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ABSTRACT

More than 70 percent of San Antonio (Texas) urban school children are Hispanic, and approximately 85 percent are from minority ethnic groups. This paper is the second in a series of reports from a 3-year study of private and public school-choice programs in San Antonio. The paper discusses the characteristics of private and public schools as perceived by the teachers within them. The study focused on two choice programs--the privately funded Children's Education Opportunity (CEO) Foundation program that provides partial scholarships to low-income children for use in private and out-of-district public schools; and the districtwide multilingual public school-choice program offered by the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). The study also included a group of nonchoice attendance-zone schools. A survey was administered in spring 1993. A followup survey in fall 1994 contacted over 1,000 teachers at the following groups of schools: (1) private elementary schools in the CEO program; (2) SAISD nonchoice attendance-zone elementary schools; (3) private middle schools in the CEO program; (4) SAISD middle schools housing the multilingual choice program; and (5) SAISD nonchoice attendance-zone middle schools. The majority of private and public elementary and middle school teachers reported that their schools' mission and goals were clearly stated and that their principals were committed to carrying them out. Teachers at both CEO private elementary schools and SAISD elementary schools generally agreed that building-level personnel worked together as a team. Over two-thirds of CEO private and SAISD public elementary teachers said that they had moderate or great influence over setting school-performance goals. Three-fourths of CEO private elementary and middle school teachers were Anglo, compared with roughly 50 percent of SAISD elementary and multilingual middle school teachers and 57 percent of SAISD attendance-zone middle school teachers. SAISD teachers were more likely to hold masters' degrees, to be certified, and to have more years of full-time teaching experience than did CEO private school teachers. Over one-half of the teachers at CEO private elementary and secondary schools expected that about 90 percent of their students would reach grade level by the end of the school year. Finally, although both private and public school teachers said that they made similar efforts to contact parents, CEO private school teachers were more likely to meet their students' parents and to have greater parent participation. Contains 26 tables. (LMI)

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COMPARING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS Teacher Survey Results

San Antonio School Choice Project
Summer 1996

Frank Kemerer, Valerie Martinez, and Ken Godwin

Center for the Study of Education Reform
College of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the second in a series of research reports on a three-year study of private and public school choice programs in San Antonio, Texas. The first report examined the characteristics of choosing and nonchoosing families, the factors influencing their schooling decisions, and their levels of satisfaction with their schools.¹ This second report discusses the characteristics of private and public schools as perceived by the teachers within them.

Two choice programs are the focus of the three-year study. The first is the privately funded Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) Foundation program providing partial scholarships to low-income children for use in private and out-of-district public schools. The second is a district-wide multilingual public school choice program offered by the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). In addition, inclusion of SAISD allows study of a comparative group of nonchoice attendance-zone schools.

A survey was administered in Spring 1993 and followed up in Fall 1994. It included over 1,100 teachers in many of these schools. The survey sought information about school mission and goals, administrative style and procedures, discipline policy, teacher autonomy and influence, pedagogical approaches, and nature of parental involvement. The groups of schools consisted of 1) private elementary schools participating in the CEO program, 2) SAISD nonchoice attendance-zone elementary schools, 3) private middle schools participating in the CEO program, 4) SAISD middle schools housing the multilingual choice program, and 5) SAISD nonchoice attendance-zone middle

¹ Entitled *Who Chooses and Why*, the report was issued in June 1993 and is available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EA 025 031).

schools.

Key findings from the research are:

1. The vast majority of private and public elementary and middle school teachers find that the mission and goals are clearly stated at their schools and the principal committed to carrying them out.
2. Teachers at CEO private schools are more likely than SAISD teachers to find the school learning environment conducive to student achievement. SAISD attendance-zone middle schools are the least likely of any respondent group to find the school environment conducive to student achievement.
3. Teachers at both CEO private elementary schools and SAISD elementary schools generally agree that building-level personnel work together as a team.
4. Twice as many CEO private middle school teachers as SAISD public attendance-zone middle school teachers agree that building-level personnel work together as a team. Within the multilingual schools, multilingual teachers are more likely to say they work as a team than are regular teachers.
5. CEO private school teachers are more likely than SAISD teachers to agree that teachers are supported when they enforce the school's discipline rules.
6. Over two-thirds of CEO private and SAISD public elementary teachers say they have moderate or great influence over setting school performance goals. Private school elementary teachers indicate more influence than public school elementary teachers over determining school discipline rules and establishing the school curriculum. Public school elementary teachers indicate more influence over staff development programs and the school budget.
7. CEO private middle school teachers show greater influence over building policy issues than SAISD public middle school teachers, with regular teachers at SAISD's two multilingual middle schools showing the least influence in most areas.
8. CEO private school teachers claim much more influence over selecting classroom textbooks and other instructional material than SAISD teachers. Both groups say they have considerable control over selecting the content, topics, and skills taught in the classroom and in determining the amount of homework assigned.
9. Three-quarters of CEO private elementary and middle school teachers are Anglo, compared with roughly fifty percent of SAISD elementary and multilingual middle school teachers and fifty-seven percent of SAISD attendance-zone middle school teachers.

10. SAISD teachers are more likely to hold master's degrees, be certified, and have more years of full-time teaching experience than CEO private school teachers.

11. Class size is more likely to vary at CEO private schools than at SAISD public schools. Classes are much more likely to be large at SAISD middle schools than at CEO private middle schools. However, although teachers in attendance-zone schools and regular teachers in multilingual middle schools have the largest classes, multilingual teachers have the smallest classes of all groups.

12. SAISD attendance-zone middle school teachers assign less homework than their counterparts at SAISD multilingual middle schools and at CEO private middle schools. Multilingual teachers assigned more homework than the other groups.

13. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the SAISD middle school and elementary teachers say they encourage their students to express their values and to develop an appreciation for the values of other students, while a majority of CEO private school teachers say they teach the values represented by their school.

