



*“I’m older. I don’t have a lot of money. I don’t know what I would do without the voucher program. There is no way I could afford a good school for my kids.”*

**Johnnie Mae Boone, Cleveland, Ohio**

## **Most Americans Have School Choice**

School choice programs often are labeled “new” or “experimental.” In truth, for those with adequate income, parental school choice in America is widespread. These families either can afford private schools or can move to neighborhoods with high-quality public schools. For low-income families, such choices are limited or non-existent.

“Choice is everywhere in American education. It is manifest in the residential choices made by families [and] in the housing prices found in neighborhoods [and] when families, sometimes at great financial sacrifice, decide to send their children to private schools.... [I]n all instances, these choices ... are strongly shaped by the wealth, ethnicity, and social status of parents and their neighborhoods.”

Who Chooses? Who Loses? Culture, Institutions, and the Unequal Effects of School Choice, Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1996.

“[M]ore than half of American families now exercise school choice [and] some families have more choice than others.”

School Choice and Social Controversy: Politics, Policy and Law, Brookings Institution Press, 1999.

Those who are able to exercise educational choice value their ability to do so. Parents who select their child’s school are “more likely to be very satisfied ... than parents of children attending assigned schools.” The greatest number of “very satisfied” parents has children in private schools or in public schools chosen by the parents. The fewest number of “very satisfied” parents were those whose children were assigned by a school district to attend a school.

The Condition of Education 2000, U.S. Department of Education.

### **Teachers**

- “[T]here are ... public schools that middle class parents, including me, would not want their children to attend.”

Robert Chase, President, National Education Association, advertisement, October 25, 2000.

- “[T]he percentage of public school teachers ... who enroll their children in private schools is staggering ... Boston (44.6 percent); Cleveland (39.7 percent); San Francisco (36.7 percent); Chicago (36.3 percent); Philadelphia (35.9 percent); and Pittsburgh (35.4 percent).”  
“The president’s about-face on school choice,” *The Washington Times*, October 4, 1996.
- “Half the public school teachers who live in Milwaukee’s central city are sending their children to private schools, according to an analysis of 1990 Census data.”  
“Teachers Choose Private Schools,” *Milwaukee Journal*, November 14, 1993.

## **Members of Congress**

- In 2001, “of those who responded ... 47 percent of those in the U.S. House of Representatives [and] 51 percent of those in the Senate who have school-aged children send or have sent at least one of their children to private school.”  
“Another Look At How Members of Congress Exercise School Choice,” Heritage Foundation, May 2002.