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The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Descriptive Report on Participating Schools 2009 – 2010

Brian Kisida

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Laura I. Jensen

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Patrick J. Wolf

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, pwolf@uark.edu

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The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Descriptive Report on Participating Schools 2009 – 2010

Brian Kisida
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SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation

Report #27

March 2011





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.

**Milwaukee Parental Choice Program:
Descriptive Report on Participating Schools**
2009–10

Brian Kisida, *University of Arkansas*
Laura I. Jensen, *University of Arkansas*
Patrick J. Wolf, *University of Arkansas*

SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation
Report # 27
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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

This report is the fourth 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).

MPCP Participating Schools – Basic Characteristics

A total of 115 schools participated in the MPCP for the entire 2009-10 academic year, with 20,899 students enrolled in the schools using MPCP vouchers. 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 81 percent. Sixty-seven percent of participating schools had student enrollments that were greater than 80 percent MPCP students, while 55 percent had MPCP enrollment percentages above 90 percent. Collectively, private schools participating in the MPCP in 2009-10 offered the full range of grade options, from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Eighty-nine percent of schools served elementary students, while 81 percent served middle school students. Twenty-eight percent offered high school.

The average per pupil cost at participating schools in 2008-09, the most recent year for which data were available, was \$7,692, while the maximum scholarship amount that year was \$6,607. Eighty-two percent of the schools reported per-pupil operating costs higher than the maximum scholarship amount. For the 2009-10 school year, the maximum scholarship amount was lowered to \$6,442. When adjusted for inflation, this amounts to the lowest maximum scholarship amount since the 1997-98 school year.

MPCP Participating Schools – Religious Status

Participants include schools representing at least 10 distinct religious affiliations, non-religious schools that follow a religious tradition, and purely secular schools. Eighty-four percent of the schools identified themselves as religious, six percent were classified as non-religious with a religious tradition, and ten percent of the participating schools identified themselves as non-religious.

MPCP Participating Schools – Programs Offered

Private schools participating in the MPCP offer an array of programs typically found in traditional public schools. High percentages of schools offer art programs (78%), music programs (77%), programs for students with learning problems (71%), and afterschool programs (70%). Over half of the schools incorporate student government, programs with special instructional approaches, summer school, and foreign language programs. Fewer schools offer before school programs, special programs for advanced learners, gifted and talented programs, and programs for non-English speakers.

MPCP Participating Schools – Accountability Testing

With the passage of the 2005 Wisconsin Act 125, private schools participating in the MPCP are required annually to administer a nationally normed standardized test or the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) in reading, mathematics, and science to their MPCP students enrolled in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. The law further directs MPCP schools to submit copies of the scores from those tests to the SCDP. During the 2009-10 school year, the SCDP received student test scores from 105 schools. Seven MPCP schools were not required to test their students as they did not have any students in grades 4, 8, or 10. Three schools failed to submit test scores for the 2009-10 school year.

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 (61%), more than a third provide guidance counselors (43%), and nearly a quarter have a school nurse. Over 85 percent of the schools have a gym, cafeteria, and computer lab. Slightly fewer have a library (76%) and lunches prepared at the school (70%).

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared—Racial/Ethnic Enrollment

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 82 percent compared to 89 percent in MPS in 2009-10. On the whole, the seven point difference in average percent minority levels is statistically significant.

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared—Teacher Qualification and School Size

Compared to MPS reported data in 2009-10, the teachers at MPCP schools exhibit different attributes when it comes to measurable teacher characteristics. On average, 36 percent of the teachers at MPS schools have a master's degree, while only 27 percent of the teachers at MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey do. Ninety-two percent of MPS teachers are certified by the State of Wisconsin, compared to 65 percent of the teachers at MPCP schools. Lastly, 76 percent of the teachers at MPS schools have at least five years of teaching experience while 67 percent of MPCP teachers have this same characteristic.

Compared to MPS schools, MPCP schools are smaller and have a lower average student-teacher ratio. The average school participating in the MPCP has 244 students, while the average MPS school has nearly twice that amount. The average student-teacher ratio in MPCP schools is 14.7, compared to 16.3 in MPS schools.

Characteristics of Schools No Longer Participating in the Program

Former MPCP schools that no longer receive public funds differ from current participants in a number of ways. On average, these schools were smaller than current MPCP schools and they participated in the MPCP for less time. These schools also had a higher percentage of their total student enrollments comprised of MPCP students. Schools no longer receiving public funds were less likely to be religious schools. Former participants were also less likely to offer elementary and middle school and more likely to offer high school.

When compared to current participants, schools that left the Program exhibit a pattern of lower student achievement data. On the WKCE, the schools no longer receiving public funds have average 4th, 8th, and 10th grade scale scores that range from 5 to 59 points lower than currently operating schools. Schools no longer receiving public funds that administered nationally normed tests had normal curve equivalent scores that ranged from 6 to 9 percentage points lower than currently participating schools. The same comparison conducted for MPS schools closed recently versus those continuing to operate shows similar results.

Future Reports

This report and its companion reports are the fourth in a series of annual reports produced by the SCDP. For information about MPCP schools in previous years of this evaluation, see http://www.uark.edu/au/der/SCDP/Milwaukee_Research.html. Future reports will continue to monitor changes and trends at the school level within the choice landscape in Milwaukee.

Acknowledgments

So far this project has been 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 our reports are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect any official positions of the various funding organizations or research institutions involved.

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: **Descriptive Report on Participating Schools**

This report is the fourth in a series of annual reports produced by the School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP) providing 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 descriptive statistics about schools participating in the MPCP and provides comparisons to Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) when possible.

Overview of School Choice in Milwaukee

Families in Milwaukee have an array of government-funded educational options. In addition to being able to choose any traditional school within MPS, families can also choose from the following educational options regardless of where they live in Milwaukee:¹

- 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

¹ For more detail about these choice options, please visit the Milwaukee Public Schools website, at http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/comm/schools/315/school_types/38281.

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program is the nation's oldest and largest urban school voucher program. The vouchers it provides enable low-income students to attend a private school within the City of Milwaukee. Having started in 1990 with seven nonsectarian schools enrolling 341 students, it has grown to include 115 schools—both religious and non-religious—and enrolled 20,899 students during the 2009-10 academic year. 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:

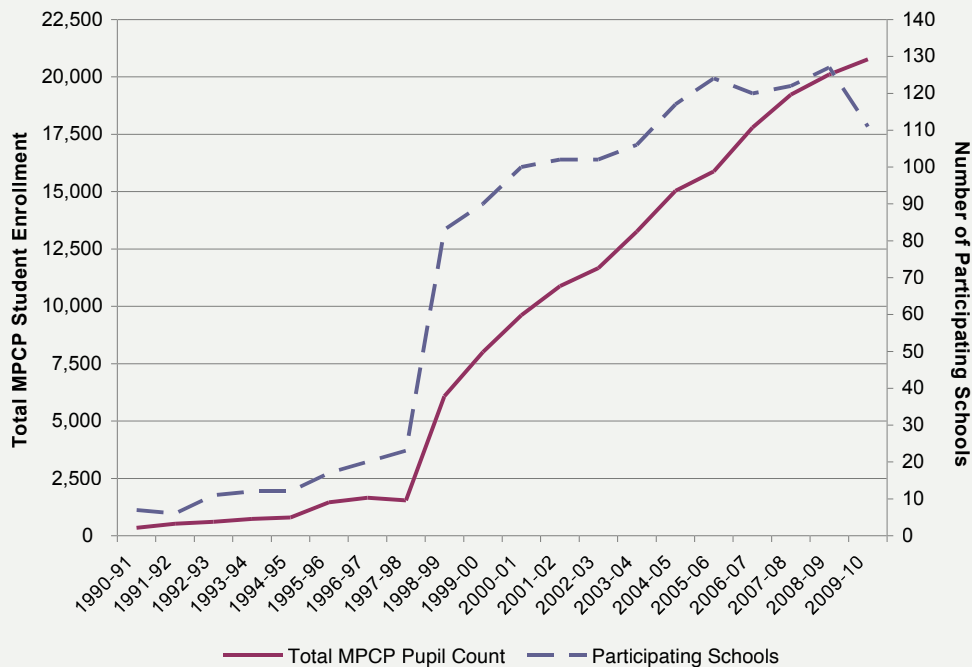
1. the child was enrolled in MPS;
2. the child was enrolled in the MPCP the previous year;
3. the child was enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 in a non-MPCP participating private school; or
4. the child was not enrolled in any school.

