Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on a Christian School

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Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on a Christian School

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
for the requirements of the degree
Masters of Education

By

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ABSTRACT


This qualitative thesis project was conducted under the direction of Cedarville University and with the cooperation of the Christian Academy of Madison, in Madison, Indiana. The purpose of the project was to identify and analyze changes that occurred in a private school due to a significant increase in enrollment from students that received vouchers from the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program. Data was collected from third grade IREAD-3 and ISTEP+ state test scores from the previous four years. Additional data was gathered from surveys and interviews with the administration, teachers, non-voucher families and voucher families at the school. Student test scores and parent interviews were divided into three categories: only non-voucher, both non-voucher and voucher, and only voucher. Survey data gathered verified an overall high parental satisfaction with the Christian Academy of Madison. Test data showed that the addition of voucher students did not have a direct adverse effect on the overall third grade test scores, but the school's performance as a whole had room for improvement. Interview data revealed differences between voucher and non-voucher students. Suggestions were made for the Christian Academy of Madison to better assimilate new voucher students into their school while maintaining high academic standards.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Introduction to the Research

The debate surrounding school choice has become a large and complex issue in education in recent years (DeBray-Pelot, Lubienski, & Scott, 2007). As of the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, thirty-two school voucher programs existed in sixteen states in the United States, supporting over 200,000 students, yet there is still much controversy surrounding these programs (Extreme Couponing, 2012). Although many people would agree that the idea of personal choice is one of the quintessential values of our American society today, much debate and controversy remain from both political parties over how this value is applied in the realm of education (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007).

Different state governments define and implement school choice programs in various ways. Some state governments only allow students to transfer from one public school to another public school of their choice within a specific district (Rabovsky, 2011). In Florida, tax credits were given to individuals who donated to a fund that provided students with a scholarship to choose which school they wanted to attend (Figlio & Hart, 2011). Even still, other school choice programs use vouchers to make it possible for students to leave the public school system entirely and enter non-public schools such as private or charter schools (Rabovsky, 2011). Within the school choice debate is also the issue of who is eligible to receive state funding for vouchers. In the past, various voucher programs have been issued only for students in special education, students in the lowest income brackets, or students that are coming from low or underperforming schools.

Today, proponents of school choice affirm several reasons for supporting the use of state funds to be relocated to the school of their choice. The first reason for supporting school choice
is that it provides equal freedom for all families by affording them the ability to select the school of their choice (Ben-Porath, 2009). Many families do not have the financial means to send their children to private schools without the aid of vouchers. School choice enhances parents' control over their child's education (Ben-Porath, 2009) by providing a way for underprivileged students to escape from being trapped in underperforming schools (Rabovsky, 2011). A second reason for supporting school choice includes the rationale that expanding school choice to private schools will help to improve public schools because they will be faced with the competition of losing students and funding (Figlio & Hart, 2011). In a research study based on Florida's Tax Credit scholarship program, competition between private and public schools was found to be positively related to increased state test scores in math and reading (Figlio & Hart, 2011). Another benefit of allowing school choice scholarships is that vouchers often pay less than the cost of educating a child in a public school, thus saving the state money (Extreme Couponing, 2012).

On the other side of the debate, criticisms of voucher programs reveal opposition from the public. Although parents who accept vouchers may be satisfied with their right to choose where their child receives his education, the results regarding the effectiveness of voucher programs are muddied, sparse, and contradictory in nature. In a study of the Cleveland, Ohio voucher programs, researchers found virtually no difference in test scores between students in kindergarten through fourth grade in public verses private schools after the vouchers were given (Black Issues in Higher Education, 2004). In addition, parents may make the choice to use vouchers for varying reasons other than seeking a more academic school. Many times charter schools have noted that parents transfer their children (with the use of vouchers) because they were experiencing disciplinary problems at their previous school, and the voucher was an opportunity to escape their problems (Rabovsky, 2011). Another criticism of vouchers rests on
the potential for segregation to worsen as parents may pull their child out of one school and place him in the school of their choice (Rabovsky, 2011).

Controversy over vouchers continues between political parties and religious groups as well. Republicans have been more likely to support the initiation of voucher programs than Democrats (Klugman, Waters, Stuber & Rosenbaum, 2011). In addition, parents who identify themselves as religious and conservative have demonstrated much greater support for vouchers than parents who had no religious affiliation (Deckbman, 2002). Historically, voucher programs have struggled to gain support because of Democratic opposition (Butcher, 2013). Not only are the use of state funds questioned in the debate for and against vouchers, but the limited availability of private schools to take on additional students has also been called into question between political parties (Butcher, 2013).

Clearly the debate over the use of vouchers is far from over. The short-term use of voucher programs and the small percentage of students that have used vouchers combined with the diversity and implementation of various programs makes obtaining consistent evidence over their effectiveness difficult, if not impossible, to accurately judge. Although both sides state the reasons they are either in favor for or in opposition to vouchers, more research is needed to truly determine the worth of these initiatives that are created to promote student academic achievement.

Definition of Terms

School choice. An educational system designed to offer options for parents to be able to choose the school that best meets the needs of their child and provide the opportunity for any child to succeed in the classroom of their choice (INPEA, 2013).
**Indiana Choice Scholarship Program.** Begun in 2011, this program "provides scholarships to eligible students by utilizing a portion of the state funds allocated for that child to follow them to the non-public school of their choice" (INPEA, 2013). State funds may be directed to public, private or charter schools.

**Voucher.** "The term voucher currently describes programs that provide families with funds to defray the cost of tuition in the public or private school of their choice" (Metcalf & Legan, 2002). Privately funded scholarships are not considered vouchers, as vouchers use public funds (Wolf, 2008). Under Indiana's Choice Scholarship program, vouchers are also referred to as "choice scholarships" (IDOE, 2013). State funds are designated and designed to offset tuition costs at non-public schools (IDOE, 2013).

**Participating Schools in Indiana.** Schools that have met the requirements to accept voucher coupons for eligible students. The requirements for participating schools include: being accredited by the state of Indiana, participating in state standardized testing such as ISTEP+ and IREAD-3, maintaining accountability with Indiana's state school grading system on student performance, not discriminating admission for students, and conducting annual teacher performance evaluations (IDOE, 2013, INPEA, 2013).

**Private school.** Also referred to as a non-public school, the dictionary defines private school as a school that is "founded, conducted and maintained by a private group rather than by the government" (2013). These schools may include Christian, charter or other privately funded schools. Private schools often follow their own curriculum, philosophy and may teach religious viewpoints as well (Dictionary.com, 2013). Their primary funding is paid for by tuition fees and private funding.
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Statement of the Problem

In May 2011, Indiana governor Mitch Daniels signed a state law that approved "choice scholarships" for students in low-income to middle-class families (Butcher, 2013). This voucher program is currently the only active program that doesn't limit vouchers exclusively to only low-income students or students enrolled in underperforming schools (Zubrzycki, 2012). To date, Indiana's voucher program is the most inclusive first-year voucher program in the United States, regarding the number of families eligible to receive vouchers (Butcher, 2013 and School Choice Indiana 2012).

For the Christian Academy of Madison (CAM) in Madison, Indiana, choice scholarships have played a substantial role in the enrollment and growth of the school (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Enrollment at CAM. This graph illustrates the growth at CAM throughout the history of the school.](image)

Founded in 2007, this Christian school began with 26 students in its inaugural year. In the 2011-2012 school year when the voucher program was first enacted, nine students received vouchers out of a total enrollment of approximately 110 students. However, with the increased interest in
the choice scholarship program in the community, 48 students out of approximately 140 students received the voucher during the 2012-2013 school year, comprising nearly one-third of the school's total enrollment. Currently, there are over 70 students receiving the voucher for the 2013-2014 school year as enrollment has grown once again to just under 160 students.

One change that has been noted as enrollment has increased is that some students who were formally non-voucher students have been able to qualify for a voucher by choosing to attend a public school for at least one year as dictated by the Indiana Choice Scholarship law. This has led several families to take their children out of CAM, place them in a public school for a year and then return to CAM upon qualifying for the voucher. Many families have chosen to come to CAM directly from the public schools because they qualified for the voucher and were formally unable to afford attending CAM without the aid of the voucher.

As the school leadership looks toward the future of Indiana's voucher program as well as the future of the school, there is concern over the possible unknown effects of accepting such a large percentage of voucher students. While some students are coming to the school to receive an education from a Biblical worldview, other parents have brought their children to the school due to overcrowded classrooms in the public school, for more individualized help for students who may have some learning difficulties, or for the family friendly environment for which the school has a reputation for within the community. The fact that nearly 45% of the school's population is attending CAM by means of a voucher is a considerable point to note as teachers prepare to educate these students. The school's administration has noted that it is wise to understand these students' family backgrounds and current academic levels as these students become acclimated to the new curriculum, policies and the structure of a private school.
Scope of the Study and Delimitations

The purpose of this study is to analyze students who are attending a Christian school that are currently using vouchers and compare them with students who have chosen to attend CAM without the aid of a voucher enabling them to go for free or for a reduced cost. Since voucher students compose nearly half of the total enrollment at the Christian Academy of Madison, state standardized test scores will be analyzed to determine if any difference is noted between these groups of students. The study will include a review of current as well as previous third grade student ISTEP+ scores and IREAD-3 test scores. The study will analyze the average class test scores over the past four years, which are influential in determining the school grade that CAM receives from the state of Indiana every year. Test data will also be analyzed by placing students into one of three categories: current voucher students (coming to school directly with a voucher), former non-voucher students who are current voucher students, and current non-voucher students. Data will be used to determine if there are patterns in student achievement and how they may have changed over the years that the voucher program has been enacted.

In addition to test scores, surveys will be given to all families who have children that attend CAM. One survey will be designated for families who are currently receiving vouchers and a separate survey will be given to families who do not use vouchers. The surveys will seek to discover strengths and weaknesses within our school, reasons why families chose to enroll their children at CAM, general opinions and observations about the voucher program, and families' perceived value of the fundamental values that make CAM unique from other schools.

The third component for gathering data will be conducting interviews. Interviews will be conducted with the administration, teachers and parents of both voucher and non-voucher
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recipients to gather further insight and data. Interviews with parents will include students of various grades who are receiving the Indiana Choice Scholarship voucher.

There are a few delimitations within this study that are worthy to note. First, this study will not be analyzing middle school or high school student test scores. Third grade is the first year students are required to take state standardized tests that can be compared with the same state tests that public school students take so it is a good benchmark assessment for this study. Another delimitation in this study is the short history of data that can be compared. Since the voucher program began in 2011 and only a small fraction of students using vouchers attended the school (sometimes only a few students using the voucher were in each classroom), only the current two years of state test scores (using the voucher program) will be available to be compared with the previous years' scores to determine if there is any relationship between the data.

A third delimitation worth noting in this study is the number of students that chose to attend CAM for years without a voucher, but have now been eligible to receive the voucher and are considered voucher recipients in recent years. Since this means that some students may be part of more than one focus group, care will be taken during the review of data to ensure students are placed in only one of the following three categories: only non-voucher students, voucher students who were formerly non-voucher students attending the school, and voucher students that came to CAM from public schools for the first time because they had a voucher. These groups will be used to ensure accuracy, integrity of the statistical review, and reliability of the data.

A final delimitation in this study is the narrow population being considered by reviewing the data at CAM. While there are many different Christian schools in Indiana that have voucher
students, each school is located in various school districts and has varying student populations, which also may factor into student performance. In addition, different rural and city locations of schools may have differing percentages of voucher students as well as different socio economic situations that may provide varying results. Further research should be done to evaluate the effectiveness of the voucher program for all students on a much larger scale.

**Significance of the Study**

During the inaugural year of Indiana's choice scholarship program, the number of available vouchers was capped at 7,500 (School Choice Indiana, 2012). During the 2012-2013 school year, the Indiana choice scholarship had a restricted limit of 15,000 vouchers that may be awarded to students (School Choice Indiana, 2012). In the 2013-2014 school year, the cap on vouchers was permanently lifted to allow all students who qualify financially to be eligible to receive state vouchers if they so choose to apply (Zubrzycki, 2012).

Although this law has been debated, defended and prosecuted in court over its constitutionality, the law seems for the present to be a valid option for families to be able to choose where their child will attend school. This being said, the number of children who will be transferring to other schools will likely increase in the coming years if the popularity trending with this program continues to grow and increase as it has the past few years. For students who are currently in public school, it will mean adjusting to a new school, curriculum, and culture within a new school. For families with children that are currently attending Christian schools, parents may choose to enroll their children in a public school classroom for one year in order to become eligible to receive the voucher. Students must attend two semesters at a public school before being allowed to apply for the voucher program (Billick, Hiller and Spradlin, 2011). Once
these students have completed their eligibility requirements to receive the voucher, they will be able to return to the Christian school, having their tuition paid by the vouchers.

Part of introducing a new school choice program is acclimating students who decide to transfer to new schools. Although the Indiana school choice program may apply to low and middle-income families, more lower-income families are currently using the vouchers for their children. Over 80% of students receiving vouchers currently qualify for free and reduced lunches, which is an indicator of low-income families (Extreme Couponing, 2012). Understanding that family socio-economic status is one of many factors that does influence academic performance in students, it may be likely that some students who are struggling in one school are using the voucher with the hopes of improving their academic performance.

Considering the increase in the number of students transferring to private schools as a result of the voucher program, there are several questions that private schools should consider when accepting vouchers students. Is there a significant difference between the academic performance of voucher and non-voucher students? How do incoming voucher students' state test scores compare with the level of the current test scores within CAM? If there is a significant difference between voucher and non-voucher students, how might instruction, accommodations, and classroom structure need to be changed to best meet the needs of all students so that they succeed? Are the families receiving the voucher supportive of Christian education? These questions will be answered through the course of researching and analyzing data for voucher and non-voucher student test results. Additional areas of consideration to determine the impact the voucher program has had will also include looking at student behavior, social cohesiveness and discipline issues as enrollment has grown significantly over the past few years.
Methods of Procedure

I have conducted a full literature review considering school choice programs and their impact on students and education today. The primary focus of my research has been to review the history of various voucher programs as well as current scholarship and voucher programs today and their positive or negative effects on schools and student performance. I have viewed several online databases to obtain information including the following: Academic Search Complete, Ebsco, Education Full Text and Education Research Complete, PsychInfo, ERIC, and Google Scholar. I have also consulted Indiana's Department of Education website to gain further understanding of the choice scholarship law and its stipulations, restrictions and requirements.

After reading and analyzing the data presented in various sources, I have drawn several conclusions regarding vouchers. Even when school choice or voucher programs are implemented, many states still experience continual debate regarding the effectiveness and worth of such programs. Second, voucher programs have been so sporadically conducted with so many various possibilities as to how many vouchers are offered, to whom they are offered, and if they are partial or full scholarships, that there is not much solid research in the way of producing consistent results surrounding the use or effectiveness of voucher programs. Furthermore, the results that have been produced by such studies indicate such a wide variety of outcomes that it is easy to determine that much more research needs to be conducted in this field of education before final conclusions can be made. Due to the varying nature of some voucher programs that were effective, some that were neutral, and others that tended toward more stagnant results, I found it worthwhile and beneficial to conduct my own study comparing the implications of the school choice program on my school's state standardized test outcomes.
This qualitative study will consist of gathering data from the last four years of state test scores (which includes the last two years with voucher students) primarily in third grade at the Christian Academy of Madison. Evidence will be analyzed to compare the average class score from previous years without voucher recipients to determine if there is any significant difference in schools using vouchers with their previous test score results. Test score results will be taken from the statewide test called ISTEP+ that measures students' proficiency in reading, writing and math skills. Data will also be taken from a high stakes test called IREAD-3 which focuses on third grade reading proficiency.

Interviews will also be conducted with parents, teachers and administration at CAM to determine their opinions of the voucher program, their evaluation of the school's ability to meet the needs of their child, and the various reasons why they chose to use the voucher. Results will be analyzed to gain further understanding into the effectiveness of the program and the impact it has had on these children over the course of the past year. Parents will be divided into three categories when being selected for interviews: parents who have never received a voucher for their children, parents who originally came to CAM without a voucher, but now are receiving a voucher, and parents who came to CAM from a public school because the voucher was made available to them. Ten interviews will be conducted with each parent focus group to gain further insight into the value and opinions of this program and its impact on the school.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

It is undeniable that school choice has become an increasingly bigger issue in education in the past decade. The Washington Times reported that there are presently 47 different school choice options available across the nation, consisting of school vouchers or tax credit programs (2013). However, it is not only the sheer number of programs that are causing school choice to become a more prominent issue, but the rate at which these programs are being created that is demonstrating the demand for school choice options. From 1990-2010, 20 private school choice programs were passed, averaging one program per year (Butcher, 2013). That average was shattered when seven new programs were passed in 2011 (Butcher, 2013). In 2011 alone, 41 states and the District of Columbia either introduced or passed legislation concerning school choice vouchers or tax-credit programs (Blunt, 2011). Currently, out of the 47 available school choice options, 21 of them were begun or expanded in part over three years from 2010-2013 (Washington Times, 2013). While some reforms are being credited to Republican election gains from 2010, the issue still remains that school choice is becoming a more prominent issue in our educational system today (Blunt, 2011).

While many people may believe that school choice is only a recent phenomenon that has taken over the education world in recent years, the idea of school choice is actually over 200 years old.

In 1776 Adam Smith first published *The Wealth of Nations* and suggested that schools could reach a higher quality of education by allowing students to choose their own teacher and schools...[asserting] that if a school’s enrollment began to diminish
drastically, the school would be forced to emulate the popular schools and offer high quality education. (Billick, Hiller & Spradlin, 2011, p.1)

Less than two decades later in 1791, Thomas Paine argued for the concept of school choice in his book *The Rights of Man*, by stating that "the government should provide funds to families for their children's schooling" so poor families could have the same educational opportunities as richer families (Metcalf & Legan, 2002, p. 25).

