

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on
Education
(SC-Ed)**

File Naming Example:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01a
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01b
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt02

Published Documents

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

*Information Collected For Or
Against Proposal*

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

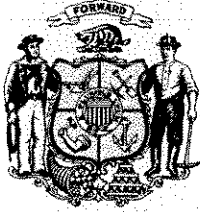
**

➤ Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)

➤ **05hr_sb0618_SC-Ed_pt01**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
DT: February 23, 2006
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 618

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 3:00pm, February 23, 2006. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 618:

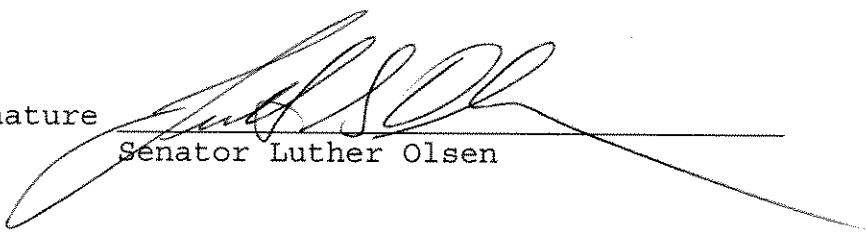
Relating to: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Introduced by Senators Darling, Kanavas, Plale, Lazich and Stepp; cosponsored by Representatives Vukmir, Fields, Gard, Sinicki, Huebsch, Honadel, Ziegelbauer, Towns, Nischke, Lothian, Pridemore, Vos, Musser, Gielow, Ott, Hundertmark, Davis, Bies, Ballweg, Stone, Newcomer, Jeskewitz, Moulton and Albers

- Moved by Senator Olsen that Senate Bill 618 be recommended for passage

Aye X No

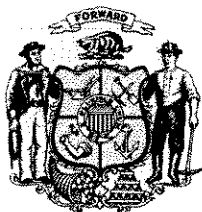
Signature



Senator Luther Olsen

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

FR: Senator Alberta Darling, Member, Senate Committee on Education

DT: February 23, 2006

RE: Paper Ballot for SB 618

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 3:00pm, February 23, 2006. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 618:

Relating to: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Introduced by Senators Darling, Kanavas, Plale, Lazich and Stepp; cosponsored by Representatives Vukmir, Fields, Gard, Sinicki, Huebsch, Honadel, Ziegelbauer, Towns, Nischke, Lothian, Pridemore, Vos, Musser, Gielow, Ott, Hundertmark, Davis, Bies, Ballweg, Stone, Newcomer, Jeskewitz, Moulton and Albers

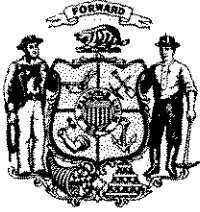
- Moved by Senator Olsen that Senate Bill 618 be recommended for passage

Aye X No

Signature



Senator Alberta Darling



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

FR: Senator Sheila Harsdorf, Member, Senate Committee on Education

DT: February 23, 2006

RE: Paper Ballot for SB 618

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 3:00pm, February 23, 2006. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 618:


Relating to: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Introduced by Senators Darling, Kanavas, Plale, Lazich and Stepp; cosponsored by Representatives Vukmir, Fields, Gard, Sinicki, Huebsch, Honadel, Ziegelbauer, Towns, Nischke, Lothian, Pridemore, Vos, Musser, Gielow, Ott, Hundertmark, Davis, Bies, Ballweg, Stone, Newcomer, Jeskewitz, Moulton and Albers

- Moved by Senator Olsen that Senate Bill 618 be recommended for passage

Aye No

Signature



Senator Sheila Harsdorf

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

FR: Senator Glenn Grothman, Member, Senate Committee on Education

DT: February 23, 2006

RE: Paper Ballot for SB 618

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 3:00pm, February 23, 2006. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 618:

Relating to: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Introduced by Senators Darling, Kanavas, Plale, Lazich and Stepp; cosponsored by Representatives Vukmir, Fields, Gard, Sinicki, Huebsch, Honadel, Ziegelbauer, Towns, Nischke, Lothian, Pridemore, Vos, Musser, Gielow, Ott, Hundertmark, Davis, Bies, Ballweg, Stone, Newcomer, Jeskewitz, Moulton and Albers

- Moved by Senator Olsen that Senate Bill 618 be recommended for passage

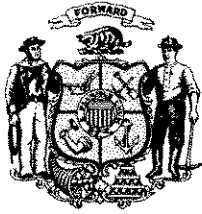
Aye No

Signature _____

Senator Glenn Grothman

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education

FR: Senator Jon Erpenbach, Member, Senate Committee on Education

DT: February 23, 2006

RE: Paper Ballot for SB 618

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 3:00pm, February 23, 2006. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 618:

Relating to: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Introduced by Senators Darling, Kanavas, Plale, Lazich and Stepp; cosponsored by Representatives Vukmir, Fields, Gard, Sinicki, Huebsch, Honadel, Ziegelbauer, Towns, Nischke, Lothian, Pridemore, Vos, Musser, Gielow, Ott, Hundertmark, Davis, Bies, Ballweg, Stone, Newcomer, Jeskewitz, Moulton and Albers

- Moved by Senator Olsen that Senate Bill 618 be recommended for passage

Aye _____ No X

Signature

 X Jon Erpenbach
Senator Jon Erpenbach

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882



Wisconsin State Legislature

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
FR: Senator Dave Hansen, Member, Senate Committee on Education
DT: February 23, 2006
RE: Paper Ballot for SB 618

Please consider the following item and vote on the motion below. Return this ballot to Senator Luther Olsen, Room 5 South, no later than 3:00pm, February 23, 2006. Committee members' ballots not received by the deadline will be marked as not voting.