14. The vast majority of all respondents say they engage in discussing controversial issues in the classroom. The group most likely to do so often is CEO middle school teachers.

15. Over half the teachers at CEO private elementary and secondary schools expect upwards of 90 percent of their students to reach grade level by the end of the year. The percentages for SAISD teachers are much lower.

16. While both private and public school teachers say they make similar efforts to contact parents, CEO private school teachers are more likely to meet their students' parents, to have parent volunteers in the classroom, and to have parents respond to their requests for conferences than are SAISD public school teachers.

COMPARING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Teacher Survey Results

San Antonio School Choice Project
Summer 1996

Frank Kemerer, Valerie Martinez, Ken Godwin

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of surveys administered to teachers in private schools participating in a privately funded scholarship program for low-income families in San Antonio, Texas and to teachers in public schools offering a multilingual choice program to students in the San Antonio Independent School District. Teachers in non-choice attendance-zone elementary and middle schools operated by the San Antonio school district also were surveyed. The purpose of the surveys was to obtain baseline comparative information about school mission and goals, administrative style and procedures, discipline policy, teacher autonomy and influence, pedagogical approaches, and extent of parental involvement.

The research is part of a broad-based school choice evaluation project that examines the differences between choosing and non-choosing families, the educational impacts of school choice on low-income students, the satisfaction of parents, and the effect of pricing on a family's ability to choose. The location of the study is San Antonio, Texas. San Antonio is an ideal site for investigating the consequences of school choice, especially for low-income, minority families. More than 70 percent of San Antonio urban school children are Hispanic and approximately 85 percent are from minority ethnic groups (*Pride and Poverty: A Report on San Antonio*, Partnership for Hope, 1991). In 1991, an estimated 18 percent of low-income families residing in the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) chose to send their children to private

schools, while an additional 2 percent participated in the district's multilingual choice program. In Fall 1992, the Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) Foundation increased the availability of private-school choice for low-income families by providing partial scholarships to more than 900 children in San Antonio and throughout Bexar County.

With the full cooperation of SAISD and the CEO Foundation, we began a comprehensive three-year evaluation of school choice in San Antonio in August 1992. Our first report, *Who Chooses and Why*, was a description of baseline demographic data on choosing and nonchoosing families. The report was issued in June 1993 and is available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EA 025 031).

The Choice Programs

The Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) scholarship program, initiated by the Texas Public Policy Foundation in 1992, offers tuition scholarships to low-income families in San Antonio so that they may enroll their children in private or public schools of their choice in Grades 1-8.¹ Only students who qualify for free or reduced lunches under federal financial guidelines are eligible. The scholarships cover half of a school's tuition, with a maximum of \$750. While low by private school standards in many parts of the country, the CEO scholarship has real value in San Antonio where the average elementary school tuition is less than \$1,100. The average CEO scholarship is \$575.

¹ No scholarship student was admitted to a public school in the fall of 1992 when the program was implemented. Several students applied as out-of-district students to attend public schools, but the schools already had waitlists.

Contributions from corporations in the San Antonio area underwrite the CEO program and guarantee continued funding for three years. The CEO program is similar to the Educational Choice Charitable Trust scholarship program initiated in Indianapolis by the Golden Rule Insurance Company. The primary difference is that the students served in San Antonio are predominantly Hispanic, whereas the students in the Indianapolis program are primarily Anglos and African-Americans.

In the 1992-93 school year, the CEO Foundation provided 936 students with scholarships. Recipients were selected on a first-come, first-chosen basis. Approximately half of the scholarships went to families whose children had previously attended public school. By design, the other half of the scholarships were granted to eligible families whose children were already enrolled in private schools. Of the total enrollees, approximately 60 percent enrolled in Catholic schools, 20 percent in nondenominational religious schools, 10 percent in Baptist schools, 1 percent in non-religious schools, and the remainder in religious schools of various denominations. The scholarship program was and remains heavily oversubscribed. At the time the teacher and administrator surveys were undertaken, there were over 800 students on the waitlist, all of whom were enrolled in private schools.

SAISD has an enrollment of 60,156 students. Eighty-one percent are Hispanic, 12 percent are African-American, and 7 percent are Anglo. Approximately 80 percent of the district's students receive free or reduced-price meals. Most of the district lies within the incorporated city limits of San Antonio. SAISD initiated its multilingual program in the early 1980s to enhance the district's foreign language offerings. The multilingual program is a continuous seven-year program of foreign language instruction beginning in the sixth grade. Students first make

application in the fifth grade. They are admitted on the basis of superior academic performance as evidenced in test scores, grades, and teacher recommendations. The multilingual program includes instruction in the same essential elements required in all Texas public school districts as well as language enrichment through honor classes, accelerated pacing, and individualized instruction. The multilingual program is housed in two middle schools and one high school. The student population at these schools also includes regularly assigned students. Thus students enrolled in the multilingual program take many of their classes with regular students. For the 1992-93 school year, SAISD admitted 675 students to the multilingual program. Another 307 students applied for the program, but were not admitted due to enrollment limitations.

Data Collection

A comprehensive questionnaire was administered in the spring of 1993 to 1,113 teachers in 40 private and 34 public schools in San Antonio.² An overall response rate of 46 percent was obtained. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

Private Schools

In February 1993 we contacted the directors of the 74 private schools participating in the CEO program to inform them of the institutional phase of our school choice study. Forty agreed to allow us to survey their teachers. In May 1993 we sent the directors of the 40 schools sets of sealed packets for all teachers in his or her school. Each packet contained a letter informing the

²A follow up survey of the two multilingual middle schools was conducted in the spring of 1994 to increase the response rates of teachers at these schools.

teacher about the survey, the four-page questionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

A total of 578 questionnaires were distributed to teachers, and 306 were returned for a response rate of 53 percent. Teachers who fell outside the grade 1-8 range or who taught all grade levels in such subjects as music or physical education were deleted from the study. Of the 222 remaining, 149 taught at the elementary level and 73 at the middle school level (see Table 1).