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 without children in the household becoming ineligible for the program.

Initially the MPCP was capped at one 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 can be eligible for the MPCP. The cap was raised to a 1.5 percent/65 percent limit (WI Act 16) in 1993 and to a 15 percent/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 from the preceding year. Over the next seven years, enrollment in the MPCP steadily increased until a predetermined 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 2009-10 school year 115 private schools participated in the MPCP, with 20,899 students enrolled in the schools using MPCP vouchers. Figure 1 shows the number of students enrolled and the number of schools participating in the MPCP since its establishment in 1990.²

2 For Figure 1, the available historical data from DPI includes the total number of MPCP schools that participated in each year, which 1) includes schools that closed during the academic year and 2) counts some schools with multiple campuses as single schools. Throughout the remainder of this report, however, we only include information on schools that remain open for the full academic year, and we break down schools into individual campuses when possible. For this reason the total number of schools described elsewhere in this report do not perfectly match the total number of schools listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Historical MPCP Schools and Student Enrollment

Source: Data obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

In July of 2009, the Wisconsin State legislature passed 2009 Wisconsin Act 28 which mandated a series of changes pertaining to MPCP schools. As a result, MPCP schools must:

1. Administer the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) in reading, math, and science to all of their MPCP pupils in 3rd-8th and 10th grade.
2. Adopt a written policy specifying criteria for promoting a pupil from 4th to 5th grade and from 8th to 9th grade and for granting a high school diploma.
3. Adopt pupil standards in mathematics, science, reading and writing, geography, and history.
4. Ensure that all MPCP administrators have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
5. Ensure that all MPCP teachers have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
6. Provide the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction with pupil scores on all standardized tests administered under s. 119.23(7)(e)1 (a.k.a. 2005 Act 125) for the previous 5 years.

Data and Methodology

During the period of February-September of 2010 the SCDP administered a survey to the principals of the 115 private schools that participated in the MPCP for the full academic year. The initial set of surveys was distributed at the February 2nd, 2010 MPCP Pupil Assignment Council meeting at St. Roman Parish School in Milwaukee, WI. Schools that did not send representation to the meeting received the survey through a mailing the following week. In order to increase the response rate, a second wave of surveys was mailed to non-responding schools in June 2010. A final reminder letter with an additional copy of the survey was mailed to non-responding schools in July 2010. Over the months of July and August 2010, the SCDP team followed up with reminders through telephone calls and e-mails to schools that had not returned surveys. At completion, the SCDP received 100 completed surveys from the MPCP schools, which equates to a final response rate of 87 percent. All fifteen of the non-respondents completed an earlier version of the SCDP's principals' survey. Where appropriate, baseline data that are considered constant (e.g. historical information and religious affiliation) from earlier versions of the principals' survey are used in this report to reduce the amount of missing data. Known characteristics of non-respondents are detailed in Appendix A. Additional data were provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Data for MPS 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).



MPCP Participating Schools – Basic Characteristics

Participation in the Program

Each year the Wisconsin DPI publishes student enrollment figures for all the schools participating in the MPCP as of the third Friday in September. There were 20,899 students using vouchers to attend 115 private schools participating in the MPCP in 2009-10, an increase of 1,096 students from the previous year (Table 1).³

Table 1. Change in MPCP Population of Students and Schools: 2006-07 to 2009-10

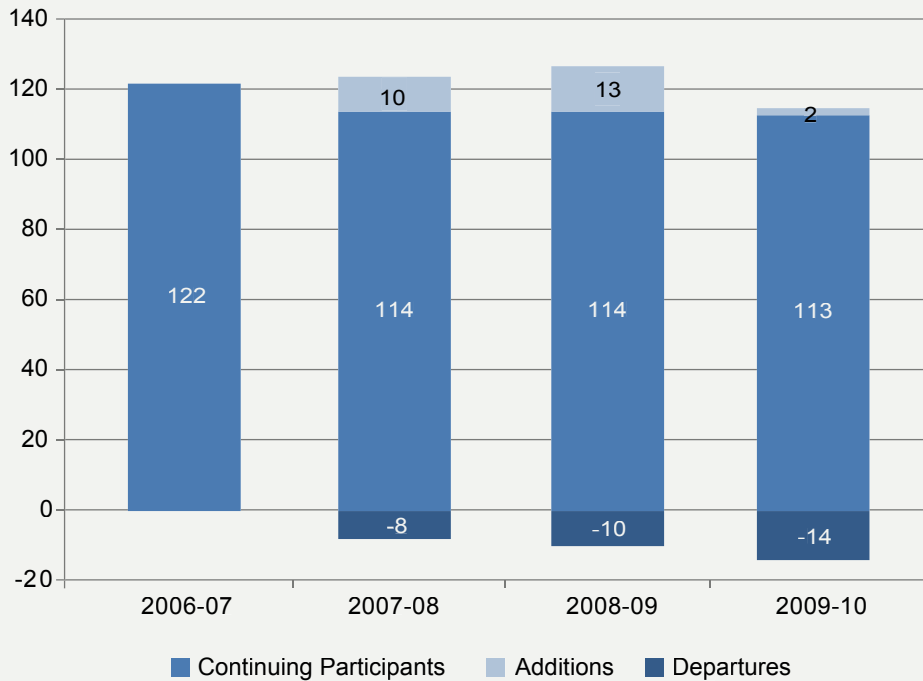
School Year	Schools Participating in the MPCP for the entire academic year	Student Enrollment based upon third Friday in September headcount
2006-07	122	17,749
2007-08	124	19,069
2008-09	127	19,803
2009-10	115	20,899

Notes: Student enrollment figures represent the third Friday in September headcounts for the 115 schools that participated for the entire year. Students who may have attended a school that did not participate for the entire academic year are not counted here. Source: 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>.

The number of schools participating in the MPCP decreased from 127 in 2008-09 to 115 in 2009-10. Two schools joined the MPCP for the first time during the 2009-10 school year, while 14 schools that participated in 2008-09 left the Program in 2009-10 (Figure 2).

According to SCDP survey responses, most schools that participated in 2009-10 existed prior to the establishment of the Program in 1991 (Table 2). However, 34 percent of the participating schools indicated that they were created after the program began. Of that 34 percent, roughly half (54%) indicated that the MPCP was a major factor in their decision to open a school, while an additional nine percent said that it was a minor factor.

³ For purposes of this report, schools that fall under an umbrella organization (e.g. Messmer Schools, Blessed Savior Schools, and Northwest Catholic Schools) are broken down into separate campuses. Tallying schools by their individual campuses results in a total of 122 MPCP schools for 2006-07, 124 MPCP school for 2007-08, 127 MPCP schools for 2008-09, and 115 schools for 2009-10. However, when reporting some characteristics, such as school level enrollment and MPCP enrollment, we must rely on DPI's data which combines these schools under their umbrella organization, resulting in a total of 119 schools for 2006-07, 120 schools for 2007-08, 123 schools for 2008-09, and 110 schools for 2009-10.

