A STUDY OF BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL
DISTRICT'S OPEN ENROLLMENT SYSTEM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Open enrollment has existed in the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) since 1961. However, it did not become a significant practice and source of controversy until the mid 1990s. Spurred by a concerned and vocal group of parents' discontent with the District's implementation of the "middle school philosophy," coupled with a perceived lack of emphasis on academics in BVSD more generally, various choice options began to proliferate. This was also a time when the school choice movement began accelerating at both the state and national levels.

Several types of choice options were differentiated, and "open enrollment" became an umbrella term that, in addition to the option to enroll in any District neighborhood school on a space available basis, covers 4 other kinds of options: (1) focus schools: schools with a particular curricular focus that have no attendance area; (2) neighborhood focus schools: focus schools that give priority for enrollment to students from within the neighborhood attendance area; (3) strand schools: neighborhood schools employing the BVSD curriculum that share a site with a different curricular strand previously approved for focus schools; and (4) charter schools: relatively autonomous district schools with no attendance area whose accountability to BVSD is specified in a contract. Variations also exist within these types.

Prior to the 1994-95 school year, there were 5 articulated choice options in BVSD, all emphasizing diversity, experiential learning, integrated learning, or bilingual education, sometimes in combination. By 1999-2000, there were 16 additional articulated choice options, half of which had adopted a new kind of mission consistent with the mood of the mid 1990s, namely, an explicit emphasis on academic rigor.

Dramatic changes have occurred in BVSD as a result of the growth of choice options in the district. Approximately 20% of students now open enroll in BVSD schools other than those assigned to them by attendance area, a much larger percentage than is typical in public choice systems. Also, because all BVSD schools must compete for students, all BVSD schools are affected by the open enrollment policy.

Purposes

To date, the practices and effects of open enrollment have not been systematically described and evaluated. One purpose of this study is to provide such a description and evaluation. A closely related purpose is to provide information to BVSD officials, the School Board, and the public that they will find useful in deliberating about what reforms in BVSD's open enrollment policy might be indicated.

Background: The School Choice Controversy

BVSD's open enrollment system is an instance of "public school choice," to be distinguished from vouchers which transfer public funds to private schools. There is a broad set of controversies about public school choice that goes well beyond the confines of BVSD, but that also helps frame the controversies within BVSD. Claims for and against public school choice fall into three general categories: competition, meeting student needs, and equity.

Competition

Advocates of school choice contend that competition in public education can drive improvement. Competition gives parents a voice and the power to vote with their feet; it shakes up ossified and unaccountable school district bureaucracies and schools; and it spurs innovation. Schools that perform poorly will lose students and be forced to close. The result will be increased achievement for all children and increased parental satisfaction with public schools.

Critics respond that competition is destructive of cooperation among teachers and schools, and that it neglects the interests of students enrolled in schools not doing well in a competitive environment. And, instead of increasing achievement overall, it only stratifies school achievement, as certain schools "skim" the most able students and affluent parents with exclusive admissions procedures or targeted recruiting.

Meeting Student Needs

Advocates of public school choice argue that traditional public schools cannot respond to the diverse array of interests and learning styles that characterize school children. Traditional public schools employ a "one-size fits all" approach. Although the associated curricular and instructional approaches may be suitable for some, even many, students, many other students need different approaches better suited to their specific interests and needs. School choice can provide the variety that effectively responding to the diversity of student needs and interests requires.

Critics respond that genuinely *public* schools must be open to all students, and must accommodate, rather than exclude, student needs and interests that depart from the norm. Especially where schools of choice are permitted to define needs in terms of excellence in academics, schools become stratified by race and income, exclude special needs students, and force other public schools that cannot turn students away to carry the entire burden of accommodating the needs of more difficult to teach students.

Equity

In general, those who see public choice as a means of promoting equity observe that public school choice is really nothing new, for parents have long chosen schools by

choosing their place of residence. Parents' incomes and social positions thus largely determine their power to chose. A choice policy that removes attendance boundaries permits students to attend schools independent of the price of houses in the neighborhoods in which they live. It thus provides all parents with choice, and also promises to promote diversity in schools.

Critics charge that school choice can only exacerbate inequity, not mitigate it. Without free transportation, which public choice plans typically fail to provide, many parents are precluded from exercising choice. Certain parents also lack the information needed to participate in meaningful choice, and others may lack trust. And not only do certain parents operate with an unfair disadvantage. Because of "skimming," schools will also be subjected to unfair comparisons. Schools that benefit from skimming and those hurt by it will be judged in terms of the same criteria, especially test scores, with no regard for the kinds of students they enroll or the resources they can garner.

Controlled Choice

An early outcome of the back-and-forth between advocates and critics of public school choice was the emergence of the idea of "controlled choice." Controlled choice places certain constraints on choice to help avoid the problems enumerated by the critics. Among constraints that have been advocated, adopted, or both are: limits on the number of choice schools; requiring oversubscribed schools to select students by lottery; requiring that choice schools reasonably reflect the socio-economic composition of the district; prohibiting schools from requiring parents to sign agreements to donate time or resources; prohibiting parents from supplementing the funds available to their children's schools; and providing additional funding for schools that enroll difficult to teach students.

Currently, the idea that school choice must be constrained by some set of the kinds of rules described above is almost unanimously embraced. Controversies continue, however, concerning just which of these rules are required, and how far they should go.

The Study

The controversies in BVSD surrounding open enrollment often echo the broader controversies just described. But to avoid prejudging what the most salient issues for BVSD parents and educators are, and what positions might be taken on them, the perceptions of parents, teachers, and principals regarding BVSD's open enrollment policy were thoroughly investigated. They play a central role in this study.

DATA

Five kinds of data were collected: surveys of parents and educators in BVSD schools; focus group discussions with this same group; a follow-up survey of principals; a random telephone survey of BVSD parents; and records of open enrollment, BVSD test scores, BVSD demographics, BVSD funding, and fundraising by individual BVSD schools.

The BVSD Department of Research and Evaluation supplied most of the records. On occasion, data were also obtained from the BVSD and Colorado Department of Education web sites. Data from these sources were used to create a number of computer files, keyed to the different analyses that were conducted.

The parent/educator surveys (hereafter: school surveys) and focus group discussions were designed to elicit the beliefs and attitudes about open enrollment and school choice held by people actively involved in BVSD schools. Participants were 466 individuals representing 43 "schools" (defined to count strands or focus schools sharing sites as schools).   All choice schools, including strands, were included, except Sojourner, Arapahoe Ridge, and Boulder Preparatory.   A sample of neighborhood schools was selected geographically to include several from each of the District's 8 regions.   The overall sample contained 23 neighborhood schools, 16 "choice schools," and 4 "bilingual choice schools." There were 5 high schools, 11 middle schools, and 28 elementary schools (K-8 schools were counted as both elementary and middle).

Participants in the school surveys and the focus groups were the same, and typically included the principal, teachers and parents on the School Improvement Teams.   The sample was disproportionately white, highly educated, and female, reflecting the characteristics of people most active in BVSD school communities.

The telephone surveys were designed to elicit the beliefs and attitudes of district parents who have not participated in open enrollment. For this survey, the District was divided into the 8 geographic regions used by the District to identify attendance boundaries and feeder patterns.   Eighty-five potential respondents from each region were selected at random from a list of parents provided by the district. Potential respondents were called and asked to answer the survey questions until 30 completed surveys were obtained from each region, netting a total of 240 telephone surveys.   This sample was more representative of parents in BVSD than the school surveys, except for including a disproportionate number of women.

FINDINGS

The data were analyzed and combined, as appropriate, in terms of the three general parts into which this study was divided: Parents' and Educators' Perceptions of Open Enrollment; Open Enrollment Patterns, Practices and Procedures; and Workload, Funding, and Fundraising.

Parents' and Educators' Perceptions of Open Enrollment

In general, BVSD parents, teachers, and staff believe their schools should focus primarily on the development of social, citizenship, and academic skills in safe, comfortable environments in which teachers are sensitive to student needs. Most say that they choose a school for their child (ren) on the basis of its curriculum, teachers, and staff and that they find the curriculum, teachers, and staff to be the major strengths of their particular

school. Very few express concern about ineffective curricula or ineffective teachers at their school. Although standardized test scores are much more accessible as a means of comparing schools in this district than information about curricula or teachers, very few people say that they choose or like a school because of its test scores. In general, the level of parent satisfaction with the curriculum, teachers, and staff (seeing these as strengths) of their school is high. What people say they most want in schools is what they think their own school provides.

However, people do seem to praise different things when they refer to academic preparation, social and citizenship skills, curriculum, and good teachers. At bilingual choice schools, people focus on what their schools accomplish in terms of serving diverse populations, celebrating cultural difference, and offering bilingual curricula and teachers. They talk about their children coming to "value learning" broadly construed. At choice and neighborhood schools, the focus on learning and curriculum tends to be more narrowly construed in terms of academic basics, while positive school climate is more generally construed in terms of student safety and comfort level.

Parents, teachers, and staff at bilingual choice schools also criticize different things. Whereas at choice and neighborhood schools, people are dissatisfied most often about inadequate funding and support for their schools, people at bilingual choice schools are dissatisfied most about the problems associated with a disadvantaged population and a bad reputation. Thus, it appears that while people choose bilingual choice schools in part for their diversity, they also believe that their schools suffer some special negative effects because of that diversity. In sum, it seems that different values and priorities regarding learning, curriculum, and school climate motivate those at bilingual choice schools, compared to those at choice and neighborhood schools. In contrast, there is very little difference evident in the values and priorities of choice and neighborhood schools.

Regarding equity issues, people in BVSD say they believe that schools should avoid discrimination, including elitism, favoritism, segregation, racism, sexism, and classism. At the same time, however, most also believe that there currently are unequal opportunities to participate in open enrollment in the district (due to such things as inadequate or inaccessible information about various schools, lack of transportation for choice students, open enrollment timelines, and special requirements for choice school applicants) and that these unequal opportunities have led to increased disparities among the District's schools. As consequences of open enrollment, people believe that some schools have gotten stronger while others have been weakened; some parents have been able to raise large sums of money for their schools while others have not; and some schools have been able to find many parents to participate in school-related activities, including fundraising, while others have found only a few. People also believe that open enrollment has tended to increase the concentration of ethnic minorities (mainly Hispanics and Blacks) and low-income students at certain schools. Finally, most people say that these kinds of inequities are divisive and unfair and should be reduced or eliminated.

Regarding competition, two opposing views of competition among schools are evident.

One view is that increased competition is beneficial because it strengthens all schools as they strive to attract parents and students. The second view is that increased competition is harmful because it reduces collegiality in the District overall and leads to the closing of some schools and threats to close others when their enrollments decline. Not surprisingly, neighborhood schools, most vulnerable to being closed, are the most worried about the negative consequences of competition. In a district where almost everyone believes that their own school has a strong curriculum and teachers, any school closings are likely to be sad and traumatic events. Perhaps because some neighborhood schools have recently been closed and others are threatened, more people in the District believe that competition has hurt BVSD schools than believe that it has helped them.

Among the reasons for supporting school choice, almost everyone surveyed believes that open enrollment helps parents and schools meet the needs of particular students. Almost everyone also believes that school choice strengthens the bonds of community that form at a school. Although there may be downsides to choice (e.g., increased inequities, threats from competition, and weakened neighborhood bonds), there is powerful sentiment in the District that increased ability to meet student needs and strengthen within-school communities are strong justifications for school choice.

Whether they favor the expansion or contraction of choice options, each side tends to believe that the District's support for their side is weak or equivocal. Those favoring more choice believe the District is anti-choice; those favoring neighborhood schools believe the District is pro-choice.

Almost everyone agrees that the District and the local media have not been as helpful as they could be in providing and disseminating information about school choice--what the options are, what the procedures are, what the deadlines are, and so forth. Further, they chide both the District and the media for their heavy reliance on test score comparisons, their failure to provide information in languages other than English, and some policies that seem to increase divisiveness within the community.

Although most BVSD parents, teachers and staff believe that school choice should be continued, most also think that changes are necessary. The strongest recommendations to the District are to reduce the numerous inequities associated with choice and to make the policies and procedures for school choice more widely accessible and easier to understand.

Open Enrollment Patterns, Practices, and Procedures

Two factors are most strongly associated with the open enrollment "demand" (the number of open enrollment requests of a school corrected for its size) for BVSD schools: test scores and parental satisfaction. But the strength of these associations varies, depending on whether the school level is elementary, middle, or high school. At the elementary level, demand is strongly associated with test scores and associated, but less strongly, with parental satisfaction. At the middle school level, demand is strongly associated with both test scores and parental satisfaction. At the high school level,

demand is strongly associated with parental satisfaction but appears not to be associated with test scores. The evidence also suggests that Latinos are less motivated by test scores and satisfaction ratings than whites, or are willing to trade these off for a bilingual program.

In general, parents are more satisfied with choice schools than neighborhood schools. It is reasonable to infer that giving parents a greater voice in the operation of schools and the power to choose the curricula and methods of instruction they deem best for their children explains this. On the other hand, this is not the whole explanation, for, at the elementary and middle levels, parental satisfaction is highly associated with test scores, and choice schools' test scores tend to be the highest.

The emphasis on test scores is reflected in the pools of students requesting open enrollment for 6th and 9th grades, when they enter middle and high schools, respectively. In general, these students have higher test scores than their BVSD cohorts and apply disproportionately to schools with higher test scores. Thus, a form of "skimming" is occurring at both the middle and high school levels (notwithstanding the apparent lack of association between test scores and demand at the high school level). But it is important to note that it is not skimming in the sense of selecting the highest scoring students from among students in the pool requesting open enrollment. There is no evidence of this. Rather, the pools from which students are selected are themselves made up of higher scoring students. This deserves the name "skimming" because some schools are drawing a disproportionate number of students from the high scoring pool (for certain schools, all of their students), whereas other schools are losing a disproportionate number.

Race/ethnicity is a prominent feature of open enrollment patterns, both regionally and with respect to individual schools. The most pronounced regional movements via open enrollment are from North Boulder to South Boulder and from Lafayette to Louisville/Superior. In each case, students are leaving regions with higher percentages of minorities for regions with lower percentages. With respect to individual schools, whites are leaving high minority schools through open enrollment at a disproportional rate; in one case, at a rate nearly double their proportion of the school's population. Whites are disproportionately requesting open enrollment in schools with high-test scores; Latinos are disproportionately requesting open enrollment in bilingual schools.

Overall, BVSD schools have become significantly more stratified with respect to race/ethnicity since the expansion of open enrollment in the mid 1990s and the advent of choice schools heavily emphasizing academic achievement. Stratification of BVSD has also increased with respect to SES since the mid 1990s. Moreover, strongly associated with minority enrollment to begin with, the association between SES and minority enrollment has become even stronger. These outcomes are evident at the elementary and middle school levels in the change since 1994-1995 in the overall racial/ethnic and SES distributions of students among elementary and middle schools. At the high school level, the evidence is piecemeal and inconclusive, limited to some evidence of "skimming" and to the fact that a disproportionate number of white students are open enrolling out of BVSD's two highest minority enrollment high schools.

The stratification that marks BVSD's open enrollment system has sometimes been attributed to the motives of racism, classism, and elitism, among others. These motives might be at work for some parents participating in open enrollment, but it must be emphasized that racial/ethnic and SES stratification are virtually impossible to disentangle from test scores and parental satisfaction ratings. To the extent they can be disentangled, test scores and parent satisfaction are, generally speaking, more strongly associated with the demand for BVSD schools than are minority enrollment or SES make-up. On the other hand, even though best interpreted as a side effect of parents' desire for schools with high-test scores and satisfaction ratings, increased stratification is an undeniable outcome of their choices.

These choices are made within the context of BVSD open enrollment procedures and practices, and these procedures and practices help explain the observed open enrollment patterns. First, the District practice of prominently displaying test scores in the annual Daily Camera open enrollment insert, as well as in district and school web pages, helps explain why this factor is so large in the demand for BVSD schools, and why the form of "skimming" described above is evident. (Although test scores have become the primary, if not sole, criterion for judging the quality of schools at the state and national levels, presumably, this is not a position that BVSD wishes to endorse or encourage.) Second, requiring parents to obtain their own information on open enrollment rather than sending information directly to them; requiring them to visit schools in which they wish to open enroll; and requiring them to provide their own transportation help explain why open enrollment may have a stratifying effect. For this favors parents with savvy, time, and resources. It also favors parents who are best connected to the parent information network, the importance of which is shown by how prominent word of mouth is as a student recruitment method, particularly for choice schools.

That some individual schools (all charter or focus) have created their own list of open enrollment preferences and requirements, in addition to the District's, may also contribute to stratification. This is not to suggest all preferences are problematic, even when they do favor certain groups of parents. For example, although giving preference to the children of the founders of a school for three years, as the District does, advantages parents who have the time and resources to engage in the rather demanding activity of establishing a school or strand, this appears to be a reasonable compromise to strike. Placing no time limits on such a preference, as is the practice at several individual schools, is prima facie exclusionary and not easily justified in a public school system. Also prima facie exclusionary are (1) additional preferences afforded to certain groups, such as siblings of graduates, children of teachers and staff, and students previously enrolled in a tuition-based pre-school program; (2) additional application requirements, such as interviews and supplementary forms to fill out; and (3) additional expectations for parental participation, formalized in written agreements.

The District policy on student recruitment that disadvantages neighborhood schools may also contribute to stratification. Whatever the historical reasons for restricting neighborhood schools to recruiting within their feeder systems, this places them at a

distinct disadvantage relative to choice schools in the current open enrollment system. For they are as vulnerable as choice schools to the loss of FTE and other resources, or even closure, if their enrollment drops, but they are not equally able to recruit students to help prevent this. They are also vulnerable to having their most active and financially able parents lured away. This breeds resentment on the part of neighborhood schools toward choice schools, as well as the District, and gives them an incentive to become focus schools solely for the purpose of eliminating their recruiting disadvantage. Several schools have taken this step, and several others have considered it.

Workload, Funding, and Fundraising

At the District level, administering open enrollment has increased the duties of personnel in various departments. This has typically been accomplished by simply adding on to pre-existing duties. In the case of the Business Department, the most heavily affected unit, an additional staff person was hired to help manage the intensified activity.

Open enrollment duties have also been added on to pre-existing duties at the individual school level. Many principals reported that open enrollment consumes a significant amount of time, and takes them away from their other duties. Several of these principals questioned whether marketing their schools is an appropriate role for them, several were uncomfortable with the competitive environment they believe exists, and several displayed cynicism and low morale. Finally, several principals also questioned having to use school time and resources for advertising, and, on this point especially, a number of parents, teachers, and staff joined them.

The BVSD budgeting process, including for charter schools, makes no provision for the percentages of low-income students in BVSD schools. Auxiliary funds are provided to schools with the highest percentages of low-income students in the form of Title I, but these funds are inadequate to meet the needs. This budgeting process is prima facie inequitable in light of the facts that (1) stratification by income in BVSD schools is on the rise and (2) BVSD receives additional funds in the state formula proportional to its number of students qualifying for free lunch (approximately 10% per qualifying pupil).

Based on numerous comments of participants in surveys and focus groups, in addition to the information from BVSD records, there is good reason to believe that significant disparities exist among BVSD schools in the amounts of additional funding they can garner, and that these disparities are tied to parental income. Given the uses to which such funding is put--library and classroom books, curriculum materials, computers, art supplies, adjunct faculty, guest speakers, among others--this creates substantial advantages for some schools and substantial disadvantages for others.

General Conclusions

Several general conclusions follow from combining the perceptions of BVSD parents and educators of the open enrollment system with other findings from this study. These are framed in terms of the three general categories of controversy about public school choice

policy introduced at the outset, namely, competition, meeting student needs, and equity.

Competition

Many BVSD parents and educators see competition as the driving force in obtaining District resources and support, for good or ill. To our knowledge, BVSD has never declared that competition will be the mechanism by which it decides the levels of support to be provided to its schools, but it seems to have adopted this mechanism by default. The resources provided to BVSD schools (and, in the extreme, whether they will continue to exist) are tied almost exclusively to enrollment, for which all schools must compete. And here they are left to their own devices.

Test scores loom large in how schools fare in the competition. Test scores are strongly associated with the open enrollment demand for BVSD schools, especially among middle-income whites. As these parents move to high scoring schools, already mostly white middle income, they take their various resources with them and further stratify BVSD schools with respect to race/ethnicity and income, in addition to test scores. The schools they depart are left with fewer resources and with a more diverse student population. This diversity complicates their educational missions, both administratively and in the classroom. The result is a "spiral of decline" for schools losing enrollment: They have relatively low-test scores; they lose parental resources; and, due to decreased enrollment, they begin to experience cuts in resources from the District. Their test scores drop further; they lose more parental resources, and so on. All along they are scrambling to find new programs to attract students, further complicating and intensifying their work. Several BVSD schools have fallen into this spiral or are threatened. Elementary bilingual schools are an exception. They have kept their enrollments up despite possessing features that threaten them, such as relatively low test scores, increasingly high percentages of minority and low income students, and the "bad reputations" that go with these.

Proponents of competition contend that it works to boost achievement overall, even if some schools may decline. This must be classified as conjecture in the case of BVSD. The fact that some BVSD choice schools, particularly those emphasizing academics, have high--remarkably high--test scores does not establish the claim that competition has stimulated increased achievement in BVSD schools overall. No further evidence exists to support this claim.

Evidence from this study indicates that rather than increasing achievement overall, open enrollment is a zero-sum game—a situation in which some schools do better only at the expense of others doing worse. There is suggestive evidence at the high school level and strong evidence at the middle school levels that certain schools are disproportionately gaining high scoring students and others are disproportionately losing them. So, rather than boosting the achievement levels of BVSD students overall, open enrollment is merely redistributing them. The result is that while certain schools spiral down, certain others, those schools gaining high scoring students, thrive. And it is these latter schools who win awards for excellence and receive coverage in the press for their exceptional curricula and teaching.

Focus and charter schools embrace competition, for the most part. This is consistent with the fact that these schools were born competing for students and with a commitment largely limited to their school. Moreover, competing for students has served them well. But a significant portion of BVSD's other schools--schools that have had to take on competing for enrollment as a new activity--perceive the competition for students as having mainly negative effects on them, as well as the BVSD community overall. These BVSD parents and educators see themselves as being required to divert time and resources away from curriculum and instruction toward keeping their enrollments up. Because open enrollment is so demanding, at the same time that these parents and educators have less time and resources for curriculum and instruction, their total effort has increased. The competition for students has also engendered a breakdown of collegiality in their eyes, as individual schools are forced to look after their own interests and to place them above the District's as a whole.

These concerns about competition are more fundamental than the complaint voiced by many neighborhood schools that the terms of competition are unfair, based on the fact that they are restricted to recruiting within their feeder systems whereas choice schools recruit from across the district. For challenging competition on the ground that it destroys collegiality and inappropriately diverts time and resources away from the educational mission of schools challenges competition itself as the means by which to determine the level of support BVSD schools receive.

Meeting Student Needs

BVSD parents are by-and-large satisfied with the schools to which they send their children, and those who send their children to focus or charter schools are the most satisfied. This applies across BVSD's array of choice schools: from predominantly white schools emphasizing academics, such as High Peaks and Summit; to largely Latino schools, emphasizing diversity and bilingualism, such as Uni Hill and Washington; and to various kinds of alternative schools, such as New Vista and Arapahoe Ridge. Increased parental satisfaction is one of the claims made on behalf of public school choice, and this is an apparent benefit of BVSD's open enrollment system.

But this claim faces the same difficulty as the parallel claim about achievement. Insofar as parental satisfaction is important in judging the effects of open enrollment on BVSD schools, overall satisfaction is what should be at issue. If some parents are more satisfied only at the expense of others being less so, then open enrollment is a zero-sum game. Tackling this question requires longitudinal data that spans the period when open enrollment burgeoned, and such data is unavailable. Thus, the claim that open enrollment has resulted in an overall increase in parental satisfaction is also based on conjecture, though perhaps less so than in the case of achievement. BVSD parents are generally satisfied with their schools. The approximately 20% of students who are open enrolling certainly seem to be having their needs met well. Perhaps it can be presumed that the approximately 80% attending schools within their attendance area, or at least a large proportion of them, are having their needs met too, as evidenced by the fact that they are

not open enrolling out.

Significantly obscured by questions about how well needs are being met (as measured by parental satisfaction) is the prior question of how to think about and identify student needs in the first place. Traditionally, the focus has been on "at risk" students who have needs that require additional resources, efforts, and methods to meet. And many initiatives and school reform policies have emphasized improving schools for at risk populations, including Colorado's charter school law. In BVSD, the idea of student needs has been stretched to include the need for a rigorous, college preparatory education.

If a rigorous, college preparatory education is a need, it is certainly of a different order than the needs of at risk students. And there would seem to be nothing special about it that warrants schools especially devoted to it. Although there are differences among groups of BVSD parents and educators on the question of how exclusively they can and should pursue the goal of increased academic achievement, each group places academic achievement at or near the top on the list of things that schools should accomplish. Culling academic achievement out as a special need that may used to define the mission of certain BVSD schools has resulted in tracking writ large—tracking *between* schools rather than *within* them—and the racial/ethnic and income stratification that goes with this.

The idea that schools should promote social/citizenship skills was also high on every group's list, along with high academic achievement. Unless learning to appreciate and interact with a diversity of people are excluded from what goes into social/citizenship skills, and it is difficult to see how they could be, students who are separated off into homogeneous, predominantly white schools will not acquire these skills. From this perspective, their education is impoverished. Moreover, the broader aims of public education embraced by a considerable number of BVSD parents and educators are left wanting.

Equity

One of the complaints frequently lodged against the open enrollment system is that is inequitable because it sets up unfair competition among BVSD schools. This claim has considerable warrant when advanced by neighborhood schools, and the solution is to level the playing field, for example, by permitting neighborhood schools to compete under the same set of rules as focus and charter schools. Although leveling the playing field in this way would be an improvement, it implicitly concedes that competition is the principle that ought to determine which schools thrive and which are judged "good." (Currently test scores are the major determinant of both.) As suggested above, more fundamental concerns about the principle of competition exist, concerns grounded in equity.

Letting things shake out through competition does not insure equity. For it does nothing to address the problem of the inequity experienced by students and educators languishing

in schools caught in or threatened by the spiral of decline. Addressing this problem requires invoking another principle that sometimes limits competition: insuring that all students receive a good education on equitable terms.

Letting things shake out through competition does not insure equity even for those schools that manage to keep their enrollments up. Consider BVSD's bilingual schools. That Latinos are getting their choice of bilingual schools and that the majority of these schools are maintaining their enrollments does not mean they are getting the same kind of benefit that whites who are enrolling their children in homogeneous, high achieving schools are. Unlike the complex set of challenges facing bilingual schools, these high achieving schools can be single-minded in their pursuit of achievement because they have a homogenous set of students who predictably do well. Despite the relatively easier task they have to perform in comparison to bilingual schools, these schools receive the same per pupil funding from the District, and they typically have more additional resources at their disposal through fundraising. And the uses to which fundraising is put—books, computers, staff development, and, in some cases, teacher salaries—are anything but marginal to the quality of education that schools can provide.

In addition to the fact that there is inequality in the costs and benefits associated with the school choices made by BVSD parents, there is inequality in their opportunities to choose at all. Lack of transportation, time, and information diminish or eliminate the opportunities of many parents to participate.

Final Observations

We have not hesitated to draw critical conclusions about BVSD's open enrollment system when they were warranted by our findings. But we have confined our conclusions to the *system* and its outcomes, and have drawn no conclusions about individuals or groups of individuals. In our view, criticizing the motives and behaviors of individuals would be bad strategy, more likely to inflame people than to lead to constructive change. It would also be unwarranted.

The BVSD administration and Board have been beseeched with demands and counter-demands over the last five years, amidst significant turnover. For their part, BVSD parents participating in open enrollment have what they perceive to be the best interests of their children in mind, across the array of groups participating. That no one or no group should be assigned responsibility, however, does not erase the fact that the current open enrollment system is riddled with inequities and has resulted in a disturbingly high degree of stratification among BVSD schools with respect to race/ethnicity and income. Accordingly, the set of rules that has brought BVSD to this place need to be revisited and revised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are 12 recommendations that grow out of the findings of this study. Several overlap, and this is especially true of the first recommendation to create a unit in the Education Center to oversee and coordinate open enrollment. Most of the subsequent recommendations, if implemented, could be within the purview of such a unit.

1. A unit devoted to open enrollment should be created in the Education Center

The District should consider establishing a unit in the Education Center which has the major responsibility for overseeing and coordinating open enrollment, and which is clearly identified as such. The open enrollment system is currently spread across several departments at the Education Center, as well as individual schools. This leads to inefficiency and inconsistency in administering open enrollment procedures, and confusion and uncertainty on the part of BVSD parents.

2. Open enrollment procedures should be centralized

Whether or not a unit responsible for open enrollment is established in the Education Center, applications for open enrollment should be submitted directly to the Education Center and handled there. Currently, individual schools have major responsibility for administering the open enrollment system, which requires considerable effort and resources on their part. A significant number of school communities see the effort and resources they must devote to open enrollment as unduly burdensome and as compromising their ability to pursue educational goals. Because individual schools must provide information on their open enrollment requests to the District for budgeting purposes and the open enrollment lottery, the current system also results in double handling of open enrollment applications and thus inefficiency.

3. Parents of prospective open enrollees should not be required to visit the school(s) to which they wish to apply for open enrollment

Parents of prospective open enrollees should be encouraged but not required to visit the school(s) to which they wish to apply for open enrollment. Such a requirement is inequitable for parents who lack the time and resources to arrange school visits, and should not be a condition of taking advantage of open enrollment.

4. Open enrollment procedures and requirements should be consistent across schools

The open enrollment procedures and requirements across BVSD schools are not consistent. Certain focus and charter schools have established their own preferences and requirements that go beyond the District's and that are prima facie exclusionary. The District should consider abolishing all such preferences and requirements.

5. Free transportation should be made available for open enrollees

The District should undertake to make free transportation available for all students accepted for open enrollment. Currently, open enrolled students are required to provide their own transportation. This creates an insurmountable obstacle for all of those wishing to take advantage of open enrollment who cannot provide their own transportation.

6. Open enrollment information should be sent to all BVSD parents

A large number of BVSD parents lack good information on open enrollment under the current system. The District should mail information on open enrollment, including in languages other than English as appropriate, to all BVSD parents apprising them of their opportunity to apply for open enrollment and how to go about it. The mailing should also include an application and pertinent information about BVSD schools with suggestions on how to evaluate such information, particularly what average test scores mean for their individual child(ren). In addition to apprising a much larger number of parents of their opportunities, such mailings would also help mitigate the disadvantage of neighborhood schools in student recruitment.

7. The BVSD funding formula should take into account the characteristics of school populations

The BVSD funding formula should be revised to take into account the characteristics of school populations, particularly their percentages of low-income students. The current formula makes no allowance for the relatively large proportions of low-income students in certain schools in allocations from the general fund. This is prima facie inequitable given that the BVSD per pupil allocation derived from the Colorado School Finance Act rises as the percentage of low-income students rises. The inequity has been exacerbated by the fact that open enrollment has resulted in larger proportions of low-income students being concentrated in certain schools. To the extent that low-income students have educational needs that require more resources to meet (the rationale for the low-income allocation in the state financing formula) the current BVSD formula also provides a disincentive for schools to enroll low-income students.

8. The District should obtain and make available accurate and complete information on individual school fundraising

Accurate and complete information on the amounts and uses of funds that individual BVSD schools obtain through fees, donations, and fundraising activities is difficult to obtain or unavailable. The District should establish reporting requirements to remedy this situation, and should make the resulting information readily available to the public.

9. Inequalities in individual school fundraising should be addressed

Individual BVSD schools vary considerably in their capacity to raise funds, an often-cited source of inequity that has been exacerbated by the stratifying effects of open enrollment. To mitigate this source of inequity, the District might consider requiring individual schools to contribute a portion of the funds they raise to a District fund to be redistributed to individual schools and students most in need (perhaps earmarked for transportation). Alternatively, or in addition, the District might direct its discretionary funds, and encourage organizations such as the Boulder Valley School Foundation to direct theirs, toward individual schools least able to raise their own funds. (These methods and similar ones require accurate information on the amount of school specific funds individual schools obtain, Recommendation 8.) Among the justifications for such a requirement are that individual schools are a part of the larger BVSD community (see Recommendation 11) and also take advantage of BVSD resources and facilities in their fundraising efforts.

10. Stratification by race/ethnicity and income should be addressed

The District should consider measures to reduce the stratification by race/ethnicity and income among BVSD schools caused by open enrollment. Such stratification not only raises equity issues, but also narrows the educational experiences of BVSD students. A change in funding is one such measure that would change incentives (Recommendations 7 and 9). The District should seek legal counsel to investigate the possibility of stratifying its open enrollment lotteries by income and race/ethnicity (though only the former is likely to be legally permissible.) The District should seek legal counsel also to determine whether District open enrollment practices may be in violation of the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations for Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits a funding recipient from practices that have a negative disparate impact on individuals because of their race or ethnicity (34 C.F.R.§100.3(b)(2)).

11. The District should foster the idea that BVSD is one community

The District should take steps to help rejuvenate the larger BVSD community, for example, by supporting and facilitating collaboration across individual school communities on the curricula and instructional methods they have found most effective. Open enrollment has encouraged individual schools to focus on their own interests and welfare and on competing with other schools for enrollment. In the process, the idea that they are all part of the larger community that is BVSD has been overshadowed.

12. A comprehensive, long-range policy should be developed

The District should develop a comprehensive, long-range policy on open enrollment. Such a policy should articulate the scope and limits of open enrollment consistent with the overall mission and principles that guide District decision making. Among the

specific points that should be articulated is the relationship between enrollment patterns and decisions to open and close BVSD schools.

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INTRODUCTION

School choice has existed in the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) since 1961. However, it did not become a significant practice and source of controversy until the mid 1990s. Spurred by a concerned and vocal group of parents' discontent with the District's implementation of the "middle school philosophy," coupled with a perceived lack of emphasis on academics in BVSD more generally, various choice options began to proliferate in the mid 1990's. This was also a time when the school choice movement began accelerating at both the state and national levels.

As open enrollment expanded in BVSD, a number of specific types of choice options were differentiated. "Open enrollment" has become an umbrella that, in addition to the option to enroll in any District neighborhood school on a space available basis, covers 4 other kinds of options: (1) focus schools: schools with a particular curricular focus, for example, Core Knowledge and Montessori, and that have no attendance area; (2) neighborhood focus schools: focus schools that give priority for enrollment to students from within the neighborhood attendance area; (3) strand schools: neighborhood schools employing the BVSD curriculum that share a site with a different curricular strand previously approved for focus schools, for example, Core Knowledge; and (4) charter schools: relatively autonomous district schools whose accountability to BVSD is specified in a contract. Variations also exist within these types. For example, some charter schools obtain their own facilities, whereas others negotiate the use of BVSD buildings; facilities are sometimes shared by more than one school in various combinations, e.g., focus and neighborhood schools, charter and neighborhood schools; in one case, Superior Elementary, the strand has no students open enrolled because all of its spaces are filled by neighborhood children.

In 1999-2000, the 21 (of 57) BVSD schools that incorporated one of the kinds of choice options described above were distributed across levels as follows: 1 (of 2) K-8 schools, 11 (of 33) elementary schools, 5 (of 13) middle schools, and 4 (of 9) high schools. (Note: In its total count, BVSD counts K-8 schools twice, as both elementary and middle schools, and Nederland 6-12 twice, as both a middle and a high school.) Approximately 20% of students open enrolled in schools other than their neighborhood schools in 1999-2000.

To put the BVSD open enrollment system in historical perspective, prior to the 1994-95 school year, there were 5 articulated choice options in BVSD--at Uni Hill, Platt, Horizons, Washington Bilingual, and New Vista--all emphasizing diversity, experiential learning, integrated learning, or bilingual education, sometimes in combination. By 1999-2000, there were at least 20 articulated choice options. In addition to the proliferation of choice options, the advent of Fairview's International Baccalaureate program in 1994-95 helped spark the beginning of a new kind of mission defining choice options, namely, an explicit emphasis on academic rigor. This mission was adopted at the elementary level by High Peaks in 1995-96, but enjoyed its largest expansion in 1996-97, when 6 new choice options implemented that year adopted it. Bear Creek Elementary and Base Line Middle School each converted from neighborhood to neighborhood focus schools with

academic emphases; Louisville Elementary and Lafayette Elementary each added Core Knowledge strands; Superior Elementary opened its doors with a Core Knowledge strand in place; and Summit Middle School opened as BVSD's first charter school, heavily emphasizing rigorous academics. Two other choice options were also opened in 1996-1997, but without the explicit emphasis on academics. Boulder Community School for Integrated Studies (BCSIS) opened as a focus school, adopting aspects of the Waldorf approach, and sharing a site with Majestic Heights Elementary; Mapleton Elementary implemented a community focus.

Activity has ebbed since the major expansion in 1996-1997, but has not disappeared. Burbank Middle School added a Core Knowledge strand in 1997-1998 and Peak to Peak charter school which, like Summit and High Peaks, puts academic rigor at the center of its mission, opened in 2000-2001. There has also been additional activity commensurate with the traditional conceptions of choice schools in BVSD. Sojourner Middle School, a charter, opened in 1999-2000, with the mission of experiential and integrated learning; Boulder Preparatory High School, also a charter, opened in 1998-1999, with the mission of helping adjudicated youth; finally, Pioneer Elementary was converted to a dual immersion bilingual focus school in 2000-2001.

Dramatic changes have occurred in BVSD as a result of the growth of choice options in the district. Approximately 20% of students now open enroll in BVSD schools other than those assigned to them by attendance area. And because all BVSD schools must compete for students, all BVSD schools are affected by the open enrollment policy.

