

MODELING URBAN SCHOLARSHIP VOUCHERS IN MASSACHUSETTS

by Ken Ardon and Cara Stillings Candal

Preface by Patrick J. Wolf



PIONEER INSTITUTE
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

White Paper No. 134
July 2015

PIONEER'S MISSION

Pioneer Institute is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded research organization that seeks to improve the quality of life in Massachusetts through civic discourse and intellectually rigorous, data-driven public policy solutions based on free market principles, individual liberty and responsibility, and the ideal of effective, limited and accountable government.



This paper is a publication of the Center for School Reform, which seeks to increase the education options available to parents and students, drive system-wide reform, and ensure accountability in public education. The Center's work builds on Pioneer's legacy as a recognized leader in the charter public school movement, and as a champion of greater academic rigor in Massachusetts' elementary and secondary schools. Current initiatives promote choice and competition, school-based management, and enhanced academic performance in public schools.



The Center for Better Government seeks limited, accountable government by promoting competitive delivery of public services, elimination of unnecessary regulation, and a focus on core government functions. Current initiatives promote reform of how the state builds, manages, repairs and finances its transportation assets as well as public employee benefit reform.



The Center for Economic Opportunity seeks to keep Massachusetts competitive by promoting a healthy business climate, transparent regulation, small business creation in urban areas and sound environmental and development policy. Current initiatives promote market reforms to increase the supply of affordable housing, reduce the cost of doing business, and revitalize urban areas.



The Center for Health Care Solutions seeks to refocus the Massachusetts conversation about health care costs away from government-imposed interventions, toward market-based reforms. Current initiatives include driving public discourse on Medicaid; presenting a strong consumer perspective as the state considers a dramatic overhaul of the health care payment process; and supporting thoughtful tort reforms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	5
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	8
Private School Choice in the U.S.	9
School Choice in Massachusetts	11
Rationale for School Choice	14
Legal Barriers to Private School Choice in Massachusetts	16
A Scholarship Voucher Program for Massachusetts	17
Conclusion and Recommendations	20
Appendix	22
About the Authors	23
Endnotes	24

PREFACE

by Patrick J. Wolf

When I arrived in Boston in the fall of 1988, Massachusetts had little in the form of policy-enabled parental school choice. Sure, high-income parents could afford to send their children to largely exclusive private schools, or buy a house in an area with excellent public schools; but choice programs for disadvantaged students were few, small, and young. The METCO program bused a few thousand volunteer students from Boston to neighboring public school districts, and Cambridge had a system of “controlled choice” whereby parents could request certain school placements for their children that would only be honored if they improved the public schools’ racial balance. Public charter schools did not yet exist and Massachusetts was nowhere near even considering any private school choice initiative.

The highly limited Massachusetts school choice scene in the late 80s reflected our nation as a whole at that time. America is known as a country that values consumer choice, yet our system for delivering K-12 education has been one of the most centralized and monopolistic in the world. Opponents of school choice regularly defended the U.S. educational monopoly in the land of choice and competition by claiming that education is different from other services and therefore requires strict government control.

By the time I left Boston for New York in 1994 (I was sold to the Yankees for \$200,000), education was changing in the Commonwealth. More researchers and policymakers were challenging the presumption that choice and competition, while good in most other areas of American life, were bad for K-12 education. Massachusetts had expanded its inter-district choice programs and birthed a public charter school sector that would become the envy of the country. In the time since, however, school choice policies in the Commonwealth have been limited to public options and capped as increasing numbers of students became attracted to exciting alternatives to their assigned public schools. Parental choice

has been restricted in many ways; it is only real for a fraction of those Massachusetts residents who seek it.

Meanwhile, private school choice is sweeping the country, leaving Massachusetts behind. As this excellent study by Ken Ardon and Cara Candal documents, private school choice programs in the form of government vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and Education Savings Accounts are increasingly common, as 23 states plus the District of Columbia are home to 40 different programs. Almost all these initiatives are limited to students who are disadvantaged either due to low income, disability, or assignment to a persistently failing public school. If all the private school choice programs across the country comprised a single school district, it would serve 400,000 students of whom over 80 percent would qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and over 20 percent would have a disability. African-American and Latino students enroll in these programs at rates significantly higher than their portion of the eligible student population. Far from skimming the cream of the crop, choice programs attract and serve students who tend to struggle within the traditional public school system.

And private school choice programs tend to serve these disadvantaged students well. In rigorous experimental research that I and other scholars have performed over the past 20 years, we have consistently found that parents are much more satisfied when they have the option to select a private school for their child, the students graduate from high school and enroll in college at higher rates, and student test scores are at least similar and in many cases better for the choice students compared to the control group. The bulk of the statistical evidence also shows that access to private schooling through choice improves the civic outcomes of choice students relative to comparable students in government-run schools.

So, why are there no private school choice programs in Massachusetts? One reason, as

Ardon and Candal explain, is a problematic aspect of the Massachusetts state constitution with an ugly and bigoted pedigree. The notoriously anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic “Know Nothing” political party of the 1850s succeeded in modifying the constitution of the Commonwealth to prohibit any state aid from going to sectarian religious institutions, including schools. As interpreted by the Massachusetts courts (misinterpreted some would argue), the Commonwealth’s anti-aid amendment is one of the most restrictive in the nation and stands as a formidable impediment to extending private school choice to disadvantaged students.

Importantly, Ardon and Candal describe what could exist in Massachusetts, in the form of a means-tested urban school voucher program, were such a program to be enacted and survive legal challenge. It is no accident that the first two private school choice programs, in Milwaukee and Cleveland, had such designs. Low-income inner-city students have limited access to private schools even though a long series of studies by James Coleman and others have established that it is precisely those students who benefit the most from a private schooling opportunity. The authors wisely propose that the voucher amount be set to \$6,000 for the elementary grades and \$8,000 for high school, and that state aid to each public school district be subtracted by exactly that much for each student who transfers from public to private school using a voucher. Since the local school funds raised to be spent on that child would remain in the public school system, each school district that lost students to the voucher program would be left with more funds to spend on the remaining students. It is a win-win: Some students get private school choice while the others get more resources dedicated to their public schooling.

Education is the realm of possibilities. Ken Ardon and Cara Candal have painted a detailed picture of what might be possible in terms of private school choice for disadvantaged students in Massachusetts. Getting there will be difficult. It would be sadly ironic, however, if the

Commonwealth proved to be the *last* state to join the school choice revolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For most families, their home address determines the school that their children will attend. While wealthier families can move to the community of their choice or choose a private school, lower-income families have fewer alternatives if they are not satisfied with their local schools. In the past two decades, many states have begun to subsidize private school choice through scholarship tax credits, educational savings accounts, and vouchers. These programs often target specific students such as low-income, special needs, or students in struggling districts. In the 2015-16 school year 23 states will offer subsidies to roughly 400,000 students.

Research consistently indicates that private school choice programs increase parents' satisfaction and have a positive impact on students. The positive outcomes may explain why states almost always expand private school choice programs in the years following implementation.

Many communities in the Commonwealth provide various forms of public school choice, including intra-district choice, METCO, magnet schools, and charter schools. These programs are very popular, and the 56,000 students on waiting lists indicate the strong demand for additional choice options. Unfortunately, the Massachusetts Constitution includes an amendment that makes it impossible to enact a private-school choice program. While the legal barrier presents a high hurdle to proponents of increased choice, this paper models how a voucher program for low-income urban students might work in the Commonwealth.

Vouchers have the potential to do many things – improve family satisfaction, reduce racial isolation, and strengthen educational outcomes for both the recipients and the children remaining in public schools – all at little or no net cost to taxpayers. The program described in this paper could provide 10,000 students from low-income families with the choices that other families already possess.

