: Valid N=120. Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2006-07 MPCP Principal's Survey (n=97). Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. The religious identity of two schools could not be determined. Total MPCP enrollment for the 120 schools that had religiosity identified is 17,728 based on MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list available at <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sms/geninfo.html>.



Of the 95 schools (79%) that identified themselves as religious, 36 (30%) were Catholic, 26 (22%) were Lutheran, 17 (14%) were non-denominational Christian, and five (4.2%) were Church of God in Christ. Other religious affiliations of MPCP schools included schools that were Apostolic/Pentecostal, Baptist, Islamic, Seventh Day Adventist, and Jewish (table 5).

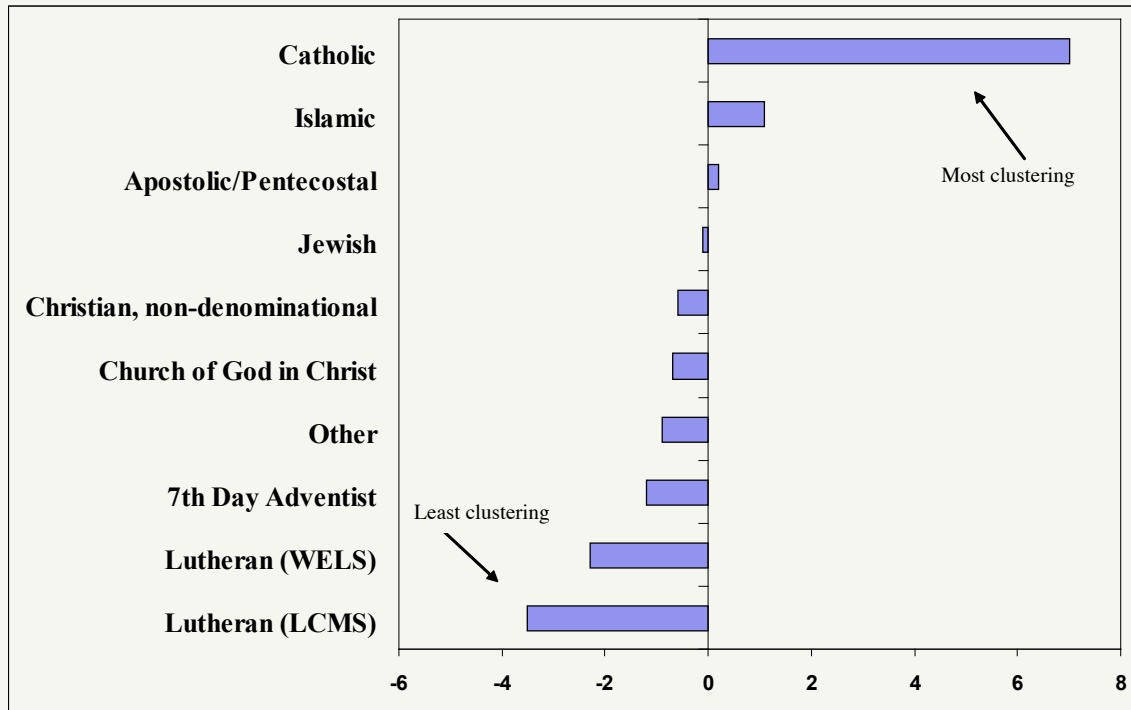
Table 5: Affiliations of Religious MPCP Schools

Affiliation of Religious Schools	Total	Percent of Participating Schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	Percent of MPCP Students Attending
Catholic	36	30.0	6556	37.0
Christian, non-denominational	17	14.2	2414	13.6
Lutheran (WELS)	14	11.7	1663	9.4
Lutheran (LCMS)	12	10.0	1152	6.5
Church of God in Christ	5	4.2	621	3.5
Other	11	9.2	1478	8.3

NOTES: Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2006-07 MPCP Principal's Survey (n=97). Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list available at <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sms/geninfo.html>. Lutheran (ELCA) was also included as a category on the survey, but generated no cases.