Figure 2. Number of Participating MPCP Schools, 2006-07 through 2009-10

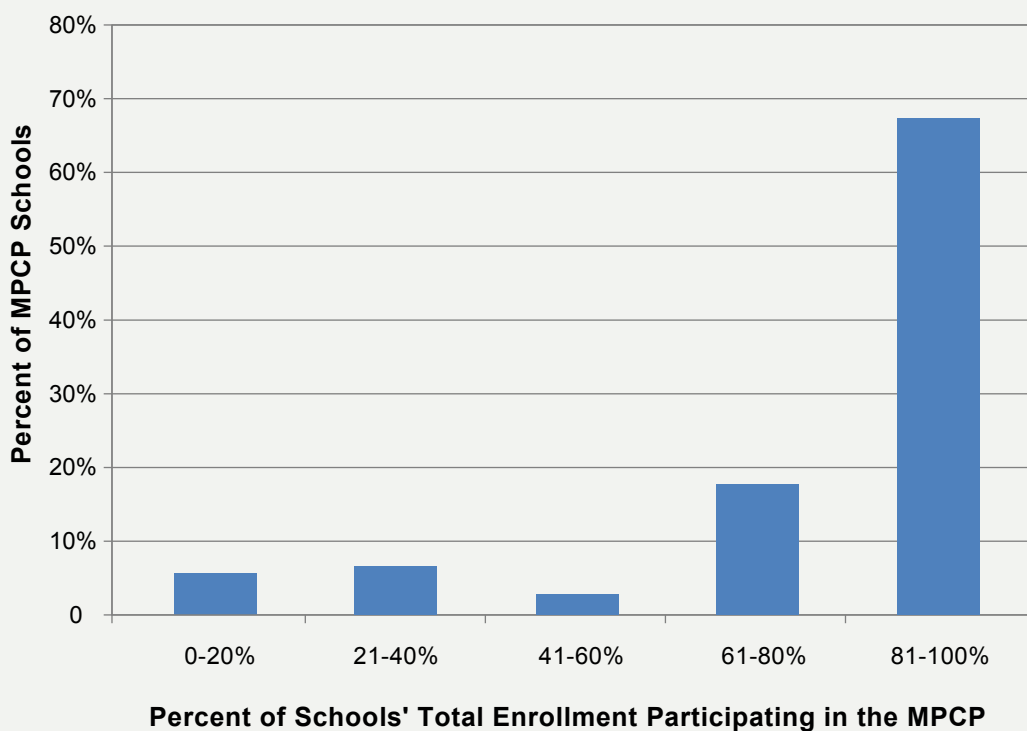
Source: Data obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Table 2. School Participation in the MPCP

Did school exist prior to the establishment of MPCP?	Total	Percent
Yes	69	66.4
No	35	33.7
Was the MPCP a factor in your decision to open a school?	Total	Percent
Not a factor in our decision	10	28.6
A minor factor in our decision	3	8.6
A major factor in our decision	19	54.3
Don't know	3	8.6

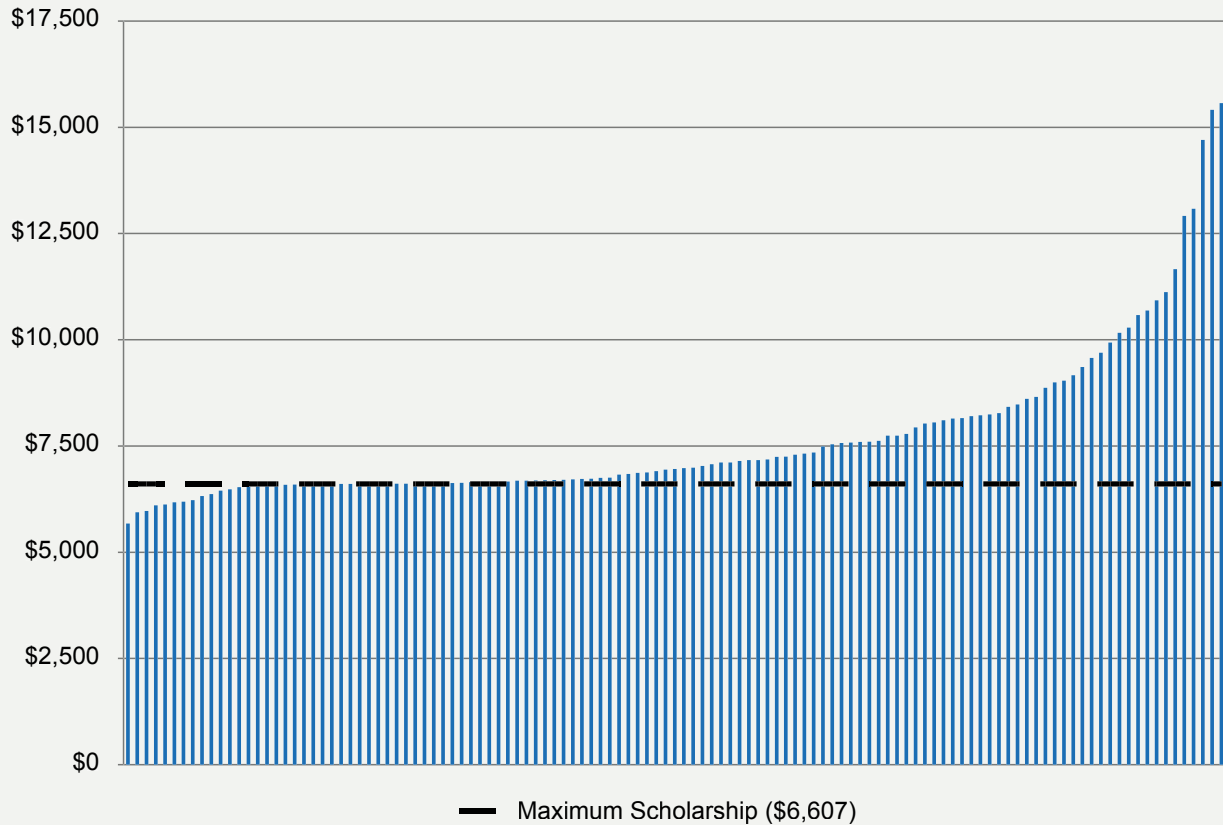
Notes: Valid N=104. Source: Figures are based upon 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principal Survey responses.

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 81 percent. Sixty-seven percent of participating schools had student enrollments that were greater than 80 percent MPCP students, while 55 percent had MPCP enrollment percentages above 90 percent (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percent of Schools by MPCP Percent of Schools' Enrollment, 2009-10

Notes: N=107. Source: Enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. In three cases where reported MPCP enrollment exceeded reported DPI total enrollment, MPCP percentages were truncated at 100 percent. Eight schools are not included in this figure because DPI does not provide campus level breakdowns.

