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**THE POLITICS OF SCHOOL VOUCHERS:
ANALYZING THE MILWAUKEE PARENTAL CHOICE PLAN¹**

In school voucher systems, parents control a portion of the taxpayer funds allocated for public education, often for use toward private school tuition. Typically, vouchers are issued to families on behalf of their children. Each family can then apply their voucher to a school of their choosing. The school exchanges the voucher for payment directly from the government. Vouchers are either *universal* or *targeted*. Universal vouchers are available to all parents within a jurisdiction while targeted vouchers are available only to a particular subset of the population. Currently, there are five publicly-funded school voucher plans: the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program, Utah's Special Needs Scholarship, the federally-funded Washington, D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, and Ohio's pilot EdChoice program (see Table 1).² All of these public voucher systems are targeted.

The MPCP is the oldest and largest publicly-funded voucher system in operation. The program is available to all qualified students living in Milwaukee from pre-kindergarten through high school. For the 2006-07 school year, the program had a total enrollment of 17,410 students.

¹ Rand Quinn prepared this case under the supervision of (and minor funding from) Professor Daniel A. McFarland for the purpose of class instruction. Stanford University grants permission to reproduce and distribute this case for the sole purpose of education and research. Users may not create derivatives of the case without the express written permission of Stanford University and they may not commercially exploit the case or any material derived from it. The case is provided "as is" without any warranty. Stanford University makes no claims on the accuracy or currency of information within the case, and is not liable for how it is used. All copies must include the following notice on the inside cover: "©2007 The Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. All rights reserved. All or portions of this material include copyrighted materials belonging to Stanford University. To obtain a commercial license please contact Imelda Oropeza at Imelda@stanford.edu." Any other use of the case in whole or part is prohibited. © 2007 The Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. All rights reserved.

² In addition to publicly-funded vouchers, there are privately-funded vouchers in several jurisdictions, including foundation-administered programs in New York City, Dayton, and Washington, D.C., as well as a nationwide program run by the Children's Scholarship Fund. There are also programs (called "tuitioning") in Maine and Vermont that provide assistance to students in rural areas for which there are no public schools. *Also* In 2003, Colorado began implementation of their Opportunity Contract program of school vouchers, but it was found to have violated a school board local control provision of the state constitution and was subsequently struck down by the Colorado Supreme Court in 2004. Florida's Opportunity Scholarship Program allowed students who attended failing public schools to choose a higher performing public school or a participating private school. In 2002, a Florida state court invalidated the Opportunity Scholarship Program as the state constitution forbids the use of tax money to aid a sectarian institution, but the program continued while the case was appealed. In August 2004, the Appeals Court upheld the unconstitutionality of the program, but certified it to the Florida Supreme Court for further appeal. In January 2006, the Florida Supreme Court ruled that the private school option unconstitutional. The option to attend another public school remains. In 2005, Congress created a one-time nonpublic school tuition assistance program providing up to \$6,000 for regular education students and \$7,500 for special education students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The majority of students attend private school but some apply their vouchers for home schooling costs while others use it for transportation costs associated with transferring to another public school within the district. The voucher currently provides either \$6,501 a year or the private school’s annual cost per student, if it is less. To qualify, a first-time voucher recipient’s household income must be at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). The income limit for continuing voucher students and their siblings is 220% of the FPL. Private schools that choose to participate in the program must accept any student who meets the eligibility criteria. In other words, prior test scores, religion, income level, and other characteristics *may not* be used to screen out applicants. If more voucher students apply to a school than there is space available, a lottery is held to determine who can enroll.

Table 1. Publicly-Funded Voucher Programs (all targeted).

Jurisdiction	Program	Est.	Grades	Eligibility	Initial Enrollment	Enrollment (Year)	# of Schools (Year)	Maximum Payment (Year)
Milwaukee	MPCP	1990	preK-12	Low-income	341	17,410 (2007)	121 (2007)	\$6,501 (2007)
Cleveland	CSTP	1996	K-8	Low-income	1,996	3,797 (2001)	45 (2007)	\$3,450 (2006)
Ohio	EdChoice	2006	K-12	Failing school	~2,600	~2,600 (2006)	320 (2007)	\$4,250/\$5,000 (2007)
Utah	SNS	2005	K-12	Special needs	134	~300 (2006)	26 (2007)	\$3,626/6,043 (2007)
D.C.	OSP	2004	K-5	Low-income	1,000	~1,800 (2007)	66 (2007)	\$7,500 (2007)

Note. Adapted from Howell & Peterson (2002).

