



The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

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SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation

Report #8
March 2009



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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.

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Executive Summary

This report is the second in a series of annual reports produced by the School Choice Demonstration Project (SCDP) that will provide descriptive information about the private schools participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), the oldest and largest urban school voucher program in the U. S. The MPCP was launched in the fall of 1990 with seven participating schools enrolling 341 students.

MPCP Participating Schools – Basic Characteristics

A total of 124 schools participated in the MPCP for the entire 2007-08 academic year, with 19,069 students enrolled using MPCP vouchers. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), two schools closed and two were barred from participation in the MPCP due to compliance issues at some point during the 2007-08 school year. Generally speaking, MPCP students constitute a majority of participating schools' total enrollment—the average school level percentage of MPCP students in these schools was 76.7 percent. Over 60 percent of participating schools had student enrollments that were greater than 80 percent MPCP students, while 53 percent had MPCP enrollment percentages above 90 percent. Collectively, schools participating in the MPCP in 2007-08 offered the full range of grade options, from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Ninety percent of schools served elementary students, while 80 percent served middle school students. Twenty-two percent offered high school.

MPCP Participating Schools – Religious Status

Participating schools represent at least 10 distinct religious affiliations, others that classify themselves as non-religious schools that follow a religious tradition, and purely secular schools:

- Ninety-nine schools identified themselves as religious (81.8%),
- Nine were classified as non-religious with a religious tradition (7.4%), and
- Thirteen of the participating schools identified themselves as non-religious (10.7%).

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 music programs (78.3%), arts programs (74.7%), afterschool programs (72.6%), and programs for students with learning problems (71.6%). Roughly half of the schools incorporate student government, foreign language programs, before school programs, and summer school. Fewer schools offer gifted and talented programs or programs for non-English speakers.

MPCP Participating Schools – Accountability Testing

With the passage of the 2005 Wisconsin Act 125, schools participating in the MPCP are now required to annually 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 2007-08 school year, the SCDP received student test scores from 114 schools. Nine MPCP schools were not required to test their students as they did not have any students in grades 4, 8, or 10. One school failed to submit test scores for the 2007-08 school year.

MPCP Participating Schools – Support Staff and Facilities

Schools participating in the MPCP incorporate support staff and facilities typically found in traditional schools. Most provide individual tutors (65.2 %), slightly more than half provide guidance counselors (51.1 %), while close to one-third have a school nurse (28.1 %).

Over 80 percent of the schools have a computer lab, gym, and a cafeteria. Slightly fewer have a library (69.6 %) or lunches prepared at the school (71.1 %).

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared—Racial/Ethnic Enrollment Comparisons

Both MPCP and MPS (Milwaukee Public Schools) schools enroll a high percentage of minorities. However, the MPCP schools exhibit modestly lower school-level percentages of minorities—an average of 79.0 percent compared to 85.5 percent in MPS. On the whole, the 6.6 point difference in average percent minority levels was found to be statistically significant.

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared—Teacher Qualification and School Size Comparisons

Compared to MPS reported data, the teachers at participating MPCP schools exhibit different attributes when it comes to measurable teacher characteristics. On average, 42.1 percent of the teachers at MPS schools have a Master's Degree, while only 28.7 percent of the teachers at MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey had that credential. Ninety-four percent of MPS teachers are certified by the State of Wisconsin. Sixty-nine percent of the teachers at the MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey are state certified. Compared to 63.1 percent of the MPCP teachers at schools that responded to the survey, 81.1 percent of the MPS teachers have at least five years of teaching experience.

Compared to MPS schools, MPCP schools are smaller and have a lower student-teacher ratio:

- The average school participating in the MPCP has 218 students, while the average MPS school has almost twice that number.
- The average student teacher ratios are smaller within the MPCP schools.

Future Reports

This report and its companion studies continue a series of annual reports on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program that will be conducted by the School Choice Demonstration Project. An initial draft of the report was greatly improved based on comments from the SCDP Research Advisory Board and research team, particularly Anneliese Dickman of the Public Policy Forum and Margaret Raymond of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. All remaining errors are the responsibility of the authors alone. This ongoing research project is being funded by a diverse set of philanthropies including the Annie E. Casey, Joyce, Kern Family, Lynde and Harry Bradley, Robertson, and Walton Family Foundations. We thank them for their generous support and acknowledge that the actual content of this report is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect any official positions of the various funding organizations or the University of Arkansas. Finally, we are grateful to the Milwaukee Public Schools, the private schools in the MPCP, and the state Department of Public Instruction for the willing cooperation, advice, and assistance that has made this research possible.

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

This report is the second 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 a set of baseline descriptive statistics about schools participating in the MPCP and provides comparisons to Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) whenever possible.

Overview of School Choice in Milwaukee

Currently, families in Milwaukee have an array of government-funded educational options. In addition to being able to choose any traditional school within MPS, estimates indicate that over 30 percent of the city's 130,000 school-age children take advantage of non-traditional forms of government-funded school choice.¹

The creation of government-funded education options for Milwaukee students has its roots in desegregation controversies that came to fruition in the 1970s. In 1976, a U.S. District Court ruled that Milwaukee Public Schools had "engaged in practices with the intent and for the purpose of creating and maintaining a segregated school system..."² The direct effect of the case was a court approved settlement aimed towards improving integration. That year the state enacted the Chapter 220 program "to promote cultural and racial integration in education" by facilitating the voluntary transfer of students between schools and districts.³

Beginning with the enactment of the MPCP in 1990, the Wisconsin Legislature has greatly expanded the number of educational options available to Milwaukee parents. Most notably, MPS was empowered to authorize charter schools in 1993;⁴ legislation to approve the MPCP participation of religious schools was passed in 1995 and implemented in 1998 after passing legal muster; and the legislature raised the enrollment cap on the MPCP in 1993, 1995, and 2005. Furthermore, in 1997 the legislature enacted a statewide "open enrollment" program that allows all parents, regardless of race, to apply for their children to attend public schools outside their district.