When observed within the context of MPCP enrollment levels (column 3 compared to column 5), some notable clustering can be observed within the available options. Explicitly, clustering is evident when the percentage of MPCP students attending a school with a particular characteristic exceeds the percentage of schools offering that same characteristic. This is a noteworthy trend, though it is important to keep in mind that multiple explanations can be inferred from this clustering. While it hints at the preferences for particular characteristics among choice families, many other factors can influence enrollment rates. For example, either the size of a school and available seats or its location could influence enrollment levels independently, regardless of other school characteristics. Thus, while student clustering is an important description of the types of school experiences students are receiving, readers are cautioned against drawing casual inferences as to the exact forces behind it.

The most notable pattern of clustering is that while 30 percent of all MPCP schools are Catholic, they enroll 37% of MPCP students. Additionally, though 21.7 percent of schools are Lutheran, they enroll only 15.9 percent of MPCP students. Figure 2 shows the differences between the percentage of students attending schools of each religious affiliation and the percentage of participating schools that identify with a particular religious affiliation.

Figure 2. Clustering in MPCP Schools by Religious Affiliation

NOTES: Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2006-07 MPCP Principal's Survey (n=97). Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. MPCP enrollments based on DPI's unaudited count available at <http://dpi.state.wi.us/sms/geninfo.html>. Lutheran (ELCA) was also included as a category on the survey, but generated no cases. Bars represent the difference between the percent of MPCP students attending each type of school and the percent of participating schools of each religious affiliation.

MPCP Participating Schools – Programs Offered: 2006-07

Private schools participating in the MPCP offer an array of programs typically found in traditional public schools (table 6). High percentages of schools offer music programs (83.3%), arts programs (79.8%), after-school programs (72.9%), and programs for students with learning problems (67.7%). Roughly half of the schools incorporate student government, foreign language programs, and programs with special instructional approaches. Fewer schools offer gifted and talented programs and programs for non-English speakers.

Table 6: School Programs in MPCP Schools

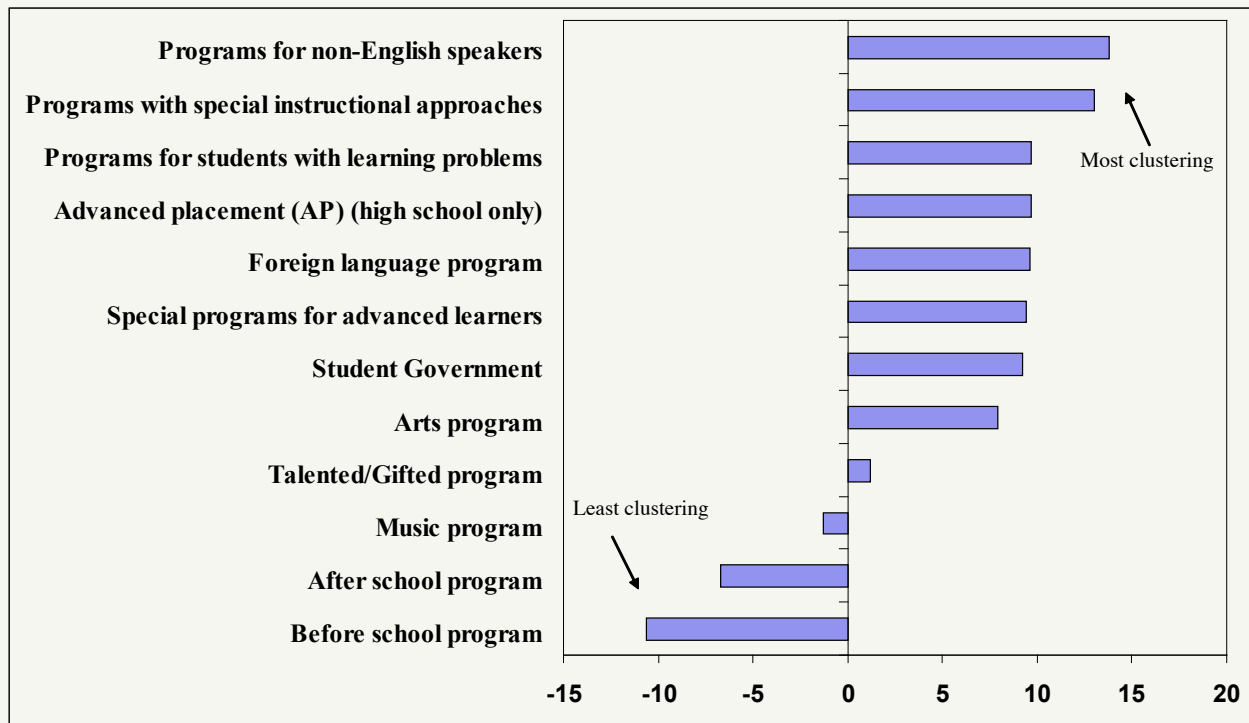
Programs	Total	Percent of Schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	Percent of MPCP Students Attending	Valid School N	Valid Student N
Music program	80	83.3	12053	82.0	96	14692
Arts program	75	79.8	12773	87.7	94	14564
After school program	70	72.9	9722	66.2	96	14692
Programs for students with learning problems	65	67.7	11375	77.4	96	14692
Programs with special instructional approaches ⁹	48	51.1	9231	64.1	94	14394
Student Government	50	52.1	8994	61.3	96	14676
Foreign language program	47	49.5	8559	59.1	95	14482
Before school program	47	49.5	5669	38.9	95	14559
Special programs for advanced learners	39	41.9	7385	51.3	93	14389
Talented/Gifted program	18	19.0	2895	20.2	95	14361
Programs for non-English speakers	16	17.4	4390	31.2	92	14073
Advanced placement (AP) (high school only)	10	16.7	2620	26.4	60	9923