America's first voucher program actually began in 1869 in Vermont (Wolf, 2008). The program was created to provide a voucher for rural communities without a public junior high or high school in their district to allow "parents to enroll their child in the nearby school of their choice" (Wolf, 2008, p.417). The state of Maine also created a voucher program similar to Vermont that has operated since 1873 (Wolf, 2008). However, in the 130 years after Vermont's initial voucher program began in our country, a total of only 5 other voucher programs were established (Wolf, 2008). Politically, there seemed to be many years of silence with no desire to change the way education was viewed and taught in America. Even so, ideas about the value of school choice were still growing, however feebly, when little political action supported it.

In 2007, authors Berends, Langevin & Springer, wrote in the Peabody Journal of Education that the "school choice movement represents one of the most controversial reform strategies in state legislatures and local school districts" (p.183). The difficulty arises in the fact that every voucher program is unique and designed with a specific target audience of potential recipients in mind (Wolf, 2008). Voucher programs may serve students from failing school districts, students in foster care, students with special needs and disabilities, or students living below a certain poverty level (Wolf, 2008).
Public school education has been the norm for educating children in the past, and it will continue to be the norm even as voucher programs gain momentum. Going to a public school is so rooted in our American way of thinking that many couples view public education as a "fait accompli," and they will move to the best neighborhood because they want to their children to attend the best public school (Enlow, 2014). However, it is vital to "recognize the reality that school choice is a single chapter in the larger story of contemporary education reform" (Berends et al., 2007, p.183). Educators as well as politicians must always seek to be in the business of reforming education to meet the needs of all students to help them reach their maximum potential and succeed to the best of their ability. It is important to be zealous about increasing student achievement, decreasing dropout rates and seeing all children succeed, but it is equally important to be "unbiased as to where the educating takes place: at home, online, in public, charter, magnet or private schools" (Enlow, 2014, p.1)

The purpose of this literature review is to visit the history of voucher programs in the past, to consider current voucher programs, to analyze the debate for and against school choice, to evaluate the data surrounding these programs, to discuss the political and legal ramifications of such programs, and to examine current data regarding the recent Indiana Choice Scholarship Program. Voucher programs have already impacted many students and school districts across our country, and studying the evidence from current research will help educators, politicians and families better understand how to make the best choice possible when it comes to educating the children in our nation.

**History of Vouchers**

In order to gain a better understanding of the voucher programs that are in existence today, such as the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program, it is beneficial to look back at the
beginning of key voucher programs in American history and learn what empirical studies have shown regarding their effectiveness for voucher recipients as well as the public school students. Voucher programs in Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, and Washington D.C., have been influential in shaping the landscape of current voucher programs in forming standards that determine what is valued, what programs are deemed constitutional and what factors are considered successful in regards to parental choice in education today.

Wisconsin

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) started in 1990 and is recognized as the longest current voucher program in the United States (Belfield & Levin, 2005). The MPCP used state funds to allow parents to transfer their child to another public school of their choice. The MPCP began slowly, due in part to the cap placed on the program that it would offer vouchers to no more than 1% of the Milwaukee public school enrollment, which equated to less than 2,000 students for the first several years (Costrell, 2009). An initial evaluation for the first five years of the voucher program (when only public schools were eligible to redeem vouchers) showed no difference between voucher and non-voucher students (Belfield & Levin, 2005). Later, a reanalysis of the data found achievement advantages in math and reading for long-term voucher students (Belfield & Levin, 2005). A third evaluation showed no difference for reading but a slight advantage in math for voucher students (Belfield & Levin, 2005).

"In 1998, the voucher program was modified to make religious schools eligible to redeem vouchers" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p. 561). The cap limiting the number of students was raised to 15% of the Milwaukee public school enrollment, and the program grew to 18,500 students within a decade (Costrell, 2009). "In September of 2011, Wisconsin lifted restrictions on the number of students who can participate in Milwaukee's Parental Choice Program" (Blunt, 2011,
Families may make up to 300% of the federal poverty level and still qualify for the voucher, making 58% of Milwaukee families eligible ("ABCs," 2014).

One positive result of the MPCP is the amount of money the state has saved because the vouchers awarded to families are considerably less than the money spent per pupil in the public schools. Comparing the cost spent per student with the MPCP voucher and in the Milwaukee public schools, the voucher program saved Wisconsin taxpayers $31.9 million in 2008 and a total of $180 million from 1994-2008 (Costrell, 2009).

In order to ensure accountability from schools that receive the voucher funds, participating private schools must submit to mandatory academic standards, observe specific hours of yearly instruction, and use state tests required of public schools ("ABCs," 2014). However, no empirical studies have been done on the effectiveness of voucher recipients in the MPCP since the program was expanded to allow private schools to receive vouchers. As of 2005, no comparable test score data was available comparing students in public verses private schools since 1995 (Belfield & Levin).

Today 24,915 students are receiving the MPCP vouchers to attend the school of their choice. While the program has continued to grow each year in the number of recipients it has accepted, the lack of specific testing to measure the effectiveness on voucher recipients is disconcerting, given the length of time the program has been in place.

However, several studies have been conducted on the effects of the MPCP on public school achievement in Milwaukee. One study conducted by Greene and Marsh on the MPCP found a correlation that the more private schools that participated in the program, the more public school achievement scores increased (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Data showed that for every 37 private schools that participated by taking voucher students, the overall public school
scores were boosted by two percentage points (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Another study
conducted by Caroline Hoxby compared how public schools are affected by the MPCP program.

In her study, Hoxby compared schools where at least 66% of the student population was
eligible for vouchers. Hoxby found that in a single year, schools more exposed to
vouchers made gains that were greater than those of other Milwaukee public schools by
3% in math, 3% in language, 5% in science and 3% in social studies. (Friedman
Foundation, 2014)

Even as some studies demonstrate evidence that is bent toward a positive direction for
Milwaukee public schools, others scholars disagree with the significance of the results that have
been found.

Education historian Diane Ravitch has noted that 20 years after the initiation of vouchers
in Milwaukee and a decade after the program's expansion to include religious schools,
there was no evidence of dramatic improvement for the neediest students or the public
schools left behind. (Blunt, 2011, p.19)

While the results of each study may be disputed as to the degree of effectiveness that has been
attained from the MPCP, the subject of how to dramatically improve student achievement is
clearly a complicated issue that will not be quickly resolved.

**Ohio**

Unfortunately, not all voucher programs are derived because there are strong school
systems that are excelling. Due to the highly segregated housing districts in the city of
Cleveland, public schools had developed a controversial background of segregation (Hess &
McGuinn, 2002).
As schools were forced to begin the process of desegregating in 1980, the population of students in the Cleveland public schools was reshaped, the enrollment dropped from 125,000 to 73,000 and the enrollment changed from being mostly white to over 70% black students. (Hess & McGuinn, 2002, p.734)

White families fled the city to enroll their children in private schools or in schools located in the suburbs. By the 1996-1997 school year, Cleveland's public schools were in a crisis mode as only 27 percent of the students who entered as freshman went on to graduate, and only nine percent of seniors were able to pass the five Ohio proficiency tests required for graduation the following year (Hess & McGuinn, 2002).

It was under this context that the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program (CSTP) was created in 1996. Vouchers were restricted to students who lived in the Cleveland city school district who met low-income requirements (Hess & McGuinn, 2002). Vouchers were first awarded to the lowest income families, but when many of those families chose not to use the vouchers, they were offered to progressively higher income families making up to 200% of the federal poverty income level (Wilson, 2004). Although the program provided vouchers for 2,000 students, vouchers were once again limited to the city's poorest students, and only available for certain grades at a low tuition amount (Hess & McGuinn, 2002). Statistics showed that white and Latino children were more receptive to accepting the vouchers than black students (Wilson, 2004).

As the voucher program grew to enroll five percent of the school population, it drew apathetic responses from many (Hess & McGuinn, 2002). In interviews conducted with both Cleveland public school educators and non-educators, neither group regarded the CSTP to be a threat to public schools (Hess & McGuinn, 2002). "Union officials did not fear the voucher
program because they argued that most of the vouchers were already going to families that were attending private schools” (Hess & McGuinn, 2002, p.751).

Several studies have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of the voucher program, but none have produced enough solid evidence to confirm or deny its effectiveness. A study conducted at Indiana University found mixed results on the performance of voucher students, while Harvard researchers found that voucher students had outperformed Cleveland public school peers (Hess & McGuinn, 2002). However, the results of these tests had been statistically adjusted to account for lower test scores of low-income and minority children, because the voucher group had a greater proportion of white and affluent children than public schools (Wilson, 2004). After the test scores were adjusted for minority students, there was virtually no difference (Wilson, 2004). While the study did find high parental satisfaction among families who received the voucher (Wilson, 2004), Hess & McGuinn concluded from their research that:

the central lesson from Cleveland's choice reform is not that competition cannot cause urban school systems to change. It is that the timing and degree of such changes will depend in large part on the particular educational, political, and organizational context.

(Hess & McGuinn, 2002, p.756)

Currently, approximately 6,000 students are enrolled in CSTP voucher program ("ABCs," 2014). The average voucher given is limited to $4,250 for elementary and $5,700 for high school when the public schools currently spend $12,100 per pupil each year ("ABCs," 2014). Many low income families still have trouble paying the difference for private school tuition that the voucher may not cover so they do not always accept the voucher, even if they are eligible to do so. Although the voucher program has helped some families, the continued political and
organizational context surrounding the segregation and high percentage of low income families in Cleveland are some of the main issues that need to be addressed if the majority of students will have a chance to succeed in their education.

The Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program is a more recent and larger voucher program begun in 2006 with over 16,000 students enrolled in the 2013-2014 school year ("ABCs," 2014). This program provides vouchers for any student in Ohio who attended or would have to attend a school that received a D or F rating for two out of three years ("ABCs," 2014). Unlike the CSTP, the Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program has been found to have positive effects in public school districts where students were eligible to receive the voucher (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Studies have shown a statistically significant increase in proficiency rates in the public school system, both for low and high performing students on math and reading scores in 4th and 6th grades (Friedman Foundation, 2014). For students who were able to receive the voucher to attend a school of their choice and for students that remained in struggling schools, this was a win-win situation for students alike.

Florida

In 1999, Florida became the first state to adopt a statewide voucher program called the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) to provide alternative options for all students who attended a public school that received a failing grade (two out of four years) to be able to transfer to another public school or receive a voucher for tuition at a private school (McCarthy, 2006). This program used state tax funds to generate the revenue for the vouchers awarded. Two goals of this voucher program were to provide an alternative for students to gain a better education instead of being forced to attend a failing school, but also to give failing schools an incentive for improving test scores so they would not lose students and funding to the voucher program.
A study conducted by Greene and Winters in 2004 analyzed the impact that potentially losing students to the voucher program would have on voucher eligible schools and voucher threatened schools (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Voucher eligible schools were defined as schools that had received a failing grade, while voucher threatened schools were schools that had a D grade (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Students who attended voucher eligible schools would become eligible to receive a voucher if the school received another failing grade the following year on their test scores. Greene and Winters discovered that voucher eligible schools made improvements 15 points higher than other public schools, and voucher threatened schools made improvements 9 points higher than other public schools (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Whether it was directly related to the possibility of losing students to the voucher program or some other incentive, these schools made significant improvements at a rate much higher than other public schools (Friedman Foundation, 2014).

Despite the data demonstrating that threatened schools did make impressive gains over other public schools, the OSP voucher program was challenged in court over its constitutionality. In 2006, the Florida Supreme Court ruled against the OSP in the Bush v. Holmes case declaring the program to be unconstitutional (based on Florida's state constitution) because they "reasoned that the OSP unconstitutionally diverted public funds into separate, non-uniform, private systems that compete with and reduce funds for the state's free public schools" (McCarthy, 2006, p.21). Although this decision only applied to Florida, the results of the case are definitely influential as other states make decisions regarding voucher programs.

Sensing the tension growing with the state funded voucher program, Florida turned to creating tax credit programs as an alternative means of providing vouchers to students. These programs were considered constitutional because they involved using corporate tax credits to
fund scholarships for tuition instead of using state funds (McCarthy, 2006). Individuals and corporate sponsors who donated to the Scholarship Fund Organization would in turn receive a dollar for dollar tax credit for their contribution ("ABCs," 2014). The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program began in 2001 and was designed for low income students who qualified for free and reduced lunch at public schools ("ABCs," 2014).

Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship Program has grown stronger over time (Figlio & Hart, 2011). In 2011, more than 34,000 low-income students benefited from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, with two-thirds of the recipients being African American or Hispanic (Blunt, 2011). In the most recent statistics from the last two years (2012-2014), the program has continued to grow at a staggering rate of 48%, offering scholarships to over 19,000 new students ("ABCs," 2014). During the current 2013-2014 school year, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program has enabled 59,674 students to receive vouchers, which is the largest number of students enrolled in a single voucher program in our nation ("ABCs," 2014).

The only other voucher program that is currently operating in Florida is the John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program ("ABCs," 2014). Begun in 1999, this program was the first of its kind to be created specifically for students who have disabilities and have an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 plan at a public school to be able to attend the school of their choice ("ABCs," 2014). Over 27,000 students are using this voucher, and this program has been hailed as an example for other states to follow in offering help to students that struggle with learning because of a diagnosed disability ("ABCs," 2014).

Although Florida has been considered a leader in our country for their creation of statewide voucher programs, the question many people want to know is how effective these programs are and if they are helping or harming public schools. "One popular argument for
expanding private school choice [has been] that public schools will improve their own
performance when faced with competition for students" (Figlio & Hart, 2011, p.76). Studies have
found that measures of competition [between public and private schools] are positively related to
student performance on state math and reading tests" (Figlio & Hart, 2011, p.78).

Researchers found that having additional private schools nearby boosts public school test
scores by almost three percent of a standard deviation. Although the effects are small
they consistently indicate a positive relationship between private school competition and
student performance in the public schools. (Figlio & Hart, 2011, p.79)

Since the Florida Tax Credit Program was introduced, there has been an improvement in public
school performance. As Florida's voucher programs continue to grow steadily, hopefully studies
will continue to prove that competition will be as beneficial for Florida's students in the public
schools as well it has been for voucher recipients.

Washington, D.C.

The Opportunity Scholarship Program was launched in 2004 and is designed for students
who qualify according to the federal poverty level (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007). "The D.C.
voucher program is unique from other state and local programs because although the majority of
revenue for D.C. Public Schools comes from local sources, the voucher program is funded by the
federal government" (Billick et al., 2011, p.4). The program has been authorized through 2016
with $20 million available to fund scholarships ("ABCs," 2014). Individual vouchers for
elementary students are capped at $8,200 for elementary and $12,300 for high school ("ABCs,"
2014). While the amount of money distributed is on the larger range compared with most
voucher programs, it is still only 40% of the $25,400 that public schools pay per student each
One of the positive elements of this voucher program is the amount of money the public school system has truly saved since all of the funding for the vouchers has come directly from the federal government. High school students would have cost taxpayers nearly twice as much if they had been enrolled in the D.C. public school system (Friedman Foundation, 2014). In the first five years of the program, D.C. taxpayers saved a total of $135 million from 2004-2009 (Friedman Foundation, 2014).

As great as the financial savings have been for D.C. residents, there are two major weaknesses with the Opportunity Scholarship Program. The first major weakness with the program is its limited funding and limited voucher availability. The program can only provide 2,000 vouchers per year, although 25% of D.C. public school students qualify financially to receive a voucher ("ABCs," 2014). A lottery is held each school year to determine which students receive vouchers, but the sad reality is that this voucher program cannot expand or grow to its potential because the funding is restricted and limited. The second weakness with this program is the fact that unlike Milwaukee, Florida and Ohio public schools which showed improvement when faced with competition from voucher programs, D.C. public schools have shown no improvement academically as a result of the voucher program. Because the voucher program has paid for students to attend other schools, the District of Columbia public schools have had no incentive to better manage their finances or improve education (Billick et al., 2011). Researchers believe that the reason this voucher program has shown no significant results for voucher students or public schools is that "vouchers are randomly assigned among a group of voucher applicants from low-income families" making it difficult to assess a consistent sample of students (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p.561). Although one study did find small positive gains only for African American students after three years of voucher enrollment, the gains were not
consistent across different voucher sites or among different years the program was studied (Belfield & Levin, 2005).

The Voucher Debate

School choice policies range from allowing students to transfer from their neighborhood public school to another public school outside of their residential district to "more expansive systems of choice that provide tuition vouchers for students to exit the public school system entirely and attend private school instead" (Rabovsky, 2011, p.87). In a survey conducted by the Friedman Foundation, "the general public's support of vouchers increased to 60% in 2013 from 56% in 2012," and the state of Indiana specifically had a 66% support rate for vouchers ("Do Americans Favor," 2014, p.1). Despite the approval ratings of vouchers, supporters and opponents of vouchers have valid reasons for their positions as well as concerns and theories about the impact these programs will have on education.

Supporters of vouchers believe school choice is an example of social politics. Their rationale behind their desire to extend vouchers to families is two-fold. The first goal is personal, because it extends civil rights and social justice to all people, improving parents' ability to have control over the education of their children by giving families options they previously did not have (Ben-Porath, 2009). "Opponents and advocates agree that vouchers would affect the equality of educational opportunity as families are given more options. They differ, however on how equal opportunity would be affected" (Metcalf & Legan, 2002, p.27). Supporters believe vouchers improve equality by giving low income families educational opportunities previously available to only higher income families. Advocates of school choice suggest that being able to choose a school increases the level of control that individuals have over the outcome of their children's future (Ben-Porath, 2009). Opponents argue that vouchers are primarily used by
families who are already involved in their children's education and this would only increase the gap between the "haves and the have-nots" (Metcalf & Legan, 2002).