Given the history of the Milwaukee educational marketplace, the educational options available to parents likely will continue to change. The following section of this report will outline the various educational choices available to Milwaukee parents during the 2007-08 school year and provide more detailed information about the MPCP.

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- 1 Recent changes affecting transportation policies in Milwaukee may reduce the availability of intra-district choice. For more information, see "Functional Plan: Transportation," October 2008, Milwaukee Public Schools: http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_3754_335_0_43/http%3B/www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/port/docs/Tran-Plan.pdf.
 - 2 For more information see Irvin B. Charne's "The Milwaukee Cases," *Marquette Law Review*, 2005: <http://law.marquette.edu/lawreview/Fall%202005/Charne.pdf>.
 - 3 For more information see Russ Kava's "School Integration (Chapter 220) Aid," Information Paper #28, Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2007: [http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/informationalpapers/28_School%20integration%20\(Chapter%20220\)%20Aid.pdf](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/informationalpapers/28_School%20integration%20(Chapter%20220)%20Aid.pdf).
 - 4 UW-Milwaukee, the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Area Technical College were approved as charter school authorizers in 1997.

Milwaukee's Current Educational Options

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

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

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) began in 1990 (1989 WI Act 336) as a taxpayer funded voucher program that allows low-income students to attend a private school (including religious schools as of 1998) in the City of Milwaukee. The MPCP, the nation's oldest and largest urban school voucher program, started nearly 19 years ago with seven nonsectarian schools enrolling 341 students.

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

1. the child was enrolled in MPS;
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 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.

Initially the size of the MPCP was capped at 1 percent (900) of the total Milwaukee Public Schools enrollment (approximately 90,000 at that time), with the additional limit that no more than 49 percent of an individual school's students can be eligible for the MPCP. The cap was raised to 1.5 percent/65 percent limit (WI Act 16) in 1993 and to 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 percent increase from the preceding year. Over the next seven years, enrollment in the MPCP steadily increased until a statutory cap of 16,500 students was reached in 2005. In March of 2006, Governor Jim Doyle signed SB 618 (a.k.a. 2005 Act 125) which lifted the cap to 22,500. During the 2007-08 school year 19,069 students enrolled in 124 participating schools using MPCP vouchers.

Data and Methodology

During the period of February-September of 2008 the SCDP administered a survey to the principals of the 124 private schools participating in the MPCP. The initial set of surveys was distributed at the February 5, 2008 MPCP Pupil Assignment Council meeting 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 July 2008. Over the months of July and August 2008, the SCDP team followed up with reminders through telephone calls and e-mail to schools that had not returned surveys. At completion, the SCDP received 103 completed surveys from the MPCP schools, which equates to a final response rate of 83.1 percent. Eight of the 21 non-respondents from 2007-08 data collection efforts previously completed the 2006-07 principals' survey. Where appropriate, baseline data that is considered constant (e.g. historical information and religious affiliation) from the 2006-07 principals' survey is used in this report if such data were not obtained through the 2007-08 data collection efforts. Known characteristics of non-respondents are detailed in Appendix A. Additional data were provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

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

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 19,069 students using vouchers to attend 124 private schools participating in the MPCP in 2007-08 (table 1).⁵ Ten schools joined the MPCP for the first time during the 2007-08 school year. Two MPCP schools closed and two were terminated from the Program due to compliance issues last year.

Table 1. Change in MPCP Population of Schools: 2006-07 to 2007-08

School Year	Schools Participating in the MPCP all year	Total MPCP Student Enrollment: Third Friday in September Headcount
2006-07	122	17,749
2007-08	124	19,069

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

According to MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey, most schools that participated in 2007-08 existed prior to the establishment of the program in 1990 (table 2). However, 35 percent of the participating schools indicated that they were created after the program began. Of that 35 percent, over half (54.1%) indicated that the MPCP was a major factor in their decision to open a school, while an additional 14 percent said that it was a minor factor.