Senate Bill 618:

Relating to: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Introduced by Senators Darling, Kanavas, Plale, Lazich and Stepp; cosponsored by Representatives Vukmir, Fields, Gard, Sinicki, Huebsch, Honadel, Ziegelbauer, Towns, Nischke, Lothian, Pridemore, Vos, Musser, Gielow, Ott, Hundertmark, Davis, Bies, Ballweg, Stone, Newcomer, Jeskewitz, Moulton and Albers

- Moved by Senator Olsen that Senate Bill 618 be recommended for passage

Aye _____

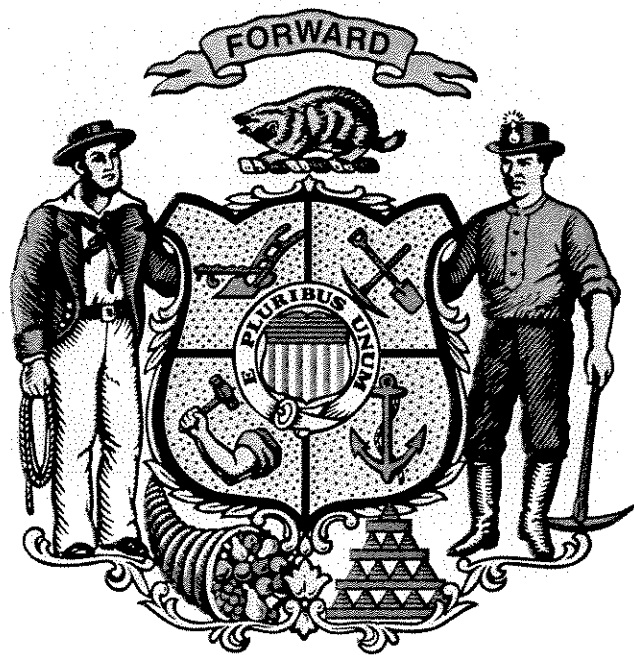
No X _____

Signature

Dave Hansen
Senator Dave Hansen

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882





Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

February 22, 2006

TO: Members
Wisconsin Legislature

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 618/Assembly Bill 1057: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program and Student Achievement Guarantee in Education Program

Senate Bill 618 was introduced on February 21 and referred to the Senate Committee on Education. Assembly Bill 1057, which is a companion bill, was introduced on February 21 and referred to the Assembly Committee on Education Reform. The bills would: (a) increase the limit on choice participation; (b) increase the per pupil payment under the SAGE program; (c) modify pupil eligibility under the choice program; and (d) establish a system of accreditation and testing for choice schools.

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Under the choice program, state funds are used to pay for the cost of children from low-income families in the City of Milwaukee to attend, at no charge, private schools located in the City. Pupil participation is limited to pupils in grades K-12 with family incomes less than 175% of the federal poverty level. In the school year prior to their initial enrollment in a private school, participants must have been either enrolled in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), the choice program, or grades K-3 in private schools located in the City, or not enrolled in school. The limit on the number of pupils who can participate in the program is 15% of the MPS membership. In 2005-06, this limit is approximately 14,750 pupils. It is estimated that enrollment under the program will reach that limit in 2005-06.

It is estimated that participation in the choice program in 2006-07 will exceed the 15% limit, which will be approximately 14,530 students. Under current law, in any school year in which there are more spaces available in participating choice schools than the maximum number of pupils allowed to participate, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is required to prorate the number of spaces available at each participating choice school. On December 27, 2005, DPI notified

schools participating in the program of the procedures that will be used to implement the prorated process for 2006-07. Under the current prorated procedure, which was outlined by staff of the Legislative Council during deliberations on earlier administrative rules proposed by DPI on the prorated requirement, each choice school will be able to fill a percentage of its available seats. The percentage will be equal to the number of students eligible to participate in the program divided by the total number of choice seats available, as indicated by choice schools when they register to participate by February 1. On February 20, DPI notified choice schools that a total of 30,833 seats are available in 2006-07 for choice pupils. With a limit of 14,530 pupils, each choice school would be able to fill 47.1% of its available seats. Thus, if a choice school indicated to DPI on February 1 that it has 300 seats available for choice pupils, it would be able to take 141 pupils under the program.

For each pupil attending a choice school, DPI pays the parent or guardian an amount that is equal to the lesser of: (a) the private school's operating and debt service cost per pupil related to educational programming; or (b) the amount paid per pupil in the previous school year adjusted by the percentage change in the general school aids appropriation from the previous school year to the current school year. If that percent change is a negative number, however, the per pupil payment does not change from the prior year. The maximum per pupil payment under choice program in 2005-06 is \$6,351. Based on the general school aids appropriations under 2005 Act 25 (the 2005-07 budget act), the maximum per pupil payment will be \$6,501 in 2006-07.

The estimated cost of the payments from the choice program appropriation is partially offset by a reduction in the general school aids otherwise paid to MPS by an amount equal to 45% of the total cost of the choice program. Under revenue limits, MPS may levy property taxes to make up for the amount of aid lost due to this reduction. As a result, the general fund pays for 55% of the choice program and MPS for 45%. In 2005-06, it is estimated that the state will fund \$51.5 million of the cost of the choice program, while the MPS aid reduction will offset the remaining \$42.2 million.

SAGE Program. Under current law, the student achievement guarantee in education (SAGE) program provides five-year grants to eligible school districts for the purposes of: (a) lowering class sizes to 15 pupils to one teacher in grades kindergarten through third; (b) keeping the school open every day for extended hours and collaborating with community organizations to make educational and recreational opportunities, and community and social services, available in the school to all district residents; (c) providing a rigorous academic curriculum designed to improve academic achievement; and (d) creating staff development and accountability programs that provide training for new staff members, encourage employee collaboration, and require professional development plans and performance evaluations.