The second goal of school choice is social because school choice is designed to enhance school effectiveness, which should stimulate and create competition between schools and thus improve the quality of all schools for all children (Ben-Porath, 2009). In a study conducted in Cleveland, Ohio comparing student test score data among public schools, the results displayed that "public schools subjected to or threatened by voucher and charter competition performed better than similar schools that did not face this type of competition" (Hess & McGuinn, 2002, p.730). Similarly, "increased competitive pressure public schools faced following the introduction of Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship Program led to general improvement in their performance" (Figlio & Hart, 2011, p.80). As many schools face scrutiny over test scores and performance grades by the state, the stakes are high to retain state funding while maintaining high academic scores.

"Presumably, an educational market based on the use of vouchers would enable many types of schools to compete for students" (Belfield, & Levin, 2005, p.549). "Choice advocates suggest that the invisible hand of the market competitions will compel school leaders to compete for students to ensure the survival and success of their schools, causing the efficiency and quality of schooling to improve" (Hess & McGuinn, 2002, p.729). Since the money for many voucher programs is directed to the school parents choose, many schools are determined to make necessary improvements to maintain their current enrollment so they sustain the maximum state funding possible. Opponents caution against placing too much faith in what has not been proven, stating: "theoretical presumption is not equivalent to proof of superior effectiveness in the real world" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p.549). One of the most frustrating things in the debate over
school choice is the difficulty comparing the effectiveness of such a program in the real world because no large-scale voucher demonstration study exists in the United States to give clear, concrete evidence to completely validate or deny assumed ideologies (Belfield & Levin, 2005).

Those who oppose the idea of school choice are most often opposed to the results that they predict will happen to our educational system if such programs are allowed. There are four main arguments against school choice that opponents rest their case upon. The first concern is that school choice will worsen school segregation (Rabovsky, 2011). Today, "many criticisms of school choice center on the potential to create or increase inequity" (Rabovsky, 2011, p.88). Unfortunately, segregation is already prevalent in many school systems that do not even have school choice as an option simply due to the segregation that takes place in residential districts (Rabovsky, 2011). While some scholars argue that school choice will be a way for some parents to overturn residential segregation and result in more diverse schools, the evidence supporting or opposing these claims is limited and inconsistent (Rabovsky, 2011).

The second argument opponents cite against school choice is stratification, which is also known as skimming. Stratification or skimming takes place when advantaged families (which opponents believe are more likely to take advantage of school choice programs) exit the public schools and take the best students away from a school system, leaving a higher proportion of lower-income students at the public schools (Rabovsky, 2011). Opponents argue that low income parents have less access to information about school choice and would not make the change to switch schools (Rabovsky, 2011). However, research has revealed that "several empirical studies of charter schools and voucher programs have found little evidence to suggest that skimming has occurred" (Rabovsky, 2011, p.88). While no research has explicitly proven that skimming has occurred through a school choice program, the argument is still a valid one given the different
methods families use to make informed decisions about education, recognizing that socioeconomic status may play a role in the way some families make those decisions.

Thirdly, opponents do not favor school choice because they desire to "focus on the importance of exposing all students to a common set of civic and social values" (Metcalf & Legan, 2002, p.28). One of the original purposes for creating public school education for all students was to instill civic values through a system of common schools (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007). One of the concerns of school choice is that it would decrease the number of students who attend public schools, so fewer students would be "exposed to a common set of socially agreed upon values" (Metcalf & Legan, 2002, p.28). Opponents essentially fear that vouchers would diminish tolerance, an appreciation of diversity, and civic duty (Metcalf & Legan, 2002).

The fourth and final argument that opponents have against school choice is the struggle of continuing to run public schools if funding is redirected to private schools. They state that schools will lose money but they cannot always cut operational costs that are structured into their budget such as faculty and utilities. This is a valid concern, because there ranges of enrollment where schools do lose money and instructional costs do seem to remain constant (Friedman Foundation, 2014). However data shows that many public schools increase their per-student spending soon after school choice programs begin. Milwaukee schools spent $9,038 per student in 1992, but by 2011, that amount had increased by 58% to $14,244 per student, well above the rate of inflation (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Cleveland school districts also increased per pupil spending over the course of 15 years, as spending per student was $9,293 in 1997 but rose 62% to $15,072 by 2011 (Friedman Foundation, 2014). Whether these school costs were increased as a direct result of school choice programs or as a result of increasing school costs due to budget
issues has yet to be known, but many opponents worry that reallocating funds to private schools will hurt the remaining students that are left in public schools.

In the midst of the polarizing differences between opinions regarding school choice, one positive element has been the unity surrounding voucher programs that are designated only for students with disabilities. "Voucher programs deliver on their promise to enroll highly disadvantaged populations of students" (Wolf, 2008, p.420). Students with disabilities using vouchers to attend alternative schools are at a proportion that is more than twice the ratio of students with disabilities in public schools:

A 2007 study by the U.S. Department of Education of the 56,285 participants in school voucher programs determined that 30 percent of all voucher users were students with disabilities, as compared to mainstream public schools which average 14 percent in attendance with disabilities. (Billick, et al., 2011, p.16)

Although some states such as Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina and Oklahoma have voucher programs specifically for students with disabilities, one positive outcome of voucher programs is that these students who may struggle academically and need special assistance are receiving the funds necessary to aid their education ("ABCs," 2014).

The debate over vouchers still tends to be widely contested over political parties. The Republican party has had a long-standing endorsement of federal legislation for vouchers and tuition tax-credits for private schools that reflects their ideology of local control and a preference for market solutions, while Democrats have generally been opposed to school choice programs (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007). However, the issue of school choice is not entirely a black and white issue for all party members. Some liberals have supported school choice on equity grounds, while at times some conservatives are wary of choice because they are concerned about
the possibility of the erosion of civic values that are supposed to be fostered through a system of common schools (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007). While Democrats have been known for their opposition to voucher programs, they have been "advocates of particular school choice forms, such as charter schools" that are still associated with the public school system (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007, p.206). In addition, "the [voucher] movement has grown among African American Democrats, many of whom believe school choice is the new civil rights struggle" (Blunt, 2011, p.18). Regardless of one's political affiliation, the Texas Public Policy Foundation made a valid point regarding vouchers: "school choice should not be a Democrat or Republican issue. It should always be about doing what is best for students" (Washington Times, 2013, para.8).

Even if a nationwide school choice program were to be implemented in the future, one major consideration would have to do with the issue of the school choice when schools (public or private) reach their full capacity. Sometimes school choice is not an option because there are not enough schools that have the capacity to enroll the number of students that would change schools and enroll in a new school if they were given the choice. Washington Post education columnist Jay Matthews states his opinion of what he feels is the crux of voucher programs: "the voucher path is a dead end because we are never going to have nearly enough spaces in private schools for the kids who need it" (Butcher, 2013, p. 5).

**Who Chooses Vouchers: The Process of Parental Choice**

Researchers have long contemplated the fundamental reasons why families choose to use vouchers. Some theories include a family's socioeconomic status, social class, ethnicity, religion, dissatisfaction with a particular school, and political beliefs. Authors and educators agree that while some factors may be more influential in a family's decision to accept or reject a voucher,
the factors affecting school choice are ultimately plural, not singular (Campbell, West & Peterson, 2005, p.538).

School choice policy rests on rational choice theory, in which parents will engage in an orderly, sequential process, gathering information about the quality of services that schools offer and then make a rational decision based on objective data such as test scores. (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.524)

For some parents that are supportive of school choice, this is true. Parents who choose to use vouchers have often been found to gather information about schools and make objective, data-driven decisions based on the evidence they see (Beal & Hendry, 2012). When surveyed about what factors make a quality school, 80% of parents cited that the curriculum and high academic standards were the factors they most closely associated with quality schools (Beal & Hendry, 2012).

As important as the rational choice theory may be, "many parents trust informal social networks or "grapevines" more than official school information" (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.524). Numerous studies conclude that white, higher-income and more formally educated parents rely more on social networks, whereas lower-income and less formally educated parents rely primarily on school based information" (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.524).

Sadly, race is a factor that still affects the selection of schools. Joshua Cowen, in his article Who Chooses, Who Refuses?, states evidence that confirms that white students are far more likely to attend private schools than African American or Hispanic students (Cowen, 2010, p.3). While it is not surprising to see white families choosing to use vouchers to attend private schools (because typically the majority of private schools are comprised of a majority of white students), it is disheartening to learn that a school's racial composition may play a role in their
decision. Some studies suggest that both white and black parents "seek schools with a student population that reflects their own racial background, but other studies find that race is more important to white parents than black parents" (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.526). In a national survey, only 13% of white parents said they would be willing to send their children to a minority school where the population was three quarters minority and one-quarter white, while black families placed no significance on a school's racial composition (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.526). It is evident that racial issues have existed in our school system long before school choice was ever an issue, but although schools have come so far in the desegregation process, we still have a long way to go in our views of equality and tolerance for all people.

Socioeconomic status has been a key factor that educators have studied in relation to how students perform in schools, but it is also a factor in whether families choose to accept or reject vouchers. When making decisions regarding vouchers, parents often do not know enough and are not informed. "One of the most difficult aspects of school choice programs is the high cost of information acquisition, and the unfamiliarity of many parents with the details of the process and what they might entail" (Ben-Porath, 2009, p.536). "Social elements like gender, class and race can play a decisive role in the accessibility of choice because the resources necessary for making informed choices about schools are not available for many parents" (Ben-Porath, 2009, p.536).

Low-income, urban and minority families were found to rely on anecdotal information and the perceived status of the local school when they formed their opinion of schools and voucher programs in a study conducted by Ben-Porath (2009). A Carnegie Foundation study found that "low-income parents did not select schools based primarily on academic excellence" (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.527). Research on reasons why low-income families choose schools for their children found that parents cited their experiences from visits to the school, personal
conversations with teachers and their child's opinion as the primary basis for selecting a school (Beal & Hendry, 2012). Even when minority families were given the opportunity to receive a voucher for their child to attend a private school, they are less likely to accept the voucher than higher socioeconomic families (Cowen, 2010).

In contrast, higher socioeconomic status families that have received a higher quality of education were found to have much greater access to educational networks of information, which not only helped them to make more informed choices for their children, but also led to greater disadvantages for minority families that are not aware of all of the facts when making decisions regarding what constitutes a good school (Ben-Porath, 2009). "This is congruent with the fact that students whose parents are better educated or have higher incomes are more likely to choose private schools" (Cowen, 2010, p.3).

Even though there are legitimate advantages that come from parents having a higher education, socioeconomic status is not a guaranteed factor for why families accept or reject vouchers. In a study done by the Children's Scholarship Fund regarding the types of families who apply for and use vouchers the results acknowledged that families with lower incomes are more likely to both apply for and take vouchers when given the opportunity, consistent with the argument that vouchers are most attractive to those families who face the greatest constraints on their ability to exercise school choice under the status quo. (Campbell, et al., 2005, p.537)

It can be easily confirmed that vouchers are attractive to families of all socioeconomic status levels for various reasons. While higher socioeconomic status families may have an advantage in making informed decisions based on their ability to retrieve the information they need, the issue
remains that there is a great need to support the choices families make with the information that will help them make the best decision for their children.

One of the rationales most closely associated with why parents choose vouchers is a person's faith. Catholics and Evangelical Protestants have been known to be more attracted to voucher programs, because studies have shown them to be statistically more likely to apply for and take vouchers (Campbell, West & Peterson, 2005). It has even been said that "in practice, families who use vouchers differed from the eligible population less in their income or education as in their religious practice" (Campbell, et al., 2005, p.537). "Family religious characteristics, especially church attendance, have been shown to be important determinants of private school choice" (Cowen, 2010, p.4). This may be because "those active in a particular faith may well find something lacking in the secular education provided by public schools" (Campbell, et al., 2005, p.538). In addition, families that were the most likely to stick with a voucher program over three years chose to enroll their children in a school sponsored by their own religious faith (Campbell, et al., 2005). It is also interesting to note that political views more sharply divide the Christian community when it comes to support for vouchers. "Christians that align with a conservative political viewpoint have a 56% support rate for vouchers, while only 13% of Christians who align with a liberal political viewpoint support the use of vouchers" (Deckman, 2002, p. 481).

For some families, the rationale behind accepting a voucher is not tied to their socioeconomic status, race or religion, but rather it provides a way of escape from a difficult situation at a current school. This may include students who are continually bullied and fear going to school. Voucher recipients may also be comprised of students who are struggling in larger-sized classrooms to gain the individualized attention they need from a teacher in order to pass a particular course. On the other hand, some "families use school choice programs as a
response to disciplinary problems from their current school and the choice option is a way to escape those problems" (Rabovsky, 2011, p.90). In all of these cases, it is important to recognize that families may choose vouchers for many different reasons, and every student is important regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, religion or the reason why they chose to attend a particular school.

As important as it is to understand reasons why parents choose to use vouchers, it is also important to understand why parents decline vouchers. When the No Child Left Behind Act was implemented in 2001, it offered parents of children who are attending failing schools (for two consecutive years) to be reassigned to another school (Ben-Porath, 2009). Even though NCLB is not a voucher program, it does provide parents with an opportunity for school choice. "Recent reports suggest that the vast majority (up to 97%) of parents with children in failing schools choose to keep their children in those schools, even when it is their legal right to do otherwise" (Ben-Porath, 2009, p.534).

Those who opt for the default [school] are the families with the least capital--those with no workable networks of information, nor time or inclination to collect information on their own, and sometimes no involvement in the education of their children. Thus the weakest children in terms of the crucial factors of parental involvement and social capital are left to attend the weakest schools. (Ben-Porath, 2009, p.541)

Unfortunately, "when it comes to the education of their children, the simple rule of thumb that parents tend to follow is if it ain't broke, don't fix it" (Wolf, 2008, p.422). Switching schools can be highly disruptive to students both educationally and socially and requires a period of adjustment that parents may not want to risk for their children (Wolf, 2008).
Most likely the biggest key to understanding school choice and why parents choose to use (and continue to use) vouchers is directly based on their perceived happiness, success and satisfaction with the voucher program and the school they chose. The Friedman Foundation made the point that "when schools know that students have a choice and can leave, those schools have a much more powerful incentive to improve their performance and keep those students from walking out the door" (2014). For private schools that depend entirely on the income they receive from tuition and vouchers, this incentive is absolutely necessary for the continuation of their school from year to year. Since school vouchers are optional, no parent will continue to keep their child in a school they are not sincerely pleased with. Private schools have realized this principle long before vouchers were an option because they have had to work diligently to offer a quality education if parents were going to be willing to pay to have their child attend there. Perhaps private schools know a thing or two about parental satisfaction and this has allowed vouchers to work in their favor.

Ideology of Vouchers

Although discussing the issue of vouchers can become a highly contested and debated topic, understanding the heart of the issue behind the evidence will lead to a greater understanding of the struggle to fairly evaluate and balance both perspectives. In their article Vouchers and Public Policy: When Ideology Trumps Evidence, authors Belfield and Levin discuss in great depth the reasons why the debate for or against vouchers is one that cannot be easily won or lost by simply looking at evidence alone (2005). Belfield and Levin propose four major ideological goals that are represented in our interpretation of and expectation for our educational system that people use to form positive or negative opinions of voucher programs (2005). The first goal is freedom of choice--people want to be able to "ensure that schools that
are chosen are consistent with the child-rearing practices and preferences of families" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p.551). Next is productive efficiency--people desire to see students reach their maximum potential and schools improve their productivity in reaching high standards and goals (Belfield & Levin, 2005). The third goal that can form positive or negative impressions of voucher programs is equity--making sure schools are accessible, competitive and more fully provide a fair opportunity for all students (Belfield & Levin, 2005). The final goal of education is social cohesion--the value our society places on schools to be able to use curriculum to teach values, goals, and politics with the hope that students will be fully functioning participants in our society (Belfield & Levin, 2005).

The essential tension of the voucher debate rests between individuals who believe schooling should be "guided primarily by private values and goals and those who see it as an experience designed to mold citizens and society through addressing social goals" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p.551). "On one side is the libertarian belief that freedom of choice is the highest priority" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p.555). This position assumes that by having the freedom to make choices it will promote the goals of efficiency and equity (Belfield & Levin, 2005). However, libertarians do not have much to say on how vouchers will influence social cohesion (Belfield & Levin, 2005). The other side of the debate is social contract advocates who argue that education is best when it is provided free, publically funded, and is democratically determined because they believe it will create the most equity (Belfield & Levin, 2005). On the negative side, social contract advocates do not tend to highly value efficiency or freedom of choice (Belfield & Levin, 2005).

The main reason school choice is an ideological issue is because the policies that are debated are still largely contested on ideological grounds and boundaries. These ideological
grounds remain simply because concrete evidence does not exist to prove or disprove one view or another (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007).

Solid evidence on all of these claims is unavailable, and what parades as evidence is modest in magnitude of effects and inconsistent from study to study. Indeed, often what parades as evidence in the voucher arena is often an attempt to provide a scholarly appearance to what is, at bottom, ideology. (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p. 562)

"Obviously, both advocates and opponents [of vouchers] feel strongly that vouchers would substantially affect schools and schooling, but how they evaluate that impact depends largely on their philosophical or ideological stance" (Metcalf & Legan, 2002, p.28). Voucher reform is a complicated and multifaceted argument because it "impacts all the fundamental purposes of education, and involves value judgments that cannot be easily reconciled" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p. 562). Some of the ways ideological value judgments can be interpreted differently by supporters and opponents of vouchers are as listed below:

1. Humanitarianism: Supporters desire to help the less fortunate. Opponents view vouchers as unnecessary because people need to work for and earn what they get.

2. Equality: Opponents believe that life is not always about giving everyone an equal chance while supporters will push for equal rights for every family.

3. Individualism: Opponents believe that if you work hard you can achieve anything and succeed while supporters argue that some people work hard but never achieve the level of success that others do.

4. Limited government: Supporters say the government has gotten bigger and is now involved in things people should be able to do for themselves. Opponents believe our
country has big problems that call for more control from the government to solve them. (Klugman, et al., 2011).