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (n=97). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. International Baccalaureate programs was also included in the survey but generated no affirmative responses.

Moreover, as was the case with schools' religious affiliations, enrollment levels suggest that students are clustered within schools that have particular programs (figure 3). In all but three instances, the percentage of students attending a school with a particular program is larger than the percent of all schools that offer the program. As previously mentioned, this is a noteworthy finding, yet the cause of this clustering is somewhat difficult to interpret. While it suggests that there is greater demand among choice families for schools with certain characteristics, other explanations -- such as a positive correlation between the size of a school and the amount of programs offered -- could be driving these results.

⁹ E.g., Success for All, Reading Recovery, Direct Instruction etc.

Figure 3. Clustering in MPCP Schools by Programs Offered



NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (n=97). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. Bars represent the difference between the percent of MPCP students attending each type of school and the percent of participating schools that offer a particular program.



MPCP Participating Schools – Support Staff and Facilities

Private schools participating in the MPCP incorporate support staff and facilities typically found in traditional schools. Most provide individual tutors (70 percent), slightly fewer than half provide guidance counselors (46 percent), while one-fourth have a school nurse (table 7).

More than 80 percent of the schools have a computer lab, gym, and a cafeteria. Slightly fewer have a library (73 percent) and lunches prepared at the school (69 percent).