Since its creation, three rounds of five-year contracts have been authorized. Under 2001 Act 16, DPI was authorized to enter into renewal contracts for additional five-year terms for any currently participating SAGE school. As a condition of receiving payments under a renewal of a

SAGE contract, a school board is required to maintain the reduction in class size achieved under the original contract in grades kindergarten through third.

DPI is required to fund contracts at \$2,000 per low-income pupil enrolled in the eligible grades, which has remained unchanged since the program's start in 1996-97. Additionally, DPI is required to arrange for an evaluation of the SAGE program and must allocate \$250,000 annually for this purpose. The Department has contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Madison for this evaluation. Under 2005 Act 25, \$97,614,000 GPR in 2005-06 and \$98,588,000 GPR in 2006-07 is provided to fund the SAGE program.

SUMMARY OF BILLS

SAGE Program. Under the bill, the current law \$2,000 per pupil payment would be increased. In the 2007-08 school year and any subsequent year, participating districts would be paid \$2,250 multiplied by the number of low-income pupils enrolled in grades kindergarten to third in schools covered by SAGE contract renewals. The requirement to maintain class sizes of no more than 15 pupils per teacher in the eligible grades, and other current law requirements, would be unchanged.

Choice Participation Limit. The limit on the number of pupils who can participate in the program would be increased from 15% of the MPS membership to 22,500 pupils, as counted under the current law definition of pupils enrolled (full-time equivalent pupils). The bill would delete the requirement that DPI prorate the number of spaces available at each choice school if there are more spaces available in participating choice schools than the maximum number of pupils allowed to participate. Instead, a new requirement would be created under which, whenever the State Superintendent determines that the limit has been reached, he or she would be required to issue an order prohibiting the participating choice schools from accepting additional pupils until he or she determines that the number of pupils attending choice schools has fallen below the limit.

Choice Pupil Income Eligibility. Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, a pupil attending a school in the choice program would continue to remain eligible under the program if his or her family income is less than 220% of the federal poverty level, rather than the current law 175%. A sibling of a pupil attending a choice school would initially be eligible for participation in the choice program if his or her family income is under 220% of the federal poverty level. A pupil who leaves the program would need to meet the income requirement of 175% of the federal poverty level to re-enter the program, unless the pupil has a sibling still in the program, in which case the 220% threshold would apply.

Choice Prior-Year Participation Requirements. The prior-year participation requirements for pupils (that they must have been either enrolled in MPS, the choice program, or grades K-3 in private schools located in the City, or not enrolled in school, in the school year prior to their initial enrollment in a choice school) would be deleted, beginning with the 2006-07 school year.

Choice School Accreditation. Under the bill, a choice school would need to either: (a) achieve accreditation by December 31 of the third school year following the first school year that begins after June 30, 2006, in which it participates in the choice program, by the Wisconsin North Central Association, the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation, the Independent Schools Association of the Central States, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Institute for the Transformation of Learning at Marquette University, or any other organization recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation; or (b) be approved for scholarship funding by Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) for the 2005-06 school year.

If a school did not participate in the choice program during the 2005-06 school year, or if a school participated in the program in 2005-06 but did not participate in 2006-07, and the school is not accredited by one of the organizations or approved by PAVE, that school would be required to apply for accreditation by December 31 of the school year in which it enters or re-enters the choice program. However, the bill would specify that any school that participated in the choice program during the 2005-06 school year, notified the State Superintendent of its intent to continue to participate in the 2006-07 school year, and is not accredited by one of the organizations or approved by PAVE would be required to apply for accreditation by September 30, 2006. If the State Superintendent determines that such a school has not applied by September 30, the school may not participate in the program in the 2006-07 school year.

If, during the accrediting process, an accrediting agency determines that a school does not meet all of the current law requirements for a private school, the accrediting agency would be required to report that failure to DPI. Under current law, an institution is considered a private school if its education program meets the following criteria: (a) the primary purpose of the program is to provide private or religious-based education; (b) the program is privately controlled; (c) the program provides at least 875 hours of instruction each school year; (d) the program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and health; (e) the program is not operated or instituted for the purpose of avoiding or circumventing the compulsory school attendance requirement; and (f) the pupils in the institution's educational program, in the ordinary course of events, return annually to the homes of their parents or guardians for not less than two months of summer vacation, or the institution is licensed as a child welfare agency.

Under the bill, if the State Superintendent determines that any of the following have occurred, he or she could issue an order barring a choice school from participating in the program in the subsequent school year: (a) a school that is required to seek accreditation by December 31 of the school year in which it enters or re-enters the choice program has not done so; (b) a school's application for accreditation had been denied by an accrediting organization; or (c) the private school has not achieved accreditation by December 31 of the third school year following the first school year that begins after June 30, 2006, in which it participates in the program. If the State Superintendent issues such an order, he or she would be required to immediately notify the parent or guardian of each pupil attending the school.

Choice Testing. Under the bill, each choice school would be required to annually administer a nationally-normed, standardized test in reading, mathematics, and science to pupils attending the school under the choice program in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. Choice schools would be authorized to administer additional standardized tests to choice pupils. Annually from 2006 through 2011, a choice school would be required to provide scores of all standardized tests that it administers to the School Choice Demonstration Project. The Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) would be required to review and analyze the standardized test score data received from the School Choice Demonstration Project. Based on its review, LAB would be required to report to the Legislature annually from 2007 to 2011 on: (a) the results of standardized tests administered by choice schools; (b) the scores of a representative sample of choice pupils on the Wisconsin knowledge and concepts examinations administered in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades and the Wisconsin reading comprehension test administered in the 3rd grade; and (c) the scores of a comparable group of MPS students on the knowledge and concepts examinations and reading comprehension tests.