INTRODUCTION

The United States is one of the few industrialized nations in which parents do not have a fundamental right to choose the publicly funded schools their children attend.¹ The system of school funding in the U.S., which relies heavily on revenue generated at the local level, means that localities with higher home values can generate tax revenue with comparatively less effort than communities where the homes are not as valuable. In this way, wealthier communities are often able to make comparatively greater investments in their schools. While there is no clear relationship between school funding and student outcomes, schools in wealthier districts across the country tend to outperform their counterparts in less privileged communities.²

Both the reality of and perceptions about school quality can be a driving factor in the residential decisions that families make. When they have the ability to do so, many parents choose schools by voting with their feet (moving from one community to another) or with their pocketbook (opting to send their children to a private school). When families cannot afford to do either of these things, they are left with a more limited range of educational opportunities for their children.

In recent decades, whether a parent's right to choose a school should be limited by his or her home address and/or income has become a political issue. Some school choice advocates view the ability to choose a school for one's child as a fundamental right and a social justice issue. They believe it unfair that families who cannot afford to live in wealthy communities should be denied the ability to send their child to a school that meets his or her distinct needs. They also posit that increased choice for parents will provide incentives for all schools to become better as they seek to attract consumers. Some opponents of school choice fear that allowing parents to opt-out of the traditional public system will damage that system in various ways, including by taking money away from traditional schools and by leaving some schools to be "dumping

grounds" for the students who are most difficult to educate.³

Having gained traction in some communities, advocates for school choice have ushered in new, mostly public, educational options for students. Public magnet schools, charter schools, and broader programs that allow parents to make a choice between various public schools in urban and suburban districts have opened up new avenues of school choice for many families. Homeschooling is another option that an increasing number of families take advantage of; it too can be costly, however, especially in cases where a parent who might otherwise generate income stays home to educate his or her children.

Even more recently, choice has become viewed as a mechanism for reform, meaning that some communities have begun to provide parents with public school choice when it becomes clear that the local schools are failing. In this sense, school choice is framed as an opportunity for parents and a sanction against struggling public schools.

Beyond these more common programs for public school choice, some states have also begun to make it easier for families to send their children to private schools. They do so primarily through vouchers, educational savings accounts (ESAs), and scholarship tax credit programs.⁴ Vouchers provide public funds to parents to help pay tuition at private schools; ESAs do the same and allow the funds to be used for other educational expenses as well. Scholarship tax credits work indirectly by providing a tax credit to a third party who donates money to fund a scholarship that is provided to parents. Regardless of the program, the end result is the same – public funds support families who choose to send their children to private school.

Though many Massachusetts communities provide various forms of public school choice, including intra-district choice, magnet schools and charter schools, the state Constitution includes an amendment that has, thus far, made it impossible to enact a program of private-

school choice. As private school choice programs blossom around the country, however, and as some of those programs come to be known for enabling parents of low-socio-economic status to access the type of education they desire for their children, it seems increasingly pertinent to ask how a system of private school choice could provide more and better options for Massachusetts parents.

Considering the existing barriers to private school choice in the Commonwealth, this paper models what such a program might look like in Massachusetts. It does so after providing context for the types of choice programs that currently exist across the country and in the Commonwealth; after considering the extent of the demand for increased school choice that currently exists; as well as the potential impact on academic outcomes that an enhanced system of school choice might have.

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE IN THE U.S.

According to data collected and published by the Alliance for School Choice, the number and variety of private school choice programs across the country has grown rapidly in recent years, despite legal barriers and challenges in some states and communities.⁵ Private school choice programs began approximately 25 years ago when the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program offered a means-tested voucher for low-income children who want to attend private school. During the 1990s, private school choice grew slowly, with Ohio starting the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program in 1995, and Arizona starting the Individual School Tuition Organization Tax Credit program in 1997, the nation's first tax credit program. By 2000, fewer than 30,000 students had access to private school choice programs in four states. Since that time, growth has accelerated as governors signed into law new

FIGURE 1. GROWTH OF PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS SINCE 1990⁶

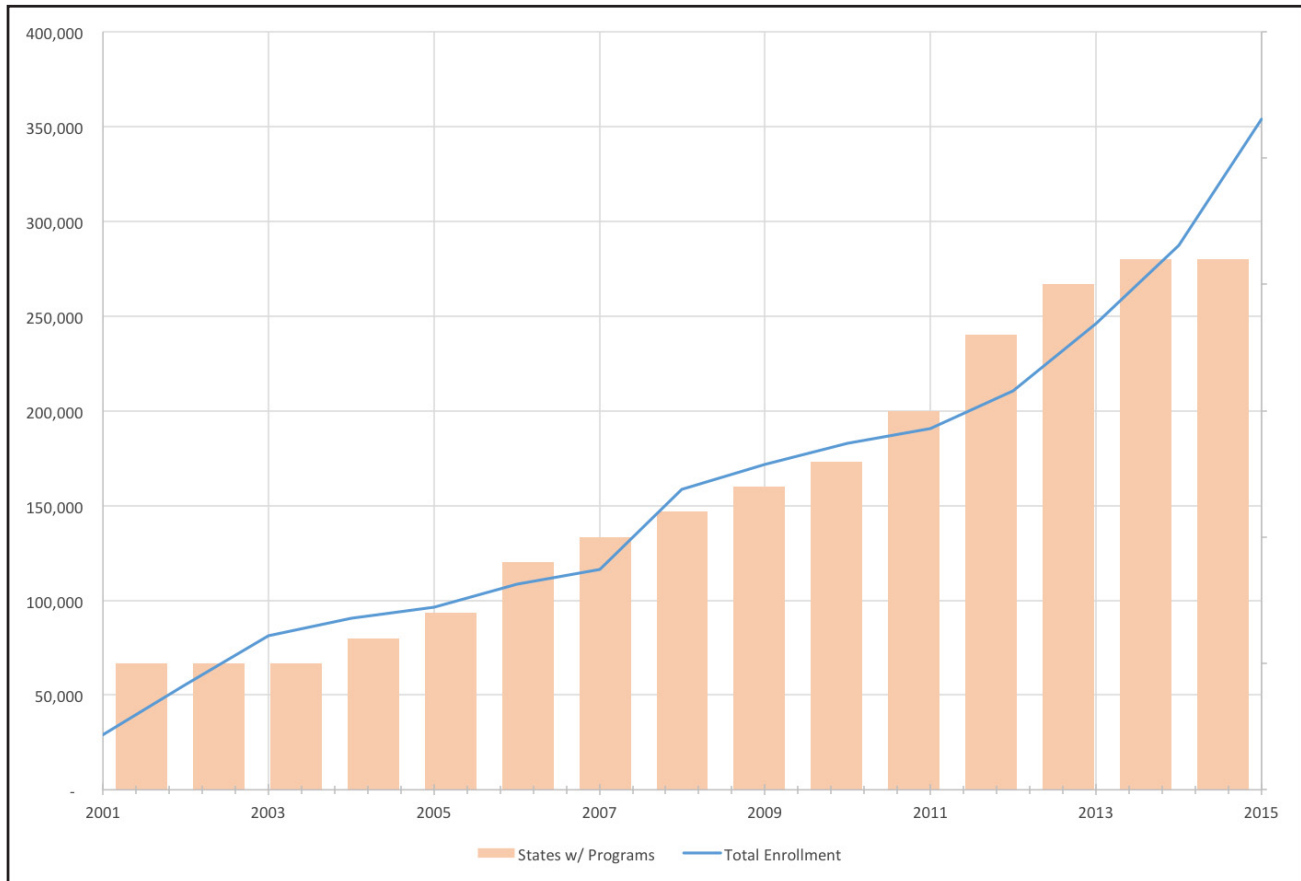


TABLE 1. PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE IN 2014-15

	States (and Washington D.C.)	Students	Spending (\$ million)
Vouchers	11	141,000	\$790
Scholarship Tax Credits	14	210,000	\$661
Educational Savings Accounts	2	2,600	\$31

programs or expanded existing programs. By the 2014-15 school year, school choice programs spread to 20 states and the District of Columbia, and during that time enrollment expanded by almost 20 percent per year.