Purposes of this Study

To date, the practices and effects of open enrollment have not been systematically described and evaluated. One purpose of this study is to provide such a description and evaluation. A closely related purpose is to provide BVSD officials, the School Board, and the public with information that they will find useful in deliberating about what reforms in BVSD's open enrollment policy might be indicated.

Form of this Report

This report is divided into 3 major parts: this introduction, methods and findings, and synthesis and general conclusions. In the remainder of the introduction, we briefly place BVSD's open enrollment policy within the broader context of the school choice controversy, emphasizing claims, pro and con, about competition, student needs, and equity. In the methods and findings part, we describe our data collection and analysis methods, and report our findings. This part is divided into three sections keyed to the three major emphases of the study: (1) parents' and educators' perspectives on open enrollment; (2) open enrollment patterns, practices, and procedures; and (3) workload, funding, and fundraising. For ease of exposition, we often interweave methods and findings. In the third part, we synthesize findings and draw general conclusions.

OPEN ENROLLMENT POLICY IN THE BROADER CONTEXT

Two approaches to school choice have dominated the educational policy discussion in recent years: "vouchers," which transfer public funds to private schools, and "public choice," which restricts public funds to public schools. School choice in the latter sense is within a public school system, not between it and private schools. Advocates of public school choice, often see it as a compromise that takes advantage of the virtues of choice while avoiding the threat to public education perceived to be posed by vouchers (e.g., Bulman & Kirp, 1999). Public choice is the sense of school choice exemplified in BVSD's open enrollment policy.

Although less controversial than vouchers, public school choice has also prompted intense debate. Claims for and against are made under three primary categories: competition, meeting student needs, and equity.

Competition

Advocates of school choice contend that competition in public education can drive improvement. Competition gives parents a voice and the power to vote with their feet; it shakes up ossified and unaccountable school district bureaucracies and schools; and it spurs innovation. Schools that consistently perform poorly will lose "clients" and be forced to go "out of business" (e.g., Chubb & Moe, 1990). The result will be increased achievement for all children and increased parental satisfaction with public schools.

Critics respond that competition is destructive of cooperation among teachers and schools, and that it provides no answer to the question of what to do with students being harmed while schools are declining, before they "go out of business" (e.g., Arsen et. al., 2000; Lauder & Hughs, 1999). Critics also deny that competition leads to innovation (UCLA Charter School Study, 1998). And, instead of increasing achievement overall, it only stratifies school achievement, as certain schools "skim" the most able students and affluent parents with exclusive admissions procedures or by touting the high test scores of the kinds of students they enroll (e.g., Carnoy, forthcoming).

Meeting Student Needs

Advocates of public school choice argue that traditional public schools cannot respond to the diverse array of interests and learning styles that characterize school children (e.g., Raywid, 1994). Traditional public schools employ a "one-size fits all" approach. Although the associated curricular and instructional approaches may be suitable for some, even many, students, many other students need different approaches better suited to their specific interests and needs. School choice can provide the variety that effectively responding to the diversity of student needs and interests requires.

Critics respond that genuinely *public* schools must be open to all students, and must accommodate, rather than exclude, student needs and interests that depart from the norm.

Especially where schools of choice are permitted to define needs in terms of excellence in academics, schools become stratified by race and income (e.g., Cobb & Glass, 1999; Cobb, Glass, & Crockett, 2000), exclude special needs students (e.g., Rothstein, 1999), and force other public schools to carry the burden of accommodating the needs of more difficult to teach students (e.g., Kirp, 1992).

Equity

Equity is at the core of the school choice debate, and, as in the case of competition and meeting student needs, advocates and critics of public choice see things quite differently.

The idea that public choice plans can serve to promote equity has a relatively long history. For example, Coons and Sugarman (1978) proposed such a plan for California in the 1970s (not adopted). In general, those who see public choice as a means of promoting equity observe that public school choice is really nothing new, for parents have long chosen schools by choosing their place of residence. Parents' incomes and social positions thus largely determine their power to choose. A choice policy that removes attendance boundaries permits students to attend schools independent of the price of houses in the neighborhoods in which they live. It thus provides all parents with choice, and promises to promote diversity in schools.

Critics charge that school choice can only exacerbate inequity, not mitigate it. Without free transportation, which public choice plans typically fail to provide, many parents are precluded from exercising choice. Certain parents also lack the information needed to participate in meaningful deliberation, and others may lack trust (e.g., Wells, 1993). And not only do certain parents operate with an unfair disadvantage. In virtue of "skimming" by certain schools (described above), schools will also be subjected to unfair comparisons. That is, schools that benefit from skimming and those hurt by it will be judged in terms of the same criteria, especially test scores, with no regard for the kinds of students they enroll or the resources they can garner.

An early outcome of the back-and-forth between advocates and critics of public choice was the emergence of the idea of "controlled choice" (Cookson, 1994). Controlled choice places certain constraints on choice to help avoid the problems enumerated by the critics. Among constraints that have been advocated, adopted, or both are: limiting the number of choice schools (often charter schools) in a given district or state; requiring oversubscribed schools to select students by lottery (both features of many charter school laws, including Colorado's); requiring that charter schools reasonably reflect the socio-economic composition of the district (a feature of Kansas' charter law); prohibiting schools from requiring parents to sign so-called "sweat equity" agreements to donate time or resources (a feature of Michigan's charter law); prohibiting parents from supplementing the funds available to their children's schools; and providing additional funding for schools that enroll difficult to teach students (the last two are both features of Chubb and Moe's, 1990, highly influential public choice proposal).

Currently, the idea that school choice must be constrained by some set of the kinds of

rules described above is almost unanimously embraced. Controversies continue, however, concerning just what rules are required, and how far they should go. Answering this question depends, in turn, on the actual results of public choice plans, given a set of rules.

We undertook this study using the broader controversies just described to help frame the issues we would investigate. At the same time, however, we endeavored to be sensitive to the peculiarities of the local context of the Boulder Valley School District. Accordingly, we sought the perceptions and judgments of parents, teachers, and principals with respect to their overall views of the open enrollment policy in BVSD, as well as with respect to the individual schools with which they were most familiar. We did this in a markedly open-ended and non-directive way, so as to avoid prejudging what the most salient issues are for BVSD and what positions might be taken on them. As it turned out, the nearly 700 individuals we surveyed and talked to in BVSD expressed many of the same opinions on school choice, pro and con, that characterize the broader controversies, particularly concerning equity.

METHODS AND FINDINGS SECTION I:
PARENTS' AND EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS

FOCUS GROUP METHODS

In order to learn first-hand about the prevalent beliefs and attitudes concerning open enrollment and school choice held by people actively involved in BVSD schools, we conducted 34 focus groups. Focus group meetings were scheduled at all BVSD choice schools and a sample of neighborhood (only) schools during the 1999-2000 school year. The purpose of the meetings was to learn what active members of various school communities thought about open enrollment and its effects. Two different tools were used to collect information at the focus group meetings: (1) a Focus Group Interview in which participants publicly discussed open enrollment issues with each other and the researchers; and (2) a written School Survey that each participant completed on his or her own. Participants in the Focus Group Interview and the School Survey were thus the same individuals (see below under School Survey for the demographic characteristics of these individuals).

The meetings were scheduled by contacting the principal and asking him or her to gather members of the School Improvement Team (or equivalent) for an hour and a half session with the researchers. In most cases, those attending the meeting were the School Improvement Team (SIT) members, including the principal; in some cases, other interested parents and teachers, as well as a few community members and students, also attended. In addition to these groups, one other focus group was composed of BVSD parents and educators from across the district who were especially interested in special education. In general, the participants were all active members of their school communities.

At the focus group meetings, the researchers began by describing the BVSD Open Enrollment Study and the purpose of the Focus Group Interview and School Survey. Informed Consent forms were distributed, explained, and collected. Then, the School Surveys were handed out. Each participant completed a survey. After approximately 30 minutes, the surveys were collected and the Focus Group Interview began.

The Focus Group Interview was initiated by one of the researchers asking a general, open-ended question along the following lines: We are interested in your experiences of open enrollment in BVSD. We'd like to know what you think are the advantages and disadvantages of open enrollment. Is there anything not on the [written] survey that should have been? Are there any issues raised on the survey that you would like to pursue further? With little or no additional prompting, individuals began to talk with the researcher and other participants, and a discussion developed. From that point on, one researcher served as a facilitator, asking for clarification of points, attempting to give everyone a chance to speak, and occasionally bringing up well-known issues that had not been mentioned. The focus group questions and discussion were translated into Spanish as needed. Usually, a second researcher was present to record notes of the discussions.

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The notes were later typed and analyzed for the themes exemplified in them.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The units of analysis for the focus groups were schools and, when aggregated, types of schools (choice versus neighborhood). Our interest was not with the sheer number of opinions, but with the opinions that could be associated with the different commitments and experiences associated with different schools and different types of schools. Furthermore, we had little control over how many people would attend a given focus group. Thus, merely counting up the opinions of individuals could significantly distort the results vis a vis school size. For example, we had large elementary schools with focus groups of about a dozen and small elementary schools with focus groups of over 20.

The analysis in this subsection is framed in terms of the 5 general themes that emerged as most prominent after several rounds of sifting through the focus group data: equity, stratification, principles justifying school choice, criticisms of district administration, and poor information. We also briefly discuss a sixth theme, shared sites, that is largely an outcome of expanded open enrollment but that affects only a minority of BVSD schools. (One other significant theme, the costs of administering open enrollment, is discussed subsequently, in Methods and Findings Section III.) These are themes that drove the conversations, not isolated remarks. The illustrative examples given below should be seen in that light. (Note: The examples of remarks from participants are placed within quotation marks even when they are close paraphrases based on notes or have been altered slightly to protect confidentiality. Using quotation marks in this way identifies the remarks of participants and distinguishes them from our own.)

Equity

Every focus group raised at least one equity issue, and most raised more than one. The issues identified can be divided into two broad categories: unfair competition among schools (identified by 30 of 34), and unequal opportunities for parents to participate in open enrollment (identified by 26). Complicating matters, the two largest categories of more specific issues identified within the broader ones were (1) lack of transportation (identified by 15) and (2) inequitable recruitment procedures (identified by 11). Because these two cut across the distinction between the categories of unfair competition among schools and unequal opportunities for parents, i.e., are instances of both kinds of inequity, the dividing line between the two broad categories is blurry indeed.

Choice and neighborhood schools generally agreed that parents have unequal opportunities to participate and that lack of transportation is a major reason for this. Focus group participants said things such as: "There are some parents who can't cross boundaries due to family circumstances;" "If you get people excited about choice, you need to provide transportation;" and "A level playing field is required. Otherwise, people don't have a real choice."

Some choice schools identified inequitable recruitment procedures as a problem, for example, one choice school focus participant remarked, "We profit from open enrollment and are what we are because of open enrollment. The down side is we're stealing the crème de la crème from other schools. We get stronger and they get weaker." In general, however, the perception of inequitable recruitment procedures was of most concern to neighborhood schools, including neighborhood BVSD strands. The policy that restricts a neighborhood school's recruitment efforts to its feeder system and "skimming" were both concerns: "We're restricted in where we can recruit, but focus schools aren't;" "We're not allowed to put out a flyer, except to feeders. Focus and charter schools are not restricted in this way;" and "There is a large, informal involvement in recruiting. The myth that bright children go to core is no longer a myth…Skimming is going on."

Further differences between neighborhood and choice schools with respect to equity issues are to be found in the additional categories under the heading of unfair competition among schools. Most notable is fundraising (identified by 9, the third most frequent specific category). Although unequal fundraising cuts across the choice/neighborhood distinction, it was a concern expressed mostly by neighborhood schools (including strands): "We can't fund raise for this school when parents are single parents with two jobs, but _____can raise $50,000. A lot of the needs get met by fund raising;" and "_____ raised $52,000 for 250 students. We can't touch that."

Stratification

Stratification of BVSD schools (often referred to as "segregation" by focus group participants) in terms of race/ethnicity, special education, and socio-economic status (SES) was specifically claimed to be a problem by 12 of the focus groups, roughly a third. There was overlap between these groups and groups that identified the motives and behaviors on the part of parents believed to result in stratification, namely, elitism (10), white flight (5), and racism (4). In all, 20 groups, nearly two thirds, raised one or more issues having to do with stratification. Remarks of participants included the following: "Segregation is happening on a school to school basis, and groups are forming on a school to school level;" "Focus schools create a class system . . . The percentage of our free and reduced lunch has grown, probably doubled in the last 7 or 8 years;" "The bottom line is white flight and racism. It is such an easy cop-out for a particular socio-economic class who can do what they want…;" and "There seems to be an elitist push. When the emphasis is on elite academics, everything else at the institution is explicitly degraded."

Three school groups (focus or charter schools in each case) took exception with the above kinds of charges, apparently seeing themselves as the targets. Remarks along these lines included: "If we do well, we're accused of being elitist. If we focus on parental involvement, we're accused of using this to raise test scores;" "Our school is wrongly accused of elitism and seeking out only white people. The charge of elitism is partly an outgrowth of the fact that parents actively participate and are lost from neighborhood schools;" and "If given the resources, we would love to recruit minorities."

Principles Justifying School Choice

Twelve of the focus groups, including some of the otherwise most ardent critics of open enrollment, endorsed the idea that open enrollment helps meet diverse student needs; and no group contested this idea. Typical remarks were: "Students are not made with cookie cutters. Seeking the best fit for a child is important…;" "Choice recognizes that there are differences in families, kids, and styles of learning;" and "I am so in favor of choice because when parents and children choose, they are more successful."

Opinion was sharply divided by school type on another principle often used to support school choice: that it fosters community. Six school groups supported the idea (all but one a focus or charter); five school groups opposed it (all neighborhood or neighborhood strand schools). Remarks in support of the idea that choice fosters community were: "When people choose where they are, this has to create a positive sense of community because people want to be there;" and "There is a different culture at this school because everyone shares a vision…Students and parents choose to be here, teachers choose to be here." Remarks opposing the idea were: "I wish we didn't have open enrollment. It's damaging the sense of community;" "Choice can be destructive—to neighborhoods, to diversity;" and "Open enrollment in Boulder is the most divisive thing I've ever seen. It's tearing the community apart."

Opinion was also sharply divided on a third principle: that competition will spur improvement overall, though the opinions were not clearly associated with school type and 3 groups were on both sides of the issue. Overall, six groups believe competition improves BVSD schools: "Competition has made us stronger. Everyone should have to perform;" "Competition can make schools better. Public education has gone on as business as usual. Charters and focus schools have involved parents. We need to meet needs and invite parents in;" and "Competition will lead to failure, but you have to destroy in order to build the new." Nine groups saw competition as destructive: "The basis of open enrollment is competition…they're expecting us to deal with people like widgets;" "The fight for students breaks down any sense of collegiality among principals;" and "It is inappropriate and distasteful to apply open market policy to public education. It doesn't make sense, it doesn't add up. It is anathema to the way this country is supposedly set up."

Criticisms of the BVSD Administration

Twenty-four of the groups, slightly more than two thirds, were critical of the BVSD central administration's handling of open enrollment in at least one way, and several had more than one complaint. Lack of district support was claimed by 7 schools, 5 of which were charters, focus, or strand schools. Complaints included: "Boulder Valley School District has been reluctant to include choice. This seems like a reinforcement of the attitude that we are only doing choice because it is the law…;" "There is no choice if core knowledge is oversubscribed . . . The district does not support strands or core knowledge, doesn't give it a fair shake;" and "The district is hostile. It wants total control and one curriculum for all students, and resents parent-driven schools. The district uses choice as

a scapegoat for declining enrollment in neighborhood schools, which is actually due to changing demographics. The district gives no credit for the good job that is being done."

Nine groups, 8 of which were neighborhood or strand schools, criticized the district administration for poor planning and leadership, and failing to enforce open enrollment policies. Their remarks included: "Procedures are not monitored or enforced. Schools can just declare they are a focus. It's too easy to open charter schools;" "The choice policy has developed haphazardly. Standards are needed and choice programs and schools need to be evaluated;" "We've done everything wrong with choice in this district. Some choice options are trying to address real needs, but some are trying to meet the invidious propensity of Americans to try to get every advantage for their kids;" and "There's no strategic plan, just more choices…There's no vision--We're on the bus from the movie Speed."

Nine groups, 6 of which were neighborhood or strand schools, criticized the district administration for not effectively disseminating information about open enrollment. Among their remarks were: "I don't even know what the process is for open enrollment. There are so many choices. It's too open-ended. It is overwhelming;" "We got nothing in the mail. I heard about open enrollment through word of mouth in the neighborhood;" "Open enrollment is not too hard to understand. It is too hard to get the information… The information isn't available or accessible. If you don't have the means to access the information, then you don't have a choice;" and "Part of the problem is from the district. They don't provide information in languages other than English."

Poor Information

Eighteen focus groups, more than half, saw more far reaching problems with information than poor dissemination by the BVSD administration. Six, 4 of which were neighborhood schools, claimed that the media is biased, uninformed, or inaccurate: "The press coverage is biased. They communicate that charter schools are superior;" "The media has put fear into parents that we're not making the ideal choice. Test scores are overemphasized, and parents don't see that test scores can't be compared between schools with different populations;" "The district should check the accuracy of the information in the Camera;" and "If you read all the articles in the Camera from the last five years, you'd say these people who run the newspaper don't want choice."

Nine groups, all from neighborhood or strand schools, said that parents often base their choices on poor information: "Parents only care whether it's a focus school. They're not interested in learning more about a neighborhood school;" "In shopping, parents get information they can't understand, mostly test scores and stuff in the newspaper;" "Most people's decisions are arbitrary. Some people just choose Core Knowledge because someone has told them it's the best. On walks, I've had neighbors stop me and ask me, 'What do you think?'" and "It's a known fact that realtors push kids out of our schools."

Twelve groups, 9 of which were from neighborhood or strand schools, charged that test scores are over-emphasized and used to evaluate schools without taking their student

populations into account: "Test scores are the whole marketing strategy;" "For parents, the big issue is test scores, but there are a lot of different cultures here. They think we dumb down the content, especially because we have a lot of non-English speakers;" "Test scores drive the process;" and "People are looking only at test scores--it's competition without full information. They say, 'I'll take my child wherever the test scores are good.'"

Shared Sites

BVSD has 11 sites at which different schools share facilities or a single school has two distinct curricular strands. Eight of these groups, a little more than three quarters, raised issues about these arrangements. The groups were roughly equally divided on whether these arrangements are working. Five suggested they are, and four that they are not (one group was on both sides). Critics said things such as, "I know people who don't come here because of the shared building. There is so much stress on kids. Think of the football game: What if CU and CSU had to share the same campus. One kid asked my girl, 'Do you go to _____ or the school for dummies?' She came home crying;" and "Principals who are in charge of 2 schools that are going in different directions have to be a cheerleader for both. It's like you're prostituting yourself. You don't have a soul." Supporters said things such as, "Our focus school and regular program have enhanced each other. We just look upon ourselves as one school. We don't differentiate it. It has made our school stronger…;" and "Two different curricula side-by-side provide a good opportunity for each group of teachers to learn from one another."

SCHOOL SURVEY METHODS

The School Survey was designed to elicit the personal beliefs and attitudes of active parents, teachers, and principals at choice and neighborhood schools. In most cases, the School Surveys were completed by individuals when they arrived to attend the focus group meetings. Written Surveys were collected before the start of the focus group. In a few cases, individuals completed the survey later and mailed it to the researchers.

Sample

School Surveys were completed by 466 individuals representing 43 "schools." To analyze the School Surveys, we first grouped responses by school, where "school" was defined as a unit identified by BVSD as a neighborhood, focus, strand, or charter school. Thus, responses from one school building housing more than one unit, such as Majestic Heights, were separated by unit and counted as 2 schools--one neighborhood school (Majestic Heights Elementary) and one focus school (BCSIS). Similarly, a building in which participants identified with one of two programs--neighborhood (BVSD) program or strand (Core Knowledge) program--was counted as 2 schools. Then, focus, strand, and charter schools were grouped together and then subdivided into two categories: choice schools with an explicit bilingual or diversity component (or mission), hereafter referred to as "bilingual choice schools," and choice schools without an explicit

bilingual/diversity component, hereafter "choice schools." (Thus, there were more "schools," as defined this way, than focus groups because several BVSD and strand curricula groups located in one building participated together in one focus group.) All of the choice schools in BVSD except Sojourner (too new), Arapahoe Ridge, and Boulder Prep (both too specialized) were included in the study. All neighborhood schools with a strand school were also included, along with a sample of the remaining neighborhood schools. The sample was selected geographically, so as to include neighborhood schools from each of the district's 8 regions. One of these neighborhood schools refused to participate; another failed to respond in a timely enough manner to participate.

The number and type of schools represented in the School Surveys were 23 neighborhood schools, 16 choice schools, and 4 bilingual choice schools, for a total of 43 "schools" (as defined above). Among these schools were 5 high schools, 11 middle schools, and 28 elementary schools (K-8 schools were counted as both an elementary and a middle school).

The demographic characteristics of the School Survey respondents (and Focus Group participants) were as follows:

Gender: 77.9% Female; 22.1% Male

Ethnicity (the number in parentheses is the % of students of each ethnicity in the school district): 92.3% (80%) White, non-Hispanic; 4.8% (12%) Hispanic; 1.1% (5%) Asian/Pacific Islander; 0.9% (2%) African-American; 0.7% (1%) American Indian; 0.2% (-----) Other (including Biracial)

Highest Educational Level: 55.1% Advanced degree; 36.1% Bachelor's degree; 6.1% Some college or trade school; 2.2% High school; 0.4% Less than high school

Role: 51.7% Parents; 33.8% Teachers; 7.1% Principals; 2.2% Students; 1.9% Community members; 3.3% Other

This sample is considerably more white and less diverse than the school district student population. It also is more white, less diverse, and more highly educated than the randomly selected respondents to the Phone Survey (see below). This difference indicates that those who most actively participate in BVSD (i.e., those who completed the written School Survey and participated in the Focus Group Interviews) are more white and more highly educated than the school district as a whole.

Data Analysis Procedures

Responses to the School Survey were entered into Paradox database software for analysis. In order to aggregate responses, as well as preserve respondents' meanings, response codes were derived for each question from the raw data. Response codes were aggregated first by question and then by school and role type (parents vs. educators, including principals, teachers, and staff). A few questions (the ones about teacher and

student recruitment) were not included in the present analysis because the data were judged to be uninformative. For four questions (the ones about student recruitment, fundraising methods, and the value, or lack of value, of the public discussion of the district's choice policy), responses were limited in number or very similar, thus they were reviewed and categorized by hand. Finally, only the principals' responses to the question about the amount of money obtained through fundraising were used, and for a separate purpose to be described subsequently (in Methods and Findings Section III).

In the case of roles, the frequency of each response code was calculated as a percentage for each role type. These percentages were then used to compare the responses of parents to those of educators.

In the case of schools, because our intent was to use schools (rather than respondents) as the units of analysis and because the number of respondents differed greatly across schools, we needed a way to equalize the responses by school. To do this, the frequency of each response code was calculated as a percentage for each school; then, the average percentage for each response code across schools was calculated. Average percentages were used to generate tables that compared the responses from neighborhood schools with those from choice and bilingual choice schools. In cases where a response code included less than 1.5% of responses from all three-school types, this response code was omitted from the final calculations.

PHONE SURVEY METHODS

The Phone Surveys were designed to elicit the beliefs and attitudes of district parents who have not participated in open enrollment, i.e., those who have not placed a child in a strand, focus, charter, or neighborhood school outside their attendance area.

Sample

For the Phone Survey, the school district was divided into the 8 geographic regions used by the district to identify attendance boundaries and feeder patterns. Eighty-five potential respondents from each region were selected at random from a list of parents provided by the district. Researchers telephoned the selected parents, screened for appropriate characteristics, and then administered the Survey so as to obtain 30 completed surveys from each region and a total of 240 completed surveys. Surveys were conducted in Spanish as needed.

The demographic characteristics of the Phone Survey respondents were as follows:

Gender: 75.7% Female; 24.3% Male

Ethnicity (the number in parentheses is the % of students of each ethnicity in the school district): 78.8% (80%) White, non-Hispanic; 8.3% (12%) Hispanic; 4.6% (-----) No answer; 2.9% (-----) Other; 2.5% (5%) Asian/Pacific Islander; 2.1% (2%) African-American; 0.8% (1%) American Indian

Highest Educational Level: 36.7% Bachelor's degree; 22.9% Advanced degree; 19.6% Some college or trade school; 13.8% High school; 4.6% No answer; 2.5% Less than high school

The figures for ethnicity among respondents to the Phone Survey more closely matched the student population of the district than did respondents to the School Survey, and respondents to the Phone Survey had lower educational levels than the respondents to the School Survey.

Data Analysis Procedures

Like the School Survey, responses from the Phone Survey were entered into Paradox for analysis. Responses were coded, and response codes aggregated first by question and then by region, gender, ethnicity, and educational level. Frequencies were calculated as a percentage for each region, gender, etc., and these percentages were used to compare responses.

SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

In order to more systematically determine the extent to which attitudes about school choice differed across groups based on their experience of open enrollment, we sorted School Survey responses by school and then categorized the schools as one of three types: Neighborhood, Choice, and Bilingual Choice. Responses to each question were coded. Percentages of response codes for each question were calculated for each school and then averaged across schools in each school type to eliminate the bias created by having different numbers of respondents from each school and different numbers of schools of each type. (See SCHOOL SURVEY METHODS, Data Analysis Procedures for a discussion of the coding procedures).

School Survey Results by School Type

The results indicate that, regardless of school type, there is considerable agreement in what participants have to say about school choice and open enrollment in this district. Broadly speaking, respondents tend to want the same things from schools, want to avoid the same things, have similar reasons for choosing a particular school, mention the same kinds of benefits and drawbacks, and make similar kinds of recommendations for change. However, there also are some important differences that suggest respondents from the three school types think differently about the general desires and worries they share. For example, while most respondents agree that they choose and admire their particular school for its Curriculum and Educators, *what* they value most about these items may be different, e.g., some value a curriculum primarily because it is academically oriented; others primarily because it celebrates cultural diversity. Some of these differences were predictable from the school type, but there also were a few surprises. Finally, concerns about cultural and economic diversity (concern about it, respect for it, lack of it) appeared to be one item that rather consistently differentiated responses by school type.

In the following subsections, actual questions used in the survey occur in the associated table headings and actual phrases used by respondents are placed within quotation marks. Response code categories (our categories) are capitalized.

Important to Accomplish (Table 1.1)

In response to the question, "What are the most important things for schools to accomplish?" Social/Citizenship Skills was the single most frequently mentioned category for choice and

Table 1.1. Responses by School Type to "What are the most important things for schools to accomplish?"

Important to Accomplish	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighborhood
Academic issues	16.6%	12.9%	13.5%
Meet student needs	12.6%	13.7%	16.5%
Positive school climate	14.8%	6.8%	16.2%
Prep for future opportunities	7.5%	5.5%	6.6%
Respect for diversity	2.4%	3.4%	3.4%
Skills/content beyond basics	10.0%	18.0%	11.5%
Social/citizenship skills	23.9%	17.8%	25.3%
Value of learning	12.1%	21.9%	7.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

neighborhood schools (23.9% and 25.3% of responses, respectively). Social/Citizenship Skills include responses such as "good citizens," "moral education," "values inculcation," and "enhanced self-esteem." For these two school types, the next three most frequently mentioned categories were Academic Issues (e.g., "basics," "academic achievement"), Positive School Climate (e.g., "teachers and staff who care about kids," "safe environment"), and Meet Student Needs (e.g., "educate all students up to their potential"). Although the rank order differs slightly, these four categories cover 68.1% of all responses from choice schools and 71.5% of all responses from neighborhood schools. Even for bilingual choice schools, where two other categories have the highest number of responses, the four categories of Social/Citizenship Skills, Academic Issues, Positive School Climate, and Meet Student Needs cover 51.2% of responses.

For bilingual choice schools, Value of Learning (e.g., "love of learning," "confidence in learning") and Skills beyond the Basics (e.g., "art," "music") were the two highest response categories, ahead of the four shared by the other two school types. Value of Learning, in particular, was mentioned more frequently by bilingual choice schools (21.9%) compared to the other types (12.1% and 7%). Positive school climate, in contrast, was apparently not as important to bilingual choice schools (6.8%) as it was to

the other school types (14.8% and 16.2%).

Regardless of school type, the two response categories of Preparation for the Future and Respect for Diversity had similar, low response rates compared to the other categories.

In summary, although there were some differences across school types, there was general agreement that schools should accomplish the broad educational goals of teaching social and citizenship skills, as well as academics, and do so in a way that students are comfortable, safe, and given the attention they need. The goals of preparing students for the future and instilling a respect for diversity were important enough to mention, but they were not *as important* as the other goals.

Important to Avoid (Table 1.2)

In response to the question, "What are the most important things for schools to avoid?" the top three response categories were shared (though in a different order by choice schools) by all three-school types. Discrimination (e.g., "elitism," "favoritism," "segregation"), Failure to Meet

Table 1.2. Responses by School Type to "What are the most important things for schools to avoid?"

Important to Avoid	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighborhood
Competition	2.2%	0.0%	2.3%
Discrimination	18.0%	29.5%	28.6%
Failure to meet students' academic needs	29.2%	25.9%	20.6%
Failure to meet students' social/citizenship needs	11.3%	8.1%	10.1%
Ineffective curriculum, programs	9.6%	8.0%	7.7%
Ineffective teachers/administrators	3.5%	1.8%	4.2%
Negative school climate	20.6%	24.1%	18.4%
Political issues	4.8%	0.0%	6.3%
Religious (or values) issues	0.9%	2.7%	1.9%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Students' Academic Needs, and Negative School Climate accounted for 67.8% of responses from choice schools, 67.6% from neighborhood schools, and 79.5% from bilingual choice schools. Discrimination is a bigger concern for bilingual choice and neighborhood schools (29.5% and 28.6%) than for choice schools (18%), but it is still quite important to choice schools. Failure to Meet Students' Social/Citizenship Needs and Ineffective Curriculum are fourth and fifth in response frequency for all three-school types, and together with the first three response categories, account for 88.7% of choice responses, 85.4% of neighborhood, and 95.6% of bilingual choice responses.

It also is interesting to note that for all three school types, concerns about discrimination, meeting academic needs, and negative school climate are considerably greater than concerns about either ineffective curriculum or ineffective teachers, and ineffective curriculum is of greater concern than ineffective teachers.

Of the low response categories, Political Issues (e.g., "political controversies," "politically-inspired arguments") and Competition (e.g., "competition among schools for students," "competition among schools for resources") were mentioned by choice and neighborhood schools but not bilingual choice schools. Religious Issues (e.g., "teaching religion in schools," "teaching values") and Ineffective Teachers were mentioned, but not very often, by all three-school types.

In summary, the list of things that schools should avoid, and the order of frequency, is almost identical for the three school types. The one prominent exception is greater concern about discrimination on the part of bilingual choice and neighborhood schools.

Reasons for Choosing a School (Table 1.3)

In answer to the question, "What were your reasons for choosing [this] school for your child (ren)?" responses were more varied--some predictable and some not. (Note that only parents answered this question.) Not surprisingly, in the case of neighborhood schools, the most frequent response was "because it's in my neighborhood" (32%); this response was much less common for choice parents (9.2% from choice, 0% from bilingual choice schools). Choosing on the basis of Curriculum was the most frequent response from bilingual choice (46.6%) and choice schools (31.9%) parents. Choosing on the basis of Teachers/Staff was relatively important across school types (12.1%, 12.7%, 14%) but much less important than Curriculum for choice schools or Neighborhood for neighborhood schools.

Also predictably, Cultural Diversity is a more important reason for choosing a school in the case of bilingual choice schools (21.2%) than for neighborhood schools (7%) and especially for choice schools (2.1%). In addition, Positive School Climate is of greater concern to choice schools (14.5%) than to neighborhood (2.5%) or bilingual choice (1.6%) schools. Comparing the two kinds of choice schools, the positive value placed on Cultural Diversity and the relative lack of importance of Positive School Climate by bilingual choice schools contrasts rather sharply with the positive value of Positive School Climate and the relative lack of importance of Cultural Diversity by choice schools. It seems that bilingual choice schools are attractive in large part because they are ethnically and economically diverse, and choice schools are attractive in large part because they are perceived as providing high levels of comfort and

Reasons for Choosing this School	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighborhood
Best school available	4.0%	0.8%	2.3%
Cultural/ethnic/SES diversity	2.1%	21.2%	7.0%
Curriculum	31.9%	46.6%	10.6%
Experience with school	0.8%	0.8%	3.0%
Facility	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Good reputation	1.9%	0.8%	4.6%
High quality education	1.6%	6.6%	5.2%
High standards, expectations	2.1%	0.0%	2.4%
Meets students' needs	3.9%	0.0%	1.1%
Neighborhood school	9.2%	0.0%	32.0%
Parental involvement	1.5%	0.8%	0.7%
Positive school climate	14.5%	1.6%	2.5%
Proximity/location	3.7%	4.3%	6.8%
Small school or class size	8.0%	2.3%	2.0%
Strong community	1.6%	0.8%	4.4%
Educators	12.1%	12.7%	14.0%
Test scores	1.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

safety (aspects of Positive School Climate).

Somewhat surprising given the arguments by school choice proponents that choice schools can raise achievement standards, do a better job of meeting student needs, and increase parental involvement, these items comprised a very small percentage (less than 4%) of reasons for choosing a particular school, regardless of school type. Choice parents mentioned these items slightly more than at the other school types, but the percentages were still very low. Bilingual choice parents barely mentioned these items at all.

Another surprise was the very low percentage of parents who responded that "test scores" were a reason for choosing a particular school, again regardless of school type. This finding contrasts sharply with a pattern in our statistical analysis (reported later in Section II), where test scores were found to be strongly associated with the demand for schools.

In summary, responses to this question suggest that very active parents in this district choose a school on the basis of its curriculum, teachers and staff. Curriculum and Teachers/Staff are also important reasons for choosing neighborhood schools, although

not as important as the fact that it is a neighborhood school. Other considerations, notably cultural diversity *or* positive school climate, are valued quite differently by parents from the two types of choice schools. Although this difference is predictable, as is the distinctive and overwhelming choice for Neighborhood by neighborhood school parents, these differences are important because they suggest that different values and priorities contribute to the choices and decisions that parents make. It seems safe to say that everyone chooses a school for its curriculum, teachers, and staff, but what parents notice and value about these items may differ substantially.

Very low response rates for reasons of High Standards of Achievement, Meeting Student Needs, and Parental Involvement are surprising given their emphasis in the pro-choice literature and among pro-choice advocates in this district. Very low response rates for reasons of Test Scores are also surprising given our statistical finding (see Section II) that test scores are strongly associated with the demand for schools in the District. Perhaps these reasons are embedded in what parents mean when they say they choose on the basis of Curriculum and Teachers/Staff. Or perhaps, many do not want to admit to choosing on the basis of test scores.

Advantages or Strengths of this School (Table 1.4)

In response to the question, "What are the advantages or strengths of this school?" answers were similar to those reported for Question 5/Reasons for Choosing a School (above) but more clearly suggest some of the ambiguities in the survey data. Educators and Curriculum were the top two strengths across school types, accounting for an average of 50% of the responses. After Curriculum and Educators, School Climate was seen as a relatively important strength by all school types (13.3%, 14%, 11.3%).

Table 1.4. Responses by School Type to "What are the advantages or strengths of this school?"

Advantages or Strengths of this School	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighborhood
Academics	2.2%	0.0%	4.4%
Curriculum and instruction	24.9%	31.8%	13.1%
Diversity	4.0%	21.5%	10.3%
Facilities, materials	1.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Meet student needs	4.7%	0.7%	3.8%
Parental involvement	8.1%	5.3%	10.2%
Proximity/location/n'borhood	2.6%	0.0%	6.4%
School climate	13.3%	14.0%	11.3%
Small school or class size	10.9%	1.6%	5.5%
Students	1.0%	0.0%	3.2%
Educators	27.0%	25.2%	28.4%

Total	100%	100%	100%

Diversity is seen as an advantage for bilingual choice schools (21.5%), but much less so at choice schools (4.0%). This finding for choice schools is ambiguous, since it could be either that fewer choice schools considered cultural diversity a strength of their school, or that fewer choice schools considered the diversity at their schools when answering this question.

A few other differences were interesting although it is hard to know what to make of them at this point. Small Size was relatively important as a strength of choice schools (10.9%), less so for bilingual choice (1.6%) or neighborhood schools (5.5%). Although perhaps not as important a strength as expected for neighborhood schools, Proximity was more often mentioned by neighborhood schools (6.4%) than by the other school types (2.6%, 0%).

The low response rates for Academics (2.2%, 0%, 4.4%) were interesting but again ambiguous. It may be that people in this district are not happy with academics in their schools (and therefore they don't identify Academics as a strength), or that, for them, Academics was encompassed by Curriculum and Teachers/Staff, or that Academics was not something they considered when answering this question.

In summary, it seems clear that, regardless of school type, people say that they choose and admire their school primarily for its curriculum, teachers, and staff. However, it is hard to be sure what various people include and exclude when using these terms; it is hard to know, for example, whether related features, such as cultural diversity and strong academics, are included under the labels of Curriculum or Teachers. On the other hand, it seems telling that academic rigor, often included in the written mission (e.g., on their web pages) of choice schools in this district, is not explicit in their answers to this question.

Disadvantages or Problems of this School (Table 1.5)

Responses to the question, "What are the disadvantages or problems of this school?" shed some light on the issues raised by Question 7/Advantages or Strengths of this School. First, it is clear that few people view their own school as having problems with Weak Curriculum, Ineffective Teachers/Staff (although choice schools consider this more of a problem than the other school types), or Negative School Climate. This is consistent with earlier findings that good curriculum, good teachers and staff, and positive school climate are principal reasons for choosing a school and the main strengths of one's own school.