FISCAL EFFECT

SAGE Program. If the per pupil SAGE aid would increase by \$250 annually, approximately \$12.5 million in additional SAGE aid eligibility would be generated annually. Because schools can withdraw from the program and the number of low-income pupils in participating schools varies each year, this fiscal estimate could differ from the actual aid eligibility that would be generated annually. Because the per pupil payment would increase beginning in 2007-08, the fiscal effect of this bill provision would first be realized in the 2007-09 biennium, and the 2007 Legislature would need to appropriate this additional funding to fully fund the program.

Choice Program. The bill would both increase the limit on the number of pupils that could participate in the choice program and expand eligibility to students who are currently ineligible to participate in the program. It is difficult to estimate the number of additional students who would participate in the program, given that it would depend on the decisions of those families that would become eligible under the provisions of the bill. The potential fiscal effect of the bill, however, can be discussed in more general terms.

Potential Effects on the General Fund. Because the state no longer has a commitment to fund two-thirds of partial school revenues, any decrease to a school district's revenue limit would no longer result in a reduction to general aids funding equal to two-thirds of the decrease. For example, if MPS enrollment were to decline as a result of children enrolling in the choice program who would otherwise enroll in MPS, the general school aids appropriation would not be automatically reduced as a result of the decline. If additional students enroll in the choice program, the state would pay 55% of the payment amount for each pupil. Thus, under current law, to the extent that the changes proposed in the bill result in more students entering the choice program, general fund expenditures would increase.

Over the last five years, participation in the choice program has grown by an average of 1,100 FTE pupils annually. In its fiscal estimates to Senate Bill 521 and Assembly Bill 941, companion bills that would also eliminate the prior year participation requirements and set continuing eligibility for the program at 220% of the poverty level, DPI notes that PAVE estimates that an additional 800 to 1,000 students would become eligible for the program under these two provisions. Based on the higher limit and the modified eligibility provisions, it is estimated that participation under the choice program would increase to 16,750, which would represent an increase of 2,000 pupils to 2005-06. Because the current law funding for the choice program is based on an estimated limit of 14,530 in 2006-07, the estimate of 16,750 pupils would represent an increase of 2,220 pupils from current law in that year. Using the estimate of an increase of 2,220 pupils and the maximum allowable per pupil payment amount of \$6,501, general fund expenditures in 2006-07 would increase by an estimated \$14.4 million GPR. However, aid to MPS would be reduced by 45% of this amount (\$6.5 million) so that the net cost to the general fund would be an estimated \$7.9 million.

Potential Effects on MPS Revenue Limits. Under the provisions of the bill, if additional pupils enroll in the choice program that otherwise would have enrolled in MPS, the revenue limit for MPS would be lower than it would have been. Under revenue limits, one-third of the number of choice pupils that left MPS would be reflected immediately under the three-year rolling average of enrollment. Revenue limits for MPS would fully reflect the loss of additional choice pupils only in the third year. If, for example, 2,000 pupils had been fully phased out for MPS revenue limit purposes in 2005-06 under the provisions of the bill, it is estimated that the MPS revenue limit would have been reduced by \$19.2 million compared to what the revenue limit would have been had those 2,000 pupils enrolled in MPS, had those changes applied in that year.

If the 2,000 additional pupils would otherwise have enrolled in non-MPS schools, then there would not have been any effect on MPS revenue limits.

Potential Effects on the Distribution of General School Aids. Because general school aids are calculated using prior year membership and shared cost data, the loss of additional pupils from MPS to the choice program would not directly affect the amount of equalization aid received by MPS until the next year. Once these pupils and their related shared costs would be fully excluded from MPS for general school aid purposes, assuming all other aid factors are unchanged, there would be aid shifts under the equalization formula. Under the example that 2,000 pupils would have enrolled in the choice program rather than MPS for the 2005-06 aid calculation under the bill, it is estimated that aid to MPS would have decreased by \$22.3 million and the aid to the other 425 school districts would have increased, in total, by \$16.6 million, had those changes applied in that aid year.

These aid changes would reflect the effects of three factors. First, the increase in choice membership would have resulted in a larger 45% aid reduction for MPS under the current choice financing structure. Second, membership and shared costs for MPS would have been reduced. Because MPS receives positive aid at the tertiary level of the equalization aid formula, these

reductions would have resulted in MPS receiving less aid under the equalization aid formula. Third, because membership and shared costs statewide would have decreased as a result of the MPS changes, the secondary cost ceiling, secondary guarantee, and tertiary guarantee would all have been slightly higher, which would have increased the aid received by most other districts at those levels of the formula.

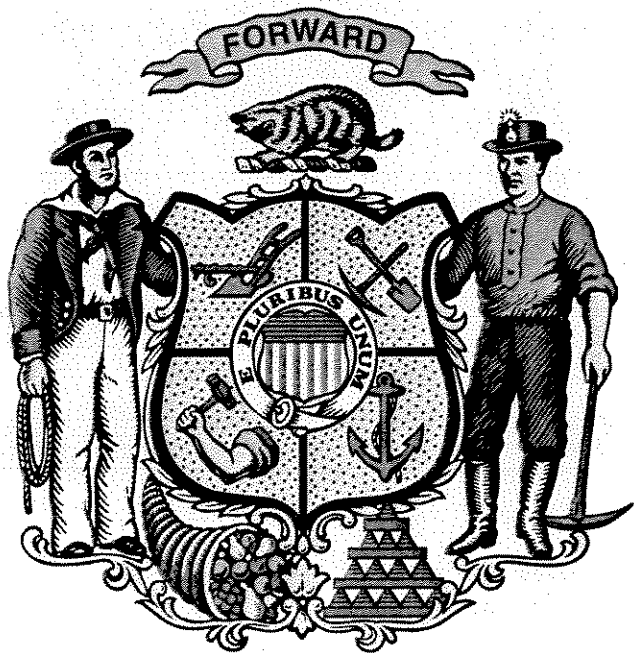
If the 2,000 additional pupils would otherwise have enrolled in non-MPS schools, then the only effect on general school aids would have been an increased aid reduction of \$5.7 million for MPS in 2005-06, had those changes applied in that aid year.

