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**An analysis of the impact of school choice and perceptions of
school officials in Nebraska K-12 districts**

Cunning, Michael Joy, Ed.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1991

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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CHOICE
AND PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS
IN NEBRASKA K-12 DISTRICTS**

by

Michael J. Cuning

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
the Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of
Administration, Curriculum, and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor Ward Sybouts

Lincoln, Nebraska

December 1991

DISSERTATION TITLE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CHOICE AND PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL

OFFICIALS IN NEBRASKA K-12 DISTRICTS

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CHOICE
AND PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS IN NEBRASKA
K-12 DISTRICTS

Michael J. Cunning

University of Nebraska, 1991

Advisor: Ward Sybouts

This study was conducted to examine to what extent perceived and acclaimed advantages for choice were being realized in Nebraska during its first year of implementation.

During the study 252 Class II, III and VI school superintendents and board chairpersons were surveyed. One hundred approved choice applications were randomly sampled from the 567 approved applications on file with the Nebraska Department of Education. Reasons given for choosing another district were obtained from the applications.

A mailed questionnaire and follow-up telephone survey were used to determine the impact and perceptions of school superintendents and board chairpersons.

Information from the Nebraska Department of Education indicated 17 (37 percent) Class II, 106 (50 percent) Class III, and 12 (60 percent) Class VI schools participated in the choice plan for the 1990-91 school year. Data indicated 437 K-8 students and 130 9-12 students participated.

The need for expanded curricula was the reason given most often by students participating in choice. Data gathered indicated the majority of students chose schools with larger enrollments than their resident districts. School officials surveyed believed that choice caused a change in their schools' curriculum.

Responses from school officials indicated they felt the state should reimburse the state average per pupil cost for each choice student. However, school officials' responses indicated the dollar amount assigned for each choice student did not affect whether their school district participated in the choice plan. Responses from school officials indicated the main reason for not participating in the choice plan the first year was not knowing what could happen.

The majority of superintendents surveyed by telephone believed (1) schools will need to respond to parent's requests or the student will choose another district to attend, and (2) school choice will give students the opportunity to get the best education possible.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Problem

Public school choice, the idea of providing parents the opportunity of deciding the educational system that is appropriate for their children, is a topic of interest among parents of school-age children in the United States. In Nebraska, the topic of choice was brought to the forefront by the State Legislature in 1989, with the passage of LB183 along with the subsequent modification of LB183 by state Legislators in 1990 and 1991. Due to the choice legislation, parents have the right to decide what school district they want their children to attend. School board members and administrators across the state have discussed choice as they have formulated policies for their schools to bring them into compliance with LB183.

More than 20 states have adopted or are considering some version of parental choice of schools. Over half of the 50 states have at least some limited form of choice--in a county, city or a single school district (Sylvester, 1989).

Inevitably, a society based on individual freedom would have to contend with the pressure for broader choices in education. Choice may be seen as a key in giving students the opportunity to have more opportunities in education. Choice has fostered an atmosphere in which many parents are taking an active role in deciding which school is appropriate for their children (Klauke, 1989).

Participants and researchers have discovered that educational choice programs generally reduce dropout rates and increase academic achievement as well as

personal satisfaction. Choice programs provide options for struggling students and generate improvement on all levels in the schools, according to Nathan (1989).

Well-designed choice programs may help motivate students to improve.

Educators and education policy makers are taking a fresh approach to what makes a good school. Educational leaders are being challenged to make new efforts toward achieving high standards (Nathan, 1989). Choice is one of several options being advocated to foster educational reform.

Differences exist in the framework of schools because of funding, student composition, curriculum, graduation requirements, staffing, class size and extra-curricular activities. Developing and offering options among public schools bring together three powerful ideas: (1) expansion of opportunity for educators, families, and students; (2) the use of controlled competition to help stimulate improvements among schools and districts; and (3) recognition that there is no one best kind of school for all students or teachers (Nathan, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

There is a need to examine the impact of choice in Nebraska in an effort to determine to what extent the perceived and acclaimed advantages for choice are being realized in actual practice. The Nebraska Department of Education personnel have kept records of the applications, as well as the approval rate, submitted by parents requesting movement from the home district to another district and have recorded the reasons listed on applications for the school years of 1990-91 and 1991-92.

The challenges facing educators, parents and students in Nebraska as a result of the statute LB183, which allows students to choose which school they attend, gave rise to this study. This study was designed to examine selected aspects of the Nebraska choice plan (LB183) and how it affected Nebraska public schools in the areas of pupil enrollment, reasons for student transfers, curriculum, finances and possible changes in the future due to the choice plan.

The President of the United States, George Bush, has called for "a second great wave of education reform" where choice is "perhaps the single most promising" idea (Cavazos, 1989). As David Kearns, the Chairman of Xerox, stated, "To be successful, the new agenda for school reform must be driven by competition and market discipline. . . . The objective should be clear from the outset: complete restructuring. . . . The public schools must change if we are to survive" (Daniels, 1989).

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzes five aspects of the impact of choice legislation.

- (1) Enrollment of students was studied by addressing the number of transfers for the 1990-91 school year.
- (2) Reasons given for the transfers from the Nebraska Department of Education choice application forms.
- (3) Change brought about in curriculum and finance in school districts that participated in the choice plan.

(4) Perceptions of superintendents and board chairpersons about the advantages and disadvantages of public school choice as seen from school officials' perspectives.

(5) Practices employed by school district officials were explored to prepare for the future years of choice students.

Research Questions

The following eight questions were researched in this study.

1. How many schools of Class II, III and VI districts participated in the choice program in 1990-91?
2. How many students transferred during the first year?
3. What were the student's stated reasons for choosing to attend another school district?
4. How many students chose to attend schools with a smaller pupil enrollment and how many opted for schools with a larger enrollment?
5. (a) How many dollars should the state pay an option district for each choice student?
5. (b) Did the dollar amount assigned affect the school officials' decision to participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year?
6. What programs were added or deleted due to the choice program?
7. What did superintendents and school board chairpersons perceive to be the general impact of the choice statute upon the quality of student learning and staff effectiveness?

8. What did superintendents and school board chairpersons see as the advantages and disadvantages of the choice legislation?

Definition of Terms

When the following terms are used in this study, their meanings shall be defined as:

Students. Those individuals enrolled in a Nebraska public school in one of the following grades, K-12 (NDE, 1990)

Option Students. Students who have chosen to attend a school district other than their resident district (NDE, 1990).

Option School District. A school district students chose to attend other than their resident school district (NDE, 1990).

Resident School District. The school district in which students reside (NDE, 1990).

Class I District. Any school district that maintains only elementary grades under the direction of a single board (NDE, 1990).

Class II District. Any school district embracing territory having a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single board (NDE, 1990).

Class III District. Any school district embracing territory having a population of more than 1,000 and less than 100,000 inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single board of education (NDE, 1990).

Class IV District. Any school district embracing territory having a population of 100,000 or more and less than 200,000 inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single board of education (NDE, 1990).

Class V District. Any school district embracing territory having a population of 200,000 or more inhabitants that maintains both elementary grades and high school grades under the direction of a single school board of education (NDE, 1990).

Class VI District. Any school district in this state that maintains only a high school (NDE, 1990).

Assumptions

The conclusions formulated from this study are dependent upon the following assumptions:

- (1) The instrument used in the survey was sufficient to collect valid data from the respondents.
- (2) The procedures used to identify the schools selected for the study were valid and the schools selected were representative of the total population of Class II, III, and VI school districts in the state of Nebraska.
- (3) There was sufficient time since the passage of LB183 for patterns of transfers to be observable with quantitative data which were available.

Delimitations

- (1) The design for the study was survey research.

(2) Only two people from each school district (the district superintendent and the school board chairperson) were surveyed in this study. Participants perceptions may or may not reflect the views of other individuals within each district.

(3) The data collected from the Nebraska Department of Education were considered to be accurate and fair representation of the facts as they existed in the State of Nebraska.

(4) The information was gathered from only Class II, III, and VI school district applications filed with the Nebraska Department of Education.

Limitations

(1) The results of this study are directly applicable to the State of Nebraska but may not have implications for public schools in other states.

(2) Only Class II, III and VI school districts were surveyed, so results may not be generalizable for urban schools.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is twofold. First, educational choice had not been offered in the State of Nebraska until the beginning of the 1990-91 school year. Consequently its implication was unknown. Analysis of how the choice legislation impacted on the schools in the state in the first year of implementation could help educators, Nebraska Department of Educational personnel, and legislators in making revisions to maintain, improve or change the present legislation and policies.