Consistent with the interpretation that choice schools (which have little cultural diversity) are not particularly concerned about diversity, only 4.7% name Lack of Diversity as a problem or disadvantage. In contrast, this figure is 11% for neighborhood schools. (This figure is 0% for bilingual choice schools, perhaps because they have large minority populations by district standards and value them.)

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With the exception of different levels of concern about cultural diversity, choice schools and neighborhood schools are similar in the disadvantages or problems they are most likely to name. Inadequate Funding/Support is the most frequently mentioned problem (18.1%, 13.5%) for both school types. Inadequate Facilities and Limitations due to Small (or Declining) Size are the next most frequently mentioned problems (together: 22.2 % at choice, and 20.3% at neighborhood, schools).

The prominence of problems associated with small size for choice schools is interesting in light of the earlier finding that Small Size was a relatively important reason for parents to choose a school of this type. This suggests that choice schools are ambivalent about the value of small size: They apparently like smaller class sizes because students receive more attention but dislike it when some programs cannot be offered because student numbers are too low. Clearly, it will be hard to have it both ways.

Understandably, given that a number of existing neighborhood schools have had to share space with new strand or focus schools, Shared Space is seen as a bigger problem by neighborhood schools (7.2%) than by the other school types (3.4%, 3.4%).

Table 1.5. Responses by School Type to "What are the disadvantages or problems of this school?"

Disadvantages or Problems of this School	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Bad reputation or negative public relations	4.2%	23.1%	6.4%
Cliques	1.2%	1.1%	1.6%
Competition	2.2%	0.0%	1.8%
Disadvantaged population	0.0%	25.2%	6.0%
Hostility from those opposed to choice schools	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Inadequate facilities	13.9%	5.6%	8.8%
Inadequate funding/resources/support	18.1%	9.9%	13.5%
Ineffective teachers/administrators	8.0%	0.0%	5.7%
Lack of diversity or respect for diversity	4.7%	0.0%	11.0%
Lack of neighborhood	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lack of transportation	1.6%	1.1%	0.0%
Limited programs due to small (or declining) size	9.3%	0.0%	11.5%
Negative school climate	2.7%	4.5%	4.3%
Pressure to meet state or district requirements	4.8%	0.0%	0.8%
School or classes too large (overcrowding)	2.5%	3.4%	6.6%
Shared space	3.4%	3.4%	7.2%
Special demands on students	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Threat of closure or move	2.8%	0.0%	5.1%
Too little parental involvement	3.5%	11.6%	1.9%
Too much parental involvement	1.7%	1.1%	1.1%
Too much traffic	0.6%	1.1%	1.7%

Weak academics	3.3%	2.2%	1.2%
Weak or inconsistent curriculum or instruction	4.8%	6.6%	4.0%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

What was quite striking about the responses to this question was the distinctly different set of main problems at bilingual choice schools. In contrast to the other two school types, bilingual choice schools identified their major problems as: a Disadvantaged Population (25.2%), a Bad Reputation (e.g., "gangs," "discipline problems," "negative publicity") (23.1%), and Too Little Parental Involvement (11.6%). None of these items appeared very often for choice or neighborhood schools. This finding, coupled with previous ones, suggests that although people who choose bilingual choice schools say they value the cultural diversity found there, they also believe, at least in this district, that their schools suffer from the negative consequences associated with diversity--parents and students with limited economic means, few educational resources, and bad reputations.

Finally, in light of the earlier question about the extent to which rigorous academics is a consideration for some, the low response rate for Academics as a problem matches its low rate as a strength, regardless of school type. Thus, we still cannot be sure what to make of its relative insignificance in this survey (see Question 7/Advantages or Strengths of this School for competing interpretations).

In summary, the findings from this question lend support to earlier findings about the primary importance of Curriculum, Teachers/Staff, and Positive School Climate: Regardless of school type, respondents believe that these features are strengths and not problems at their own schools. Further, concern about cultural diversity continues to distinguish school types; bilingual choice schools believe that they suffer because of their diverse populations, choice schools do not seem very concerned about lack of cultural diversity, and neighborhood schools, more than the others, worry about their lack of diversity. All school types are concerned about Inadequate Funding/Support, but while this is the most frequently mentioned problem at choice and neighborhood schools, Disadvantaged Population is the most frequently mentioned problem at bilingual choice schools. The flip side of this is that choice schools and neighborhood schools do not consider Disadvantaged Populations to be a big problem for them.

Effect of Open Enrollment on the Community (Table 1.6)

This question asked respondents what they thought about the effects of open enrollment on the sense of community at their school. Regardless of school type, many believed that open enrollment Weakens Community (neighborhood) Bonds but at the same time Makes a Stronger Community at a School. However, these two response categories accounted for considerably more responses from choice schools (66%) and bilingual choice schools (68.7%) than from neighborhood schools (39.5%).

Table 1.6. Responses by School Type to "How has the BVSD open
enrollment/choice policy affected the sense of community?"

Effect of Open Enrollment on Community	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Allows for more educational options (good)	4.2%	0.0%	1.9%
Creates problems of shared space	1.1%	1.7%	3.6%
Increases competition, leading to better schools	1.4%	8.3%	1.9%
Increases competition, threatening some schools	5.6%	11.7%	20.7%
Increases diversity (good)	2.4%	5.0%	1.9%
Increases faculty/staff workload	0.0%	1.7%	1.3%
Increases segregation	5.7%	0.0%	11.4%
Makes stronger community at a school	51.3%	32.9%	15.4%
No effects, no net change	13.6%	2.9%	17.8%
Weakens community bonds	14.7%	35.8%	24.1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Not surprisingly, because some neighborhood schools have been closed or threatened with closure after students moved to choice schools, neighborhood schools, more than choice schools, were concerned about the negative effects of Increased Competition (20.1% for neighborhood schools compared to 5.6% for choice schools and 11.7% for bilingual choice schools). Neighborhood schools also were more concerned about Increased Segregation resulting from open enrollment (11.4% for neighborhood schools compared to 5.7% for choice schools and 0% for bilingual choice schools).

Responses indicate that a fair number of people from both neighborhood and choice schools believe that there have been No Effects on the sense of community (17.8% at neighborhood schools, 13.6% at choice schools). Only 2.9% gave this response (No Effects) at bilingual choice schools. Somewhat surprisingly, bilingual choice schools were more likely to mention the positive effects of Increased Competition (8.3%) than were the other two school types (1.4%, 1.9%). The relatively high response rate on this item from bilingual choice schools and the very low response rate from choice schools is surprising because calls to improve schools through competition are most closely associated with choice schools in this district.

In summary, these findings suggest that, regardless of school type, the majority recognize some effects of open enrollment on the sense of community, namely, a weakening of neighborhood bonds and a strengthening of within-school bonds. The tenor of these responses suggests that while many regret the weakening of neighborhood bonds (e.g., "my children don't know their neighbors anymore"), they are pleased that within schools communities have gotten stronger (e.g., "when parents choose a school, they are much more actively involved"). Of the smaller percentage who believe that open enrollment has had no effect on the community, most were from neighborhood elementary schools or

high schools that have experienced little out migration of their students.

Benefits of Open Enrollment (Table 1.7)

This question asked respondents for their overall opinions, pro or con, of the district's open enrollment policy. Responses were divided into two categories: benefits (pro) and drawbacks (con) and then coded. Findings regarding each category are reported separately.

Table 1.7. Responses by School Type to "What are your 'pro' (favorable) opinions about BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Benefits of Open Enrollment/Choice Policy	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Allows for meeting student needs	21.1%	9.4%	22.0%
Allows for school or program choice	58.4%	90.6%	68.1%
Encourages competition that leads to improvement	7.3%	0.0%	4.7%
Encourages parents to take an active role	0.8%	0.0%	1.1%
Improves school climate	4.9%	0.0%	1.8%
Increases enrollment, keeps students in district	7.4%	0.0%	2.4%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

There was overwhelming agreement that the benefits of open enrollment are (1) the opportunity to select a school or program of choice; and (2) the opportunity to better meet the particular needs of a student. These two responses comprised 79.5% of responses from choice schools, 100% of responses from bilingual choice schools, and 90.1% from neighborhood schools.

Choice schools mentioned two other benefits--Keeping Students in the District (rather than at private schools) and Encouraging Competition leading to Improvement (7.4% and 7.3% respectively). Given that the economic resources of many choice parents are high, it is likely that they considered sending their children to private school and that they know other families who have made this choice. For this group, the opportunity to choose, and in some cases to start, a school may be what convinced them to keep their children in public schools. This group's identification of increased competition as a benefit is consistent with the fact that calls to improve schools through competition are most closely associated with choice schools in this district.

In summary, almost everyone agrees that the benefits of open enrollment are the opportunity to choose a school and the opportunity to meet particular students' needs. Choice schools also see the benefits of keeping students in the district and improving district schools through competition. It is interesting to note that while most agree that a

benefit of open enrollment is the opportunity to meet student needs, this response was not commonly given as a reason for choosing a particular school. A similar pattern is evident when comparing responses from choice schools about the benefits of increased competition. While a fair percentage of choice schools consider increased competition to be a benefit of open enrollment, very few think that increased competition has had an effect on the community.

Drawbacks of Open Enrollment (Table 1.8)

Regardless of school type, many believe that open enrollment Increases Inequities across Schools and Enables Segregation by race and class (38.7% at choice schools, 51.4% at bilingual choice schools, 31.7% at neighborhood schools). However, for bilingual choice schools and neighborhood schools, the High Negative Cost to Neighborhoods is the single most frequently given response (27.8%, 28.6%); this response is much lower for choice schools (8.7%).

Table 1.8. Responses by School Type to "What are your 'con' (unfavorable) opinions about BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Drawbacks of Open Enrollment/Choice Policy	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Creates inappropriate uses of resources	1.8%	3.1%	3.8%
Creates/increases inequities for schools /families	22.3%	26.4%	18.0%
Enables segregation	16.4%	25.0%	13.7%
High negative cost to charter or focus schools	5.7%	0.0%	1.0%
High negative cost to neighborhood, community	8.7%	27.8%	28.6%
Inadequate information available to make choice	17.4%	9.0%	7.0%
Increases traffic congestion	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Interferes with good education	2.9%	2.8%	1.0%
Procedural problems with implementation	16.0%	5.9%	8.0%
Too much competition	8.8%	0.0%	18.1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Choice schools are more likely than bilingual choice or neighborhood schools to identify the drawbacks of Inadequate Information and Procedural Problems with Implementation (17.4% versus 9% and 7% for Inadequate Information; 16% versus 5.9% and 8% for Procedural Problems). This may be because this group has been the most active in seeking information about the educational alternatives offered by the district and because they have been most affected by the priority lists and lottery system that determine who will be admitted to high-demand schools.

Consistent with responses to question 10, neighborhood schools are more likely than

choice or bilingual choice schools to identify Too Much Competition as a drawback (18.1% versus 8.8% and 0%). Also as suggested by the responses to Question 10/Effect of Open Enrollment on Community, bilingual choice schools appear to be less concerned about the drawbacks of increased competition and more positive about its advantages than the other two school types.

Interestingly, two drawbacks brought up in the focus group meetings--Inappropriate Use of Resources (to implement and maintain open enrollment) and Traffic Congestion (increased because parents must provide transportation to choice schools)--received relatively little attention here.

In summary, the serious drawbacks to open enrollment were identified as increased inequities across schools, increased segregation, and the high negative cost to neighborhood cohesion. Choice schools were also concerned about inadequate information available for making a choice among schools and problems associated with the implementation of open enrollment in this district. As was true in answers to other questions, neighborhood schools were the most concerned about the negative effects of increased competition, while choice schools seemed the least concerned.

Recommendations for Change (Table 1.9)

In response to the question, "What changes would you recommend to the open enrollment/school choice policies in this district?" answers tended in the direction of remedying some of the problems identified as drawbacks in Question 15-Con/Drawbacks of Open Enrollment. Reducing Inequities across schools was recommended by 21% at choice schools, 37.3% at bilingual choice schools, and 23.2% at neighborhood schools. Making Policies and Procedures Clearer was recommended by 25.2% at choice schools, 11.9% at bilingual choice schools, and 17.1% at neighborhood schools.

At choice schools, respondents recommended More Data about School Choice (9.7%) and more Support of (Existing) Choice Programs (10.2%). At bilingual choice schools, respondents recommended greater Cooperation between choice and neighborhood schools (15.9%). Neighborhood schools also recommended Making It Harder to Open Enroll (12.9%) and Establishing Procedures to Protect Neighborhood Schools (7.7%). These four recommendations were not as important to the other school types.

Interestingly, given the salience of increased segregation as a drawback (Question 15-Con), very few recommended changes that would Address the Lack of Diversity at Some Schools (1.7%, 0%, .5%).

Table 1.9. Responses by School Type to "What changes would you recommend to the open/enrollment choice policy in this district?"

Recommended Changes in OE/Choice Policy	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Address lack of diversity at some schools	1.7%	0.0%	0.5%
Be more responsive to parents' requests for programs, meet parent demand	6.5%	2.4%	0.8%
Create more small schools	0.8%	2.4%	0.3%
Eliminate open enrollment	2.7%	0.0%	3.2%
Encourage cooperation between charter/focus and neighborhood schools	1.4%	15.9%	0.4%
Encourage development of more charter or focus schools	3.4%	4.8%	0.3%
Establish protections for neighborhood schools	2.7%	0.0%	7.7%
Increase support for disadvantaged schools	0.0%	2.4%	0.7%
Limit charter or focus schools	1.7%	0.0%	6.1%
Make it harder to open enroll	0.7%	5.6%	12.9%
Make policies and procedures clearer and more consistent	25.2%	11.9%	17.1%
None	4.0%	4.8%	4.0%
Provide adequate facilities	5.2%	2.4%	6.3%
Provide more data about school choice and its effects	9.7%	4.8%	3.6%
Reduce inequities between charter/focus and neighborhood schools	21.0%	37.3%	23.2%
Reduce need for schools to compete	3.2%	5.6%	6.4%
Support (existing) choice programs more fully	10.2%	0.0%	6.3%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

In summary, the strongest recommendations were to reduce inequities across schools and to make open enrollment policies and procedures clearer and more consistent. These seem to be recommendations that the district could pursue. It is interesting that there were so few explicit recommendations about reducing segregation, given the consensus (Q15-Con) that increased segregation is a drawback of open enrollment. Perhaps this was encompassed by Reducing Inequities, or perhaps this is a problem for which people can think of no solution.

Value of Public Discussion (Table 1.10)

In response to the question, "What has been valuable about the public discussion of open enrollment and school choice?" there was agreement that Making More Information Available was the single most valuable aspect of the discussion (43.4% of responses at choice schools; 53.8%, at bilingual choice schools; 31%, at neighborhood schools). Respondents from choice and neighborhood schools, and to a lesser extent at bilingual choice schools, also believed that a valuable aspect of the discussion was to Give the Public a Chance to Air their own Views and Hear Others' Views (20.2% of responses from choice schools; 24.8% of responses from neighborhood schools; 15.4% at bilingual choice schools). Especially at neighborhood schools, respondents also mentioned the value of Exposing Dissatisfactions and Clarifying Needs (17.7% at neighborhood schools, compared to 5.1% at choice schools, and 7.7% at bilingual choice schools). Regardless of school type, only a few said there was Nothing valuable about the discussion.

Table 1.10. Responses by School Type to "What has been valuable about the
public discussion of BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Value of Public Discussion	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Brings attention to educational issues	7.1%	7.7%	6.2%
Can learn about both sides	2.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Encourages more public involvement in education	3.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Exposes dissatisfactions and clarifies needs	5.1%	7.7%	17.7%
Exposes rumors, misunderstandings, bias	7.1%	7.7%	1.8%
Gives public a chance to air views & hear others' views	20.2%	15.4%	24.8%
Leads to clarification of policies, needs	4.0%	7.7%	3.4%
Makes clear which schools are the best, which are in trouble	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Makes more information available	43.4%	53.8%	31.0%
Makes schools more accountable	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%
Nothing	8.1%	0.0%	7.1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

In summary, regardless of school type, respondents believed that making more information available and giving the public a chance to air views and hear others' views were the most valuable aspects of the public discussion of open enrollment and school choice. More than those at the other school types, respondents at neighborhood schools noted the value of exposing dissatisfactions and clarifying needs.

Detriments of Public Discussion (Table 1.11)

In response to the question, "What has been detrimental about the public discussion of

open enrollment and school choice?" the most frequent response for each school type was that the press or media Coverage has been Inadequate (e.g., "biased," "one-sided," "includes too few perspectives"). Respondents from bilingual choice schools, who also worried about having a bad reputation and negative publicity (Question 8/Disadvantages or Problems of this School), were the most concerned about Inadequate Coverage. This response was given by 46.1% at bilingual choice schools, 39.5% at choice schools, and 31.9% at neighborhood schools. Many of respondents also believed that the public discussion has Created Divisiveness, especially by alienating neighbors from each other (24.3% at choice schools, 23.0% at bilingual choice schools, 19.1% at neighborhood schools). At choice schools, 6.6% felt that the public discussion Made Choice Schools Look Bad (e.g., "elitist," "looking out for their kids only," "negativity toward choice schools"), while at bilingual choice schools 15.3% felt this way (compared to only 2.1% at neighborhood schools). At neighborhood schools, 18.4% felt that the public discussion has Emphasized Choice Schools Too Much/Detracted from Neighborhood Schools (e.g., "choice schools come across as the only ones who can meet the challenge," "creates the false impression that neighborhood schools are soggy biscuits"), and 14.2% said the public discussion has Made Some Schools Look Bad when they aren't (compared to 3.9% and 7.8% at choice schools).

Table 1.11. Responses by School Type to "What has been detrimental
about the public discussion of BVSD's open enrollment/
choice policy?"

Detrimental about Public Discussion	Average Percent for School Type		
	Choice	Bilingual Choice	Neighbor hood
Coverage not adequate (biased, too few voices)	39.5%	46.1%	31.9%
Creates divisiveness, especially among neighbors	24.3%	23.0%	19.1%
Emphasizes choice schools, detracts from neighborhood schools.	3.9%	0.0%	18.4%
Heightens pressures on parents	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%
Increases feelings of uncertainty about schools (closings, etc.)	3.4%	0.0%	1.4%
It's uncivil	10.5%	0.0%	3.5%
Makes choice sound bad	6.6%	15.3%	2.1%
Makes some schools look bad (via test scores) when they aren't	7.9%	7.8%	14.2%
Nothing	3.9%	7.8%	5.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

In summary, the most common responses of all school types were that biased media coverage and increased divisiveness within the community have been the detrimental

effects of the public discussion of open enrollment and school choice. Some people at both choice and neighborhood schools believe that the media favors the other group, making their own schools look or sound bad.

School Survey Results By Role Type

In order to determine whether responses within school type differed by the role of the respondent (e.g., Did parents and teachers at choice schools have different attitudes about school choice?), roles of respondents were categorized into two types: Parents or Educators, including teachers, principals, and staff. Using the same response codes that were used in the analysis by school types, response codes were sorted first by School Type and then by Role for each survey question.

The results indicate that there is quite a bit of agreement between parents and educators about schools and open enrollment. However, parents and educators at choice and neighborhood schools were in closer agreement than parents and educators at bilingual choice schools. As a general rule, parents seemed to be somewhat more enthusiastic about the positive effects of school choice on individual students than were educators. Educators were more concerned than were parents about problems such as discrimination, inequities across schools, and the negative effects of increased competition.

With the preceding discussion of Results by School Type as context, the following discussion focuses on differences between parents and educators for each school type. Parents and educators are compared first by question, and then, at the end of this section, by role across all the questions.

Important to Accomplish (Table 1.12)

Regardless of school type, parents and teachers were in general agreement about the most important things for schools to accomplish; however, there were a few interesting differences. At choice schools, Academic Issues received the highest percentage of responses from parents (21.1%), whereas it was fourth on the list (11%) from educators. In contrast, Social/Citizenship Skills was highest (27.2%) for educators and second (18.5%) for parents.

Table 1.12. Responses by Role and School Type to "What are the most important things for schools to accomplish?"

Important to Accomplish	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Academic issues	21.1%	11.0%	15.8%	21.7%	13.9%	13.1%
Meet student needs	13.0%	10.1%	10.5%	13.0%	13.6%	16.3%
Positive school climate	14.0%	18.0%	14.0%	8.7%	18.4%	16.3%

Prep for future opportunities	4.7%	9.6%	3.5%	4.3%	5.6%	5.7%
Respect for diversity	2.3%	1.3%	7.0%	4.3%	2.9%	2.8%
Skills/content beyond basics	9.4%	10.5%	17.5%	13.0%	12.6%	12.4%
Social/citizenship skills	18.4%	27.2%	17.5%	17.4%	24.1%	23.4%
Value of learning	17.1%	12.3%	14.0%	17.4%	8.8%	9.9%

The importance of Academic Issues is consistent with the expectation that choice parents are especially concerned that their schools provide rigorous academics; teachers and staff were not as likely to mention this as parents were. Also consistent with earlier findings, Respect for Diversity was not often mentioned as important to accomplish by either choice parents (2.3%) or educators (1.3%).

At bilingual choice schools, educators mentioned Academic Issues most often (21.7%), while this item was third (15.8%) behind Skills and Content beyond the Basics (17.5%) and Social/Citizenship Skills (17.5%) for parents. However, the percentages for all three of these items were similar for both groups and more similar to each other than was true for choice schools. Interestingly, the only salient difference between parents and educators at bilingual choice schools was on Respect for Diversity. Although the response rate on this item was relatively low for both groups, it was lower for educators (4.3%) than for parents (7%).

At neighborhood schools, the response frequencies for the two groups were the most similar. In both groups, Social/Citizenship Skills was the most frequently mentioned thing that schools should accomplish (24.1%, 23.4%) with Academic Issues important, but less frequently mentioned by both groups (13.9%, 13.1%).

In summary, there is considerable agreement across parents and educators at each school type that schools should be responsible for social and citizenship skills as well as academic skills. Parents and educators at neighborhood schools appear to be in closest agreement that social and citizenship skills should be accomplished, followed by academic skills. However, more parents (than educators) at choice schools mentioned academics (than mentioned social/citizenship skills), and more educators (than parents) at bilingual choice schools mentioned academics (than mentioned social/citizenship skills). This result suggests somewhat greater concern about academics (relative to social and citizenship skills) by parents at choice schools and by educators at bilingual choice schools.

Important to Avoid (Table 1.13)

With regard to what schools should avoid, parents and educators were in close agreement at choice and neighborhood schools, but less so at bilingual choice schools. At choice schools, Failure to Meet Students' Academic Needs, Negative School Climate, and Discrimination were the most frequently mentioned things to avoid for both groups and

in the same order. Ineffective Curriculum and Failure to Meet Students' Social/Citizenship Needs came next, as things to avoid, for both groups.

At bilingual choice schools, Negative School Climate, Failure to Meet Students' Academic Needs, and Discrimination were the three most frequently mentioned things to avoid for both groups, but these items received different amounts of attention (parents: 35.7%, 31%, 21.4% versus educators: 22.2%, 16.7%, 27.8%). While these top three items comprised most of the responses from bilingual choice parents, a fair percentage of educators also were concerned about avoiding Failure to Meet Students' Social/Citizenship Needs (11.1%) and Religious Issues (11.1%).

Again at neighborhood schools, parents and educators were in fairly close agreement about the most important things for schools to avoid: Discrimination, Negative School Climate, and Failure to Meet Students' Academic Needs (parents: 25.7%, 23.1%, 17.9%; educators: 25.5%, 16.5%, 22.6%).

In summary, again there is considerable agreement across parents and educators at each school type that schools should avoid negative school climate, discrimination, and failure to meet students' academic needs. However, in this case, parents and educators at choice schools and neighborhood schools appear to be in close agreement; the two groups at bilingual choice schools are in somewhat less agreement. At bilingual choice schools, more parents were concerned about negative school climate while more educators were concerned about discrimination.

Table 1.13. Responses by Role and School Type to "What are the important things for schools to avoid?"

Important to Avoid	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Competition	1.4%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	2.8%
Discrimination	12.3%	18.0%	21.4%	27.8%	25.7%	25.5%
Failure to meet students' academic needs	30.5%	25.0%	31.0%	16.7%	17.9%	22.6%
Failure to meet students' social/citizenship needs	10.5%	12.8%	2.4%	11.1%	7.8%	8.0%
Ineffective curriculum, programs	10.9%	5.8%	4.8%	5.6%	9.0%	9.9%
Ineffective teachers/administrators	6.4%	2.3%	2.4%	5.6%	6.3%	4.2%
Negative school climate	22.3%	22.1%	35.7%	22.2%	23.1%	16.5%
Political issues	3.2%	5.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	5.7%
Religious (or values) issues	1.8%	1.2%	2.4%	11.1%	1.5%	2.4%

Advantages or Strengths of this School (Table 1.14)

With regard to the advantages or strengths of a particular school, parents and educators at choice and neighborhood schools were in somewhat closer agreement than parents and educators at bilingual choice schools. At choice schools, both groups named (in the same order) Curriculum and Instruction, Teachers/Staff, and School Climate as the top strengths of their school. These three responses accounted for 68.9% of responses from parents and 64.1% from educators. Given the explicit commitment to academic rigor at choice schools, it is interesting that Academics (per se) was not often mentioned as a strength by either group (only 2.5% of parents and 2.4% of educators).

At bilingual choice schools, Curriculum and Instruction was the most often mentioned strength by both groups (parents: 30.2%, educators: 25%). Teachers/Staff was mentioned by 22.6% of parents (2nd) and 20.8% of educators (3rd). School Climate was mentioned by 15.1% of parents (4th) and 25% (2nd) of educators. A major difference between the two groups occurred with Diversity, where 20.8% of parents mentioned it as a strength, whereas only 4.2% of educators mentioned it. Because bilingual choice schools were expected to care about cultural diversity more than other school types, this difference between parents and educators is interesting.

Table 1.14. Responses by Role and School Type to "What are the advantages or strengths of this school?"

Advantages or Strengths of this School	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	**Educators**	**Parents**	**Educators**	**Parents**	**Educators**
Academics	2.5%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5.5%	4.9%
Curriculum and Instruction	29.3%	28.2%	30.2%	25.0%	12.6%	11.8%
Diversity	0.7%	2.4%	20.8%	4.2%	9.1%	11.8%
Facilities, materials	0.7%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	2.4%
Meet student needs	5.7%	2.4%	0.0%	4.2%	1.9%	3.8%
Parental involvement	8.8%	10.1%	5.7%	16.7%	10.2%	12.5%
Proximity/location/ neighborhood	1.8%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%	3.1%
School climate	13.8%	15.7%	15.1%	25.0%	9.3%	15.7%
Small school or class size	8.1%	10.1%	3.8%	0.0%	3.6%	1.7%
Students	0.7%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	3.8%

| Teachers/staff | 25.8% | 20.2% | 22.6% | 20.8% | 29.7% | 24.7% |

At neighborhood schools, Teachers/Staff, Curriculum and Instruction, Parental Involvement, and School Climate were considered strengths (although in different orders) by both groups (parents: 29.7%, 12.6%, 10.2%, 9.9%; educators: 24.7%, 11.8%, 12.5%, 15.7%). Not surprisingly for neighborhood schools, Proximity was seen as a strength by some parents (9.9%) but few educators (3.2%).

In summary, once again it appears that parents and educators at choice schools and neighborhood schools are in closer agreement about their strengths (curriculum, teachers/staff, school climate) than are these two groups at bilingual choice schools where more parents consider diversity a strength than do educators. This difference is somewhat surprising given the explicit commitment to cultural diversity on the part of bilingual choice schools. In addition, given the explicit commitment to academic rigor on the part of choice schools, it is surprising to find that neither many parents nor many educators consider academics a strength of their schools.

Disadvantages or Problems of this School (Table 1.15)

Responses to this question were somewhat more mixed within school type. For choice schools, Inadequate Funding/Support and Inadequate Facilities were the two most frequently mentioned

Table 1.15. Responses by Role and School Type to "What are the disadvantages or problems of this school?"

Disadvantages or Problems of this School	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Bad reputation or negative public relations	2.3%	8.8%	9.7%	6.7%	8.2%	6.9%
Cliques	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.5%
Competition	2.9%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	3.0%
Disadvantaged population	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	20.0%	2.4%	5.4%
Hostility from those opposed to choice schools	2.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Inadequate facilities	12.7%	15.0%	3.2%	26.7%	8.2%	9.4%
Inadequate funding/ resources/support	13.3%	21.8%	25.8%	6.7%	9.0%	13.9%
Ineffective teachers/administrators	9.2%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%	4.5%
Lack of diversity or respect for diversity	5.8%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	7.8%	12.4%
Lack of neighborhood	5.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Lack of transportation	5.8%	2.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Limited programs due to small (or declining) size	6.9%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	10.6%	8.9%
Negative school climate	2.9%	2.0%	9.7%	6.7%	2.4%	6.4%
Pressure to meet state or district requirements	5.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
School or classes too large (overcrowding)	2.3%	3.4%	9.7%	0.0%	11.0%	4.0%
Shared space	5.2%	2.0%	0.0%	20.%	7.8%	6.4%
Special demands on students	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Threat of closure or move	3.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	1.0%
Too little parental involvement	2.9%	0.0%	6.5%	6.7%	2.0%	1.5%
Too much parental involvement	1.7%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Too much traffic	0.6%	0.7%	0.0%	6.7%	2.9%	0.5%
Weak academics	2.3%	0.0%	6.5%	0.0%	1.2%	0.5%
Weak or inconsistent curriculum or instruction	2.3%	5.4%	19.4%	0.0%	4.1%	5.4%

disadvantages for both groups (parents: 13.3%, 12.7%; educators: 21.8%, 15%). After these two disadvantages, parents named Ineffective Teachers/Administrators next (9.2%), whereas educators named Bad Reputation ("gangs," "discipline problems," "negative publicity") next (8.8%). Ineffective Teachers/Administrators was mentioned next most often by educators (6.1%), but Bad Reputation was mentioned much less often by parents (2.3%) than by educators. Given earlier questions about how much respondents from choice schools valued academics per se, neither group found Weak Academics or Too Much Emphasis on Academics to be much of a disadvantage at these schools (parents: 0%, .7%; educators: 2.3%, .6%).

At bilingual choice schools, parents and educators were quite different. Inadequate Funding/Support and Weak Curriculum were the disadvantages most frequently mentioned by parents (25.8% and 19.4%, compared to 6.7% and 0% by educators), whereas Inadequate Facilities, Disadvantaged Population, and Shared Space were the disadvantages most frequently mentioned by educators (26.7%, 20%, 20%, compared to 3.2%, 6.5%, and 0% for parents). (Note that both groups of respondents--parents and educators--were predominantly white.)

At neighborhood schools, some differences appeared but not as many as at bilingual choice schools. Inadequate Funding/Support, Inadequate Facilities, and Limited Programs due to Small (or Declining) Size comprised 32.2% of disadvantages identified by parents and 30.6% of disadvantages identified by educators. However, overcrowding was the single disadvantage most often mentioned by parents (11%, compared to 4% by educators), whereas Inadequate Funding/Support was most often mentioned by educators (13.9%, compared to 9% by parents). In addition, Lack of Diversity was mentioned

second most often by educators (12.4%), but fourth by parents (7.8%).

Given that BVSD is generally considered a very good district in the state, it was surprising to find that Bad Reputation was a disadvantage mentioned by a fair number of people, both parents and educators (the low response rate for parents at choice schools is the one exception). At choice schools, Bad Reputation was mentioned by 8.8% of educators; at bilingual choice schools, it was mentioned by 9.7% of parents and 6.7% of educators; at neighborhood schools, it was mentioned by 8.2% of parents and 6.9% of educators.

In summary, the disadvantages identified by parents and educators differ more than do the two groups' responses to other questions. Again there were greater differences between the two groups at bilingual choice schools than at choice or neighborhood schools. At choice schools, more educators worry about a bad reputation than parents. At bilingual choice schools, more parents worry about inadequate funding and weak curriculum, while more educators worry about inadequate facilities and the disadvantaged characteristics of their student population. At neighborhood schools, more parents worry about overcrowding, while more educators worry about lack of diversity.

Effect of Open Enrollment on the Community (Table 1.16)

Parents and educators at choice schools agreed that the main effects of open enrollment have been to Make Stronger Communities at Schools (50%, 59.2%) and, to a lesser extent, to Weaken Community Bonds (16.7%, 11.2%). A fair percentage of both groups did not believe that open enrollment has affected communities (parents: 18.8%; educators: 10.4%). Although calls for more competition to improve schools often come from participants at choice schools, very few in either group mentioned that open enrollment has done this (parents: .7%; educators: .8%). Instead, they were more likely to believe (although this was still a low response) that increased competition has had a negative (threatening) effect on some schools (parents: 4.3%; educators: 4.8%). Only a small percentage of either group believed that open enrollment has increased segregation (parents: 3.5%; educators: 4%).

Table 1.16. Responses by Role and School Type to "How has the BVSD open enrollment/choice policy affected the sense of community?"

Effect of Open Enrollment on Community	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Allows for more educational options (good)	2.8%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.7%
Creates problems of shared space	2.8%	0.8%	0.0%	10.0%	6.5%	4.7%
Increases competition, leading to better schools	0.7%	0.8%	3.4%	0.0%	1.5%	1.3%
Increases competition, threatening some schools	4.2%	4.8%	10.3%	0.0%	21.4%	24.0%

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Increases diversity (good)	0.0%	4.8%	13.8%	0.0%	3.5%	0.7%
Increases faculty/staff workload	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	1.0%	1.3%
Increases segregation	3.5%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.5%	10.7%
Makes stronger community at a school	50.0%	59.2%	51.7%	80.0%	9.0%	13.3%
No effects, no net change	18.8%	10.4%	6.9%	0.0%	11.4%	14.0%
Weakens community bonds	16.7%	11.2%	13.8%	0.0%	32.8%	29.3%

At bilingual choice schools, both parents and educators agreed that the main effect of open enrollment has been to Make Stronger Communities at Schools (parents: 51.7%; educators: 80%). Some parents, but not teachers, have also noticed increased diversity (good) (13.8%), weakened community bonds (13.8%), and threats from increased competition (10.3%). Some educators, but not parents, have noticed problems of shared space (10%) and increased faculty workload (10%). Only 6.9% of these parents said that open enrollment had had no effect on the community; no educators said this.

At neighborhood schools, both parents and educators agreed that the main effects of open enrollment have been to Weaken Community Bonds (32.8%, 29.3%), to Increase Competition that produced negative effects at some schools (21.4%, 24%), and, to a lesser extent, to Increase Segregation (9.5%, 10.7%). Parents and educators at neighborhood schools were even more likely than at choice schools to say that increased competition has had a negative, rather than a positive, effect on schools (parents: 21.4% said competition was negative, 1.5% said it was positive; educators: 24%, negative, 1.3% positive). As was also the case at choice schools, a fair percentage in both groups at neighborhood schools believed that open enrollment has had no effect on communities (parents: 11.4%, educators: 14%).

In summary, many parents and educators seem to agree that open enrollment has made for stronger communities at schools but has weakened neighborhood community bonds. At the same time, a consistent percentage at choice and neighborhood schools believe that open enrollment has had virtually no effect on communities. Especially at neighborhood schools, both groups feel that increased competition has hurt, rather than helped, schools. Even at the two kinds of choice schools, more parents and educators believe that increased competition has had a negative, rather than a positive, effect on the schools.

Benefits of Open Enrollment (Table 1.17)

Parents and educators at all school types agreed that the benefits of open enrollment are the opportunity to select a school or program of choice and the opportunity to meet the needs of a particular student. In contrast to some previous responses, a fair percentage of parents, but not educators, at choice schools also believed that a benefit of open enrollment could be to Encourage Competition that Leads to Improvement (13.7% of

parents but only 4.7% of educators). This difference, in reverse, was the case at neighborhood schools, where only 6% of parents, but 20.7% of educators believed that a benefit of open enrollment could be to Encourage Competition that Leads to Improvement.

Table 1.17. Responses by Role and School Type to "What are your 'pro' (favorable) opinions about BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Benefits of Open Enrollment/Choice Policy	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Allows for meeting student needs	27.5%	24.4%	6.3%	42.9%	25.0%	15.5%
Allows for school or program choice	39.2%	57.0%	93.8%	57.1%	64.3%	51.7%
Encourages competition that leads to improvement	13.7%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	20.7%
Encourages parents to take an active role	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	3.4%
Improves school climate	6.9%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
Increases enrollment, keeps students in district	9.8%	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	5.2%

In summary, parents and educators agree on the principal benefits of open enrollment, but parents at choice schools, much more than educators there, and educators at neighborhood schools, much more than parents there, mention the potential benefit (improved schools) of increased competition. Considering this result in light of responses to Q10/Effects of Open Enrollment, it seems that even those who believe that increased competition *could* lead to school improvement do not believe it has done so in the past.

Drawbacks of Open Enrollment (Table 1.18)

Parents and educators at choice schools had somewhat different concerns about the drawbacks of open enrollment. More parents mentioned Procedural Problems with Implementation as a drawback (22.4% of responses), followed by Increased Inequities (20.7%). More educators mentioned Increased Inequities as a drawback (36.2%), followed by High Negative Cost to Neighborhoods (14.9%) and then Procedural Problems (12.8%). In roughly equal percentages, the two groups agreed that other drawbacks include the possibility of Enabling Segregation (10.3%, 8.5%) and Too Much Competition (8.6%, 8.5%).

Parents and educators at bilingual choice schools were in agreement that the drawbacks are Increased Inequities (46.7%, 50%) followed by Inadequate Information to Make a Choice (13.3%, 25%). High Negative Cost to the Neighborhood is more likely to be seen as a drawback for educators (25%) than for parents (6.7%).