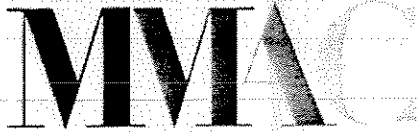
Potential Effects on MPS School Property Tax Levy. With respect to the MPS property tax levy, if 2,000 pupils that otherwise would have attended MPS had been fully phased out for MPS revenue limit and equalization aid purposes in 2005-06, it is estimated that the MPS revenue limit would have been reduced by \$19.2 million and that aid to MPS would have decreased by \$22.3 million compared to the calculations that would have resulted had those 2,000 pupils enrolled in MPS. Under revenue limits, MPS would have the authority to levy to replace any loss of aid within the new limit. Thus, the MPS levy could have increased by up to \$3.1 million in 2005-06 under this scenario, based on the decision of the Board of School Directors of MPS.

If the 2,000 additional pupils would have, instead, otherwise attended non-MPS schools, then the reduction in general school aids for MPS would have been the \$5.7 million noted above, and the MPS levy could have increased by up to \$5.7 million, depending on the decision of the Board of School Directors of MPS.

The revenue limit and general school aid effects described above are generally proportional for each additional 2,000 pupils that would attend a choice school rather than MPS. It should be noted, however, that the actual aid effects would not be perfectly proportional, as changes to the assumptions in the number of students who would attend choice schools would affect the various cost and value ratios in the equalization aid formula.

Prepared by: Russ Kava and Layla Merrifield





Metropolitan
Milwaukee
Association of
Commerce

Council of Small Business Executives

www.mmac.org

TO: The Members of the Senate and Assembly Education Committee

FROM: Tim Sheehy, President
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce

RE: Joint Hearing on the Legislation to Lift the Cap on the MPCP; Add
Improvements to the Accountability and Accreditation of Participating
Schools; Make Changes to the Eligibility Criteria; and Increase Funding
for the SAGE Program

DATE: February 22, 2006

Thank you for the opportunity to address this joint hearing regarding legislation we believe will significantly improve the delivery of education in Milwaukee.

The number one issue facing businesses in the greater Milwaukee area is finding educated and skilled employees capable of meeting their needs in a highly competitive environment.

It's not getting better. It's getting worse.

In the next five years, **more people will** be retiring than will be entering the workforce. If we can't educate and graduate greater numbers of our young people, jobs will flow to other communities and countries that can provide this resource.

And for those who reach working age without the education and skills, family supporting jobs are slim and none. Our region has 194,000 people over the age of 25 without a high school degree. Eighty-nine thousand of these individuals live in the city of Milwaukee.

You cannot make a career out of supporting a family with a strong back and a good alarm clock anymore. We are past a wake up call, far too many kids in Milwaukee fail to get an education.

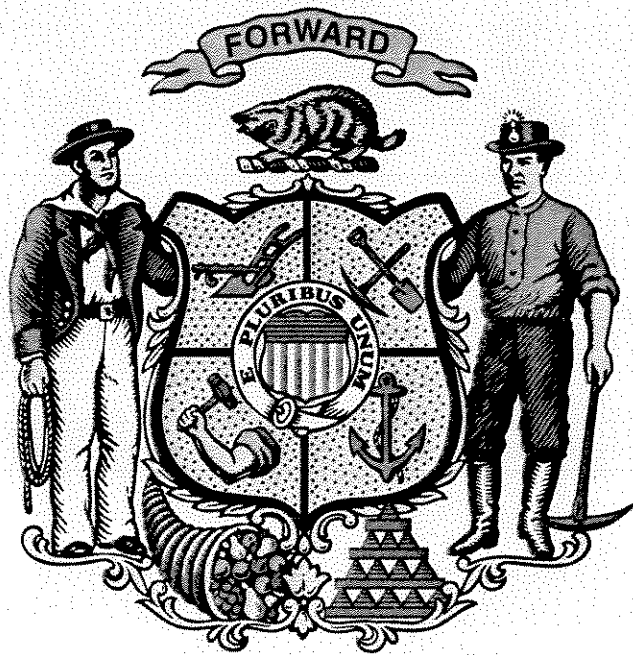
This legislation is a life line for increasing the number of schools that are reaching and teaching kids. MPS is full of committed teachers, good principals, and has a highly competent Superintendent. But it is not reaching enough kids, it is not graduating enough kids, and not enough of the kids that are graduating can perform at the next level of education.

Eighty-one percent of MPS graduates attending UWM are taking remedial classes. This is not a condemnation of the hard work from committed educators in MPS, it is an acknowledgment that we cannot keep doing the same thing over and over and expect a different result

We need other options for parents to choose from in a system of schools in Milwaukee. If you don't support this legislation, we will lose thousands of additional young people, close schools that are performing well, and dampen some of the gains we see being made in MPS.

This will be the most important tool you can give to our community to give us a chance to give more people the opportunity to reach prosperity in their lives.

Thank you.





February 22, 2006

Members, Senate Committee on Education
Members, Assembly Committee on Education Reform

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I am writing to urge your support for the proposal relating to the Milwaukee Parental Choice program.

My support for parental choice is long held and deeply cherished! The Milwaukee Parental Choice program has proven to be a successful reform that is critically helpful to thousands of Milwaukee families. The compromise permits the program to continue its positive contribution to many families in our state's largest city. The proposal secures the program for the foreseeable future. The families who value choice will be free from worry and uncertainty that cap-induced rationing will deny their children access to schools that can help them.