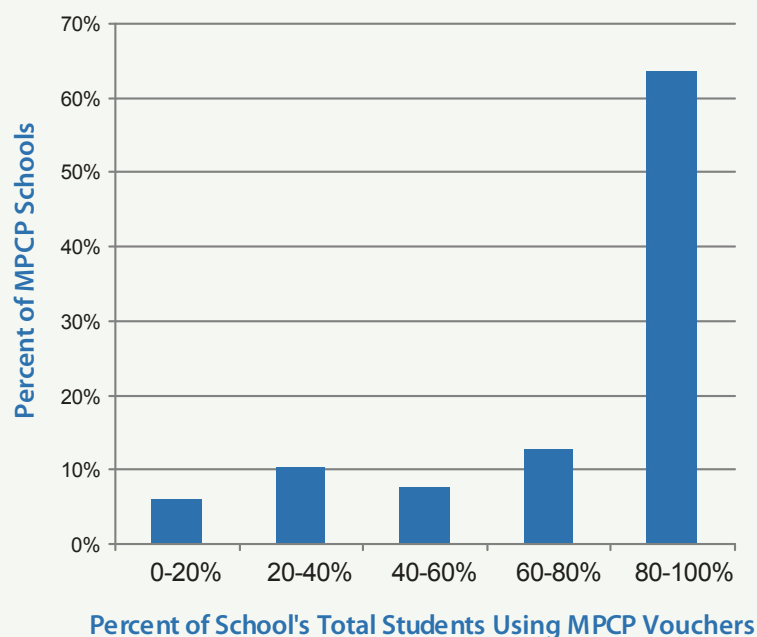
⁵ For reporting purposes, the DPI requires the schools to submit only one enrollment report that combines totals for all of their MPCP participating campuses. When possible we will separate these schools by their individual campuses which will result in a total of 122 MPCP schools for 2006-07 and 124 MPCP school for 2007-08. However, when reporting school level enrollment we must rely on DPI's data which combines the schools under their umbrella organization giving us a total of 119 schools for 2006-07 and 120 schools for 2007-08. In 2007-08 Blessed Savior had four campuses: Blessed Savior North, Blessed Savior South, Blessed Savior East, and Blessed Savior West. Messmer Catholic Schools had two campuses during the 2007-08 school year: Messmer Preparatory Catholic School and Messmer High School.

Table 2: School Participation in the MPCP: 2007-08

Did school exist prior to the establishment of MPCP?	Total	Percent	Valid N
Yes	71	65.1	109
No	38	34.8	109
Was the MPCP a factor in your decision to open a school?	Total	Percent	Valid N
Not a factor in our decision	10	27.0	37
A minor factor in our decision	5	13.5	37
A major factor in our decision	20	54.1	37
Don't know	2	5.4	37

NOTES: Figures are based upon 2006-07 and 2007-08 MPCP Principal Survey responses.

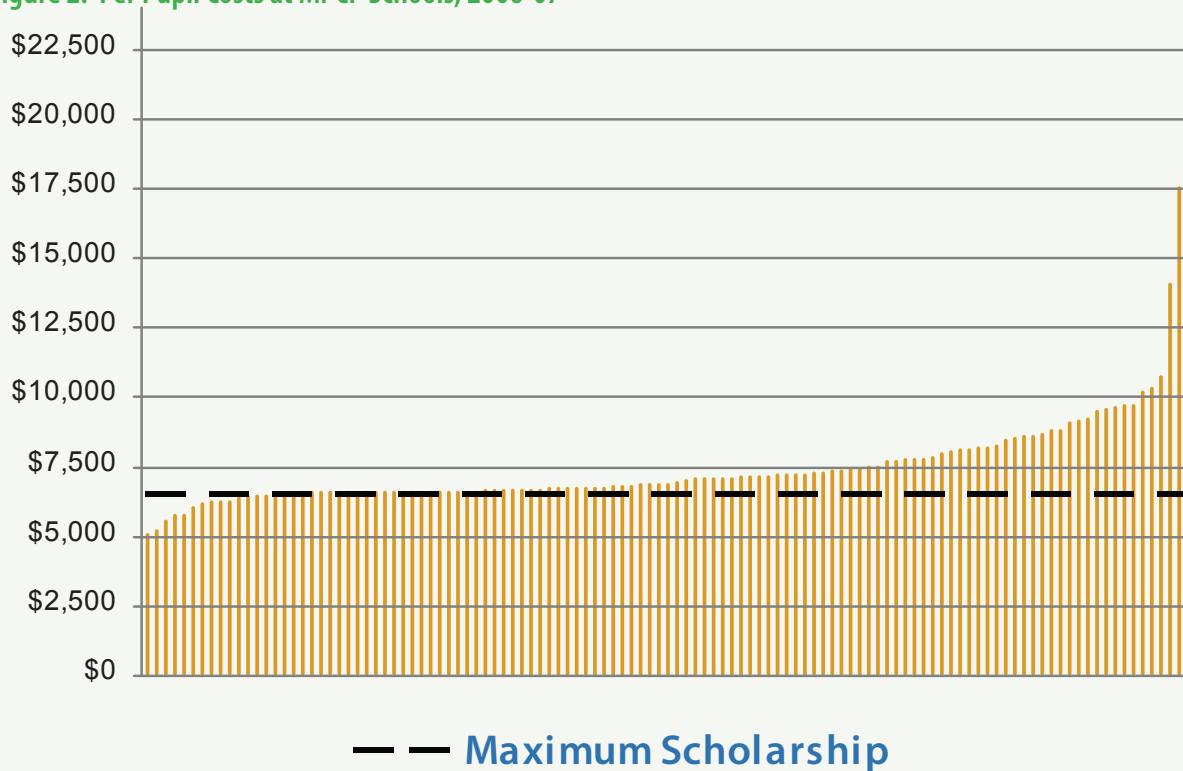
Generally speaking, MPCP students made up a large part of participating schools' total enrollment—the average school level percentage of MPCP students in these schools was 76.7 percent. Over 60 percent of participating schools had student enrollments that were greater than 80 percent MPCP students, while 53 percent had MPCP enrollment percentages above 90 percent (figure 1).