The education “problems” that vouchers solve

Quality and equity are the two issues that drive most modern education reform³ efforts. The public generally regards urban school systems to be of poor quality across the board and in need of significant improvement. In addition, disparities in achievement based on inequitable school experiences are an ongoing and significant challenge. Voucher proponents frame universal vouchers as a way to address the school quality issue and targeted vouchers as a way to address the school equity issue (see Table 2). In this section we describe indicators of quality and equity in public education and how these issues are addressed in the rhetoric of vouchers.

To this day, perhaps the most well-known indicator of the poor quality of our schools is *A Nation at Risk* and its warning of a “rising tide of mediocrity” in society.⁴ This 1983 national report connected America’s slipping position in industry and commerce to a mediocre education system. In the years following the report, many states created educational accountability systems in an effort to improve school quality (Kirst, 1990). More recently, elements of the federal No Child Left Behind⁵ act attempt to improve overall school quality by requiring states to make yearly progress on the percentage of students who are proficient in math, English language arts, and, beginning in the 2007-08 school year, science. International achievement rankings are also

³ Here, we use Tyack and Cuban's definition of education reform: the "planned efforts to change schools in order to correct perceived social and educational problems" (1995, p.4).

⁴ *A Nation at Risk* is a 1983 report on the state of public education released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

⁵ Public Law 107-110. The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Major components include: standards based testing, opportunities for school choice and charter schools, academic proficiency levels, and teacher quality and qualifications.

common indicators used to argue that school quality is poor. Each year TIMMS⁶ scores are published, editorials and op-eds are written lamenting the fact that American students trail their peers abroad in math and science.

Despite gains in recent years in student achievement, there remains a prevailing sense that our schools are failing. According to recent polling done by Phi Delta Kappa and Gallup, only 21% of adults believe that public schools as a whole deserve an ‘A’ or ‘B’ (i.e., above average) grade (Rose & Gallup, 2006). For parents with children in public schools, the percentage is even less. Voucher proponents argue that universal vouchers are a solution to the problem of low school quality because they introduce market-based competition into the public education system, thereby prompting all schools to improve.

Table 2. Two Views of Vouchers.

Orientation	Problem	Indicators	Policy Alternative	Political Environment
Quality	On average, public schools are underperforming, impacting all students.	<i>A Nation at Risk</i> . TIMMS. Opinion polling on the state of education.	Universal vouchers	Hostile
Equity	The variation within public schools is too great and disproportionately impacts poor students	Achievement gap (race, class, urbanicity). Parental satisfaction polling.	Targeted vouchers	Receptive

The second issue, school inequity, speaks to the variation of quality and achievement within the public school system. While poor quality is a systemic problem, school inequity is a relational problem that is limited only to those assigned to underperforming classrooms, schools, or districts. Many studies show a disparity in standardized test scores by race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and urbanicity—the so-called achievement gap. As many as two-thirds of students in high-poverty urban schools perform “below basic” on the NAEP⁷ compared with only one-third of students in non-urban areas. And more than half of students in underperforming schools fail to graduate in four years (Olson & Jerald, 1998). Further indicators of the achievement gap problem can be found in public perception. Residents in predominantly white neighborhoods are more satisfied with their schools than residents in black neighborhoods. In 1996, 43% of all respondents to the PDK/Gallup poll, compared with 36% of black respondents, had a favorable opinion of their local school (Rose & Lowell, 1996).⁸

Closely tied with the achievement gap is a resource gap, the considerable variation of resources found across districts and even across schools within a district. A portion of school expenditures is derived from local property taxes. Districts located in areas with a large tax base have the advantage. And although several states have attempted to equalize funding across districts, wealthy neighborhoods are able to supplement their local schools through fundraisers and donations. But perhaps more important than district-by-district funding differences is the

⁶ The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides data on the math and science achievement of students by country.