That in and of itself is reason enough to support this package. But there are other reasons why I believe this proposal is very much in the public interest.

One such reason is that it is comprehensive. As I said last year, support for parental choice and support for public education are not mutually exclusive positions. The support of Wisconsin's other bishops and myself for the voucher program is matched by a desire to affirm and improve public schools. This package models the spirit of inclusion that can and should be a model for future educational policy initiatives.

The proposal is also inclusive in that it is bi-partisan. For the first time, high-level leaders of both parties have been able to agree that parental choice has a respected and essential place in our policy agenda. That too, bodes well for the future.

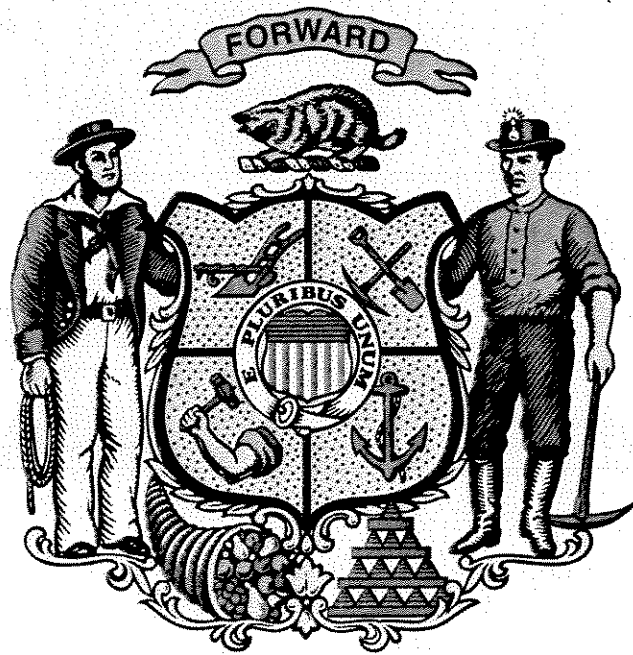
The program strengthens accountability. Just as the inclusion of resources for public schools debunks the concern that voucher proponents are not invested in strong public schools, so do the provisions on accreditation and testing put to rest concerns that those of us who support educational options are disinterested in assuring that schools meet credible standards.

This package is not perfect. No proposal is. But it is the product of serious give and take on the part of our state's leaders. It is an example of the cooperation and leadership that makes Wisconsin a special place in which new ideas emerge and grow beside established programs in our policy landscape.

For all these reasons, I urge you to support this proposal, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of Milwaukee



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

**Testimony submitted to a joint hearing of
the Assembly Committee on Education Reform and
the Senate Committee on Education
February 22, 2006**

OPPOSE SB 618/AB 1057

Any Milwaukee Education Package should be a balanced package of reforms that will create real accountability for taxpayer-supported private and religious voucher schools and include long-overdue additional support for the successful SAGE program and Milwaukee Public Schools. WEAC will support legislation that expands participation in the voucher program only if there is a meaningful investment in the vast majority of Milwaukee children who attend the city's public schools.

WEAC believes that any Milwaukee Education Package should include:

- A "Hold Harmless" provision for Milwaukee Public Schools, which allows MPS to count voucher students for state aid, and requires that the funding increase be applied only to instructional services for students.
- Investment in SAGE, a program proven to raise achievement in low-income students. The SAGE reimbursement should increase from \$2,000 to \$2,500.
- Increased accountability for voucher schools, including a requirement to administer and publicly report results of the WKCE tests, using those scores to determine "adequate yearly progress" and require accreditation from independent accrediting authorities.

WEAC Position on Private School Vouchers and Enrollment Cap

In recent days, much attention has been focused on the Milwaukee private school voucher program enrollment cap. Because of the experimental nature on the voucher program, state law caps enrollment in the voucher program at 15% of Milwaukee Public Schools' enrollment. WEAC opposes eliminating the enrollment cap on the Milwaukee private school voucher program.

Lifting the enrollment cap on the Milwaukee private school voucher program would result in a significant property tax increase for Milwaukee taxpayers. Private school vouchers are funded 45% by the Milwaukee property tax payers and 55% from state general purpose revenue. For every additional 1,000 students who would attend private voucher schools due to repeal of the enrollment cap, Milwaukee taxpayers must pay out an additional \$2.7 million and state taxpayers another \$3.3 million. According to the Department of Public Instruction, lifting the school voucher program cap for one year with an increase 1,500 pupils would cost nearly \$9 million dollars--\$4.9 million from the state and over

Stan Johnson, President
Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director



\$4 million in an increase to Milwaukee property taxpayers. According to Mayor Barrett, a voucher pupil costs a Milwaukee taxpayer \$1042 more than a pupil enrolled in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Milwaukee Public Schools have been deeply cutting staff and programs that serve the majority of Milwaukee's children—more than 1,200 positions in the last few years.¹ Meanwhile some legislators and voucher proponents want to increase property taxes to expand the voucher program, a program that has cost the taxpayers \$300 million and provides no evidence of improved student performance.

WEAC believes the Milwaukee private voucher schools program should be accountable to the state's taxpayers as well as parents and the community. Accountability measures for voucher schools should be the same that are required of every other school receiving taxpayer funds.