Second, the results will be used to study the perceptions of school officials (superintendents and board of education chairpersons) on the advantages and disadvantages of the choice legislation. Once the data were gathered regarding perceptions of school officials, the information may be beneficial to the Nebraska Department of Education in revising rules for the enrollment options program.

The impact of school choice legislation in the State of Nebraska, as reflected by the number of students who transferred among various size school districts, the reasons given for choosing another school district and the data as to the grade level of transfers. The information may help educators across Nebraska and the nation in evaluating the reasons for choosing another school. Understanding the reasons could assist educators in improving educational programs.

The study will also be of value because it will be structured to widen the field of research on student choice in the State of Nebraska. The findings of the study will be presented to the legislature for review.

The Methods Section

The research design used in this study was survey research. The population base was drawn from names and addresses of superintendents and board chairpersons from 252 Class II, III, and VI public school districts were obtained from the Nebraska Association of School Boards. Surveys were mailed to the superintendent and school board chairpersons of all Class II, III and VI school districts. The advantage of this data collection procedure is that it is an easily

accessible data collection process, and it gives the researcher the ability to gather information from a geographically dispersed pool of respondents (Whitney, 1973).

Review of the Literature

The review of literature is divided into four parts. Part one examines the history of school choice. Part two reviews the advantages and disadvantages presented by authors in regard to the topic of choice. Part three reviews which states are participating in some type of choice program and the types of choice plans being used, such as the voucher system, parent participation, post-secondary options, and the alternative school setting. Part four discusses the Nebraska open enrollment plan which was adopted (LB183) in 1989, and amended by LB843 in 1990 and LB207 in 1991.

The Sample and Population

The survey population for this research study was the population of school superintendents and school board chairpersons from Class II, III and VI school districts in Nebraska with names and addresses of school officials furnished by the Nebraska Association of School Boards. All 252 Class II, III and VI school district superintendents and school board chairpersons were surveyed.

Instrumentation

Two survey instruments were used in this study: (1) a mailed questionnaire developed by the researcher and (2) a telephone interview schedule consisting of questions dealing with categorical or dichotomous responses, with ample space for recording individual comments. Questions of a Likert scale format were asked in

the mailed survey. Open ended questions were asked, and respondents were allowed to explain fully their schools' position.

The mailed survey used in this study had four parts. The first was a section of demographic questions to elicit findings about the respondents' position with the district, school size, and school geographic location in respect to the size of the closest contiguous school districts.

The second section included items pertaining to whether or not the district participated as a resident or option district for the 1990-91 school year. If any school district did not participate for the 1990-91 school year, the reasons the school district did not participate were solicited. Information was gained from the Nebraska Department of Education as to the number of students that chose a school district other than their resident district (Class I through Class VI).

The third section of the questionnaire was designed to review the revenue gain or loss and enrollment increase or decrease, as well as information about programs that were added or deleted due to the choice legislation. The questionnaire also addressed effects that choice legislation had or will have on each individual school district, and how school officials perceived the change choice made in their school system.

The final section of the questionnaire addressed perceptions and opinions regarding dropout rates, student satisfaction, academic achievement, athletic recruitment, consolidation, classes added or deleted, program offerings, finances,

advantages, disadvantages, and what the respective respondent considered to be the most significant impact of school choice.

Data Collection

A random sample of 100 of the 567 approved choice applications for the 1990-91 school year was analyzed. Data taken from the 100 applications at the Nebraska Department of Education included the reasons listed by parents for the child opting into another district.

Questionnaires were mailed to all superintendent and board chairpersons of the 252 Class II, III and VI school districts.

Follow-up questionnaires were mailed to all school district superintendents and board chairpersons who had not returned a completed questionnaire within a two week time period.

Telephone surveys were used to acquire more information as to why the superintendents answered the way they did on certain questions or if there were more that they wanted to say. Ten percent (25) of the superintendents who answered the mail survey were randomly selected for the telephone survey.

Data Analysis

The research questions for this study were analyzed by utilizing descriptive statistics, ANNOVA, and Grounded Theory as provided in Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs (1982).

Reporting Results

The results of this study will be made available to the Nebraska Department of Education, members of the Nebraska State Legislature and to other interested persons or agencies.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The scope of this review includes works on public school choice as well as how and why school choice was expected to affect educational reform. The review of the literature was completed to determine: (a) the relationship of public school choice and the public's expectations of educational needs, (b) the results of national studies and reports on school choice as to the advantages and disadvantages of school choice, (c) what other states have done to implement public school choice and (d) what significance the guidelines of LB183, LB483 and LB207 had for the Nebraska educational choice plan. Computer searches were completed through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Love Library. Several professors of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln assisted in making resource materials available in the development of this review, as did several individuals from the Nebraska Department of Education.

History of Choice

Over the years individuals and special interest groups have had conflicting expectations from public schools. The citizens of the United States have turned to public education to secure a common citizenship and a common morality in a pluralistic society but have often found that this common morality abuses their religious beliefs or ethnic values. The expectations themselves also have been the source of tension and conflict. Sometimes the expectations are contradictory and favor the elimination of class differences and to reinforcing the social class

structure. The result, inevitably, is conflict. According to Lazerson (1985), public education is both the source of America's most noble hopes and the repository of its greatest frustrations (Lazerson, 1985).

Diversity in public education often is viewed as a product of the 1960s. That was a time when a free-spirit philosophy sought to make school personnel sensitive to the diversity of students through alternative programs. Another view has traced the concept of diversity to heightened parent interest in private schools. Diversity in education is much older and runs deeper than either of these recent developments. Diversity is, in fact, a part of American school tradition, one that affirms the "one best system" described by historian David Tyack (1974). Education never has been without abundant variety and choices for parents and students (Levin, 1983).

Diversity was inherent in the earliest American public school systems of the 19th century. The common school founded by Horace Mann and others in New England provided a shared experience in education. The nature of that educational experience was left to local communities. From that local determination came variety, reflecting differing makeup and interest of the citizens (Levin, 1983).

Citizens agreed on the importance of schooling in the common school but not necessarily on its content. Although parents wanted their children to attend school, they did not expect to abdicate responsibility for what took place. The

idea of parent participation, in other words, is as old as the common school itself (Levin, 1983).

The issues of choice concerns the rights and obligations of the individual and the state. The view of Horace Mann and other reformers was that public education would be civic, moral, and nonsectarian (Wagoner, 1986).

Parents' selection of educational opportunities for their children has been limited to choices between public and parochial schools, among geographic areas and among courses offered in a particular school. Private or parochial school choice has been available to parents since the first schools were established. Parents have made choices as to whether they should send their children to public or private schools, with most instances depending on whether the parents had the financial resources to exercise this type of choice. Choice among public schools allows some students to have access to good schools through indirect means, such as the quality of neighborhood in which they lived or how much input the individual school district allowed parents in the running of the school. Some programs allow within-school choice programs which may afford a certain number of options in the various types of specialized programs offered including gifted, vocational, performing arts programs, or advanced classes such as algebra, drama or tennis {Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 1990}.

Many people, who want more latitude than the limited options offered, claim that Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act provided the basis for more flexible

choice. Those advocates of choice believed that children should be able to attend any school they and their parents choose (Stillman, 1986).

Educational reform was placed at the top of many state policy agendas during the 1980s. The publication of A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform in April 1983 brought about concern with the state of American education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

School choice is the most divisive part of President Bush's American 2000 strategy. Choice will be one path toward school improvement by ridding the system of a public monopoly. Choice is not the only part of President Bush's plan. Local communities will need to work with local school districts to accomplish a successful choice plan (Alexander, 1991).

The underlying causes of recent reform initiatives are more complex than the Sputnik era of the 1950s. The perception that public education is failing has spread through communities in the United States (Layton, 1987).

Advantages and Disadvantages

The principal proponents for school choice assert that in a free and democratic society, the public has an interest in maintaining a public school system but not in requiring children to attend a certain public school. Parents therefore should be allowed to choose the appropriate school for their children (Rosenberg, 1989).

Public school choice could reduce or eliminate distinctions due to wealth and place of residence, opening an avenue to balance the educational opportunities

for all students. Allowing the students the opportunity to choose the school of their choice might limit the choices of other students, especially when choice is based on enrollment size limits (Rosenberg, 1989).

Elmore (1986) stated that there are two fundamental questions about educational choice: (1) should parents and students be allowed to choose schools, or among programs within schools; (2) should educators be empowered to organize and manage schools, design educational programs, recruit students and receive public funds to educate those students? The first question is a demand type question which poses the issue of whether parents should be given the role of deciding what kind of education is best for their children. The second question is a supply-side issue--the issue of whether schools should be given the autonomy and flexibility to respond to differences in the opinions of parents about what makes a good educational system (Elmore, 1986).