Drawbacks of Open Enrollment/Choice Policy	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Creates inappropriate uses of resources	3.4%	4.3%	6.7%	0.0%	6.2%	3.6%
Creates/increases inequities for schools and families	20.7%	36.2%	46.7%	50.5%	14.4%	26.4%
Enables segregation	10.3%	8.5%	6.7%	0.0%	7.5%	5.5%
High negative cost to charter or focus schools	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%
High negative cost to neighborhood, community	10.3%	14.9%	6.7%	25.0%	34.9%	25.5%
Inadequate information available to make choice	12.1%	8.5%	13.3%	25.0%	5.5%	9.1%
Increases traffic congestion	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Interferes with good education	1.7%	6.4%	6.7%	0.0%	0.7%	2.7%
Procedural problems with implementation	22.4%	12.8%	13.3%	0.0%	15.1%	7.3%
Too much competition	8.6%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%	11.6%	20.0%

At neighborhood schools, High Negative Cost to Neighborhoods was the most frequently mentioned drawback for parents (34.9%), with Increased Inequities less often mentioned (14.4%). In comparison, Increased Inequities was most frequently mentioned by educators (26.4%) with High Negative Cost to Neighborhoods a close second (25.5%). Parents were more concerned about Procedural Problems with Implementation (15.1%, compared to 7.3% for educators), whereas educators were more concerned about Too Much Competition (20%, compared to 11.6% for parents).

In summary, more educators than parents seem to be concerned about the increased inequities associated with open enrollment. Parents, more than educators, seem to be concerned about procedural problems.

Table 1.19. Responses by Role and School Type to "What changes would
you recommend to the open enrollment/choice policy in the district?"

Recommended Changes in Open Enrollment/ Choice Policy	Choice		Bilingual choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Address lack of diversity at some schools	1.3%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Be more responsive to parents' requests for programs, meet demand	11.7%	2.4%	3.4%	0.0%	2.1%	0.9%
Create more small schools	0.0%	2.4%	3.4%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%

Eliminate open enrollment	0.6%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	3.8%
Encourage cooperation between charter/focus and neighborhood schools	3.2%	0.0%	13.8%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Encourage development of more charter or focus schools	3.9%	4.8%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Establish protections for neighborhood schools	1.9%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	13.1%	5.7%
Increase support for disadvantaged schools	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%
Limit charter or focus schools	1.3%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	7.9%	6.6%
Make it harder to open enroll	1.3%	1.2%	3.4%	0.0%	9.9%	9.4%
Make policies and procedures clearer and more consistent	17.5%	14.3%	13.8%	20.0%	12.6%	17.0%
None	3.9%	10.7%	3.4%	20.0%	2.6%	3.8%
Provide adequate facilities	2.6%	6.0%	3.4%	0.0%	2.6%	4.7%
Provide more data about school choice and its effects	13.6%	7.1%	6.9%	0.0%	5.2%	4.7%
Reduce inequities between charter/focus and neighborhood schools	18.2%	28.6%	34.5%	60.0%	20.9%	28.3%
Reduce need for schools to compete	0.0%	3.6%	3.4%	0.0%	5.8%	5.7%
Support (existing) choice programs more fully	15.6%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.9%

Reducing Inequities than were parents (educators: 28.6%; parents: 18.2%). Parents were more likely to recommend greater Support for Choice Programs (15.6%) than were educators (4.8%). Parents were also more likely to recommend greater efforts to Be More Responsive to Parents' Requests for Programs (11.7%) than were educators (2.4%). Teachers and staff, on the other hand, were more likely to have no recommendations for change (10.7%) than parents (3.9%).

At bilingual choice schools, Reducing Inequities was the most frequently made recommendation by both parents and educators, but again, educators were considerably more likely to make this recommendation (60%) than parents (34.5%). Parents recommended Encouraging Cooperation between Charter/Focus and Neighborhood Schools (13.8%); this item was not mentioned at all by educators. Making Policies and Procedures Clearer was mentioned by both groups, but more often by educators (20%) than parents (13.8%). More educators (20%) recommended no changes than parents (3.4%).

At neighborhood schools, Reducing Inequities was the most frequently made recommendation, again with educators somewhat more likely to recommend it (28.3%) than parents (20.9%). Making Policies and Procedures Clearer also was recommended by both, but somewhat more often by educators (17.0%) than parents (12.6%).

In summary, although both groups recommend reducing inequities across schools, teachers and staff make this recommendation more frequently than parents. And although making policies and procedures clearer also is frequently recommended, it is more likely to be recommended by teachers and staff (than by parents) at bilingual choice and neighborhood schools. Teachers and staff at choice schools are more likely than parents there to have no changes to recommend.

Value of Public Discussion (Table 1.20)

Parents as well as educators at all school types most often mentioned the value of Making More Information Available, followed by the value of Giving the Public a Chance to Air Views and Hear Others. However, parents in both kinds of choice schools were more likely to single out the value of Making Information Available, while educators there were more likely to see both as valuable. At choice schools, 62.8% of parents valued more information, while only 11.6% (the next highest frequency) valued the chance to air views. Among educators at choice schools, 38.6% valued more information, and 31.8% valued the chance to air views. At bilingual choice schools, 50% of parents valued more information (the highest response category), while none mentioned the value of airing views. Fifty-seven percent of educators valued more information, and 28.6% valued the chance to air views. At neighborhood schools, the percentages for parents and educators were more similar: 37.3% of parents valued more information (the highest response category), and 23.7% valued the chance to air views. Among educators, 22.6% valued more information (the highest response category), and 20.7% valued the chance to air views. Also at neighborhood schools, the value of Exposing Dissatisfactions was a relatively common response, and parents and educators were about equal in the percentage who mentioned this as a valuable aspect of the public discussion (16.9% of parents; 17.0% of educators).

In summary, both groups believe that making more information available and the chance to air views are the most valuable aspects of the public discussion of open enrollment/school choice. Relatively speaking, however, parents are more likely to see the value of more information; educators are more likely to see the value of airing views. At neighborhood schools, a fair number of people in both groups believe that one valuable aspect of the discussion is to expose public dissatisfaction with open enrollment and school choice.

Table 1.20. Responses by Role and School Type to "What has been valuable about the public discussion of BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Value of Public Discussion	Choice		Bilingual Choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Benefits of open enrollment become clear	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
Brings attention to educational issues	4.7%	9.1%	16.7%	0.0%	3.4%	7.5%
Can learn about both sides	2.3%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%

	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators	Parents	Educators
Encourages more public involvement in education	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.9%
Exposes dissatisfactions and clarifies needs	4.7%	6.9%	0.0%	14.3%	16.9%	17.0%
Exposes rumors, misunderstandings, bias	11.6%	2.3%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%
Gives public a chance to air views and hear others' views	11.6%	31.8%	0.0%	28.6%	23.7%	20.7%
Leads to clarification of policies, needs	2.3%	4.5%	16.7%	0.0%	1.7%	5.7%
Learned about specific program of interest	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%
Makes clear which schools are the best, which are in trouble	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%
Makes more information available	62.8%	38.6%	50.0%	57.1%	37.3%	22.6%
Makes schools more accountable	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	1.9%
Negative costs of open enrollment become clear	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%
Nothing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.8%	7.5%

Detriments of Public Discussion (Table 1.21)

Parents and educators at all school types agreed that the biggest detriment of the public discussion has been Inadequate Coverage of the issues (at choice schools, 38% of parents and 39.2% of educators; at bilingual choice schools, 50% of parents and 40% of educators; at neighborhood schools, 30.1% of parents and 33.4% of educators). By Inadequate Coverage, they mean that the coverage has been selective, biased, incomplete, and inaccurate. There also is a shared belief, slightly more often expressed by educators than parents, that the public discussion has created divisiveness within communities (at choice schools, 22.5% of parents and 27% of educators; at bilingual choice schools, 12.5% of parents, 40% of educators; at neighborhood schools, 16.4% of parents, 19.7% of educators). Parents (12.7%) at choice schools were relatively concerned about the incivility of the public discussion. Parents and educators at neighborhood schools, parents at bilingual choice schools, and educators at choice schools also were relatively concerned about Making Some Schools Look Bad via test score comparisons (12.3% of parents and 15.2% of educators at neighborhood schools; 12.5% of parents at bilingual choice schools; and 12.2% of parents at choice schools). Some choice parents (8.5%), bilingual choice parents (12.5%), and especially bilingual choice educators (20%) worried that the public discussion has made school choice sound like a bad thing.

Table 1.21. Responses by Role and School Type to "What has been detrimental about the public discussion of BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Detrimental about Public Discussion	Choice		Bilingual Choice		Neighborhood	
	Parents	**Educators**	**Parents**	**Educators**	**Parents**	**Educators**
Contributes to confusion about the issue	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%

Coverage not adequate (biased, too few voices)	38.0%	39.2%	50.0%	40.0%	30.1%	33.4%
Creates divisiveness, especially among neighbors	22.5%	27.0%	12.5%	40.0%	16.4%	19.7%
Emphasizes choice schools, detracts from neighborhood schools	2.8%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	19.2%	16.6%
Heightens pressures on parents	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	4.5%
Increases feelings of uncertainty about schools (closings, etc.)	2.8%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%
It's uncivil	12.7%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	3.0%
Makes choice sound bad	8.5%	1.4%	12.5%	20.0%	4.1%	0.0%
Makes some schools look bad (via test scores) when they aren't	4.2%	12.2%	12.5%	0.0%	12.3%	15.2%
Nothing	5.6%	5.4%	12.5%	0.0%	6.8%	6.1%
Stirs up too much	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%

In summary, both groups worry about the detrimental effects of biased or incomplete coverage of school choice issues and the community divisiveness that has ensued. Educators are slightly more concerned about divisiveness than parents. Both parents and educators tend to think that the public discussion about their school type has been negative.

Across All Questions: Parents versus Educators at Choice Schools

Comparing the choice school parents' responses across all questions with those of educators, choice school parents seemed to be more consistently concerned about meeting academic needs, the procedural problems of implementing school choice, and obtaining adequate information about school choice. Choice school educators, in contrast, seemed to be more consistently concerned about inadequate funding, the increased inequities associated with school choice, and the negative effects of increased competition among schools. Interestingly, educators felt even more strongly than parents about the benefits of parents being able to select a school or program of choice.

Across All Questions: Parents versus Educators at Bilingual Choice Schools

Comparing the bilingual choice school parents and educators across all questions, parents, more than educators, saw diversity as a strength of their school and the benefits of selecting a school or program as a strength of school choice. Parents also were more concerned about inadequate funding, weak curriculum, and obtaining adequate information. Educators, in contrast, were more worried about inadequate facilities, the high negative cost of open enrollment to neighborhoods, and the need to reduce inequities

across schools. Competition, whether good or bad, was not much of an issue for either group.

Across All Questions: Parents versus Educators at Neighborhood Schools

Comparing the neighborhood school parents and educators across all questions, neighborhood school parents, more than educators, worried about large classes, the limits associated with declining enrollment, and the high negative cost to neighborhoods. Parents also felt more strongly than educators about the benefits of being able to choose a school or program and of being able to meet particular students' needs. Educators, more than parents, worried about inadequate funding, lack of diversity in schools, inequities across schools, and the negative effects of competition. Both groups were more concerned than at the other school types about weakening community bonds and the negative effects of increased competition. Both groups also saw more value in the public discussion that exposed dissatisfactions with open enrollment.

PHONE SURVEY RESULTS

Phone Survey respondents were randomly selected from the school district's 8 geographic regions (30 from each region, for a total of 240 respondents). The regions were: Broomfield, Central, East, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior, Mountain, North, and South. Phone Survey respondents were district parents who have not participated in open enrollment, i.e., they have not placed a child in a strand, focus, charter, or neighborhood school outside their attendance area. As noted earlier, the ethnic composition of this group more closely matched that of the district's student population and, on average, the educational level of these parents was somewhat lower than the parents who responded to the School Survey.

The Phone Survey responses were analyzed to determine differences in beliefs and attitudes about open enrollment across groups based on ethnicity, geographic region, gender, and educational level. Frequencies were calculated as a percentage for each group type and compared within group type.

For the most part, the Phone Survey included the same questions that were asked in the School Survey. Thus, the same response codes were used to categorize the data from both surveys. However, in some cases, because the response codes were inductively determined from the School Surveys, a few additional codes were added to accommodate new responses (responses that had not appeared in the School Survey).

In the following discussion of results, the findings are first presented by question. For each question, the responses from each demographic group are discussed in turn, beginning with and emphasizing ethnicity. (Only the results for ethnicity are displayed.) In the final section, findings for each demographic group across all questions are reviewed.

Important to Accomplish

By Ethnicity (Table 1.22)

Two items, Academic Issues, and Positive School Climate, tended to be mentioned most often regardless of ethnic groups. Positive School Climate was the most often mentioned item for American Indians (50%), Asians (40%), Whites (31.5%), Hispanics (33.3%), whereas it was mentioned less often by Blacks (22.2%) and Others (12.5%). Academic Issues was a high response item for all groups (average = 29.1%) except Asian Americans (13.3%) and American Indians (0%). Skills and Content beyond the Basics seemed to be more important to some minorities—Asians (20%), Blacks (33.3%)--than to Whites (11.4%), Hispanics (12.1%),

Table 1.22. Phone Responses by Ethnicity to "What are the most important things for schools to accomplish?"

Important to Accomplish	Ethnicity					
	White non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Academic issues	26.9%	27.3%	13.3%	22.2%	0.0%	37.5%
Meet student needs	7.2%	6.1%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Positive school climate	31.5%	33.3%	40.0%	22.2%	50.0%	12.5%
Prep for future opportunities	4.4%	3.0%	6.7%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Respect for diversity	0.8%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Skills/content beyond basics	11.4%	12.1%	20.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Social/citizenship skills	16.5%	15.2%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Value of learning	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	50.0%	0.0%

American Indians (0%), or Others (0%). In contrast Social/Citizenship Skills were not important to African Americans (0%) or American Indians (0%) but were important to the other groups (average 17.5%). Respect for Diversity was a low response for Whites (.8%) and Hispanics (3%), and not mentioned at all by Indians, Asians, or Blacks.

By Region

Across the 8 demographic regions, Academic Issues, Social/Citizenship Skills, and Positive School Climate were the most frequently mentioned things for schools to accomplish. In most of the regions, responses were fairly equally distributed across these three items. In three regions, one item was mentioned considerably more often than the others. For example, in East, 58.6% of responses concerned Positive School Climate (compared to 17.2% for Academic Issues, the next most common response). In Louisville/Superior, 46.9% of responses concerned Positive School Climate (next: 30.6% for Academic Issues), whereas in next-door Lafayette, 40% of responses concerned Academic Issues (compared to 13.3% for Positive School Climate). Respect for

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Diversity, never a frequent response, did not appear at all in the responses from Central, East, North, or South.

By Educational Level

The same top three items were also most frequently mentioned regardless of educational level. Positive School Climate was mentioned more often than Academic Issues by those with advanced degrees (32.2% versus 24%), bachelor's degrees (35.3% versus 27.7%), and some college/trade school (32.2% versus 22.2%). Academic Issues was mentioned more often than Positive School Climate by those with high school degrees (34.8% versus 27.3%) and those with less than a high school degree (22.2% versus 11.1%). Respect for Diversity was again a low response, and mentioned only by those with advanced degrees, high school degrees, and less than a high school degree. Those with less than a high school degree stand out from the other groups in giving highest mention to Social/Citizenship Skills (33.3%).

By Gender

The same top three items were also mentioned most often by females and males. Males' responses were nearly equally distributed across the three categories (Academic Issues, 25.2%; Positive School Climate, 24.3%, Social/Citizenship Skills, 20%). Females' responses were more varied; they most often mentioned Positive School Climate (34.7%), followed by Academic Issues (27.2%) and then by Social/Citizenship Skills (14.3%). Respect for Diversity was a very low response for both groups (1.1% for females; 1.7% for males).

In summary, it appears that almost everyone, regardless of ethnicity, region, education, or gender, agrees that schools should be responsible for (at least) academics, social and citizenship skills, and a positive school climate, although there are differences in the relative attention groups give to each of these items. These broad educational goals were also shared by respondents who took the School Survey. As was also true in the School Survey, respect for diversity did not receive very much attention as an important school goal from any group.

Important to Avoid

By Ethnicity (Table 1.23)

Negative School Climate and Discrimination were the most frequently mentioned things to avoid by Asians, Whites, Hispanics, and Others (average = 31.7% for Negative School Climate, 26.1% for Discrimination, for the 4 groups). Discrimination received a lot of attention from Asians (42.9% of their responses); much less from Blacks (10%) and Indians (0%). Indians and Blacks were more concerned about avoiding Ineffective Curriculum or Programs (50% and 30% of their responses) than were the other ethnic groups (average = 14.3% for the other groups). Competition, as something to avoid, was mentioned only by Whites, and then in only 2.3% of their responses.

Important to Avoid	Ethnicity					
	White, non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Closing schools, eliminating programs	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Competition	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Crowding	10.0%	8.3%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Discrimination	16.3%	16.7%	42.9%	10.0%	0.0%	28.6%
Failure to meet students' academic needs	12.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Failure to meet students' social/citizenship needs	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ineffective curriculum, programs	12.3%	12.5%	0.0%	30.0%	50.0%	14.3%
Ineffective teachers/administrators	9.6%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Lack of resources	1.3%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Negative school climate	19.6%	50.0%	28.6%	30.0%	0.0%	28.6%
Political issues	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Religious (or values) issues	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	14.3%

By Region

There were more differences across regions in what should be avoided. Religious (or values) Issues stood out as something to avoid in Broomfield (26.2%), but it was seldom mentioned (average = 3.1%) in other regions. Discrimination was a relatively high response category across regions (average = 15.5%), with one outlier, Central, at the high end (26.5%), and another one, Broomfield, at the low end (2.4%). Negative School Climate was the most frequently mentioned thing to avoid in the other regions (average = 23.8%). Crowding was mentioned relatively often in East, Louisville/Superior, Mountain, and South (average = 16.1% in these 4 regions). Crowding was not mentioned at all in Broomfield or Central. Competition as something to avoid received the most attention in Lafayette (7.9%) and none in Central, East, Louisville/Superior, or South. Avoiding the need to Close Schools received little attention in most regions, with Broomfield giving it the most attention (4.8%); it received no attention in Central, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior, Mountain or North.

By Educational Level

There were few differences by educational level in responses to this question. Negative School Climate and Discrimination were the two most commonly mentioned items to avoid by all educational levels (except NA).   Ineffective Curriculum or Programs was the next most commonly mentioned item for all educational levels except some college or trade school (and NA).   For those with some college or trade school, Crowding was named next most often (12.7%, compared to 7.9%, 10.9%, and 8.3% in the other groups that included Crowding). Competition and Closing Schools had low response rates, or no responses, in all groups.

By Gender

Negative School Climate was the most frequent response by both females and males (21.8%, 23.7%).   Females were somewhat more concerned about avoiding Discrimination (18.6%) and Crowding (11.1%) than males (8.7%, 5%).   Males were somewhat more concerned about avoiding Ineffective Curriculum (17.5%) than females (11.8%). Competition and Closing Schools had very low response rates for both groups.

In summary, there were more differences within groups in what should be avoided than in what should be accomplished. By ethnicity, American Indians and Blacks stand out from the other ethnic groups in expressing more concern about ineffective curricula or programs and less about discrimination. By region, respondents from Broomfield were especially concerned about avoiding religious or values issues in schools, while in Central, they were especially concerned about avoiding discrimination. More consistent with responses to Question3/Important to Accomplish indicating the overall importance of positive school climate, negative school climate was the most common concern in the other six regions. By educational level, there were only small differences. By gender, women, more than men, were concerned about avoiding discrimination and crowding. Men, more than women, were concerned about avoiding ineffective curricula. No group, regardless of region, ethnicity, educational level, or gender, expressed very much concern about increased competition among schools or about closing some schools.

Comparing these results to the School Survey, Failure to Meet Students' Academic Needs appeared to be more of a concern for the participants in the School Survey than for the random sample of participants in the Phone Survey. In the Phone Survey, this item was less often mentioned than Discrimination or Negative School Climate. Only in Central and South and among men did concerns about Failure to Meet Students' Needs outnumber concerns about Discrimination or Negative School Climate.   Another difference concerned Crowding. This item was eliminated from the School Survey analysis because it comprised no more than 1.5% of responses from any school type. Yet, it was a relatively important concern in East, Louisville/Superior, Mountain and South, among those with a high school or above education, and among women.

Reasons for Choosing a School

By Ethnicity (Table 1.24)

There were few ethnic group differences in reasons for choosing a school. Neighborhood and Proximity were the two most frequently given reasons for all groups. Blacks and Others, more than the other groups, also mentioned Experience with the School. Cultural Diversity was given as a reason by only two groups, Asians (11.1%) and Whites (.6%). Parental Involvement and Test Scores were important reasons for American Indians (25% for each) but not the other groups.

By Region

In all regions except Broomfield, Neighborhood School and Proximity/Location were the two most frequently mentioned reasons for choosing a school. These two reasons were frequently mentioned in Broomfield, too, except that Experience with the School was the most frequent response in Broomfield (25.9%) and a low frequency response everywhere else (average = 2.7%) except in North where a fair number of people mentioned it (11.5%). In response to Q3 (above), respondents from all regions said that schools should accomplish academics and positive school climates.

Table 1.24. Phone Responses by Ethnicity to "What were your reasons for choosing [this] school?"

Reasons for Choosing the School	Ethnicity					
	White, non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Best school available	3.5%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Bus Transportation	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Cultural/ethnic/SES diversity	0.6%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Curriculum	3.5%	3.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Educators	6.4%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%
Experience with school	6.1%	9.4%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	18.8%
Facility	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Good reputation	6.4%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
High quality education	7.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%
High standards, expectations	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Meets students' needs	1.2%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Neighborhood school	29.4%	15.6%	44.4%	22.2%	25.0%	18.8%
Parental involvement	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Positive school climate	2.9%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%
Proximity/location	21.2%	50.0%	33.3%	33.3%	25.0%	18.8%
Small school or class size	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Strong community	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

| Test scores | 1.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.0% | 0.0% |

But, the items that would seem to correspond as reasons for choosing a school (High Quality Education, Meeting Students' Needs, Positive School Climate, Test Scores, and High Standards) were mentioned considerably less often as reasons than were Neighborhood and Proximity.

By Educational Level and Gender

There also were few differences by educational level or gender in reasons for choosing a school. As above, the overwhelming reasons across all levels and genders were Neighborhood and Proximity.

In summary, the two most frequent reasons for phone survey respondents to choose a school were the fact that is was the neighborhood school and that it was nearby. Compared to the school survey results, where choosing a school on the basis of the curriculum or teachers were the most common responses, these two reasons were given much less often in the phone survey, except in East where they were mentioned in 16.4% and 9.8% of responses. Similarly, choosing a school on the basis of its cultural diversity was not often given as a reason in the phone survey. It was mentioned in only three regions, Central, North, and South, and among Asians, but by only a few people.

Advantages When Parents Choose

Although this question was phrased differently in the Phone Survey ("What are the main advantages when parents are able to choose a school?") than in the School Survey (Q15: "What are your opinions, pro and/or con, about BVSD's Open Enrollment/Choice policy overall?"), answers to the two questions were similar.

By Ethnicity (Table 1.25)

There were a few differences by ethnic group. All groups, except American Indians and Hispanics, named the same two advantages, Allows for School or Program Choice and Allows for Meeting Student Needs, most often. American Indians, Hispanics, and African-Americans also included Proximity as an important advantage.

By Region

The top advantages in all regions were Allowing for the opportunity to select a School or Program of Choice and for the opportunity to Meet Student Needs. Proximity was given as an advantage by a fair number in Broomfield, and some in the other regions. Encouraging Parents to Take an Active Role was given as an advantage by a fair number in East and Mountain.

By Educational Level

Again, regardless of educational level, the same two categories were consistently mentioned most often. Proximity was seen as a bigger advantage for those groups with less education.

By Gender

There were no apparent differences between males and females.

In summary, as was true on the School Survey, almost everyone, regardless of region, ethnicity, educational level, or gender, considers the opportunity to choose a school or program and the opportunity to meet students' needs to be the main advantages of school choice. Competition and Keeping Students in the District (two items mentioned as advantages by choice schools in the School Survey) were not mentioned at all in the phone survey. Proximity, which was not mentioned at all by School Survey respondents, was a relatively important advantage for American Indians, Hispanics, African-Americans, and those with less education.

Table 1.25. Phone Responses by Ethnicity to "What are the main advantages when parents are able to choose a school?"

Advantages when parents are able to choose a school	Ethnicity					
	White non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Allows for meeting student needs	37.9%	0.0%	16.7%	40.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Allows for school or program choice	29.7%	48.0%	66.7%	40.0%	66.7%	37.5%
Encourages competition that leads to improvement	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Encourages parents to take an active role	7.8%	12.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Improves school climate	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Increases enrollment, keeps students in district	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Location/proximity/convenience	6.5%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Permits students to get better education	5.6%	16.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Raises academic level	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Raises parent or student satisfaction	6.9%	4.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Disadvantages When Parents Choose

This question, "What are the main disadvantages when parents are able to choose a school?" was intended to parallel the question about the disadvantages or drawbacks of school choice on the School Survey.

By Ethnicity (Table 1.26)

There were quite a few differences by ethnic group. Asians, Blacks, and Whites tended to see the High Cost to Neighborhoods as a major disadvantage. This disadvantage was not mentioned by American Indians, Hispanics, or Others. Increased Inequities was also a disadvantage named by Asians, Whites, and Hispanics, but not American Indians, Blacks, or Others. Overcrowding at Some Schools was a disadvantage among Whites, Hispanics, and Others, but not among American Indians, Asians, or Blacks. American Indians were more worried about having Too Many Choices; Asians, about having Inadequate Information and Procedural Problems with Implementation; and Blacks, Hispanics, and Others, about the Inconvenience of Getting to the Best School. Only Whites, Hispanics, and Others mentioned increased Segregation as a disadvantage. No Disadvantages were reported by a large percentage of American Indians, Blacks, Hispanics, and Others, although the number of people reporting is very low.

Table 1.26. Phone Responses by Ethnicity to "What are the main disadvantages when parents are able to choose a school?"

Disadvantages when parents are able to choose a school	Ethnicity					
	White, non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Creates inappropriate uses of resources	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Creates/increases inequities for schools and families	13.1%	20.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Enables segregation	11.7%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%
High negative cost to charter or focus schools	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
High negative cost to neighborhood, community	24.8%	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Inadequate information available to make choice	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Inconvenient to get to best school	5.9%	20.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	16.7%
Increases traffic congestion	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Interferes with good education	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No disadvantages	6.3%	30.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%
Overcrowding at some schools, low enrollment at others	14.4%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Procedural problems with implementation	1.8%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Some parents become too powerful	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Too many choices	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%
Too much competition	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

By Region

Most parents, regardless of region, agreed that one disadvantage of school choice is the High Cost to Neighborhoods. Beyond that, there were quite a few differences by region in the responses to this question. In Central, Louisville/Superior, Mountain, and North, Creating Inequities across School and Families, High Negative Cost to Neighborhoods, and Overcrowding at Some Schools/Low Enrollment at Others were the three most common disadvantages. In Broomfield, most parents worried about the Inconvenience of Getting students to the Best School and Too Much Competition, as well as the High Negative Cost to Neighborhoods. In East, most parents worried about having Too Many Choices and Segregation, as well as the High Cost to Neighborhoods. In Lafayette, most parents worried about Inequities, High Cost to Neighborhoods, and Segregation. In South, most worried about High Cost to Neighborhoods, Segregation, and Traffic Congestion. Increased Segregation was seen as a disadvantage by at least a fair number of people in Broomfield, East, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior, North and South, but by few or none in Central or Mountain. Too Much Competition was seen as a disadvantage by at least a fair number of people in Broomfield, North, and South, but by few or none in Central, East, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior, or Mountain. No Disadvantages was given as a response by at least a fair number of people in Central, East, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior and Mountain.

By Educational Level

Those with advanced degrees most often noted the disadvantages of increased Segregation, High Cost to Neighborhoods, increased Inequities across Schools, and Too Many Choices. Those with bachelor's degrees also noted most often the disadvantages of Segregation, High Cost to Neighborhoods, and Increased Inequities, along with the disadvantage of Overcrowding at Some Schools/Low Enrollment at Others. However, Segregation is mentioned by a considerably greater percentage of those with advanced degrees (21.2%) than those with bachelor's degrees (10.8%) or any other group. Those with some college or trade school most often mentioned the High Cost to Neighborhoods, Overcrowding at Some Schools, Increased Inequities, and Traffic Congestion as disadvantages. Too Much Competition was mentioned as a disadvantage by a higher percentage (10.5%) of those with some college or trade school than by any other educational group. Of those with high school degrees, 33.3% said there were No Disadvantages, many more than in any other educational group. Others of those with high school degrees did note the disadvantages of Overcrowding at Some Schools and the High Cost to Neighborhoods.

By Gender

Eighteen percent of males, but only 6.7% of females, thought there were No Disadvantages to school choice. Women were considerably more likely than men to mention the High Cost to Neighborhoods (24.9% versus 12%). Men were slightly more likely to recognize the disadvantages of increased Segregation (14% versus 9.6%); women, the disadvantages of Overcrowding at Some Schools (15.3% versus 10%). A fair percentage in both groups saw Increased Inequities across Schools as a disadvantage (13.4% and 12%).

In summary, there was quite a bit of variation within demographic groups regarding the disadvantages of school choice. By ethnicity, each group reported a fairly distinctive list of disadvantages. A high percentage of all ethnic groups, except Asians and Whites, saw no disadvantages to school choice. Only Whites, Hispanics, and Others mentioned increased segregation as a disadvantage. By region, high cost to neighborhoods was generally recognized as a disadvantage, but beyond that, there were many differences. Inequities across Schools and Overcrowding in Some Schools were important disadvantages in four regions (Central, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior, Mountain), but less so in the other three (Broomfield, East, South). Segregation was a disadvantage in six regions but not in the two others (all but Central and Mountain). Too much competition was a disadvantage in three regions (Broomfield, North, and South), but not the other five (Central, East, Lafayette, Louisville/Superior, Mountain). A fair number of people in all regions--except Broomfield, North, and South where the percentages were quite low or 0%–saw no disadvantages to school choice. By educational level, segregation appears to be more of a concern for those with advanced degrees than for others, and a high percentage of those with high school degrees (only) thought there were no disadvantages to school choice. By gender, men were considerably more likely than women to think that there were no disadvantages to school choice. Men were slightly more likely than women to consider increased segregation a disadvantage, while women were slightly more likely than men to mention overcrowding at some schools/low enrollment at others to be a disadvantage.

Compared to the school survey, these parents were not as concerned about inadequate information or procedural problems as were the School Survey respondents from choice schools. Asian Americans were the only exception; they were quite concerned about these two issues. Too much competition, a concern of neighborhood schools in the School Survey, was also a concern in Broomfield, North, and South.

Value of Public Discussion

As in the School Survey, this question asked, "What has been valuable about the public discussion of school choice in BVSD?"

By Ethnicity (Table 1.27)

Across ethnic groups, except for American Indians, there was general agreement that Making More Information Available and Giving the Public a Chance to Air Views and Hear Others were valuable features of the public discussion. American Indians all felt that the public discussion Encouraged More Involvement in Education.

By Region

There was general agreement across regions that it is valuable to Make More Information Available through public discussion of school choice. In all regions, this response, together with one other, Gives Public a Chance to Air Views and Hear Others, comprised more than 50% of responses. A fair percentage of respondents in Broomfield (18.8%) said the discussion was valuable because people could Learn about Both Sides. (No one else in any other region gave this response.) A fair percentage of respondents in Central (17.6%), Mountain (9.1%), North (11.5%), and South (9.4%) said the discussion was valuable for Encouraging More Public Involvement in Education. In East, but nowhere else, Making the Negative Cost of Open Enrollment Clear was an important value (11.5%). In Louisville/Superior and South, but not elsewhere, Making Schools More Accountable was an important value (22.2%, 18.8%). Only a few people felt there was nothing valuable about the discussion.

Table 1.27. Phone Responses by Ethnicity to "What has been valuable about the public discussion of BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Value of Public Discussion	Ethnicity					
	White, non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Benefits of open enrollment become clear	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Brings attention to educational issues	14.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Can learn about both sides	0.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Encourages more public involvement in education	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Exposes dissatisfactions	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Exposes rumors, misunderstandings, bias	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Gives public a chance to air views and hear others' views	20.8%	42.9%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Leads to clarification of policies, needs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Learned about specific program of interest	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Makes clear which schools are the best, which are in trouble	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Makes more information available	39.6%	42.9%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	80.0%

81

Makes schools more accountable	8.7%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Negative costs of open enrollment become clear	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nothing	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%

By Educational Level

The two responses (Making More Information Available and Giving the Public a Chance to Air Views and Hear Others) were given most often regardless of educational level. Those with more than a high school degree were also relatively likely to say that a value of public discussion was Bringing Attention to Educational Issues (advanced degree, 16.7%; bachelor's degree 11.8%, some college or trade school, 13.9%); those with a high school degree did not mention this. In contrast, Making Schools More Accountable was more likely to be mentioned by those with a high school degree (18.8%), than by those with more education (advanced degree, 6.3%; bachelor's degree, 7.4%; some college or trade school, 8.3%).

By Gender

The same two responses (Making More Information Available and Giving the Public a Chance to Air Views and Hear Others) were given most often regardless of gender, too. However, females saw more value in Bringing Attention to Educational Issues than males (13.2% vs. 9.5%), males; more value in Making Schools More Accountable than females (14.3% vs. 6.2%). Among females, 3.9% said there was nothing valuable about the public discussion; no males gave this response.

In summary, most respondents agree that the public discussion of school choice is valuable because more information is made available and because views can be aired. American Indians stand out in their belief that the public discussion has encouraged more involvement in education. Beyond that, there were some differences by region, with respondents in Broomfield more likely to see value in learning about both sides; those in East, more likely to see value of exposing the negative cost of open enrollment; and those in Louisville/Superior and South, more likely to see value in making schools more accountable. In Central, Mountain, North and South, increasing public involvement in education was considered a valuable aspect of the public discussion. There were also a few differences by educational level and gender, but not ethnicity. The value of bringing attention to educational issues was more likely to be considered by those with more than a high school degree; the value of making schools more accountable was more likely to be considered by those with a high school degree only. Females, like those with more education, were more likely than males to mention the value of bringing attention to educational issues. Males, like those with less education, were more likely to mention the value of making schools more accountable.

Detrimental about Public Discussion of Open Enrollment

Also like the School Survey, this question asked, "What has been detrimental about the public discussion of school choice in BVSD?"

By Ethnicity (Table 1.28)

Others, Hispanics, and African-Americans were more likely than the other ethnic groups to think that there was Nothing detrimental about the public discussion of school choice (100% of Others, 77.8% of Hispanics, and 50% of African-Americans, compared to 30.8% of Whites, and 0% for Asians and American Indians). Whites worried about Biased Coverage (15.9%) while other groups did not. Divisiveness and Incivility were considered important detriments among some minorities (American Indians, Asians, and Hispanics); Divisiveness, by some whites. Whites, and Asians, but not other groups, worried that the public discussion Made Some Schools Look Bad (when they are not).

By Region

Many people in East (42.3%), Lafayette (31.6%), Louisville/Superior (80%), Mountain (66.7%) and North (26.3%) did not think there was anything detrimental about the public discussion of open enrollment. In Broomfield and especially in South, the largest percentages of respondents were most worried about Creating Divisiveness (22.2%, 52.6%). Especially in Central and to a lesser extent in South, many worried that the Coverage was Biased or Inadequate (66.7%, 21.1%). In Lafayette, the most concern was expressed about Making Some Schools Look Bad (26.3%).

Table 1.28. Phone Responses by Ethnicity to "What has been detrimental about the public discussion of BVSD's open enrollment/choice policy?"

Detrimental about Public Discussion	Ethnicity					
	White, non Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian	African American	American Indian	Other/ Biracial
Contributes to confusion about the issue	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coverage not adequate (biased, too few voices)	15.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Creates divisiveness, especially among neighbors	15.0%	11.1%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Emphasizes choice schools, detracts from neighborhood schools	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Heightens pressures on parents	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Increases feelings of uncertainty about schools (closings, etc.)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
It's uncivil	2.8%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Makes choice sound bad	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Makes some schools look bad (via test scores) when they aren't	15.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Nothing	30.8%	77.8%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Promotes choice schools, devalues neighborhood schools	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Stirs up too much ill will	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

By Educational Level

Those with advanced degrees were much less likely than anyone else to say that there was nothing detrimental about the public discussion of school choice (13.2%, compared to 39.6%, 46.7%, 50%). Those with advanced degrees were concerned about Biased Coverage (26.3%), Divisiveness (21.1%), and Making Some Schools Look Bad (18.4%). Those with bachelor's degrees were also relatively concerned about Making Some Schools Look Bad (18.8%) and Divisiveness (14.6%). Those with some college or trade school were relatively concerned about Biased Coverage (12.5%), while those with a high school degree were relatively concerned about Divisiveness (20%) and Contributing to Confusion (13.3%).

By Gender

Many males and females felt that there was nothing detrimental about the public discussion of school choice (31.3%, 36.5%). Females were also relatively concerned about Divisiveness (15.6%), Biased Coverage (13.5%) and Making Some Schools Look Bad (11.5%). Males were also relatively concerned about these same things, but in a different order--Some Schools Look Bad (18.8%), Biased Coverage (12.5%) and Divisiveness (12.5%).

In summary, many people do not think there has been anything detrimental about the public discussion of school choice. Those with advanced degrees are the least likely to think there have been no detrimental effects. Divisiveness, biased coverage, and making some schools look bad were other detrimental effects mentioned by some, regardless of demographic group.