Many states have more than one program. During the past school year, 40 private school choice programs in 20 states and Washington D.C. served more than 350,000 students and spent almost \$1.5 billion. Vouchers and ESAs offer an average of \$5,700 per student, while the tax credit scholarships programs offer an average scholarship of \$3,200.⁷ However, the averages mask considerable variation, in part because programs for special needs students offer more generous payments.

Since last year, four states previously without private school choice created programs that will start in 2015-16, while the Colorado Supreme Court declared that the nation's only locally

established program in Douglas County was unconstitutional.⁸ At the same time, many states with existing programs increased funding and expanded eligibility to new groups of students (either through changes to existing programs or the creation of new programs). By this fall, school choice programs will serve roughly 400,000 students in 23 states and the District of Columbia. Legislatures in several states without private school choice programs have also advanced bills that may lead to additional programs.

While some states have very small programs serving fewer than 100 students, eight states have well-developed programs that serve more than 10,000 students. Florida alone provides tax credits, scholarships, or savings accounts to almost 100,000 students, while Arizona subsidizes private school for 5 percent of all the students in the state.

TABLE 2. LARGEST PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS, 2014-15⁹

State	Choice Students	Percent of Total State Enrollment
Arizona	55,529	4.9%
Florida	99,922	3.6%
Georgia	16,668	1.0%
Indiana	40,215	3.9%
Iowa	10,254	2.1%
Ohio	38,273	2.2%
Pennsylvania	45,879	2.6%
Wisconsin	29,677	3.4%
Washington D.C.	1,442	2.0%

As the graphs below show, about one third of the programs (13 of 40) target special needs students – e.g., Florida has the largest special needs programs in the country, with scholarship tax credits and educational savings accounts that benefit 30,000 students. Vouchers and ESAs are especially likely to focus on special needs students.

Similarly, more than half of all programs and the majority of scholarship tax credits target low-income students, while other programs benefit students in specific failing districts. Several of the new programs established this year fit this pattern – Arkansas and Tennessee created voucher and ESA programs for students with disabilities, while Nevada passed a means-tested tax credit scholarship. Only Arizona, Georgia, and Douglas County Colorado offered programs open to all students last year (the program in Douglas County has since been shut down), and Montana will join them this year with a limited tax credit scholarship.

The existing means-tested programs generally cap eligibility between 185 percent and 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Targeting low-income students allows states to help those families who are least likely to be able to

afford private school on their own rather than subsidizing families who can afford choice and would attend a private school even without the subsidy.

SCHOOL CHOICE IN MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts offers residents several public school choice programs: intra-district choice, inter-district choice, vocational schools, charter schools, and METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity). About 27,000 students attend vocational-technical schools, 37,000 attend charter schools, and another 3,300 participate in METCO – a total of more than 70,000 students out of 930,000 statewide.¹⁰ At this time, Massachusetts has no private school choice programs. While more than 110,000 students attend private K-12 schools, they do so without public financial support.¹¹

Median household income in Massachusetts is roughly \$60,000, and for households with children it is approximately \$85,000.¹² Statewide, roughly 30 percent of households in Massachusetts have income below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, and in Boston the median income for households with children is only \$40,000.¹³ While there are many low-cost

FIGURE 2. SPECIAL NEEDS AND GENERAL PROGRAMS 2014-15

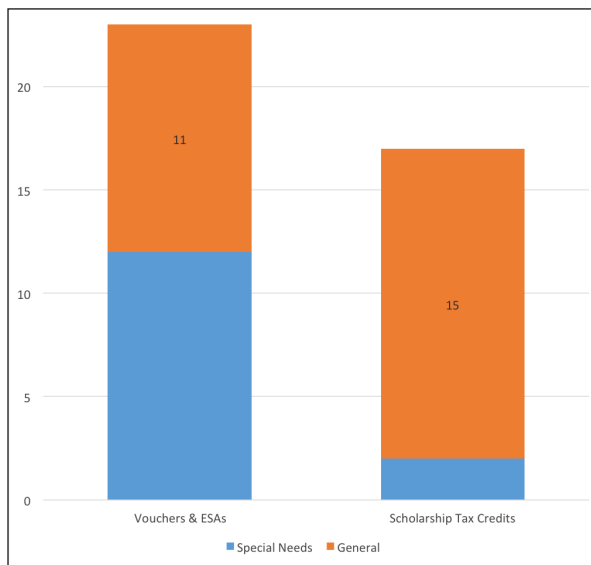
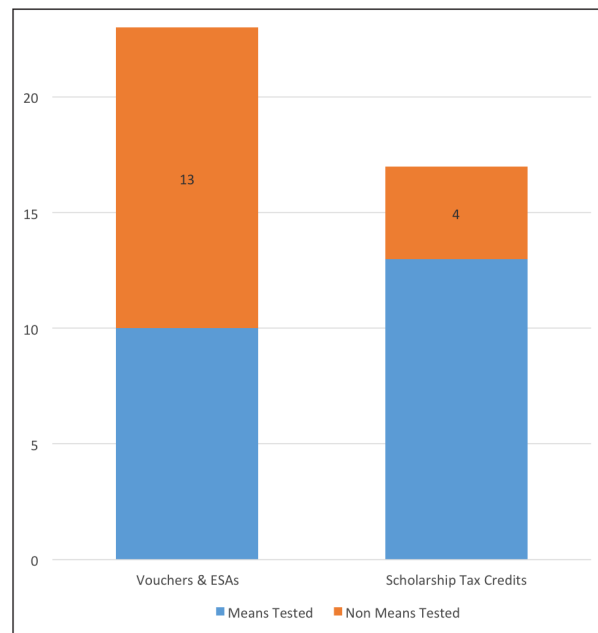


FIGURE 3. MEANS TESTED PROGRAMS 2014-15



religious private schools in Massachusetts, most low-income families cannot afford to pay full tuition. This means that they do not have access to the school choice that is available to wealthy or middle class families.

It can be difficult to assess demand for private school options, but there is evidence of unmet demand for additional choice in the public school system. Charter schools in Massachusetts have 42,000 students on waiting lists and the METCO program has 10,000. Moreover, the number of families applying to vocational schools and to take advantage of the state's inter-district choice program has grown in recent years. This unmet demand for choice indicates that additional avenues for accessing diverse schools options could benefit tens of thousands of Massachusetts families.

A 2012 poll conducted for Pioneer Institute by DPA Research identified that over two-thirds of 500 likely voters polled believe that “less affluent families should have access to options other than their local public school.”¹⁴ Likewise, two-thirds of respondents express support for charter schools and for “allowing the families of mostly poor and minority children in failing schools to use part of the money that would have been spent educating their child to send their child to any public, private, or parochial school willing to accept him or her.” These statistics point to a willingness to allow for greater school choice in the Commonwealth, especially choice engineered to serve populations that do not have access to high quality school options.¹⁵ They also speak to the perception that choices for families are currently too limited. Indeed, many of the school choice options to which Massachusetts families legally have access are not accessible due to the high level of demand.