Public school choice is seen as a means to provide educational differences and to improve quality and student academic performance, along with student, faculty, parent and community satisfaction with the school. It is believed public school choice will achieve these goals through competition, which is the means or incentive for increasing educational quality and satisfaction (Rosenberg, 1989).

Kearns (1991) believed there is a cure for the current education systems' problems. Schools need to be treated as businesses. Schools have products and services that the parents are purchasing with their tax dollars. Unfortunately, parents in most states have little choice in selecting the best public schools for

their children. The present system of choice is determined by one's street address. The result of parents not having a choice of schools to send their children to is that a thousand little education monopolies have been created all over the country, and little competition is taking place among schools. This lack of competition has worked to the detriment of consumers (Kearns, 1991).

Raywid (1984) noted improvement in the areas of academic, affective, and social growth for all students in schools of choice. Student discipline and attendance improves. Parents, students and teachers have an unusually high satisfaction rate with schools of choice (Raywid, 1984).

Parents should, according to choice advocates, be allowed to choose their children's school. Parents make or help their children make choices and decisions based on health care, religious experiences, nutrition and/or participation in athletics; so why should parents not be allowed to make the decision as to what school their children will attend? The promise that choice brings for improving the educational system and for giving parents more power will be met if information about each school is provided and there is a diversity available among public schools (Randall, 1989).

Parents need to have the opportunity to choose schools that offer the best education for their children, and parents must back these schools with tax dollars. The implication is that the creation of a marketplace of schools would result in educational improvements. The schools that provide a quality education would thrive, and schools that do not would lose students and tax dollars be forced to

change or close. Competition would be a powerful medicine in curing the nations' education ills (Kearns, 1991).

Pressure must be kept on public officials to meet the needs of all public schools (Foglia, 1989). To provide the required resources would permit teachers, administrators, parents, and others to improve the quality of education in all schools. The answer is not to give some parents a choice, but to make all schools choice schools (Foglia, 1989).

One issue in school choice is motivation, which is one of the oldest idea in education. Theoretically, a school that is chosen is a school in which children, parents, and teachers work together. The school and parents have expectations about each other. Students will meet standards because the students are there voluntarily. The most powerful explanatory variable in student performance is the students' own willingness to work (Doyle, 1989).

Advocates of public school choice hold the following three assumptions: (1) no one kind of school is best for students and teachers; (2) controlled competition can help stimulate improvement; (3) increasing options for students and teachers expands opportunities (Nathan, 1989).

The days when parents have no choice where they want their children to go to school are numbered. This country is becoming more open to various types of options, not because there are many believers in choice, but because there is no best school for any child (Chubb, 1991).

Advocates of choice, who favor progress and reforms, believe that school choice offers educational opportunities for all students. Conservative advocates, who traditionally favor following established programs, believe choice is attractive because it forces school personnel to compete, which may cause improvement. Support for choice, then, seems to cross political boundaries. The 1987 Gallup Poll of public attitudes toward the public schools recorded that 71 percent of those surveyed supported the idea of choice (Nathan, 1989).

Nathan (1991) believed that many people are distorting choice by making it fundamentally about competition. Those who have been working with choice plans for the past few years recognize that teachers need opportunities to work with parents to create different kinds of schools, so a greater percentage of students do well (Nathan, 1991).

According to a report by Dr. Don Draayer (1989), the rationale for school choice has pros and cons.

Pros

The pros for open enrollment are higher parent satisfaction, more serious student effort, improved teacher/student rapport, wider curriculum choices to meet student needs, and more overt incentive put into play. Other pros are increased responsiveness to reforms desired by the public, reduced collective bargaining turmoil, holding down costs, reduced need for private school choice, and promotion of dignity, self-worth, and respect by equal status in the relationship and positive public relations in current movement.

Cons

He stated the cons against public school choice are a reduction in the sense of local entity and ownership, reduction of the feeling the present system is working well and a failure to recognize referendum costs. Other cons stated by Draayer (1989) were: a suffering of low density programs (art, home economics, etc.), back door consolidation, rising transportation costs, deterioration of the balance in athletic competition and the opening of doors to full-scale voucher systems. Furthermore, systems for adjudication of grievances are not in place, long range planning is more difficult, and job security is lessened (Draayer, 1989).

The effect of individual choice on the performance of schools underlies the argument for increased choice in education. The assumptions that arise in arguments about choice are as follows: (1) parents are likely to be satisfied with a school they have chosen; (2) students will be more serious about their school work since they had a part in choosing their school; and (3) teachers are more likely to enjoy their work if they have been given an opportunity to have input in the school operation (Elmore, 1986).

The California Teachers Association (CTA) considered "parental choice" to be a fraud--or worse. Four reasons presented by the CTA personnel were: (1) affluent parents already have choice; they move to communities that have the best schools; (2) schools are limited by the number of teachers employed and the number of available classrooms. If choice means overcrowding, the quality of education would be jeopardized; (3) the danger exists that choice might further

segregate schools; and (4) there is concern about what would happen to the students who were left behind? Each time a student enrolled in another school, the school losing the student also would lose funding, which would mean less money for teacher salaries, textbooks, and equipment (Foglia, 1989).

Supporters of choice cite four advantages of the choice concept: (1) increased levels of parent and student involvement in school programs, (2) improvement of mediocre and poor schools, (3) promotion of redistricting and desegregation, and (4) expansion of curriculum opportunities (Oglesby, 1990).

A choice of schools might make education better. Parents exercising their right to choice in selecting schools for their children have a reason to support the school and to transmit their feelings to their children. Children gain in a general way from a school that is committed to the ideals of a community chosen by their parents. Children must learn respect for those around them by first acquiring those ideals from their parents (Coons, 1990).

When parents have the opportunity to choose the best learning environment for their child, they will be more satisfied with the school, teachers, and administration. As parents have the opportunity to choose the school that will best help their child, more of a responsibility is put on those parents to know how their child progresses (Randall & Geiger, 1991).

For educational choice to operate there needs to be at least two schools within reach, a diversity of offerings, and no restrictions on the parents' ability to choose the school. Some parents may not be able to afford the costs and

overcome the administrative hurdles. If choice is going to increase parental involvement in their children's schooling, then the school officials need to initiate and encourage parent involvement. The school will need to have admissions procedures that encourage parents to enroll their children. School personnel will need to keep the channels of communication open to allow the schools to become knowledgeable of the parents' wishes (Stillman, 1986).

Raywid (1984) supported choice for the variety it provides to the diverse population of schools in the United States. Choice helps motivate students and increases effectiveness and success by increasing teacher efficiency and student performance. Parents should be allowed to make more choices for their children (Raywid, 1984).

One of the early supporters of educational choice, Mario Fantini, saw public education as earning the support of participants. A 1972 Gallup Poll revealed that 60 percent of Americans were satisfied with public education. However, 28 percent expressed dissatisfaction. Fantini, in Public Schools of Choice (1973), encouraged choices that would "provide the individual parent, student, and teacher with direct choice among alternative education forms--those now in existence and others yet to be developed - all within the framework of the public education system" (Fantini, 1973).

Fantini (1973) proposed several ground rules for schools of choice. He encouraged establishment of a comprehensive set of educational objectives. No choice plan should be imposed without community input providing a base for the

program. Financial costs must be kept equitable, seeking a wiser rather than a greater expenditure of money.

According to Fantini (1973) school choice would offer teachers, students and parents a number of alternatives for individual teachers, students, and parents to choose. Those employing the choice concept should seek openness, diversity, embrace human growth and development, and recognize the individual worth of each student. Exclusivity to religious, racial, or political group was not advocated. A system of evaluation was to be established (Fantini, 1973).

Public school choice can work when all parties have equal access to the same programs. He encouraged starting with options similar to programs presently in existence. He reviewed the successful Quincy (Illinois) Senior High system of seven alternatives in a school-within-a-school program. Students and teachers chose from seven options ranging from standard to work study. Parents, teachers and students showed different preferences, and almost all received their first choice. Public schools of choice would create a renewal system. Results would be used to judge the options offered under a broad public framework. Successful results with one model would encourage growth of an idea. The options that are more successful will most likely be more in demand (Fantini, 1973).

Bridge and Blackman (1978) as part of Rand Corporation studied family choice in Alum Rock, Minneapolis' Southeast Alternatives Program, and Mamaroneck (New York) School District. The Minneapolis project was an open enrollment plan and the New York project provided schools within schools.

Bridge and Blackman (1978) proposed a list of summaries of parent behavior in family choice school settings.