Forty-one percent of private school teachers included in the survey are employed at Catholic schools, 26 percent at Christian schools, 16 percent at Baptist schools, and the remainder at schools of various denominations or at nonreligious schools.

Public Schools

To survey a comparable number of teachers from the San Antonio Independent School District, we conducted a stratified random sample for grades 1-8. The sample was stratified on the basis of the seven sectors of the district served by each of the district's school board members. From each of these, one middle school and up to five elementary schools were chosen. All were chosen randomly except for the two schools housing the SAISD's multilingual choice program. All told, 27 elementary and seven middle schools were selected. Of these, all were non-choice attendance-zone schools except the two middle schools housing the district's multilingual program.

The teachers to be surveyed in these schools were chosen proportionally. To obtain 80 teachers within each of the school board sectors, we randomly selected from each school one teacher per grade level per 100 students enrolled. Sealed packets containing an explanatory memorandum, a brief note from the superintendent supporting the research, the questionnaire, and

self-addressed stamped return envelope were distributed to teachers through the SAISD internal mail system. A total of 621 questionnaires were distributed, and 293 returned for a response rate of 47 percent. Of the 293 teachers responding, 160 taught at the elementary level, 79 at the two multilingual middle schools, and 54 at the attendance-zone middle schools (see Table 1).

Following additional surveying in 1994, 79 teachers at the two multilingual schools returned questionnaires. Of these, 66 taught regular subjects and 13 taught special language classes.

The survey questionnaire was adapted from one developed by University of Wisconsin Professor John Witte for examining schooling characteristics in Milwaukee metropolitan public schools.³ Additional questions were added regarding the teaching of values and controversial issues in the classroom, strategies to be used for students who do not reach grade level or teacher objectives, and teacher demographics. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to this report.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Mission, Goals, and Learning Climate

We asked several questions regarding mission, goals, and learning climate. Over 90 percent of the teachers at both the private and public elementary schools indicate that the goals and priorities for their schools are clear (first item, Table 2A). At the middle school level, private school teachers are more emphatic in saying so. Fifty-five percent strongly agree with the statement, compared with 31 percent of the teachers in the SAISD multilingual schools and 9 percent in attendance-zone middle schools (first item, Table 2B). Twenty-three percent of the

³ See Witte, J.F., & Walsh, D.J. (1990). A systematic test of the effective schools model. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 12: 188-212.

latter disagree that goals are clear. This compares with 4 percent for private middle school teachers and 12 percent for multilingual school teachers.

The vast majority of CEO private and SAISD public school teachers agree that the principal is committed to the school's mission and has communicated this to the staff (see second item, Tables 2A and 2B). More private school middle school teachers are likely to strongly agree than their public school counterparts. Teachers at one of the two multilingual choice middle schools are more supportive of the statement than teachers at other SAISD middle schools.

While most private and public school elementary teachers agree that the principal sees that priorities are set and that plans are made and carried out (item three, Tables 2A and 2B), nearly half of the regular teachers at the multilingual middle schools disagree.

The responses among teachers are mixed regarding whether the learning environment is conducive to school achievement for most students (item four, Table 2A and 2B).⁴ Although a majority of private and public elementary school teachers say that the environment is conducive to learning, over a quarter of the public elementary school teachers disagree. Only 9 percent of private teachers do so. The disparities are more evident at the middle school level. Here, approximately 90 percent of the private school teachers and 80 percent of the public multilingual school teachers believe the environment is conducive to learning. But at the attendance-zone schools, only 41 percent think so.

In summary, the vast majority of teachers in both private and public schools find school mission and goals clearly stated and the principal committed to carrying them out. Teachers at

⁴ This was a reversed item on the questionnaire, and it may be that some teachers did not realize so in responding.

SAISD's multilingual choice schools are more likely to believe so than their counterparts at SAISD attendance-zone middle schools. However, nearly half of the regular teachers at the multilingual schools disagree that their principals are effective at setting priorities and at making plans and carrying them out. Teachers at the attendance-zone middle schools are much more likely than other respondent groups to find the schooling environment not conducive to student achievement.

Teamwork

The questionnaire included items relating to administrative and staff teamwork (Tables 3A & 3B). While a majority of elementary teachers at both private and public schools concur that all personnel in the building work together as a team, over a third of SAISD elementary teachers disagree (36 percent). This compares with 10 percent for private elementary school teachers (item one, Table 3A). Support for teamwork in other areas among private and public elementary school teachers is consistently strong. Over 80 percent agree that the school administration is supportive of the staff (item two, Table 3A). Most elementary teachers view the principal as aware of their classroom instructional program and themselves aware of what other teachers are doing in the school.⁵ Percentage variation in responses between private and public school elementary teachers is small (items three and four, Table 3A).

In the area of student discipline, however, the difference is greater. While only 22 percent of the private elementary school teachers say that teachers are not supported when they enforce

⁵ The question regarding the principal's familiarity with the respondent's classroom instruction was a reversed item on the questionnaire.

the school's discipline rules, nearly twice as many SAISD elementary school teachers say so (item five, Table 3A). Similarly, more private elementary school teachers than public school elementary teachers say that they are in close agreement with the principal on the school's disciplinary policy (item six, Table 3A).

There is greater difference between the responses of CEO private and SAISD middle school teachers on teamwork than with elementary teachers. While 81 percent of the teachers in private schools and 51 percent of the teachers in the SAISD multilingual program agree or agree strongly that all personnel work together closely as a team, fewer than half of regular teachers in SAISD multilingual schools and attendance-zone middle schools do so (item one, Table 3B). Over one-quarter of the multilingual and one-third of the attendance-zone teachers do not find the administration supportive of the staff, compared with 9 percent for private school teachers (item two, Table 3B). Nearly half of the teachers at multilingual schools do not find the principal knowledgeable about their classroom instruction (item three, Table 3B).⁶ On the other hand, a high percentage of middle school teachers in all respondent groups agree that they are familiar with the content of classes taught by others in their department or grade level (item four, Table 3B).