Across All Questions, by Ethnicity

A striking finding is that discrimination and increased inequities seemed to be of more concern to Asians, Whites, and Hispanics than to Blacks or American Indians, who were more concerned about ineffective curricula and teachers. Hispanics, Others, and African-Americans were most likely to say that there were no detrimental effects of the public discussion of school choice, whereas Whites and Asians worried about biased coverage, divisiveness, and negative portrayals of some schools in the public discussion.

Across All Questions, by Region

There was considerable cross-region agreement among parents that schools should

provide academics, positive school climates, and social/citizenship skills; that schools were chosen because they were in the neighborhood and close to home; and that the high negative cost to neighborhoods was a major disadvantage of school choice. The east-county regions of East and Louisville/Superior were most committed to providing a positive school climate. Their east county neighbor, Lafayette, was the most committed to providing academics. Broomfield, also in east county, stood out as the most distinctive region overall. Considerably more than in the other regions, respondents from Broomfield worried about too much religion in the schools, cited experience with a school as the primary reason for choosing it, and mentioned the inconvenience of getting to the best schools and the disadvantages of too much competition. More than in other regions, respondents from Central, Lafayette, and North expressed the worry that open enrollment contributes to increased inequities across schools. Increased segregation was also a fairly important concern in East, Lafayette, and South. Traffic congestion was more of a concern in South than elsewhere.

Across All Questions, by Educational Level

In general, those with higher educational levels (some college or trade school or more) were more interested in positive school climate than academics; more worried about increased segregation, the high negative cost to neighborhood schools, and increased inequities associated with school choice; most likely to think the public discussion could bring (beneficial) attention to educational issues; and most concerned about biased coverage in the public discussion. Those with a high school degree or less were more interested in academics than school climate; more likely to consider proximity an advantage of school choice; less likely to mention any disadvantages of school choice; and more likely to see increased accountability as the biggest value of the public discussion of choice.

Across All Questions, by Gender

Females were more concerned than males about avoiding discrimination and crowding; saw more value to bringing attention to educational issues through public discussion; and saw more costs to neighborhoods of school choice. Males were more concerned about avoiding ineffective curricula and the value of making schools more accountable through public discussion.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

General Beliefs about Schools

BVSD parents, teachers, and staff believe their schools should focus primarily on the development of social, citizenship, and academic skills in safe, comfortable environments in which teachers are sensitive to student needs. Most say that they choose a school for their child (ren) on the basis of its curriculum, teachers, and staff and that they find the curriculum, teachers, and staff to be the major strengths of their particular school. Very

few express concern about ineffective curricula or ineffective teachers at their school. Although standardized test scores are much more accessible as a means of comparing schools in this district than information about curricula or teachers, very few people say that they choose or like a school because of its test scores. In general, the level of parent satisfaction with the curriculum, teachers, and staff (seeing these as strengths) of their school is high. In sum, there is virtual consensus about this: What people say they most want in schools is what they think their own school provides.

However, people do seem to focus on somewhat different things when they refer to academic preparation, social and citizenship skills, curriculum, and good teachers. At bilingual choice schools, people focus on what their schools accomplish in terms of serving diverse populations, celebrating cultural difference, and offering bilingual curricula and teachers. They talk about their children coming to "value learning" broadly construed. At choice and neighborhood schools, the focus on learning and curriculum tends to be more narrowly construed in terms of academic basics, while positive school climate is more generally construed in terms of student safety and comfort level.

Parents, teachers, and staff at bilingual choice schools also worry about different things. Whereas at choice and neighborhood schools, people complain most often about inadequate funding and support for their schools, people at bilingual choice schools worry most about the problems associated with a disadvantaged population and a bad reputation. Thus, it appears that while people choose bilingual choice schools in part for their diversity, they also believe that their schools suffer some special negative effects because of that diversity. In sum, it seems that different values and priorities regarding learning, curriculum, and school climate motivate those at bilingual choice schools, compared to those at choice and neighborhood schools. In contrast, there is very little difference evident in the value and priorities of choice and neighborhood schools.

Equity

People in BVSD say they believe that schools should avoid discrimination, including elitism, favoritism, segregation, racism, sexism, and classism. At the same time, however, most also believe that there currently are unequal opportunities to participate in open enrollment in the district (due to such things as inadequate or inaccessible information about various schools, lack of transportation for choice students, open enrollment timelines, and special requirements for choice school applicants) and that these unequal opportunities have led to increased disparities among the district's schools. As consequences of open enrollment, people believe that some schools have gotten stronger while others have been weakened; some parents have been able to raise large sums of money for their schools while others have not; and some schools have been able to find many parents to participate in school-related activities, including fundraising, while others have found only a few. People also believe that open enrollment has tended to increase the concentration of ethnic minorities (mainly Hispanics and Blacks in this district) and low-income students at certain schools. Finally, most people say that these kinds of inequities are divisive and unfair and should be reduced or eliminated.

Competition

Two opposing views of competition among schools (increased with open enrollment) are evident in the BVSD responses. One view is that increased competition is good because it strengthens all schools as they strive to attract parents and students. The second view is that increased competition is bad because it reduces collegiality in the District overall and leads to the closing of some schools when their enrollments decline and threats to close others. Not surprisingly, neighborhood schools, most vulnerable to being closed, are the most worried about the negative consequences of competition. In a district where almost everyone believes that their own school has a strong curriculum and teachers, any school closings are likely to be sad and traumatic events. Perhaps because some neighborhood schools have recently been closed and others are threatened, most people in the district feel that competition has so far hurt rather than helped BVSD schools.

Justifications for School Choice

Almost everyone surveyed believes that open enrollment helps parents and schools meet the needs of particular students. Almost everyone also believes that school choice strengthens the bonds of community that form at a school. Although there may be downsides to choice (e.g., increased inequities, threats from competition, and weakened neighborhood bonds), there is powerful sentiment in this district that increased ability to meet student needs and strengthen within-school communities are strong justifications for school choice.

Complaints about the School District

Whether one favors the expansion or contraction of choice options, each side believes that the school district's support for their side is weak or equivocal. Those favoring more choice believe that the school district is anti-choice; those favoring neighborhood schools believe the school district is pro-choice.

Almost everyone agrees that the school district and the local media have not been as helpful as they could be in providing and disseminating information about school choice--what the options are, what the procedures are, what the deadlines are, and so forth. Further, they chide both the district and the media for their heavy reliance on test score comparisons, their failure to provide information in languages other than English, and some policies that seem to increase divisiveness within the community.

Recommendations to the School District for Change

Although most BVSD parents, teachers and staff believe that school choice should be continued, most also think that some changes are necessary. The strongest recommendations to the school district are to reduce the numerous inequities associated with choice and to make the policies and procedures for school choice more widely accessible and easier to understand.

METHODS AND FINDINGS SECTION II:
OPEN ENROLLMENT PATTERNS, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

In this section we examine the patterns and procedures of open enrollment in BVSD. Beginning with patterns, we examine how they are associated with region, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), special populations, test scores, and parental satisfaction. We chose these factors to examine because they are commonly addressed in studies of school choice and because they frequently arose in the surveys and focus groups discussed in the previous section. Where possible, we examine these issues longitudinally, taking the 1994-1995 school year as the benchmark for a significant expansion of open enrollment in BVSD. Where the requisite data are not available for longitudinal analysis, we rely on shorter time slices, typically the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years.

It is important to bear in mind that analyses of patterns of open enrollment are based on the actions of parents participating in the BVSD open enrollment process, and thus describe the actions of a relatively small minority of the total BVSD parent population (approximately 20% participate). Accordingly, although the actions of these parents do help explain the mechanisms and outcomes of the BVSD open enrollment system, the propensities of these parents may not be generalized to BVSD parents overall.

Our examination of open enrollment practices and procedures is quite modest in comparison to our examination of open enrollment patterns. It relies heavily on the survey and focus group results reported in the previous section of Methods and Findings, and could have been included there. We chose to include it in this section instead because of its potential to help explain the findings on open enrollment patterns.

A final word of introduction. We often do not mask the identity of schools in this section. There are two reasons for this. First, the data we employ are publicly available in some form, and various analyses have been published elsewhere, including by BVSD, the Daily Camera, and the Colorado Department of Education. We have merely aggregated the data in certain ways and derived certain measures and indices suitable for the kinds of analyses we conduct. Second, for some of the analyses, attempting to mask the schools either would be a futile exercise (people would be able to identify them from their characteristics) or would render the analyses impossible.

Data Sets and Sources

The BVSD Department of Research and Evaluation supplied a large portion of the data for this section. On occasion, we also obtained data from the BVSD and Colorado Department of Education web sites. We used the data from these sources to create a number of computer files, keyed to the different analyses we conducted.

One of these files requires further description, namely, the one we employed to examine the relationships among open enrollment, race/ethnicity, and test scores. The

open enrollment data provided by BVSD were not linked to either test scores or race/ethnicity. Because we wished to analyze the relationships among open enrollment and these other factors, we were required to create a new data file containing all three kinds of information by merging several other files. The resultant file contains all open enrollment requests, race/ethnicity for approximately 90% of these, and test scores (CSAP or CTBS) for approximately 85%. We are confident that this data file provides a representative sample and that the proportions we report are accurate. However, the numbers we report requesting open enrollment in several analyses are lower than the actual numbers.

Two other remarks about the data employed in this section. First, we lacked sufficient data for the Spanish version of the CSAPs to include it in our analyses. Second, the open enrollment data we obtained from the office of Research and Evaluation did not include BVSD's new schools for 2000-2001, Aspen Creek K-8, Eldorado K-8, and Peak to Peak. This gives the appearance in our analyses that open enrollment activity in 1999-2000 (for enrollment in 2000-2001) declined when it actually remained nearly constant. Beyond this, because these schools are new, they would have been excluded from many of our analyses for lack of data in any case.

Student Populations of BVSD Schools

Table 2.1 provides a description of BVSD schools' elementary, middle school, and high school student populations with respect to racial/ethnic, special education, free and reduced lunch, and English Language Learner (ELL) percentages for the 1999-2000 school year. It is evident from the tables that the current distribution of student characteristics across BVSD schools is far from uniform. This lack of uniformity serves as the point of departure for much of what follows in this section.

**Table 2.1. BVSD Student Population
Characteristics, 1999-2000**

School Level	School Type	School	Race/Ethnicity			Free/ Red. Lunch	Eng Lang Learn -er	Spec. Ed.
			White	Latino	Other			
High Schools	Focus	A Ridge	75%	21%	4%	38%	10%	28%
		New Vista	86%	7%	7%	0%	1%	16%
	Neigh-borhood	Boulder	80%	12%	8%	6%	10%	10%
		Broomfield	88%	7%	5%	5%	2%	9%
		Centaurus	73%	20%	7%	11%	12%	12%
		Fairview	90%	4%	6%	4%	2%	10%
		Monarch	89%	7%	4%	2%	1%	14%
		Ned Jr/Sr	90%	4%	6%	12%	0%	17%

School Level	School Type	School	Race/Ethnicity			Free/ Red Lunch	Eng Lang Learn- er	SpecE d
			White	Latino	Other			
Elementary Schools	Charter	Horizons K8	92%	4%	4%	na	0%	10%
	Focus	BCSIS	85%	4%	11%	10%	0%	17%
		Bear Creek	88%	2%	10%	3%	2%	8%
		C M'ntessori	88%	3%	9%	1%	0%	5%
		High Peaks	91%	2%	7%	4%	3%	2%
		Mapleton	89%	2%	9%	18%	1%	15%
	Bilingual	Washington	34%	64%	2%	56%	56%	7%
		Uni Hill	47%	43%	10%	46%	42%	11%
	Strand	Lafayette	72%	15%	13%	32%	14%	17%
		Louisville	91%	4%	5%	8%	2%	11%
		Superior	87%	4%	9%	2%	7%	8%
	Neigh-borhood	Aurora 7	57%	27%	16%	39%	29%	13%
		Birch	84%	11%	5%	11%	3%	10%
		Coal Creek	89%	5%	6%	6%	4%	12%
		Columbine	42%	44%	14%	62%	46%	12%
		Crest View	85%	9%	6%	13%	8%	10%
		Douglas	92%	3%	5%	2%	3%	8%
		Eisenhower	84%	3%	13%	5%	11%	8%
		Emerald	74%	11%	15%	23%	14%	8%
		Fireside	84%	5%	11%	3%	10%	11%
		Flatirons	94%	2%	4%	13%	10%	11%
		Foothill	95%	2%	3%	3%	1%	8%
		Gold Hill	94%	0%	6%	0%	0%	6%
		Heatherw'd	91%	5%	4%	10%	2%	8%
		Jamestown	94%	0%	6%	0%	0%	6%
		Kohl	90%	5%	5%	4%	1%	15%
		Maj Heights	84%	8%	8%	7%	10%	27%
		Martin Park	75%	10%	15%	27%	15%	12%
		Mesa	93%	3%	3%	4%	4%	9%
		Monarch K8	89%	4%	7%	1%	1%	6%
		Nederland	95%	3%	2%	17%	1%	11%
		Ryan	78%	13%	9%	17%	8%	15%
		Whittier	62%	18%	20%	42%	23%	15%
	Bilingual	Pioneer	46%	48%	6%	46%	42%	13%
		Sanchez	32%	65%	3%	67%	51%	6%
Middle Schools	Charter	Sojourner	54%	na	na	na	na	20%
		Summit	89%	3%	8%	4%	1%	4%
	Focus	Baseline	78%	10%	12%	16%	12%	17%
		Platt	91%	4%	5%	5%	0%	17%
	Bilingual	Casey	47%	42%	11%	52%	43%	11%
	Strand	Burbank	87%	5%	8%	8%	2%	16%
	Neigh-borhood	Angevine	67%	27%	6%	31%	18%	15%
		Broom Hts	85%	8%	7%	11%	6%	12%
		Centennial	91%	4%	5%	4%	2%	11%
		Louisville	92%	4%	4%	4%	1%	14%
		So Hills	94%	3%	3%	5%	1%	17%

OPEN ENROLLMENT PATTERNS

Regional

Boulder Valley School District is divided into 8 regions: Mountain, North Boulder, Central Boulder, South Boulder, East Boulder, Louisville/Superior, Lafayette, and Broomfield.   To investigate regional patterns, we aggregated individual school open enrollment data to form summaries for the eight regions. Table 2.2 depicts the results for 1998-1999 and Table 2.3, for 1999-2000.

Table 2.2. Regional Patterns of Open Enrollment
1998-1999*

| | | Region losing student | | | | | | | | | | |
		Mountain	N. Boulder	C. Boulder	S. Boulder	E. Boulder	Louis/Sup	Lafayette	B 'field	Total	Into Region	Gain/loss
Region gaining student	**Mountain**	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	-31
	N. Boulder	8	107	12	33	22	6	16	1	205	98	-205
	C. Boulder	11	89	30	23	30	5	10	2	200	170	85
	S. Boulder	9	160	53	77	70	67	67	11	514	437	356
	E. Boulder	3	41	18	13	99	27	70	17	288	189	53
	Louis/Sup	1	8	2	10	13	52	126	18	230	178	55
	Lafayette	0	4	0	1	1	17	57	8	88	31	-264
	B'field	0	0	0	1	0	1	6	2	10	8	-49
Total		32	410	115	158	235	175	352	59			
Out of Region		32	303	85	81	136	123	295	57			

*Open enrollment procedures completed in spring 1998 for the 1998-1999 school year.

There are two kinds of open enrollment relative to regions: within and between. The relatively high number of within region open enrollments (the highlighted cells falling along the diagonals in Tables 2.2 and 2.3) suggests that proximity is probably a consideration for parents taking advantage of open enrollment. The relatively high numbers for nearby or adjacent regions, e.g., Lafayette and Louisville/Superior, North Boulder and South Boulder, is also evidence that proximity is a factor in open enrollment.

Table 2.3. Regional Patterns of Open Enrollment
1999-2000*

		Region losing student										
		Mountain	N. Boulder	C. Boulder	S. Boulder	E. Boulder	Louis/Sup	Lafayette	B 'field	Total	Into Region	Gain/Loss
Region gaining student	Mountain	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	-24
	N. Boulder	7	49	8	25	16	8	12	5	130	81	-76
	C. Boulder	3	47	6	18	24	4	5	1	108	102	35
	S. Boulder	17	86	39	32	67	56	51	10	358	326	259
	E. Boulder	0	28	16	17	65	17	55	11	209	144	26
	Louis/Sup	0	2	0	5	3	44	99	3	156	112	11
	Lafayette	0	2	3	1	6	13	125	3	153	28	-196
	B'field	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	18	26	8	-25
Total		29	216	73	99	183	145	349	51			
Out of Region		27	157	67	67	118	101	224	33			

*Open enrollment procedures completed in spring 1999 for the 1999-2000 school year.

On the other hand, there are several noteworthy between-region patterns that indicate that proximity is only one consideration, and probably not the most important one. In the above two examples, open enrollment movement is heavily in one direction: from Lafayette to Louisville/Superior and from North Boulder to South Boulder. In addition, South Boulder, the region with the most open enrollment inflow, draws relatively heavily from throughout the District, whereas Lafayette, the region with the most open enrollment outflow, loses students to regions throughout the District.

The patterns are similar for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, though some differences exist. In both years, South Boulder stands out as heavily favored (gaining 356 and 259 in consecutive years); Lafayette is heavily disfavored (loosing 264 and 196), followed by North Boulder (loosing 205 and 76). (As explained above, the apparent decrease in open enrollment in 1999-2000 is accounted for by the fact that our 1999-2000 data is missing the new schools for 2000-2001.) The major difference between the patterns is the disproportionate increase in within-region open enrollment in Lafayette. This can be accounted for by the restructuring of Sanchez and Pioneer elementary schools. Beginning in 2000-2001, both schools will be K-5; previously Sanchez was K-2 and a feeder for Pioneer, which was grades 3-5. A significant number of students in the Sanchez attendance area have been accepted for open enrollment into Pioneer.

It should be noted that overcrowding is not a likely explanation of regional patterns.

Save the Mountain Region, Lafayette and North Boulder have the lowest enrollment in BVSD relative to their capacities, at 84% and 88%, respectively (BVSD Enrollment Statistics, Oct. 24, 1999), and they are losing the most students. On the other hand, it seems clear that these regional patterns are associated with race/ethnicity, since the eastern portion of BVSD, especially Lafayette, has a significantly higher proportion of nonwhite students than the District overall. North Boulder schools have a relatively high proportion as well. We pursue racial/ethnic patterns of open enrollment further in the next subsection, in terms of individual schools.

Racial/Ethnic

Recent Time Slices

The overall pattern of participation of racial/ethnic minorities in requesting open enrollment coincides reasonably well with the racial/ethnic demographics of the District (see Table 2.4), and their acceptance rate provides no evidence of racial/ethnic discrimination. In 1998-1999, Latinos were slightly under-represented in the pool of those requesting open enrollment, but slightly over-represented in the pool of those accepting open enrollment relative to how many apply. Latinos made-up 10% of the BVSD student population, 8.3% of the pool of those requesting open enrollment, and 9.5% of the pool of those accepting open enrollment. In 1999-2000, Latinos made up 11% of the BVSD student population, 11.8% of the pool of those requesting open enrollment, and 13% of the pool of those accepting open enrollment. Other racial/ethnic minorities in the BVSD classification system, American Indians, Asians, and African Americans, each requested and accepted open enrollment in numbers proportional to their representation in the BVSD student population.

Table 2.4. Racial-Ethnic Group Participation in Open Enrollment
1998-1999, 1999-2000*

	1998-1999			1999-2000		
	BVSD percent	Req'st percent	Accept percent	BVSD percent	Req'st percent	Accept percent
American Indian	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.2	0.7
Asian	5.0	5.9	5.8	5.0	4.7	4.6
African American	2.0	1.6	1.7	2.0	1.4	1.8
Latino	10.0	8.3	9.5	11.0	11.8	13.0
White	82.0	83.2	82.2	81.0	80.8	79.9

*Open enrollment procedures completed previous springs for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 enrollment.

It is important to observe that this global analysis does not entail that open enrollment patterns bear no relationship to race/ethnicity in the District, for it obscures important features of open enrollment patterns that may only be revealed by closer inspection.

Figure 2.1 and 2.2 depict the relationship between minority enrollment in given schools and the requests by their students to open enroll in other schools in the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years (for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 enrollment, respectively). The arrays displayed indicate that as minority enrollment increases in a given school, approaching and exceeding 20%, so do requests to open enroll in other schools. Some schools defy the relationship, and in some cases the reasons for this are not evident. In most cases, however, plausible reasons can be proffered associated with the explicit missions of given schools and the vagaries of the open enrollment system. For example, there is one outlier to the top left (high requests to open enroll out and less than 20% minority enrollment) in 1998-1999 and two in 1999-2000. Burbank lies in this region each year, and Burbank has significant within school open enrollment, from the BVSD to the Core Knowledge strand. In 1999-2000 the outlier to the top left in addition to Burbank is Majestic Heights and, which was one of the schools affected by the South Boulder restructuring. There are 5 outliers to the bottom right (low requests to open enroll out/high minority enrollment) in both 1998-1999 and 1999-2000. In each year, three of these are bilingual schools, Pioneer, Washington, and Uni Hill, each of which have populations that have selected these schools for their bilingual curricula.

Figure 2.1. Relationship Between Percent Minority Enrollment And Requests to Enroll in Other Schools, 1998-1999
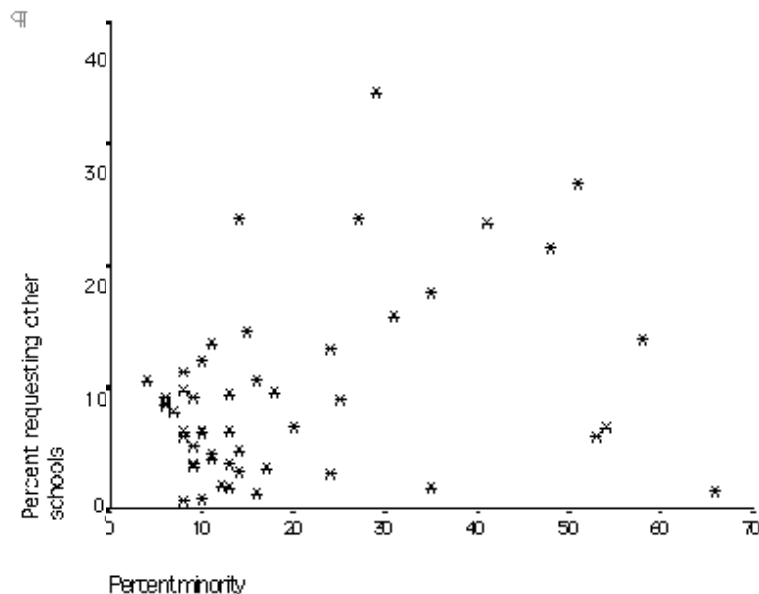
Figure 2.2. Relationship Between Percent Minority Enrollment
and Requests to Open Enroll in Other Schools, 1999-2000
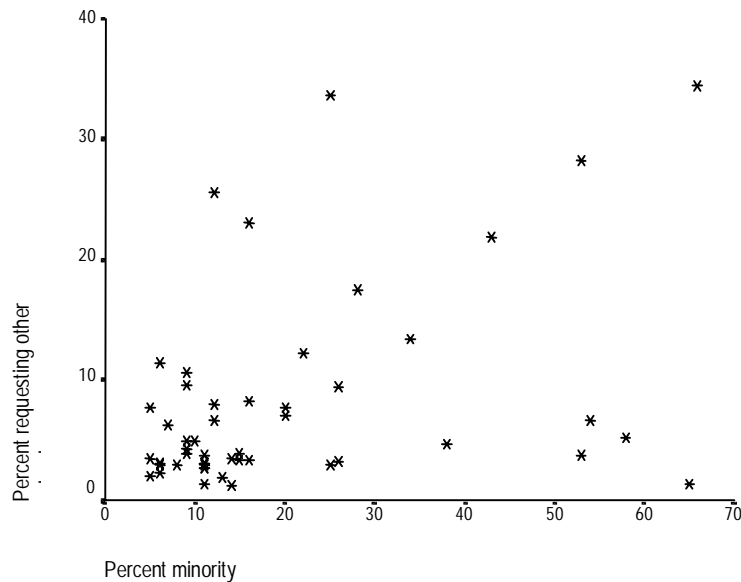
To investigate the question of whether the pattern of higher requests for open enrollment out of high minority schools is racially/ethnically "neutral" in the sense that racial/ethnic groups are participating proportionately in leaving such schools, we created an index that compares the percentage of white students in the school population with the percentage of white students requesting to open enroll in another school. For example, if 70% of a school's population is white and 70% of the students requesting open enrollment in another school are white, then the value of the index is 1, which means white students are requesting open enrollment at a rate proportional to their representation in the school population. (A parallel index for nonwhite students in the case would also be 1, 30%/30%.) If the index is greater than 1, then a greater proportion of whites are requesting to open enroll in another school than would be expected on the basis of their representation in the school population (e.g., 1.2 would indicate 20% more than expected); if less than 1, then a smaller proportion of whites are requesting to open enroll in another school than would be expected on the basis of their representation in the school population. In this case, it would be nonwhites who were disproportionately requesting to open enroll in another school.

The index was computed for all schools for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, and the results for elementary, middle, and high schools, respectively, are displayed in Tables 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7, along with the ethnic/racial make-up of schools. Because the index becomes quite unreliable when the number of requests for open enrollment is small, the tables do not report index values based on fewer than 15 requesting open enrollment, which happens most often with elementary schools.

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Table 2.5. Elementary School Open Enrollment Out Race/
Ethnicity Index for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000

School Type	School	Race/Ethnicity 1999-2000			Index 1998-1999	Index 1999-2000
		White	Latino	Other		
Charter	Horizons K8	92%	4%	4%	na	---*
Focus	BCSIS	85%	4%	11%	---*	---*
	Bear Creek	89%	2%	9%	1.11	---*
	C M'ntessori	88%	3%	9%	---*	---*
	High Peaks	91%	2%	7%	---*	---*
	Mapleton	89%	2%	9%	---*	---*
Bilingual	Washington	35%	64%	1%	---*	---*
	Uni Hill	47%	43%	10%	1.68	---*
Strand	Lafayette	72%	15%	13%	1.18	1.12
	Louisville	91%	4%	5%	.93	.94
	Superior	87%	4%	9%	.92	---*
Neigh-borhood	Aurora 7	57%	27%	16%	1.11	1.03
	Birch	84%	11%	5%	---*	.99
	Coal Creek	89%	5%	6%	.83	---*
	Columbine	42%	44%	14%	1.16	1.49
	Crest View	85%	9%	6%	.90	.92
	Douglas	92%	3%	5%	.94	---*
	Eisenhower	84%	3%	13%	.99	---*
	Emerald	74%	11%	15%	1.10	1.13
	Fireside	84%	5%	11%	1.05	1.19
	Flatirons	94%	2%	4%	.96	---*
	Foothill	95%	2%	3%	.99	.98
	Gold Hill	94%	0%	6%	---*	---*
	Heatherw'd	91%	5%	4%	.97	.84
	Jamestown	94%	0%	6%	---*	---*
	Kohl	90%	5%	5%	---*	1.01
	Maj Heights	84%	8%	8%	.95	.96
	Martin Park	75%	10%	15%	1.15	.72
	Mesa	93%	3%	3%	.97	---*
	Monarch K8	89%	4%	7%	1.03	---*
	Nederland	95%	3%	2%	.97	---*
	Ryan	78%	13%	9%	1.01	1.09
	Whittier	62%	18%	20%	1.03	---*
Bilingual	Pioneer	46%	48%	6%	.53	1.24
	Sanchez	32%	65%	3%	1.54	.82

*Insufficient open enrollment to calculate.

Beginning with the elementary level, the index values show that there were certain schools that whites chose to leave disproportionately in 1998-1999. Uni Hill, Lafayette, Aurora 7, Columbine, Emerald, Martin Park, and Sanchez each exceeded the expected rate of requests by whites to open enroll out by at least 10%, and each of these schools had a relatively high nonwhite enrollment. Bear Creek, which did not have a high nonwhite enrollment, and Pioneer, which had a high minority enrollment but an index value less than 1, were the exceptions.

Some notable shifts occurred between 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, probably associated with the restructuring that occurred in South Boulder and Lafayette. For example, the

index for Martin Park shifted from 1.15 in 1998-1999 to .72 in 1999-2000, as the reorganization prompted nonwhites to seek open enrollment, with a third of them accepting open enrollment at Uni Hill. Whereas Pioneer had a disproportionate number of nonwhites seeking to open enroll out in 1998-1999 (index = .53), it was whites in 1999-2000 (index = 1.24) who were disproportionately requesting to open enroll out. Sanchez is somewhat of a mirror image of Pioneer (index = 1.54 in 1998-1999 and .82 in 1999-2000), as Latinos chose Pioneer over Sanchez in the restructuring. Fireside also increased above the 10% threshold, to 1.19, for reasons that are not apparent.

At the middle school level, Casey (index = 1.86 for 1998-1999 and 1.83 for 1999-2000), and Angevine (index = 1.26 for 1998-1999 and 1.41 for 1999-2000) provide the most striking cases of whites seeking to open enroll out of schools disproportionately. Casey and Angevine have the highest minority enrollments among BVSD middle schools. At Casey, the rate for white students is nearly twice what would be expected compared to what it would be if the outflow were neutral with respect to race/ethnicity. Baseline, the BVSD middle school with the third highest minority population, had the third highest index value for 1999-2000 (index = 1.19). The only middle school that had index values significantly below 1 is Centennial (.89 for 1998-99 and .83 for 1999-2000), indicating that nonwhite students were requesting open enrollment out disproportionately (apparently seeking bilingual and ESL programs Casey and Baseline, their first two choices for open enrollment).

Table 2.6. Middle School Open Enrollment Out Race/
Ethnicity Index for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000

School Type	School	Race/Ethnicity 1999-2000			Index 1998-1999	Index 1999-2000
		White	Latino	Other		
Charter	Sojourner	54%	na	na	---*	---*
	Summit	89%	3%	8%	---*	---*
Focus	Baseline	78%	10%	12%	.98	1.19
	Platt	91%	4%	5%	.96	1.00
Bilingual	Casey	47%	42%	11%	1.86	1.83
Strand	Burbank	87%	5%	8%	1.08	1.03
Neigh-borhood	Angevine	67%	27%	6%	1.26	1.41
	Broom Hts	88%	8%	4%	---*	---*
	Centennial	91%	4%	5%	.89	.83
	Louisville	92%	4%	4%	1.04	1.03
	So Hills	94%	3%	3%	1.06	.96

*Insufficient open enrollment to calculate.

At the high school level, Centaurus stands out as having an index value significantly above 1 (index = 1.17 for 1998-1999 and 1.19 for 1999-2000), though Boulder High (index = 1.10) reached the 10% level for 1999-00. With the exception of Arapahoe Ridge, Centaurus and Boulder have the highest minority enrollments among BVSD high schools. Broomfield is the only high school with an index at least 10% below 1 (index = .87 for 1998-1999 and .84 for 1999-2000).

Table 2.7. High School Open Enrollment Out Race/
Ethnicity Index for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000

| School Type	School	Race/Ethnicity 1999-2000			Index 1998-1999	Index 1990-2000
		White	Latino	Other		
Charter	Bldr Prep	na	na	na	---*	---*
Focus	A Ridge	75%	21%	4%	---*	---*
	New Vista	86%	7%	7%	---*	---*
Neigh-borhood	Boulder	80%	12%	8%	1.04	1.10
	Broomfield	88%	7%	5%	.87	.84
	Centaurus	73%	20%	7%	1.17	1.19
	Fairview	90%	4%	6%	.93	.95
	Monarch	89%	7%	4%	.97	.96
	Ned Jr/Sr	90%	4%	6%	1.09	1.04

*Insufficient open enrollment to calculate.

Longitudinal Trends

The above analyses indicate that race/ethnicity is clearly a feature of current patterns of open enrollment. However, although the indices suggest that these patterns of open enrollment would increase racial/ethnic stratification within BVSD, it does not follow straightforwardly from these analyses that stratification within the District has increased in comparison to the patterns that existed before the expansion of open enrollment. We took 1994-1995 as the benchmark school year because this marks the beginning of a significant expansion of open enrollment options in the District (most of which occurred in the subsequent two years, as described in the Introduction to this report). We then examined the ethnic-racial make-up of BVSD schools over the six-year period from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000 from three angles.

First, the scatters in Figure 2.3 depict the percentages of white students in BVSD elementary schools from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000.[i] The patterns show an increasing spread over the six-year period in which one elementary school has fewer than 50% white students in 1994-1995, whereas five do in 1999-2000. This pattern indicates increasing racial/ethnic stratification. The pattern for middle schools also depicts increasing stratification, but it is less general than for elementary schools. It is primarily two schools that have been steadily decreasing in their percentage of white students between 1994-1995 and 1999-2000 (see Figure 2.4).[ii] The pattern exhibited by high schools is suggestive of increased stratification, but only slightly (see Figure 2.5).[iii]

**Figure 2.3. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students in BVSD
Elementary Schools, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999**
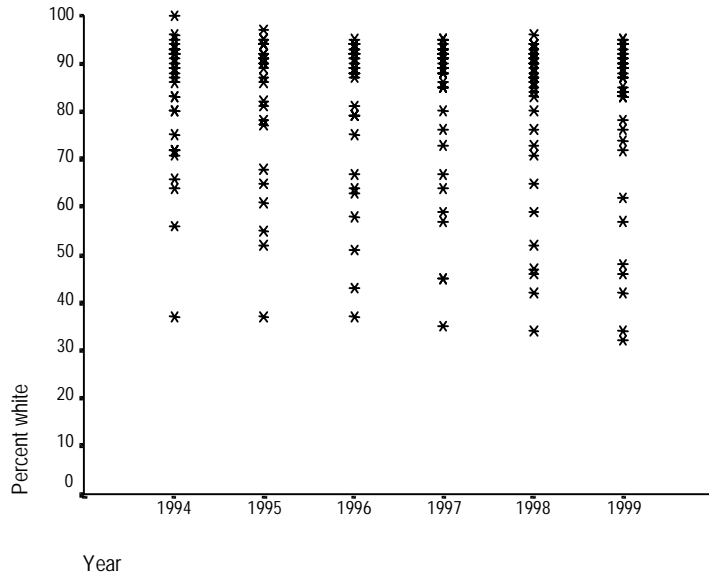
**Figure 2.4. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students In BVSD
Middle Schools, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999**
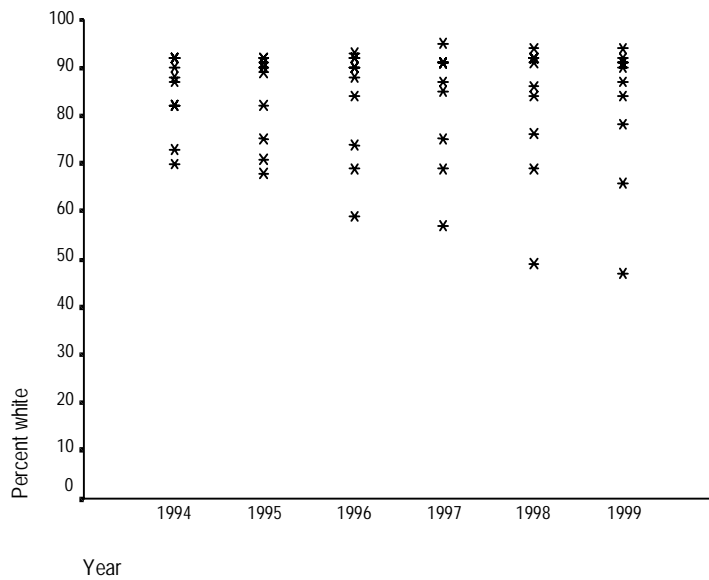
**Figure 2.5. Racial Ethnic Distributions of Students In BVSD
High Schools, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999**
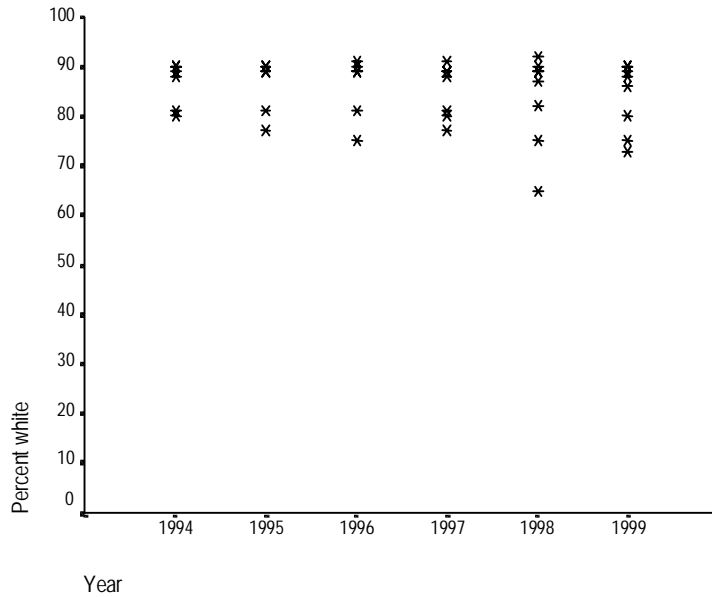
Second, Figure 2.6 depicts the increasing stratification for elementary schools in an alternative, more formal way. The vertical lines represent the variation in the percentages of white students in BVSD elementary schools from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000, expressed in terms of standard deviations (the mean difference from the mean). The boxes represent

**Figure 2.6. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students in BVSD Elementary School
Expressed in Terms of Standard Deviations, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999**

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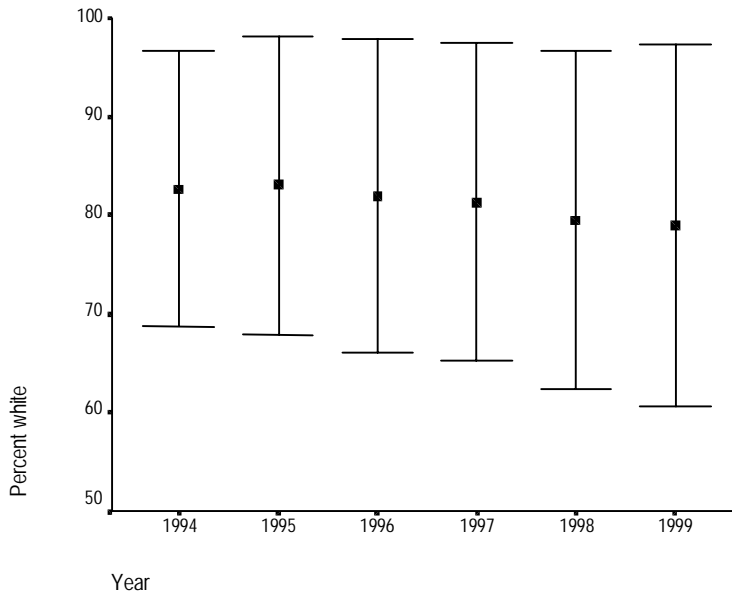
the BVSD mean percentage of whites over the six-year period. The longer the vertical lines, the more schools are departing from the BVSD mean white percentage overall and, thus, the more stratification that is exhibited. The length of these lines steadily increased from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000, indicating increasing stratification. (The standard deviations are as follows for 1994-1995 through 1999-2000: 13.94, 15.12, 15.86, 16.13, 17.16, and 18.32.)