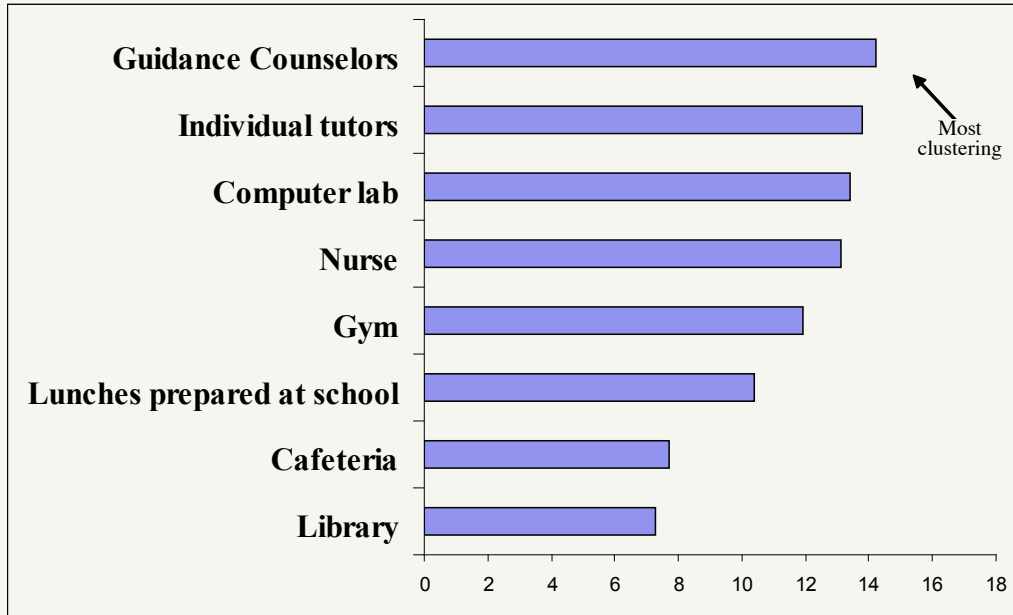
Table 7: Support Staff and Facilities in MPCP Schools: 2006-07

Staff	Total	Percent of Schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	Percent of MPCP Students Attending	Valid School N	Valid Student N
Individual tutors	64	69.6	11031	77.8	92	14175
Guidance Counselors	44	45.8	8552	58.2	96	14692
Nurse	24	25.3	5437	37.1	95	14640
Facilities						
Computer lab	78	82.1	13352	91.4	95	14610
Gym	77	80.2	13059	88.9	96	14692
Cafeteria	77	80.2	12443	84.7	96	14692
Library	69	72.6	11146	76.3	95	14610
Lunches prepared at school	66	68.8	11229	76.4	96	14692

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (n=97). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited enrollment list.

When examining the availability of specialized staff and facilities offered, the same pattern of clustering within schools that have more offerings is observable. While 45.8 percent of schools have guidance counselors, 58.2 percent of MPCP students attend schools that offer them. This same general pattern can be seen with regard to the availability of school nurses and individual tutors (figure 4). Students are also attending schools with computer labs, libraries, gyms, and cafeterias at a higher rate than the rate at which these facilities are offered. This could suggest a positive relationship between school offerings and available seats for MPCP students, or it could be that parents are more likely to choose the schools that offer a higher range of services.

Figure 4. Clustering in MPCP Schools by Staff and Facilities



NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (n=97). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited enrollment list. Bars represent the difference between the percent of MPCP students attending each type of school and the percent of participating schools that offer a particular characteristic.

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared—Racial/Ethnic Enrollment

In order to get a meaningful description of some aspects of the private schools participating in the MPCP, it is valuable to compare them to their public counterparts when the data are available.

Both MPCP and MPS schools enroll a high percentage of minorities. However, the MPCP schools exhibit modestly lower school-level percentages of minorities—an average of 78 percent compared to 88 percent in MPS. On the whole, the 10 point difference in average percent minority levels was found to be statistically significant.¹⁰

This pattern was consistent with both average African-American and Hispanic percentages, but when broken down into those specific subgroups the differences were not statistically significant (table 8).

¹⁰ Statistical tests employed here generate a confidence level to gauge the likelihood that an observed difference could be produced by chance. For example, a difference that is statistically different at the 99% confidence level would only occur by chance 1 out of 100 times. A difference that is statistically different at the 95% confidence level would only occur by chance 5 out of 100 times.

Table 8: Racial/Ethnic Enrollment Data: 2006-07

School Level Enrollment Data (PreK-12)	MPCP Mean	MPS Mean	Difference
Average % Racial/Ethnic Minority	77.7	88.0	-10.4**
Average % African-American	57.6	61.7	-4.1
Average % Hispanic	14.9	18.7	-3.8
Average % Other Minority	5.2	7.7	-2.5

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=93). Public school data from MPS (Valid N=218).