As with the elementary teachers, CEO private middle school teachers and SAISD middle school teachers vary widely over the extent of teamwork regarding student discipline. Only 19 percent of private school teachers say that teachers are not supported by the principal when they enforce the school's discipline rules. The percentages are much greater for SAISD teachers -- 54

⁶Teachers in one multilingual school are more likely than teachers at the other multilingual school to say that the principal is not familiar with instruction in their classrooms. This difference may be attributable to the recent appointment of an administrator at one multilingual school.

percent for teachers at the multilingual schools and 61 percent at attendance-zone schools (item five, Table 3B).⁷ As with private elementary school teachers, private middle school teachers are more likely to agree that teachers and the principal are in accord on school disciplinary policy. Eighty-three percent of private school teachers say that such accord is evident, compared with 64 percent of the teachers at the SAISD multilingual schools and 52 percent of the teachers at SAISD attendance-zone schools (item six, Table 3B).

Teacher Involvement

Considerable emphasis in the school reform literature is placed on increased teacher involvement in school and classroom decision making. Our survey asked teachers to indicate the degree of influence they have over school building policy in a number of areas (Tables 4A and 4B). As is evident from Table 4A, private school elementary teachers indicate more influence than SAISD elementary teachers over determining school discipline rules and establishing the school curriculum (items one and three), while public school teachers indicate more influence over staff development programs and school budget (items two and five). Over two-thirds of both respondent groups indicate having moderate or great influence over setting school performance goals (item four). Neither group has much influence over the school budget or establishing school staffing patterns (items five and six).

⁷There is a marked difference between the responses of the teachers at the two multilingual schools to this question, including less evidence of staff and administrative teamwork. Again, this difference may be attributable to the recent appointment of an administrator at one multilingual school.

At the middle school level, the response pattern over the same areas of influence shows private school teachers and multilingual teachers claiming the most influence, followed by SAISD attendance-zone school teachers and regular teachers in SAISD multilingual schools (see Table 4B). Nearly 80 percent of private school teachers indicate moderate or great influence over determining student discipline rules (item one). This compares with 60 percent for SAISD attendance-zone and multilingual teachers and 44 percent for regular teachers in SAISD multilingual school teachers. Fifty-eight percent of the private school teachers indicate moderate or great influence over determining the content of staff development programs, compared with 47 percent for multilingual teachers, 38 percent for SAISD attendance-zone teachers, and 30 percent for regular teachers at multilingual schools (item two). Nearly 60 percent of private school teachers say they have moderate or great influence over establishing the school curriculum (item three). This compares with 52 percent for attendance-zone teachers, 47 percent for multilingual teachers, and 43 percent for regular teachers in multilingual schools. A similar pattern is evident for setting performance goals (item four). Most of the respondents in each group indicate little or no influence over the school budget and school staffing patterns, with SAISD multilingual teachers indicating the least influence in each area (items five and six). Why the SAISD multilingual school teachers indicate the least influence in school building policy among the respondent groups remains to be determined.

The survey also asked the teachers to indicate their influence over a number of classroom activities. The results are portrayed in Tables 5A and 5B. Majorities of both private and public school elementary teachers claim moderate or great influence in all areas, with the greatest influence over disciplining students (item three, Table 5A). Private school teachers have much

more influence over selecting textbooks and instructional material than public school teachers; 73 percent of the former and 53 percent of the latter say teachers have moderate or great influence (item one, Table 5A). Surprisingly, given the state-mandated teaching of the essential elements in all public school classrooms, 69 percent of SAISD elementary teachers say they have moderate or great influence over selecting content, topics, and skills taught in the classroom (item two, Table 5A). This compares with 79 percent for private school elementary teachers. Private school teachers have more influence than public school teachers over controlling pull-outs⁸ from their classrooms, though many private schools may not have pull-out programs (item five, Table 5A). Otherwise, the influence patterns of private and public elementary teachers over classroom activities vary little.

For middle school teachers, the survey shows the greatest teacher influence over homework (item four, Table 5B). Over 90 percent of all major respondent groups -- private school teachers, teachers at multilingual schools, and attendance-zone school teachers -- claim to have moderate or great influence in this area (item four, Table 5B). High influence among these groups is also evident over student discipline (item three, Table 5B). Three-quarters of CEO private middle school teachers say they have moderate or great influence over selecting textbooks and instructional materials (item one, Table 5B). This compares with nearly half of teachers at attendance-zone and multilingual middle schools and 38 percent for multilingual school teachers, reflecting state and school district controls over textbook adoption at public schools. Like elementary teachers, however, a majority of all middle school respondent groups say they have

⁸ Pull-outs refers to students leaving the classroom periodically for various special curricular and extracurricular programs during the day, e.g., tutoring, speech therapy, classes for gifted/talented students, field trips, etc.

moderate or great influence over selecting the content, topics, and skills taught in the classroom (item two, Table 5B). Private school teachers claim much more influence over controlling pull-outs from the classroom than public school teachers (item five, Table 5B).

In summary, both private school and SAISD elementary teachers indicate considerable influence over non-economic building policies. At the middle school level, private school teachers consistently claim more influence over building policies than public school teachers, with the exception of economic matters where neither has much influence. Regular teachers in SAISD multilingual schools consistently claim the least influence. A lack of teamwork is evident in the responses of both SAISD elementary and middle school teachers to questions about school discipline.

Majorities of private and public school teachers claim moderate or great influence over most classroom activities, with elementary teachers claiming the greatest influence over student discipline and middle school teachers over homework. Private middle school teachers show the most control over textbooks.