Among the public school choice options for Massachusetts families, vocational education is becoming increasingly popular. Vocational-technical (voc-tech) schools are desirable to students and families not only because they promise to equip graduates with practical

workplace skills but also because many have reputations for academic excellence.¹⁶ Vocational-technical schools exist in many communities in Massachusetts. Students can apply or enter a lottery to attend a voc-tech instead of the traditional public school to which they would otherwise be assigned. In 2014, roughly 27,000 Massachusetts students enrolled in vocational technical schools in the Commonwealth.¹⁷

According to a 2014 survey conducted by Northeastern University School of Law, however, the available voc-tech options are not plentiful enough to meet demand. Of the 41 percent of operating vocational schools that participated in the survey, 21 had waiting lists, and many of them were long. According to the Northeastern researchers, the schools that reported their waitlists for the survey make up only a portion of the “4,400 students on waitlists for vocational programs across the Commonwealth.” The longest waitlists are “in communities with high unemployment and large minority populations.”¹⁸ Problematically, these waitlists reflect only a portion of the unmet demand for this form of school choice. “While the number of students captured on the survey is striking,” the authors suggest, “there is reason to suspect that it provides an underestimate of the actual number of students who miss out on the opportunity to participate in vocational-technical education.”

Options such as vocational-technical schools are just one of the forms of public school choice that currently exist in the Commonwealth. By law, parents in Massachusetts have the right to enroll their children in a school district other than that in which they live, though the ability to exercise that right is dependent upon several factors, including a receiving district's ability and willingness to accommodate additional students.¹⁹

According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) the number of pupils taking advantage of inter-district choice has risen dramatically over time; from 920 pupils in 116 sending districts

exercising the right to inter-district choice in 1992 to 14,734 pupils from 301 sending districts in 2015.²⁰ Notably, these numbers do not include students from the large urban districts of Boston and Springfield, who can take advantage of METCO, a distinct inter-district choice program that serves students in those cities. Importantly, these figures do not reflect the entirety of demand for inter-district choice. By law, only 2 percent of public school students can use the inter-district choice program, and the program does not provide transportation to students who take advantage of it.²¹

While unmet statewide demand for inter-district choice is difficult to quantify, understanding unmet demand for the METCO program is more straightforward. A grant program started in the 1960s and designed to “reduce the racial isolation of suburban school districts and to reduce segregation in city schools,” METCO sends students from Boston and Springfield to school districts across the state that agree to receive them. In the 2014-2015 school year, about 35 receiving districts voluntarily participated in the METCO program, serving 3,300 enrolled students. These students represent only a small portion of those who seek access to the program. To date, roughly 10,000 students in Boston and Springfield alone are on the METCO waitlist, with “about 1,200 to 1,500 students [over 50 percent of whom are under three years of age] entering the waitlist each year.” Given that only 350 to 400 students are admitted to receiving districts from the waitlist each year, competition for METCO is stiff: “[in] Springfield, a lottery determines placements,” and in Boston students are placed on a waitlist “approximately five years long.”

According to two different studies, METCO’s popularity can, in part, be attributed to the success that its students experience. On average, participating students “outperform their peers in the schools they left behind and, frequently, the state average.”²² METCO students also graduate high school in fewer years and at greater rates than their peers in sending districts

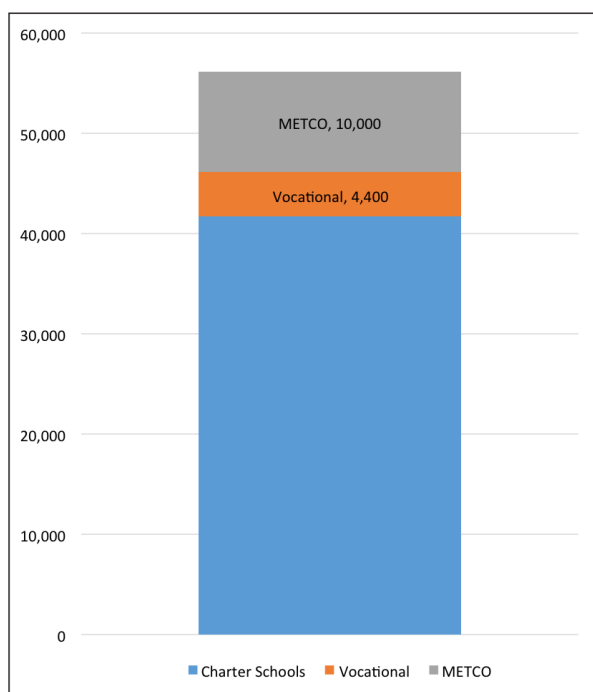
and are more likely to complete college.²³ Of course, the benefits of this form of school choice, according to the authors of these studies, also go beyond academic achievement. The vast majority of METCO students are African American (73 percent) and the vast majority of receiving districts are “predominantly white.”²⁴ In an increasingly segregated system of public schools, METCO supporters suggest that there are great benefits, cognitive and otherwise, for all students who attend school in a racially mixed environment.²⁵

While unmet demand for the METCO program is compelling, unmet demand for charter schools in the Commonwealth is unmatched by any other existing school choice option. First authorized as a part of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993, charter public schools enjoy greater autonomies than their traditional public counterparts in exchange for greater accountability for results. In the roughly twenty years that charter schools have existed in Massachusetts, demand has soared, especially in urban centers such as Boston, where the majority of charter schools are currently concentrated. Much of the demand for charter public schools, especially among African American and Hispanic families of low-income backgrounds can be attributed to the reputation they have earned for outperforming traditional public schools not only in urban centers but across the state;²⁶ in recent years, independent studies have confirmed that Massachusetts charter schools are among some of the highest performing schools nationwide.²⁷

According to the MA DESE, in the 2014-2015 school year, 37,402 students were enrolled in charter schools statewide, comprising 3.9 percent of the public school student population. In the same year, 41,747 students were on charter school waitlists.²⁸ As with other school choice options, those who take advantage of charter schools tend to reside in lower performing districts and low-income families that are unable to afford private school tuition. For instance, 29 percent of students enrolled in charter schools

in Massachusetts are African American and 27 percent are Hispanic, compared to approximately 9 and 18 percent statewide, respectively.²⁹ Students in charter schools in Massachusetts are also overwhelmingly low-income, a statistic that speaks not only to the population of families demanding this choice option, but also to the communities in which many charter schools have chosen to establish themselves.³⁰

FIGURE 4. WAITLISTS FOR SCHOOL CHOICE IN MASSACHUSETTS



When combined, the waiting lists for all of the public school choice options outlined here comprise over 56,000 Massachusetts students. Even allowing for students who might be on more than one waitlist, this represents a significant portion of the school-aged population in the Commonwealth. Such unmet demand begs the questions: Why doesn't the Commonwealth provide more school choice? What are the consequences of failing to provide alternative educational options for students and families who seek them?

RATIONALE FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

For some, the most important rationale for school choice is that it greatly enhances a parent's right to direct the education and rearing of his or her children. Wealthier families can "vote with their feet," choosing to live in public school districts where the schools have good reputations for academic outcomes, and/or provide opportunities that students might not be able to access elsewhere. Further, parents with the means may choose private school options for their children—options that may be attractive to families and students for various reasons. Indeed, studies show that when parents have the ability to switch from a school to which they were assigned to a public or private school of their choosing, both involvement and satisfaction increase.³¹ Working from the notion that choice, and therefore greater opportunities for satisfaction with schooling, should not be limited to wealthy families, publicly funded options of school choice in Massachusetts are desirable.

There are also other, more tangible, reasons for providing more publicly funded school choice options in Massachusetts. Studies have shown that where choice exists, student outcomes are better. Of course, one of the difficulties with research evaluating the educational impact of school choice is that students who choose to participate in a school choice program may be different than those who choose not to participate. For example, if only motivated families take advantage of school choice options, a poorly designed study could lead researchers to overestimate the impact of the school choice program because the students likely would have performed well even without the program. The best way to correct for this potential problem is to use data from oversubscribed programs where a random lottery determines which applicants receive scholarships.