Figure 1: Distribution of Schools by MPCP Percent of School's Enrollment: 2007-08

NOTES: N=118. Source: Enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. In the few cases where reported MPCP enrollment exceeded reported total enrollment, MPCP percentages were truncated at 100 percent. In four cases with large discrepancies DPI total enrollment data was supplanted with SCDP survey data.

Schools participating in the MPCP are required to file a Financial Information Report (FIR) with DPI each year that represents the school's per pupil operating costs. The average per pupil cost at participating schools in 2006-07, the most recent year for which data were available, was \$7,464. Seventy-eight percent of the schools reported operating costs of more than the maximum scholarship amount of \$6,501 during the 2006-07 school year (figure 2).

Figure 2: Per Pupil Costs at MPCP Schools, 2006-07



NOTES: Valid N=115. Each vertical bar represents an individual school. Source: Wisconsin DPI's Financial Information Report (FIR) for Participating Schools: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/mpcfirinf.html>.

MPCP Participating Schools – Grade-Levels Served

Collectively, schools participating in the MPCP in 2007-08 offered the full range of grade options, from Kindergarten to 12th grade (table 3). Ninety percent of schools served elementary students, while 80 percent served middle school students. Twenty-two percent offered high school.

Table 3: Types of MPCP Schools by Levels Served: 2007-08

School Type	Count	Valid N	% of all MPCP Schools
MPCP offering elementary school	112	124	90.3
MPCP offering middle school	99	124	79.8
MPCP offering high school	27	124	21.8

NOTES: Data taken from the Wisconsin DPI's Directory of 2007-08 MPCP and MPS schools. School were 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 2007-08 no single school religious affiliation enrolled more than 36 percent of all MPCP students.

Participants include (table 4) schools representing at least 10 distinct religious affiliations, non-religious schools that follow a religious tradition, and purely secular schools.

- Ninety-nine of the schools identified themselves as religious (81.8%),
- Nine were classified as non-religious with a religious tradition (7.4%), and
- Thirteen of the participating schools identified themselves as non-religious (10.7%).

Table 4: Religious Identification of MPCP Schools : 2007-08

Religious Identification of Schools	Total	% of participating schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	% of MPCP Students Attending
Religious	99	81.8	14,943	78.8
Non-Religious (with a religious tradition)	9	7.4	1,259	6.6
Non-religious (secular)	13	10.7	2,764	14.6

NOTES: Valid N=121. Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=103) and the 2006-07 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=7). Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. Total MPCP enrollment for the 121 schools that had religiosity identified is 18,966. MPCP enrollment data obtained from DPI's unaudited list.

Of the 99 schools (82%) that identified themselves as religious, 35 (29%) were Catholic, 28 (23%) were Lutheran, and 22 (18%) were non-denominational Christian. Other affiliations of MPCP schools include Church of God in Christ, Apostolic/Pentecostal, Islamic Schools, Seventh Day Adventist, and Jewish (table 5).

Table 5: Affiliations of Religious MPCP Schools: 2007-08

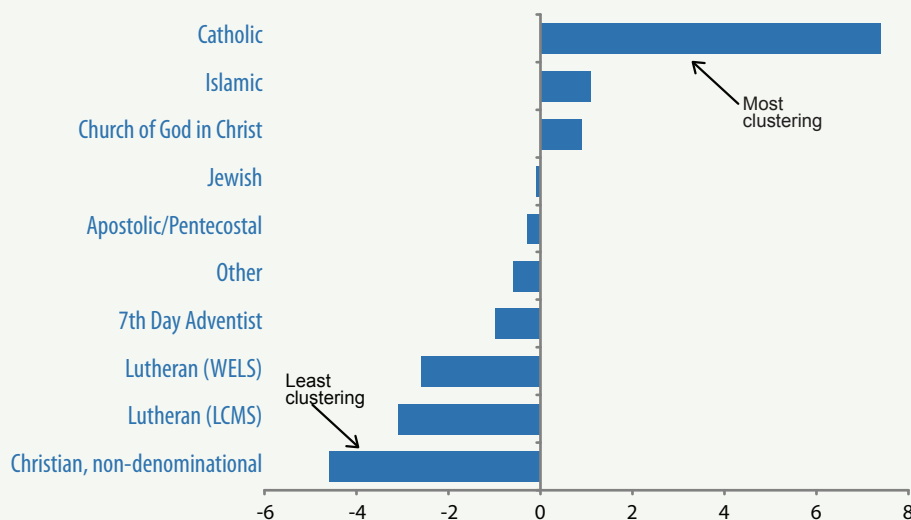
Affiliation of Religious Schools	Total	% of Participating Schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	% of MPCP Students Attending
Catholic	35	28.9	6,877	36.3
Christian, non-denominational	22	18.2	2,570	13.6
Lutheran (WELS)	16	13.2	2,008	10.6
Lutheran (LCMS)	12	9.9	1,281	6.8
Church of God in Christ	5	4.1	950	5.0
Apostolic/Pentecostal	3	2.5	417	2.2
Other	6	5.0	840	4.4

NOTES: Valid N=121. Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=103) and the 2006-07 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=7). Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. Total MPCP enrollment for the 121 schools that had religiosity identified is 18,966. MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/geninfo.html>. Lutheran (ELCA) was also included as a category on the survey, but generated no cases.