Currently voucher schools:

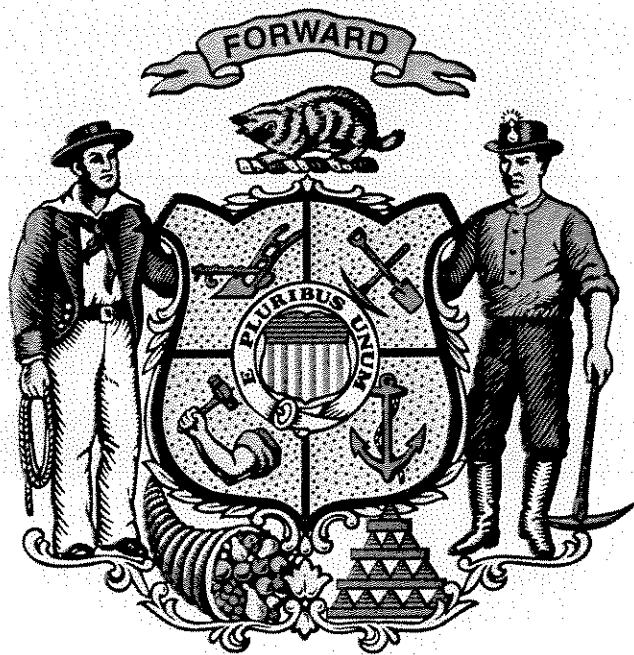
- Do not have to take the same tests as public schools.
- Do not have to release basic data about the school's performance.
- Do not have to provide special education services.
- Do not have to hire certified teachers.
- Are not subject to open meetings laws.
- Are not subject to the requirements of the so-called No Child Left Behind law.

Voucher schools should participate in the same state-level testing that is required of other publicly-funded schools, including the requirements of the so-called No Child Left Behind federal law.

For more information:

If you have any comments or questions regarding this statement, please contact Michael Walsh, WEAC Government Relations, at 800-362-8034 or 276-7711 or at walshm@weac.org.

¹ Fiscal Year 2004, 2005, 2006 Superintendent's Budget Overview, Milwaukee Public Schools.



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

MEMO

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Education
Members of the Assembly Committee on Education Reform

FR: Russ Allen, PhD, WEAC Research & Professional Development Consultant

DA: February 22, 2006

RE: Senate Bill 618/Assembly Bill 1057

Standardized Achievement Tests

What is a standardized achievement test? An achievement test measures the knowledge and skills that a student has in some content area. A test is said to be “standardized” when everything about the test, from the directions given, to the time allowed to take it, to scoring and reporting, is the same for all students. Standardization is done in order to ensure fairness and objectivity. Standardized achievement tests may be norm-referenced or criterion referenced (see below for distinction).

What is a norm-referenced test? A norm-referenced achievement test is one type of standardized achievement test. **The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, the California Achievement Test, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, the Stanford Achievement Test, and the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) are examples of norm-referenced standardized achievement tests.**

The primary purpose of a norm-referenced tests is to compare (or reference) the performance of one student to that of others, typically the so-called “national average.” Norm-referenced tests are designed to arrange students along a “bell-shaped curve” from low to high performance. Scores typically are reported as percentiles—e.g., Jane scored at the 90th percentile (scoring better than 90% of the students) while Joey scored at the 50th percentile. The 50th percentile on these tests is average.

Stan Johnson, President
Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director



Why are many critical of norm-referenced tests? Norm-referenced tests are popular because they are relatively inexpensive to purchase, easy to administer, and provide a general notion of how well a student or group of students is doing in a content area. However, critics point out that a major flaw is that they fail to provide a lucid description of what a student's test score actually means. If a student scores at the 75th percentile in mathematics, all this tells us is that the student scored higher than 75% of the other students who were tested at the time the test was developed. This percentile score does not tell the teacher, student, or parent about the specific strengths or weaknesses of the student in mathematics.

What is a criterion referenced test? A criterion-referenced test is designed to identify the specific knowledge and skills possessed by a student. This form of testing "references" a student's performance against a specific content area(s) (in Wisconsin, the content areas are the Model Academic Standards). Typically, criterion-referenced tests will include standards that define acceptable/unacceptable levels of performance. **On tests administered by the Department of Public Instruction there are four levels performance levels: minimal, basic, proficient, and advanced.**

How criterion and norm-referenced tests differ can be illustrated with the analogy of a test of driving skills. Suppose that one student takes a norm-referenced test and receives a percentile score of 70, meaning that he or she scored in the top 30% (better than 70% of the students who were tested). This score does not identify the student's strengths or weaknesses. How would the student improve to move to the 80th or 90th percentile? A norm-referenced test will not tell us.

In contrast, a criterion-referenced test of driving skills might report on how well a student did on 12 driving skills, such as merging, parallel parking, freeway driving, yielding to pedestrians, etc. In addition to receiving a single overall score, the student will be told his or her strengths and weaknesses.

What types of tests are Wisconsin's Knowledge & Concepts Examinations? These tests are criterion-referenced tests that were custom-made to measure how well Wisconsin's students have mastered the state's Model Academic Standards. There are four levels of performance reported on these tests: minimal, basic, proficient, and advanced. The goal for all students under the No Child Left Behind law is the proficient level.

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

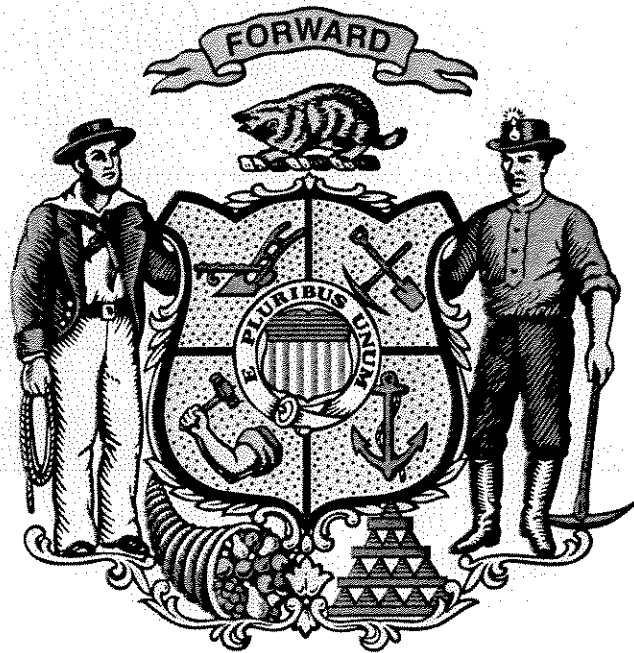
Do criterion-references tests have norms? They can. In fact, Wisconsin's Knowledge & Concepts Examinations provide state percentile scores along with information about how well students did on the overall test, as well as how they did on specific subparts--or standards.