A large number of the high-quality studies based on random assignment have shown that many different types of school choice programs have positive effects on student achievement.

In particular, these studies find significantly higher graduation rates and math scores for students receiving scholarships and moving to a private school. Wolf reports that nine out of ten high-quality studies across seven cities found improvements in test scores for at least some students.³² Five found overall gains while four found gains for some groups of students, and one study found no significant impact. The positive but mixed results are not surprising, since the studies cover a wide variety of programs that differ in eligibility and the generosity of the vouchers. Importantly, Wolf reports that no studies showed a negative impact from vouchers.³³

When combined with research suggesting that choice programs (including charter schools) promote civic values such as tolerance, volunteerism, and political knowledge, the argument for leveraging choice to enhance both cognitive and non-cognitive student outcomes is even more compelling. Also compelling is the finding that some voucher programs slightly *reduce* racial segregation, as minority students move from public schools that are racially homogenous to private schools that serve more heterogeneous student populations.³⁴

Finally, despite critiques claiming that school choice programs damage public school systems by diverting needed funding and the most motivated pupils to private schools, researchers generally find the opposite to be true: school choice programs can have a positive impact on traditional public schools. Hoxby, for example, found that competition, whether from vouchers, charters, or other public schools, increased the performance of public schools.³⁵ Schools facing more competition increased their productivity – producing better results without spending additional funds. The magnitude of the impact was quite large, indicating that increased competition would help the average student in public schools even if the private schools skimmed off only the highest performing students. Similarly, Gray et al. found that the CEO Horizon Scholarship in San Antonio had

a small but significant positive spillover effect on the traditional public schools.³⁶

In Massachusetts, there is an additional argument for expanded school choice: those who are demanding school choice are those most likely to be trapped in failing schools. Although in the past 20 years many Massachusetts school districts have made dramatic achievement gains,³⁷ struggling schools and districts still serve student populations that are predominantly poor and minority. For the vast majority of existing school choice programs in the Commonwealth, these are the same students who are on long waitlists. Thus the lack of a supply large enough to meet demand for school choice, presents a social justice issue.

Moreover, even where choices do exist for students and families, they tend to be concentrated to serve students in large urban centers (METCO is one example of this). There is also evidence that not all of the choices available even to these students are similar or equal to the array of choices that wealthier Massachusetts families have. For example, even where charter schools provide an alternative to the traditional district schools, it is unclear that they provide the innovative educational options that many families seek. This is complicated by a clause in the 2010 *Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* that allows only “proven providers” to establish in low-performing districts.³⁸ Many of these proven providers favor similar pedagogical approaches, ensuring that the diverse approaches to schooling that wealthier families can access in the private sector are largely unavailable to families that do not have the means to pay private school tuition.

According to some, this lack of choice generally and a lack of educational options tailored to the desires of students and families, more specifically, presents an economic problem. When students are trapped in failing schools, they are less likely to receive an education that will prepare them for the workforce. When students cannot access, for example, the vocational-technical

oriented educational opportunities that they seek, the result is a “drag” on an economy that might not otherwise exist. Researches note that long waitlists for vocational schools exist in communities with high unemployment.³⁹

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that in the foreseeable future students and families desiring both more and different types of school choice, especially in the form of access to private schools, will see their wishes come to fruition. Massachusetts is one of many states in the country that have erected legal barriers to types of private school choice that have proven beneficial to students in some states and even in other countries.

LEGAL BARRIERS TO PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE IN MASSACHUSETTS

In the 2002 *Zelman v. Harris-Simmons* decision, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that a state “does not violate the Establishment Clause by providing funding to a religiously affiliated school,” as long as the program meets certain legal criteria, such as “being neutral with respect to religion and providing assistance to a broad range of citizens.”⁴⁰ Although this ruling made way for voucher programs in some states, Massachusetts remains one of many that have failed to repeal “anti-aid” laws in their constitutions, laws that have a history clearly rooted in turn-of-the-century anti-Catholic sentiment, and bigotry.⁴¹

Known as the “Know-Nothing” law (named for the party that proposed it), the anti-aid amendment was “first introduced to the Massachusetts Constitution in 1855.” It preceded similar amendments in other state constitutions; eventually 38 of 50 states would enact “Blaine amendments,” named for the congressman who proposed a failed anti-aid amendment to the US Constitution.⁴² In mid-19th-century Massachusetts, the “Know-Nothing” amendment was “just one of many steps taken to restrict the political power and influence of the growing number of Catholic immigrants to the state.”⁴³

When first written, the amendment provided that “state appropriations and local tax revenues for education could be expended in, no other schools than those which are conducted according to law... and such moneys shall never be appropriated to any religious sect for the maintenance exclusively of its own schools.”⁴⁴ At the time, schools conducted according to law were Protestant in curriculum and culture; the amendment served almost exclusively to block Catholics from using state moneys to establish schools that would teach according to Catholic doctrine or “promote” Catholic culture.

Amended again in 1917 to “extend the ban on public funding to all private schools,” and to other charitable institutions as well, the anti-aid amendment remains a controversial part of the Constitution. Though some claim that the 1917 amendment purged the ban of its anti-Catholic intent, according to Cornelius Chapman, “the truth is that the amendment was drafted by a Committee on Bill of Rights dominated by Protestants” who resisted attempts to practically change the contents of the amendment.⁴⁵ Additional attempts to repeal the amendment over the years have been “bitterly [and successfully] fought by education lobbyists.”⁴⁶

Despite the *Zelman* decision at the federal level, states retain the right to “erect a higher wall of separation between church and state, so long as it does not improperly restrict a person’s right to free exercise of religion.” In practical terms this means that Massachusetts’ amendment is not affected by the *Zelman* decision, nor is it likely to be affected by future decisions at the federal level: “supreme court cases invalidating state constitutional amendments... are rare.”⁴⁷

Thus the hurdle that Massachusetts citizens who favor private school choice would have to clear is a high one, despite the benefits that an enhanced system of school choice could bring in the form of productive competition for public schools and the potential for better student outcomes overall. Nonetheless, if demand for school choice continues to increase at the current

rate, and if school voucher and voucher-like programs continue to be levers that other states successfully pull for education reform, there remains the possibility that a future challenge to the Constitution could succeed. Understanding what a voucher program might look like in Massachusetts and understanding its potential impacts is an important step in supporting any future effort to repeal the “Know-Nothing” amendment.

A SCHOLARSHIP VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR MASSACHUSETTS

State-funded vouchers would significantly expand school choice. A voucher program involves many important details that affect the program’s benefits and costs, and perhaps the most important is the answer to one critical question: who is eligible? The question of eligibility has several dimensions, the first of which is the type of student. As stated earlier, some private school choice programs target children with special needs, while others target students from low-income families or all students. In addition to the student or family characteristics, voucher programs sometimes restrict eligibility based on the student’s local district – e.g., they may be only for students in underperforming districts. Finally, the program could be restricted only to students previously enrolled in public schools, or it could also be open to families whose children already attend a private school. These factors determine both which families will benefit from the program as well as the total number of students eligible. While there are many possibilities open to policymakers, the analysis below will examine how a voucher program for low-income families in urban areas would affect state and local finances. Focusing on low-income students ensures that the program helps those most in need and also reduces the possibility the best students would be siphoned off, leaving behind students who are more difficult to educate.

In addition to determining eligibility, program designers must also decide on the value of the

voucher. Vouchers can vary by the student’s age – e.g., smaller for elementary schools and larger for high schools, as is the case for the D.C. Scholarship Opportunity Program – or by family income to provide larger vouchers to lower-income families. Research published by Pioneer Institute last year reported that the median private school tuition in low-income cities was about \$6,000 in grades K-8 and about \$8,600 in grades 9-12.⁴⁸ While some schools offer lower tuition, and vouchers do not have to cover the entire cost, if the voucher is too small many families will not be able to afford private school and the program will not expand school choice.