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Teacher Characteristics

SAISD elementary and middle school teachers are somewhat older than their CEO private school counterparts (see Table 6). Approximately two-thirds of SAISD elementary and

attendance-zone middle school teachers are 41 years of age or older, compared with 58 percent of CEO private school elementary teachers and 53 percent of CEO private middle school teachers.⁹

There is little difference in gender between public and private schools. At the elementary level, over 90 percent of the private and public school teachers are female. At the middle school level, the percentage of female teachers is closer to two-thirds for the private schools and SAISD multilingual schools, and four-fifths for SAISD attendance-zone teachers (Table 7).

Three-quarters of the CEO private elementary and middle school teachers are Anglo. At SAISD schools, teacher ethnicity is more diverse. Forty-one percent of the SAISD elementary teachers are Hispanic and 8 percent are African-American. Seventeen percent of the SAISD multilingual middle school teachers are African-American, one-quarter are Hispanic, and the rest mostly Anglo.¹⁰ The percentage of African-American teachers drops at the SAISD attendance-zone middle schools, while the percentage of Anglo teachers rises to 57 percent (see Table 8).

While 14 percent of the private school elementary teachers and 5 percent of the private middle school teachers have less than a bachelor's degree, no SAISD teacher does. SAISD teachers are more than twice as likely to have master's degrees than the CEO private school teachers (see Table 9).¹¹

⁹At the multilingual schools, however, only half of the regular teachers are 41 years of age or older, while 64 percent of multilingual teachers are 41 years of age or older.

¹⁰Among teachers at the multilingual schools, slightly over half of regular teachers are Anglo, while only one third of multilingual teachers are Anglo.

¹¹While 44 percent of regular teachers in multilingual schools (the same percentage as in attendance-zone middle schools) reported having master's degrees, 73 percent of multilingual teachers responding to the survey hold master's degrees.

Public school teachers are much more likely to hold teaching certificates than private school teachers. While 100 percent of SAISD elementary teachers are certified by the Texas Education Agency, only 53 percent of private school elementary teachers are. For middle school teachers, the percentages are 50 percent for private school teachers, 86 percent of SAISD multilingual school teachers, and 96 percent for SAISD attendance-zone school teachers.¹²

SAISD teachers are also more experienced than private school teachers. Thirty-eight percent of the private school elementary teachers and 44 percent of the private middle school teachers have less than five years of teaching experience. This compares with 15 percent of SAISD elementary teachers, 14 percent for multilingual school teachers and 23 percent for attendance-zone teachers. The higher percentage of the latter is interesting and suggests high turnover at these schools. SAISD teachers are more than twice as likely than private school teachers to have sixteen years or more of teaching experience (see Table 10).

CEO private school teachers and SAISD public school teachers have about the same number of years of employment at their present school. The percentage of teachers who have been at the school less than five years ranges from 61 percent for private school elementary teachers to 48 percent for SAISD elementary school teachers. A higher percentage of SAISD teachers than private school teachers has been at their school sixteen years or more (see Table 11).

Classroom Size and Instruction

¹² The question asked respondents whether or not they are certified. It did not ask about temporary or provisional certification. Thus some public school teachers who fall into the latter category may have responded negatively.

We included several items relating to the classroom. Class size varies considerably for CEO private elementary schools, with 19 percent having fewer than fifteen students in an average class and 27 percent having more than twenty-six students (see Table 12). For SAISD elementary schools, 90 percent of the teachers say their average class size is between 16 and 25 students. This reflects the 1-to-22 state law requirement for public school elementary classes, absent waivers from the Texas Commissioner of Education. Class size also varies considerably for CEO private middle schools, while concentrated in the twenty-one to thirty student range for SAISD public schools. SAISD middle school classes are much more likely to be larger than CEO middle school classes (see Table 12).¹³

Nearly two-thirds of teachers in private elementary schools and in SAISD elementary and multilingual schools say they assign between fifteen and forty-five minutes of homework per class period while 77 percent of teachers in CEO private middle schools say they do (see Table 13).¹⁴ However, two-thirds of the teachers at SAISD attendance-zone schools say they assign less than fifteen minutes of homework per class period (see Table 13).

There is considerable difference in how private and public school teachers handle values instruction in their classrooms. At the elementary level, 56 percent of the private school teachers say they teach the values their school represents. Only 15 percent of the public school teachers do

¹³It is interesting to note, however, that 58 percent of multilingual teachers reported classes of 20 or fewer, while only 10 percent of regular teachers in multilingual schools and none of the teachers in attendance-zone middle schools reported having classes of 20 or fewer students.

¹⁴In the multilingual schools, 46 percent of regular teachers, but none of the multilingual teachers, assign 15 minutes or less of homework per class period.

so. Nearly 80 percent of the latter encourage their students to express their values and develop an appreciation for the values of other students (see Table 14). At the middle school level, the same pattern is evident. Two-thirds of the private school teachers say they teach the values their schools represent, while nearly two-thirds of the SAISD multilingual and attendance-zone middle school teachers encourage students to express their values and to develop an appreciation for the values of other students (see Table 14). Interestingly, over one-third of multilingual teachers -- over twice as many as in any other group -- reported that they avoid values instruction.

We also asked teachers whether they engage in discussing controversial issues in their classes. Roughly two-thirds of all respondents claim that they sometimes do so (see Table 15). Thirty-two percent of teachers at CEO private middle schools say they do so often. This compares with 17 percent at SAISD attendance-zone schools and 8 percent at SAISD multilingual schools.

Student Achievement Expectations

Over two-thirds of teachers at CEO private elementary and middle schools and teachers at the SAISD public multilingual schools expect over half the students in their classes to *exceed* grade level or course objectives by the end of the year.¹⁵ This compares with 43 percent for SAISD elementary school teachers and 35 percent for SAISD attendance-zone middle schools (see Table 16). It must be remembered in reviewing these responses that students are assigned to the latter schools and thus may reflect a wider range of academic ability and motivation.

¹⁵For multilingual teachers this percentage climbs to 86 percent.