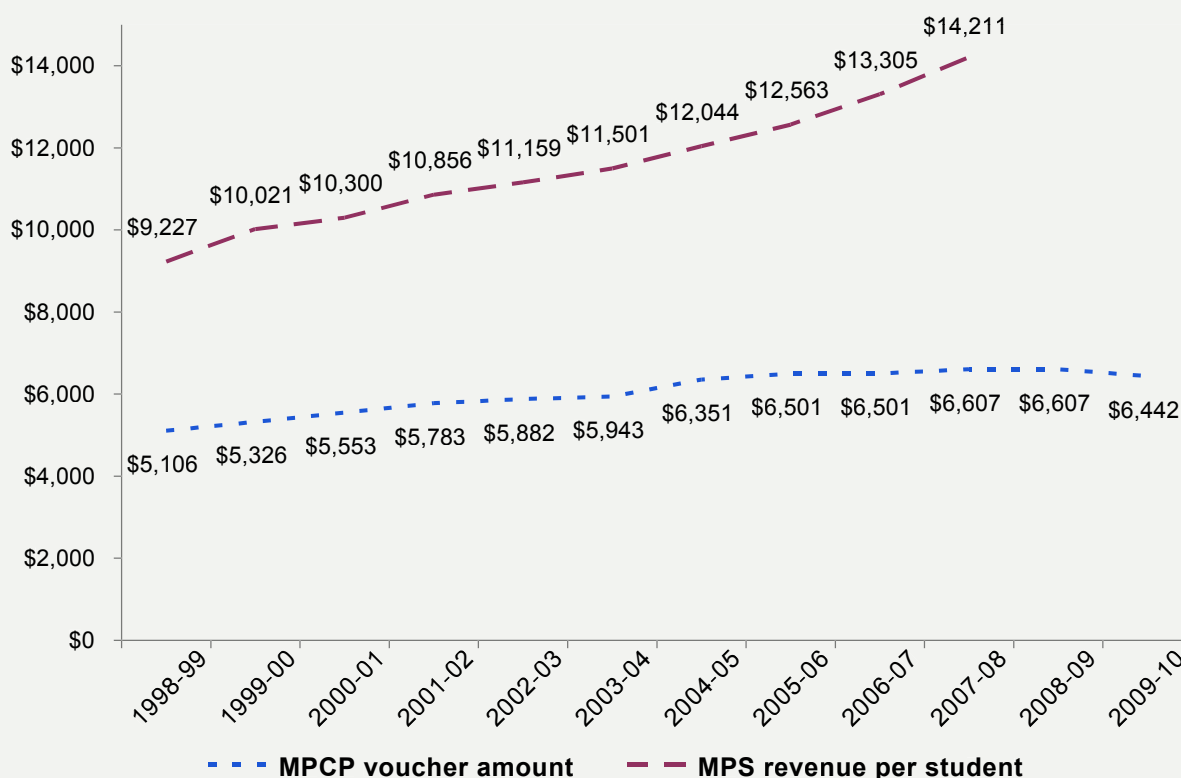
Private schools participating in the MPCP are required to file a Financial Information Report (FIR) with DPI each year that reports each school's per pupil costs. The average per pupil cost at participating schools in 2008-09, the most recent year for which data were available, was \$7,692, while the maximum scholarship amount that year was \$6,607. Eighty-two percent of the schools reported per-pupil operating costs higher than the maximum scholarship amount (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Reported Per Pupil Costs at MPCP Schools, 2008-09

Notes: Valid N=119. Each vertical bar represents an individual school. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Financial Information Report (FIR) for Participating Schools: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/mpcfirinf.html>.

For the 2009-10 school year, the maximum scholarship amount was lowered to \$6,442. When adjusted for inflation, this amounts to the lowest maximum scholarship amount since the 1997-98 school year. In non-inflation adjusted dollars, the current maximum scholarship amount of \$6,442 is lower than the four preceding years (Figure 5). The gap between the MPCP voucher amount and MPS per-pupil revenue has grown considerably over time.

Figure 5. MPCP Voucher Amount and MPS Per-Pupil Revenue Trends



Note: Data for MPS revenue were only available through the 2008-09 school year. Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Financial Information Report (FIR) for MPCP schools: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/mpcfirinf.html>; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Comparative Revenue Per Member for MPS schools: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/cmprv.html>.

MPCP Participating Schools – Grade-Levels Served

Collectively, private schools participating in the MPCP in 2009-10 offered the full range of grade options, from Kindergarten to 12th grade (Table 3). Eighty-nine percent of schools served elementary students, while 81 percent served middle school students. Twenty-eight percent offered high school.

Table 3. Types of MPCP Schools by Levels Served

School Type	Total	Percent of all MPCP Schools
MPCP offering elementary school	101	88.7
MPCP offering middle school	92	80.9
MPCP offering high school	32	27.8

Notes: Valid N=115. Source: Data taken from the Wisconsin DPI's Directory of 2008-09 MPCP and MPS 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. In 2009-10 no single religious affiliation enrolled more than 35 percent of all MPCP students.

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

- Ninety-three schools identified themselves as religious (84%),
- Seven were classified as non-religious with a religious tradition (6%), and
- Eleven of the participating schools identified themselves as non-religious (10%).

Table 4. Religious Identification of MPCP Schools

Religious Identification of Schools	Total	Percent of participating schools	Percent of MPCP students attending
Religious	93	83.8	80.4
Non-Religious (with a religious tradition)	7	6.3	5.8
Non-religious (secular)	11	9.9	13.9

Notes: Valid N=111. Source: Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 SCDP principals' surveys. Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum. Total MPCP enrollment for the 111 schools that had religiosity identified is 20,794. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list.

Of the 93 schools (84%) that identified themselves as religious, 35 (32%) were Catholic, 27 (24%) were Lutheran, and 18 (16%) were non-denominational Christian. Other options include five schools that were Church of God in Christ, two Apostolic/Pentecostal, two Islamic Schools, two Seventh-Day Adventist Schools, one Jewish School, and one Baptist school (Table 5).

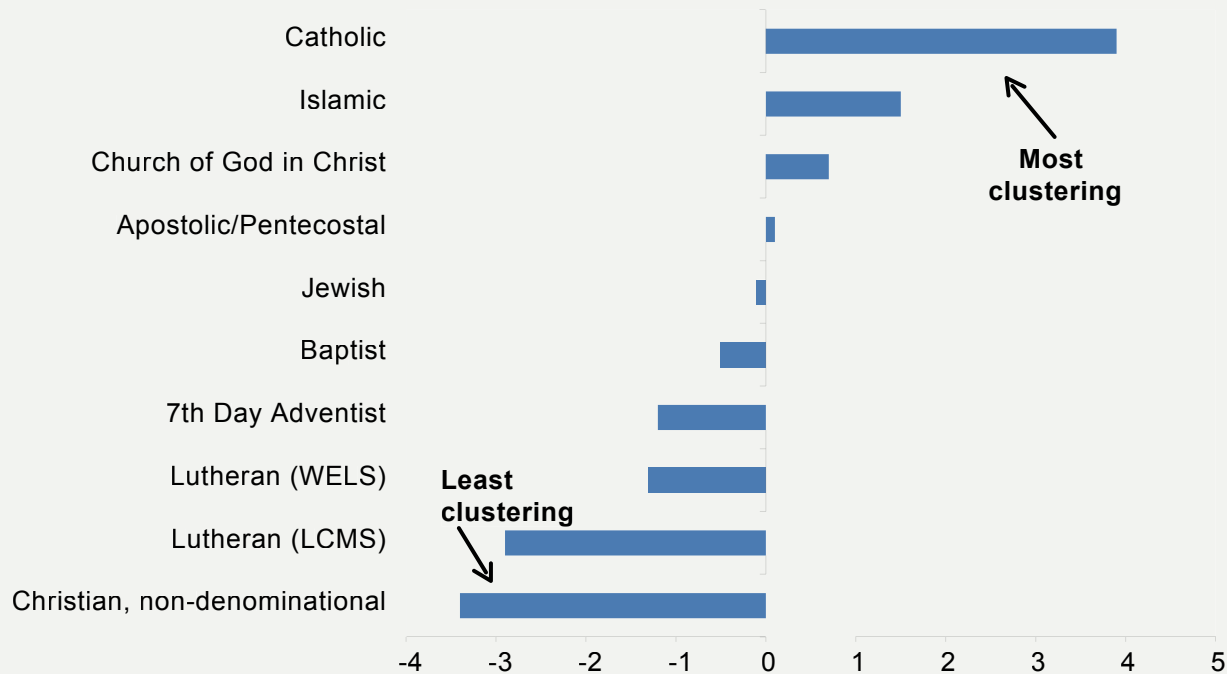
Table 5. Affiliations of Religious MPCP Schools

Affiliation of Religious Schools	Total	Percent of participating schools	Percent of MPCP students attending
Catholic	35	31.5	35.4
Christian, non-denominational	18	16.2	12.8
Lutheran (WELS)	15	13.5	12.2
Lutheran (LCMS)	12	10.8	7.9
Church of God in Christ	5	4.5	5.2
Apostolic/Pentecostal	2	1.8	1.9
Islamic	2	1.8	3.3
Seventh-Day Adventist	2	1.8	0.6
Jewish	1	0.9	0.8
Baptist	1	0.9	0.4

Notes: Valid N=111. Source: Information concerning religious identification and affiliation are based upon 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principal Survey responses. Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum. Total MPCP enrollment for the 111 schools that had religiosity identified is 20,794. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. Lutheran (ELCA) was also included as a category on the survey, but generated no cases.