1. Parents vary widely in their awareness of choices and their accuracy of information about rules on choice.
2. Over time and with the same rules, experience reduces the information differences among all parents.
3. Mothers were more involved in schooling than fathers. In two parent homes mothers signed selection cards four times as often as fathers.
4. Educated families have more sources of information than less educated families.
5. Educated parents relied more on printed material for information about schools. Less well educated parents relied on personal contacts, especially with school personnel.
6. Even with free transportation, the location of an alternative school was the most important factor in parent placement decisions.
7. With older children school location declined in importance.
8. In parent decision making curriculum factors were less important than non-instructional factors like social or ethnic composition of the school, school location, or keeping siblings and friends together.
9. Well educated parents favored imagination and independence, provided in an open classroom. Less well educated parents stressed obedience and respect, provided in traditional classrooms.

10. Parents' global evaluations of schools were lower than their evaluation of the teachers who worked with their children.

11. Alienated or powerless parents were less satisfied with school personnel and systems.

12. Parents were dissatisfied when their choices were reduced (Bridge & Blackman, 1978).

Parents make decisions on all other important aspects of their child's life, so why should they not on the school where their child attends? With school choice, new ways of teaching may be developed and also learning may be enhanced (Randall, 1989).

Wealthy students in California allegedly had a choice. Choice was seen as a means of overcrowding as the number of students could jeopardize education in good schools. Foglia (1989) stated that when students choose to attend better schools, the standards will be lowered in the other schools to meet the needs of those who are left behind (Foglia, 1989).

Rosenberg (1989) argued four points about school choice.

1. A democratic society has to maintain a public school system, but students do not need to attend a specific school. Parents should choose. People against this cannot dispute the principle but are concerned with bureaucracy and administration. With choice, wealth distinction would be reduced or eliminated; thus, educational opportunities would be equalized. With space available being one of the factors, the wealthy will stay where they are.

2. Students would have the opportunity to have their needs met. This means schools will have to meet the needs of businesses. Weak schools will not receive funding and good schools will receive both students and funding.

3. If students or families choose their school, they will support the school.

4. Choice would lower dropout rates and improve student achievement (Rosenberg, 1989).

Some students may benefit from public school choice, but using it as the sole restructuring tool puts community interests at risk in favor of student interests. A panel from the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) urged school leaders to consider other ideas before turning to choice. Heckman argued that what goes on behind the classroom door has to be the main focus. Choice has been attractive because it appears to be a fast and low cost solution to apparent problems in education. Heckman (1990) believes that little evidence has been found to negate the positive effects of choice (Heckman, 1990).

Choice, as a school admission process, cannot alone improve education. Attention needs to be given to transportation, teacher and administrator morale and counseling services, or choice itself may slow down school district progress (Oglesby, 1990). Elmore (1986) believes choice must take into account the broader aims of education, implementation of policies affecting the four major elements of the educational system--finance, attendance, staffing and content--which can provide schools with a range of options for enhancing choice.

There is little evidence that greater choice will, by itself, dramatically change the performance of schools (Elmore, 1986).

Oglesby (1990) cited seven potential drawbacks to the choice concept that have been identified by critics of choice: (1) enrollment fluctuations can cause inadequate staffing; (2) funding and planning transportation for all students; (3) dissemination of information about schools; (4) recruitment of students for academics or athletic purposes; (5) school segregation on the basis of social status, race, or handicap; (6) schools that cannot respond to the variety of offerings being forced to close and (7) less community support for schools when students come from another district (Oglesby, 1990).

School choice may provide changes in the following areas: (1) from inputs to outcomes; (2) from a few leaders to many leaders; (3) from K-12 to lifelong learning; (4) from school as a single delivery system to education in the community and (5) from ad hoc programs to a comprehensive policy for children at risk (Randall, 1989).

States With Choice Plans

Proponents of choice staunchly argue that allowing parents to choose a school for their children will increase satisfaction, competition, dignity and academic performance while reducing dropout rates. Opponents of choice believe that schools lose the sense of local ownership when a student from outside the district is allowed to enroll. They believe choice is a means of back-door consolidation

that will lead to overcrowding in good schools and the closing of mediocre schools.

The concept of choice in public education increasingly is becoming a topic of discussion by school boards across the nation (Sorahan, 1989). Regulated competition can be an important factor for the improvement of schools. To address the challenges of choice, a number of states have developed and legislated plans.

Minnesota

As of the 1990 school year, all of Minnesota's 435 school districts were required to participate in the open enrollment plan. Parents have been afforded the opportunity to transfer their children for any reason, but local school boards may decide whether to allow students to enter a specific school within their school system or the system as a unit. However, districts may refuse a student only because of space limitations or to keep a racial balance (Sorahan, 1989).

Minnesota also allows high school students or dropouts to take post-secondary classes with the state paying the costs. Since 1987, any student can earn a high school diploma by taking public school courses at special alternative learning centers (Sorahan, 1989).

Iowa

Iowa has passed a bill that allows parents to transfer children to another district, taking their state aid with them. Schools may refuse admission to a

student only because of lack of space and such transfers must remain in the new district for at least four years (Sorahan, 1989).

Colorado

The Colorado Schools of Choice Act urges all districts to offer open enrollment, and grants are provided to teams of teachers who submit viable proposals for restructuring schools to improve learning (Sorahan, 1989). During 1991 the Colorado legislature gave approval to a bill that states schools do not have to change or add programs or make any physical changes to accommodate handicapped students. Critics of the bill believed the bill allowed schools to discriminate against handicapped students (Wolk, 1991).

New Jersey, California, Wisconsin, Washington and New York

New Jersey has held state hearings on choice options. California has included open enrollment as part of a group of reform proposals. Wisconsin is allowing any student to attend any public school so long as both districts are participating. In October of 1990, a Wisconsin choice plan to use public funds to pay for private education for poor families was proven to be unconstitutional (Ashford, 1990). Students could be refused only because of lack of space or racial imbalance. The Seattle Public Schools board of education approved a version of choice to improve equity and racial balance. New York's City's District 4 in Harlem has improved test scores dramatically as a result of choice. Schools who did not attract enough students had to shut down and start over. Schools were competing for students (Sorahan, 1989).

Oregon

In 1990, Oregon voters defeated a bill which would have allowed children to attend the public or private school of their choice. Education groups said the measure's mandate was not needed because Oregon already has more children opted to schools than states with choice laws. In 1988-89, Oregon had more than 10,000 students attending schools outside their neighborhood schools under existing state laws (McCurdy, 1990).

Indiana

Indiana was, in 1991, working on a choice plan that was supported by businesses that were finding it hard to attract qualified applicants for job openings. The choice plan would allow parents to choose any public or private school, with state funds to follow the student (Kessler, 1991).

Michigan

Michigan allows choice within districts and requires local districts that operate more than one school to form schools of choice planning committees. These committees must be made up of teachers, parents and business representatives. The committees would need to have an open enrollment plan in place in their school district by the 1992-93 school year. The measure stipulates that choice plans must address requirements that schools inform parents of their choice options, provide transportation for low income students whose parents cannot afford to take their children to the school of their choice, abide by desegregation

plans and provide for a random selection process when too many students apply for any one school (Wolk, 1991).

Idaho and Utah

Idaho and Utah allow students to attend schools outside their resident district. The resident districts may not prevent students from choosing another school district. School districts in Idaho may prevent students from transferring in if they do not have enough space.

Kentucky

In 1996, Kentucky will allow parents to enroll their children in another district if their resident district does not meet certain education standards (Williams, 1991).

Nebraska Open Enrollment

The Nebraska open enrollment issue has been addressed by the Nebraska Legislature on three occasions. Choice first was discussed by the Nebraska Legislature during the 1989 legislative session. The three legislative bills that dealt with open enrollment (school choice) are LB183, passed during the 1989 legislative session, LB843, passed during the 1990 legislative session; and LB207, which was adopted during the 1991 session. The three legislative bills will be summarized in the following paragraphs.

Purpose

The general purpose of the Nebraska legislative bills is to give parents the opportunity to choose which school district they want their children to attend.

The bills allow children to attend a school district outside their immediate district without paying tuition (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Implementation

The provisions for choice will be phased in over a period of four years, with choice becoming fully implemented beginning in the 1993-94 school year. During the 1993-94 school year, there will be no limitation on the number of students that may choose into or out of a school district (Nebraska Department Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Under LB183, the choice program does not apply to students in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades who reside in a Class I district that is not a part of a Class VI district or to students who reside in a school district that had been contracting with another school district. LB207 amended part of this section from LB183 to the effect that if the Class I district has affiliated with a high school district, ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade students from the Class I district may choose another school district. However, only five percent may choose the option. After the third year of the affiliation 10 percent may choose another district, and after the fourth year all students in grades 9-12 may participate (NDE, Rule 7, 1991). With the passage of LB207, during the 1991 legislative session, students who relocate in a different district shall be automatically accepted if they have been enrolled in that district for a period of at least two years (LB207, 1991).