On the other hand, if the voucher is larger the program could become more expensive, meaning that fewer families and children might benefit. However, the connection between the size of the voucher and the cost of the program is not straightforward – the state may reduce aid to local districts when students leave, which offsets the cost of the vouchers. This means that increasing the amount of the voucher may have little or no impact on the net cost to the state, although it would reduce the funds available to local districts. In some cases even generous vouchers can reduce total spending on education. However, any savings from vouchers are offset if vouchers are awarded to families who would have sent their children to private school even without the voucher.

The Commonwealth has a variety of admired and successful private schools. Despite having some of the best public schools in the country, more students attend private schools in Massachusetts than in other states. However, a large majority of private school students come from upper or middle-income families.⁴⁹ A means-tested voucher program in Massachusetts could greatly expand educational choice to families that cannot afford private school today.

There are many low-income students in Massachusetts public schools; almost 40 percent of students live with families eligible for free-or-reduced-price lunch. If Massachusetts offered a

significant voucher to these families, there would undoubtedly be more potential applicants than program slots available. While it is impossible to know how many families would apply, it is likely that a reasonably sized program would be oversubscribed and easily distribute all the vouchers.

Based on the estimates of the cost of private school and the size of vouchers in other states, vouchers of \$6,000 to K-8 students and \$8,000 to high school students might be appropriate for Massachusetts. If these were offered to families

TABLE 3. EXAMPLE OF DISTRIBUTION OF VOUCHERS

City	Voucher Recipients	Percent of Enrollment
Boston	2,383	3.7%
Brockton	685	3.9%
Cambridge	164	2.4%
Chelsea	288	4.2%
Everett	279	3.7%
Fall River	442	3.9%
Lawrence	639	4.2%
Lowell	580	3.8%
Lynn	648	4.0%
Malden	223	3.0%
Medford	89	1.8%
New Bedford	509	3.9%
Peabody	108	1.8%
Quincy	243	2.6%
Salem	139	3.0%
Somerville	191	3.5%
Springfield	1,257	4.3%
Waltham	117	2.2%
Worcester	1,016	3.7%
Total	10,000	3.7%

with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, roughly 350,000 students statewide would be potentially eligible. The program rules could determine whether vouchers were available to all public school students, only those in targeted urban areas, or perhaps those in low-performing districts. Even if the program were available statewide, the majority of applicants would most likely come from urban areas; Boston alone is home to about 1/8 of all the low-income students in the state.

Based on the distribution of low-income students in public schools, a voucher program for 10,000 urban participants might draw enrollees from the districts as illustrated in the table below. While 10,000 students may sound like a large number, it is only 1 percent of total enrollment in the state, 3.7 percent of enrollment in these cities, and 4.2 percent of the low-income students in the cities. It would lead to an increase of about 8 percent in total private school enrollment, suggesting that the private schools would already have or could create the capacity to serve the new students.

Vouchers for 10,000 students would require state expenditures of roughly \$67 million per year.⁵⁰ However, as mentioned previously, because voucher programs result in lower enrollment in traditional public schools, states typically reduce funding to the affected districts. The amount of the reduction in state aid varies, with some states cutting aid by more than the cost of the voucher so that total spending on education declines and the state saves money. The overall financial impact of a voucher program depends on the details, but estimates from existing programs demonstrate that voucher programs are likely to reduce total spending.⁵¹

State funding for schools in Massachusetts is governed by the Chapter 70 formula. Declines in enrollment due to a voucher program could be handled entirely within this formula. However, using this complex formula would lead to erratic and inequitable outcomes – e.g. some districts could lose state aid equal to twice the cost of the voucher, while other districts would not lose any funding as students left.⁵²

A simpler system would be to reduce state aid to districts by the amount of the voucher. This would mean that the program would have no net cost to the state – spending on vouchers would be exactly offset by reduced state aid. While local districts would see a reduction in state aid, the vouchers are much lower than average spending per pupil so that districts would be left with more resources for each remaining student. For example, suppose that a student in a district that spent \$12,000 per student (roughly the state average) received a \$6,000 voucher for a private elementary school. The district would lose

\$6,000 in state aid, but would still have the other \$6,000 to spend on the students remaining in the district.

Under this system, the financial impact of vouchers on local districts would be different than the impact of charter schools. When a student leaves for a charter school, the state transfers funds to the charter school equal to the average spending in the district (in the example above the district would lose the entire \$12,000). Because the voucher is lower than average spending per pupil, the local district

TABLE 4. POTENTIAL CHANGES IN STATE AID AND SPENDING PER PUPIL

City	FY16 Required Spending Per Pupil	Reduction in State Aid	Spending Per Pupil After Vouchers	Increase in Spending Per Pupil
Boston	\$13,547	\$15,966,100	\$13,811	\$264
Brockton	\$11,839	\$4,589,500	\$12,046	\$207
Cambridge	\$11,547	\$1,098,800	\$11,665	\$118
Chelsea	\$12,178	\$1,929,600	\$12,416	\$238
Everett	\$11,972	\$1,869,300	\$12,176	\$204
Fall River	\$11,572	\$2,961,400	\$11,770	\$198
Lawrence	\$12,257	\$4,281,300	\$12,501	\$244
Lowell	\$11,668	\$3,886,000	\$11,864	\$196
Lynn	\$11,970	\$4,341,600	\$12,192	\$222
Malden	\$11,367	\$1,494,100	\$11,512	\$145
Medford	\$11,575	\$596,300	\$11,665	\$90
New Bedford	\$11,316	\$3,410,300	\$11,501	\$185
Peabody	\$10,807	\$723,600	\$10,883	\$76
Quincy	\$11,959	\$1,628,100	\$12,100	\$141
Salem	\$11,359	\$931,300	\$11,502	\$143
Somerville	\$13,681	\$1,279,700	\$13,937	\$256
Springfield	\$11,929	\$8,421,900	\$12,166	\$237
Waltham	\$11,744	\$783,900	\$11,858	\$114
Worcester	\$12,002	\$6,807,200	\$12,205	\$204
Average	\$12,246	\$67,000,000	\$12,456	\$210

sees a smaller cut in state aid when the student leaves. However, with charter schools the state also provides substantial but temporary reimbursement to the district to offset the decline in state aid.

Table 4 illustrates the impact on state aid and spending per pupil of the voucher program described above. Spending per student in the effected districts would rise by an average of roughly \$210. This does not mean that the remaining students necessarily have more resources, because the students who leave could be cheaper to educate than the students who remain behind (i.e. if the marginal cost of educating the student who left is lower than the average cost). This is more likely to be true if children with more expensive special education needs are less likely to use vouchers. However, the small changes in Table 4 demonstrate that the overall impact on funding per student is quite small. The more important effect, as noted earlier, is that prior research has found evidence that increased competition could have significant benefits for the vast majority of students who would not use vouchers – the 260,000 students remaining in the public schools.

The description above assumes a voucher program that restricts access only to students already in public schools – as is true with most existing vouchers and ESAs. Some states allow students already in private schools to participate, which increases the program cost because there is no reduction in state aid. Regardless of the initial program design, some portion of the funds would eventually be spent on children who would have attended private schools even without the vouchers, but Costrell (2009) suggests that this amount is likely to be small for programs targeting low-income students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many Massachusetts families have little choice about where their children attend school. More than 50,000 mostly urban students are on waiting lists for vocational schools, charter

schools, and the METCO program, and an untold number of other families would be interested in private school choice. In 23 other states as well as the District of Columbia, more than 350,000 students and their families have access to private school choice programs, primarily through vouchers or tax credits. Tellingly, states that have implemented private school choice in the past two decades have almost always chosen to expand their initial programs.