When observed inside the context of MPCP enrollment levels, students cluster more heavily within certain types of schools. 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 (column 3 compared to column 4 in Table 5). 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.

While there is some evidence of clustering within schools of certain religious affiliations, the general levels of clustering are relatively small. For example, 32 percent of all MPCP schools are Catholic, and they enroll 35 percent of MPCP students. Additionally, though 16 percent of schools are Christian, non-denominational, they enroll only 13 percent of MPCP students. Figure 6 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 6. Religious Affiliations: Share of Enrollment in Schools Compared to Share of Schools

Notes: Valid N=111. Source: Information concerning religious identification and affiliation are based upon 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principal Survey responses. Additional data came from the Public Policy Forum. Total MPCP enrollment for the 111 schools that had religiosity identified is 20,794. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. Lutheran (ELCA) was also included as a category on the survey, but generated no cases.

MPCP Participating Schools – Programs Offered

Private schools participating in the MPCP offer an array of programs typically found in traditional public schools (Table 6). High percentages of schools offer art programs (78%), music programs (77%), programs for students with learning problems (71%), and afterschool programs (70%). Over half of the schools incorporate student government, programs with special instructional approaches, summer school, foreign language programs, and Advanced Placement. Fewer schools offer before school programs, special programs for advanced learners, gifted and talented programs, and programs for non-English speakers.

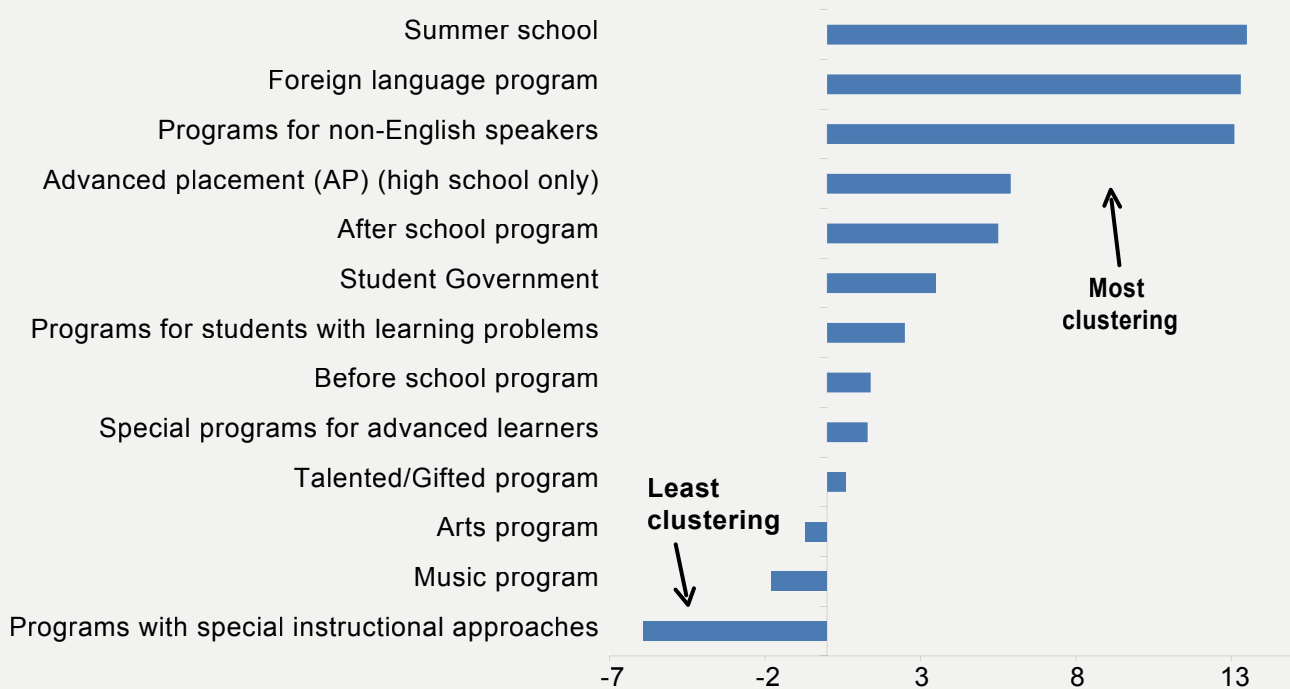
Table 6. School Programs in MPCP Schools

Programs	Percent of Schools	Percent of MPCP Students Attending
Arts program	77.6	76.9
Music program	76.8	75.0
Programs for students with learning problems	71.3	73.8
Afterschool program	70.1	75.6
Student Government	62.6	66.1
Programs with special instructional approaches ⁴	60.0	54.1
Summer School	59.2	72.7
Foreign language program	55.1	68.4
Advanced placement (AP) (high school only)	54.2	60.1
Before-school program	45.3	46.7
Special programs for advanced learners	27.2	28.5
Talented/Gifted program	17.8	18.4
Programs for non-English speakers	8.3	21.4

Notes: In cases where DPI collapsed enrollment figures for multiple campuses, schools are included in this figure if all of the campuses shared the same responses regarding programs offered. In cases where multiple campuses differed in their responses, those schools were excluded because MPCP enrollment breakdowns for those individual campus experiences are not available to us. Source: Information concerning school programs was taken from the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=99). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. International Baccalaureate programs were also included in the survey but generated no affirmative responses.

Enrollment levels suggest that students are clustered within schools that have particular programs to a greater extent than the student clustering observed by religious affiliation (Figure 7). In all but three instances, the percentage of students attending a school with a particular program is larger than the percentage 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. Clustering might result from parents favoring schools with some features over others. Or it might result from the fact that large schools have a critical mass of students and thus are more likely to have summer school, foreign language programs, and programs for non-English speakers.

⁴ E. g., Success for All, Reading Recovery, Direct Instruction etc.

Figure 7. School Programs: Share of Enrollment in Schools Compared to Share of Schools

Notes: 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. Source: Information concerning school programs was taken from the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principal Survey responses. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list.

MPCP Participating Schools – Accountability Testing: 2009-10

With the passage of the 2005 Wisconsin Act 125, private schools participating in the MPCP are now required to annually administer a nationally normed standardized test or the WKCE in reading, mathematics, and science to their MPCP students enrolled in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. The law further directs MPCP schools to submit copies of the scores from those tests to the SCDP. During the 2009-10 school year, the SCDP received student test scores from 105 schools. Seven MPCP schools were not required to test their students as they did not have any students in grades 4, 8, or 10. Three schools failed to submit test scores for the 2009-10 school year (Table 7).⁵

5 Additional details regarding the accountability testing can be found in Michael Q. McShane, Laura I. Jensen, and Patrick J. Wolf, *Milwaukee Longitudinal School Choice Evaluation: Annual Testing Report 2009-2010*. School Choice Demonstration Project, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation Report #26, March 2011, available at http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Milwaukee_Research.html.