The Nebraska choice plan had a phase-in plan, to go into total open enrollment during the 1993-94 school year. During the 1991-92 school year the resident district was required to allow up to 5 percent of its enrollment choice out of the district, with any more than that amount being voluntary. LB207 amended LB183 providing that if more than 5 percent of the students in a resident district apply for participation for the 1991-92 or 1992-93 school years, the district must give priority to siblings of option students. However, an option district is not required to take students if it is at capacity. School choice was still voluntary in 1991-92 for a school district to participate as an option school. Beginning in the 1992-93 school year, all school districts must allow up to 10 percent of their enrollments to opt out if they request to do so, with any more than that being allowed voluntarily to choose another district according to the school board's wishes. School choice will still be voluntary if a school wants to be an option district and allow students into their district. For the 1993-94 school year, all school districts must participate as resident districts and allow students the opportunity to choose another school district. Also, during the 1993-94 school year, all school districts must be open to applications, local standards determine the acceptance or rejection to application (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

The open enrollment program will be available only once to each student prior to graduation unless the student relocates to a different resident school district, the option school district merges with another district, or the option

school district is a Class I at which time the student will be given the opportunity to choose another district upon completion of the grades offered at the Class I district. Once students have chosen another school, they must stay in that school district for at least one full year before returning to the resident district (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Funding

In order to support the choice bill, the Nebraska legislature budgeted \$954,000 for the 1990-91 school year. Under LB183, the resident district was required to remit to the option district an amount equal to the state aid received by the resident district for each option student based on the state average per pupil cost. State aid is invariably less than the per-pupil cost, which raised the question of the constitutionality of LB183. The constitutionality in question is that of receiving less money from the state for each choice student than it costs to educate the other students in the district. The method of funding required the taxpayers in an option district to come up with the balance of the per pupil cost of the option student (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

LB843 provided a different funding mechanism. In LB843, the State Department of Education shall pay the option school district the statewide per-pupil cost for the previous year, or the option school district's per-pupil cost, whichever is lower. The funding would be made in two payments, the first on or before January 30 and the second on or before June 30 (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

If there is not enough money available to fully fund the open enrollment plan, then the state department shall make a reduction in each payment. The new funding mechanism still does not guarantee the constitutionality of LB843 because a school district might receive less than its per pupil cost (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Transportation

LB183 provided that the legal guardians of the option students would be responsible for their child's transportation. It also stated that a school district may, upon mutual consent with the parent of the student, provide transportation to the option student. LB843 kept the same ideas as that of LB183 in regard to transportation in that the parents of the option students are still responsible for the transportation. Several changes were made by LB843, as it provides that the parents or guardians of option students who qualify for free and reduced price lunches will be eligible for reimbursement for transportation payments. The State Department will make all transportation payments to the parents. If a child is verified handicapped the resident district must provide transportation. The resident district will be reimbursed by the state at 90% of transportation costs (NDE, Rule 7, 1990). LB207 allows a parent who qualifies for transportation reimbursement to have an agreement with the option district to provide transportation. If the financial agreement is agreed upon by both parties, then the payment will be only for those miles actually traveled beyond the normal route (LB207, 1991).

Recruitment

LB183 prohibited the recruitment of students. LB843 repealed the recruitment restrictions contained in LB183 and there is no longer anything barring the recruitment of students (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Athletic Participation

LB183 prohibited option students in grades nine through twelve from participating in athletics for the first school year in the option district. LB843 repealed the athletic participation section and left the regulation up to the Nebraska State Activities Association. The NSAA provides a 90 day waiting period for any student who transfers for other than academic reasons (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Application Procedures

In order for students to choose another school district, their applications must be submitted to the option district between September 1 and January 1 to be considered during the following school year. These dates can be waived if both the resident and the option districts agree to do so. The resident district then has to act on the application. If the application is refused, the option district must state the reasons in the rejection letter. The parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the State Board of Education within 30 days after receiving the rejection letter (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Desegregation Plan

School districts must have a desegregation plan in order to limit the number of students who may transfer in or out of the school district. The school district must establish policies that would provide for racial balances (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

Credits

The option school district must accept credits toward graduation from the resident district. The option district will award a diploma to the option student when the student meets the option district's graduation requirements (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 7, 1990).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study was conducted to investigate selected aspects of the Nebraska school choice plan. The areas that were studied include the effect of the choice plan in pupil enrollment, curriculum, finances, reasons for student transfers, and potential educationally related changes in the future due to the choice plan.

The Purpose

This study analyzes five aspects of the impact of choice to determine if choice legislation.

- (1) Enrollment of students was studied by addressing the number of transfers for the 1990-91 school year.
- (2) Reasons given for the transfers from the Nebraska Department of Education choice application forms.
- (3) Change brought about in curriculum and finance in school districts that participated in the choice plan.
- (4) Perceptions of superintendents and board chairpersons about the advantages and disadvantages of public school choice as seen from school officials perspectives.
- (5) Practices employed by school district officials were explored to prepare for the future years of choice students.

Research Questions

Eight research questions were developed for this study.

Question #1

How many schools of Class II, III and VI districts participated in the choice program in 1990-91?

Question #2

How many students transferred during the first year?

Question #3

What were the students' stated reasons for choosing to attend another school district?

Question #4

How many students chose to attend schools with a smaller pupil enrollment and how many opted for schools with a larger enrollment?

Question #5

(a) How many dollars should the state pay on option district for each choice student?

(b) Did the dollar amount assigned affect the school officials' decision to participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year?

Question #6

What programs were added or deleted due to the choice program?

Question #7

What did superintendents and school board chairpersons perceive to be the general impact of the choice statute upon the quality of student learning and staff effectiveness?

Question #8

What did superintendents and school board chairpersons see as the advantages and disadvantages of the choice legislation?

Research Methods

The procedural steps taken in this study are listed below.

The review of literature was completed to determine: 1) the history of school choice in the United States; 2) the advantages and disadvantages to the topic of school choice; 3) the types of choice plans which states have implemented; 4) the components that make up the Nebraska choice plan adopted in LB183 and amended by LB843 and LB207.

Two surveys were developed explaining the purpose and process for conducting the study included in the cover letter (Appendix III). The surveys addressed the eight research questions. One survey was mailed and the other one was a telephone survey (Appendices I & II)

Pilot Survey

A pilot survey was developed for the mailed and telephone survey. The pilot surveys were reviewed by ten superintendents and ten board chairpersons at the

Nebraska Council of School Administrators and Nebraska Rural Community School Association spring meeting.

The ten respondents selected to complete the pilot survey were encouraged to add comments and to clarify their perceptions of any items on the survey that they felt needed a change or further explanation. The results of the pilot survey and suggestions made by the participants were analyzed.

The author determined which changes suggested by the participants in the pilot survey would be beneficial in the final survey. Suggestions made by the participants were analyzed for clarity. Survey changes then were made.

The Population and Sample Selection

The populations were identified as school superintendents and school board chairpersons from Class II, III and VI school districts in the State of Nebraska. All of the 252 superintendents and board chairpersons from Class II, III and VI school districts in the state of Nebraska were sent a questionnaire on April 5, 1991. A follow-up questionnaire and cover letter were sent on May 5, 1991 to those superintendents who had not responded to the first mailing (see Appendix IV).

A random sampling of the superintendents who had responded to the mailed questionnaire was done to identify 10 percent of the superintendents. The selected superintendents were then surveyed by telephone to explore in more detail the topic of choice.

One hundred of the 567 approved choice applications from the Nebraska Department of Education for the 1990-91 school year selected by random

sampling and were analyzed. The random numbers table and procedures described by Wiersma (1980) were used to aid in the selection of applications. The data researched comprised the reasons that were given for the student choosing another school district.

Data Collection

A survey and a personalized cover letter were sent to each of the 252 Class II, III and VI school superintendents and board chairpersons during the week of April 5, 1991. An addressed, stamped, return envelope was included in the mailing.

The Nebraska Department of Education provided copies of the actual choice applications from 100 of the 567 applications they had received. A random sample of the numbers assigned to each application by the Department of Education was done to get the sampling.

Tabulation of Data

The survey results were gathered and tabulated, with each response from the questionnaire being entered on an electronic spreadsheet. Each entry was then checked again for accuracy. The spreadsheet was used to assist in the data analysis.

Analysis of Data

The study was of descriptive, qualitative, and quantitative design. The mean, mode, and median were established for each subsection of the survey. The mean value was assigned to questions on the mailed questionnaire for both the

superintendent and board chairpersons survey, by adding the rating response given for each question to determine each question's total value. The total value then was divided by the number of respondents in each group.