A voucher program like the example described in this paper would bring choice to families in Massachusetts and allow 10,000 students to attend a private school, providing the opportunities that higher income families already possess. The program could target low-income students, students with special needs, or students in failing districts.

There is abundant evidence that private school choice increases parents' satisfaction, and that students using vouchers or ESAs receive an education that on average is at least as good as, if not better than, that provided in the public schools. These outcomes are particularly likely because the families least satisfied by their local schools would be most likely to use vouchers. Students would also be more likely to attend less racially identifiable schools. Opponents of private school choice contend that it is detrimental to the public schools, but this argument has been proven wrong. Instead, research from other states suggests that the students using vouchers would not be the only ones to benefit – traditional public schools thrive when faced with additional competition.

Unfortunately, legal barriers currently prevent the Commonwealth from offering residents the same choice that so many other states already offer. We offer several recommendations to the legislature:

1. Repeal the two “Know-Nothing”-style amendments. These amendments, originally adopted to discriminate against Catholics and immigrants, prevent the Commonwealth from moving forward with vouchers and expanded urban school choice

2. Create a voucher program based on the best practices and most successful voucher and ESA programs in other states. This paper modeled the impact of a simple voucher targeted at low-income urban students. To implement a new program, policymakers would have to determine the details such as which students are eligible, the size of the voucher, and the impact on local aid.
3. Collect adequate data to monitor and evaluate the program's effects on participants and on public school districts.

There are few if any downsides to creating a voucher program. Vouchers would offer parents additional choice, supplementing public school options such as charter schools and vocational schools not affecting those families satisfied with their local schools. The impact on enrollment in any specific district is likely to be small and could be limited by program design. Finally, the financial impact is minimal – with no overall net cost or even savings, and only a small reduction in aid to local districts that results in higher spending per pupil.

Vouchers have the potential to do many things – improve family satisfaction, reduce racial isolation, and strengthen educational outcomes for both the recipients and the children remaining in public schools – at little or no net cost to taxpayers. More fundamentally, they could also provide low-income families with the choices that other families already possess. It is time for the Commonwealth to consider expanding private school choice.

APPENDIX – LOW-INCOME VOUCHER PROGRAMS IN THE U.S. 2014-15⁵³

Program	Year Implemented	Students
Indiana: Choice Scholarship Program	2011	29,100
Louisiana: Student Scholarship for Educational Excellence Program	2008	7,400
North Carolina: Opportunity Scholarship Program	2013	1,200
Ohio:		
• Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program	1995	7,400
• Educational Choice Scholarship Program	2005	20,300
• Income Based Scholarship Program	2013	3,700
Washington D.C.: D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program	2004	1,400
Wisconsin:		
• Milwaukee Parental Choice Program	1990	26,900
• Racine Parental Choice Program	2011	1,700
• Parental Choice Program	2013	1,000

About the Authors

Ken Ardon received a Ph.D. in economics from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1999, where he co-authored a book on school spending and student achievement. He taught economics at Pomona College before moving to Massachusetts, and from 2000 to 2004, Dr. Ardon worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the Executive Office of Administration and Finance. Since 2004, he has been an assistant and then associate professor of economics at Salem State University, where he now serves as chair of the economics department. Dr. Ardon is a member of Pioneer Institute’s Center for School Reform Advisory Board.

Cara Stillings Candal is an education researcher and writer. She is a senior consultant for research and curriculum at the Center for Better Schools/National Academy for Advanced Teacher Education, an adjunct professor at the Boston University School of Education, and a senior fellow at Pioneer Institute.

Patrick J. Wolf is Distinguished Professor of Education Policy and 21st Century Endowed Chair in School Choice at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Previously he was on the faculty at Columbia and Georgetown. He has led or assisted with most of the key evaluations of private school voucher programs over the past 15 years, including recent studies of programs in Washington, DC; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Louisiana. He received his Ph.D. in Government from Harvard University in 1995.

About Pioneer

Pioneer Institute is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded research organization that seeks to change the intellectual climate in the Commonwealth by supporting scholarship that challenges the “conventional wisdom” on Massachusetts public policy issues.

Recent Publications

Federal Overreach and Common Core, White Paper, July 2015

The Pacheco Law Has Cost the MBTA More than \$450 Million, White Paper, July 2015

Mass Hospitals Weak on Price Transparency, Policy Brief, June 2015

MBTA Reform – The Case of Full, Final and Binding Interest Arbitration, June 2015

Support and Defend: The K-12 Education of Military-Connected Children, White Paper, June 2015

Analyzing the Convention Center Authority’s Inflated Claims, Policy Brief, June 2015

Why Massachusetts Should Abandon the PARCC tests and the 2011 Coleman et al English Language Arts Standards on which the MCAS Tests are Based, Public Testimony, June 2015

Whistleblowers Expose the Massachusetts Connector: A Behind-the-Scenes Account of What Went Wrong, White Paper, May 2015

Great Teachers Are Not Born, They Are Made: Case Study Evidence from Massachusetts Charters, White Paper, April 2015



Endnotes

1. While public school options such as charter schools now exist in most states, they are by no means widely available in all places. Further, while parents are guaranteed the right to choose among schools, many are limited in that they are prevented from using government money for a private school education. “How Does School Choice Work in Other Countries?” The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, <http://www.edchoice.org/getattachment/School-Choice/School-Choice-FAQs/How-does-school-choice-work-in-other-countries.pdf>, accessed June 29, 2015.
2. Baker, B. Sciarra, D, and Farrie, Danielle, (2014). “Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card.” Third Edition, Education Law Center, p. 2.
3. Fowler, Frances C (2002). “Introduction: The Great School Choice Debate.” *The Clearing House* 76(1), p. 1.
4. States also offer personal tax credits that could theoretically allow private school choice. The tax credits serve the largest number of families (almost 300,000 in Illinois alone), but they are almost always small relative to private school tuition and therefore do not actually materially affect school choice.
5. “School Choice Yearbook 2014-2015: Breaking Down Barriers to Choice.” Alliance for School Choice, 2015. Washington D.C.
6. The count of states includes Washington D.C.
7. Alliance for School Choice, 2015.
8. The states with new programs were Arkansas, Montana, Nevada, and Tennessee. Arkansas and Tennessee created scholarships for children with disabilities, and Nevada passed both a tax credit scholarship and an ESA. In Montana the governor vetoed an ESA but a tax credit scholarship became law, but low limits on the credits may limit its impact.
9. These figures do not include tax credits for educational expenses, which as discussed previously are generally too small to provide true school choice.
10. Data from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/chapter-16p.html>
11. Private School Universe Survey, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education accessible at <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/tables1112.asp>
12. American Community Survey data reported by KidsCount Data Center. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/65-median-family-income-among-households-with-children#detailed/2/2-52/false/36/any/365>
13. Distribution of Total Population by Federal Poverty Level, Kaiser Family Foundation, accessible at: <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-fpl/#>
14. http://pioneerinstitute.org/school_choice/poll-finds-likely-massachusetts-voters-overwhelmingly-favor-more-school-choice/
15. National polls report similar results, as well as strong support specifically for vouchers. For example, The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice found that 61 percent of respondents favored vouchers while only 33 percent opposed them: <http://www.edchoice.org/Blog/June-2015/Breaking-Down-the--2015-Schooling-in-America-Surve> (accessed on June 28, 2015)
16. Fraser, Allison. October 2008. Vocational Technical Education in Massachusetts. Pioneer Institute.
17. Ball et al. March 26, 2014. “Manufacturing Success: Improved Access to Vocational Education in Massachusetts.” Northeastern University School of Law. See also: Woolhouse, Megan. September 25, 2014. “Schools’ wait lists called a drag on the economy.” *The Boston Globe*. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2014/09/14/with-companies-clamoring-for-skilled-workers-vocational-schools-unable-educate-enough/X20u4D2LEnbU8AFI59tKqN/story.html>
18. Ibid.