⁷ National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a federal testing program that provides state-by-state data on student performance.

⁸ The most recent published PDK/Gallup Poll breakdown by race for this question was in 1996.

effect staffing trends have on schools. More experienced teachers tend to avoid schools with high minority and high poverty rates. Teachers without seniority and therefore without much teaching experience are placed in the very schools that are most in need. This situation is unlikely to change because of contract provisions bargained with teachers unions. School voucher proponents argue that targeted vouchers solve the equity problem by providing disadvantaged students with an expanded set of educational opportunities, thereby closing the achievement gap.

During the voucher discussions of the late 1980s, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) was one of the lowest-performing districts in the state, ranking last or near last on several indicators of achievement (Van Dunk & Dickman, 2003). MPS was a predominantly African American district: nearly 60% of the students were black, 30% were white, and 10% were Latino. Over 75% of the district qualified for free or reduced lunch and it ranked last in property value per student, making it one of the poorest districts in the state. The establishment of the MPCP voucher program hinged on two factors: the vast difference in quality across districts, between urban and suburban schools, and the vast difference in opportunity within the district, between wealthy and poor students.

Political cleavage on school vouchers

In general, Republicans support school vouchers while Democrats do not. Since the 1980s, national Republican politicians including Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Robert Dole, and George W. Bush have been outspoken advocates of vouchers. On the other hand, national Democrats including Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and John Kerry have been vocal critics.⁹ Republican governors spearheaded four of the existing publicly-funded voucher programs: Tommy Thompson was governor of Wisconsin during the establishment of the Milwaukee plan, George Voinovich oversaw Cleveland's program, Bob Taft established Ohio's EdChoice, and Jon Huntsman, Jr. signed Utah's plan into law. As for the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship, it was created by a Republican-led Congress and signed by President Bush. In terms of institutional support, organizations aligned with the Democrats are generally opposed to vouchers. The AFL-CIO, including the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association are opposed to vouchers. Traditional national civil rights organizations including the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the American Civil Liberties Union are opposed as well. This same dynamic holds for the general public. The Gallup Poll recently found that while 68% of Republicans are for school vouchers only 46% of Democrats favor them (Gallup, 2000).

School vouchers are very clearly a Republican concept of school reform. Yet, by framing vouchers as a solution to the problem of school equity, voucher proponents have successfully attracted support from African Americans, one of the most consistent voting blocs for Democrats. The 2002 National Opinion Poll conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies asked the question: "Would you support a voucher system where parents would get money from the government to send their children to the public, private, or parochial school of their choice?" The survey found that while whites were just about equally divided on the question, a solid majority of blacks were in favor of such a system (Table 3). And while support for vouchers in the general population decreases with educational attainment, even at the post-graduate level, blacks are supportive of vouchers. The same Joint Center poll found that a

⁹ Of course there are politicians who break from their ranks. Republican governor of California Pete Wilson was opposed to a 1993 school voucher initiative (Proposition 174) and Democratic vice-presidential and presidential candidate Joe Lieberman has supported school vouchers.

majority of Democrats and a majority of liberals oppose vouchers; however, a majority of black Democrats and liberals support them (Bositis, 2002).

The legitimacy gained by the voucher movement once it was able to find support from black legislators makes it difficult for liberal Democrats to effectively argue against voucher programs. Referring to two black elected officials who were early supporters of school vouchers, Polly Williams in Wisconsin and Lawrence Patrick of Detroit, Raspberry (1990) writes, “Williams and Patrick are black, and it matters. As long as white conservatives were the driving force behind vouchers, tax credits and other choice mechanisms, the mostly liberal education establishment found it easy to discredit them as not really interested in the education of poor children but only in their own arcane doctrines” (p. 21).

Targeted programs are currently the only type of vouchers that can bring together conservatives and blacks. This is because a voucher program that targets those most in need can work to decrease inequity by providing certain students an expanded set of educational options. Low-income enrollees have a choice of schools available to them at no greater cost whereas all other students must settle for their assigned school or pay for private schooling out of pocket. In a universal system, all families—privileged or not—have access to vouchers of the same dollar amount. Such a broadly inclusive system, while favored by market orientation advocates, would likely maintain or possibly even increase inequity as it simply amounts to a subsidy for largely white, upper-middle class families (Witte, 2000).