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

The most notable pattern of clustering is that while 29 percent of all MPCP schools are Catholic, they enroll 36 percent of MPCP students. Additionally, though 23 percent of schools are Lutheran, they enroll only 18 percent of MPCP students. Figure 3 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 3. Religious Affiliations: Share of Enrollment in Schools Compared to Share of Schools: 2007-08



NOTES: Valid N=121. Information concerning religious identification and affiliation was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals’ Survey (n=103) and the 2006-07 MPCP Principals’ Survey (n=7). Subsequent missing data came from the Public Policy Forum and the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data. Total MPCP enrollment for the 121 schools that had religiosity identified is 18,966. MPCP enrollment data from DPI’s unaudited list available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/geninfo.html>. Lutheran (ELCA) was also included as a category on the survey, but generated no cases.

MPCP Participating Schools – Programs Offered: 2007-08

Private schools participating in the MPCP offer an array of programs typically found in traditional public schools (table 6). High percentages of schools offer music programs (78%), arts programs (75%), afterschool programs (73%), programs for students with learning problems (72%), and programs with special instruction approaches (60%). Roughly half of the schools incorporate student government, foreign language programs, summer school, and before-school programs. Fewer schools offer gifted and talented programs and programs for non-English speakers.



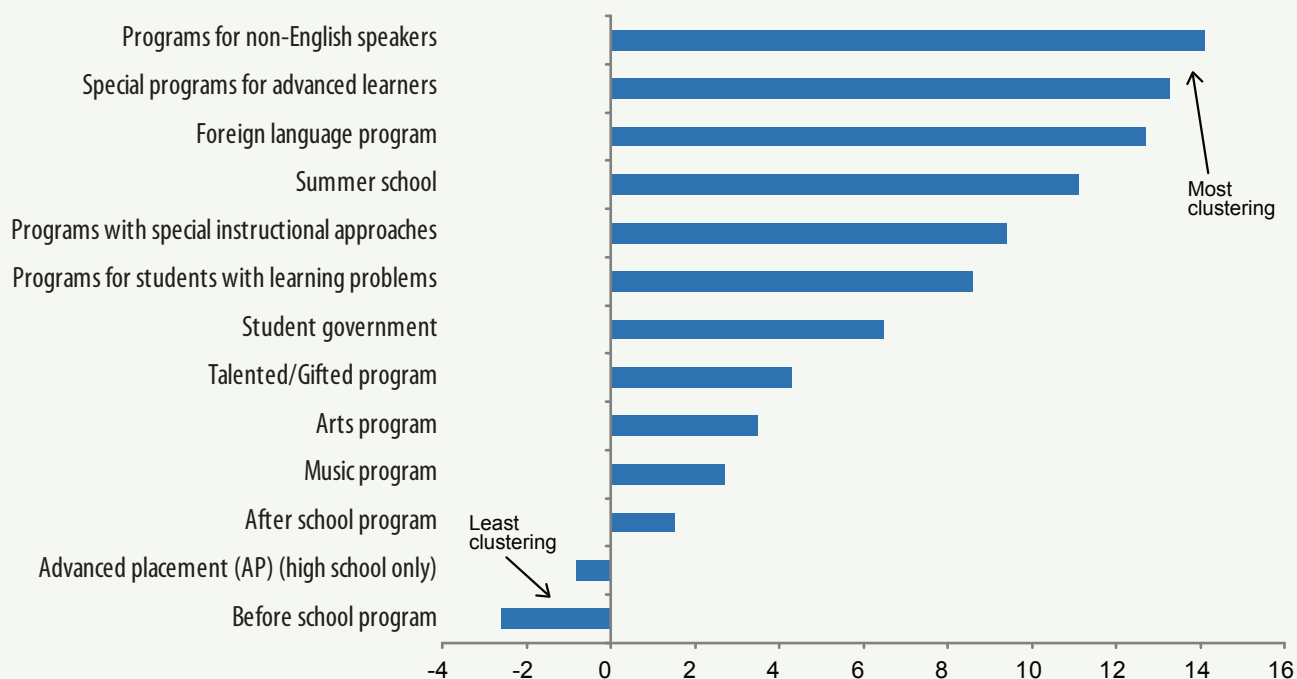
Table 6: School Programs in MPCP Schools: 2007-08

Programs	Total	% of Schools	MPCP Students Attending	% of MPCP Students Attending	Valid School N	Valid Student N
Music program	72	78.3	12,327	81.0	92	15,213
Arts program	74	74.7	12,348	78.2	99	15,781
Afterschool program	69	72.6	10,891	74.1	95	14,700
Programs for students with learning problems	63	71.6	11,252	80.2	88	14,033
Programs with special instructional approaches ²	52	59.8	9,899	69.2	87	14,314
Student government	52	54.2	9,805	60.7	96	16,154
Foreign language program	48	50.0	10,074	62.7	96	16,079
Summer school	47	49.5	9,581	60.6	95	15,807
Before-school program	45	49.5	6,658	46.9	91	14,182
Special programs for advanced learners	28	32.2	6,581	45.5	87	14,473
Talented/Gifted program	18	19.6	3,702	23.9	92	15,471
Programs for non-English speakers	13	14.3	4,077	28.4	91	14,350
Advanced placement (AP) (high school only)	8	13.6	1,131	12.8	59	8,837

NOTES: Information concerning school staff and facilities was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=103). MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. International Baccalaureate programs were also included in the survey but generated no affirmative responses. 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.