Over half the teachers at CEO private elementary and secondary schools expect upwards of 90 percent of their students to *reach* grade level by the end of the year. The percentages of SAISD teachers who expect so are much lower (see Table 17)¹⁶.

We asked the teachers who they think is primarily responsible for improving the performance of students not learning well in the classroom. Private and public school teachers were quite consistent in their responses. Over three-quarters of the elementary teachers at both private and public schools say that the teacher is most responsible. At the middle school level, roughly a third of the private and public school teachers place responsibility on the student, with most of the others holding the teacher responsible. Only a small percentage of the respondents holds the parent responsible (see Table 18).¹⁷

We also asked the teachers what strategies they would recommend for students who neither reach grade level nor meet the teacher's objectives by the end of the year. The most frequently mentioned strategy was additional practice and instruction. Others listed include individualized teaching such as one-to-one tutoring, diagnostic testing followed by placement in a special class or program, and nontraditional instructional methods.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The survey asked teachers to indicate the frequency of contact with parents and to comment on it. For elementary teachers, parents visit and observe students' performance

¹⁶However, the percentage of multilingual teachers -- 43 percent -- who expect 90 percent of their students to reach grade level approaches that of private schools.

¹⁷Multilingual teachers, however, gave responses that were quite different: 38 percent name the teacher most responsible, 33 percent name the student, and 29 percent name the parent.

infrequently. Sixty-five percent of the CEO elementary teachers and 58 percent of the SAISD elementary teachers indicate parents visit two to four times a year. One-third of the latter say parents do not visit at all (first item, Table 19A). The frequency of parent visits is about the same for teachers at CEO middle schools and SAISD multilingual middle schools. Over half of the SAISD attendance-zone teachers say that parents do not visit at all (first item, Table 19B).

CEO private school elementary teachers are much more likely to meet the majority of their students' parents (second item, Table 19A). The pattern is similar for middle school teachers. Only 2 percent of private school teachers say that they do not meet the majority of their students' parents, compared with 24 percent of teachers SAISD middle schools and 46 percent of those at SAISD attendance-zone schools who say they have no contact (second item, Table 19B).

Private school elementary teachers are also more likely to have parent volunteers in the classroom than are SAISD elementary teachers. Over half of the latter say that they never have parent volunteers in their classrooms (third item, Table 19A). While 58 percent of the private middle school teachers claim they never have parent volunteers in their classroom, the percentage rises to 88 percent for teachers in SAISD multilingual middle schools and 93 percent for SAISD attendance-zone middle school teachers (third item, Table 19B). These data are in accord with our demographic study of CEO and SAISD choosing and nonchoosing families. Parents who choose private or public schools for their children are more likely to be involved in their children's education through such activities as helping in the classroom, attending parent/teacher conferences, belonging to the parent/teacher organization, and assisting their children with homework.

Teacher participation in parent organization activities is about the same for private and public elementary teachers, with most saying they participate two to four times a year (item four, Tables 19A). Private school middle school teachers are more frequently involved in parent organization activities than their public school counterparts (item four, Table 19B).

While nearly 50 percent of private and public school elementary teachers say they communicate to parents in writing their academic expectation for children weekly or monthly, over half do so two to four times a year or not at all (item five, Table 19A). For middle school teachers, fewer say they communicate frequently with parents. There is little difference between the responses of public and private middle school teachers (item five, Table 19B).

Seventy percent of private and public school elementary teachers say they find it effective to have parent volunteers in their classrooms (item one, Table 20A). Middle school teachers are less enthusiastic (item one, Table 20B).

The vast majority of private school elementary teachers say that parents usually respond when they request a conference. SAISD elementary teachers find parent response less prompt (item two, Table 20A). Differences in response patterns are also evident at the middle school level. Most CEO private middle school teachers say that parents respond, with only 3 percent saying parents seldom do so. Thirteen percent of SAISD attendance-zone middle school teachers and 21 percent of the multilingual school teachers say parents seldom or never respond to conference requests (item two, Table 20B). Private school elementary and middle school teachers are more likely to find it effective to involve parents when children are having difficulty than are SAISD elementary and middle school teachers (item three, Tables 20A and 20B).

In summary, parents do not visit often in either the CEO private schools or the SAISD public schools. But especially at the elementary level, private school teachers are more likely than public school teachers to meet frequently with parents and to have parent volunteers in the classroom, a reflection perhaps of the greater interest that choosing parents take in the education of their children. Teachers at private and public schools make similar efforts to become involved with parent organizations and to contact parents when children are having difficulty. Parents whose children attend CEO private schools are more likely to respond than other parents when teachers request conferences and teachers are more likely to find the responses effective.

SUMMARY

The teacher survey indicates significant differences among teachers at CEO private schools, the SAISD multilingual schools, and SAISD attendance-zone schools regarding perceptions of the characteristics of their schools, their involvement in building-level decision making, their classroom practices, and extent of parent involvement. While the survey reveals differences, it does not explain why they exist. Selected on-site case studies at these schools should help us understand the institutional and personal dynamics that influenced the questionnaire responses.

Table 1 *Teacher Survey Sampling and Response Rates*

Teachers	Size of Sample	Number of Schools Surveyed¹	Number of Completed Questionnaires	Response Rate	Percentage of Total Respondents
Private School	496²	40	222³	45%	43%
Elementary			149		29%
Middle			73		14%
Public School	621	34	293	47%	57%
Elementary	399	27	160	40%	31%
Middle Multilingual ⁴	109	2	79	72%	15%
Middle Attendance-Zone	113	5	54	48%	10%
Total Teachers	1113	74	515	46%	100%

¹ Of the 78 private schools involved in the CEO program, 40 agreed to participate in the survey. A random stratified sample of SAISD schools yielded 34 schools for the study. Survey instruments were distributed individually to teachers through the internal school mail system in the SAISD schools in sealed packets. Because teacher names and grade levels were not available to us, sealed packets were distributed by school directors at CEO private schools to their faculty members. The packet contained explanatory information, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

² Originally 578 teachers were surveyed, but 496 remained after the 82 whose questionnaires were not usable were subtracted (see note 3).