Table 3. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, National Opinion Poll, Vouchers 2002. Percent

<i>Selected subgroups</i>	<i>Black Population</i>		<i>General Population</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total	57.4	42.6	51.7	48.3
White (not Hispanic)	-	-	51.4	48.6
Less than HS	57.9	42.1	64.8	35.2
BA/BS degree	54.9	45.1	50.1	49.9
Postgrad	53.8	46.2	45.2	54.8
Liberal	55.7	44.3	45.3	54.7
Democrat	56.2	43.8	47.2	52.8
Have Children	67.0	33.0	56.3	43.7
No Children	52.1	47.9	49.4	50.6

Source: Bositis, D. A. (2002) National opinion poll. Education. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Table 5.

The item reads: *Would you support a voucher system where parents would get money from the government to send their children to the public, private, or parochial school of their choice?*

Coalition-building

Political factors such as public opinion, partisan concerns, the ideological distribution of policymakers, and interest group lobbying can work against any proposal, no matter how complementary it may be to a policy problem. In the case of school vouchers, the political environment of recent years has been generally hostile towards universal systems yet receptive to targeted systems that hold promise for equity and that have earned legitimacy by garnering the support of an educationally disadvantaged constituency.

This requirement has resulted in the formation of interesting political alliances in which predominantly white conservatives join forces with predominantly liberal black leaders to argue for vouchers on the grounds of educational equity. In their description of such an alliance in Milwaukee, Van Dunk & Dickman (2003) state that “political conservatives who were mainly

identified with a market approach to public education had to find allies among political liberals from low-income constituencies in Milwaukee. The latter were not necessarily market advocates. They were legislators and policymakers who in many cases felt that the traditional benefits of market economics had bypassed their constituents. They supported vouchers for low-income families as a solution to a failing urban public school system” (p. 13).

Republican Tommy Thompson, a former Wisconsin assemblyperson who was elected governor in 1987, was the originator of the Milwaukee voucher program. As governor, he pushed for a voucher proposal to be added to the 1988-89 state budget bill, Assembly Bill 816. It proposed a fairly expansive voucher program (see Table 4). If passed, it would have been available to residents in Milwaukee County (as opposed to only those residing within the city limits), there would have been no set standards or reporting requirements for the schools in the program, and students would have been able to apply their vouchers to religious schools. Democrat Annette “Polly” Williams—an African American assemblyperson representing a majority black district in Milwaukee—opposed the voucher plan. It was easily removed from the state budget bill by the then controlling Democrats (Witte, 2000). Thompson tried again in 1989. His second attempt, Senate Bill 31 (attached to the omnibus budget), excluded religious schools. But even with this major concession, the bill was opposed by Williams and was once again removed from the budget by the Democrats. It became clear that without support from the Democrats, Thompson had little short-term hope of passing voucher legislation.

A bipartisan coalition formed later that year when Williams and Thompson decided to develop a voucher proposal that would find support from enough Democrats without losing its Republican base. In October 1989, Williams introduced Assembly Bill 601, a voucher proposal that was limited to the city of Milwaukee. In the Assembly, 36 Republicans and 11 Democrats cosponsored the bill while in the Senate it found nine Republican and three Democrat cosponsors. But this support was not sufficient. A series of deals were made to bring other key decision makers into the coalition. Of particular importance was Wisconsin’s lone black senator, Gary George, whose support was key as he was co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee (Witte, 2000).