Table 7. Accountability Testing: 2009-10

Type of Test Given	Total	Percent of participating schools	Percent of MPCP Students Attending
Norm-referenced	67	63.8	63.5
WKCE	18	17.1	18.4
Both Norm-Referenced and WKCE	14	13.3	13.7
No Test Required	7	6.7	0.9

NOTES: Information concerning standardized testing was taken from scores submitted by the MPCP schools (Valid N=105). In cases where schools with multiple campuses differed in their responses, those schools were excluded because MPCP enrollment breakdowns for those individual campus experiences are not available to us. Total MPCP enrollment for the 105 schools is 19,743.

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 (61%), more than a third provide guidance counselors (43%), and nearly a quarter have a school nurse. Over 85 percent of the schools have a gym, cafeteria, and computer lab. Slightly fewer have a library (76%) and lunches prepared at the school (70%) (Table 8).

Table 8. Support Staff and Facilities in MPCP Schools: 2009-10

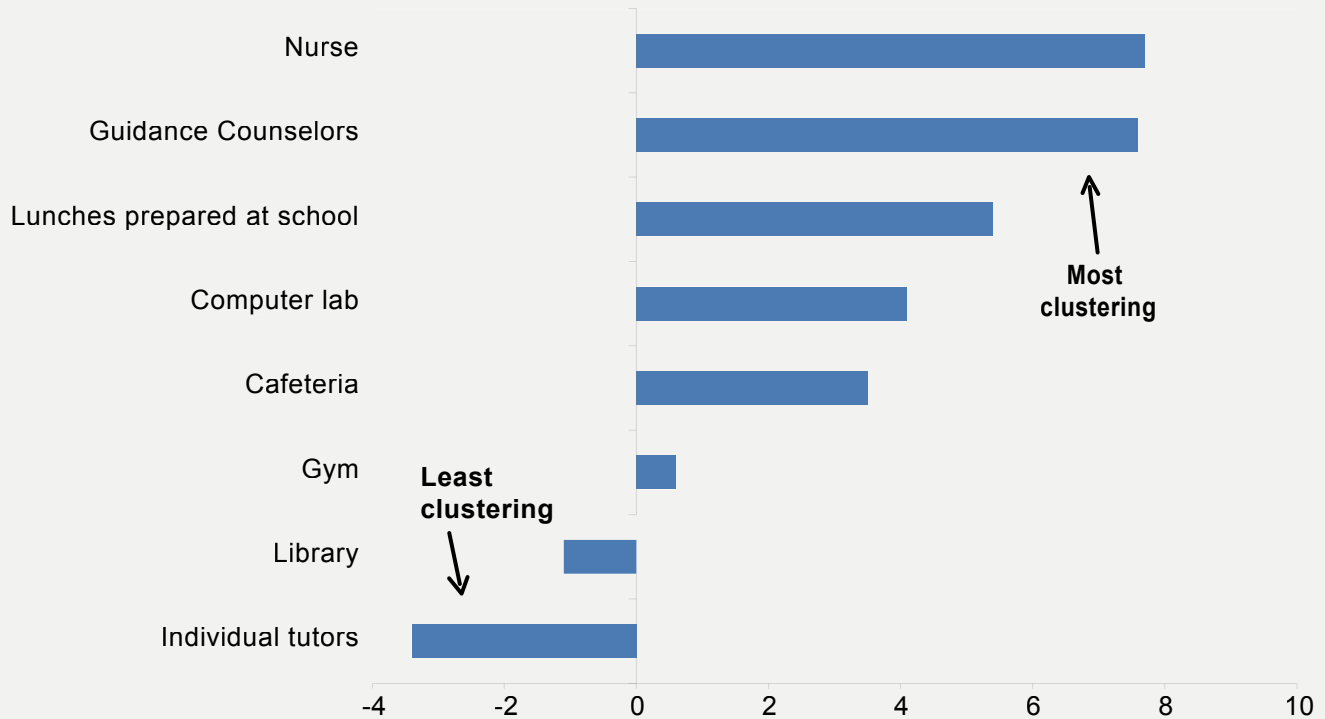
Staff	Percent of Schools	Percent of MPCP Students Attending
Individual tutors	60.9	57.5
Guidance Counselors	42.9	50.5
Nurse	23.4	31.1
Facilities		
Gym	88.4	89.0
Cafeteria	87.9	91.4
Computer lab	85.6	89.7
Library	75.5	74.4
Lunches prepared at school	69.7	75.1

Source: Information concerning support staff and facilities are based upon 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=115). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited 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 43 percent of schools offer guidance counselors,

51 percent of MPCP students attend schools that offer them. This same general pattern can be seen with regard to the availability of school nurses (Figure 8). Students are also attending schools with gyms, cafeterias, and computer labs at a higher rate than the rate at which these facilities are offered. This suggests 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. Another possible explanation is that high schools, which tend to be larger, are likely to have more extensive facilities and provide personnel such as guidance counselors and nurses.

Figure 8. Staff and Facilities: Share of Enrollment Compared to Share of Schools



Source: Information concerning support staff and facilities are based upon the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principals' Surveys (Valid N=115). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list.

MPCP Participating Schools – Communication with Parents

Private schools participating in the MPCP communicate with parents in a variety of ways. Nearly all schools distribute a yearly newsletter with information concerning the school or school system (98%) and a mid-term report of their child's grades (98%) (Table 9). Over two-thirds (73%) of the schools produce weekly or daily updates on each student's progress while just over sixty percent notify parents if disruptive behavior results in the student being sent to the office.

Table 9. Communication with Families in MPCP Schools: 2009-10

Method of Communication	Total	Percent of Schools	Percent of MPCP Students Attending
School newsletter	92	97.9	98.9
Mid-term grade report	92	97.9	98.9
Regular progress updates	69	73.4	76.2
Notification of child sent to office	57	60.6	59.5

Notes. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. In cases where DPI collapsed enrollment figures for multiple campuses, schools are included in this figure if all of the campuses shared the same responses regarding programs offered. In cases where multiple campuses differed in their responses, those schools were excluded because MPCP enrollment breakdowns for those individual campus experiences are not available to us. Source: Information concerning support staff and facilities are based upon the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 MPCP Principals' Surveys (Valid N=94).



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 (Table 10). However, the MPCP schools exhibit modestly lower school-level percentages of minorities—an average of 82 percent compared to 89 percent in MPS in 2009-10. On the whole, the seven point difference in average percent minority levels is statistically significant.

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 10. Racial/Ethnic Enrollment Data: 2009-10

School Level Enrollment Data	MPCP Mean	MPS Mean	Difference
Average % Racial/Ethnic Minority	82.4	88.9	-6.5*
Average % African-American	59.0	61.0	-2.0
Average % Hispanic	16.5	19.7	-3.1
Average % Other Non-White	6.8	8.2	-1.5

* Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Notes: Valid N for MPCP = 95; MPS = 198. "Other non-white" includes Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian, and a mixed race category. Source: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses. MPS ethnicity data was obtained from MPS.

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared — Teacher Qualification and School Size

Compared to MPS reported data in 2009-10, the teachers at MPCP schools exhibit different attributes when it comes to measurable teacher characteristics (Table 11). On average, 36 percent of the teachers at MPS schools have a master's degree, while only 27 percent of the teachers at MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey do. Ninety-two percent of MPS teachers are certified by the State of Wisconsin, compared to 65 percent of the teachers at MPCP schools. Last, 76 percent of the teachers at MPS schools have at least five years of teaching experience while 67 percent of MPCP teachers have this same characteristic.