Analysis of variance was used on one occasion to determine variance between groups.

The procedures of grounded theory were utilized as a means of acquiring theory directly from qualitative data (Glaser & Stauss, 1967). Strauss (1990) stated that the processes and products of the grounded theory method are derived from the information gathered rather than from preconceived found theory. The grounded theory method allows data to be collected and categorized for analysis. From the data collected, concepts and their relationships are abstracted to identify patterns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A unique aspect of grounded theory is the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. The data may be of a wide variety guided by the research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Telephone survey responses and data collected from the 100 actual choice applications from the Nebraska Department of Education were subjected to descriptive analysis. Information gathered utilizing the telephone survey was categorized by similarities of responses by utilizing the grounded theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose for conducting this study was to determine if school choice has made an impact in the areas of: (1) student enrollment based on how many students transferred for the 1990-91 year; (2) reasons given for the transfers from actual choice applications from the Nebraska Department of Education; (3) impact or change in program areas and financing that have taken place in the schools participating in the choice plan; (4) superintendents and board chairpersons response concerning the advantages and disadvantages of public school choice as seen from their perspective as school officials, and (5) examines what school personnel were doing differently to prepare for future years of choice students.

The population identified was the 252 superintendents and board chairpersons from Class II, III, and VI school districts. The number and percentages of questionnaires mailed and returned are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Questionnaires Mailed Out, Returned, and Percentage of Returns

	Mailed	Returned	Percentage
<u>1st mailing</u>			
Superintendents	252	226	89.7
Board Chairpersons	252	111	44.0
<u>2nd Mailing</u>			
Superintendents	26	9	34.6
Board Chairpersons	141	39	27.6
<u>Totals</u>			
Superintendents	252	235	93.2
Board Chairpersons	252	150	59.6
Total Combined	454	385	84.8

The first mailing of questionnaires occurred on April 5, 1991. The second mailing of questionnaires occurred on May 5, 1991. The 357 questionnaires from the first mailing were returned by May 1, 1991. The 48 returned questionnaires from the second mailing were returned by May 20. The 25 superintendents contacted for the telephone survey were called during the week of May 27, 1991.

Analysis of the data was done by using the software and hardware resources available in the Nebraska Evaluation and Research Center at the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln and mainframe resources located in the College of Engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Statistical analysis of the data employ frequency ANOVA.

Demographic Information Asked of Respondent Superintendents and Board Chairpersons

Respondents were asked on question #1 to indicate the class of school district that they represented. Question #2 referred to the respondents' position with the school district. Of the 235 superintendents responding 34 (14.5 percent) were from Class II districts, 189 (80.4 percent) were from Class III districts and 12 (5.1 percent) were from Class VI districts. The 150 board chairpersons responding to the survey represented 26 (17.3 percent) Class II districts, 108 (72 percent) Class III districts and 16 (10.7 percent) from Class VI districts (Table 2).

Table 2

Frequency of respondents by school classification

	II	Class III	VI	Total
Superintendent	34	189	12	235
	14.5%	80.4%	5.1%	100.0%
Board Chairperson	26	108	16	150
	17.3%	72.0%	10.7%	100.0%

Superintendents were asked in question #3 to indicate how many years they had served in their present position with the school district. Of the 235 superintendents responding, the mean was 7.63 years, the median was 5 and the mode 1. The minimum years served in their present position was zero or first year and the greatest length of years served was 33.

Of the 150 board chairpersons responding to the question on length of years in present position, the mean was 5.10 years, the median 4 and the mode 1. The minimum time served in their position was zero or first year and the maximum was 28 years (Table 3).

Table 3

Years Served in Present Position

Years	<u>Board</u> Frequency	<u>Supt.</u> Frequency
1 or less	34	33
2	18	30
3	17	22
4	14	27
5	14	14
6	11	13
7	7	11
8	6	7
9	6	2
10	5	10
11	5	9
12	4	6
13	1	9
14	0	3
15	1	4
16	4	5
17	0	3

Table 3 (Continued)

Years Served in Present Position

Years	<u>Board</u> Frequency	<u>Supt.</u> Frequency
18	1	3
19	1	4
20	1	1
21	0	2
22	0	4
23	0	6
25	0	1
26	0	1
27	0	3
28 or more	0	2
Total	150	235
Mean	5.10	7.63
Median	4	5
Mode	1	1

Superintendents were asked in question #4 how far their school district was from the nearest Class II, III, or VI school district. The mean distance given from another Class II, III, or VI district given by school board chairpersons was 10.92 miles, the median 10 miles and the mode 10 miles. The mean distance reported by the superintendents was 10.68 miles, the median 10 miles and the mode was 10 miles (see Table 4). Although superintendents and board members reported slight variations in distances between their resident district and their nearest neighboring school, the pattern was consistent and differences relatively small. The modal distance between districts of 10 miles can be interpreted to suggest distance may not be an inhibiting factor in choosing another school district. The longer distances, however, (14.5% were 15 to 19 miles from one district to another and 8% of the districts were, according to superintendents, 20 to 40 miles from a neighboring district) could pose a limitation on choice.

Table 4

Miles From Nearest Class II, III or VI

Miles	<u>Board</u> Frequency	<u>Supt.</u> Frequency
0	10	22
1	2	2
2	1	2
3	4	3
4	2	2
5	1	5
6	7	15
7	14	17
8	11	17
9	8	14
10	29	32
11	4	9
12	10	23
13	7	10
14	6	9
15	11	16
16	1	4
17	0	4
18	6	6
19	0	4

Table 4 (Continued)

Miles From Nearest Class II, III or VI

Miles	<u>Board</u> Frequency	<u>Supt.</u> Frequency
20	7	6
23	1	3
24	0	2
25	3	1
26	0	2
27	2	0
30	1	2
34	1	0
35	1	2
40	0	1
Total	150	235
Mean	10.92	10.68
Median	10	10
Mode	10	10

Participation of Schools in Choice Program

In question #5 superintendents were asked whether or not their district participated in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year. Of the total 235 respondents 136 (57.9 percent) participated (Table 5).

Table 5

Reported Participating in Choice 1990-91 School Year

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	136	57.9
No	99	42.1
Total	235	100.0

Superintendents were asked in question #6 if the school district participated in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year and then to what extent they participated. Of the 235 districts surveyed 18 (7.6 percent) did so as a resident district. Thirteen (5.5 percent) of the respondents participated as an option district, and 105 (44.7 percent) participated as a resident and option district. Ninety-nine (42.1 percent) of the total available districts did not participate in the choice plan (Table 6).

Table 6

Reported Participating in Choice 1991-92 School Year

	Frequency	Percent
Resident	18	7.6
Option	13	5.5
Resident & Option	112	44.8
Did Not Participate	99	42.1
Total	235	100.0

Analysis of variance was used to determine if there was a significant difference among school districts as to whether they participated in the choice plan in relation to the distance from another class II, III or VI school district. In order to determine the significance of the difference among the categories, a two way analysis of variance was performed by the NEAR center at the University of Nebraska (Table 7).

Table 7

ANOVA Test of Totals of Responses of School Districts in Participation and Distance from Another Class of School District

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Participated in Choice	14.452	1	14.452	0.990	.320
Distance From Another District	4.944	2	2.472	0.169	.844
Total	19.396	3	16.924	1.159	1.164

p < .05

There was no significant difference between the totals for school district participation and the distance from the neighboring class II, III or VI school districts.

Question #7 was directed to the superintendents in those districts that did not participate for the 1990-91 school year. The question referred to whether their school district would participate during the 1991-92 school year. Of the 99 school districts that did not participate for the 1990-91 school year, 16 (16.1 percent) on this question reported they would be participating as a resident district. Six (6.1 percent) districts planned to participate as an option district. Seventy-seven (77.8 percent) of the districts will be participating both as a resident and option district for the 1991-92 school year (Table 8).

Table 8

Districts Not Participating during 1990-91 but Intending to Participate in 1991-92

	Frequency	Percent
Resident	16	16.1
Option	6	6.1
Resident & Option	77	77.8
Total	99	100.0

Question #8 addressed the financial aspect of the choice program. The question asked respondents how much money should be allocated by the state for each choice student. Seventy-nine superintendents and/or board chairpersons wrote a dollar amount in the blank. Three hundred-six of the respondents felt the state average per pupil cost would be sufficient. The mean of the 79 responding with a dollar amount was \$4,324.05. The minimum amount was \$1,500.00 and the maximum \$9,500.00. The standard deviation was \$1,235.30.