Figure 2.7 depicts increasing stratification for middle schools. (The standard deviations in sequence are 6.41, 9.10, 10.96, 11.01, 12.93, and 13.39.) The pattern for high schools, Figure 2.8, is inconclusive. Although it shows an increase overall from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000, it is small in comparison to the elementary and middle schools and fluctuates up and down over the six-year period. The standard deviations are also small each year in comparison to the elementary and middle schools. (The standard deviations in sequence are 4.59, 5.59, 6.40, 5.51, 9.29, and 6.92.)

Figure 2.7. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students in BVSD Middle Schools Expressed in Terms of Standard Deviations, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999
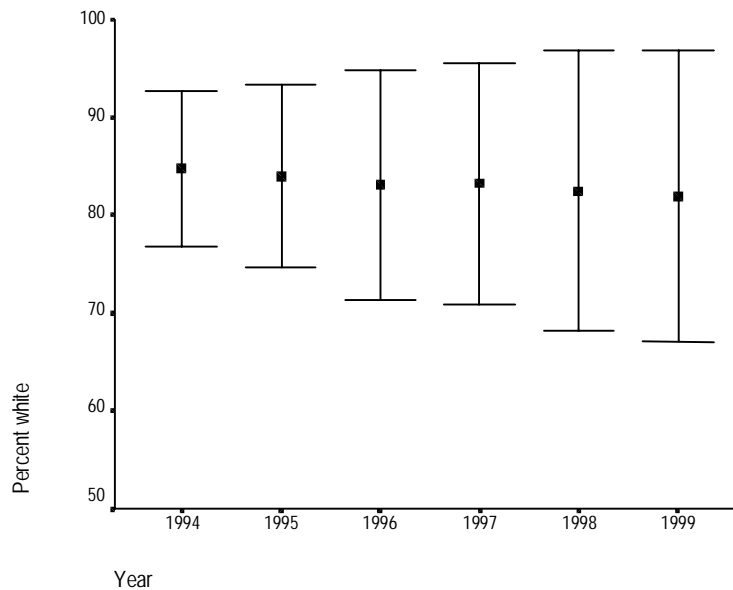
Third, chi-square "goodness of fit" tests compared the 1994-1995 racial/ethnic distributions to those in 1999-2000. The percent white at each school in 1994-1995 was not available for all schools. In those cases, the first year subsequent to 1994-1995 was used as the base year with which to compare the percent white in each school during the 1999-2000 school year. The differences were statistically significant for elementary and middle schools (at the 1% level). Thus, the percent difference in white elementary and middle school students between the appropriate base and 1999-2000 school years is highly unlikely due to random fluctuation. These results, particularly when combined with the above evidence of a trend of increasing stratification, warrant the conclusion that

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the differences in the racial/ethnic distributions in BVSD elementary and middle schools between 1994-95 and 1999-2000 are explained by the expansion of open enrollment, not normal year-to-year fluctuations.
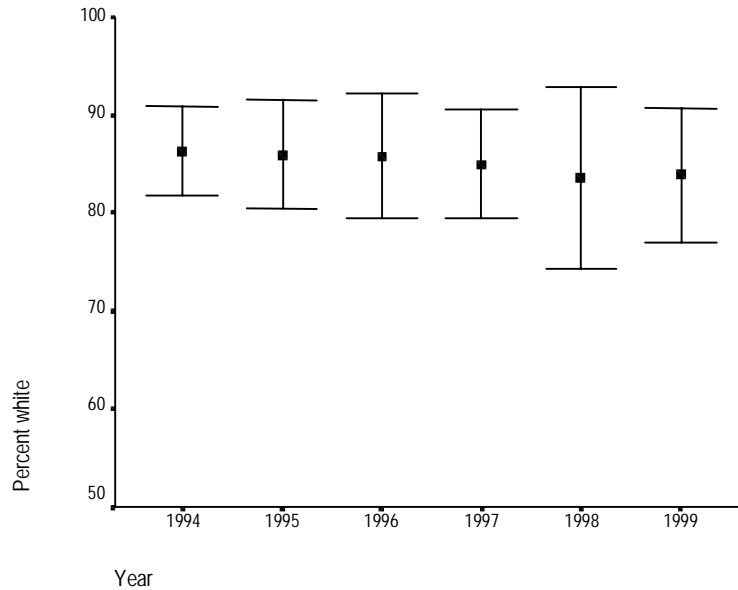
Figure 2.8. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students in BVSD High Schools Expressed in Terms of Standard Deviations, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999

The chi-square test for high schools was not statistically significant. Thus, the change in high school distributions can be attributed to normal year-to-year fluctuations. This finding is consistent with what the above scatter plot and standard deviations suggest.

The above analysis ignores the fact that some racial/ethnic stratification results from bilingual programs, a particularly important factor at the elementary level. We surmise that most BVSD educators and parents would agree that increased stratification (within reason) that results from giving English language learners the option of bilingual programs is an acceptable trade-off. However, when BVSD's 3 elementary bilingual schools, Pioneer, Uni Hill, and Washington, are removed from the analysis, the stratification among the remaining elementary schools is more pronounced than when these schools are included. Figure 2.9 shows the standard deviations that result from removing the 3 bilingual schools.[iv] Although the values are smaller than those reported for all elementary schools, the increase between 1994-1995 and 1999-2000 is larger. Whereas the difference is 4.38 (18.32 – 13.94) for all elementary schools, it is 5.93 (15.00 – 9.07) when the 3 bilingual schools are excluded. (The standard deviations between 1994-1995 and 1999-2000 for elementary schools excluding Pioneer, Washington, and Uni Hill are 9.07, 10.19, 11.99, 11.77, 13.00, and 15.00.) In addition, a

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chi-square test comparing 1994-1995 and 1999-2000 elementary with the 3 bilingual schools removed was statistically significant (at the 1% level.)   It follows from these findings that the option of bilingual schools does not explain the increasing racial/ethnic stratification in BVSD elementary schools over the past six years.   On the contrary, increasing stratification must be attributed to the open enrollment patterns associated with BVSD's other elementary schools.

Figure 2.9. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students in BVSD Elementary Schools Expressed in Terms of Standard Deviations, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999, Excluding Three Bilingual Schools
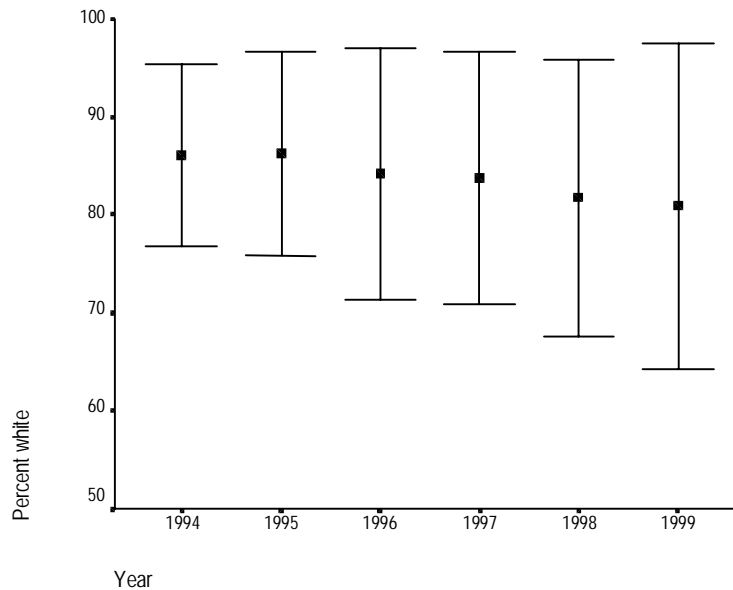

Socio-Economic Status

We investigated patterns of open enrollment associated with socio-economic status (SES) using free and reduced lunch percentage as a marker of SES. Free and reduced lunch percentage is an imperfect but widely used measure of SES at the elementary and middle levels. It is typically not used for high schools, however, because high school free and reduced lunch figures are generally gross underestimates. Accordingly, high schools are excluded from the analyses of this subsection.

Recent Time Slices

Data were not available to do an analysis of the proportion of open enrollees who qualify for free and reduced lunch and who are represented in the request and accept open enrollment pools, an analysis that would parallel the analysis above with respect to race/ethnicity. Such an analysis requires data on individual students and free and reduced lunch percentages are restricted to the school level. Thus, we were unable to determine

the degree to which low SES students are participating in open enrollment relative to their numbers and whether when they do apply, they are accepted at a proportional rate.

However, using individual schools as the unit of analysis, we did investigate the relationship between free and reduced lunch percentage and the percentage of students requesting to open enroll out of given schools for the open enrollment years 1998-1999 and 1999-2000. The patterns for elementary and middle schools (see Figures 2.10 and 2.11) were remarkably similar to those associated with race/ethnicity for all BVSD schools, though the threshold is 30% rather than 20% (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). That is, as the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch approaches and exceeds 30%, the number of students requesting to open enroll out similarly increases.

Figure 2.10. Relationship Between Percent Free and Reduced Lunch And Requests to Open Enroll in Other Schools, 1998-1999
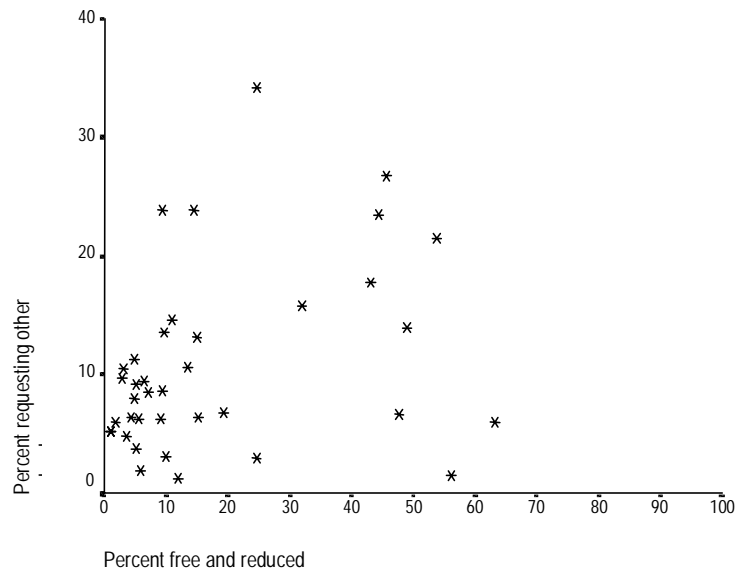
Figure 2.11. Relationship Between Percent Free and Reduced Lunch And Requests to Open Enroll in Other Schools, 1999-2000
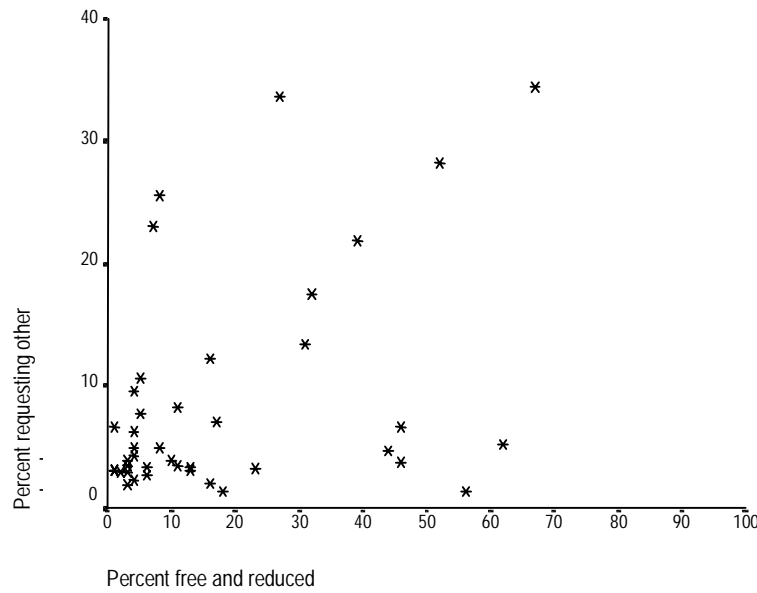
The schools that defied the relationship were the same as those that defied the relationship between minority percentage and requests to open enroll in another school in almost all cases (see the discussion of outliers on p. 91). This is to be expected in terms of the strong correlation between minority enrollment percentages and free/reduced lunch enrollment percentages discussed immediately below.

Longitudinal Trends

That the pattern of percent free and reduced lunch and percent minority (elementary and middle schools only) is very similar is reflected in the correlations between the two, which, with the exception of 1995-1996 (when the correlation was .853), steadily increased from .882 in 1994-1995 to .957 in 1999-2000. (Both of these correlations, as well as the ones for the intervening years, are statistically significant at the 1% level.) The increasing correlation indicates that the percentages of low SES and minority students in BVSD schools have been increasing (and decreasing) in tandem and have become more strongly associated between 1994-1995 and 1999-2000.

To further investigate longitudinal trends with respect to SES, we employed the same three angles of analysis that we did with race/ethnicity. (Again, the analyses for SES are limited to elementary and middle schools.)

**Figure 2.12. Distribution of Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch
In BVSD Elementary Schools, Fall 1994 to Fall 1995**
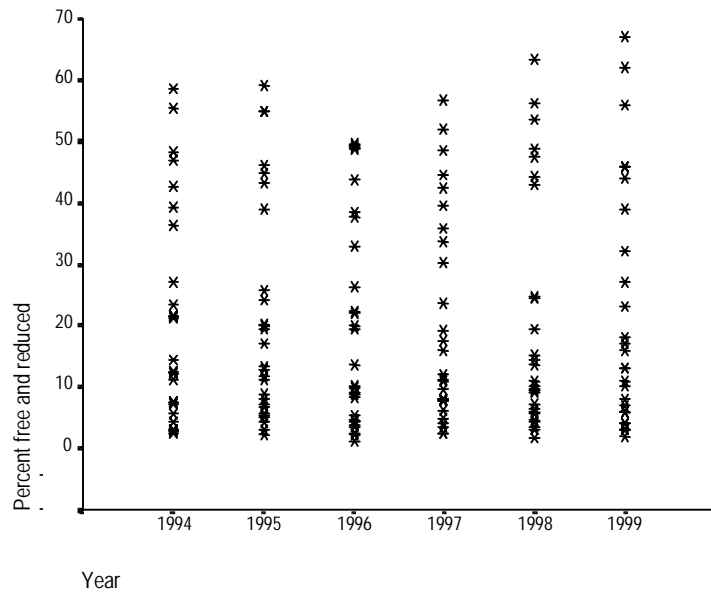
First, the scatter plots for elementary and middle schools (Figures 2.12 and 2.13) show an increasing spread of the percentages of free and reduced lunch, with the highest percentages increasing over time.[v] This is similar to the patterns with respect to minority percentages and consistent with the high correlations between minority percentages and free and reduced lunch percentages.

**Figure 2.13. Distribution of Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced
Lunch In BVSD Middle Schools, Fall 1994 to Fall 1995**
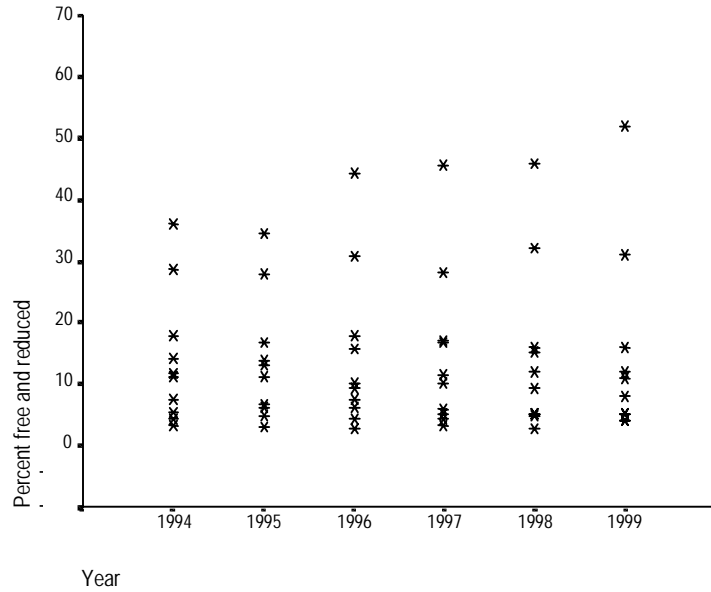
Second, the standard deviations for elementary and middle schools (see Figures 2.14 and 2.15) increase over the six-year period, but the pattern is not as consistent in the case of

**Figure 2.14. Distribution of Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced
Lunch in BVSD Elementary Schools Expressed in Terms of
Standard Deviations, Fall 1994 to Fall 1995**
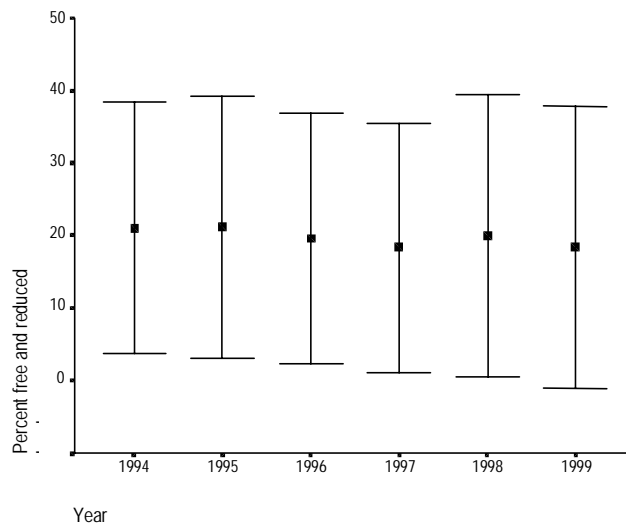
free and reduced lunch percentages as in the case of minority percentages. In particular,

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the standard deviations do not consistently increase over the six-year period from 1994-1995 to 1999-2000, but decrease from one year to the next in several cases. (The standard deviations over the six-year period for elementary schools are 17.39, 18.11, 17.22, 17.22, 19.44, 19.99; for middle schools they are 10.82, 10.32, 13.04, 12.92, 13.79, 14.57.)

Figure 2.15. Distribution of Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch In BVSD Middle Schools Expressed in Terms of Standard Deviations, Fall 1994 to Fall 1995
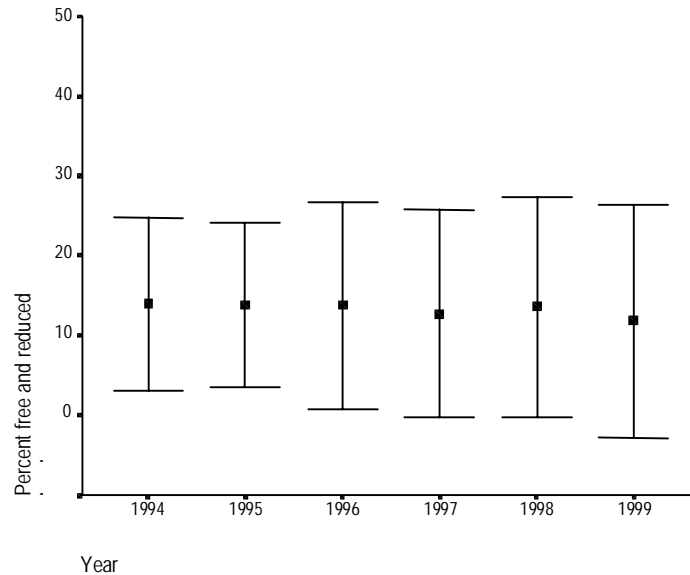
Third, chi-square tests for the changed distributions for elementary and middle schools for the six-year time period were both statistically significant at the 1% level. This is evidence for a trend increasing stratification with respect to SES. Because the standard deviations do not consistently increase, however, the evidence is weaker than it is with respect to race/ethnicity.

Other Special Populations

Ascertaining whether open enrollment has resulted in stratification with respect to special education, ESL, and Title I students is complicated by the fact that BVSD (and school districts in general) have long concentrated services and programs in certain schools to meet the needs of such students, both as a way to make efficient use of resources and as a way to operate within the constraints of federal funding regulations. (The last applies especially to Title I.) Thus, options have always been relatively restricted for the parents of such students, and stratification has always been present.

Table 2.1, included at the beginning of this section, indicates that BVSD schools are stratified with respect to special populations. Unfortunately, we do not have the data required to address the longitudinal questions of whether stratification has increased

relative to the benchmark of 1994-1995 for ESL and Title I. It would be difficult to interpret in any case for the reasons given above. For special education, our data is limited to the focus group data, as opposed to the statistical records we used to investigate stratification with respect to race/ethnicity and SES.

The claim that the options of parents of special education students have been diminished by the expansion of open enrollment has two interpretations: relative and absolute. Because, as indicated above, special education services have always been concentrated to a degree in certain schools, parents of special education students may have experienced diminished choice relative to the expanded options available to other parents, but not relative to the options they had before the expansion of open enrollment. But several participants in focus groups asserted that the options of parents of special education students had been diminished in the absolute sense that their options had actually decreased relative to their options before the expansion of open enrollment. According to them, as more BVSD schools have specialized their curriculum and instruction, fewer have become able and willing to accommodate special education students than prior to the expansion of open enrollment. "Core knowledge is notorious for not having as many staffed students," one remarked.

Participants in the focus groups pointed to both the open enrollment procedures of individual schools and the BVSD policy of requiring that Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) be completed before enrollment in a given school is finalized as sources of the diminishing options for parents of special education students and of increased stratification. Each of these are sometimes manifested in the practice at various schools referred to as "counseling out," in which the parents of special education children are told that there is "not a good fit" between their children's needs and the school's curriculum and instruction.

Test Scores

Relationship Between Test Scores and School Demand

To ascertain the relationship between test scores and patterns of open enrollment in elementary schools, we computed the correlation between the open enrollment demand for elementary schools (adjusted for size of school by dividing the requests for open enrollment by the school's enrollment) and percent proficient or advanced on 4th grade CSAPs. We used the 1997-1998 combined reading and writing 4th grade CSAPs for those requesting open enrollment in 1998-1999 and the 1998-1999 combined reading and writing 4th grade CSAPs for those requesting open enrollment in 1999-2000 (in both cases the CSAP scores are for the year prior to requesting open enrollment). We also computed correlations between the demand for elementary schools and their minority and free and reduced lunch percentages (also for the years prior) to examine the strength of these factors relative to CSAPs. The results are reported in Table 2.8. The table also reports the results of this analysis with Pioneer, Uni Hill, and Washington removed.

The results indicate that, in general, an elementary school's test scores is the factor most

strongly associated with the number of parents seeking to open enroll in it as compared to racial/ethnic and free/reduced lunch percentages. Three of the four correlations between

Table 2.8. Correlations Between Demand for Elementary Schools and 4th Grade CSAPs, Minority Percentages, and Free/Reduced Lunch Percentages

		Year Previous to OE Request		
		4th Grade CSAP	Percent F/R Lunch	Percent Minority
1998-1999 OE Year Demand	**All Elementary Schools**	.521** (n=28)	-.210 (n=27)	-.245 (n=30)
	Exclude 3 Bi-lingual Schools	.496* (n=25)	-.379 (n=24)	-.343 (n=27)
1999-2000 OE Year Demand	**All Elementary Schools**	.220 (n=28)	-.141 (n=30)	.001 (n=32)
	Exclude 3 Bi-lingual Schools	.488* (n=25)	-.395* (n=27)	-.289 (n=29)

* Correlation is significant at the 5% level.
**Correlation is significant at the 1% level.

school demand and test scores are statistically significant and in the one case in which it is not (1998-1999 for all elementary schools), it is still higher than the correlations between school demand and both racial/ethnic percentages and low SES percentages. In 1999-2000, the correlation increases when Pioneer, Uni Hill and Washington are removed. This suggests that parents open enroll their children in these schools less for test scores than for their bilingual curricula. However, this is not the pattern for 1998-1999, which blurs the picture. (The dramatic increase in requests for Pioneer due to the Lafayette restructuring helps explain the reduced correlation between demand and test scores between 1998-1999 and 1999-2000. Pioneer has relatively low tests scores coupled with a high demand in 1999-2000, which reduces the correlation. When Pioneer is removed, along with the other two bilingual elementary schools, the correlation between test scores and demand is statistically significant for 1999-2000).

The correlations between demand and (1) free/reduced lunch and (2) minority percentages are negative in all but one case, suggesting that as a school's free/reduced lunch and minority percentages increase, demand for it decreases, and vice versa. These correlations increase in each case when Pioneer, Uni Hill and Washington are removed, reaching statistical significance for 1999-2000 free/reduced lunch percentage. These findings are consistent with the previous ones regarding the stratifying effects of open enrollment.

The parallel analyses for open enrollment demand at the middle and high school levels are more limited in comparison to the analyses for elementary schools, for there is only one year of test data in each case and no SES data appropriate for the high schools.

At the middle school level, the correlation between 1999-2000 open enrollment demand and the combined reading and writing 1999 7th grade CSAP percentage proficient/advanced is .753 (statistically significant at the 1% level); the correlation

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between demand for open enrollment and free/reduced lunch percentage is -.328 (not statistically significant); and the correlation between demand for open enrollment and minority percentage is -.210 (not statistically significant). These results are the same as for elementary schools. Overall, test scores, as compared to free/reduced lunch or minority percentages, are most strongly associated with the demand for BVSD middle schools.

At the high school level, the correlation between 1999-2000 open enrollment demand and the combined reading, language, and math subtests of the 1999 CTBS is -.477 (not statistically significant).   The correlation between open enrollment demand and minority percentage was .120 (not statistically significant). (Again, no analyses were conducted for high schools using free and reduced lunch data.) On the basis of this evidence, no conclusions may be drawn regarding what factors influence open enrollment demand in BVSD high schools. (It should be observed that the number of high schools is small in comparison to middle and especially elementary schools. This compromises the ability to draw conclusions based on correlational analysis.)

Test Scores of Students Open Enrolling: The Skimming Issue

Because students open enrolling at the 6th grade and 9th grade levels have prior test scores, we were able to investigate several patterns having to do with test scores of students open enrolling in middle and high schools. (These grade levels, in addition to kindergarten, are responsible for the vast majority of open enrollment: 23% at kindergarten, 25% at 6th grade, and 19% at 9th grade.)   This kind of analysis is precluded at the elementary level because the bulge in elementary open enrollment at kindergarten occurs prior to BVSD testing.

As a group, students requesting open enrollment in 6th grade performed markedly better on the 4th grade CSAP than BVSD 4th graders in general. Table 2.9 compares the percent of BVSD students proficient or advanced on the 4th grade CSAPs in reading and writing to (1) students requesting and (2) students accepting 6th grade open enrollment in middle and K-8 schools in 1998-99 and 1999-00, the years immediately subsequent to the 1998 and 1999 administrations of the 4th grade CSAPs. The data quite clearly indicate that students in both groups have higher test scores than their cohorts.

The differences between CSAP proficient or advanced in the request and accept pools are negligible, and are both positive and negative. It follows that there is no evidence to suggest that middle and K-8 schools are "skimming" by selecting the highest test scorers and easiest to educate students from their request pools. On the other hand, the data indicate that 6th grade open enrollees are by no means a random sample of the BVSD student population and that skimming in another sense is occurring.

The data presented in Table 2.9 indicate some rather large differences among schools, both in the number of students accepting open enrollment and in these students' 4th grade CSAP performance. For example, Summit had acceptances from 58 students from the 1998 pool (in open enrollment year 1998-1999, for enrollment in 1999-2000) who

exceeded the overall BVSD 4th grade CSAP percentage of proficient/advanced by 21% in reading and 37% in writing; Summit had acceptances from 63 students from the 1999 pool (in open enrollment year 1999-2000, for enrollment in 2000-2001) who exceeded the overall BVSD 4th grade CSAP percentage of proficient/advanced by 13% in reading and 27% in writing. By contrast, Casey had acceptances from 10 students from the 1998 pool who equaled the overall BVSD 4th grade CSAP percentage of proficient/advanced in reading and exceeded it by 4% in writing; Casey had acceptances from 10 students from the 1999 pool who fell below the overall BVSD 4th grade CSAP percentage of proficient/advanced by 16% in both reading and writing.

Table 2.9. Fourth Grade CSAP Performance of Students Requesting and Accepting Open Enrollment for Sixth Grade

	Fourth Grade CSAP Scores							
	1998 percent prof/adv				1999 percent prof/adv			
	reading		writing		reading		writing	
	Request OE	Accept OE	Request OE	Accept OE	Request OE	Accept OE	Request OE	Accept OE
Base line	79% (n=76)	82% (n=61)	54% (n=76)	54% (n=61)	88% (n=82)	88% (n=51)	54% (n=82)	51% (n=51)
Broom Hts	---* (n=2)	---* (n=0)	---* (n=2)	---* (n=0)	68% (n=19)	67% (n=12)	47% (n=19)	42% (n=12)
Burbank	84% (n=77)	86% (n=49)	68% (n=77)	74% (n=49)	86% (n=56)	84% (n=25)	64% (n=55)	64% (n=25)
Centen nial	87% (n=54)	87% (n=38)	61% (n=54)	64% (n=39)	87% (n=59)	77% (n=34)	61% (n=59)	53% (n=34)
Ange vine	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)	---* (n=1)
Louis ville	71% (n=38)	67% (n=12)	51% (n=37)	58% (n=12)	74% (n=34)	78% (n=23)	47% (n=38)	50% (n=22)
Platt	76% (n=96)	81% (n=67)	52% (n=96)	52% (n=67)	79% (n=110)	75% (n=69)	46% (n=110)	39% (n=69)
So Hills	77% (n=44)	73% (n=30)	66% (n=44)	63% (n=30)	95% (n=99)	94% (n=77)	69% (n=98)	71% (n=76)
Monarc' K-8	82% (n=11)	---* (n=0)	36% (n=11)	---* (n=0)	88% (n=25)	83% (n=18)	64% (n=25)	50% (n=18)
Summit	90% (n=108)	91% (n=58)	79% (n=108)	83% (n=58)	92% (n=118)	89% (n=63)	74% (n=117)	73% (n=63)
H'izons K-8	81% (n=16)	---* (n=2)	75% (n=16)	---* (n=2)	82% (n=28)	82% (n=11)	56% (n=27)	30% (n=10)
Casey	65% (n=17)	70% (n=10)	35% (n=17)	50% (n=10)	64% (n=11)	60% (n=10)	27% (n=11)	30% (n=10)
BVSD	70%		46%		76%		46%	

*Insufficient open enrollment to compute.

An examination of the kinds of students middle schools are losing through open enrollment helps paint a more complete picture of the effects of open enrollment on entering characteristics of middle school students with respect to test scores. Table 2.10 is similar in format to Table 2.9 but reports the CSAP statistics for the students lost to schools (students assigned to the school in question on the basis of attendance area) when these students accept open enrollment in another school.

**Table 2.10. Fourth Grade CSAP Performance of Students Requesting
Open Enrollment Out of Home School** for 6th Grade**

	Fourth Grade CSAP Scores of Students Requesting OE Out			
	1998 percent prof/adv		1999 percent prof/adv	
	reading	writing	reading	writing
Baseline	82% (n=33)	73% (n=33)	91% (n=44)	64% (n=44)
Broom Hts	100% (n=5)	80% (n=5)	87% (n=15)	60% (n=15)
Burbank	91% (n=66)	73% (n=66)	88% (n=68)	66% (n=67)
Centennial	80% (n=35)	60% (n=35)	81% (n=36)	53% (n=36)
Angevine	74% (n=65)	49% (n=64)	75% (n=76)	46% (n=76)
Louisville	74% (n=19)	63% (n=19)	91% (n=35)	57% (n=35)
Platt	79% (n=38)	55% (n=38)	89% (n=53)	51% (n=53)
So Hills	83% (n=24)	61% (n=24)	86% (n=21)	60% (n=20)
Monarch K-8	75% (n=12)	42% (n=12)	83% (n=12)	64% (n=11)
Summit	**---*(n=0)**	---*(n=0)	---*(n=0)	---*(n=0)
H'izons K-8	---* (n=2)	---* (n=2)	---* (n=2)	---* (n=2)
Casey	89% (n=65)	66% (n=65)	81% (n=78)	59% (n=78)
BVSD	70%	46%	76%	46%

* Insufficient open enrollment data to compute.
****In most cases "home" school is attendance area school. Summit and Horizons, which have no
    attendance areas, are the exceptions.**

With few exceptions (Monarch, 1998 reading; Angevine, 1999 reading and writing) the students in this pool exceed the overall BVSD 4th grade CSAP percentage of proficient/advanced. In general, when middle schools lose students through open enrollment, they lose students who score highest on achievement tests. To help assess the impact on given middle schools, compare Casey and Summit once again. Among BVSD middle schools, Casey has the highest overall rate of requests to open enroll out: 65 in 1998-1999 and 78 in 1999-2000 (Angevine is much larger, and Burbank has significant intra-school open enrollment). And the students making these requests have 4th grade CSAP scores that markedly surpass the general BVSD level.   Summit, on the other hand, loses no students to open enrollment because it has no attendance area. Like all focus and charter schools in BVSD, Summit is required to accept students only through open enrollment. It thus draws its students exclusively from the pool of high scoring students reported in Table 2.9.

Keeping in mind the different pools of students who are requesting open enrollment into and out of BVSD middle schools, Figures 2.16 (for the 1998-1999 enrollment year) and 2.17 (for 1999-2000) illustrate the gains and losses of high scoring students to them as a

consequence of open enrollment activity.

Figure 2.16. Middle School Open Enrollment Activity
Open Enrollment Year 1998-1999
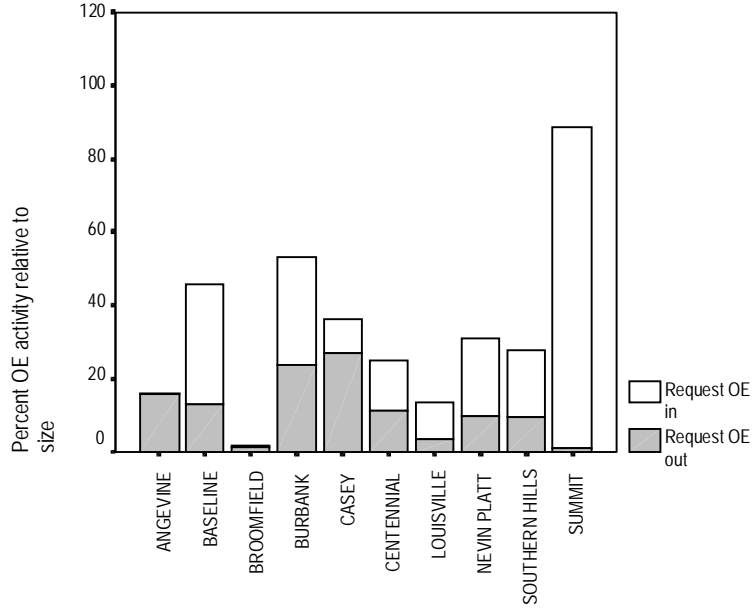
Figure 2.17. Middle School Open Enrollment Activity
Open Enrollment Year 1999-2000
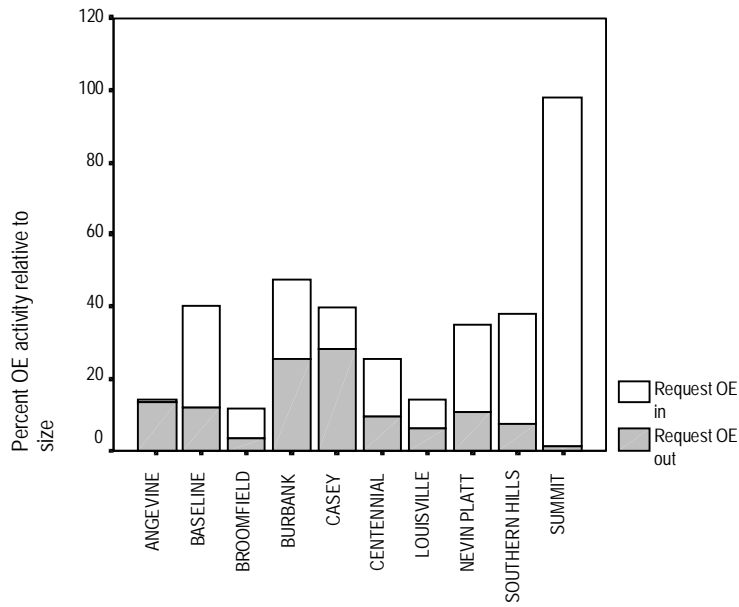
It is evident that the previous test scores of students entering 6th grade are predictive of

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their subsequent test scores, and this significantly complicates evaluating middle schools on the basis of test scores. For, is it the quality of the curriculum and instruction of a given school, or the kinds of students it enrolls that explains its test scores? The ideal analysis would track the same students longitudinally to get a precise estimate of just how strong this relationship is and how given middle schools affect it. In the absence of such an analysis, for which appropriate data are not available, it is nonetheless instructive to compare BVSD middle schools' gains and losses of high scoring students via open enrollment with their 7th grade CSAP scores.