³ Eighty-two teachers who indicated their primary assignment as Pre-K, Kindergarten, or grades 9 and above were eliminated from the study. Although 304 questionnaires were received, the adjusted total of private school respondents is 222.

⁴ Of the 91 teachers teaching regular subjects in the multilingual schools, 66 returned a questionnaire for a 73% response rate following additional surveying. Of the 18 teachers teaching special language classes in the multilingual schools, 13 returned a questionnaire for a 72% response rate.

Table 2A Mission, Goals, and Learning Climate

	CEO Elementary Schools				SAISD Elementary Schools			
	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD
Goals and priorities for the school are clear.	49	46	4	1	43	48	5	4
Principal is committed to the school's mission.	67	29	2	2	59	35	3	3
Principal sees that priorities and plans are made and carried out.	36	54	7	3	26	53	13	8
The school learning environment is not conducive to student achievement.	3	6	42	49	5	23	39	34

Table 2B Mission, Goals, and Learning Climate

	CEO Middle Schools			SAISD Multilingual Middle Schools			SAISD Attendance-Zone Middle Schools					
	SA	A	D	SA	A	D	SA	A	D			
Goals and priorities for the school are clear.	55	41	4	0	31	55	12	2	9	69	19	4
Principal is committed to the school's mission.	74	23	1	1	52	37	8	3	30	52	15	4
Principal sees that priorities and plans are made and carried out.	38	54	7	1	12	50	29	9	6	57	20	17
The school learning environment is not conducive to student achievement.	1	10	38	51	2	20	48	30	7	52	32	9

Table 3A Administration and Staff Teamwork

	CEO Elementary Schools				SAISD Elementary Schools			
	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD
All personnel work closely as a team.	35	56	7	3	18	46	23	13
School administration is supportive of the staff.	46	46	5	3	34	49	13	3
Principal is not familiar with instruction in my classroom.	8	18	40	35	5	17	43	37
I am familiar with content of classes taught by other teachers in my department or grade level.	40	53	7	0	28	54	14	3
Teachers are not supported when they enforce the school's discipline rules.	3	19	31	47	11	29	32	26
The teachers and the principal are in close agreement on school disciplinary policy.	38	50	10	3	26	46	19	9

Table 3B Administrative and Staff Teamwork

	CEO Middle Schools			SAISD Multilingual Middle Schools			SAISD Attendance-Zone Middle Schools					
	SA	A	SD	SA	A	SD	SA	A	SD			
All personnel work closely as a team.	32	49	15	4	6	47	28	19	2	39	35	24
School administration is supportive of the staff.	53	38	6	3	17	56	12	15	11	51	30	8
Principal is not familiar with instruction in my classroom.	8	11	34	47	11	35	38	17	7	30	50	13
I am familiar with content of classes taught by other teachers in my department or grade level.	25	60	14	1	23	58	15	5	20	58	17	4
Teachers are not supported when they enforce the school's discipline rules.	4	15	33	48	18	36	26	20	20	41	30	9
The teachers and the principal are in close agreement on school disciplinary policy.	38	45	15	1	9	55	20	16	4	48	35	13

Table 4A Teacher Influence Over Building Policy

	CEO Elementary Schools			SAISD Elementary Schools				
	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal		
Determine student discipline rules	3	12	39	46	9	25	38	29
Determine content of staff development programs	17	36	34	14	11	25	45	19
Establish school curriculum	9	27	37	27	8	40	37	15
Set school performance goals	12	20	42	26	6	23	41	30
Determine school budget	62	33	5	0	38	28	29	6
Establish school staffing patterns	47	34	18	2	48	25	20	3

Table 4B Teacher Influence Over Building Policy

	CEO Middle Schools			SAISD Multilingual Middle Schools			SAISD Attendance-Zone Middle Schools					
	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal			
Determine student discipline rules	3	18	56	23	8	45	32	15	6	35	43	17
Determine content of staff development programs	13	29	50	8	22	45	26	8	15	47	34	4
Establish school curriculum	18	25	40	18	19	38	34	9	20	29	35	17
Set school performance goals	8	24	51	17	8	42	37	14	6	36	49	9
Determine school budget	51	32	14	4	56	23	14	6	46	33	17	4
Establish school staffing patterns	41	41	16	3	68	28	5	0	50	35	15	0

Table 5A Teacher Classroom Influence

	CEO Elementary Schools			SAISD Elementary Schools				
	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal	None	Little	Mod- erate Great Deal		
Selecting textbooks and instructional material	5	22	34	39	13	33	32	21
Selecting content, topics, and skills taught	5	16	33	46	5	25	37	32
Disciplining students	0	1	32	67	4	13	33	50
Determining amount of homework	1	3	21	75	2	8	24	67
Controlling pullouts from classroom	16	16	33	35	36	31	27	6

Table 5B Teacher Classroom Influence

	CEO Middle Schools		SAISD Multilingual Middle Schools		SAISD Attendance-Zone Middle Schools							
	None	Little	Mod- erate	Great Deal	None	Little	Mod- erate	Great Deal				
Selecting textbooks and instructional materials	4	22	37	37	23	32	21	24	26	30	24	20
Selecting content, topics, and skills taught	6	15	31	49	5	21	20	55	6	11	35	48
Disciplining students	0	13	28	59	3	18	42	36	4	15	37	44
Determining amount of homework	2	9	22	68	2	2	26	71	0	4	28	69
Controlling pullouts from classroom	13	27	38	23	35	37	17	11	33	33	26	8