Table 4. Versions of Milwaukee Voucher Proposals

Bill	Year	Religious Schools?	Cap Enrollment?	Eligible Region	School Standards?	Thompson Support?	Williams Support?	Result
AB 816	1988	Yes	No	Milwaukee County	No	Yes	No	Defeated
SB 31	1989	No	No	Milwaukee County	No	Yes	No	Defeated
AB 601	1989	No	Yes	City of Milwaukee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Passed

Witte, p. 43

The bill, as passed by the Joint Finance Committee, was limited to nonreligious schools and to families with incomes no more than 175% of the FPL. In addition, the Committee required the program to be a time-limited experiment, placed limits on the maximum number of vouchers available, restricted the total amount of the vouchers, imposed an annual evaluation, and required a lottery for students in situations where demand exceeded space available (see Table 5). These amendments were enough to attract two other black representatives, Spencer Cogg and Gwendolyn Moore, both from Milwaukee. Its passage out of the legislature was

subsequently guaranteed when George added it to a budget bill. Prior to signing it, Thompson vetoed the provision of the bill that deemed the program experimental (Witte, 2000).

Assembly Bill 601 was amended until just enough support for passage was gained, a minimal winning coalition. Witte (2000) states that while “no direct votes on the bill were taken, a key procedural vote to kill a third reading of the bill lost by one vote in the Assembly on a 48 to 48 tie” (p. 44). In the case of the MPCP, there was no reason to amend the bill more than what was minimally necessary. The compromises made in order to keep the MPCP proposal alive resulted in a program that had just enough appeal for both types of voucher supporters: those who advocated for free-market concepts as well as those who advocated for improving educational equity for Milwaukee’s African American and poor students.

Williams and Thompson formed an uneasy partnership. Given the liberal-conservative cleavage on the school voucher issue, both camps needed each other. Republicans needed legitimacy plus a portion of the traditionally liberal vote to pass vouchers. On the other side, African Americans could not count on their party, the Democrats, to push for vouchers and so relied upon Republicans to support the proposed legislation.¹⁰

Table 5. Restrictions placed on voucher proposals

Bill (Year)	Author/Owner	Religious schools	County-wide	No enrollment cap	Current private school students	No Lottery	No Performance Standards	No Annual Study	Non-Experimental
AB 816 (1988)	Thompson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SB 31 (1989)	Thompson	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AB 601 (1989)	Williams	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
--as amended by JFC	George	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
--as signed by Governor	Thompson	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

Data from Witte (2000).

Implementation of MPCP

The development of the MPCP took place primarily within the confines of the Wisconsin Legislature. Lawmakers ultimately had the authority and responsibility to determine how the voucher program would be implemented. Because Polly Williams had greater influence than Tommy Thompson over black legislators who were key to its final passage, the final bill leaned toward educational equity whereas the original proposal was market oriented.

Although the Wisconsin Legislature was directly responsible for crafting the MPCP, there were several key actors influencing the program from the outside. Polly Williams’ main outside supporters were Howard Fuller, a government administrator and long-time community organizer, and George Mitchell, a Milwaukee business executive who had been appointed

¹⁰ This alliance has been most prominent in the establishment of the MPCP but signs of similar alliances can be found in Cleveland and Washington, D. C., two other areas where publicly-funded voucher systems are in place.

director of a governor's study commission on Milwaukee education (Witte, 2000). Rather than individual community leaders, Tommy Thompson's supporters were largely institutional. The governor's early efforts to establish a universal voucher program received support from a handful of influential conservative foundations and research institutes. These included the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation, the Heritage Foundation, and the Hudson Institute.

In 1990, once MPCP took effect, direct influence was no longer confined to the Capitol. It was now one program of many competing for Milwaukee's students in the local education environment. MPCP was a small program in a system that included public schools, non-denominational private schools, and religious schools. All of these schools and the MPCP were interdependent sub-systems. A school failing to enroll enough students would risk closure. Similarly, if the MPCP failed to attract enough students it would be deemed unnecessary, giving lawmakers an opportunity to shut down the program.

Shifting Alliances

MPCP began with a dedicated core of supporters representing primarily low-income African American residents. But over time, black leaders that worked on behalf of the program were co-opted by more powerful conservative and predominantly white business interests and advocates of religious schools (Witte, 2000). There were early signs of co-optation. For instance, during the legislative debates over AB 601 (the bill that would eventually pass), Shirley Krug, an assemblyperson who represented white working-class constituents, called for half of the vouchers to be made available to families with incomes greater than 175% of the poverty line.