Table 2.11 compares 1999-2000 7th grade CSAP reading and writing scores to (1) the 4th grade reading and writing CSAPs of students requesting open enrollment in and out of BVSD middle schools and (2) 7th grade reading and writing CSAPs for the 1999-2000 cohort of 7th graders. (The 4th grade reading and writing CSAP are from students who took the test in 1997-1998, completed open enrollment procedures in 1998-1999, and enrolled in 1999-2000 as 6th graders. These students will be 7th graders in 2000-2001. Thus, they are not the same cohort that took the 1999-2000 7th grade reading and writing CSAPs.)

Table 2.11. Comparison of 4th and 7th Grade Reading and Writing CSAPs In Light of Open Enrollment Patterns

	1998 4th Grade CSAP				2000 7th Grade CSAP	
	% prof/adv				% prof/adv	
	reading		writing		Reading	Writing
	accept OE in 1998-99	request** OE out 1998-99	accept OE in 1998-99	request** OE out 1998-99		
Baseline	82% (n=61)	82% (n=33)	54% (n=61)	73% (n=33)	77%	62%
Broom Hts	---* (n=0)	100% (n=5)	---* (n=0)	80% (n=5)	69%	50%
Burbank	86% (n=49)	91% (n=66)	74% (n=49)	73% (n=66)	78%	58%
Centennial	87% (n=38)	80% (n=35)	64% (n=39)	60% (n=35)	82%	73%
Angevine	---* (n=1)	74% (n=65)	---* (n=1)	49% (n=64)	53%	38%
Louisville	67% (n=12)	74% (n=19)	58% (n=12)	63% (n=19)	77%	64%
Platt	81% (n=67)	79% (n=38)	52% (n=67)	55% (n=38)	85%	69%
So Hills	73% (n=30)	83% (n=24)	63% (n=30)	61% (n=24)	85%	78%
Monarch K-8	---* (n=0)	75% (n=12)	---* (n=0)	42% (n=12)	85%	69%
Summit	91% (n=58)	---* **(n=0)**	83% (n=58)	---* (n=0)	91%	84%
H'izons K-8	---* (n=2)	---* (n=2)	---* (n=2)	---* (n=2)	90%	63%
Casey	70% (n=10)	89% (n=65)	50% (n=10)	66% (n=65)	29%	23%
BVSD	70%		46%		73%	59%

* Insufficient open enrollment to compute.
**Not all students are accepted. It is the proportions among middle schools that are relevant.

The rankings of 7th grade CSAP scores are what would be predicted on the basis of the 4th grade CSAP scores of students open enrolling into and out of BVSD middle schools. In general, those with the highest inflow and lowest outflow of high scorers on the 4th grade CSAP via open enrollment have the highest 7th grade CSAP scores. Summit, Southern

Hills, and Platt each have a favorable balance of open enrollment inflow versus outflow (for Summit, it is inflow only) and have among the highest 7th grade CSAPs. (This picture is somewhat complicated by, among other things, the facts that Burbank and Platt have substantial within school open enrollments and that the bulk of Horizons' open enrollment occurs in earlier grades). Conversely, those schools that have a high outflow and little inflow of students, especially high scorers, have the lowest 7th grade CSAP scores. Casey and Angevine provide striking examples of this.

We conducted several analyses of high schools on the skimming issue, and the results were much the same as for middle schools, though less dramatic. Table 2.12 shows the 1998-1999 7th grade CSAP reading and writing scores for students (8th graders) requesting and accepting open enrollment in 1999-2000 (for 9th grade enrollment in 2000-2001). Like middle schools, there is no evidence that high schools are skimming the highest scoring students from their request pools.

Table 2.12. Comparison of 7th Grade Reading and Writing CSAPs, 10th Grade Reading and Language CTBS Scores, and 1999-2000 Open Enrollment Patterns for 9th Grade

| School | 1999 7th Grade CSAP Percent Prof/Adv of Students Requesting and Accepting OE in 1999-2000 for 9th Grade | | | | | | 199910th Grade CTBS avg Percentiles | |
| | Reading | | | Writing | | | | |
	Req OE In	Accept OE	Req OE Out	Req OE In	Accept OE	Req OE Out	read-ing	lang-uage
Bldr Prep	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
A Ridge	28% (n=34)	30% (n=23)	---*	8% (n=34)	4% (n=23)	---*	49	42
New Vista	78% (n=78)	82% (n=22)	---*	58% (n=78)	64% (n=22)	---*	82	54
Boulder	80% (n=65)	74% (n=46)	83% (n=107)	74% (n=65)	67% (n=46)	68% (n=107)	85	74
Broomfield	83% (n=6)	75% (n=4)	68% (n=31)	83% (n=6)	75% (n=4)	53% (n=31)	74	67
Centaurus	75% (n=12)	73% (n=11)	66% (n=95)	58% (n=12)	55% (n=11)	53% (n=95)	73	64
Fairview	87% (n=189)	88% (n=113)	83% (n=47)	75% (n=189)	77% (n=113)	69% (n=47)	87	80
Monarch	74% (n=62)	70% (n=37)	83% (n=69)	60% (n=62)	60% (n=37)	68% (n=69)	79	68
Ned Jr/Sr	---*	---*	---*	---*	---*	---*	---	---
BVSD	71%			61%				

*Insufficient open enrollment to compute.

Instead, and also like middle schools, skimming is occurring in the sense that students requesting open enrollment, from which open enrollees are selected, have higher test scores than their cohort. The end result is that certain high schools are drawing disproportionately from the pool of high scoring students.

The balance of requests to open enroll in and out varies across high schools. Excluding New Vista and Arapahoe, which have no attendance boundaries and thus little or no outflow, Fairview has the most favorable balance, 189 requesting to open enroll in and only 47 requesting to open enroll out. Centaurus has the least favorable balance, 95 requesting out and only 12 requesting in, followed by Boulder High, 107 out and 65 in. Thus, BVSD high schools are attracting and accepting high scoring students at different rates.

Fairview leads in both. Fairview is also attracting and accepting students with higher scores than it is losing. Seventh grade CSAP scores for students who accepted open enrollment at Fairview in 1999-2000 were 88% proficient or advanced in reading and 77% proficient or advanced in writing; these are well above the BVSD rates of 71% and 61%, and above the rates of students requesting to open enroll out of Fairview, 83% and 69%. New Vista has the next highest scores for students accepting open enrollment. Reading is well above the BVSD rate, at 82%, and writing is above it, at 64%. Boulder High accepted students for open enrollment whose proficient or advanced rates slightly exceeded the BVSD rates (74% for reading and 67% for writing) and Monarch accepted students virtually at the BVSD rates (70% and 60%). Both lost students with rates substantially above the BVSD rate (83% and 68% for each). This relationship was in reverse for Broomfield and Centaurus: students accepting open enrollment had higher

Figure 2.18. High School Open Enrollment Activity
Open Enrollment Year 1999-2000
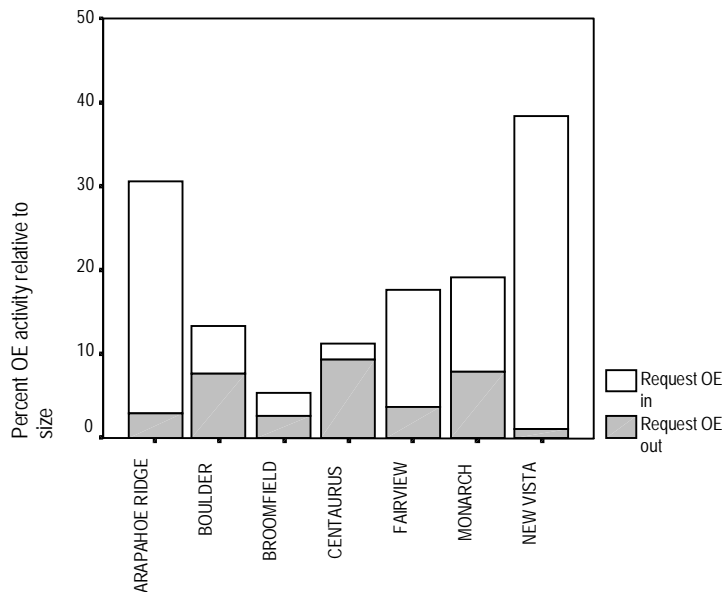
proficient and advanced rates, mostly above the BVSD rate, than those requesting to open enroll out, all below the BVSD rate. But both had relatively few requests to open enroll in and Centaurus has many requests to open enroll out. Keeping in mind the proficient

and advanced rates for the pools associated with different BVSD high schools, Figure 2.18 illustrates the impact of open enrollment on the student populations.

Table 2.12 (p. 112) compares average percentile scores for the 1999 10th grade Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills in reading and language with the 7th grade CSAPs to examine the relationship between the entering test scores of students open enrolling in BVSD high schools with their subsequent test performance. (Math was excluded to help create a closer parallel to the reading and writing 7th grade CSAPs.) As in the case of middle schools, the cohort of students being compared is not the same. So, the inference from entering to subsequent tests scores, again, is not ideal. The high school analysis is further complicated by the difficulty in comparing proficiency levels (the criterion for evaluating CSAP performance) to percentiles (the criterion for evaluating CTBS performance). With these caveats in mind, it is nonetheless instructive to compare how BVSD schools rank on the 7th grade CSAP performance of students accepting open enrollment with 10th grade CTBS performance.

As in the case of several previous analyses, the relationships are once again unclear for high schools. At the extremes, Fairview has the highest scores across the board and Arapahoe Ridge the lowest. Otherwise, the rank orderings between the two kinds of testing do not hold. For example, Boulder High is 4th on the 1999 7th grade CSAP reading scores of students accepted for open enrollment in 1999-2000 and 3rd on writing, but second on both reading and language on the 1999 CTBS. Monarch is 6th on CSAP reading and 5th on writing, but 4th and 3rd, respectively, on CTBS reading and language. The remaining schools show a similar shifting of rankings. (Among the reasons that help explain the difference from the findings for middle schools is the relatively small proportion of students who are open enrolled in the large high schools such that CTBS scores are determined mostly by students from the attendance area.)

Parental Satisfaction

To determine the relationship between parental satisfaction and patterns of open enrollment for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 requests, we derived a single measure of satisfaction based on BVSD's annual "snapshot" survey for 1997-1998 and 1998-1999, the years previous to 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, respectively. We used 6 of the first 7 items included on the survey: (1) Satisfied with academic achievement, (2) Sets high and realistic expectations, (3) Curriculum provides solid foundation, (4) Clear and positive approach to discipline, (5) My student has a positive attitude, and (6) School provides a safe environment. Factor analysis was employed to assess item weights and to confirm that the 6 selected items could be combined to form a single item measuring parental satisfaction. We judged these to be most relevant to parental concerns and to be the kinds of questions that average parents are in a good position to answer. (Compare, for example, the items "Administration works collaboratively" and "Shared decision making is effective," which are more appropriate for staff.) Also, two of the items we selected, "Satisfied with academic achievement" and "School provides a safe environment" are reported in the Daily Camera each year in its open enrollment information insert. (Note: We used only the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses, assigning them values of 4 and

3, respectively. Also, the statistical technique used to insure that the items are properly weighted--so as to yield a single measure of parental satisfaction--makes it possible for values to exceed 4. This happened in one case.)

<center>Table 2.13. Elementary School Parental Satisfaction
1997-1998 and 1998-1999</center>

School Type	School	1997-1998		1998-1999	
		satis-faction	response rate	satis-faction	response rate
Charter	Horizons K8	3.74	49%	3.76	54%
Focus	BCSIS	na	na	3.38	53%
	Bear Creek	3.67	55%	3.71	56%
	C Mn'tessori	3.53	54%	3.56	59%
	High Peaks	3.93	63%	3.82	58%
	Mapleton	3.64	34%	3.45	47%
Bilingual	Washington	3.56	30%	3.47	34%
	Uni Hill	3.54	30%	3.57	34%
Strand	Lafayette	2.99	29%	2.86	31%
	Louisville	3.46	46%	3.48	44%
	Superior	3.37	51%	3.33	41%
Neigh-borhood	Aurora 7	3.39	30%	3.24	26%
	Birch	3.54	35%	3.34	41%
	Coal Creek	3,39	44%	3.39	42%
	Columbine	3.29	34%	3.19	29%
	Crest View	3.45	38%	3.40	41%
	Douglas	3.44	52%	3.56	51%
	Eisenhower	3.72	47%	3.61	42%
	Emerald	3.33	35%	3.15	30%
	Fireside	3.41	40%	3.35	38%
	Flatirons	3.59	49%	3.70	47%
	Foothill	3.26	43%	3.37	47%
	Gold Hill	3.76	48%	4.01	31%
	Heatherw'd	3.34	41%	3.21	47%
	Jamestown	3.68	55%	3.84	53%
	Kohl	3.40	45%	3.40	42%
	Maj Heights	3.21	23%	3.36	39%
	Martin Park	3.28	38%	3.34	41%
	Mesa	3.68	58%	3.65	56%
	Monarch K8	3.19	44%	3.16	37%
	Nederland	3.04	38%	2.73	38%
	Ryan	3.36	42%	3.36	43%
	Whittier	3.42	25%	3.52	28%
Bilingual	Pioneer	3.33	25%	3.13	23%
	Sanchez	3.26	20%	3.17	17%

The results for 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 are reported in Table 2.13 (for elementary

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schools), 2.14 (for middle schools), and 2.15 (for high schools). In addition to the single measure of parental satisfaction, we also include the response rates for each year. These rates are quite different between schools and in the majority of cases are less than 50%. Accordingly, caution must be exercised in interpreting the analyses to follow, for they depend upon what is very likely an atypical group of parents.

Type of School

In general, parents are more satisfied with choice schools (charter, focus, and strand) than with neighborhood schools. At the elementary level, the 9 most highly rated schools (approximately the first quartile) in 1997-1998 were: High Peaks (3.92), Gold Hill (3.76), Horizons (3.74), Eisenhower (3.72), Jamestown (3.68), Mesa (3.68), Bear Creek (3.67), Mapleton (3.64), and BCSIS (3.60). Five of these are charter or focus schools (High Peaks, Horizons, Bear Creek, Mapleton, and BCSIS). The next 8 most highly rated schools (approximately the second quartile) were: Flatirons (3.59), Washington (3.56), Birch (3.54), Uni Hill (3.54), Community Montessori (3.53), Louisville (3.46), Crestview (3.45), and Douglass (3.44).   Four of these are focus or strand schools (Community Montesorri, Louisville, Uni Hill, and Washington). Thus, slightly more 33% (12 of 35) of BVSD elementary schools for 1997-1998 were choice schools, whereas 75% of them (9 of 12) were among the top 50% in parent satisfaction ratings.   The results were similar in 1998-1999. With some changing of relative positions, and the disappearance of BCSIS, the same choice schools appeared in the first two quartiles. Thus, in 1998-1999, 67% (8 of 12) choice schools were among the top 50% of elementary schools in parent satisfaction ratings.

At the middle school level, Summit, a charter school, had the highest parent satisfaction ratings by a wide margin. In 1997-1998, Summit's rating was 3.93, followed next by Louisville at 3.24; in 1998-1999, Summit's rating was 3.99, followed next by Southern Hills at 3.27. Otherwise, there was no discernible relationship between school type (choice versus neighborhood) and parent satisfaction ratings at the middle level.

Table 2.14. Middle School Parental Satisfaction
1997-98 and 1998-99

School Type	School	1997-98		1998-99	
		satis-faction	response rate	satis-faction	response rate
Charter	**Sojourner**	na	na	na	na
	Summit	3.93	54%	3.99	59%
Focus	**Baseline**	2.94	39%	2.93	34%
	Platt	3.14	45%	3.16	45%
Bilingual	**Casey**	2.76	27%	2.88	25%
Strand	**Burbank**	2.73	34%	3.15	36%
Neigh-borhood	**Angevine**	2.65	26%	2.48	22%
	Broom Hts	2.86	31%	2.81	31%
	Centennial	3.04	40%	3.17	41%
	Louisville	3.24	37%	3.15	37%
	So Hills	3.19	36%	3.27	42%

At the high school level, two focus schools, Arapahoe Ridge and New Vista, had the highest parent satisfaction ratings each of the two years. This finding of higher parent satisfaction for choice schools parallels the one for elementary schools.

Table 2.15. High School Parental Satisfaction
1997-98 and 1998-99

School Type	School	1997-98		1998-99	
		satis-faction	response rate	satis-faction	response rate
Charter	Bldr Prep	na	na	na	na
Focus	A Ridge	2.89	23%	3.16	22%
	New Vista	3.38	40%	3.39	36%
Neigh-borhood	Boulder	2.53	30%	2.64	32%
	Broomfield	2.54	24%	2.56	22%
	Centaurus	2.35	25%	2.54	22%
	Fairview	2.80	32%	2.76	28%
	Monarch	na	na	2.62	39%
	Ned Jr/Sr	2.72	30%	2.36	24%

Open Enrollment Demand

At the high school and middle school levels, the demand for open enrollment in a given school in a given year is strongly associated with parental satisfaction from the previous year (see Table 2.16). At the high school level, the correlation between parental satisfaction in 1997-1998 and demand in the 1998-1999 open enrollment year is .883; for 1998-1999 demand and 1999-2000 satisfaction, it is .979. At the middle school level, the correlations are .817 and .874. All four of these correlations are statistically significant (at the 5% level).

Table 2.16. Correlations Between Parental Satisfaction, Open Enrollment
Demand, and Test Scores, 1998-1999 and 1999-2000
Open Enrollment Years

Satisfaction Data Year	School Level	1998-1999 OE Year	1999-2000 OE Year	
		Demand	Demand	1998-1999 Test Scores**
1997-1998	Elem	.412*	---	---
	Middle	.817*	---	---
	High	.883*		---
1998-1999	Elem	---	.320	.684*
	Middle	---	.874*	.940*
	High	---	.979*	-.489

* Statistically significant at the 5% level.
**Combined reading and writing 4thgrade CSAPs for elementary, combined reading and writing 7th grade CSAPs for middle, and combined 10th grade reading, language, and math CTBS subtests for high school.

At the elementary level, the parallel correlations are also positive but weaker, .412 and .320, and only the first, for 1997-98 parental satisfaction and 1998-99 demand for open enrollment, is statistically significant (at the 5% level). (Once again, the Sanchez/Pioneer

restructuring likely explains the depressed correlation for the 1999-2000 open enrollment year.)

Observing the caveat about the low response rate, these results indicate that parental satisfaction is strongly associated with open enrollment demand at the middle and high school levels. The relationship is considerably weaker at the elementary levels.

Test Scores

We confine the analysis of the relationship between parental satisfaction and test scores to one year, 1998-1999, because we have only one year of matching test data for middle and high schools. Also, we use the 10th grade CTBS rather than CSAP at the high school level because high school level CSAPs do not currently exist.

The relationship between test scores and parental satisfaction is different than the one between demand for open enrollment and parental satisfaction with respect to the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The relationship is strongly positive at the elementary and middle school levels, but negative at the high school level. (See Table 2.16).

At the elementary level, the correlation between parental satisfaction and the combined reading and writing 4th grade CSAPs for 1998-1999 is .684. At the middle school level, the correlation between parental satisfaction and the combined reading and writing 7th grade CSAPs for 1998-99 is .940. Both of these correlations are statistically significant at the 5% level.

At the high school level, parental satisfaction for 1998-1999 is negatively associated with the 1998-1999 10th grade combined CTBS (-. 489), but this correlation is not statistically significant.

OPEN ENROLLMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Application Procedures

Information on BVSD open enrollment application procedures is available primarily from the BVSD Education Center, the BVSD web page, and the Daily Camera; word-of-mouth in the "parent network" is an important informal source of information. Parents make application directly to the school(s) in which they are interested in enrolling their student(s), using the BVSD application form, available at both the Education Center and individual schools. The deadline for applications is typically late January. Parents must confirm whether they accept an offer to open enroll their student(s) in given schools typically in mid February.

Individual schools to which applications are made determine whether space is available to accommodate all requests for open enrollment. Students are accepted for enrollment on the basis of the following set of District preferences: students wishing to return to their

home school; a new student whose older sibling is attending a given school and will continue attending the subsequent year; in-district students; students of founding parents of focus and strand schools for three years after the focus or strand is implemented; students applying for the next level in an articulated K-8 program (e.g., Core Knowledge); and siblings of a student who has been accepted at a higher grade level.

So far, no school has been filled to capacity in this way. (However, a school may have no open enrollment because it filled to capacity from its attendance area, for example, Superior Elementary.) For open enrollment requests in excess of any remaining slots (those not filled on the basis of attendance area, the above district preferences, or individual school preferences and requirements described below), a random lottery is administered by the Research and Evaluation Department at the BVSD central office. In particular, individual schools assign numbers to their pool of applicants and submit them to the Research and Evaluation Department, which then rank orders the numbers on the basis of a random selection. These rank ordered lists are then returned to individual schools who then contact the parents of children who have been selected after a district-wide specified date. Should the first set of contacts not fill all the slots in a school because parents decline open enrollment at that school, the school makes another set of contacts of parents of children farther down the list.

Some schools (all of which are focus or charter) have their own set of preferences, in addition to the District's. These include the children of teachers and staff; siblings of students who have graduated; children who have previously attended an on-site, tuition-based pre-school; and no 3-year limit on preferences for the children of founding parents. Some schools (again, focus or charter) also employ supplementary application procedures and requirements. These include: submitting portfolios of students' past work, filling out supplementary application forms, and encouraging parents to sign a written agreement to actively participate in school activities and in their child's education.

Student Recruitment

We investigated the issue of student recruitment primarily with the school surveys, which contained the question: How are students recruited to this school (strand)?   The responses this question prompted fell into three general categories: (1) active (which refer to genuine recruitment efforts, e.g., newspaper adds; flyers and brochures; school activities such as open houses; tours and classroom visits; and principal, staff, and student visits to other schools), (2) passive (which are more explanations of why students enroll than recruitment efforts, e.g., attendance area, reputation, and media coverage), and (3) word of mouth.

Comparing schools by type (choice, bilingual choice, and neighborhood), 55% of the choice school respondents, 60% of the bilingual choice school respondents, and 54% of the neighborhood school respondents listed the active methods of recruitment listed above. The overall differences and the differences that existed within this category are unremarkable. (It should be observed that the data used here is insensitive to the scale of these activities, which might vary considerably. For example, a frequently voiced

concern in the survey and focus group data is the connection between fundraising ability and the ability to place paid newspaper ads.)

Seventeen percent of the choice school respondents, 23% of the bilingual school choice respondents, and 23% of the neighborhood school respondents listed passive methods of recruitment, also unremarkable. There were important differences within this category, however. Neighborhood school respondents, not unexpectedly, much more frequently listed attendance area (14%, as compared to 6% for choice schools and 4% for bilingual choice schools). On the other hand, neighborhood school respondents much less frequently listed media coverage (3%, as compared to 8% for choice schools and 19% for bilingual choice schools.)

The differences in terms of the third category, word of mouth, are notable because of the difference between choice and neighborhood schools. Fifty-three percent of choice school respondents and 63% of bilingual choice school respondents listed word of mouth as a student recruitment method, while only 36% of neighborhood school respondents did.

The most important formal difference between choice schools (charter, focus, strand) and neighborhood schools with respect to student recruitment is that the latter must restrict their efforts to feeder schools. As discussed in the focus group analysis, this policy has prompted neighborhood schools to complain about unfair competition.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Two factors are most strongly associated with the open enrollment "demand" (the number of open enrollment requests of a school corrected for its size) for BVSD schools: test scores and parental satisfaction. But the strength of these associations varies, depending on whether the school level is elementary, middle, or high school. At the elementary level, demand is strongly associated with test scores and associated, but less strongly, with parental satisfaction. At the middle school level, demand is strongly associated with both test scores and parental satisfaction. At the high school level, demand is strongly associated with parental satisfaction but appears not to be associated with test scores. The evidence also suggests that Latinos are less motivated by test scores and satisfaction ratings than whites or are willing to trade these off for a bilingual program.

In general, parents are more satisfied with choice schools than neighborhood schools. It is reasonable to infer that giving parents a greater voice in the operation of schools and the power to choose the curricula and methods of instruction they deem best for their children explains this. On the other hand, this is not the whole explanation, for, at the elementary and middle levels, parental satisfaction is highly associated with test scores, and choice schools' test scores tend to be the highest.

The emphasis on test scores is reflected in the pools of students requesting open enrollment for 6th and 9th grades, when they enter middle and high schools, respectively.

In general, these students have higher test scores than their BVSD cohorts and apply disproportionately to schools with higher test scores. Thus, a form of "skimming" is occurring at both the middle and high school levels (notwithstanding the apparent lack of association between test scores and demand at the high school level). But it is important to note that it is not skimming in the sense of selecting the highest scoring students from among students in the pool requesting open enrollment. There is no evidence of this. Rather, the pools from which students are selected are themselves made up of higher scoring students. This deserves the name "skimming" because some schools are drawing a disproportionate number of students from the high scoring pool (for certain schools, all of their students), whereas other schools are losing a disproportionate number.

Race/ethnicity is a prominent feature of open enrollment patterns, both regionally and with respect to individual schools. The most pronounced regional movements via open enrollment are from North Boulder to South Boulder and from Lafayette to Louisville/Superior. In each case, students are leaving regions with higher percentages of minorities for regions with lower percentages. With respect to individual schools, whites are leaving high minority schools through open enrollment at a disproportional rate, in one case, at a rate nearly double their proportion of the school's population. Whites are disproportionately requesting open enrollment in schools with high test scores; Latinos are disproportionately requesting open enrollment in bilingual schools.

Overall, BVSD schools have become significantly more stratified with respect to race/ethnicity since the expansion of open enrollment in the mid 1990s and the advent of choice schools heavily emphasizing academic achievement. Stratification of BVSD has also increased with respect to SES since the mid 1990s. Moreover, strongly associated with minority enrollment to begin with, the association between SES and minority enrollment has become even stronger. These outcomes are evident at the elementary and middle school levels in the change since 1994-1995 in the overall racial/ethnic and SES distributions of students among elementary and middle schools. At the high school level, the evidence is piecemeal and inconclusive, limited to some evidence of "skimming" and to the fact that a disproportionate number of white students are open enrolling out of BVSD's two highest minority enrollment high schools.

The stratification that marks BVSD's open enrollment system has sometimes been attributed to the motives of racism, classism, and elitism, among others. These motives might be at work for some parents participating in open enrollment, but it must be emphasized that racial/ethnic and SES stratification are virtually impossible to disentangle from test scores and parental satisfaction ratings. To the extent they can be disentangled, test scores and parent satisfaction are, generally speaking, more strongly associated with the demand for BVSD schools than are minority enrollment or SES make-up. On the other hand, even though best interpreted as a side effect of parents' desire for schools with high-test scores and satisfaction ratings, increased stratification is an undeniable outcome of their choices.

These choices are made within the context of BVSD open enrollment procedures and practices, and these procedures and practices help explain the observed open enrollment

patterns. First, the District practice of prominently displaying test scores in the annual Daily Camera open enrollment insert, as well as in district and school web pages, helps explain why this factor is so prominent in the demand for BVSD schools, and why the form of "skimming" described above is evident. (Although test scores have become the primary, if not sole, criterion for judging the quality of schools at the state and national levels, presumably, this is not a position that BVSD wishes to endorse or encourage.) Second, requiring parents to obtain their own information on open enrollment rather than sending information directly to all BVSD parents; requiring them to visit schools in which they wish to open enroll; and requiring them to provide their own transportation help explain why open enrollment may have a stratifying effect. For this favors parents with savvy, time, and resources. It also favors parents who are best connected to the parent information network, the importance of which is shown by how prominent word of mouth is as a student recruitment method, particularly for choice schools.

That some individual schools (all charter or focus) have created their own list of open enrollment preferences and requirements, in addition to the District's, may also contribute to stratification. This is not to suggest all preferences are problematic, even when they do favor certain groups of parents. For example, although giving preference to the children of the founders of a school for three years, as the District does, advantages parents who have the time and resources to engage in the rather demanding activity of establishing a school or strand, this appears to be a reasonable compromise to strike. Placing no time limits on such a preference, as is the practice at several individual schools, is prima facie exclusionary and not easily justified in a public school system. Also prima facie exclusionary are (1) additional preferences afforded to certain groups, such as siblings of graduates, children of teachers and staff, and students previously enrolled in a tuition-based pre-school program; (2) additional application requirements, such as interviews and supplementary forms to fill out; and (3) additional expectations for parental participation, formalized in written agreements.

The District policy on student recruitment that disadvantages neighborhood schools may also contribute to stratification. Whatever the historical reasons for restricting neighborhood schools to recruiting within their feeder systems, this places them at a distinct disadvantage relative to choice schools in the current open enrollment system. For they are as vulnerable as choice schools to the loss of FTE and other resources, or even closure, if their enrollment drops, but they are not equally able to recruit students to help prevent this. They are also vulnerable to having their most active and financially able parents lured away. This not only contributes to stratification. It breeds resentment on the part of neighborhood schools toward choice schools, as well as the District, and gives them an incentive to become focus schools solely for the purpose of eliminating their recruiting disadvantage. Several schools have taken this step, and several others have considered it.

METHODS AND FINDINGS SECTION III:
WORKLOAD, FUNDING, AND FUNDRAISING

This section describes our methods and reports our findings with respect to the increased workload associated with administering open enrollment; the distribution of District funds to individual schools; and how and to what extent individual schools augment the total resources they have available with fundraisers, gifts, and fees. (Below we lump these together under "fundraising.")

Questions about the costs of administering open enrollment are relevant to an overall appraisal of the open enrollment system because resources are limited and administering the open enrollment system requires reallocating them away from the more traditional activities of the District personnel, as well as teachers, staff, and especially principals, at individual schools. Morale is also an issue.

Questions about District funding are relevant primarily because of their implications for equity. The array of issues that might be entertained here is large. For example, that some students have access to new buildings, outfitted with the latest computer equipment, whereas others must make do with old buildings and equipment, is surely an equity issue (and one raised in our focus groups). But equity issues like this one, however important, are not related directly enough to open enrollment to concern us. Thus, we restrict our analysis of district funding to how the District allocates (or fails to allocate) funds so as to take into account the differences in the student populations of different schools brought about by open enrollment.

Questions about fundraising are also intertwined with more general equity issues. The increasing concentration of relatively affluent and relatively poor students in BVSD schools widens the gap in total resources available to them. Furthermore, as discussed in Section II, open enrollment recruitment policy permits charter and focus schools to recruit from across the District, whereas neighborhood schools are restricted to their feeder system. Thus, choice schools can put their resources from fundraising to use to gain further recruiting advantages over neighborhood schools. Because of their broad discretionary space, charter schools can also use their resources from fundraising to reduce class size, further extending their recruiting advantage.

As will become evident as the analyses of this section unfold, the data on which they are based are at times imprecise and lacking in comprehensiveness. Sometimes the issues were just too demanding of time and resources to pursue in-depth within the constraints of this study (e.g., the activities and time spent on open enrollment by individuals at the Education Center). At other times, reasonably concerted efforts to obtain good data failed (e.g., on fundraising amounts). Despite these limitations, we believe the research described in the section yielded several trustworthy and illuminating findings that can help guide future deliberations about open enrollment policy.

INCREASED WORKLOAD

The District

Administering open enrollment at the Education Center requires the coordinated efforts of the Superintendent's Office, and the Departments of Business, Research and Evaluation, Transportation, and Special Education. The Superintendent's Office distributes information about open enrollment and fields questions from parents; the Department of Transportation accommodates requests from open enrollees for District transportation on a space available basis; the Special Education Department oversees the requirement of prior staffings for students requesting open enrollment who receive special education services; and the Research and Evaluation Department administers the open enrollment lottery. These additional activities are not inconsequential, but they are not on the same scale as those assumed by the Business Department.

The Business Department is responsible for determining individual school budgets, and open enrollment activity significantly complicates this task. In addition to the normal activities associated with projecting budgets, open enrollment activity must be entered into the calculations to help insure that provisional estimates are reasonably accurate. Late, relatively large adjustments in individual schools budgets are disruptive and disconcerting. Furthermore, precise documentation of movement among schools via open enrollment is necessary to prevent double counting and thus over projecting the state allocation. As described in the Section II of this report, individual schools perform the open enrollment application and parental notification procedures. The Business Department thus obtains from individual schools the information needed to keep its tally of schools gaining and losing students from their enrollments.

An individual in the Business Department estimates that the equivalent of two months of full time effort by a staff person is required to track the movement of students among schools via open enrollment. This same individual also reported that the general demands of administering open enrollment, including negotiating contracts with charter schools and monitoring and advising them on their finances, have compelled the Business Department to add a full-time staff person to help manage the workload.

Schools

Administering open enrollment also requires time and effort on the part of principals, teachers, and staff in individual schools. We did not precisely estimate just how much time and effort, nor translate time and effort into monetary terms. Nonetheless, the focus group data indicates that the time and effort required by individual schools to participate in open enrollment, and the other efforts it displaces, is a significant concern. So is the perceived imperative to market schools.

Eight of the neighborhood schools and 5 of the choice schools with whom we conducted focus groups raised these issues. (Here, choice schools and bilingual choice schools are not distinguished, and strand, focus, neighborhood focus, and charters are grouped

together as choice schools.) Below is a collection of illustrative remarks from the focus groups. (Note: Each example is a direct quotation or close paraphrase, based on notes.)

1. Choice school #1 principal: I didn't go to college to be a marketer.

2. Neighborhood school #1 principal: If I'd known this is what the job was, I'd have taken a job as principal in a private school—and made a lot more money.

3. Choice school #2 principal: The district should provide more resources for dealing with OE. The school's money shouldn't go to informing the public; it should go to the kids here.

4. Choice school #3 principal: Our advertising comes out of our fundraising, and it takes a lot of teacher time to promote the school.

5. Choice school #1 staff: OE is very time consuming and disruptive. Every year it becomes more intense.

6. Neighborhood school #2 teacher: We spend too much time and energy advertising.

7. Neighborhood school #3 teacher: Teachers can't teach during shopping period. There are competing demands between teaching and marketing. It's gotten a little out of control.

8. Neighborhood school #4 parent: We've had to put so much time and energy into defending our school. We have to create brochures rather than doing other things like improving the curriculum.

9. Neighborhood school #5 teacher: Schools feel like they have to advertise to get students. This takes away resources from professional development or time with kids.

10. Neighborhood school #6 parent: OE puts schools in the business of marketing. It is an inappropriate use of school funds, time and energy.

11. Neighborhood school #6 principal: Look at all the time I put into open enrollment and all the hidden costs. Decisions are not educationally driven; they are market driven.

12. Neighborhood school #7 principal: I waste my time every time OE rolls around…They've created Machiavellian principals…the fight for students breaks down any sense of collegiality among principals…survival is what it's all about.

13. Choice school #4 parent: Open enrollment has added additional pressure: you need marketing people and fancy brochures.

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14. Choice school #5 principal: Some parts of the school year I spend 50% of my time on open enrollment. I still have to run the school. It requires more administrative time, period. It is a constant balancing act. All of the promotional marketing materials come out of the school budget. We spend probably around $4-5K on brochures, mailings, refreshments for open houses, etc

15. Neighborhood school #8 principal: You're forced to play the game or perish.

A follow-up survey of principals via email provided additional information pertinent to the perceived burdens of open enrollment. The response rate was relatively low (12 respondents, 36% of principals in the survey/focus group sample), and 2 who responded represent schools already included in the comments above. On the other hand, the remarks below add 9 to the total of schools represented on the question of the extra time and effort required to administer open enrollment, bringing it to 23 (70% of the survey/focus group sample).

In addition to principals' estimates of the time spent on administering open enrollment, we also include the activities they say they spend time on, as well as their pro and con remarks about engaging in these activities. (Note: the majority of these remarks are direct quotations, but some have been edited to preserve flow and to protect confidentiality.) Once again, choice schools and bilingual choice schools are not distinguished, and strand, focus, neighborhood focus, and charters are grouped together as choice schools. Also, descriptions of individuals, "Choice school principal #1," etc., start anew, i.e., do not correspond to the descriptions above.)

- Choice school #1 principal

  1. Time spent: 10-20%

  2. Activities: Showing off the school, phone calls and sit down discussions.

  3. Pro: Proud to display our school and staff. It should be done more in the district.

  4. Con: The time it takes and knowing other schools are losing great parents who could support their school.

- Choice school #2 principal

  1. Time spent: In general, open enrollment takes the greatest amount of time during the months of November, December and January. During the months of November and December the time usually is spent in planning activities (20% of time.) The month of January approximately 15 to 20% of the time is spend implementing activities. During the remainder of the year approximately 5% of my time is devoted to open enrollment activities. This is based on a 10 hour day.

2. Activities: Activities include open house, meetings with parents at feeder schools, meetings with our parents, escorting our students to feeder schools, and gathering information for publication.

3. Pro: Some activities are positive.   I feel that as the lead administrator I should be doing positive public relations for the school.

4. Con: Because of the spirit of competition for the same students in the district, too much time is spent. … Some of this time should be spent in the educational endeavors of the students.