Moreover, as was the case with schools' religious affiliations, enrollment levels suggest that students are clustered within schools that have particular programs (figure 4). In all but three instances, the percentage of students attending a school with a particular program is larger than the percent of all schools that offer the program. As previously mentioned, this is a noteworthy finding, yet the cause of this clustering is somewhat difficult to interpret. While it suggests that there is greater demand among choice families for schools with certain characteristics, other explanations--such as a positive correlation between the size of a school and the amount of programs offered--could be driving these results.

Figure 4. School Programs: Share of Enrollment in Schools Compared to Share of Schools: 2007-08



NOTES: Information concerning school staff and facilities was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals’ Survey (n=103). MPCP enrollment data obtained from DPI’s unaudited list. Bars represent the difference between the percent of MPCP students attending each type of school and the percent of participating schools that offer a particular program.



MPCP Participating Schools – Accountability Testing: 2007-08

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 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 2007-08 school year, the SCDP received student test scores from 114 schools (table 7).⁶ Nine MPCP schools were not required to test their students as they did not have any students in grades 4, 8, or 10. One school failed to submit test scores for the 2007-08 school year.

Table 7: Accountability Testing: 2007-08

Type of Test Given	Total	% of Participating Schools	MPCP Students Attending	% of MPCP Students Attending
Norm-referenced	72	58.5	9,795	51.5
WKCE	24	19.5	4,262	22.4
Both Norm-Referenced and WKCE	18	14.6	4,785	25.1
No Test Given	9	7.3	187	1.0

NOTES: Information concerning standardized testing was taken from scores submitted by the MPCP schools (n=123). MPCP enrollment data obtained from DPI's unaudited list.



6 For details see Nathan Gray, Patrick J. Wolf, and Laura I. Jensen, *Annual School Testing Summary Report*, SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation Report #10, March 2009, available at http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Milwaukee_Research.html.

MPCP Participating Schools – Support Staff and Facilities

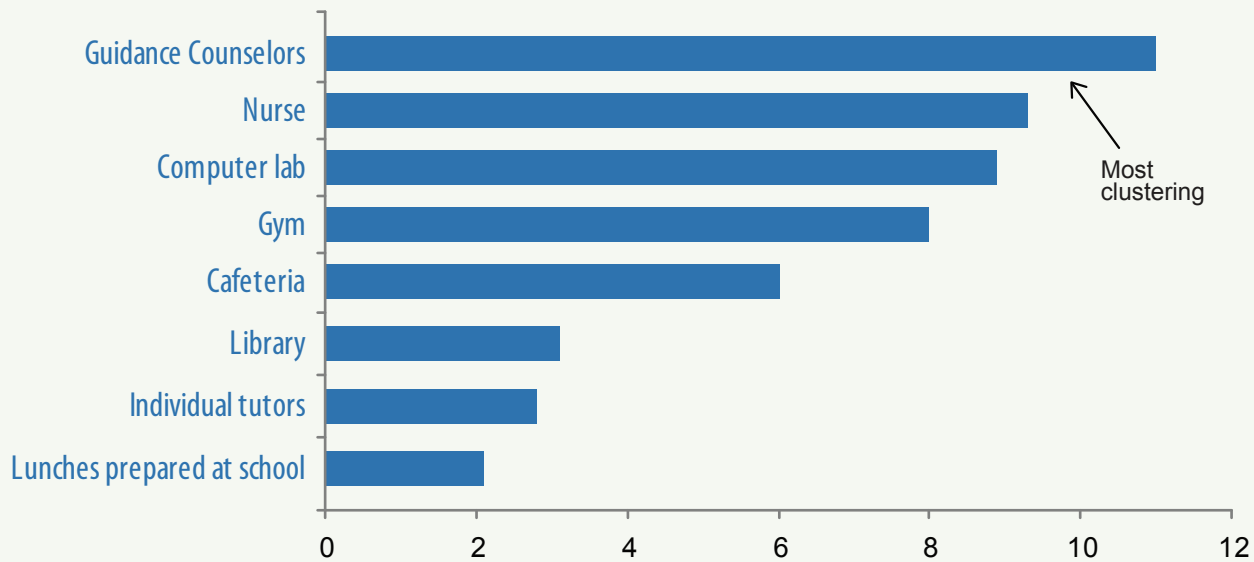
Private schools participating in the MPCP incorporate support staff and facilities typically found in traditional schools (table 8). Most provide individual tutors (65 %) and guidance counselors (51 %), while close to one-third have a school nurse (table 8). Over 80 percent of the schools have a computer lab, gym, and a cafeteria. Slightly fewer have a library (70 %) and lunches prepared at the school (71 %).

Table 8: Support Staff and Facilities in MPCP Schools: 2007-08

-- Staff --	Total	% of Schools	MPCP Students Attending	% of MPCP Students Attending	Valid School N	Valid Student N
Individual tutors	58	65.2	9,719	68.0	89	14,297
Guidance Counselors	48	51.1	9,670	62.1	94	15,578
Nurse	25	28.1	5,525	37.4	89	14,771
-- Facilities --						
Computer lab	83	83.8	15,040	92.7	99	16,225
Gym	77	81.9	13,846	89.9	94	15,404
Cafeteria	80	82.5	14,297	88.5	97	16,163
Library	64	69.6	10,973	72.7	92	15,091
Lunches prepared at school	69	71.1	11,650	73.2	97	15,905

Information concerning school staff and facilities was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=103). 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 51.1 percent of schools have guidance counselors, 62.1 percent of MPCP students attend schools that offer them. This same general pattern can be seen with regard to the availability of school nurses and individual tutors (figure 5). Students are also attending schools with computer labs, libraries, gyms, and cafeterias at a higher rate than the rate at which these facilities are offered. This could suggest a positive relationship between school offerings and available seats for MPCP students, or it could be that parents are more likely to choose the schools that offer a higher range of services.