Regardless of a person's political view or opinion of voucher programs, the fact that voucher programs exist and are growing in popularity is beginning to change the way Americans are viewing education in our society. "If voucher programs become widespread, they could have a significant impact on education in our nation, as models of schooling focus more on consumer satisfaction rather than the common good" (McCarthy, 2006, p. 26). "By engaging in choice, parents participate in a market culture situating schools as a private, consumer good. Conceptualizing public education as a private rather than a public good advances an understanding of democracy as a consumer commodity" (Beal & Hendry, 2012, p.544).

**The Results of Voucher Programs**

With all of the debate regarding ideological views of voucher programs, supporters and opponents of school choice are desperately searching for evidence that would confirm their viewpoint. While each side has used what meager evidence has been produced from various research studies to support their opinions, it is worthwhile to dissect the facts to shed some light on the effectiveness or lack thereof of voucher programs.

When conducting educational research, gold standard experimental studies are preferred because they use random assignment in their selection process to eliminate selection bias and produce accurate results (Wolf, 2008). In 2008, out of "ten separate analyses of data from gold standard experimental studies of voucher programs, nine conclude that some or all of the participants benefited academically from using a voucher to attend a private school" (Wolf, 2008, p.416).
When looking at data regarding surrounding school choice programs, it is important to recognize that any improvement that may be demonstrated takes time for voucher students attending private schools, but often that the amount of improvement increases over time as well. In the Milwaukee School Choice Program, data from a randomized field test from 1990-1995 compared reading and math scores of choice students attending private schools with students attending public schools. The results found small gains of 1-2 percentile points for private school students each year in math and reading (Peterson, 1998). However, the longer the choice students remained in the private schools, the larger their reading and math test score gains increased. "Students remaining in private schools for 4 years had a 5.8% higher percentile ranking in reading and a 10.6% higher percentile ranking in math" (Peterson, 1998, p.12). Vouchers are not and cannot be expected to be a magic button that transforms children overnight (Peterson, 1998). This is a common conclusion that is reached with an accurate understanding of how the education process works. It always takes time for students to adjust to new curriculum, teachers, discipline systems, learning environments and the structure of a new school. "Even in the most favorable light, [voucher program outcomes are] rather modest, especially in view of initial optimism about the potential of these reforms." (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007, p.2010) Some studies have even concluded that vouchers were neutral in their effect because there were no gains or losses for voucher students (Belfield & Levin, 2005). Researchers are careful to note that while vouchers might have made some modest impacts on achievement, it is not necessarily clear whether this represents a clear efficiency gain for schools in general (Belfield & Levin, 2005). However as Greg Forster argues, "a moderate positive effect is still a positive effect. Claims that voucher programs do not work directly contradicts a clear consensus in the scientific evidence" (2011, p.28).
Although some studies have shown small gains for students who use vouchers, the information gained from research is not always interpreted unanimously by researchers. When asked to determine if the vouchers were completely effective to the degree of the results that had been anticipated, researchers working on studies conducted for Milwaukee and Cleveland voucher programs noted that "all of the studies had problematic features, so empirical evidence has not settled the issue" (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p.550). Some of the problematic features researchers site include the fact that voucher programs are small scale, limited to a few cities and contain student eligibility thresholds, which reduces the number of applicants that potentially would use vouchers (Belfield & Levin, 2005). When few studies are conducted that are limited in their scope, it is difficult to predict with complete accuracy the future of other voucher programs that vary in socioeconomic locations with different groups of people. Unfortunately, despite sizable research efforts, the evidence presented about voucher programs does not always provide the clearest guidance (Belfield & Levin, 2005).

When studying voucher programs to determine their effectiveness, the spotlight often shines the brightest on the students receiving the vouchers. The assumption is made that if these children succeed academically then the voucher program is successful. Success, as educators well know, often comes in different forms among unexpected means in the classroom, and the success of a voucher program should not be hinged solely on the academic results of those students receiving a voucher. One of the major theories argued in the debate for and against school choice is that vouchers will increase competition between public schools, which theoretically should increase their productivity and academic achievement as well. Studies have been conducted on the effect voucher programs had on public schools where students were eligible to use vouchers to attend other schools, and the results were surprisingly consistent. Out
of 22 different empirical studies, conducted between 2001-2010, 21 studies showed a positive effect in public school performance when a voucher program was in place, and the remaining study displayed no visible effect for D.C. public schools (Forster, 2011). No study conducted on a public school influenced by a voucher program showed a decrease in the performance of the academic achievement on the students who remained in the public school system (Forster, 2011).

One final aspect to consider when trying to determine the effectiveness of a school choice program is parental satisfaction and approval from families who use vouchers. "One consistent finding is that parents are most positive about their child's education if allowed to select the school their child will attend" (McCarthy, 2006, p.26). Survey evidence collected from families involved in Milwaukee and D.C. voucher programs found that parents who used vouchers were not only satisfied with the school they chose, but were more satisfied than public school parents who chose to keep their children in the public schools (Blunt, 2011).

As positive as parental satisfaction may be for supporters of voucher programs, there still remains a lack of general knowledge among the public about what voucher programs are or why they are implemented.

The lack of important evidence is certainly reflected in the fact that a major public opinion poll found that about 80 percent of respondents expressed their views on the desirability of vouchers, but only about one-third seemed to possess even rudimentary knowledge of what they were. (Belfield & Levin, 2005, p. 558)

In conclusion, data surrounding the results of school choice programs is complex and further, more broad scale studies need to be conducted to develop a more comprehensive picture of the results of voucher programs. What the research has found to date is that "voucher programs have consistently large positive effects on parental satisfaction with schools and
smaller and less consistent effects--but always positive--on student test scores" (Wolf, 2008, p.434). While evidence and research methods have been evaluated for their effectiveness in producing accurate results, it is significant to note that in the history of research regarding voucher programs, "no empirical study has ever found that vouchers harm public schools" (Friedman Foundation, 2014).

**The Constitutionality of Vouchers**

Voucher programs have been and continue to be controversial in many states across the country because taxpayer funds are allocated to private schools, of which the majority are religious in nature (Eberle-Peay, 2012). The reason they are highly contested is because the First Amendment Establishment Clause to the United States Constitution (also known as the Federal Establishment Clause) states that "congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" (Billick, et al., 2011, p.5). As school choice programs have been enacted in various states, many court cases have resulted in subsequent years in order to affirm or deny their constitutionality.

One of the most nationally recognizable court cases involving school choice has been Zelman v. Simmons-Harris. "In 2002, the Supreme Court used Zelman v. Simmons-Harris to stop these kinds of challenges to voucher programs" (Eberle-Peay, 2012, p.709). In this case regarding Cleveland's low performing public schools, the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program was challenged under the Establishment Clause, saying taxpayer funds were being used to advance religion.

The Supreme Court ultimately disagreed, though not unanimously, finding the program to be neutral with respect to religion, and an exercise of genuine choice for parents. The
Court focused on the fact that voucher money was first directed to the parents, and they could redirect to the school of their choice. (Eberle-Peay, 2012, p.710)

The Supreme Court determined that "the Cleveland voucher program did not violate the Establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution because parents, not the state, now possessed the authority to choose from a range of secular and religious schools" (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007, p.206).

Following the Supreme Court ruling, President George W. Bush referred to the Zelman decision as the most important decision since Brown v. Board of Education (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007). Former Secretary of Education Rod Paige wrote in a Washington Post editorial the day after the Zelman ruling:

...with Brown [v. Board of Education], education became a civil rights issue, and the decision introduced a civil rights revolution that continues to this day. Zelman v. Simmons-Harris holds the same potential. It recasts the education debates in this country, encouraging a new civil rights revolution and ushering in a new birth of freedom for parents and their children everywhere in America. (DeBray-Pelot, et al., 2007, p.220)

Although the Supreme Court decision in Zelman v. Simmons-Harris made a federal ruling on the U.S. constitutionality of voucher programs, state courts still have the freedom and jurisdiction to decide whether the voucher programs and laws created for their state meet Establishment Clause objections outlined in their state constitution. Florida, Arizona, New Hampshire and Maine have all declared tax payer funded voucher programs to be unconstitutional, arguing that "parental choice does not erase a connection between the state and religion" (Eberle-Peay, 2012, p.710). In states where tax payer funded voucher programs have been found to be unconstitutional, other non-publically funded programs such as tax-credit
programs and scholarship programs now fund the voucher programs that are offered in these various states.

Looking toward the future of school choice programs, it is predicted that school choice programs will withstand Federal government scrutiny under the Establishment Clause if they can be designed in a way that neither "favors nor disfavors religion in defining the program's beneficiaries and the state funds reach the religious institution through the clear private choices of citizens" (Billick, et al., 2011, p.6). If voucher programs can demonstrate a secular purpose in providing educational opportunities for students that are neutral, do not create a preference for or against religion, are applicable to a significant portion of the population, and give aid directly to parents to make independent choices on how to use the voucher, they have the potential to continue to grow (Billick, et al., 2011, p.7).

The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program

"On May 5, 2011, Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels signed into law the most inclusive voucher program in American history" (Butcher, 2013, p.2). The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program (ICSP) was designed with broad eligibility rules that include middle class as well as low income families (Butcher, 2013). What makes the ICSP so broad is that "every district, every school, every student of lower-income families is theoretically eligible, regardless of whether the student or the school is performing well" (Eberle-Peay, 2012, p.714). Indiana's philosophy of promoting choice has also extended to making it possible for students to apply to any public school, including those outside the school district in which the child lives" (Extreme Couponing, 2012, p.28).

The ICSP is unique among other voucher and tax scholarship programs in that "it is the only active voucher program in the country that is not limited to low-income students or students
who have attended a low-performing school, and it is the only one with no eventual cap on enrollment" (Zubrzycki, 2012, p.13). Under the ICSP, up to 7,500 students could be accepted to receive vouchers in the inaugural year of the program, up to 15,000 vouchers could be awarded the second year and the cap would be lifted altogether in the 2013-2014 school year (Zubrzycki, 2012). As long as families meet the income and eligibility requirements, they may use the voucher (Zubrzycki, 2012).

The Indiana Choice Scholarship law went into effect on July 1, 2011 (Zubrzycki, 2012). Applications were due by Sept. 16, so families did not have much time to decide what they wanted to do. However, "out of the state's 400 plus private schools, 260 accepted voucher students" in the first year of the program (Zubrzycki, 2012, p.14). During the first year, 53% of the voucher recipients were minority students, compared to the state's population which is 84% white (Zubrzycki, 2012, p.14). In addition, 85% of voucher recipients were from the lowest income levels during the first year (Wang, 2014). The ICSP definitely afforded many families with greater options for school choice as cautious estimates suggested that only 20% of voucher recipients might be able to attend private schools without the financial assistance that the vouchers provide (Enlow, 2014).

"Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program is the fastest growing voucher program in the nation" ("ABCs," 2014, p.37). Each subsequent year that the program has been extended the enrollment has more than doubled each year. In its first year (2011-2012) 3,919 students from 185 Indiana school districts participated in the Choice Scholarship program, making it the largest inaugural enrollment for a voucher program in U.S. history (Butcher, 2013). The following year (2012-2013), 9,139 students participated in the choice scholarship program ("ABCs, 2014). In the 2013-2014 academic year, 19,809 students are receiving vouchers ("ABCs," 2014).
When comparing the ICSP to other school choice voucher programs, it ranks sixth in the overall number of students participating in 2013-2014 school year (see Table 1). Florida, Pennsylvania and Arizona rank 1st, 2nd and 5th, but are tax-credit scholarship programs that are privately funded (Reed, 2014). Florida also has a voucher program that is publicly funded, but is restricted to students with special needs only (Reed, 2014). Wisconsin is the only other publically funded state voucher program open to low-income families that enrolls more students than Indiana, but it is more limited than the ICSP because it is only available for students in Milwaukee (Reed, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank by State</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th># of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Florida</td>
<td>Tax-credit scholarship</td>
<td>Low-income students</td>
<td>59,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Tax-credit scholarship</td>
<td>Low-income students</td>
<td>59,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Florida</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>Special needs/disabilities</td>
<td>27,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wisconsin</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>Low-income Milwaukee students</td>
<td>24,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Arizona</td>
<td>Tax-credit scholarship</td>
<td>None (open to all students)</td>
<td>23,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Indiana</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>Low and middle income students</td>
<td>19,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ohio</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>Students in underperforming schools</td>
<td>16,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Georgia</td>
<td>Tax-credit scholarship</td>
<td>None (open to all students)</td>
<td>13,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Iowa</td>
<td>Tax-credit scholarship</td>
<td>Low-income students</td>
<td>10,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Louisiana</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>Low-income students in underperforming schools</td>
<td>6,775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program not only quintupled in size from the first year to the third year, but it also expanded in 2013 to provide more options for students to receive vouchers who never attended public schools (Wang, 2014). In order to be eligible to receive a voucher, Indiana students must meet one of the following requirements:

1. Any student who has attended a public school for two semesters and are from families earning up to but not exceeding 150% of the free and reduced lunch (FRL) income level.
2. Students with disabilities and are from families earning up to 200% of the FRL income level.

3. Students who attend or would be attending a school with an "F" grade level and are from families not exceeding the 150% FRL level.

4. Students or siblings of students who received a minimum of $500 from a tax-credit scholarship from the Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) from the previous year.

5. Students who received a voucher in the previous school year and are from families earning up to 200% of FRL. (ABCs of School Choice, 2014, p.37)

Eligibility requirements #3-5 were added in 2013 to provide additional ways a student may receive the voucher (Morones, 2013). From the expanded requirements, the SGO became the prominent way new students could become voucher recipients without having to attend public school.

Tax-credit scholarships, like the SGO, allow students to attend private schools by using private donations instead of state funds to help alleviate tuition costs (IDOE, 2014). Individuals and corporations can contribute to school organizations, which distribute the scholarships to students who qualify for them, and in exchange, donors receive credit on their taxes for their contribution (Butcher, 2013). While the SGO is not directly connected to the ICSP because it is not state funded, it is a huge step for families who want to qualify to receive the voucher. Ultimately, the newly expanded voucher eligibility rules mean that kindergartners who receive the SGO voucher and current voucher students' siblings would be immediately eligible to receive the voucher without having to attend public school for a year (Morones, 2013).

In 2013-2014, 5,225 first-time voucher recipients received the voucher under the expanded eligibility guidelines that would not have qualified under the original voucher.
eligibility rules (Wang, 2014). Since the majority of those students never attended public schools, opponents of the ICSP argue that they are a new expense to the state (Wang, 2014). By expanding eligibility requirements, "some educators wonder whether the state has strayed from the original intent of the vouchers: to provide more options for low-income students who didn't flourish in public schools" (Wang, 2014, p.1).

With the expanded eligibility requirements, 42% of Indiana families are now eligible to meet the program's income requirements ("ABCs," 2014). Families who qualify for the FRL rate qualify for a voucher worth up to 90% of the what the state of Indiana pays per student for that sending school district, while families who earn up to 150% of the FRL rate may receive a voucher for 50% of the funds allocated per student in the district as well ("ABCs," 2014, p.37). For the 2013-2014 school year, a family of 4 could make $43,568 and qualify for the 90% tuition voucher (IDOE, 2013). The same family of 4 people could make up to $65,352 per year and qualify for the 50% voucher (IDOE, 2013).

Since school districts vary in the amount of money they spend per pupil, voucher amounts will vary as well. Although the maximum amount of any voucher in Indiana is $4,700 for students in K-8 and $4,500 for students in high school, the average amount of voucher funds being redirected to schools is $3,962, which is below half of what public schools receive per student ("ABCs," 2014).

For the Christian Academy of Madison, Indiana, tuition rates are lower than the average voucher funds redirected to schools. During the first year of the voucher program, tuition was $2,750 for in grades 1-8 and $3,250 for high school students. Since the 2012-2013 school year, tuition has been set at $3,000 for grades 1-8 and $3,500 for high school. In addition, any discounts or scholarships CAM would typically offer to these families (i.e.: enrolling multiple...
siblings, full-time Christian vocation, or faculty/staff discount) must be reported to the state and those funds must be deducted from the final voucher funds redirected to CAM.

As the debate over the purpose, goal and necessity of voucher programs in other states has increased, the debate over the ICSP has continued in Indiana as well. Phil Handy, a Republican educational advisor made the following comment about the ICSP: "Rich people have the choice of public or private schools. Why shouldn't people of all means have that choice? We're talking about educating kids--not protecting the system" (Cavanagh, 2011, p.22). Nate Schnellenberger, the president of the Indiana State Teachers Association gave a different perspective on the issue when he acknowledged that "my wife and I could afford to send our kids to private schools, if we so choose, but I wouldn't expect the state of Indiana to subsidize that decision" (Cavanagh, 2011, p.22). Teresa Meredith, the vice president of the Indiana State Teachers Association, argued against the ICSP, making the case that instead of redirecting funding to other schools, funds need to go to inner city and rural schools, and class sizes need to be reduced in order to help the majority of students in public school because she believes that "voucher schemes abandon the vast majority of our kids, leaving them with fewer resources and diminished public support" (Meredith, 2013, p.14).

**Constitutionality of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program**

Opponents of Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program wasted no time in trying to get the law repealed in court. On May 5, 2011, the same day that the Choice Scholarship Program was signed into law by Governor Mitch Daniels, a lawsuit was also filed to stop this law on the basis that it was breaking constitutional grounds (Stafford, 2012). Those who opposed the voucher program stated their case against the ICSP because it was "overwhelmingly supportive of sectarian schools, is overly broad in covering the entire state, and does not truly provide funds
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through parental choice" (Eberle-Peay, 2012, p.720). In the lawsuit against the Choice Scholarship program, the Indiana State Teachers association argued that the program drained funds from public schools while redirecting those funds to schools that are religious and promote religious teachings (Morones, 2013). Given the fact that 97% of private schools in Indiana are religious, opponents of the ICSP believed the program was using tax payer funds to benefit religious institutions (Eberle-Peay, 2012).