- Choice school #3 principal

  1. Time spent: The real question is, What work does not get done because your secretary is dealing with open enrollment? The answer to that question is: budget tracking, ordering, phone answering. The principal spends about 2 hours per week on open enrollment average over the year.

  2. Activities: Tracking data, giving tours, answering questions on the phone and processing decisions regarding OE with governance groups and staff.

  3. Pro: These activities provide families in the district with choice. They provide our school with an opportunity to clarify and communicate about what makes our school special.

  4. Con: Schools are more alike than different and parents feel tremendous pressure to make the *right* choice for their child. I spend a lot of time allaying fears and answering questions that don't really relate to our school or to why our school might be better than another one.

- Choice school #4 principal

  1. Time spent: I have an assistant principal assigned to enrollment activities.

  2. Activities: One day per week all year is devoted by the assistant principal to giving tours and answering questions from prospective families.

  3. Pro: Open enrollment gives families in the district a choice.

  4. Con: Many families who come for tours are insensitive to the time demands this places on us and expect private tours with lengthy private conversations afterwards.

- Choice school #5 principal

    1. Time spent: Four or five hours a week in January and February. An hour a week the rest of the time.

    2. Activities: Paper work, phone call, parent information night, shadow days

    3. Pro: I enjoy talking to parents.

    4. Con: [none]

- Choice school #6 principal

    1. Time spent: [not estimated]

    2. Activities: Observation days, drop-ins, prospective parent visitation days, open house.

    3. Pro: Parents can learn about our program model. We can hopefully correct some myths.

    4. Con: Time is a huge factor for administrators and teachers. Visitors often approach teachers during their planning or lunchtime versus during scheduled observation periods.

- Choice school # 7 principal

    1. Time spent: I spent quite a bit of time; most of this is at meetings. I probably spend about 2 hours planning and getting materials ready. I spend about 40 hours meeting with parents over the course of the year. Then I spent about 12-15 hours in meetings.

    2. Activities: [addressed in 1]

    3. Pro: What a wonderful way to communicate and have meaningful dialogue about what happens at our school. It helps us reflect on our programs and the questions help us think about possible changes.   We rely upon open enrollment because we have a district program and I do not resent the meetings at all. In fact, they have been reaffirming!

    4. Con: I don't like having to compete with my colleagues. I think it creates some divisions among us.

- Neighborhood school #1 principal

  1. Time spent: I have spent hours designing and publishing brochures and ads, trying to compete . . . I've walked the neighborhood, passing out flyers on O.E. We've had open houses. I can't say that any of those activities really were effective. We have the reputation as being an ESL and Special Ed school, with lots of kids of color, special needs, and lower economic backgrounds. Those characteristics don't appeal to everyone.

  2. Activities: [addressed in 1]

  3. Pro: It makes you think about what your strengths are.

  4. Con: [B]asically, it's every man for himself. When competition determines who survives, schools quit worrying about the district as a team or system.

  Because choice does not increase student enrollment, only shifts it around, if additional schools open, sufficient numbers cannot exist at the rest unless they were over-crowded, which no school in Boulder was. As the population shifts, parents have migrated toward schools or programs that look or believe like themselves. This shifting and sorting has made the student populations become more and more homogenous. We used to call that segregation, but now it's palatable because it's just an unintended by-product of choice, and who can be against choice?

- Neighborhood school #2 principal

  1. Time spent: At peak times like the present, I spend as much as an hour a day on the topic. Off peak, maybe half an hour per week.

  2. Activities: Calling parents who have questions, talking with staff members who have questions, communicating with district employees on the topic, making decisions about OE issues for this school, reviewing exceptions to the District OE rules, and attending district meetings.

  3. Pro: I believe in giving people choices if possible. It feels good if your school has a huge OE in list. It is rewarding to attempt to help people find the best school placement for their educational needs.

  4. Con: It feels bad if no one OE's to your building. You feel bad if you cannot satisfy all student and parent requests for OE in. I don't like the competitive atmosphere OE encourages/causes. OE smacks of exclusivity rather than inclusively. OE creates an opportunity for closet racial and other types of segregation.

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People have gotten aggressive, very aggressive, about OE in/out issues. District-level personnel are generally unclear about their roles in OE discussions. The District provides OE opportunities but then attempts to encourage/discourage OE's based on problems political in nature. OE opportunities generate unfortunate divisiveness between and among BVSD schools.

- Choice school #8 principal

  1. Time spent: About 1 -2 hours per week.

  2. Activities: Information meetings, giving tours and meeting with visitors, phone calls and e-mails, paperwork.

  3. Pro: I love to share the good things our school is doing.

  4. Con: I could constantly be talking to people if I didn't limit my time.

- Choice school #9 principal

  1. Time spent: In January and the first half of February, I spend around a half day a week; the rest of the year, almost nothing.

  2. Activities: Parent informational nights, parent visits, OE paperwork, creating database, mailing letters, etc.

  3. Pro: It is good getting to talk about the school and all the great things we do.

  4. Con: The time taken away from being in classrooms.

- Choice school #10 principal

  1. Time spent: I personally spend the equivalent of about 10-15% of my time annually on open enrollment issues. From about the end of October through the first of March it is more like 33% of my time.

  2. Activities: Program planning/revising, school visits, open houses, reconciling all the student applications/lists/files, planning and marketing the school, assisting/coordinating office personnel on related stuff, etc., but mostly, it takes up hours of time talking individually with parents about the school, their kids' needs, answering their questions, etc.

  3. Pro: We meet a lot of nice parents and kids who are genuinely interested in their choice of schools. It has kept the doors of our school open by attracting lots of additional students.

4. Con: With all the other things that school administrators have to do in trying to be instructional leaders, etc., every minute counts. I am actually somewhat cynical about open enrollment because it does take so much time and energy away from everything else we have to do-- so much so that I don't want to do it anymore. It is just too much and after a while it is easy to get burned out. It is also creating another huge layer of issues that most of the school board and ed. center staff haven't even anticipated or figured out yet. It is also frustrating to parents and they get angry at us when we have to implement the open enrollment policies and procedures that they don't like. In some cases, parents have lied, cheated, or …to try to get their child in a school after the January deadlines.

DISTRICT FUNDING

"Standardized costs per pupil" is a method of analysis employed by BVSD to compare the human resources allocated to individual schools in a way that controls for the actual salaries of personnel, which are determined by things such as years of experience and college credits completed. This method determines the average costs of various personnel—principals, teachers, librarians, specialists, counselors, media technicians, etc—and then calculates per pupil costs on the basis of FTE in the various categories, excluding Special Education, Title I, and other special programs. (Charter schools, to be discussed below, are excluded from the standardized costs per pupil comparison because they manage their own budgets.)

Table 3.1 contains the projected standardized per pupil costs, the actual standardized per pupil costs, and projected and actual enrollments, based on the 1999-2000 standardized per pupil cost study (BVSD Business Services, December, 1999). Free and reduced lunch percentages for 1999-2000 are also included.

The primary factor in standardized per pupil costs is school size. In general, the smaller a school, the higher its standardized per pupil costs, and vice versa. The average (actual) standardized per pupil costs for 1999-2000 are $3,507 for elementary, $3,337 for middle, and $3,295 for high schools. The smallest schools most exceed these averages across all three levels: Gold Hill ($5,330) and Jamestown ($4,642), at the elementary level, and Nederland Middle/High ($5,382), at the secondary level. Next in costs are schools next in size: Arapahoe ($3,847) and New Vista ($3,497) at the high school level; Burbank ($3,694) and Casey ($3,934) at the middle school level; and Mapleton ($4,000), Community Montesorri ($4,042), Whittier ($4,142), and Majestic Heights/BCSIS ($4,303) at the elementary level.

The accuracy of projected enrollment is a secondary factor. In general, over projecting actual enrollments contribute to increased standardized per pupil costs, and under projecting actual enrollments contributes to decreased standardized per pupil costs.

Choice schools are over-represented among high cost schools on the basis of the above comparison. Indeed, all of the schools listed above except the three mountain schools

Table 3.1. BVSD Standardized Costs Per Pupil, Enrollments,
and Free/Reduced Lunch Percentages, 1999-2000

Level	School Type	School	Enrollment		Standardized Costs/Pupil in $		Free/ Red Lunch
			proj'd	actual	proj'd	actual	
Middle	Charter	Sojourner	na	na	na	na	na
		Summit	na	na	na	na	4%
	Focus	Baseline	462	474	3,474	3,386	16%
		Platt	620	625	3,293	3,266	5%
	Bilingual	Casey	355	337	3,729	3,934	52%
	Strand	Burbank	355	349	3,632	3,694	8%
	Neighbor-hood	Angevine	757	755	3,265	3,274	31%
		Broom Hts	975	965	3,147	3,179	11%
		Centennial	655	675	3,251	3,157	4%
		Louisville	650	677	3,344	3,213	4%
		So Hills	438	420	3,489	3,639	5%
High	Focus	A Ridge	179	164	3,525	3,847	38%
		New Vista	344	340	3,451	3,497	0%
	Neighbor-hood	Boulder	1,839	1,763	2,915	3,041	6%
		Broomfield	1,334	1,299	3,000	3,082	5%
		Centaurus	1,314	1,256	3,022	3,162	11%
		Fairview	1,968	1,891	2,839	2,956	4%
		Monarch	1,042	1,045	3,231	3,224	2%
		Ned Jr/Sr	384	352	4,934	5,382	12%

(which are a special case) and Whittier (which is small and had a relatively large over projection of enrollment) are focus or strand schools. This raises a prima facie question of equity, but it is not straightforward. Given the importance of size in determining costs, the question of whether higher standardized per pupil costs for choice schools is inequitable cannot be disentangled from the question of whether higher standardized per pupil costs for smaller schools is inequitable. And this is a general question that is independent of open enrollment issues.

However, in light of the fact that stratification in BVSD schools associated with open enrollment patterns has increased over the last six years, the advent and protection of small, relatively expensive choice schools that serve predominantly white, middle class students is clearly linked to the equity issues surrounding the open enrollment system. The higher costs associated with these schools make less money available for other, needier schools. This is prima facie inequitable.

This inequity is compounded by the fact that BVSD makes no special provisions for low-income students in distributing its general fund dollars, even as stratification has increased and despite the fact it receives an additional allocation for low-income students in accordance with the Colorado State Finance Act. Based on the 1998-1999 BVSD financial statement, 2,600 students qualified for free lunch (the criterion is less that 125% of the poverty level) for which BVSD received 1.4 million dollars in funding. This

Level	School Type	School	Enrollment		Standardized Costs/Pupil in $		Free/ Red Lunch
			proj'd	actual	proj'd	actual	
Elementary	Charter	Horizons K8	na	na	na	na	na
	Focus	BCSIS	(see Majestic Heights)				10%
		Bear Creek	292	320	3,735	3,414	3%
		C M'ntessori	136	124	3,685	4,042	1%
		High Peaks	(see Martin Park)				4%
		Mapleton	133	146	4,391	4,000	18%
	Bilingual	Washington	254	267	3,701	3,521	56%
		Uni Hill	349	351	3,609	3,583	46%
	Strand	Lafayette	427	430	3,391	3,367	32%
		Louisville	559	532	3,196	3,359	8%
		Superior	641	619	3,245	3,363	2%
	Neigh-borhood	Aurora 7	353	312	3,388	3,828	39%
		Birch	419	415	3,218	3,251	11%
		Coal Creek	496	521	3,386	3,223	6%
		Columbine	320	313	3,629	3,710	62%
		Crest View	530	505	3,317	3,482	13%
		Douglas	429	410	3,156	3,299	2%
		Eisenhower	463	417	3,084	3,425	5%
		Emerald	562	517	3,330	3,620	23%
		Fireside	456	443	3,330	3,424	3%
		Flatirons	248	247	3,760	3,783	13%
		Foothill	457	440	3,175	3,298	3%
		Gold Hill	33	30	4,765	5,330	0%
		Heatherw'd	386	393	3,422	3,366	10%
		Jamestown	26	32	5,713	4,642	0%
		Kohl	638	611	3,261	3,406	4%
		Maj Heights	242	214	3,804	4,303	7%
		Martin Park	393	366	3,480	3,737	27%
		Mesa	290	322	3,900	3,512	4%
		Monarch K8	194	203	3,655	3,493	1%
		Nederland	313	327	3,665	3,514	17%
		Ryan	505	470	3,109	3,340	17%
		Whittier	237	211	3,688	4,142	42%
	Bilingual	Pioneer	295	314	3,621	3,402	46%
		Sanchez	244	259	3,995	3,771	67%

amounts to approximately $535.00 per low-income student. Were this funding simply passed through, it could have a significant impact on school budgets. For example, in 1999-2000, four elementary and two middle schools would have received in excess of $80,000 in additional funding: University Hill, Pioneer, Sanchez, Columbine, Angevine, and Casey. Three elementary schools would have received in excess of $50,000 in additional funding: Aurora 7, Washington, and Whittier.

Each of these schools (and several others) receive additional funding through Title I. But this is earmarked Federal funding that BVSD must allocate to schools with high percentages of low-income students, and it is stretched thin. Table 3.2 shows the 1999-2000 disparity between the free and reduced lunch percentages in schools receiving Title I funding and the percentage of students in these schools covered by Title I. For the most

part, fewer than a third of low-income students are supported with Title I funds.

Table 3.2. Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch Compared
to Percentage of Students Covered by Title I
1999-2000

School Level	School	Free/Reduced Lunch Percentage	Percentage of Students Covered by Title I
Elementary	Aurora 7	39%	11%
	Columbine	62%	18%
	Emerald	23%	11%
	Lafayette	32%	11%
	Nederland	16%	12%
	Pioneer	46%	school wide
	Ryan	17%	5%
	Sanchez	67%	school wide
	University Hill	46%	20%
	Washington	56%	school wide
	Whittier	44%	29%
Middle	Angevine	31%	10%
	Casey	52%	14%

***Funds are not tied to individual students, but distributed through
the school.**

As stated above, charter schools do not fall under the normal budgeting processes of
BVSD, and the standardized per pupil cost method is not employed. Rather, charter
schools begin with a budget of 100% of per pupil revenue multiplied by their enrollment.
This amount is then reduced by charges from the District for services such as accounting,
insurance, personnel etc., and is adjusted for special education. Charter schools thus
receive an equal per pupil share of the portion of the general fund that is determined by
the number of low-income students in BVSD, independent of the number of low-income
students that they enroll themselves. Because charter schools, for the most part, are small
and enroll relatively few low-income students, the prima facie funding inequities
described above also apply to the manner in which charter school budgets are determined.

FUNDRAISING

BVSD schools generate funds additional to those provided by the district in a number of
ways, ranging from selling grocery store coupons, wrapping paper, and candy, to
soliciting parents to donate stocks. All but charters have quite limited discretion in how
they use these funds. For example, individual schools typically do not determine overall
class size or the number of teachers and support personnel they may have, and they are
restricted by district policy from using school-specific funding for these purposes.

Despite the relatively limited discretion for most BVSD schools in how they may use the
funds they generate, the uses to which school specific funds are put are by no means

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peripheral to schools' educational missions and their capacity to carry them out effectively. Among these uses are: library and classroom books, curriculum materials, computers, art supplies, physical education equipment, adjunct faculty, guest speakers, fieldtrips, building improvements, staff development for teachers, stipends for teachers to attend out-of-state professional meetings, and retaining teachers by increasing their salaries (charters only). In the case of charter schools, which have wide discretion in how they use available funds, the BVSD per pupil funding they receive is much like a voucher which they are free to supplement with the additional funds they raise.

Given the importance of the kinds of uses to which fundraising dollars are put, it is not surprising that the perceived difference in fundraising ability among BVSD schools prompts charges of inequity. And the inequity that is perceived to exist *between* schools is sometimes also perceived to exist *within* them, in certain shared site arrangements. Charter and focus schools have separate governance structures and significant autonomy with respect to fundraising even where they share sites with BVSD curriculum schools. In such shared site arrangements (e.g., High Peaks/Martin Park and Summit/Southern Hills, both now defunct arrangements) perceived inequities are relatively more tangible and more provocative. A similar state of affairs exists with certain schools that combine the BVSD curriculum with strands. Although strand curricula groups are supposed to share governance structures with the BVSD curriculum groups within schools, and do, fundraising and the uses to which it is put are sometimes separated.

It seems a reasonable general hypothesis that as a school's percentage of low income students increases, its ability to raise funds through fundraisers, fees, and gifts decreases, and vice versa. Conjoining BVSD's budgeting process with the assumption that the educational needs of low-income students require more resources to meet, this creates a double disadvantage for schools with high percentages of low-income students and a double advantage for those with low percentages.

Unlike in Section II, where we had good data to independently test perceptions about skimming and stratification, our data on fundraising--from BVSD records, school surveys and focus groups, and the principal follow-up survey--are imprecise and conflicting. Problems in obtaining good data were compounded by the fact that several schools in the District have established non-profit organizations under names different from the schools with which they are associated, and their tax returns are not readily available. Still, it is incumbent upon us to provide some analysis of fundraising because of its implications for equity, even at the risk of reporting some fundraising amounts that we have reason to believe are inaccurate (typically on the low side).

In determining the amounts of fundraising, we excluded all second-hand accounts (e.g., what was said by individuals in the focus groups or on the written surveys about amounts raised by schools other than their own, even if these individuals were in a good position to know, as in shared site arrangements). We took the largest amount from among those (1) reported in the BVSD 1998-1999 Annual Financial Report pertaining to student activity funds, (2) reported in the 1998-1999 school reports of gifts submitted to the District, or (3) reported by principals (or their designees) on the schools surveys or

follow-up principal surveys.   The amounts are reported in Table 3.3, along with
enrollments, the derived per pupil fundraising amounts, and the 1998-1999 free/reduced
lunch percentages.

Table 3.3. Individual School Fundraising, 1998-1999

Level	School Type	School	Enroll ment	School Fundraising		Free/ Red Lunch
				Total	Per Pupil	
Elementary	Charter	Horizons K8	301	$51,300*	$170	na
	Focus	BCSIS	112	$20,689**	$185	na
		Bear Creek	347	$26,322**	$76	4%
		C M'ntessori	126	$35,000***	$278	na
		High Peaks	233	$1,700*	$7	na
		Mapleton	160	$40,000***	$250	7%
	Bilingual	Washington	277	$20,790***	$75	56%
		Uni Hill	386	$23,087**	$60	48%
	Strand	Lafayette	510	$33,659*	$66	25%
		Louisville	604	$24,962*	$41	9%
		Superior	686	$53,845*	$78	na
	Neigh-borhood	Aurora 7	304	$8,427*	$28	44%
		Birch	453	$17,433*	$38	10%
		Coal Creek	547	$25,173**	$46	6%
		Columbine	383	$5,155*	$13	54%
		Crest View	554	$8,476**	$15	11%
		Douglas	451	$46,943*	$104	2%
		Eisenhower	495	$2,826*	$6	6%
		Emerald	609	$29,216*	$48	25%
		Fireside	544	$26,932*	$50	4%
		Flatirons	258	$38,208**	$148	9%
		Foothill	498	$35,000***	$70	3%
		Gold Hill	28	none reported	---	na
		Heatherw'd	449	$32,617*	$73	10%
		Jamestown	23	$300*	$13	na
		Kohl	713	$30,997*	$43	6%
		Maj Heights	152	$15,000***	$99	14%
		Martin Park	177	$3,939*	$22	14%
		Mesa	324	$80,966*	$250	5%
		Monarch K8	828	$182,327*	$220	1%
		Nederland	360	$20,080*	$56	15%
		Ryan	539	$15,695*	$29	19%
		Whittier	255	$7,000***	$27	43%
	Bilingual	Pioneer	296	$6,397*	$22	63%
		Sanchez	333	$1,801*	$5	49%

*   Source: 1998-1999 BVSD Financial Report
**   Source : School report to BVSD
*** Source: Principal response to School Survey or Principal Follow-up Survey

Table 3.3 (cont'd). Individual School Fundraising, 1998-1999

Level	School Type	School	Enroll ment	School Fundraising		Free/ Red Lunch
				Total	Per Pupil	
Middle	Charter	Sojourner	na	na	na	na
		Summit	254	$40,000***	$157	na
	Focus	Baseline	441	$136,971*	$213	15%
		Platt	644	$156,349*	$243	3%
	Bilingual	Casey	377	$69,152*	$183	46%
	Strand	Burbank	355	$86,759*	$244	9%
	Neighbor-hood	Angevine	710	$99,208*	$140	32%
		Broom Hts	967	$211,430*	$219	12%
		Centennial	652	$197,557*	$303	5%
		Louisville	692	$203,154*	$294	5%
		So Hills	400	$81,665*	$204	5%
High	Focus	A Ridge	179	$12,700*	$71	na
		New Vista	326	$140,925*	$432	na
	Neighbor-hood	Boulder	1,813	$766,668*	$423	7%
		Broomfield	1,335	$573,251*	$429	4%
		Centaurus	1,412	$565,394*	$400	10%
		Fairview	1,918	$1,024,930*	$534	4%
		Monarch	620	$236,282*	$381	1%
		Ned Jr/Sr	400	$140,760*	$352	16%

*   Source: 1998-1999 BVSD Financial Report
** Source: School report to BVSD
*** Source: Principal response to School Survey or Principal Follow-up Survey

At the elementary level, a low free and reduced lunch percentage does not guarantee a high per pupil fundraising amount. Coal Creek and Kohl provide examples of schools with relatively low free and reduced lunch percentages and relatively low per pupil fundraising amounts. Nonetheless, there is a relationship between low free and reduced lunch and high per pupil fundraising amount, albeit one-directional. Community Montessori, Mesa, Mapleton (tied with Mesa), Monarch K-8, BCSIS, and Horizons K-8 have the highest per pupil fundraising amounts among elementary schools, in that order, and, save BCSIS, they each have relatively low free and reduced lunch percentages. Mesa, Monarch K-8, and Mapleton account for 3 of the 4 highest per pupil fundraising amounts, and all have free and reduced lunch percentages below the District percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (approximately 10%, and higher for elementary schools due to under-reporting at the middle, and especially, high school levels).   Although no data were available in 1998-1999 for Community Montesorri, which has the highest per pupil fundraising amount, its 1999-2000 free and reduced lunch percentage was 1%. Horizons K-8 does not report percentage of free and reduced lunch on the grounds it does not offer school lunches. But it very likely has a low percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch based on its low percentage of minority enrollment (8%, less than half of the District percentage), since minority percentage is highly correlated with free and reduced lunch percentage. As indicated above, only

BCSIS among the top fundraisers at the elementary level approaches the District percentage of free and reduced lunch.

The relationship is less ambiguous beginning at the low end of per pupil fundraising amounts. That is, high free and reduced lunch percentages pretty much guarantee low per pupil fundraising amounts. Nine elementary schools have or exceed 25% free and reduced lunch (roughly double the District percentage): Aurora 7, Columbine, Emerald, Lafayette, Pioneer, Sanchez, University Hill, Whittier, and Washington. Columbine and Sanchez are at the bottom of the per pupil fundraising amounts, and several others from among these 9 are exceedingly low. Washington has the highest level from among this group, but this level equals less than 1/3 of the per pupil fundraising amounts available to those elementary schools most successful at fundraising.

At the middle and high school levels we appealed to data from the 1998-1999 BVSD Financial Report in all but one case (Summit). It should be noted that the Report includes funding associated with athletics, student organizations, and the like, which increases significantly at higher grade levels and that is not as directly tied to the core educational mission as books, computers, etc. (the primary uses at the elementary level).

We forego any remarks about high schools because of the untrustworthiness of the free and reduced lunch percentages (described in Methods and Findings Section II.) At the middle school level, it is noteworthy that (excluding Summit, for which data were not reported in the 1998-1999 BVSD Financial Report) the two schools with the highest free and reduced lunch percentages, Angevine and Casey, have the lowest per pupil fundraising amounts. This is suggestive of the same pattern found at the elementary level.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the District level, administering open enrollment has increased the duties of personnel in various departments. This has typically been accomplished by simply adding on to pre-existing duties. In the case of the Business Department, the most heavily affected unit, an additional staff person was hired to help manage the intensified activity.

Open enrollment duties have also been added on to pre-existing duties at the individual school level. Based on a subset of the focus groups and on the principal follow-up survey, most principals contended that open enrollment consumes a significant amount of time and takes them away from their other duties. Several principals questioned whether marketing their schools is an appropriate role for them, several were uncomfortable with the competitive environment they believe exists, and several displayed cynicism and low morale. Finally, several principals also questioned having to use school time and resources for advertising, and, on this point especially, they were joined by several parents, teachers, and staff.

The BVSD budgeting process makes no provision for the percentages of low-income students in BVSD schools, including budgeting for charter schools. Auxiliary funds are

provided to schools with the highest percentages of low-income students in the form of Title I, but these are inadequate to meet the needs. This budgeting process is prima facie inequitable in light of the facts that (1) stratification by income in BVSD schools is on the rise and (2) BVSD receives additional funds in the state formula proportional to its number of students qualifying for free lunch (approximately 10% per pupil).

Based on numerous comments of participants in surveys and focus groups, in addition to the information contained in Table 3.3, there is good reason to believe that significant inequity exists among BVSD schools in the amounts of additional funding they can garner and that this is tied to the income levels of parents. Given the uses to which such funding is put--library and classroom books, curriculum materials, computers, art supplies, adjunct faculty, guest speakers, among others--this creates substantial advantages for some schools and substantial disadvantages for others. But the available data on this matter are imprecise and inconsistent. Thus, getting from the general claim to its specific instances requires remedying this problem. We urge the District to undertake a more thorough investigation of fundraising and to establish a more effective system of monitoring in the future. (See Recommendation 8, following the Executive Summary.)

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we have largely ignored the political context in which the open enrollment policy evolved, focusing instead on its current features and outcomes. We will continue to do so here, except to observe that the major expansion of open enrollment in the mid to late 1990s was accompanied by turbulence and instability in BVSD, to which the significant turnover in both the School Board and the Superintendent's office attest. This, no doubt, contributed to how the open enrollment system has developed, and should be borne in mind in reading the critical discussion to follow.

We frame our concluding remarks in terms of the three general categories of controversy about public school choice policy sketched in the Introduction, namely, competition, meeting student needs, and equity. Under each category we synthesize the perceptions of BVSD parents and educators of the open enrollment system and what our other findings say—or can't say—about them. In some cases, we discuss issues not prominent in actual claims and counter-claims of BVSD parents and educators, but that are no less relevant. Our general aim is to determine what claims have the most warrant and, consequently, to help move the appraisal of BVSD's open enrollment system forward on the basis of solid evidence. This is not to suggest that the perceptions of BVSD parents and educators are not important in and of themselves or that seemingly contradictory perceptions cannot sometimes both be right. For example, open enrollment may very well have spurred improvements at certain schools, as some claim, and had only deleterious effects at different schools, as others claim. There is no contradiction here.

Competition

Many BVSD parents and educators see competition as the driving force in obtaining District resources and support, for good or ill. To our knowledge, BVSD has never declared that competition will be the mechanism by which it decides the levels of support to be provided to its schools, but it seems to have adopted this mechanism by default. The resources provided to BVSD schools (and, in the extreme, whether they will continue to exist) are tied almost exclusively to enrollment, for which all schools must compete. And here they are left to their own devices.

Test scores loom large in how schools fair in the competition. (Again, BVSD has not declared this is the way it should be. On the other hand, perhaps for understandable reasons, it has taken few, if any, active steps to discourage the emphasis on test scores.) Test scores are strongly associated with the open enrollment demand for BVSD schools, especially among middle-income whites. As these parents move to high scoring schools, already mostly white middle income, they take their various resources with them and further stratify BVSD schools with respect to race/ethnicity and income, in addition to test scores. The schools they depart are left with fewer resources and with a more diverse student population. This diversity complicates their educational missions, both administratively and in the classroom. The result is a "spiral of decline" (Lauder & Hughs, 1999) for schools losing enrollment: They have relatively low test scores; they lose parental resources; and, due to decreased enrollment, they begin to experience cuts

in resources from the District. Their test scores drop further; they lose more parental resources, and so on. All along they are scrambling to find new programs to attract students, further complicating and intensifying their work. Several BVSD schools have fallen into this spiral or are threatened. Elementary bilingual schools are an exception. They have kept their enrollments up despite possessing features that threaten them, such as low test scores, increasingly high percentages of minority and low income students, and the "bad reputations" that go with these. The strong desire for bilingual education on the part of Latinos best accounts for this.

Proponents of competition contend that it works to boost achievement overall, even if some schools may decline. This must be classified as conjecture in the case of BVSD. The fact that some BVSD choice schools, particularly those emphasizing academics, have high--remarkably high--test scores does not establish the claim that competition has stimulated increased achievement in BVSD schools overall. Confirming that claim requires longitudinal data spanning the mid 1990's, when open enrollment burgeoned, and such data are not available. What scant evidence there is provides little reason to believe that an overall improvement in achievement has been an outcome of open enrollment. For example, there are now 3 years of data for the 3rd grade CSAPs and four years for the 4th grade reading and writing CSAPs. BVSD has shown steady improvement, but this is the typical pattern when a new test is introduced (e.g., Linn, 2000). In this vein, BVSD's improvement is comparable to improvement in Colorado generally, where school choice is considerably more limited. Three years of data are also available for the SAT, from 6 BVSD high schools. Arguably, the SAT is a very good measure of the performance of students in BVSD overall because it is administered near the end of their K-12 education. Overall, SAT scores have been flat or declining over the past three years.

The evidence from this study indicates that open enrollment is a zero-sum game with respect to achievement--a situation in which some schools do better only at the expense of others doing worse. There is suggestive evidence at the high school level and strong evidence at the middle school level that certain schools are disproportionately gaining high scoring students and others are disproportionately losing them, and that this explains subsequent test performance. So, rather than boosting the achievement levels of BVSD students overall, open enrollment is merely redistributing them. The result is that while certain schools spiral down, certain others, those schools gaining high scoring students, thrive. And it is these latter schools who win awards for excellence and receive coverage in the press for their exceptional curricula and teaching.

Focus and charter schools embrace competition, for the most part. This is consistent with the fact these schools were born competing for students and with a commitment largely limited to their school. Moreover, competing for students has served them well. But a significant portion of BVSD's other schools--schools that have had to take on competing for enrollment as a new activity--perceive the competition for students as having mainly negative affects on them, as well as the BVSD community overall. These BVSD parents and educators see themselves as being required to divert time and resources away from curriculum and instruction toward keeping their enrollments up.   Because open

enrollment is so demanding, at the same time that these parents and educators have less time and resources for curriculum and instruction, their total effort has increased. The competition for students has also engendered a breakdown of collegiality in their eyes, as individual schools are forced to look after their own interests and to place them above the District's as a whole.

These concerns about competition are more fundamental than the complaint voiced by many neighborhood schools that the terms of competition are unfair. (This complaint is based on the fact that they are restricted to recruiting within their feeder systems whereas choice schools recruit from across the district.) For challenging competition on the ground that it inappropriately diverts time and resources away from the educational mission of schools and that it destroys collegiality challenges competition itself as the means by which to determine the level of support BVSD schools receive. This is an issue to which we return in our subsequent remarks about equity.

Meeting Student Needs

BVSD parents are by-and-large satisfied with the schools to which they send their children, and those who send their children to focus or charter schools are the most satisfied. This applies across BVSD's array of choice schools: to predominantly white schools emphasizing academics, such as High Peaks and Summit; to largely Latino schools, emphasizing diversity and bilingualism, such as Uni Hill and Washington; and to various kinds of alternative schools, such as New Vista and Arapahoe Ridge. Increased parental satisfaction is one of the claims made on behalf of public school choice, and this is an apparent benefit of BVSD's open enrollment system.

But this claim faces the same difficulty as the parallel claim about achievement. Insofar as parental satisfaction is important in judging the effects of open enrollment on BVSD schools, overall satisfaction is what should be at issue. If some parents are more satisfied only at the expense of others being less so, then open enrollment is a zero-sum game. Tackling this question, again, requires longitudinal data that spans the period when open enrollment burgeoned, and, again, such data is unavailable. Thus, the claim that open enrollment has resulted in an overall increase in parental satisfaction is also conjecture, though perhaps less so than in the case of achievement. The approximately 20% of students who are open enrolling seem to be having their needs met well. Perhaps it can be presumed that the approximately 80% attending schools within their attendance district, or at least a large proportion of them, are having their needs met too, as evidenced by the fact that they are not open enrolling out.

Significantly obscured by questions about how well needs are being met (as measured by parental satisfaction) is the prior question of how to think about and identify student needs in the first place. Traditionally, the focus has been on "special needs" that require additional resources, efforts, and methods to meet, as, for example, in special education, English Language Learner, and "at risk" populations in general. And many initiatives and school reform policies, including Colorado's charter school law, have emphasized improving schools for at risk populations. In BVSD (and elsewhere, to be sure) the idea

of student needs has been stretched to include the need for a rigorous academic/college preparatory education.

If a rigorous academic/college preparatory education is a need, it is certainly of a different order than the needs described above. There is nothing special about it that warrants schools especially devoted to it. Although there are differences among groups of BVSD parents and educators on the question of how single-mindedly they can and should pursue the goal of increased academic achievement, each group places academic achievement at or near the top on the list of things that schools ought to accomplish. Culling academic achievement out as a special need that may be used to define the mission of certain BVSD schools has resulted in tracking writ large—tracking *between* schools rather than *within* them—and the racial/ethnic and income stratification that goes with this.

The idea that schools should promote social/citizenship skills was also high on every group's list, along with high academic achievement. Unless learning to appreciate and interact with a diversity of people is excluded from what goes into social/citizenship skills, and it is difficult to see how they could be, students who are separated off into homogeneous, predominantly white schools will not acquire these skills. From this perspective, their education is impoverished. Moreover, the broader aims of public education embraced by a considerable number of BVSD parents and educators are left wanting.

Equity

One of the complaints frequently lodged against the open enrollment system is that it is inequitable because it sets up unfair competition among BVSD schools. This claim has considerable warrant when advanced by neighborhood schools, and the solution is to level the playing field, for example, by permitting neighborhood schools to compete under the same set of rules as focus and charter schools. Although leveling the playing field in this way would be an improvement, it implicitly concedes that competition is the principle that ought to determine which schools thrive and which are adjudged "good." (Currently test scores are the major determinant of both.) As suggested above, more fundamental concerns about the principle of competition exist, concerns grounded in equity.

Letting things shake out through competition does not insure equity. For it does nothing to address the problem of the inequity experienced by students and educators languishing in schools caught in or threatened by the spiral of decline. Addressing this problem requires invoking another principle: insuring that all students receive a good education, on equitable terms. This is the principle for providing support to public schools that preceded competition. Competition may operate in conjunction with this principle, but must take a backseat.

Letting things shake out through competition does not insure equity even for those schools that manage to keep their enrollments up. Consider BVSD's bilingual schools.

That Latinos are getting their choice of bilingual schools and that these schools are maintaining their enrollments does not mean they are getting the same kind of benefit that whites who are enrolling their children in homogeneous, high achieving schools are. Unlike the complex set of challenges facing bilingual schools, these high achieving schools can be single-minded in their pursuit of achievement because they have a homogenous set of students who predictably do well. Despite the relatively easier task they have to perform in comparison to bilingual schools, these schools get the same per pupil funding from the District. They typically also have more additional resources at their disposal through fundraising. And the uses to which fundraising is put--books, computers, staff development, and, in some cases, teacher salaries--are anything but marginal to the quality of education that schools can provide.

In addition to the fact that there is inequality in the costs and benefits associated with the school choices made by BVSD parents, there is inequality in their opportunities to choose at all. Lack of transportation, time, and information eliminate or diminish the opportunities of many parents to participate. This is an inequity about which there is little disagreement across groups.

Final Observations

We have not hesitated to draw critical conclusions about BVSD's open enrollment system when they were warranted by our findings. But we have confined our conclusions to the *system* and its outcomes, and have drawn no conclusions about individuals or groups of individuals. In our view, criticizing the motives and behaviors of individuals would be bad strategy, more likely to inflame people than to lead to constructive change. It would also be unwarranted.

As we said at the beginning of these concluding remarks, the BVSD administration and Board have been beseeched with demands and counter-demands over the last five years, amidst significant turnover. For their part, BVSD parents participating in open enrollment have what they perceive to be the best interests of their children in mind, across the array of groups participating. That no one or no group should be assigned responsibility, however, does not erase the fact that the current open enrollment system is riddled with inequities and has resulted in a disturbingly high degree of stratification among BVSD schools with respect to race/ethnicity and income. Accordingly, the set of rules that has brought BVSD to this place needs to be revisited and revised.

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ENDNOTES

[i] Figures 2.3 and 2.6: 1994 (n=29 schools), 1995 (n=30 schools), 1996 (n=33 schools), 1997 (n=34 schools), 1998 (n=34 schools), 1999 (n=35 schools)

[ii] Figures 2.4 and 2.7: 1994 (n=10 schools), 1995 (n=11 schools), 1996 (n=12 schools), 1997 (n=13 schools), 1998 (n=13 schools), 1999 (n=13 schools)

[iii] Figures 2.5 and 2.8: 1994 (n=6 schools), 1995 (n=6 schools), 1996 (n=6 schools), 1997 (n=7 schools), 1998 (n=8 schools), 1999 (n=8 schools)

[iv] Figure 2.9: 1994 (n=26 schools), 1995 (n=27 schools), 1996 (n=30 schools), 1997 (n=31 schools), 1998 (n=31 schools), 1999 (n=32 schools)

[v] Figures 2.12 and 2.14: 1994 (n=27 schools), 1995 (n=27 schools), 1996 (n=28 schools), 1997 (n=31 schools), 1998 (n=28 schools), 1999 (n=33 schools)

Figures 2.13 and 2.15: 1994 (n=10 schools), 1995 (n=10 schools), 1996 (n=11 schools), 1997 (n=12 schools), 1998 (n=11 schools), 1999 (n=13 schools)