Figure 5. Staff and Facilities: Share of Enrollment Compared to Share of Schools: 2007-08**MPCP Participating Schools – Communication with Parents**

Schools participating in the MPCP communicate with parents in a variety of ways (table 9). Nearly all schools provide families with a mid-term report of their child's grades (94.7%) and distribute a yearly newsletter with information concerning the school or school system (93.7%). Close to two-thirds (61.1%) of the schools notify parents after the first occurrence of disruptive behavior resulting in the student having been sent to the office. Over half of the schools produce weekly or daily updates on each student's progress.

Table 9: Communication with Families in MPCP Schools: 2007-08

Method of Communication	Total	% of Schools	Number of MPCP Students Attending	% of MPCP Students Attending	Valid School N	Valid Student N
Mid-term report on student's grade	89	94.7	15,338	97.9	94	15,661
Notification of child being sent to office for first occurrence of disruptive behavior	55	61.1	9,561	64.3	90	14,877
Weekly or daily updates on child's progress	46	54.1	9,000	65.4	85	13,758
Newsletter concerning school or the school system	89	93.7	15,083	96.1	95	15,688

NOTES: Information concerning school staff and facilities was taken from the 2007-08 MPCP Principals' Survey (n=103). MPCP enrollment data obtained from DPI's unaudited list. International Baccalaureate programs was also included in the survey but generated no affirmative responses. 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.

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared—Racial/Ethnic Enrollment Comparisons

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

Both MPCP and MPS schools enroll a high percentage of minorities. However, the MPCP schools exhibit modestly lower school-level percentages of minorities—an average of 79 percent compared to 89 percent in MPS. On the whole, the 10 point difference in average percent minority levels was found to be 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).

Table 10: Racial/Ethnic Enrollment Data: 2006-07 to 2007-08

School Level Enrollment Data (PreK-12)	2006-07			2007-08		
	MPCP Mean	MPS Mean	Difference	MPCP Mean	MPS Mean	Difference
Average % Racial/Ethnic Minority	77.7	88.0	-10.4**	79.0	88.6	-9.6**
Average % African-American	57.6	61.7	-4.1	59.1	62.4	-3.3
Average % Hispanic	14.9	18.7	-3.8	13.6	18.6	-5.1
Average % Other Non-White	5.2	7.7	-2.5	6.3	7.5	-1.2

** Statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level.

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses (Valid N for 2006-07 = 93, 2007-08 = 97). Public school data from MPS (Valid N for 2006-07 = 218, 2007-08 = 211). MPS schools with fewer than 5 students (n=1 for school year 07-08) were excluded as outliers. "Other non-white" includes Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian, and a mixed race category.

MPCP and MPS Schools Compared — Teacher Qualification and School Size Comparisons

Compared to MPS reported data, the teachers at participating MPCP schools exhibit different attributes when it comes to certain measures of teacher quality. On average, 42 percent of the teachers at MPS schools have a Master's Degree, while only 29 percent of the teachers at MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey did (table 11). Ninety-four percent of MPS teachers are certified by the State of Wisconsin. Sixty-nine percent of the teachers at the MPCP schools that responded to the SCDP survey are state certified. Compared to 63 percent of the MPCP teachers at schools that responded to the survey, 81 percent of the MPS teachers have at least five years of teaching experience.

Table 11: Teacher Qualifications in MPCP Schools and MPS: 2006-07 to 2007-08

Teacher Attribute	2006-07			2007-08		
	MPCP	MPS	Difference	MPCP	MPS	Difference
% of teachers certified by the state of Wisconsin	NA	NA	NA	69.1	93.7	-24.6
% of teachers with a Masters degree or higher	28.9	42.8	-13.9	28.7	42.1	-13.4
% of teachers with at least five years of total experience	65.7	56.2	9.5	63.1	81.1	-18.0

NOTES: MPCP figures are based upon MPCP Principal Survey responses. Valid school N for percent of teachers with a Master's degree or higher = 100. Valid school N for percent of teachers with at least five years total experience = 96. Valid school N for percent of teachers certified by the State of Wisconsin = 94. 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.

Compared to MPS schools, MPCP schools are smaller (table 12). The average school participating in the MPCP has 218 students, while the average school in MPS has almost twice as many. This average difference of 196 students is statistically significant.

The average student teacher ratios are also smaller within the MPCP schools. 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 2006-07. The MPCP ratios were computed from SCDP survey data from 2006-07.

Table 12: School Enrollment and Student/Teacher Ratios

	Average Enrollment	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Valid N
MPCP 2007-08	218.1**	213.1	6	1,227	124
MPS 2007-08	414.0	343.4	8	2,259	211
	Student Teacher Ratio	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Valid N
MPCP 2006-07	13.6**	5.2	3.7	34.1	96
MPS 2006-07	17.4	5.6	3.7	57.0	179

**Statistically different at the 99 percent confidence level.

NOTES: MPCP enrollment data from DPI's unaudited list. In four cases with large discrepancies DPI enrollment data was supplanted with SCDP survey data. MPS supplied data for 2006-07 school size. MPS schools with fewer than 5 students (n=3) were excluded from the school size calculation as outliers. MPS data for student/teacher ratio obtained from NCES Common Core of Data. 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.