Surprisingly, during the development phase of the MPCP the Milwaukee business community was largely uninvolved (other than George Mitchell). Instead, the most prominent business leaders focused their efforts on creating and funding the Education Trust, an organization dedicated to providing direct support for the area's public schools (Witte, 2000). Once the MPCP passed, things changed. Michael Joyce, then head of the Bradley Foundation, called for the local business community to begin supporting school vouchers. Soon after, a survey conducted by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) found that over 80% of its members believed that it was important to be involved in expanding educational choice options. And so, rather than providing support directly to public schools to fund improvement projects, business interests quickly shifted their support toward vouchers, convinced by Joyce and others that the resulting competition would spur public schools to improve on their own. Religious interests, primarily the Catholic Archdiocese and its schools were also well-organized during the initial years of the MPCP. The area's community of religious leaders formed a cross-denominational coalition intent on opening up vouchers to their schools. In this endeavor, they maintained close ties with the business community, often with financial help from the Bradley Foundation.

Also of significance during this period was the Republican takeover of the Wisconsin Legislature. This lessened the influence of Williams and other Democrats. After a minor program expansion in 1993, business, religious, and Republican forces converged to expand the program further (Table 6). The 1995 expansion raised the vouchers to \$4,600 and allowed them to be applied to religious schools, an action that wasn't implemented until 1998 due to court challenges (Dougherty, 2004). Originally, Polly Williams and Gary George didn't oppose the expansion to religious schools. But other African American supporters of the MPCP were opposed, including legislators Coggins and Moore. In time, Williams changed her mind. She began to openly express her frustration with what was now a business and religious-dominated MPCP

coalition and worked to reverse the program expansion (Witte, 2000). By 1997, the only black leader still part of the coalition of supporters was Howard Fuller, who by then was awarded a Bradley Foundation-funded chair at Marquette University.

Table 6. The evolution of Milwaukee’s Voucher Program

	1990	1993	1995	2006
<i>Student Eligibility</i>				
Income Limit, new students (% FPL)	175	175	175	175
Income Limit, continuing students (% FPL)	175	175	175	220
Prior private school students	No	No	Yes (K-3)	Yes (all)
<i>School Eligibility</i>				
Sectarian	No	No	Yes	Yes
<i>Program Limits & Requirements</i>				
Choice students per school	49%	65%	100%	100%
Program size	~1,000	~1,500	~15,000	~17,000
Research reports required	Yes	Yes	No	
Maximum Voucher amount	\$2,446	\$2,985	\$4,600	\$5,943

Sources: Witte, J. F. (2000) *The market approach to education. An analysis of America’s first voucher program.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Table 3.2. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2006). Frequently asked questions. 2006-2007 school year. Retrieved from: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/sms/doc/mpcfaq05.doc>

In addition to the expansion to religious schools, there were continued attempts to open up the program to families who weren’t low-income. John Norquist, Mayor of Milwaukee, called for the income limits of the MPCP to be eliminated or at least raised to \$100,000 per household. He reasoned that limiting the program to 175% of the poverty line was unfair to middle class families: "As choice expands, the dissatisfaction with this income limit is going to become very acute. . . This is something when legislators hold town hall meetings, people are going to come and yell about it" (Bice & Williams, 1998, p. 1). Norquist’s proposal was met with a sharp rebuke from Polly Williams: "This is what you call hijacking the program . . . There are people in that coalition (that supported school choice) who never intended to help low-income children. . . I knew it was coming. When we take the cap off, we will have lost the intent of that legislation. The idea was to help poor children in Milwaukee" (p. 1).

Building on Norquist’s statement, the Wisconsin Association of Nonpublic Schools¹¹ declared that "The struggle to allow parents of all income levels to have a say in their children’s education is far from over" (Witte, 2000, p. 170). In 2006, the program was further expanded by eliminating the prior year attendance requirement and raising the income ceiling for continuing students (Table 6). Although MPCP remains a targeted voucher program, in the coming years it is likely that the program will continue to be less restrictive, thereby substantially changing the main beneficiaries.

¹¹ The Wisconsin Association of Nonpublic Schools (WANS) is a combined association of Catholic, Christian, Lutheran, and Independent schools. It is the largest nonpublic school group in the state and was founded in 1974.

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