Questions #9-15 on the mailed questionnaire were Likert Scale questions. Personnel at the NEAR Center at the University of Nebraska believed the data could be analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics of frequency, percent, and mean. Frequency distribution is useful when data need to be arranged. Frequency distribution breaks up the data into groups or classes and shows the number of observations in each class (Schaum, 1982).

Superintendents and board chairpersons were asked in survey question #9 whether the dollar amount assigned by the Nebraska State Legislature for the 1990-91 school year affected their school districts participation in the choice plan. Forty-one (17.5 percent) superintendents strongly agreed, while 27 (18.0 percent) board chairpersons strongly agreed. Thirty-five (14.9 percent) superintendents and 30 (20.0 percent) board chairperson agreed that the dollar amount assigned affected their districts participation in the choice plan. Thirty-six (15.3 percent) superintendents and 25 (16.7 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion on this question. Fifty-three (22.6 percent) and 50 (33.3 percent) board chairpersons disagreed with the question. Seventy (29.8 percent) superintendents strongly disagreed while 18 (12.0 percent) board chairperson strongly disagreed. The mean of the superintendents was 3.319. The mean of the board chairpersons was 3.353 (Table 9).

The data indicated that 123 (52.4 percent) superintendents felt that the dollar amount allocated by the Nebraska State Legislature did not affect their districts participation in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year. The board chairpersons responses were close to the superintendents' responses. Sixty-eight (45.3 percent) board chairpersons indicated that the dollar amount allocated did not affect their districts participation in the choice program.

The results of question nine indicated that although the financial part of choice program is a concern in a school officials' decision whether to participate or not, that it was not the deciding factor. This implication may contradict the

Fantini (1983) findings that financial costs must be kept equitable and fair to encourage schools to participate in the choice program.

Table 9

Dollar Amount Assigned Per Student and School District Participation

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	41	17.5	27	18.0
(A) 2	35	14.9	30	20.0
(NO) 3	36	15.3	25	16.7
(D) 4	53	22.6	50	33.3
(SD) 5	70	29.8	18	12.0
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	3.319		3.013	

On survey question #10 superintendents and board chairpersons were asked if the choice program had increased student satisfaction in their school. The responses of the superintendents found that 2 (.9 percent) strongly agreed while 6 (4.0 percent) board chairpersons agreed with the question. Eighteen (7.6 percent) superintendents and 19 (12.7 percent) board chairpersons agreed. One hundred (42.5 percent) superintendents and 59 (39.3 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion. Fifty-three (22.6 percent) superintendents and 48 (32.0 percent) board

chairpersons disagreed. Sixty-two percent (26.4 percent) superintendents strongly disagreed while 18 (12.0 percent) board chairpersons strongly disagreed. The mean of the superintendents was 3.659. The mean of the board chairpersons was 3.353 (Table 10).

The data indicate that neither the superintendents nor board chairpersons had an opinion on whether the choice program had increased student satisfaction in their school. The responses of no opinion could reflect the newness of the choice program to the state of Nebraska and school officials.

The finding challenges Rosenberg (1989) comments that public school choice is seen as a means to provide and improve student satisfaction.

Table 10

Choice and Student Satisfaction in Their Schools

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	2	.9	6	4.0
(A) 2	18	7.7	19	12.7
(NO) 3	100	42.6	59	39.3
(D) 4	53	22.6	48	32.0
(SD) 5	62	26.4	18	12.0
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	3.659		3.353	

On survey question #11, the superintendents and board chairpersons were asked whether they felt that the choice program had increased individual

academic achievement in their school. Two (.9 percent) superintendents and 6 (4.0) board chairpersons strongly agreed that choice had increased the academic achievement in their school. Twelve (5.1 percent) superintendents and 6 (4.0) board chairpersons agreed with the question. Eighty-seven (3.70 percent) superintendents and 56 (37.3 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion. Sixty-two (26.4 percent) superintendents and 57 (38.0 percent) board chairpersons disagreed with the question. Seventy-two (30.6 percent) superintendents strongly disagreed while 25 (16.7 percent) strongly disagreed. The mean of the superintendents was 3.808. The mean of the board chairpersons was 3.593 (Table 11).

The responses support the concept that superintendents and board chairpersons felt that the choice program had not increased individual academic achievement in their school. One hundred thirty-four (57.0 percent) superintendents and 82 (54.7 percent) board chairpersons either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question that choice had increased individual academic achievement in their school.

Raywid (1984) believed that choice helps motivate students and increases effectiveness and student academic performance. The responses of the superintendents and board chairpersons rebuts Raywid's beliefs.

Table 11

Increased Academic Achievement

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	2	.9	6	4.0
(A) 2	12	5.1	6	4.0
(NO) 3	87	37.0	56	37.3
(D) 4	62	26.4	57	38.0
(SD) 5	72	30.6	25	16.7
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	3.808		3.593	

On survey question #12 superintendents and board chairpersons were asked whether the choice program had promoted athletic recruitment in their school. Five (2.1 percent) superintendents and 2 (1.3 percent) board chairpersons strongly agreed that the choice plan had promoted athletic recruitment. Ten (4.3 percent) superintendents and 4 (2.6 percent) board chairpersons agreed with the question. Thirty-nine (16.6 percent) superintendents and 16 (10.7 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion on this question. Fifty-five (23.4 percent) superintendents and 67 (44.7 percent) board chairpersons disagreed with the question. One hundred twenty-six (53.6 percent) superintendents while 61 (40.7

percent) board chairpersons strongly disagreed. The mean of the superintendents was 4.221. The mean of the board chairpersons was 4.201 (Table 12).

The responses of the superintendents who were in disagreement with the question was 181 (77.0 percent). One hundred twenty-eight (85.4 percent) board chairpersons were in disagreement. The responses overwhelmingly reflect the opinion of school officials that the choice program did not promote athletic recruitment.

The results of this question could be of use by the Nebraska Activities Association in answering questions that they might receive from the public or schools regarding choice promoting athletic recruitment. The data differs from one of Draayer (1989) cons of choice programs in that choice will lead to the deterioration of the balance in athletic competition.

Table 12

Athletic Recruitment

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	5	2.1	2	1.3
(A) 2	10	4.3	4	2.6
(NO) 3	39	16.6	16	10.7
(D) 4	55	23.4	17	44.7
(SD) 5	126	53.6	61	40.7
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	4.221		4.201	

Question #13 on the mailed questionnaire asked superintendents and board chairpersons to answer whether competition for students brought about by the choice program had caused their school to upgrade curricular programs. Six (2.6 percent) superintendents and 4 (2.7 percent) board chairpersons strongly agreed. Twenty-two (9.4 percent) superintendents and 15 (10.0 percent) board chairpersons agreed with the question. Forty-one (17.5 percent) superintendents and 19 (12.7 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion. Seventy-six (32.3 percent) superintendents and 74 (49.3 percent) board chairpersons disagreed with the question. Ninety (38.3 percent) superintendents strongly disagreed with the question that competition for students as a result of the choice plan had caused their district to upgrade curricular programs, while 38 board chairpersons strongly disagreed. The mean of the superintendents was 3.944. The mean of the board chairpersons was 3.847 (Table 13).

The responses of the superintendents and board chairpersons were similar with 70.6 percent and 74.6 percent respectively disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the idea that competition due to choice had caused their district to upgrade curricular programs. This finding was surprising as one would think that school officials would be assessing their total school program to see how they can make their school programs attractive for students from other districts. The finding could be related to the fact that it is too early to see changes in schools' curricula.

The results of this question opposes Kearns (1991) beliefs that the creation of a marketplace of schools would result in educational improvement in programs and other areas.

Table 13

Curriculum Upgraded

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	6	2.6	4	2.7
(A) 2	22	9.4	15	10.0
(NO) 3	41	17.5	19	12.7
(D) 4	76	32.3	74	49.3
(SD) 5	90	38.3	38	25.3
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	3.944		3.847	

Superintendents and board chairpersons were asked in survey question #14 if they felt school choice would reduce drop out rates. Two (.9 percent) superintendents and 1 (.7 percent) board chairpersons strongly agreed with the question. Twenty-seven (11.5 percent) superintendents and 21 (14.0 percent) board chairpersons agreed. Fifty-eight (24.6 percent) superintendents and 35 (23.3 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion. Seventy-four (31.5 percent)

superintendents and 58 (38.7 percent) board chairpersons disagreed. Seventy-four (31.5 percent) superintendents and 35 (23.3 percent) board chairpersons strongly disagreed that choice would reduce dropout rates. The mean of the superintendents responses was 3.812. The board chairpersons mean was 3.700 (Table 14).