Table 11. Teacher Qualifications in MPCP Schools and MPS: 2009-10

Teacher Attribute	MPCP	MPS	Difference
% licensed by Wisconsin	64.8	91.6	-26.8
% with master degree	26.8	36.4	-9.6
% with at least five years of experience	67.3	75.7	-8.4

Notes: Public school data obtained from WINNS. Tests for statistical differences were not conducted because MPS averages were only available at the district level. As a result, the means in this table were produced by aggregating at the district level instead of at the school level. Source: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N=99).

Compared to MPS schools, MPCP schools are smaller (Table 12). The average school participating in the MPCP has 244 students, while the average school in MPS has almost twice that amount. This average difference of 172 students is statistically significant.

Table 12. School Enrollment: 2009-10

	MPCP	MPS	Difference
Average enrollment	244.1	416.4	-172.3**

**Statistically different at the 99% confidence level.

Notes: Valid N for MPCP = 115; MPS = 198. Source: MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list, MPS enrollment data was obtained from MPS. In cases with large discrepancies DPI enrollment data was supplanted with SCDP survey data.

The average student teacher ratios are also smaller within the MPCP schools (Table 13). Readers should note that the most recent data available for student/teacher ratios in MPS was from the NCES' Common Core of Data for the year 2008-09. For consistency, the MPCP ratios were also computed with SCDP survey data from 2008-09.

Table 13. Student/Teacher Ratios: 2008-09

	MPCP	MPS	Difference
Student/teacher ratio	14.7	16.3	-1.5*

*Statistically different at the 95% confidence level.

Notes: MPCP student/teacher ratios were computed from SCDP survey data by dividing total teachers by school reported student enrollment (Valid N=98). Schools were omitted from the MPS student/teacher ratio as outliers if they had student/teacher ratios over 60. All types of MPS public schools were used as observations, including MPS magnet schools and charter schools. Source: MPS data for student/teacher ratio obtained from NCES' Common Core of Data, for which 2008-09 is the most recent year available (Valid N=202). MPCP data obtained from SCDP 2008-09 Survey.

Characteristics of Schools No Longer Participating in the Program

Since the beginning of the SCDP evaluation in 2006-07 through the start of the 2010-11 school year, 41 private schools that received MPCP vouchers at some time are no longer participating in the Program.⁶ Six of these schools converted to public charter schools, the remaining 35 are no longer receiving public funds. Since 151 different schools participated in the Program during that same period, these 35 schools represent 23% of the total population of MPCP schools, or an average annual exit rate of 7 percent.

These schools stopped participating for a variety of reasons. Some voluntarily chose to stop participating in the Program, while some were barred from participation by the Wisconsin DPI for non-compliance with statutory program regulations. Some continue to operate as private schools in Milwaukee, while others have ceased to operate entirely. In this section we compare known characteristics of the schools that continue to participate in the MPCP with those that are no longer receiving public funds as of the beginning of the 2010-11 school year.⁷

Former MPCP schools that no longer receive public funds differ from current participants in a number of ways (Table 14). On average, leavers had average student enrollments that were less than half of current MPCP schools and they participated in the MPCP for less time. Former MPCP schools also had a higher percentage of their total student enrollments comprised of MPCP students. Former participants had an average of 92 percent MPCP students, while schools that were participating as of the start of the 2010-11 school year have an average of 80 percent MPCP students. Schools no longer receiving public funds were less likely to be religious schools. Former participants were also less likely to offer elementary and middle school and more likely to offer high school, though those differences were not statistically significant.

6 A small number of schools have also merged with other private schools in Milwaukee. For this section, those schools are omitted from the analysis that compares current schools to those no longer receiving public funds. A detailed list of schools no longer receiving public funds is provided in Appendix C.

7 Six private schools that participated previously have converted to public charter schools. For the purposes of this analysis, these schools are not included in the category of schools that no longer receive public funds. Additionally, a small number of private schools have merged with other private schools in Milwaukee. These schools are also not included in the category of schools that no longer receive public funds.

Table 14. Current MPCP Schools Compared to Former MPCP Schools

	MPCP Leavers (n=35)	MPCP Stayers (n=105)	Difference
Average total enrollment	91.1	249.5	-158.4**
% of total enrollment MPCP	91.7	80.2	11.5*
Average number of years in the MPCP	5.3	9.1	-3.7**
% religious	51.4	85.7	-34.3**
% serving elementary	80.0	88.6	-8.6
% serving middle	68.6	81.0	-12.4
% serving high school	34.3	23.8	10.5

* Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

Source: 2009-10 SCDP survey data was used for current MPCP schools. For former MPCP schools, the most recent year available was used.

As mentioned previously, the 2005 Wisconsin Act 125 requires private schools participating in the MPCP annually to administer a nationally normed standardized test or the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) in reading, mathematics, and science to their MPCP students enrolled in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. Of the 35 schools that have left the Program and are no longer receiving public funds since 2006-07, 28 were required to submit test scores to the SCDP under Act 125. Of the 28 testing schools, 24 submitted test score data at least once.

When compared to current participants, these schools exhibit a pattern of lower student achievement. On the WKCE, the leavers have average 4th, 8th, and 10th grade scale scores that range from 5 to 59 scale score points lower than currently operating schools (Table 15). Schools no longer receiving public funds that administered nationally normed tests, which produce results using a different metric, had normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores that were 6 points lower in reading and 9 points lower in math compared to currently participating schools (Table 16).

**Table 15. Comparison of WKCE Scores:
Current MPCP Participants and Schools No Longer Receiving Public Funds**

	MPCP closed Since 2006-07 (N)	MPCP open as of 2010-11 (N)	Diff.
Reading 4th	424.2 (85)	428.7 (584)	-4.5
Math 4th	396.1 (85)	416.3 (583)	-20.2**
Reading 8th	444.7 (58)	500.5 (662)	-55.8**
Math 8th	445.5 (59)	504.7 (662)	-59.1**
Reading 10th	429.1 (55)	454.8 (108)	-25.7**
Math 10th	482.3 (55)	487.5 (112)	-5.2

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

Note: *N* refers to the number of student observations. For schools that submitted test score data in multiple years, only the most recent submission is included in this analysis. Source: SCDP test score accountability database.

**Table 16. Comparison of Nationally Normed Test Scores:
MPCP Current Participants and Schools No Longer Receiving Public Funds**

	MPCP closed Since 2006-07 (N)	MPCP open as of 2010-11 (N)	Diff.
Reading (NCE)	37.6 (704)	43.6 (10,663)	-6.0**
Math (NCE)	33.2 (697)	42.1 (10,680)	-9.0**

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

Note: *N* refers to the number of student observations. For schools that submitted test score data in multiple years, only the most recent submission is included in this analysis. Source: SCDP test score accountability database.

The same comparison conducted for MPS schools shows similar results. MPS schools that have ceased to operate since 2006-07 have average WKCE scale scores that range from 18 to 41 points lower than currently operating MPS schools (Table 17).

**Table 17. Comparison of WKCE Scores:
Current MPS Schools and Former MPS Schools**

	MPS closed Since 2006-07 (N)	MPS open as of 2010-11 (N)	Diff.
Reading 4th	426.2 (198)	443.8 (5564)	-17.6**
Math 4th	405.6 (202)	442.6 (5594)	-40.9**
Reading 8th	460.9 (556)	490.8 (4966)	-29.9**
Math 8th	467.3 (561)	508.2 (4990)	-40.9**
Reading 10th	456.1 (670)	483.8 (5239)	-27.8**
Math 10th	487.8 (670)	509.0 (5267)	-21.2**

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

Note: *N* refers to the number of student observations. For schools with available test score data in multiple years, only the most recent year is included in this analysis. Source: MPS test score database.