As the Indiana Supreme Court reviewed this case, much of the constitutionality of the ICSP law would be dependent upon the interpretation of two key components within Indiana's constitution. The first key component deals with personal religious freedom and the separation of state funds for religious purposes. These components, found in Article 1 of the Indiana State Constitution are as follows:

Section 2: All people shall be secured in the natural right to worship Almighty God, according to the dictates of their own consciences.

Section 4: No preference shall be given by law to any creed, religious society, or mode of worship; and no person shall be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place or worship or to maintain any ministry, against his consent.

Section 6: No money shall be drawn from the treasury, for the benefit of any religious or theological institution. (Billick, et al., 2011, p.9)

Indiana's justices in the state Supreme Court focused on the phrase "for the benefit of" as they reviewed this case. If they determine that parents and students are the primary ones who benefit from the vouchers and the schools are just an incidental beneficiary of public dollars, then it was predicted that the Choice Scholarship program would be upheld as constitutional (Stafford, 2012).
The second key component that the Indiana Supreme Court must determine is the obligation and responsibility of the state to provide the best possible education for all students, and if the ICSP specifically violates this goal.

Indiana Constitution Article 8, Section 1: Knowledge and learning generally diffused throughout the learning community, being essential to the preservation of a free government; it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to encourage, by all suitable means, moral, intellectual, scientific, and agricultural improvement; and to provide by law, for a general and uniform system of Common Schools, wherein tuition shall be without charge, and equally open to all. (Billick, et al., 2011, p.11)

Under this context, Indiana's school choice law will not violate Article 8 unless the state Supreme Court determines that school choice is not a suitable means to encourage moral and intellectual improvement of Indiana's citizens (Billick, et al., 2011).

Rick Garnett, a Notre Dame Law School professor who is an expert on education reform made this statement about the importance of the outcome of this particular court case:

Indiana has become something of a leader with choice-based experiments. If the court were to pull the plug on this experiment, not only would a lot of kids be in a tricky spot, Indiana's leadership position would kind of be undermined. (Stafford, 2012, p.1)

Indiana's Choice Scholarship Program does have implications for other states because three dozen other states have restrictions written in their state constitutions about the use of state funds for religious purposes (Stafford, 2012). What Garnett recognized about this case was that the more states that approve and validate voucher and tax credit programs, the more likely it is that other states will be able to adopt similar programs, and the easier it will be to debunk myths about educational choice ("Voucher," 2013).
"School choice initiatives were given a big boost in late March when the Indiana Supreme Court upheld one of the country's most comprehensive school-choice programs" ("Voucher," 2013). Marion Supreme Court Judge Michael Keele defended the legislation in court in 2011 and rejected the claims that it violated Indiana's state constitution (Morones, 2013). In a unanimous 5-0 vote, the Indiana Supreme Court affirmed that the voucher program does not violate Indiana's constitution by stating that "the primary benefits of the program went to parents by giving them a choice in their children's education" (Morones, 2013, p.4). Indiana Chief Justice Brent Dickson also rejected plaintiff arguments because "the principal actors and direct beneficiaries under the voucher program are neither the State nor program-eligible schools, but lower-income Indiana families with school age children" (Stafford, 2013, p.4).

Following the decision of the Indiana Supreme Court, opinions of the ruling were mixed. Teresa Meredith made the comment that "even though the state Supreme Court said vouchers are constitutional, they said it's not a ruling on the merits of vouchers" (Stafford, 2013, p. 4). Indiana Governor Mike Pence welcomed the Supreme Court's decision: "I have long believed that parents should be able to choose where their children go to school, regardless of their income...we must continue to find ways to expand educational opportunities for all Indiana families" (Stafford, 2013, p.4). One of the best and most neutral responses to the ruling came from Chief Justice Brent Dickson when he stated that "individual policy preferences are not relevant. In the absence of a constitutional violation, the desirability and efficacy of school choice are matters to be resolved through the political process" (Stafford, 2013, p.4). While the ICSP has been deemed constitutional, it does not negate the responsibility of educators, legislators and citizens to continue working together to ensure that educational reform is for the good of all students.
Results of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program

In the past three years the ICSP has been active, there have been many results that lawmakers and citizens have anxiously awaited gaining access to in order assess the effectiveness and validity of such a broad program that is growing at such a rapid rate. The results of ICSP can be divided into three categories: financial results of funding vouchers, how public schools have reacted to the ICSP, and state test results comparing IN to the national scores of other states.

The first year the ICSP began resulted in nearly $4.2 million in savings for the state of Indiana (PR Newswire, 2012). In 2012-2013, Indiana spent $36 million on vouchers but saved $4.9 million in the process. (Wang, 2014). Considering that the average voucher awarded per student is only 43% of what the state pays per pupil in public schools, portions of those savings are then being redistributed back to public schools ("ABCs," 2014). The state has designed a formula for how the savings from the voucher program are redistributed back to public schools. One factor that is considered is the ISTEP+ scores of public schools (Banta, 2013). Wes Bruce, the chief assessment officer for the Department of Education said that schools with a high percentage of students that do not pass the ISTEP+ tests receive the greatest benefits from this (Banta, 2013). Robert Enlow, President and CEO of the Friedman Foundation says that the redistributed savings is good news for Indiana because it will "raise per-pupil allocations for the schools and allow them to have greater financial resources for educating students" (PR Newswire, 2012).

The second major result is that due to the unique nature of the ICSP which allows students to transfer to any public or private school of their choice (as long as there is availability), public schools have started to compete for students. "Schools are trying to make
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themselves more attractive to students, for example, by buying iPads" (Extreme Couponing, 2012, p.28). This has been true of public schools in Madison, Indiana. Madison Consolidated Schools advertised new iPads for every student in the 2012-2013 school year, the second year the Choice Scholarship Program was implemented (Grundhoefer, 2012). During that school year, every student was given an iPad to be used for daily instruction at school and at home (Grundhoefer, 2012). In addition, in the 2013-2014 school year, Madison Consolidated High Schools has increased the number of AP level classes it offers to 13, more than it has ever offered before (Dickerson, 2013). These classes are designed to be used as dual-credit courses for college and are appealing to many families who desire their children to attend college. The schools have also committed to integrating more technology into their curriculum as well (Dickerson, 2013). Ultimately, the decisions to purchase iPads and implement more AP level classes cannot be emphatically proven to be in direct response to the threat of losing students to the voucher program. Nevertheless, these are positive measures schools are taking to ensure their students are receiving the best education possible.

The final result of the ICSP is in regards to state and national testing results. Data released by the U.S. Department of Education in 2013 has shown how Indiana ranks compared to the nation. Students in Indiana increased their reading scores in fourth and eighth grades more than students in every other state across the nation except for Tennessee (Friedman Foundation, 2013). In terms of overall growth and improvement, Indiana ranked third in 2013, which was a drastic advancement from the growth ranking of 46th they received in 2011 (Friedman Foundation, 2013). Overall, Indiana ranked 13th in total scores, and again improved from their previous ranking of 23rd in 2011. (Friedman Foundation, 2013). Although studies have yet to be done to determine a key factor as to why Indiana has demonstrated significant growth and
improvement in test scores over the past two years, the inauguration of the ICSP has definitely not hurt or impeded students in Indiana from achieving successful growth in the years since it has been implemented.

**Accountability for Schools**

Opponents of voucher programs will often state that one of the reasons they are resistant to the idea of vouchers is that "private schools receive taxpayer dollars--however indirectly--with no accountability at all" (Finn, Hentges, Petrilli, & Winkler, 2009, p. 13). This is a valid concern for any school that willingly chooses to accept state funds to educate students. Schools that participate in voucher programs should be accountable to parents and taxpayers alike and should embrace accountability done the right way (Finn et al., 2009).

A study conducted by the Thomas B. Fordham institute consulted with scholars, advocates, administrators and private school representatives to gain a better understanding of what accountability should look like for private schools using public funds (Finn, et al., 2009). The study resulted in three main ideas regarding accountability. First, "responders would rather have the government leave schools alone when it comes to issues such as teacher qualifications, admissions, student discipline and religion in the curriculum (Finn, et al., 2009, p. 14). The ideas regarding discipline and curriculum are very congruent with the philosophy of many private schools, especially Christian schools that adhere to biblical discipline methods and integrate a biblical worldview in their curriculum. The second main idea researchers gained was that voucher programs should be evaluated by third party researchers to avoid biased opinions that would sway the interpretation of the results (Finn, et al., 2009). Finally, the Fordham Institute affirmed through their research that "private schools that survive predominantly on public funds
are closer to being public schools, and thus should face increasing levels of public transparency
and accountability" (Finn, et al., 2009, p.15).

For schools in Indiana, "the voucher law sets unusually strong testing requirements for
private schools that receive students through the program" (Cavanagh, 2011, p.20). Private
schools who accept voucher students are now required to take the Indiana Statewide Testing for
Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+). Schools are also required to comply with the number of
school days and hours of instruction as mandated by the state, and are responsible to report all
testing results to the state to be evaluated and graded on the states A to F grading scale with all
other public schools (Cavanagh, 2011).

The A to F evaluation process is not a new criteria for the Christian Academy of
Madison. First accredited by the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA) in 2009,
CAM has been evaluated annually since 2010 based on the state grading system. The INPEA
provides an alternative to regular accreditation known as free-way accreditation for private
schools (2013). This accreditation "allows a school to contract with the State Board of
Education to achieve high levels of student achievement, attendance, and graduation rate"
(INPEA, 2013, 6th paragraph). Being accredited by the state of Indiana allows CAM to receive
state funds for the Title 1 Reading recovery program as well as services through the public
school system for students who qualify for special needs. One of the benefits to obtaining free-
way state accreditation is that it offers private schools greater flexibility to select their own
curriculum and the freedom to hire their own staff based on their own set of standards instead of
having to abide by state regulations (INPEA, 2013).

Over the course of the past four years, CAM has received the following grades based on
the Indiana state evaluations: B in 2010, A in 2011, B in 2012, and D in 2013 (IDOE, 2013). The
Indian Choice Scholarships

State grading system is based partially on student achievement on the ISTEP+ test. To determine a school's grade, student scores are divided based on whether they performed in the bottom 25th percentile or the top 75th percentile for a school. The school's grade may then be raised if a large enough portion of the bottom 25% or the top 75% of students demonstrate high growth. At the same time, the grade may be lowered if a significant percentage of all students show low growth (IDOE, 2014).

The debate over school choice and voucher programs is far from over. As state officials seek to improve education for the future, changes may continue to be made to benefit students and use state resources wisely. As evidenced by the results displayed in the literature review, there is a great need for additional, quality research to be done regarding voucher programs that will help determine the effectiveness and value of school choice for students.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Procedures

There is no doubt that the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program has impacted CAM numerically, as evidenced by the many new students that have been able to attend school as a direct result of receiving the voucher. What remains to be known is how this program has impacted the school in other ways. Research was conducted in an attempt to glean additional insight into some of the changes that have taken place the past few years the ICSP has been in place. Procedures for the thesis research involved acquiring data from state test results, making observations and comparisons from parental surveys, and gathering the opinions of parents, teachers and administration through interviews.

The Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination 3 (also known as IREAD-3) is an assessment used to measure foundational reading standards for third grade students in Indiana (IDOE, 2014). First administered in 2012, this summative assessment evaluates reading skills to ensure that all third grade students can read proficiently before being promoted to fourth grade (IDOE, 2014). Students who do not pass the IREAD-3 test in March may need to attend remediation classes. If they do not pass the test a second time during the summer, they may face possible retention (IDOE, 2014).

The Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) is another statewide assessment that measures English/Language Arts and Math in third grade. Each subject area is comprised of two different tests. The first test, taken in March of each school year, is an applied skills test that consists of written responses to open-ended questions in English and Math (IDOE, 2014). The second portion of ISTEP+ is taken in April or May, and is a multiple choice assessment based on the same subject areas (IDOE, 2014). Both types of tests are combined,
scored, and ranked as one of three evaluations: did not pass, pass, or pass plus. While the results of the ISTEP+ do not affect a student's ability to be promoted to the next grade level, the scores are used in part to calculate the grade schools receive from the state each year.

Test scores from IREAD-3 and ISTEP+ were retrieved from viewing students' permanent records. Scores were collectively grouped together and averaged based on the following categories: voucher students, non-voucher students, and students who were considered to be both voucher and non-voucher students during the four years data was retrieved. Since the data gathered would be used anonymously in groups and could not be traced back to any particular individual student, parental consent was not necessary.

The third form of data came from surveys distributed to families at CAM. After receiving approval both from the Internal Review Board at Cedarville University (see Appendix A) and from the administration at CAM to conduct research (see Appendix B), letters were sent home to parents explaining the purpose of the survey and the directions for completing the survey (see Appendix C). One of two similar surveys was distributed to each family, based on whether they currently receive a voucher or not (see Appendix D). Parents were asked not to write their name on the survey or use their children's names or identifiable information on the short answer part of the survey. Participants were asked to complete the surveys and return them in a plain, sealed envelope to maintain anonymity.

The third form of data was gathered in the form of interviews. A letter explaining the purpose of the interview (see Appendix E) as well as an Informed Consent and Agreement form (See Appendix F) was sent to randomly selected families. Ten family names were drawn from three separate categories. Families were identified as having come to CAM: 1) without ever
receiving a voucher, 2) only by receiving a voucher, or 3) having originally come to CAM without a voucher, but later qualifying to receive a voucher.

Families that agreed to participate were interviewed in person at CAM or over the phone. The duration of the interviews lasted from 15 minutes to 1 hour in length. The administration and teachers at CAM also agreed to participate in the interview process and were interviewed at CAM.

Participants

The primary demographic focus in regards to the state test results was the third grade class from the 2009-2013 school years. During the first two years of the study (2009-2011), when the ICSP was not yet implemented, there were no voucher student test scores to compare with the rest of the non-voucher students at CAM. However, if a student in third grade later qualified and received a voucher in 4th or 5th grade during the 2011-2013 school years, they were placed in the voucher/non-voucher category to maintain consistent variables as data was analyzed. For 2011-2013 school years, first time voucher student scores were averaged and compared with non-voucher student scores and voucher/non-voucher student scores.

Participation in the research gathered from surveys and interviews for this thesis project was conducted on a volunteer basis. There are currently 95 families represented at CAM in the 2013-2014 school year. Fifty-three of these families are non-voucher families, having only paid tuition to attend CAM. Out of the 53 non-voucher families that received a survey, 38 surveys were returned for a 72% response rate. Additionally, 42 families at CAM are voucher recipients through the ICSP or the scholarship the SGO provides. From the 42 voucher families that received a survey, 27 surveys were returned for a 64% response rate. The total average response rate for all family surveys was 68%.
For the interview process, five categories of interviews were conducted. The first group of interviews consisted of members associated with the administration at CAM, including the head administrator of the school, the high school administrator, and various school board members. A total of five interviews were conducted in this category.

The second group of interviews was held with teaching faculty at CAM. Nine interviews were completed ranging from kindergarten, elementary, junior high and high school teachers. The teachers' experience ranged from beginning teachers with less than five years of experience, to master teachers with over 30 years of teaching experience. Participants included teachers that had recently come to teach at CAM within the past two years and teachers that had taught at CAM since its inaugural year. A total of nine interviews were conducted within this focus area.

The final groups of interviews consisted of parent interviews separated in to three categories. The 95 families that represent the student body at CAM were divided as follows: 53 families at CAM have never received a voucher, 24 families have come to CAM always receiving a voucher, and 18 families originally came to CAM without a voucher but have later qualified and are now receiving a voucher. A total of ten parent interviews were conducted in each of these groups.

In order to maintain uniformity between each of the parent interview groups, several characteristics were found to be present in each of the parent groups. First, each group contained families that enrolled only one child, and families that enrolled multiple children at CAM. Secondly, at least one or more families with a child that has been diagnosed as having special needs or a learning disability was represented throughout each group. Third, each interview group contained at least two or more families from different ethnic backgrounds (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian) to ensure diversity was maintained throughout the project.
Finally, each parent group contained all of the following family backgrounds: single parent families, divorced parent families, married parent families and adoptive parent families.

Some final considerations to note are that the sum of all parent interviews represents families with at least one child in every grade level at CAM from K3 preschool through 12th grade to gain an accurate representation of CAM as a whole entity. Families that had only enrolled one child in K3 or K4 were not interviewed to give preference to other families with children in K5 or above. Some specific questions in the interview focus on the academic goals parents have for their children and the quality of the curriculum at CAM, and these questions would be better answered by parents who have children in K5 or above, when more rigorous curriculum begins.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Test Score Data Results

Two separate tests were reviewed to see if there was a difference in the academic performance between voucher and non-voucher students. The first test, the IREAD-3, consisted of a pass or fail score. This test was first given during the spring of the 2011-2012 school year, the same year the ICSP began. Test results were available through the current 2013-2014 school year. During the 2011-2012 school year, CAM received a 100% pass rate. The following year, 12 out of 13 students passed the IREAD-3 for a 92.3% pass rate. This year, 17 out of 18 students passed the IREAD-3 test for a 94.4% pass rate.

The IREAD-3 test requires all students to participate in the assessment, even if they receive special services such as a Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). One of the rare cases for students to be exempt from taking the IREAD-3 test includes students with special disabilities where a case conference committee has determined that promotion is appropriate (IDOE, 2014). Students who perform significantly below grade level will participate in the Indiana Standards Tools for Alternative Reporting (ISTAR) to demonstrate their educational progress, not their ability to perform at the current grade level. The scores from ISTAR are not calculated in the overall score of the IREAD-3.

While the vast majority of students are required to take the IREAD-3 test, there are good cause exemptions that students may be eligible to receive that prevent them from being retained in third grade. These exemptions include: students with a Section 504 plan, an Individualized Education Plan, an Individualized Learning Plan, or students who have been retained twice (ICOE, 2014). The student who did not pass the test in 2013 was a non-voucher student who received an exemption from being retained in third grade because of a specific learning
disability. In 2014, the student who did not pass the test was a voucher student, but once again was exempt from being retained due to a specific learning disability.

