



“My daughter is 8 years old. She has cerebral palsy, and she’s mentally and physically handicapped...[T]he [private] school provides all kinds of services, and I believe that they will help [her] tremendously.”

Selma Curtis, North Miami, Florida

School Choice Admission Practices

Private schools in publicly financed programs in Milwaukee, Cleveland and Florida may not select the students who receive vouchers. Random lotteries are required when the number of choice students exceeds available space. In contrast, many other large public school systems routinely screen admission to individual schools based on a student’s academic ability, prior behavior record, special education needs or other factors.

Who Chooses in Milwaukee?

“As intended, the [Milwaukee program] appears to be serving children who meet statutory requirements related to low income.... In addition [it] serves pupils whose overall ethnic composition is similar to that of Milwaukee Public Schools pupils.”

“An Evaluation: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program,” Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, February 2000.

“The demographic profile [of Milwaukee’s program] was quite consistent over each of the [first] five years ... [S]tudents who ultimately enrolled ... were from very low-income families, considerably below the average [Milwaukee Public Schools — MPS] family and about \$500 below the low-income (free-lunch-eligible) MPS family ... Blacks and Hispanics were the primary applicants ... both being over represented compared with [MPS] ... Choice students were considerably less likely to come from a household in which parents were married ... Prior test scores of Choice students [showed they] were achieving considerably less than MPS students and somewhat less than low-income MPS students.”

“Fifth Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program,” Department of Political Science and Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995.

Who Chooses in Cleveland?

“The [Cleveland] scholarship program effectively serves the population of families and children for which it was intended and developed. The program was designed to serve low-income students.... The majority of children who participate in the program are unlikely to have enrolled in a private school without a scholarship.”

“Evaluation of the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program,” Indiana University Center for Evaluation, September 1999.

Who Chooses in Florida?

“With more than 96 percent black enrollment and free lunch participation, Dixon and Bibbs [Florida’s two failing schools] are two of the most poor and least racially diverse schools in Escambia County.”

“Humiliated But Defiant, F Schools Fight Back,” *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, March 4, 2000.

Special Needs

In Cleveland, the State of Ohio provides special financial aid for choice students with learning disabilities. Many private schools in the Milwaukee program serve students with special needs. The Lutheran Special School in Milwaukee exclusively serves students with special needs. Florida’s McKay Scholarships serve almost 5,000 students with learning disabilities.