Breaking the data into quintiles (table 9) reveals that 7.5 percent of MPCP schools enroll a student population that is less than 20 percent minority, while no MPS schools fall into this category. At the other end of the spectrum, 64.5 percent of MPCP schools enroll more than 80 percent minority students, compared to 78.4 percent of MPS schools.

Table 9. Percent of Schools by Quintile Category of Percent Minority

Category	MPCP	MPS	Difference
Percent of schools below 20% Minority	7.5	0.0	7.5**
Percent of schools 20%-40% Minority	9.7	2.3	7.4*
Percent of schools 40%-60% Minority	8.6	5.0	3.6
Percent of schools 60%-80% Minority	9.7	14.2	-4.5
Percent of schools above 80% Minority	64.5	78.4	-13.9*

* Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=93). Public school data from MPS (Valid N=218).

Looking only at school level percentages of enrollment by African-American students (table 10), 30 percent of MPCP schools have lower than 20 percent African-American enrollment, compared to only 21 percent of MPS schools. At the other end of the spectrum, the percentage of schools with African-American enrollment in the 60-80 percent range for MPCP schools is only 3.2 percent, compared to 14.2 percent for MPS. Most typical are schools with more than an 80 percent African-American enrollment rate, both for MPCP (47.3 % of schools) and MPS (45.4 % of schools).

Table 10. Percent of Schools by Quintile Category of Percent African-American

Category	MPCP	MPS	Difference
Percent of schools below 20% African-American	30.1	21.1	9.0
Percent of schools 20%-40% African-American	9.7	9.2	.5
Percent of schools 40%-60% African-American	9.7	10.1	-.4
Percent of schools 60%-80% African-American	3.2	14.2	-10.9**
Percent of schools above 80% African-American	47.3	45.4	1.9

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=93). Public school data from MPS (Valid N=218).

For the measure of average percent Hispanic enrollment, MPS has a smaller percentage of its schools that are lower than 20 percent Hispanic compared to MPCP schools. Additionally, a notable 12.6 percent of MPS schools are 20-40 percent Hispanic, while the comparative range for MPCP schools is only 5.4 percent (table 11).

Table 11. Percent of Schools by Quintile Category of Percent Hispanic

Category	MPCP	MPS	Difference
Percent of schools below 20% Hispanic	80.6	72.9	7.7
Percent of schools 20%-40% Hispanic	5.4	8.7	-3.3
Percent of schools 40%-60% Hispanic	3.2	6.4	-3.2
Percent of schools 60%-80% Hispanic	5.4	5.5	-.1
Percent of schools above 80% Hispanic	5.4	6.4	-1.0

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=93). Public school data from MPS (Valid N=218).

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared — Teacher Qualification and School Size

Compared to MPS reported data, the teachers at participating MPCP schools exhibit different attributes when it comes to certain measures of teacher quality (table 12). On the one hand, an average of 43% of the teachers at MPS schools have a Master's Degree, while only 29% of the teachers at MPCP schools who responded to the SCDP survey did. On the other hand, surveys from MPCP schools indicated that the average teacher at an MPCP school had more years of experience.

Table 12: Teacher Qualifications in MPCP Schools and MPS: 2006-07

Teacher Attribute	MPCP	MPS	Difference
% of teachers with a Masters degree or higher	28.9	42.8	-13.9
% of teachers with at least five years of total experience	65.7	56.2	9.5

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (n=97). Public school data obtained from WINNS. Tests for statistical differences were not conducted because MPS numbers were only available at the district level.

Compared to MPS schools, MPCP schools are smaller (table 13). The average school participating in the MPCP has 215 students, while the average school in MPS has almost twice that number. This average difference of 202 students was found to be statistically significant.

The average student teacher ratios are also smaller within the MPCP schools, but data limitations make this comparison less than ideal. Readers should note that the most recent data available for student/teacher ratios in MPS were from the NCES' Common Core of Data for the year 2005-06, while the MPCP ratios were computed from SCDP survey data from 2006-07.