While the administration at CAM is pleased with the current progress on the IREAD-3 test, it is difficult to determine major differences between voucher and non-voucher students based on the results of this test. Over the past three years the test was taken, only one non-voucher student and one voucher student did not pass. Both students had previously been diagnosed with learning disabilities which provided for their exemption from being retained. The result of each student's failure to pass the test was determined to be caused primarily by their learning disability (as determined by their case committee meetings which provided the exemptions). Given the decisions of the committee in these two cases, factors such as switching schools due to the voucher, class size, socio economic status and the impact the voucher may have had on achievement are not primary reasons that can be considered when determining the cause of these specific students failing the IREAD-3 test. The results of the IREAD-3 test indicate that both voucher and non-voucher students are performing at grade level, because all other students passed the required material to be promoted to the next grade level.

The second type of test that was analyzed was the ISTEP+ English and Math tests. These are scored differently than that IREAD-3 test because they give a specific numeric score that is then classified as Pass+, Pass, or Did Not Pass. The results of data gathered from 2010-2013 are graphed for English in Figure 2 and Math in Figure 3. As an entire class average, CAM received a passing grade each year for English and Math, although the scores fluctuated year to year. It is important to note that while there were no voucher students during the 2010 and 2011 years, students who would later receive the voucher were placed in the "Non-voucher & Voucher" category in 2010 and 2011.
Figure 2. English ISTEP+ test scores. Scores on the English ISTEP+ test are displayed for various groups of students over the course of four school years.

According to the data presented, voucher students scored slightly above or below the class average. Students who were in the mixed non-voucher and voucher category attained the highest scores, which were above the school average each year. Non-voucher students scored slightly below the class average each year.

The Math ISTEP+ test displayed similar results as the non-voucher & voucher category scored higher than the class average three out of four years. Voucher students remained just slightly above the class average, while non-voucher students fell below the class average three out of four years.
Figure 3. Math ISTEP+ test scores. Scores on the Math ISTEP+ test are displayed for various groups of students over the course of four school years.

In analyzing test data, knowing the number of students each category represents is beneficial. In Table 2, the distribution of students is represented. During the 2012-2013 years, the non-voucher & voucher category only had one student represented. In addition, most of the students with special needs or a learning disability were from the non-voucher category. While it may be a positive indication that voucher students are not having an adverse effect on the overall score of CAM, the lack of a solid base of students makes it difficult to base success or failure on such a small number of students represented in each category. A larger group of students would give a more accurate picture of the effects of the voucher program on state test results.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Voucher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>10 (2)</td>
<td>6 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Voucher &amp; Voucher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Numbers in parenthesis denote the number of students in that category identified with special needs or a specific learning disability.

One final yet significant observation regarding the English and Math tests, is that students categorized in the non-voucher and voucher category had the highest averages seven out of eight times the test was taken over the course of a four year period. Many times these averages were significantly higher than the class average. To understand part of the reason why there might be such a large difference in the scores, a couple of factors are necessary to comprehend. First, there were never more than two students represented in this category in any given year. While the students still excelled each year, one student with a low score would have drastically altered the results.

The second factor to remember is that the students in this category all began coming to CAM as non-voucher students with their parents paying tuition. One of the special factors about the ICSP is that middle class families can qualify to receive the voucher. In the case of these students attending CAM, they were already from middle-class families who could afford to pay the tuition before the voucher was even an option. Many of these middle class families are very supportive of Christian education, work diligently to ensure their children are engaged and challenged academically, and provide consistent support at home to help their children study and excel at school. When voucher programs sometimes bring in the lowest socio-economic students that struggle to meet high academic standards and pull the average score of a school down,
several of the highest achieving students at CAM (mainly from middle-class families) have been able to qualify for vouchers. Thus the overall impact has not been felt in such a negative way because some of the same students have remained at CAM and are now just recognized as receiving a voucher.

**Parental Survey Results**

Although survey questions were nearly identical for both voucher and non-voucher families, there were a few differences that were unique to each family group. The first question non-voucher families were asked was to identify the reason they initially chose to send their children to CAM (when vouchers were not an option and families paid tuition). As Figure 4 illustrates, the majority of families identified their desire for wanting their children to be educated in a Christian school as the most important reason for enrolling their children at CAM. This is not surprising, recognizing that families who are willing to invest financially in their children's education typically feel very strongly about the type of school they are willing to entrust their children to. As one parent stated, "I know that my child is taught the truth of God's word from teachers who have a personal relationship with God and care about my child's life and success" (Non-voucher survey, 2013). The second most common reason was that CAM seemed to be a better option than other schools in the area. Some reasons parents gave to support their opinion of CAM were that they felt public schools were inadequate to meet the specific needs of their child, CAM seemed to be a safe place for students, class sizes were smaller than public schools, and parent input was more likely to be heard and received more readily.
Figure 4. Most important reason why non-voucher families initially chose CAM for their children. This figure illustrates the priority families placed on values when selecting a school for their children.

An important question pertaining to voucher families included finding out how families qualified to receive the voucher. In Figure 5, 40% of survey responders indicated that they came directly from a public school to qualify to receive the voucher. The second most frequent progression for how students qualified for vouchers occurred when a student (often in Kindergarten) received the SGO voucher. The subsequent year, that student could qualify for the ICSP voucher without ever having to leave CAM. Then, after that student has received the ICSP voucher for a year, his or her siblings may qualify the next school year to also receive the voucher. Due to the recent changes to the ICSP, many families are now able to stay at CAM without having to transfer to the public school to qualify to receive the voucher.
Figure 5. How families received the voucher. This graph details the ways families qualified to receive the voucher.

Another great insight from the parent survey compared the length of time families had been at CAM. Families were asked to identify if they had been at CAM one to two years, three to four years, or five to six years. The results of the survey displayed a fairly even distribution among families over the length of time their children had attended CAM. The contrast between the length of time between voucher and non-voucher families had been at CAM was not unexpected, given the recent addition of the ICSP in the past three years. These differences can be viewed in Figure 6. It is also helpful to note that many non-voucher families in the one to two year category have enrolled their child in the K3, K4 and K5 programs, which contribute to the overall growth and more recent inclusion of families at CAM.

For the voucher families, the results were primarily divided between the one to two year and the three to four year categories. Since the ICSP has not even finished its fourth year, many voucher families who have been at CAM for four or more years were originally non-voucher
families who chose to leave CAM to attend public school to qualify for the voucher before returning to CAM.

**Figure 6.** Survey: Number of years families have been at CAM. This bar graph displays the amount of time in years that families have enrolled their children at CAM.

A large portion of the survey for all families asked them to rank several statements about CAM. Families ranked these statements on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree." All of the results were tabulated, averaged, graphed and analyzed (see Figure 7).
Figure 7. Parental ranking among statements about CAM. This chart compares parental satisfaction between voucher and non-voucher families in response to statements made about CAM.

The average of the statements ranked by both voucher and non-voucher families surveyed scored a four or higher in every category except the final statement that only voucher families ranked. On the final statement, voucher families indicated by a score of 3.6 that they would still attend CAM without a voucher. The highest ranked statement was from voucher families supporting the ICSP with a score of 4.9. In every category except for one, voucher families ranked their approval of the statements about CAM equal to or greater than non-voucher.
families. The only category where non-voucher families ranked their support higher was in regards to the statement "Christian education is important" which had an average score of 4.8.

The results of the survey signify a strong agreement from voucher and non-voucher families with positive statements regarding their experience at CAM. While it may be encouraging to see parent support for CAM, a high level of satisfaction is typically expected for private schools and voucher programs. Private education is something parents choose for their children and often sacrifice financially to send their children to a school that they trust will best meet their child's needs. If parents do not feel the school is an adequate representation of their desires, or is lacking in a major area, they will not continue to pay for their child to attend when there are many other schools that can also educate their child for free. The same can be said of the voucher program. Voucher programs thrive on parent satisfaction. If parents are not pleased with the academic progress of their children, they most likely will not continue to use the voucher when it is an option they may refuse at any time.

Perhaps the most pertinent information gained from the parent survey was how parents ranked eight considerations for choosing CAM. Parents were asked to rank eight reasons they might consider when selecting CAM for their child from 1, being the most important reason, to 8, being the least important reason. The results from each survey were once again tabulated, averaged, graphed and compared for voucher and non-voucher families. The reason with the lowest numerical average was deemed to be the highest ranked priority, while the reason with the highest numerical average was shown to be the lowest ranked priority (see Figure 8).
Figure 8. Ranked reasons why parents send their children to CAM. This graph reveals the priority parents placed on important key factors to consider when selecting a school for their children.

From the data presented, there were only slight differences in the overall averages for each reason listed between voucher and non-voucher families. The remarkable outcome noted from the survey results is that the order in which the reasons were ranked were identical for both
voucher and non-voucher families for the top six reasons. The six highest ranked reasons why parents chose to send their children to CAM are as follows:

1. Education is taught from a biblical worldview
2. Moral standards and a godly atmosphere
3. Low student to teacher ratio which provides more individualized help for students
4. Strong curriculum and educational standards
5. Family atmosphere
6. CAM is state accredited

The only minor difference between the two groups occurred when voucher families ranked successful state test scores seventh and the reputation of the school in the community as eighth. Non-voucher families ranked these two reasons eighth and seventh, respectively.

Once again, survey results displayed a unity among parents of both voucher and non-voucher students. Families seem to be united on their current level of satisfaction at CAM as well as their priorities when it comes to ranking the most important aspects of why they would send their children to a Christian school. Non-voucher families commented that CAM provides: "great education from a biblical view because it teaches my child how to apply biblical learning to everyday living," strong moral and ethical standards in the classroom, and instruction that is geared individually toward student level and ability regardless of the grade (Non-voucher surveys, 2013). Families who received vouchers also praised CAM for teaching education from a biblical perspective, working to teach students from various abilities and levels well, and creating a godly atmosphere within the school (Voucher surveys, 2013). One parent (whose child receives the voucher) summarized his thoughts this way:
INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS

It's amazing the difference between [local public school] and CAM. I have never experienced a private school before. [CAM] has a very good reputation in town. Even the kids that go here love it. The difference I have seen in my child is more than I expected. She never wants to go back to [public school]. School had been a nightmare for her. I love to see her so excited and academically succeeding. (Voucher survey, 2013)

Interview Results

Administration

Out of all the various groups that were interviewed, the administration as a whole was the most knowledgeable about the ICSP and the laws that surround the voucher program in Indiana. They have convened and discussed the implications of this law for CAM and are aware of many details involving the application process, the state test score results, the number of families that are affected by the ICSP, and how the school has been changing over the past few years.

When asked to describe CAM’s strengths as a school, the strong emphasis on teaching a biblical worldview and family atmosphere were mentioned. Another strength named was that CAM provides a loving atmosphere for many students who have special needs that allows them to be valued, accepted and safe. A majority of the administration also mentioned the personnel as one of the greatest assets of the school. One member said:

CAM has excellent teaching staff that are well qualified and educated. Unfortunately, the advantage of having a staff that is paid a lower salary [than public school teachers], is that you know that they are there for the ministry and not for the money. They have a heart for kids and Christian education. (Personal communication, April 1, 2014).

A final strength identified was that CAM is independent of any church denomination. The non-denominational aspect leads to a wide variety of families that choose to send their children to
CAM, but it also makes the school more appealing to more members of the community (Personal communication, December 15, 2013).

Specific areas the administration identified as weaknesses were low state testing results (specifically in math), limited finances and resources compared to local public schools, an increase in behavioral problems over the past few years and a lack of an official special education department to provide leadership and guidance for a growing number of students with special needs and disabilities (Personal communication, December 2, 2013). While it would be nice to have bigger facilities or build a fine arts center to expand the music program, the administration was united in their priority of improving curriculum and growing academically for the present, especially given the recent grade of D for the 2012-2013 academic school year.

Most of the administration was aware of the majority of students and families that received the voucher when asked if they were able to identify who received the voucher. They also acknowledged how parent support has decreased in the past few years as the school has grown and accepted more students. Families that receive the voucher were identified as less likely to participate in fundraising events (compared to the participation rates that non-voucher families demonstrate) because their tuition is paid and it appears that they don't perceive the importance of raising the additional funds the school needs that tuition does not cover.

Although supportive of the voucher program and the positive impact it has had on enrollment, members were also cautiously optimistic. Their desire is to maintain a strong approach to the enrollment process by accepting families who are committed to Christian education and supportive of the mission CAM is striving to achieve. They do not want to grow numerically at the cost of sacrificing the school's testimony in the community or the distinctiveness that makes CAM unique from other schools in the area.
The administration remains extremely united on their approach to the future of the ICSP and accepting state funds. While the administration willingly agrees to the current stipulations the state places on accountability at CAM because of the acceptance of state funds, they also recognize that laws can change when different people come into power in the government. If there comes a day when the ICSP prevents CAM from fulfilling its mission to teach from a biblical worldview, or if accepting state funds means going against something the Bible clearly stands against, the decision will have to be made to relinquish the voucher funds. As one board member boldly said, "if we are forced [by the state] to teach evolution as a scientific fact or homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle in order to accept state funds, we will walk away from the money one day if we are forced to cross a line we are not willing to" (Personal communication, April 1, 2104).

Teachers

When interviewing teachers about the voucher program, teachers were evenly divided between some that acknowledged they had a basic knowledge of what the ICSP was, while the other half of the faculty stated that they knew very little about the ICSP. When asked if they could identify which students in their class were voucher students, most teachers admitted that they couldn't identify every voucher student with 100% accuracy, but teachers who had been teaching at CAM for three or more years were easily able to identify most of the students in their classroom that received the vouchers.

Teachers were also divided in their ability to differentiate discrepancies in academics, behavior, and parent support between voucher and non-voucher students in their classrooms. Three of the nine teachers interviewed did not notice a difference between voucher and non-voucher students in their classroom. The remaining two-thirds of the teachers said they did
notice a difference between students in their classroom. Teachers who shared differences they observed were careful to acknowledge during their interviews that the differences were not synonymously true of every voucher family, but were general patterns and behaviors that they had detected over the past few years as CAM has accepted more and more students with vouchers. One elementary teacher noted that all of the students in her class this year that had Individualized Education Plans for learning disabilities were all voucher recipients, so it had made an impact on the way she taught and the accommodations and modifications she made in teaching, assessing and differentiated learning (Personal communication, December 3, 2013). Another teacher noted that some voucher students that had come from the public school system had come from very difficult family situations which impacted their behavior negatively (i.e.: discipline issues) and their willingness to try hard in school. "Sometimes I see voucher students having a more casual attitude toward schoolwork and parents aren't as supportive in helping them complete their homework assignments on time," one teacher admitted (Personal communication, December 3, 2013). The difference that teachers mentioned the most was a subtle feeling of entitlement that they perceived some families who received the voucher displayed. One teacher made the honest admission:

Many voucher families come to CAM telling us about the problems they have had at their previous school, and they want us to fix their child, but they are not as willing to be a part of the solution. Since they are not paying for their child to attend CAM, I believe there is less of an investment in what is going on and less of an academic mindset. (Personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Other teachers concurred that they noticed weaker parent support from voucher families than they had witnessed from families in general before the voucher program began.
Many positive strengths of CAM were noted from the teachers' perspective. Some of the strengths noted were: a family-oriented school, a strong unity and school spirit, a love that desires to show Christ-like care for each other, small class sizes, a strong Christian emphasis, striving to find ways to meet individual student needs, and competent, professional leadership.

The majority of the faculty at CAM was supportive of the ICSP, with the exception of one teacher who felt neutral about the voucher program. Teachers expressed their excitement in watching the school grow and being able to teach a more diverse group of students, even with the new challenges that the voucher program has brought. Suggestions were made to consider what the maximum limit would be on how large class sizes would become and to maintain high standards when accepting students to ensure families are supportive of Christian education and the philosophy of CAM.

**Parents**

**Voucher families.** Families interviewed in this category that came directly to CAM by receiving a voucher had the overall lowest number of years experience attending CAM, since no family had completed more than three years at the time of the interviews. On average, they rated CAM at a 9.55 out of 10 when asked to describe their satisfaction with the school. Those interviewed gave three primary reasons why they had selected CAM for their child. The first reason was due to the reputation of CAM in the community and the things they had heard about the school from families that attended here. The second reason parents chose to send their children was because families desired a more faith based atmosphere with good morals as a learning environment for their child. The final reason three families gave for choosing CAM included their child being bullied or made fun of at a public school and they wanted a safer, more accepting place for their child to be able to learn.
When asked to compare how CAM is doing academically with other schools, parents expressed high satisfaction with the academic standards at CAM. Many parents felt that the curriculum was stronger, more difficult and challenging than public schools. One family mentioned that their children had a difficult time adjusting to CAM at first because the curriculum was harder than what they were previously used to at a public school. Parents also valued the emphasis that CAM places on preparing students for college.

Voucher families praised the faculty and staff at CAM highly in their interviews. Parents articulated their appreciation for the dedication teachers put into their teaching, the passion they have for their students to grow biblically and academically, and the love and care they express for every student. As one parent said, "teachers are very willing to go out of their way to help every student" (Personal communication, April 4, 2014). Parents also mentioned that although they believe there are many excellent, qualified teachers in the public schools, the high number of students in every public school classroom make it difficult for even the best teachers to be able to meet all the needs of their students well.

Parents communicated their highest praise for the atmosphere that is present at CAM. They were highly satisfied with the Christian perspective that is present in the classroom and in disciplining students. In their opinion, parents also commented that students were better behaved and respectful than students they had witnessed at the public schools they had previously attended. Some of the statements parents made regarding the atmosphere at CAM were: "I always feel welcome and appreciated at CAM" (Personal communication, April 3, 2014), "everybody is uplifting and encouraging of our kids, and we did not always see that at other schools" (Personal communication, February 22, 2014), and "my child is loved and accepted by everyone" (Personal communication, April 3, 2014).
The three main goals voucher families stated that they would like to see changed at CAM were to put a cafeteria in so meals could be provided at school like they are at public schools, to develop a stronger writing and language arts program (especially in the high school), and to create more opportunities for newer families to get to know other families better.