There are a host of potential reasons why these former MPCP and MPS schools have lower average test scores than currently operating schools. It is possible that the lower achievement levels exhibited by students at these schools is a reflection of ineffective schooling. As such, the fact that these schools are no longer receiving public funds to educate students in Milwaukee is a positive sign that the interplay of market forces and governmental oversight is increasing the quality of the population of Milwaukee schools. The numbers presented here, however, do not control for student background characteristics. It is possible that the lower scores exhibited by the schools no longer receiving public funds could be a result of these schools serving students who are more educationally disadvantaged. Thus, readers are cautioned against drawing firm conclusions regarding what specific factors explain why these former MPCP and MPS schools, on average, produced such low student test scores.

Future Reports

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

- Continue to monitor 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.



Appendix A:

Details of Non-Respondents

Of the 115 schools that participated in the MPCP during the 2009-10 school year, 15 did not return principal surveys. 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. Fifty-eight percent of non-respondents identified themselves as religious schools, whereas 87 percent of schools that completed the survey classified themselves as religious. While non-responding schools were much less likely to offer middle school grades, responding and non-responding schools offered elementary and high school grades at similar rates. Lastly, the non-responding schools had a smaller percentage of their enrolled students using MPCP vouchers. The differences for percent religious and percent offering middle school between respondents and non-respondents were found to be statistically significant.

Table A1: Characteristics of Respondents and Non-respondents

Characteristic:	Non-Respondents	Respondents	Difference
Average enrollment	178.3	254.0	75.7
% religious	58.3	86.9	28.5*
% of students that are in MPCP	75.0	81.8	6.8
% Offering elementary school	86.7	89.0	2.3
% Offering middle school	46.7	86.0	39.3**
% Offering high school	33.3	27.0	-6.3

* Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

** Statistically significant at the 99% confidence level.

Notes: Characteristics of non-respondents based upon N=15 for grade levels offered, N=12 for religious status, N=15 for percent of school's students that participate in MPCP. Source: SCDP principals' survey data, MPS, and Wisconsin DPI's directory of schools.

Appendix B:

List of Schools that Participated in the MPCP for the Entire 2009-110 School Year

Alston's Preparatory Academy	Destiny High School	Jared C. Bruce Academy
Atlas Preparatory Academy	Divine Savior Holy Angels High School	Kindergarten Plus
Atonement Lutheran School	Dr. Brenda Noach Choice School	King's Academy Christian School
Believers in Christ Christian Academy	Early View Academy of Excellence	Life 101 "THINK" Institute
Blessed Sacrament School	Eastbrook Academy	LifeSkills Academy
Blessed Savior - East Campus	Emmaus Lutheran School	Lutheran Special School & Education Services
Blessed Savior - North Campus	Excel Academy	Malaika Early Learning Center
Blessed Savior - South Campus	Family Montessori School	Marquette University High School
Blessed Savior - West Campus	Garden Homes Community Montessori School, Inc.	Messmer High School
Calvary's Christian Academy, Inc.	Garden Homes Lutheran School	Messmer Prep Catholic School
Carter's Christian Academy	Gospel Lutheran School	Mills Christian Academy
Catholic East Elementary School	Greater Holy Temple Christian Center	Milwaukee Lutheran High School
CEO Leadership Academy	Harambee Community School	Milwaukee Montessori School
Ceria M. Travis Academy, Inc.	Hickman Academy Preparatory School	Milwaukee Seventh Day Adventist School
Child Development Center of St. Joseph	Holy Redeemer Christian Academy	More Than Conquerors Pre-School
Christ Memorial Lutheran School	Holy Wisdom Academy	Mother of Good Counsel School
Christ St. Peter Lutheran School	Hope Christian School	Mount Calvary Lutheran School
Christian Faith Academy of Higher Learning	Hope Christian School - Fortis	Mount Lebanon Lutheran
Clara Mohammed School	Institute of Technology and Academics	Mustard Seed International School
Concordia University School	Jackson Preschool Learning Academy	New Testament Christian Academy
CrossTrainers Academy		Northwest Catholic - East Campus
Daughters of the Father Christian Academy		Northwest Catholic - West Campus
		Northwest Lutheran School

Notre Dame Middle School	St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy	Washington DuBois Christian Leadership Academy
Oklahoma Avenue Lutheran School	St. Lucas Lutheran School	Wisconsin Lutheran High School
Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish	St. Marcus Lutheran School	Word of Life Evangelical Lutheran School
Outlook University Independent School Network	St. Margaret Mary School	Yeshiva Elementary School
Parklawn Christian Leadership Academy	St. Martini Lutheran School	Young Minds Preparatory School
Pius XI High School	St. Peter-Immanuel Lutheran School	
Prince of Peace	St. Philip's Lutheran School	
Right Step, Inc.	St. Rafael the Archangel School	
Risen Savior Lutheran School	St. Roman Parish School	
Salam School	St. Rose Catholic Urban Academy	
Sharon Junior Academy	St. Sebastian School	
Sherman Park Lutheran School/Preschool	St. Thomas Aquinas Academy	
Siloah Lutheran School	St. Vincent Pallotti School	
St. Adalbert School	Tamarack Waldorf School	
St. Anthony School	Texas Bufkin Academy	
St. Catherine School	The AppleCrest Preparatory Leadership Academy	
St. Charles Borromeo School	The Hope School	
St. Coletta Day School of Milwaukee	The Margaret Howard Christian Leadership Inst.	
St. Gregory the Great Parish School	Travis Technology High School	
St. Joan Antida High School	Tuskegee Aviation Academy	
St. John Kanty School	Urban Day School	
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran	Victory Christian Academy	
St. Josaphat Parish School		

Appendix C:

MPCP Participating Schools No Longer Receiving Public Funds, 2006-07 through 2010-11

School Name	First Year in the MPCP	Last Year in the MPCP
Keal Preparatory School, Inc.	1998-99	2006-07
Nzingha Institute of Creative Learning for Living	2005-06	2006-07
Agape Center of Academic Excellence, Inc.	1996-97	2007-08
Blyden Delany Academy	1998-99	2007-08
Grace Preparatory School	2000-01	2007-08
Institute for Career Empowerment	2004-05	2007-08
Jesus Academy of Learning	2007-08	2007-08
Noah's Ark Preparatory School	2000-01	2007-08
Paige II University School, Inc.	2005-06	2007-08
SMI Early College Preparatory High School	2007-08	2007-08
Bessie M. Gray Prep Academy	2000-01	2008-09
Collins Christian Academy	2008-09	2008-09
Community Vision Academy	1998-99	2008-09
Excel Learning Academy	2004-05	2008-09
Fairview Lutheran School	2004-05	2008-09
Family Academy	2005-06	2008-09
Gilchrist Christian Academy	2007-08	2008-09
Grisby's Academy for the Gifted and Talented	2008-09	2008-09
Johnson Christian Academy, Inc.	2006-07	2008-09
KidPreneur	2006-07	2008-09
LaBrew Troopers Military University School	2003-04	2008-09
New Holy Ghost Tabernacle Pre-School Academy	2007-08	2008-09
The Way and the Truth Christian Academy	2008-09	2008-09
The Young Women's Institute for Global Studies	2008-09	2008-09
Trinity Christian Academy for Nonviolence	2006-07	2008-09
Victory Preparatory Academy	1999-00	2008-09
Excel Academy	2004-05	2009-10
Garden Homes Community Montessori School	2007-08	2009-10
Gospel Lutheran School	1998-99	2009-10
Harambee School	1990-91	2009-10
Jackson Preschool Learning Academy	2008-09	2009-10
Life 101 "THINK" Academy	2008-09	2009-10
Outlook University Independent School Network	2008-09	2009-10
Resurrection Christian Academy	1998-99	2009-10
Tuskegee Aviation Academy	2008-09	2009-10

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Descriptive 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 I. 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.



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 more than 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.



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Department of Education Reform

University of Arkansas

201 Graduate Education Building

Fayetteville, AR 72701

479-575-6345

http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Milwaukee_Research.html