Table 13: School Enrollment and Student/Teacher Ratios

	Average Enrollment	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Valid N
MPCP 2006-07	215.0**	213.2	6	1286	122
MPS 2006-07	417.1	347.2	5	2319	218
	Student Teacher Ratio	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Valid N
MPCP 2006-07	13.6**	5.2	3.7	34.1	96
MPS 2005-06	16.6	5.3	2	51.5	185

**Statistically different at the 99% confidence level.

NOTES: MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. In four cases with large discrepancies DPI enrollment data was supplanted with SCDP survey data. MPS supplied data for 2006-07 school size. The most current MPS data for student/teacher ratio (2005-06) obtained from NCES Common Core of Data. Seven schools were omitted from the MPS student/teacher ratio as outliers; six had student/teacher ratios over 100 and one had a ratio of 0. All types of MPS public schools were used as observations, including MPS magnet schools and charter schools.

Future Reports

This report and its companion reports are the first in a series of annual reports that will be conducted by the SCDP. Specifically, future reports will:

- Build upon this baseline report of descriptive characteristics by monitoring changes and trends at the school level within the choice landscape in Milwaukee;
- Look inside the “black box” to identify the school-level mediating effects that may impact the educational achievement and attainment of students, and;
- Examine the impact of participation in the MPCP on the religious practices of private schools.



Appendix A:

Details of Non-Respondents

Of the 122 schools that participated in the MPCP during the 2006-07 school year, 97 (79.5%) responded to the voluntary principal's survey used by the SCDP as the primary data collection tool for this report. 25 (20.5%) of the schools did not respond to the principal's survey. This section briefly describes the characteristics of non-respondents in cases where data were available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, NCES' Common Core of Data, and other additional sources.

On average, the schools that did not respond to data collection had lower levels of enrollment, were less likely to offer elementary and middle school, and more likely to offer high school than the schools that completed the SCDP survey, though none of these differences were statistically significant (table A1). Additionally, only 61 percent of schools that did not respond to data collection were identified as religious, while 84 percent of schools that did respond were identified as religious. This difference was found to be statistically significant.

Table A1: Characteristics of Respondents and Non-respondents

Characteristic:	Respondents	Non-Respondents	Difference
Average Enrollment	229.7	158.1	71.6
Percent Religious	83.5	60.9	22.6*
Average percent of school's students that participate in MPCP	76.4	80.9	-4.5
% Offering elementary school	89.7	84.0	5.7
% Offering middle school	79.3	72.0	7.4
% Offering high school	20.6	24.0	-3.4

*Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

NOTES: Characteristics of non-respondents based upon N=25 for grade levels offered, N=23 for religious status, and N=25 for percent of school's students that participate in MPCP.

Appendix B:

List of Schools that Participated in the MPCP for the Entire 2006-07 School Year

Agape Center of Academic Excellence, Inc.	Grace Preparatory School of Excellence	Our Lady of Good Hope School
Atlas Preparatory Academy	Grandview High School (Seeds of Health)	Our Lady of Sorrows School
Atonement Lutheran School	Greater Holy Temple Christian Center	Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish
Believers in Christ Christian Academy	Harambee Community School	Paige II University School, Inc.
Bessie M. Gray Prep Academy	Hickman Academy Preparatory School	Parklawn Christian Leadership Academy
Blessed Sacrament School	Holy Redeemer Christian Academy	Parkside Elementary (Seeds of Health)
Blyden Delany Academy	Holy Wisdom Academy	Pius XI High School
Carter's Christian Academy	Hope Christian School	Prince of Peace
Catholic East Elementary School	Hope Middle School	Resurrection Christian Academy
CEO Leadership Academy	Institute for Career Empowerment Inc.	Risen Savior Lutheran School
Ceria M. Travis Academy, Inc.	Jared C. Bruce Academy	Saint Adalbert School
Christ Memorial Lutheran School	Johnson Christian Academy, Inc.	Saint Anthony School
Christ St. Peter Lutheran School	Keal Preparatory School, Inc.	Saint Bernadette School
Christian Faith Academy of Higher Learning	Kindergarten Plus	Saint Catherine of Alexandria
Clara Mohammed School	King's Academy Christian School	Saint Catherine School
Community Vision Academy LTD	LaBrew Troopers Military University School	Saint Charles Borromeo School
Concordia University School and Institute for LIGHT	Lutheran Special School & Education Services	Saint Gregory the Great Parish School
Corpus Christi School	Malaika Early Learning Center	Saint Joan Antida High School
CrossTrainers Academy	Marquette University High School	Saint John Kanty School
Destiny High School	Mary Queen of Martyrs	Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran
Divine Savior Holy Angels High School	Messmer High School	Saint Josaphat Parish School
Dr. Brenda Noach Choice School	Messmer Prep Catholic School	Saint Leo Catholic Urban Academy
Early View Academy of Excellence	Milwaukee Lutheran High School	Saint Marcus Lutheran School
Eastbrook Academy	Milwaukee Montessori School	Saint Margaret Mary School
Emmaus Lutheran School	Milwaukee Seventh Day Adventist School	Saint Martini Lutheran School
Excel Academy	Mother of Good Counsel School	Saint Peter-Immanuel Lutheran School
Excel Learning Academy	Mount Calvary Lutheran School	Saint Philip Neri Catholic School
Fairview Lutheran School	Mount Lebanon Lutheran	Saint Philip's Lutheran School
Family Academy	New Testament Christian Academy	Saint Rafael the Archangel School
Family Montessori School	Noah's Ark Preparatory	Saint Roman Parish School
First Steps Christian Learning Academy	Northwest Lutheran School	Saint Rose Catholic Urban Academy
Garden Homes Lutheran School	Notre Dame Middle School	Saint Sebastian School
Gospel Lutheran School	Nzingha Institute of Creative Learning for Living	Saint Thomas Aquinas Academy
	Oklahoma Avenue Lutheran School	Saint Vincent Pallotti School

Salam School
Sharon Junior Academy
Sherman Park Lutheran School/Preschool
Siloah Lutheran School
Tamarack Community School
Teenpreneur #2
Texas Bufkin Academy
The AppleCrest Preparatory Leadership Academy
The Hope School
Travis Technology High School
Trinity Christian Academy for Nonviolence
Urban Day School
Veritas Academy
Victory Christian Academy
Victory Preparatory Academy
Washington DuBois Christian Leadership Academy
Windlake Elementary (Seeds of Health)
Wisconsin Lutheran High School
Word of Life Evangelical Lutheran School
Yeshiva Elementary School
Young Minds Preparatory School

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program Baseline Description Report on Participating Schools

About the Authors



Brian Kisida is a Research Associate for the School Choice Demonstration Project in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas. His current research projects include the experimental evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. Previously he has served as an instructor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Arkansas and as a Research Assistant for the Arkansas Poll. Kisida received his B.A. (*Phi Beta Kappa*) and M.A. in Political Science from the University of Arkansas.



Laura Jensen is a Research Associate in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas. She coordinates the logistics of the Milwaukee evaluation being conducted by the School Choice Demonstration Project. A former special education teacher, Ms. Jensen previously served as a Project Associate at the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College's Center for Research on Women. She has a B.A. in Psychology from Westminster College and an M.A. in Child Development from Tufts University.



James C. Rahn is a Senior Research Associate at the School Choice Demonstration Project. He also is a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. Rahn has spent the majority of his professional career in Lutheran education serving as a teacher, principal, regional school coordinator, and college professor.



Patrick J. Wolf is Professor of Education Reform and 21st Century Endowed Chair in School Choice at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He also is principal investigator of the School Choice Demonstration Project. Wolf has authored, co-authored, or co-edited three books and nearly 30 articles and book chapters on school choice, special education, and public management. A 1987 *summa cum laude* graduate of the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN), he received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University in 1995.



**SCHOOL CHOICE
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

School Choice Demonstration Project

Department of Education Reform

University of Arkansas

201 Graduate Education Building

Fayetteville, AR 72701

479-575-6345

<http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Research.html>