Future Reports

This report and its companion reports are part of a series of annual reports that will be produced 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 124 schools that participated in the MPCP during the 2007-08 school year, 21 did not respond to the data collection efforts of the SCDP. This section briefly describes the characteristics of non-respondents in cases where data were available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, NCES' Common Core of Data, and other additional sources.

On average, the schools that did not respond to data collection had lower levels of enrollment, were less likely to offer middle school, and more likely to offer high school than the schools that completed the SCDP survey. Additionally, while 85 percent of schools that completed the survey were identified as religious, only 67 percent of schools that did not respond to data collection were identified as religious.

Table A1: Characteristics of Respondents and Non-respondents

Characteristic:	Respondents	Non-Respondents	Difference
Average Enrollment	233.4	143.1	90.2*
% Religious	84.5	66.7	17.8*
Average % of school's students that participate in MPCP	76.0	80.2	-4.3
% Offering elementary school	92.2	90.5	1.7
% Offering middle school	85.4	52.4	33.0***
% Offering high school	21.4	23.8	-2.4

*Statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

***Statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence level.

NOTES: Characteristics of non-respondents based upon N=21 for grade levels offered, N=18 for religious status, N=21 for percent of school's students that participate in MPCP, and N = 21 for grade levels served.

Appendix B:

List of Schools that Participated in the MPCP for the Entire 2007-08 School Year

Agape Center of Academic Excellence, Inc.	Dr. Brenda Noach Choice School	Kindergarten Plus
Alston's Preparatory Academy	Early View Academy of Excellence	King's Academy Christian School
Atlas Preparatory Academy	Eastbrook Academy	LaBrew Troopers Military University School
Atonement Lutheran School	Emmaus Lutheran School	Lutheran Special School & Education Services
Believers in Christ Christian Academy	Excel Academy	Malaika Early Learning Center
Bessie M. Gray Prep Academy	Excel Learning Academy	Marquette University High School
Blessed Sacrament School	Fairview Lutheran School	Messmer High School
Blessed Savior - East Campus	Family Academy	Messmer Prep Catholic School
Blessed Savior - North Campus	Family Montessori School	Milwaukee Lutheran High School
Blessed Savior - West Campus	Garden Homes Community Montessori School, Inc.	Milwaukee Montessori School
Blessed Savior-South Campus	Garden Homes Lutheran School	Milwaukee Seventh Day Adventist School
Blyden Delany Academy	Gilchrist Christian Academy	Mother of Good Counsel School
Carter's Christian Academy	Gospel Lutheran School	Mount Calvary Lutheran School
Catholic East Elementary School	Grace Preparatory School of Excellence	Mount Lebanon Lutheran
CEO Leadership Academy	Greater Holy Temple Christian Center	Mustard Seed International School
Ceria M. Travis Academy, Inc.	Harambee Community School	New Holy Ghost Tabernacle Pre-school Academy
Christ Memorial Lutheran School	Hickman Academy Preparatory School	New Testament Christian Academy
Christ St. Peter Lutheran School	Holy Redeemer Christian Academy	Northwest Lutheran School
Christian Faith Academy of Higher Learning	Holy Wisdom Academy	Notre Dame Middle School
Clara Mohammed School	Hope Christian School	Oklahoma Avenue Lutheran School
Community Vision Academy LTD	Hope Middle School	Our Lady of Good Hope School
Concordia University School and Institute for LIGHT	Institute for Career Empowerment Inc.	Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish
CrossTrainers Academy	Institute of Technology & Academics	Paige II University School, Inc.
Daughters of the Father Christian Academy	Jared C. Bruce Academy	Parklawn Christian Leadership Academy
Destiny High School	Jesus Academy of Learning	Pius XI High School
Divine Savior Holy Angels High School	Johnson Christian Academy, Inc.	Prince of Peace
	KidPreneur	

Resurrection Christian Academy	Siloah Lutheran School
Right Step, Inc	Tamarack Community School
Risen Savior Lutheran School	Texas Bufkin Academy
Saint Adalbert School	The AppleCrest Preparatory Leadership Academy
Saint Anthony School	The Hope School
Saint Bernadette School	Travis Technology High School
Saint Catherine of Alexandria	Trinity Christian Academy for Nonviolence
Saint Catherine School	Urban Day School
Saint Charles Borromeo School	Victory Christian Academy
Saint Gregory the Great Parish School	Victory Preparatory Academy
Saint Joan Antida High School	Washington DuBois Christian Leadership Academy
Saint John Kanty School	Wisconsin Lutheran High School
Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran	Word of Life Evangelical Lutheran School
Saint Josaphat Parish School	Yeshiva Elementary School
Saint Leo Catholic Urban Academy	Young Minds Preparatory School
Saint Lucas Lutheran	
Saint Marcus Lutheran School	
Saint Margaret Mary School	
Saint Martini Lutheran School	
Saint Peter-Immanuel Lutheran School	
Saint Philip's Lutheran School	
Saint Rafael the Archangel School	
Saint Roman Parish School	
Saint Rose Catholic Urban Academy	
Saint Sebastian School	
Saint Thomas Aquinas Academy	
Saint Vincent Pallotti School	
Salam School	
Sharon Junior Academy	
Sherman Park Lutheran School/Preschool	

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program: Descriptive Report on Participating Schools

About the Authors



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