19. http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/schoolchoice/choice_guide.html
20. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE), Office of School Finance, “School choice trends in enrollment and tuition,” <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/schoolchoice/>
21. Coulter, Michael. October 1, 2005. “Public school choice grows in Massachusetts.” Heartlander. <http://News.heartland.org>
22. Eaton, S. and Chirichigno, G. 2011. “METCO merits more: the history and status of METCO.” Pioneer Institute. Also Nelson, Laura J. 2011. “METCO Students on Positive Track: Study says they outperform their peers.” *Boston Globe*, June 16 2011. http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2011/06/16/study_says_metco_students_outperform_urban_peers/ (accessed June 21, 2015).
23. Apfelbaum, Kate and Ardon, Kenneth. March 2015. “Expanding METCO and Closing Achievement Gaps.” Pioneer Institute White Paper, No. 129
24. MA DESE “METCO Frequently Asked Questions” <http://www.doe.mass.edu/metco/faq.html?section=all>, accessed June 22, 2015.
25. Apfelbaum and Ardon, “Expanding METCO, Closing Achievement Gaps.”
26. Gerard Robinson and Edwin Chang. 2008. “The Color of Success: Black Student Achievement in Public Charter Schools,” Issue Brief for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Cited in brief of amicus curiae of the Pacific Legal Foundation in support of appellees in Atlanta Public Schools, et al. v. Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, Inc., et al. (Supreme Court of Georgia 2013).
27. Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO). February 28, 2013. “Charter School Performance in Massachusetts.” Stanford University. https://credo.stanford.edu/documents/MAReportFinal_000.pdf.
28. MA DESE “Charter school fact sheet, 2014-2015,” <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>.
29. Ibid.
30. Candal, Cara. December 2014. “Innovation Interrupted: How the Achievement Gap Act of 2010 Has Redefined Charter Public Schooling in Massachusetts.” Pioneer Institute White Paper No. 126.
31. Stephen Q. Cornman, Thomas Stewart, and Patrick J. Wolf. May 2007. “The Evolution of School Choice Consumers: Parent and Student Voices on the Second Year of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.” Georgetown University School Choice Demonstration Project, <http://hpi.georgetown.edu/scdp/files/PSV2.pdf> (accessed March 17, 2014). Also Paul DiPerna. May 8 2013. “Schooling in America Survey: What Do Mothers Say About K-12 Education?” Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice. <http://www.edchoice.org/Research/Reports/Schooling-in-America-Survey—What-Do-Mothers-Say-About-K-12-Education-.aspx> (accessed March 17, 2014).
32. Wolf, Patrick J. May 2008. “School Voucher Programs: What the Research Says About Parental School Choice.” *BYU Law Review*, 2008(2).
33. Research could also be biased if one set of schools had higher dropout or expulsion rates – e.g. if private schools expelled all low performing students then the test results would be artificially inflated. The most carefully conducted studies allow for this possibility and still find positive effects from vouchers.
34. Wolf, Patrick J. May 2007. “Civics Exam: Schools of Choice Boost Civics Values.” *Education Next*, 7(3). Greene, Jay P., Jonathan N. Mills and Stuart Buck. 2010. “The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program’s Effect on School Integration, SCDP Milwaukee Evaluation Report #20.” Fayetteville, AR: School Choice Demonstration Project. http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/SCDP/Milwaukee_Eval/Report_20.pdf
35. Hoxby, Caroline. 2002. “School Choice and School Productivity: Or Could School Choice Be a Tide that Lifts all Boats?” National Bureau for Economic Research Working Paper no. 8873. See also: [1] Belfield, Clive R., and Henry M. Levin. 2002. “The Effects of Competition on Educational Outcomes: A Review of U.S. Evidence,” National

- Center for the Study of the Privatization of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York.
- [2] Sass, Timothy R. 2006. "Charter Schools and Student Achievement in Florida," *Education Finance and Policy*, 1(1). Moe, Terry M. 2008. "Beyond the Free Market: The Structure of School Choice," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2008:2. [3] Moe, Terry M. 2008. "Beyond the Free Market: The Structure of School Choice," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2008:2.
36. Nathan L. Gray, John D. Merrifield, and Kerry A. Adzima, 2014, "A private universal voucher program's effects on traditional public schools," *Journal of Economics and Finance*, published online
 37. See, for example, "TIMSS Results Place Massachusetts Among World Leaders in Math and Science," Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, December 9, 2008.
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=4457>
 38. Candal, Cara. 2014.
 39. Ball et al. 2014.
 40. O'Neill, Rita Anne. 2003. "The School Voucher Debate After Zelman: Can States Be Compelled to Fund Sectarian Schools Under the Federal Constitution?" *Boston College Law Review* (4, 4/5);
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/law/lawreviews/journals/bclawr/44_4/44_4_toc.htm
 41. Bolick, Clint. 2008. "The Constitutional Parameters of School Choice," *Brigham-Young University Law Review*, 2008(2).
 42. <http://www.pewforum.org/2008/07/24/the-blaine-game-controversy-over-the-blaine-amendments-and-public-funding-of-religion/>
 43. Gerwin, Carol. 1999. "The Anti-Aid Amendment." *Commonwealth Magazine*. Winter, 1999.
<http://commonwealthmagazine.org/uncategorized/the-antiaid-amendment/>
 44. Chapman, Cornelius. 2009. "The Know-Nothing Amendments: Barriers to School Choice in Massachusetts." Pioneer Institute White Paper No. 49. P. 5.
 45. Ibid.
 46. <http://paceorg.net/issues-and-advocacy/massachusetts-anti-aid-amendment/anti-aid-provision-qa/>
 47. Chapman, p. 10
 48. Ardon, Ken, and Jason Bedrick. 2014. "Giving Kids Credit: Using Scholarship Tax Credits To Increase Educational Opportunity In Massachusetts." Pioneer Institute White Paper 119.
 49. Data from the Current Population Survey (<http://www.census.gov/cps/data/>) indicate that 70% of families sending children to private schools in Massachusetts have income greater than twice the poverty line.
 50. This figure assumes that 1/3 of the vouchers went to high school students and 2/3 went to K-8 students.
 51. Costrell, Robert. 2009. "Who Gains, Who Loses? The fiscal impact of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program." *Education Next*, Winter 2009, Volume 9, No 1.
 52. For a discussion of the disparate impact of a change in enrollment on funding, see Ardon and Bedrick (2014). Reducing state aid based on Chapter 70 would also mean that the net cost of vouchers would depend on which districts lost students.
 53. Alliance for School Choice. 2015. There were also 13 scholarship tax credit programs in 12 states that are either restricted to low-income families or give preference to them.



This report was prepared by Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research in Boston, Massachusetts, and is for informational purposes only. The information herein is believed to be reliable; all data have been obtained from sources that are believed to be accurate, but Pioneer Institute makes no representation as to their correctness or completeness. This report comes with no warranty, implied or explicit. The opinions, estimates and projections herein are solely those of the respective authors as of the time of its preparation and are subject to change without notice. Past performance does not guarantee future results. Pioneer Institute, its fiduciaries and the authors may engage in financial transactions and employ accounting methods inconsistent with the views taken in this report on others' and on their own behalf.

Copyright © 2015 Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research. All rights reserved.

PIONEER INSTITUTE
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

185 Devonshire Street, Suite 1101 | Boston, MA 02110 | 617.723.2277
www.pioneerinstitute.org | [Facebook.com/PioneerInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/PioneerInstitute) | [Twitter.com/PioneerBoston](https://twitter.com/PioneerBoston)