The federal No Child Left Behind law, in fact, requires that state tests be criterion-referenced and aligned with state standards. The WKCE assesses students in English/language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and writing.

If students are assessed on different tests, comparisons become very difficult, if not impossible. For example, comparing the scores of students on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Wisconsin's Knowledge & Concepts Examinations would be an apple to oranges comparison.

If you have any questions, contact Russ Allen, WEAC Research & Professional Development Consultant, at (608) 276-7711, extension 293.

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!* 





STATE OF WISCONSIN
Legislative Audit Bureau

22 E. Mifflin St., Ste. 500
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 266-2818
Fax (608) 267-0410
Leg.Audit.Info@legis.state.wi.us

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

February 22, 2006

Representative Peggy Krusick
128 North, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Representative Krusick:

At your request, we have reviewed statutory language contained in a bill draft related to the Milwaukee School Choice program (LRB 0547/3). The bill draft includes a section that requires involvement by the Legislative Audit Bureau in evaluating student performance in this program.

I have several observations related to SECTION 8 of the bill draft. First, the draft calls for annual standardized tests in three grades—fourth, eighth, and tenth—but it does not appear to specify that the students will be given the same test. According to established research practices, it is more difficult to draw firm conclusions about student achievement if different tests are used to measure student performance. There are methods that can be used to standardize scores from different tests but these methods have limitations, especially if the number of students taking a particular test is small.

Under s. 118.30, Wis. Stats., the State Superintendent of Public Instruction determines the academic testing system used for Wisconsin's public schools. Except for charter schools, which may use different tests if their use is approved by their respective school boards, *Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination – Criterion-Referenced Tests* are to be given to all public school students in the grades being tested. Beginning in the 2005-06 school year, students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 are tested. Annually, the Department of Public Instruction publishes Wisconsin's Information Network for Successful Schools, a school report card that allows for comparison of student academic achievement among school districts and between schools within a district.

Second, the draft bill language states that test score data will be collected by researchers of a private school choice demonstration project. The language in SECTION 8 of the bill draft presupposes that we will have access to the raw data collected by the private researchers in order to conduct our own analyses. However, because the Wisconsin Legislature does not have the authority to compel this group to submit its data, it is not clear if the independent researchers would be willing to share these data with our office, whether they would charge for it, and if it would be provided in a timely manner upon completion of their analysis. These questions would need to be answered before we could proceed with our own analysis.

Representative Peggy Krusick

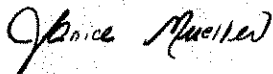
Page 2

February 22, 2006

Finally, SECTION 8 of the bill draft states that the Legislative Audit Bureau "shall review and analyze the standardized test score data." However, it is not clear whether the legislative intent is that we simply review and comment on the private research group's findings and methodology, that we attempt to replicate the group's own procedures and results, or that we use available data to perform our own independent analysis. The type of approach we were directed to take would significantly affect the overall time and cost of our review.

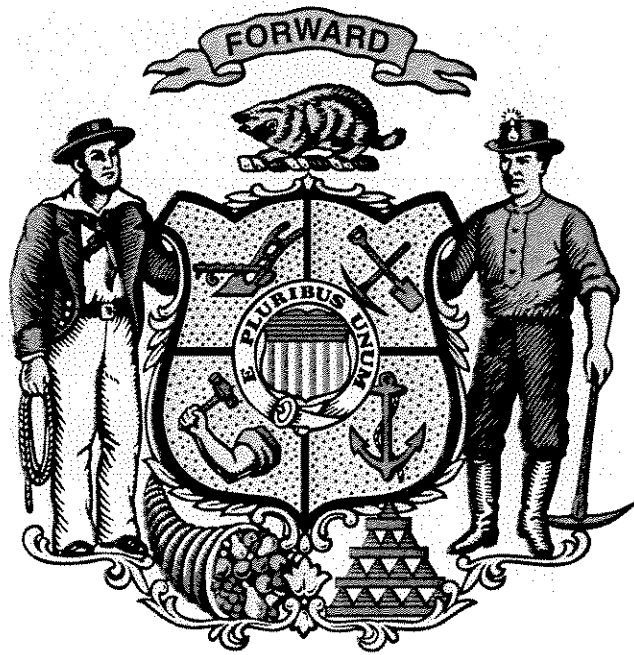
I hope you find this information helpful. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/bm



Mayor
Barnett

Impact of Current and Proposed Choice Program
(In Million Dollars)

	Current	New	Combined
Choice Students	14,751	7,749	22,500
MPS Choice Net Cost	\$ 15.4	\$ 8.1	\$ 23.5
MPS School Aid Loss	\$ 26.5	\$ 11.1	\$ 37.6
Total Current Impact Assuming impacts are additive.	\$ 41.9	\$ 19.2	\$ 61.1

Choice Program Impact Per Student (no school aid impact)

Per Student Numbers	Choice Student	MPS Student
Total Cost	\$ 6,351	\$ 8,321
State Cost	\$ 3,493	\$ 6,505
MPS Cost	\$ 2,858	\$ 1,816
Added MPS Cost Per Student		\$ 1,042
Multiplied by Current Students		\$ 15.4 Million
Multiplied by Proposed Students		\$ 8.1 Million
Net Choice Program Impact		\$ 23.4 Million