Voucher/Non-voucher families. The second group of interviews was derived from a wide range of families, whose perspectives provided key insight into assessing how CAM is doing. Some families have been more recent additions to CAM within the past three years, while several families in this group have been present for five to six years. Many of the families in this category left during the first two years of the voucher program to attend public school so they could qualify to receive the voucher. Although they have experienced different types of schools, their perspective has been enlightening and refreshing. On average, families in the voucher/non-voucher category ranked their satisfaction with CAM at a 9.05 out of 10.

Parents whose children had attended public school and CAM described the academic standard at CAM as going "above and beyond the local schools" (Personal communication, April 1, 2014). While some parents describe the curriculum at CAM as rigorous, other parents mentioned that there is room for improvement specifically in reading, as students need to develop higher-level thinking skills in response to what they learn (Personal communication, February 12, 2014). In comparing CAM with other schools, parents mentioned that CAM lacks the variety of elective classes public schools offer, and it does not have the same technology resources available as public schools do, such as providing an iPad for every student.

Teachers at CAM were commended for being approachable, qualified and willing to work with each student wherever they are at academically. Parents felt like they could contact them whenever they were needed and appreciated the honest feedback they would give. One
mother compared her experience with various teachers this way: "teachers at CAM are more caring, and at public schools I feel like teachers are burned out or stressed more often. You don't see that as much at CAM" (Personal communication, April 1, 2014).

Parents identified noticeable differences in the atmosphere at CAM compared to other schools. Parents described students as being more joyful, upbeat and disciplined. In addition, they appreciated that CAM did not tolerate swearing, bullying and disrespectful attitudes which led to a difference in the behavior parents observed in students at school. Finally, parents stated that they valued the way they felt welcome at CAM and were encouraged to visit their child's classroom and participate in school events.

Suggestions were given for ways parents would like to see CAM improve. Families wanted to see an improvement in communication between school and home. They also wanted to see CAM take steps to create a program to help challenge higher achieving students. Language arts and critical thinking skills were other academic areas that parents wanted to see growth develop in the coming years.

Lastly, parents consistently rated the elementary much stronger than the junior high and high school. The higher teacher turn-over rate in the junior high and high school grades was mentioned as a possible reason these grades lacked continuity. Some parents also consider the elementary to be more consistent in their structure, because the junior high and high school is still working through the newness of high school requirements, recently adding AP classes and having the first graduating senior class in 2014. Parents expressed their desire for their children to be challenged academically, but they also want the same commitment to excellence and professionalism that the elementary has displayed to be duplicated in the high school too.
Non-voucher families. From the three parent groups surveyed, families who had never received voucher money ranked their overall satisfaction with CAM the lowest, averaging an 8.75 out of 10. Because this group had the highest average number of years attending CAM, they were able to provide the most comprehensive perspective on where CAM has come from and the changes that have occurred over the past seven years the school has been in existence.

Among the three parent groups, non-voucher families expressed the importance for the priority to be made for their children to not only receive a quality education from a biblical worldview, but to be able to know, understand and defend their faith more than the previous two groups. An encouraging comment from a mother stated that "[CAM] has been a blessing to us. It is amazing when we have family Bible study to see how much the kids have learned and how much they have grown" (Personal communication, March 31, 2014).

Several changes that parents have noticed as CAM has grown include: growth in the number of students with special needs that are now enrolled, a decrease in parent support in recent years, and difficulty maintaining communication in the same personal way it was when the school was smaller. Parents pointed out that while they consider CAM to be a friendly place that is accepting and welcoming of all students, they have noticed a decrease in the close family atmosphere that families originally experienced when the school began. Positive changes that have taken place at CAM have included: the building and expansion of the junior high and high school classrooms, the addition of the gymnasium, and the development of the sports program and other extra-curricular activities.

One of the biggest changes that five out of ten parents identified was an increase in discipline issues as enrollment has increased. Parents readily admitted that they understand that the more the school grows, the more problems that will naturally follow because there are more
sinners that are working together. Other families expressed compassion for some of the newer students that have come to CAM from very difficult family backgrounds, which influence the way they perceive love, authority, spiritual issues and learning. The main difference that was noted throughout these interviews was that non-voucher families assessed the overall behavior of students to have decreased with the addition of voucher students, while those who receive the vouchers believe student behavior at CAM is commendable because they deem it to be much better than the public schools.

Some of the suggestions non-voucher families gave for the ways they would like to see CAM improve were similar to other parent, teacher and administration interviews. Families mentioned that communication needs to improve. Parents acknowledge that as the school has become increasingly larger, it becomes more difficult to remember all the details for every school program, sports, classroom assignment and extra-curricular activity, and at times there is a lack in the frequency that parents would deem ideal for communication. In addition, non-voucher parents would like to see an increase in parent support and involvement, especially from the new families that join CAM. Parents also acknowledged they felt the elementary was stronger than the junior high and high school. "The high school seems more relaxed, laid back. Monitoring students and keeping them accountable as well as managing high standards in academics is important," said one parent. (Personal communication, February 11, 2014).

Finally, although eight out of the ten families interviewed in this category identified their level of knowledge about Indiana’s voucher program as limited or nonexistent, families were still supportive of the voucher program because it has helped to grow CAM and bring new families into the school.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY

Biblical Integration

One of the highest privileges God has given to parents is teach, train and disciple their children. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Moses delivered God's law to his chosen people Israel, as the command was given to love and follow God "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (English Standard Version). Verse seven specifically details how God expects parents to teach their children his law diligently, regardless of where they are or what they are doing. In Ephesians 6:4, it confirms a parent's God-ordained responsibility to their children when it states: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." The Greek word for discipline is paideia, which Vine's Expository Dictionary defines as "the whole training and education of children, which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals" (Blue Letter Bible, 2013). Parents are intended to be the initiators of spiritual discipleship for their child.

Understanding this high calling, the mission statement of the Christian Academy of Madison reads:

The purpose and mission of the Christian Academy of Madison is to work cooperatively with the student’s home and church to provide a biblically-based, Christ-centered learning environment which promotes spiritual maturity, academic excellence and personal growth, ministering to the whole child. (CAM Handbook, 2013-2014).

The central focus of the Christian Academy of Madison is to work cooperatively with parents to train children to love God and follow him. Parents are commanded to be the primary spiritual influence in their child's life. Christian education is a blessing and privilege in our
country that some families may choose, but it can never replace the authority God has ordained families to have in regards to rearing their children.

While CAM desires to be an integral part of each student's spiritual growth, Christian education should never be elevated to the role of a savior, trusting in the false hope that children will automatically follow God as long as they attend daily Bible classes and are separated from the secular influences of the world. On the contrary, neither should Christian education be reduced to a Christian babysitter, fulfilling the roles of teaching and disciplining students because parents are not taking the responsibility on themselves.

The administration and faculty at CAM have expressed excitement over the recent growth that the ICSP has enabled the school to have in recent years. While it may be easy to rejoice in numerical growth, it is also vital for the leadership to look toward the future with gratitude and humility, recognizing the appropriate, biblical role that God has entrusted to CAM. The addition of many new families sometimes comes with new challenges, including more behavioral problems and additional expectations to meet. At the same time, the voucher program has allowed many new families and students to attend CAM, enlarging their mission by providing a greater number of students to disciple and reach with the gospel. Naturally, this should lead to a renewed vision to grow both in academic excellence as well as equipping students spiritually to the glory of God.

**Strengths of the Project**

One of the strengths of this thesis is the relevance of the project to impact the Christian Academy of Madison. CAM has grown quite rapidly since it began and the school is at a pivotal point as it looks toward the future. The administration and teachers desire to grow well both spiritually and academically as the school grows numerically. The information in this study has
been useful in understanding how the voucher program has affected the school and has provided direction for areas that need to change as the school looks toward the future.

Since CAM is a smaller school, the number of interviews that were conducted throughout the project provided a wide information base. The information received from the 44 interviews among the administration, faculty and parents constituted a significant portion of the 95 families that represent CAM. This meant that a larger percentage of the school family was able to give input than most likely would be possible at a larger school. The valuable input and honest answers gained through the research gave a clear picture of how CAM is doing and what values parents consider important when evaluating where improvement is needed.

**Recommendations**

Recommendations for ways the Christian Academy of Madison may improve have been generated as a result of frequent discussions with the administration and faculty as well as the author's own reflections after studying the subject matter extensively. In light of the data analyzed and the insight gained from interviews, the following recommendations are suggested as ways to strengthen CAM:

1. Create an official special education program at CAM. The number of students with learning disabilities and special needs at CAM has grown to the point where it warrants the necessity of a trained special education teacher to provide further guidance, assessment and assistance that teachers and school aides are not able to provide. With classes that are increasing in size, the need for a special education teacher has caused the administration to look toward hiring a full time special education teacher for the 2014-2015 school year.

2. Establish a committee that routinely reviews current curriculum. Although changes are being made next year with the adoption of new math and reading curriculums (geared to
strengthen these areas that are lacking), there is not a formal committee that is assigned to analyze curriculum on a routine basis. By creating a committee that will take the time to review state test scores and evaluate current curriculum every year, changes should be able to be made proactively when weaknesses are perceived instead of waiting until low test scores are revealed on state tests to recognize a problem and try to solve it by adopting a new curriculum, as has been previously done.

3. Improve communication between parents, staff and administration. As the school has grown, communication takes more effort and organization to ensure everyone stays informed. Although the office regularly communicates with parents weekly through a newsletter that is sent home as well as posting announcements on the school's website, many parents do not take the time to stay informed. Communication will improve when specific tasks (such as sports announcements, school events and homeroom announcements) are delegated to specific individuals to communicate in a consistent way. The lack of consistency in who communicates announcements and how that information gets communicated often leads to confusion.

4. Be intentional about developing critical thinking skills in students. Teachers are aware that this is an area that CAM needs to improve in academically. While the goal of education at CAM is not to teach to the test, a more concerted effort is needed to prepare students to be prepared to answer difficult open-ended test questions that are on the state assessments they take. One way CAM has recently tried to be intentional is by creating a new elective class in 2014 called "Mind Joggers." This class, created for third through eighth grades, is being taught once a week by a retired teacher who formerly taught at CAM. The purpose of this class is to enrich students by focusing on analyzing problems, understanding complex vocabulary used on tests.
and developing strategies for solving writing prompts and open-ended math questions by working through brain teasers, word puzzles and mind games.

5. Prepare teaching staff to meet the demands of assimilating new students into CAM by offering additional teacher in-service training. The book *Student Academic Assimilation* (written by the Association of Christian Schools International) is a great resource for training teachers how to assimilate new students to reach for and attain high academic goals. Teachers would benefit from reading this book and discussing practical changes that need to be made to meet the needs of all the students who attend CAM, especially students that come from lower socio-economic status households, like voucher recipients.

6. Develop a scope and sequence for the junior high and high school grades that will challenge all students and ensure that strong curriculum standards are being met. As CAM seeks to work toward accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International in the coming years, this is an integral part of the process that demonstrates competence and commitment to high academic standards. State standards must be accounted for and biblical integration included as teachers strive toward creating an educational atmosphere that is professional yet adequately prepares students for college.

7. Initiate orientation programs and family nights to help new families become acclimated to the culture at CAM. Special consideration should be given to first time families when they attend parent orientation to introduce them to the vision and mission of CAM. It is also important to organize casual, fun, family events at school to help families strengthen their relationships with each other and feel like they belong as a part of the CAM community. Additional effort must be taken to invite new and existing families to volunteer at school or help out with events in an effort to increase parent participation.
Although not exhaustive, the suggestions listed above outline a basic framework designed to answer some of the problems, questions and concerns raised by the administration, faculty and parents during the interview process.

**Limitations**

There were some limitations to consider regarding the research included with this study. The first limitation within this study is the size of the cooperating school and the third grade classes being analyzed. The number of students in third grade for the years test scores were collected are as follows: five students in 2009-2010, seven students in 2010-2011, 13 students in 2011-2012, and 13 students in 2012-2013. The small nature of the size of these classes means that one student's test score can alter the average of the class more drastically (positively or negatively) than they would in a public school classroom setting of 25 or more students. Additionally, smaller class size also means that there may only be one or two students representing an entire category. If there were more students represented in every category each year, the research gained from such data would be able to be statistically analyzed to determine the nature of any correlations that exists between groups. Statistical analysis would be beneficial to ensure accuracy and consistency among the various groups of students.

The second major limitation within this study is in the young nature of the cooperating school where the research was conducted. During the years the research was obtained, CAM had only been open for a total of six years. Students had only taken the ISTEP+ tests two years before the ICSP began. Since there is not a considerable amount of test score data prior to voucher students attending CAM, it is more difficult to make assumptions about the implications the voucher program has had on the school, since schools often adjust to many changes during their foundational years.
A final limitation regarding research was the limited voluntary participation of families in the survey. While an average of 68% of voucher and non-voucher families responded, the results may have been different if every family had participated in the research and expressed their opinion.

**Suggestions for Further Study**

One of the ways this thesis could be expanded further at CAM would be to analyze the ISTEP+ test results from fourth through eighth grades to see if the results from the third grade were found to be consistent across different grade levels among different subject areas.

Additionally, continued research of the ICSP and the effects it has on students who attend private schools with the voucher would be beneficial. As previously stated in the literature review, research on school choice and vouchers is limited. Since research is limited, it often lacks clear, concrete evidence due to the vast differences between the types of voucher programs, the source of their funding and how they are run by various state governments and non-profit organizations. The more substantive research that is conducted, the clearer the impact of vouchers will become.

Further research conducted on other schools that accept voucher students in Indiana would be beneficial for analyzing the success of the ICSP. Conducting research in larger as well as smaller schools from various urban and suburban settings would strengthen the goal of this thesis and project a more balanced perspective for voucher students across the state. In addition, it would be valuable to continue researching the differences between students who already were present in a private school before qualifying for a voucher and students who come to private schools for the first time with a voucher to determine how the ICSP may benefit different groups of students in various ways.
INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS

References


INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS


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INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS


APPENDIX A

Cedarville University Internal Review Board Proposal and Acceptance
Project Information:

- **Project Title:** Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on Christian Schools
- **Anticipated Start Date:** November 2013
- **Anticipated Completion Date:** March 2014

**Research Question – State your research questions and (if applicable) your hypotheses.**

Is there a significant difference between the academic performance of voucher and non-voucher students? How do incoming vouchers students’ state test scores compare with current test scores within CAM? If there is a significant difference between voucher and non-voucher students, how might instruction, accommodations and classroom structure need to be changed in order to best meet the needs of all students in order for them to succeed?

**Research Subjects – Describe the subjects your investigation will interact with. Could any be under 18 years old? How will subjects be selected? How many will be selected? Could they be considered to be part of a vulnerable population (e.g., prisoners, pregnant women, mentally impaired individuals, low income individuals, elderly)?**

1. The subjects involved in the research will be third grade students as well as previous third grade students from the past five years. I will use the combined average of their test scores as data for the study. Individual student test scores will not be used and there will not be personal interaction with these students.
2. Interviews will be conducted with the administrator, K5-12th grade teachers, and the parents of voucher and non-voucher students. A total of 30 voucher and non-voucher families will be randomly selected with the help of the administration for participation in the interviews. Participation in surveys is on a volunteer basis and may include some low-income families.

**Purpose, Population, and Methods – Describe your plan for conducting research; methods you will use; what subjects will do; types of questions they will be asked; behaviors you would expect to observe.**

1. Surveys will be distributes to all families at the Christian Academy of Madison (1 survey per family). Two different surveys will be administered based on if the family is currently receiving a voucher or not.
2. Interviews will be conducted with teachers and parents of students in the school. I expect survey participants to share their opinions and results of how the vouchers has influenced them positively or negatively.

*The surveys and interview questions have been provided with this document for your approval.*

**Potential Risks – What are the risks associated with participating in your study? Consider not only physical discomfort/harm, but also risks associated with emotional stress or confidentiality of information.**

There are no physical risks associated with participating in this study. Participation is on a volunteer basis. The purpose of the interviews are to gain personal opinions into the effectiveness of the voucher program and the parents’ perception of our school’s ability to meet the needs of students. All answers are on a volunteer basis and participants are encouraged to share their opinion.

**How do the investigators intend to minimize those risks? If physical or emotional risks are present, what resources will the investigators have available to deal with those possibilities?**

The notes or information gained during interviews will be considered anonymous. The names or any
identifiable information regarding persons interviewed will remain anonymous as well as any direct or indirect quotes that may be used in the thesis. During the interviews, participants may choose not to answer a specific question if they are uncomfortable with the content being asked.

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<th>What are the potential benefits of your study to: 1) the participants themselves; 2) persons other than the participants. If there are none, indicate “None”</th>
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<td>1. The potential benefits of the study are to see if there are weaknesses present at CAM, and to suggest ways that CAM can continue to become a stronger school as it continues to grow with the increased enrollment due to the voucher program. The hope is that the results of this study will better meet the needs of all students so they may succeed in every way (academically and spiritually).</td>
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<td>2. The value of creating a stronger school may benefit students (primarily) as well as parents, teachers, and the administration.</td>
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Consent Process – Describe the consent process that will be used to ensure participants freely agree to participate. Attach a copy of an informed consent statement or text of a verbal request for consent where applicable. Provide rationale if requesting consent is to be waived (e.g., no connection between participant and the data collected).

1. For Indiana state test score data, no consent is necessary since all data will remain anonymous and there will be no connection between an individual participant and the data collected.
2. For surveys that each family will complete, all data gathered will be returned anonymously and participation is on a volunteer basis.
3. For interviews, a consent form describing the procedure, risks, and anonymity will be given to each participant to sign before conducting an interview.