Table 6 Age of Teachers

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Under 25	5	4	10	0	4	0	0
25-30	15	6	11	14	18	12	21
31-40	22	22	26	34	13	39	14
41-50	35	46	38	40	49	35	57
51-60	14	17	11	9	16	10	7
Over 60	9	5	4	3	0	4	0

Table 7 Teacher Gender

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Male	8	9	31	37	20	36	39
Female	93	91	69	63	80	64	62

Table 8 Teacher Ethnicity

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Black	2	8	0	17	6	22	0 (7)
Hispanic	16	41	21	25	29	16	53 (50)
Anglo	74	47	78	50	57	55	33 (29)
Other	8	4	1	8	8	6	13 (14)

Table 9 Level of Teacher Education

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
HS-diploma	6	0	4	0	0	0	0
Assoc. degree	8	0	1	0	0	0	0
Bach. degree	74	70	72	48	56	54	27
Mast. degree	12	30	18	51	44	44	73
Doc. degree	0	0	4	2	0	2	0

Table 10 Years of Full-Time Experience

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
5 years <	38	15	44	14	23	12	21
6 - 10 yrs	22	12	30	27	11	30	14
11 - 15 yrs	20	22	10	14	28	14	14
16 to 20 yrs	8	21	8	27	13	26	29
Over 20 yrs	11	29	8	19	25	18	21

Average years for public school teachers: 15.1 years

Average years for private school teachers: 9.9 years

Table 11 Years Taught in this School

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
5 years <	61	48	60	55	59	52	67
6 - 10 yrs	24	20	30	32	21	33	27
11 - 15 yrs	9	15	8	6	4	6	13
16 to 20 yrs	3	8	1	6	8	8	0
Over 20 yrs	4	9	0	0	10	0	0

Table 12 Average Class Size

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
15 students or <	19	4	13	11	0	6	29
16 - 20 students	26	55	17	10	0	4	29
21 - 25 students	28	35	38	37	46	40	29
26 - 30 students	19	9	18	39	50	46	14
Over 30 students	8	0	14	3	4	4	0

Table 13 Average Homework per Class Period

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
15 minutes <	28	33	14	35	65	46	0
16-45 minutes	64	61	77	62	33	54	87
Over 45 minutes	8	7	8	3	2	0	13

Table 14 Values Instruction (VI)

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Avoids VI	1	8	3	19	10	14	36
Teaches values of school	56	15	66	17	24	20	7
Encourages values expression & tolerance	43	77	31	64	67	66	57

Table 15 Discussion of Controversial Subjects

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Never	11	15	1	17	17	16	20
Sometimes	70	71	67	75	65	76	73
Often	19	14	32	8	17	8	7

Table 16 Percentage of Students Expected to Exceed Grade Level

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Under 25%	15	37	11	18	50	24	0
25-50%	8	19	18	14	17	14	13
51-90%	50	32	49	52	22	52	53
Over 90%	26	11	22	15	13	10	33

Table 17 Percentage of Students Expected to Reach Grade Level

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Under 25%	5	8	3	9	14	10	7
25-50%	1	19	4	16	9	20	0
51-90%	30	54	40	55	65	56	50
Over 90%	64	20	53	20	11	14	43

Table 18 Whose Responsibility When Students Aren't Learning Well?*

	CEO Elem	SAISD Elem	CEO Mid-schl	SAISD Multi-ling Mid-schl	SAISD Atd-zone Mid-schl	Davis and Tofalla Reg-tch	Tofalla ML-tch
Teacher	78	77	54	53	72	57	38
Parent	5	7	10	14	6	11	29
Student	16	15	37	33	28	33	33
Principal	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Other	0	6	5	0	0	0	0

*The column totals may exceed 100% because some teachers designated more than one person most responsible.

Table 19A Parent Contact

	CEO Elementary Schools		SAISD Elementary Schools	
	Weekly	2-4 times per year at all	Weekly	2-4 times per year at all
Parents visit and observe my students' performance.	7	19	4	33
I meet the majority of my students' parents.	16	1	4	15
I have parent volunteers in my classroom.	27	29	7	56
I participate in parent organizations and activities.	1	13	5	12
I communicate in writing my academic expectations for their child.	25	8	21	5

Table 19B Parent Contact

	CEO Middle Schools		SAISD Multilingual Middle Schools		SAISD Attendance-Zone Middle Schools							
	Weekly	2-4 times per year	Weekly	2-4 times per year	Weekly	2-4 times per year						
	Monthly	at all	Monthly	at all	Monthly	at all						
Parents visit and observe my students' performance.	2	9	59	31	5	8	47	41	2	4	39	56
I meet the majority of my students' parents.	9	18	72	2	0	8	68	24	0	0	54	46
I have parent volunteers in my classroom.	10	6	25	58	3	2	8	88	0	0	7	93
I participate in parent organizations and activities.	3	47	43	7	3	6	63	28	0	22	67	11
I communicate in writing my academic expectations for their child.	12	26	57	6	3	37	54	6	2	37	59	2

Table 20A Response to Parent Contact

	CEO Elementary Schools			SAISD Elementary Schools				
	Usually	Some- times	Seldom	Never	Usually	Some- times	Seldom	Never
I find it effective to have parent volunteers in my classroom.	28	42	19	12	23	44	20	14
Parents respond when I request a conference.	95	5	0	0	43	36	20	2
I find it effective to involve parents when children are not achieving.	90	9	1	0	67	24	9	0

Table 20B Response to Parent Contact

	CEO Middle Schools			SAISD Multilingual Middle Schools			SAISD Attendance-Zone Middle Schools					
	Usually	Some-times	Seldom Never	Usually	Some-times	Seldom Never	Usually	Some-times	Seldom Never			
I find it effective to have parent volunteers in my classroom.	25	22	31	22	17	26	13	33	23	31		
Parents respond when I request a conference.	86	11	3	0	50	29	21	0	41	43	13	2
I find it effective to involve parents when children are not achieving.	86	14	0	0	75	21	4	0	52	39	9	0



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