External Consent – If your research is being conducted outside of Cedarville University list the agencies/locations at which research will be conducted. Approval from the CU IRB would be provided contingent on receiving documentation indicating approval from an official of that agency/location (e.g., signed permission document on letterhead). If no external agencies are involved, indicate “NONE.” For researchers requesting to conduct research under the primary supervision of another University or organization with their own Institutional Review Board, please provide documentation of the approval of that Board.

Christian Academy of Madison; Madison, Indiana

Submission of Materials – List below or provide (as an attachment) information that will be used with your subjects including survey or interview questions.

*Surveys and interview questions are attached with this document.

Dissemination – Describe your plan for any dissemination, publication, or presentation of your data and the results of your study.

Once my thesis is complete, I would like to present it to my administrator and the school board at my school. The goal of my thesis is to determine the academic and spiritual strengths and weaknesses in my school and to determine what, if any effect the vouchers may or may not have had on our school.

Since many other schools in Indiana are also adjusting to the changes that have taken place in their schools since the implementation of the voucher program, I would be willing to share the results of my thesis with them as well.

Other Documentation:

All research projects involving human subjects conducted at, or in association with Cedarville University require submission of this General Project Information (Form IRB-A) and at least one of the two IRB forms indicated below. Indicate which of the following are being included with this general project information:

- Form IRB-B – Request for Exempt Status
- □ Additional materials such as surveys, test questions, etc.
- □ Form IRB-C – Request for Full or Expedited Review
- □ Proposed statement of informed consent

The following assurance statements apply to this document and any associated documents indicated above or otherwise submitted to the Institutional Review Board as part of this proposal.

Assurance Statements:

I have read Cedarville University’s policy concerning research involving human subjects and by signing below:

1. I agree to accept responsibility for the ethical conduct of research conducted in this project;
2. I agree to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board prior to modifying procedures that might substantially affect this project.

3. I attest that the information submitted in this application and all associated documents is true to the best of my knowledge.

**Students:** send your application to your faculty advisor. Submission using your CU email account serves as your signature and pledge to abide by the conditions stated above. No original signatures are required. If submitting electronically please type names and date of submission below.

**Non-CU Affiliated Researchers:** Cedarville University requires that those wishing to conduct research using CU students, faculty, or staff as subjects be sponsored by a CU faculty member or office with expertise or responsibilities related to the subject matter of the study. Applications should be sent to the sponsoring faculty member or department supporting your research.

**Faculty or Sponsoring Departments:** submit applications and attachments by email to @cedarville.edu. Submission using your CU email account serves as your signature and pledge to abide by the conditions stated above. No original signatures are required. If submitting electronically please type names and date of submission below.

**Lead Investigator Signature:** Rebekah Read  Date: October 30, 2013

(Submitting through your CU email account serves as your signature.)

**Faculty Sponsor Signature:** 

(Date:

(Submitting through your CU email account serves as your signature.)
Request for Exempt Status (IRB-B)
Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lead Investigator Name:</th>
<th>Rebekah Read</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on a Christian School</td>
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All research involving human subjects must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board for review and approval prior to implementation. While such research may be exempt from review, the principal investigator must still submit general project information (Form IRB-A), to the Review Committee or its designated representative along with this form (IRB-B) which provides justification for an exemption. We do this for the purpose of documenting all research on human subjects, for the protection of human subjects and the researchers. Determination on exemption must be made by the review committee or its designated representative. It is not at the discretion of the investigator and research may not be conducted without prior approval.

To be exempt from review, the research must satisfy the following conditions. Please check to indicate that each condition is satisfied:

- The research does not pose more than a minimal risk to the research participants, where minimal risk is defined as follows:
  - "A risk is minimal where the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests."
- The research does not involve pregnant women, fetuses, human in vitro fertilization, or prisoners.

The research must fit into at least one of the categories for research that is exempt from review. At least one category must be selected and sub-requirements must be selected where applicable.

1. Research will be conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings (e.g. schools, training centers) involving normal educational practices, such as research on instructional strategies or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. The activities in which the students engage will be practices that would occur in the absence of any research. Interacting with students about those educational practices (surveys, interviews, etc.) would disqualify research from being exempt within this category.

2. Research will involve the use of 1) educational tests (e.g. cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement) OR, 2) survey procedures OR, 3) interview procedures (which includes focus groups) OR, 4) observation of public behavior uninfluenced by the research.

Check the appropriate boxes below:
- This research will not include subjects less than 18 years of age OR
- the research involves the observation of public behavior and the researcher will not participate in the observed activity (no surveys or interviews and no videotaping of students during instruction)

AND EITHER:
- information obtained will be recorded in such a manner that subjects could not be identified directly or through information obtained that could be used to identify the subject. (Note: Audio Recording of subjects is considered and identifiable record)

OR:
- any disclosure of the subjects’ responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, reputation, or put them at risk of disciplinary action at Cedarville University.
| 3 | ☒ Research will involve the use of educational tests survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is NOT exempt under category 2 but is exempt in this category because: the subjects will be elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office OR, federal statutes require without exception that confidentiality of collected information must be maintained beyond the end of the research (e.g. course grades). |
| 4 | ☐ This research involves the study of existing data or specimens and: the data is publicly available OR, CU researchers have never or will never have access to data with subject identifying information (original collected data may have identifiers but it must be edited before CU researchers have access and the data must arrive on campus without identifiers to qualify). |
| 5 | ☐ This research will be funded or conducted at the request of, and approved by the head of a federal agency for the purpose of studying: A public benefit or service program, OR, Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under a program, OR, Changes in payment or alternatives to a public benefit or service program. |
| 6 | ☐ This research involves taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies where: wholesome foods without additives are consumed OR: if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. |

Research approved as being exempt from IRB review generally do not require additional information beyond the general project information (Form IRB-A) and this Request for Exempt Status. Additional information may be requested to verify the status of your proposal as exempt.

IRB Proposal Acceptance E-mail:

Master of Education Thesis Proposal

Rebekah Read - rebekah.read@gmail.com>
To: Rebekah Read, Merlin F Ager - rebekah.read@gmail.com>

Rebekah,

This proposal is approved to proceed as specified.

Thanks,

Jessica Zehring
[Graded and Hidden]
APPENDIX B

School Administrator Consent
Dr. Merlin Ager  
Cedarville University  
251 N Main St.  
Cedarville, OH 45314

October 23, 2013

Dr. Ager:

I am writing to let you know that I have given my second grade teacher, Rebekah Read, who is a graduate student under your advisement, permission to conduct surveys and interviews and to collect state testing data and scores for her thesis project entitled "Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on a Christian School."

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at (812) ______ or ______@camdefenders.com. Thank you for allowing Rebekah to work with our school on this project!

In His service,

Anna Gosman

Anna Gosman, M.Ed., Administrator  
Christian Academy of Madison

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – 2 Timothy 2:15
APPENDIX C

Letter of Explanation For Surveys
Dear CAM Family,

I am nearing the completion of a Masters degree of Education that I have been working on for several years now. My final project is to write a thesis on a subject of my choice. In reflecting about what I wanted to do, I realized I wanted to do a project that would be beneficial to my school and the students that I teach. I have chosen to conduct my research on the Indiana Choice Scholarship voucher program and its impact on CAM.

As our school has continued to grow significantly over the past few years, I want to study the impact this program has had on our enrollment, academics and school atmosphere. The goal of my study is to discover what our strengths and weaknesses are as a school and to offer suggestions to make our school stronger both academically and spiritually. It is my desire that this study would aid and benefit all students so that they would be able to receive the best education possible while making the Christian Academy of Madison as strong of a school as possible.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary but would be greatly appreciated. All survey results will be anonymous. I will only use your responses to statistically analyze patterns and attitudes parents have toward CAM. The greater percentage of parent participation I receive, the better idea I will have of the true nature of our school and the ideals that matter the most to the families that represent CAM.

Whether you are currently receiving the Indiana Choice Scholarship or not, or even if you do not know much about this program, your participation in this survey is still important and beneficial for my research project. Would you consider taking 10 minutes to complete this survey?

Thank you!
Rebekah Read

Survey Instructions:
1. Do not write your name on the survey
2. Please answer all questions as thoroughly you can, being as honest as you can.
3. Return the survey in the sealed envelope provided to your child's teacher. I will be given all the surveys at one time once they have been collected.
4. If at all possible, please return the survey before Thanksgiving break by November 26, 2013.
APPENDIX D

Family Surveys
INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS

Voucher Family Survey

1. Which voucher program are you currently receiving?
   - Tax Credit Scholarship Program (SGO)
   - Indiana Choice Scholarship

2. If you are receiving the Indiana Choice Scholarship voucher, how did you receive your current voucher/scholarship?
   - My child came to CAM from a public school and received the voucher
   - My child previously attended CAM, then went to public school and returned to CAM with the voucher
   - My child received the SGO scholarship in the past and qualified to receive the voucher
   - Other children in our family received the voucher because a sibling previously received the voucher
   - My child received for the voucher because they qualify for special needs

3. How long has your child(ren) been attending CAM?
   - 1-2 years
   - 3-4 years
   - 5+ years

4. Does your child(ren) receive special services at CAM? (Check all that apply)
   - My child does not receive any special services at CAM.
   - IEP
   - 504 plan
   - Special services through the public schools (speech, occupational or physical therapy)
   - One-on one tutoring or small group assistance with an aid at CAM
   - Title 1 Reading Intervention tutoring

5. Please rank the following considerations for sending your child to CAM from 1 being the most important reason and 8 being the least important reason why you would send your child to CAM. (Use each number one time)
   - Lower teacher to student ratio than other schools; more individualized instruction and help.
   - Education is taught from a Biblical worldview with an emphasis on Bible instruction.
   - Moral standards/Godly atmosphere.
   - Loving, family atmosphere (between teachers, families and students).
   - Strong academic curriculum and educational standards.
   - Successful state testing scores
   - CAM is recognized at a state accredited school.
   - Reputation of the school within the community.
INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS

6. Why do you choose to keep your child(ren) at CAM?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

7. Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree, to 5 being strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am supportive of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM has a friendly, family atmosphere.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM has high academic standards.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM can adequately prepare my child for college.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my experience at CAM.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM has excellent teachers who are qualified to teach my child.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM strives to meet the specific needs of every student.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend CAM to other families.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education is important for our children.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM has made a positive impact on my child.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has shown more interest in spiritual things since attending CAM.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child would still attend CAM even without a voucher.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. If you could change one thing about CAM, what would it be?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
1. What is the most important reason why you initially chose CAM for your child(ren)?

- [ ] I heard about CAM from someone who had a child enrolled here.
- [ ] I wanted my child to be educated in a Christian school.
- [ ] CAM has a good reputation in the community.
- [ ] CAM seemed to be a better option than other schools in the area.
- [ ] Other: ____________________________________________________________________________

2. How long has your child(ren) been attending CAM?

- [ ] 1-2 years
- [ ] 3-4 years
- [ ] 5+ years

3. Does your child(ren) receive special services at CAM? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] My child does not receive any special services at CAM.
- [ ] IEP
- [ ] 504 plan
- [ ] Special services through the public schools (speech, occupational or physical therapy)
- [ ] One-on one tutoring or small group assistance with an aid at CAM
- [ ] Title 1 Reading Intervention tutoring

4. Please rank the following considerations for sending your child to CAM from 1 being the most important reason and 8 being the least important reason why you would send your child to CAM. (Use each number one time)

   - [ ] Lower teacher to student ratio than other schools; more individualized instruction and help.
   - [ ] Education is taught from a Biblical worldview with an emphasis on Bible instruction.
   - [ ] Moral standards/Godly atmosphere.
   - [ ] Loving, family atmosphere (between teachers, families and students).
   - [ ] Strong academic curriculum and educational standards.
   - [ ] Successful state testing scores
   - [ ] CAM is recognized at a state accredited school.
   - [ ] Reputation of the school within the community.
5. Why do you choose to keep your child(ren) at CAM?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree, to 5 being strongly agree.

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has shown more interest in spiritual things since attending CAM.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If you could change one thing about CAM, what would it be?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX E

Letter of Explanation for Interviews
Dear ______________________________,

As I am continuing to gather research for my thesis project, I would like to interview as many CAM families as possible regarding their opinion of CAM, the voucher program and ways we can continue to grow as a school. Would you be willing to be interviewed for my thesis research? Even if you do not know much about the voucher program, your opinion about CAM and how our school is doing as a whole would be greatly appreciated. All answers, quotes and information used in my thesis will remain completely anonymous and no information specifically identifying you would be used. The interview should take no longer than 15 minutes.

I would like to conduct as many interviews as possible in the next two weeks before Christmas break. I have a 2:20 interview time available during my planning period each day if you would prefer to come right before dismissal, or I will stay as late as necessary after school to accommodate your schedule.

I am including a release form with this letter letting you know more specific details and benefits of participating in this interview. If you have questions, please let me know. If you would be willing to participate in an interview please fill out the bottom of this form and return it to me at school.

Thank you,

Rebekah Read

______________________________

Name: ________________________

______ I am willing to be interviewed for Rebekah Read’s thesis research project.

The best day/time for me is: ____________________________________________________

You can contact me at (cell or e-mail): ____________________________________________
APPENDIX F

Interview Informed Consent and Agreement
Interview Consent Form and Agreement

Project Title: Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on a Christian School

I agree to take part in a research study titled "Indiana Choice Scholarships and Their Impact on a Christian School," which is being conducted by Rebekah Read of Christian Academy of Madison (812-987-6543) under the direction of Dr. Merlin Ager of the Department of Education at Cedarville University (937-472-2345). My participation is voluntary; I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records or destroyed.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to aid in research to determine how the Indiana Choice Scholarship program has impacted the Christian Academy of Madison (positively or negatively). As the Christian Academy of Madison has grown significantly in the past few years, largely in part to the Choice Scholarships being offered, this study is designed to evaluate how the school has grown academically, spiritually and socially.

Benefits:

Through the research obtained, the benefits that I may expect from it are to recognize the impact of this program and to make suggestions for the future of the Christian Academy of Madison that would aid and benefit all students to be able to receive the best education possible while making the Christian Academy of Madison as strong of a school as possible.

Procedures:

The procedures are as follows: if you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at the Christian Academy of Madison at a time of your choice. The interview will involve questions about the Indiana Choice Scholarship program, its relevance to your children, and the possible impact it may have on the Christian Academy of Madison. The interview should last about 15 minutes. With your permission, I will take notes during the interview. I expect to conduct only one interview; however, a follow-up may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by email/phone to request this.

Discomforts or Stresses:

No discomforts or stresses are expected. The interview questions are not designed to make you uncomfortable or upset. However, you are free to decline any questions you don't wish to answer for any reason. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, or if you don't wish to continue, you may stop the interview at any time.
INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS

Risks:

No risks are expected by participating in this study.

Anonymous:

Your interview data will be handled as anonymous. Notes taken during the interview will be saved without your name or other identifying information written in the documents. As results of this study are published or presented, no individual names or other personally identifiable information will be used in the writing of this thesis.

All information collected during the interview will be kept strictly confidential until research is complete and my thesis has been accepted, upon which time I will delete interview records. No publications or reports from this project will include identifying information on any participant, and the results of this participation will be anonymous.

Further Questions:

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the interview and can be reached by telephone at 812-.

Final Agreement and Consent Form Copy:

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form. Please sign both copies and return one to the researcher.

Name of Researcher: Rebekah Read

Signature: ___________________________ Date: _________________

Telephone: (812)- Email: @camdefenders.com

Name of Participant: ___________________________ Date: _________________

Signature: ___________________________
APPENDIX G

Interview Questions for Administration, Teachers and Parents
Interview Questions for Administration & Teachers:
1. How long have you been teaching at CAM?
2. How familiar are you with the current voucher programs that affect our school?
3. In your opinion, what is one of CAM's strengths as a school?
4. In your opinion, what is one of CAM’s weaknesses as a school?
5. Are you aware of which students in your class currently receive the voucher? If so, do you notice any differences between voucher and non-voucher students?
6. Has the voucher program affected our school? If so, in what ways?
7. (If the teacher has taught 3 years or more...) Are there any academic, behavior or social changes that you have noticed at CAM that have happened in the past 3 years as our school has grown significantly?
8. What is your opinion of the voucher program?

Interview Questions for Parents whose children receive the Indiana Choice Scholarship Voucher:
1. How long have your children attended CAM?
2. How did your family receive the voucher? How has receiving the voucher impacted your family?
3. Why did you choose to send your child to CAM?
4. Please describe how satisfied you are with having your child(ren) at CAM by rating it on a 1 to 10 scale with 1 being highly dissatisfied to 10 being highly satisfied.
5. What is the most important goal that you have for your children academically?
6. How satisfied are you with CAM's academic programs? Family atmosphere? Quality of teachers? Spiritual atmosphere?
7. If you had to compare CAM to other schools in the community, how would you compare them? (Academics, teachers, atmosphere, sports, etc.)
8. If you could change one thing about CAM, what would it be?
9. How has CAM changed as it has grown larger?
10. Any further thoughts, questions or comments about your experience at CAM?

Interview Questions for Parents who do not receive the voucher:
1. How long have your children attended CAM?
2. Why did you choose to send your child to CAM?
3. What is the most important goal that you have for your children academically?
4. Please describe how satisfied you are with having your child(ren) at CAM by rating it on a 1 to 10 scale with 1 being highly dissatisfied to 10 being highly satisfied.
5. How satisfied are you with CAM's academic programs? Family atmosphere? Quality of teachers? Spiritual atmosphere?
6. If you had to compare CAM to other schools in the community, how would you compare them? (Academics, teachers, atmosphere, sports, etc.)
7. If you could change one thing about CAM, what would it be?
8. How familiar are you with the Indiana Choice Scholarship program that affects many students at CAM?
9. What is your opinion of the voucher program? Do you think it helps CAM or not?
10. How has CAM changed as the school has grown?
11. Any further thoughts, questions or comments about your experience at CAM?