The responses from this question reflects the feeling that superintendents and board chairpersons do not believe that the choice program will reduce student drop out rates. One hundred forty-eight (63.0 percent) superintendents and 93 (62.0 percent) board chairpersons either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that choice would reduce dropout rates.

The implication of the findings could reflect that the choice program has not been in effect for a long enough period of time to give a true picture of what might happen to dropout rates after a few years of choice in Nebraska. Rosenberg's (1989) statement that choice would lower dropout rates has not found to be the belief to the surveyed school officials in the state of Nebraska.

Table 14

Drop Out Rates

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	2	.9	1	.7
(A) 2	27	11.5	21	14.0
(NO) 3	58	24.6	35	23.3
(D) 4	74	31.5	58	38.7
(SD) 5	74	31.5	35	23.3
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	3.812		3.700	

Superintendents and board chairperson were asked in survey question #15, if the choice program has had a visible effect on their school district. Eighty-nine (37.9 percent) superintendents and 28 (18.7 percent) board chairpersons strongly agreed that choice has had no visible effect on their school district. Seventy-seven (32.8 percent) superintendents and 63 (42.0 percent) board chairpersons agreed. Twenty-seven (11.4 percent) superintendents and 17 (11.3 percent) board chairpersons had no opinion. Twenty-six (11.1 percent) superintendents and 29 (19.3 percent) board chairpersons disagreed with the question. Sixteen (6.8 percent) superintendents and 13 (8.7 percent) board chairpersons strongly disagreed. The mean of the superintendents was 2.161. The mean of the board chairpersons was 2.573 (Table 15).

One hundred sixty-six (70.7 percent) superintendents and 91 (60.7 percent) board chairpersons either agreed or strongly agreed that there has not been any visible effect on their school district due to the choice program. The responses of school officials to this question may imply that whether a school district participated or not in the choice program that the vast majority of school officials felt that nothing positive or negative has come about due to the choice program. The data then could imply that school districts more than likely would not get hurt by participating in the choice program.

Coons (1990), stated that choice might make education better. The results of this question neither contradicts or supports Coons statement.

Table 15

No Visible Effect on School Districts Due to Choice

Rating	<u>Superintendents</u>		<u>Board Chairpersons</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
(SA) 1	89	37.9	28	18.7
(A) 2	77	32.8	63	42.0
(NO) 3	27	11.4	17	11.3
(D) 4	26	11.1	29	19.3
(SD) 5	16	6.8	13	8.7
	235	100.0	150	100.0
Mean =	2.161		2.573	

State Information

According to information provided by the Nebraska Department of Education, most movement of students from one district to another school district was from Class I districts to Class III districts. This group accounted for 180 (37.8%) of the 567 transfers in 1990-91. Another group receiving quite a number of choice students was from one Class III district to another Class III district, with 173 (30.5%) students transferring. Forty students (7 percent) chose to move from Class I district to another Class I district. The total number of Class I district students choosing a school district other than another Class I was 237. Fifty-five (9.7 percent) students from Class II districts transferred into another size of district. Class III districts had 256 (45.2 percent) of the students choose another Class III school district. Class VI districts had 19 (3.4 percent) students choose another district (see Appendix V).

Choice Applications

One hundred of the 567 approved choice applications on file with the Nebraska Department of Education were analyzed with the reasons given for choosing another school district (see Appendices VI & XI). The reasons were compiled under the same categories that the Nebraska Department of Education assigned. A total of 279 reasons for choosing another district were listed on 100 applications. The findings show that 35 (12.5 percent) of the reasons related to the instructional category. Within the instructional category, personnel was listed as a reason 14 times under the instructional category. Guidance counselor

availability was listed 4 times. Specialized teachers were mentioned 4 times. Continuity of staff was given as a reason 4 times. More one-on-one instruction was given as a reason 3 times. A combination of 6 other instructional reasons comprised the total 25 responses (see Table 16 and Appendix VI).

Curriculum was a category that was listed 80 (28.7 percent) times on the applications. Expanded curriculum opportunities was given as a reason 30 times. Fine arts was listed 18 times. Academic competition was given 7 times. Computers and business were given 7 times. Special education classes were given as a reason 4 times. Enrichment opportunities were given 4 times. Foreign language was named 4 times. Other areas were listed once or twice for the remainder of the 6 responses (see Table 16 and Appendix VII).

The category of support services received 12 (4.3 percent) of the total 279 responses. The areas under the support services that were given as reasons were library, which was mentioned 6 times. Hot lunch was marked 3 times. Transportation was given as a reason 2 times. More personalized instruction was marked one time (see Table 16 and Appendix VIII).

Climate was another category given as a reason on the actual application 77 (27.6 percent) times. Smaller class size was given as a reason 27 times. Positive learning environment and atmosphere were given 14 times. Socialization was named 14 times. Larger class size was marked 13 times. School offers greater preparation for high school was given as a reason 4 times. Full day kindergarten was given as a 3 times. Special education was mentioned as a reason 1 time. A

five-day school week was given as a reason 1 time (see Table 16 and Appendix IX).

In the category of extra-curricular activities, three areas were listed for a total of 21 (7.5 percent) times. More opportunities in athletics was mentioned 16 times. High participation rate due to good coaches was given as a reason 4 times. Small group size was given as a reason 1 time (see Table 16 and Appendix X).

Another category on the choice applications was educational opportunities. Educational opportunities was given as a reason 54 (19.4 percent) times. Convenience was given as a reason 25 times. Academic excellence was listed 14 times. Accredited school was given as reason 5 times. Transportation was marked 4 times. Enrollment was given as a reason 2 times. After school care was given as a reason 2 times. The availability of college courses was given as a reason 1 time. A four day week was given as a reason 1 time (Table 16 and Appendix XI).

The reasons given most often were in the category of expanded curriculum, which was given as a reason 30 (10.8 percent) times. Smaller class size was listed as a reason 27 times. Convenience was given as a reason 25 times. Fine arts programs were given as a reason 18 times. Athletic opportunities were given as a reason 16 times. Instructional personnel, socialization opportunities, positive learning environment and academic excellence were each mentioned 14 times. Other reasons listed were ranked lower than these areas (Table 16).

Table 16

Reasons for Participating in Choice

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Instructional		
Personnel	14	5.0
Guidance Counselor	4	1.4
Specialized Teachers	4	1.4
Continuity of Staff	4	1.4
One-on-One Instruction	3	1.1
Combination of Other	6	2.2
Subtotal	35	12.5
Curriculum		
Expanded Curriculum	30	10.8
Fine Arts	18	6.5
Academic Competition	7	2.5
Computers & Business	7	2.5
Speech Education	4	1.4
Enrichment	4	1.4
Foreign Language	4	1.4
Combination of Other	6	2.2
Subtotal	80	28.7

Table 16 (Continued)

Reasons for Participating in Choice

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Support Services		
Library	6	2.2
Hot Lunch	3	1.1
Transportation	2	0.7
Personalized Services	1	0.4
Subtotal	12	4.3
Climate		
Smaller Classes	27	9.7
Positive Learning Environment	14	5.0
Socialization	14	5.0
Larger Class Size	13	4.7
High School Preparation	4	1.4
Full-day Kindergarten	3	1.1
Special Education	1	0.4
Five Day Week	1	0.4
Subtotal	77	27.6
Extra-Curricular Activities		
Athletic Opportunities	16	5.7

Table 16 (Continued)

Reasons for Participating in Choice

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Good Coaches	4	1.4
Small Group Size	1	0.4
Subtotal	21	7.5
Educational Opportunities		
Convenience	25	9.0
Academic Excellence	14	5.0
Accredited School	5	1.8
Transportation	4	1.4
Enrollment	2	0.7
After School Care	2	0.7
College Courses	1	0.4
Four Day Week	1	0.4
Subtotal	54	19.4
Total	29	100.0

According to information gathered by the Nebraska Department of Education (see Appendix V), during the 1990-91 school year, 567 students transferred to another district. Four hundred thirty-seven of these students were in kindergarten

through eighth grade. One hundred-thirty students from grades 9-12 chose to attend a different school district (see Table 17).

Table 17

Students Who Exercised the Option of Choice During the 1990-91 School Year

Grade Level	Number of Students
K	59
1	39
2	38
3	37
4	35
5	50
6	50
7	57
8	72
9	32
10	40
11	32
12	26
TOTAL	567

The Nebraska Department of Education categorized the reasons stated on the applications from parents on the choice applications into six areas. One thousand six hundred eighty-five reasons were listed on the choice forms. Of those categories, curriculum -- which includes course offerings -- was given as a reason 671 (39.8 percent) times. Instructional personnel (teachers, counselors and administrators) was given as a reason 108 (6.4 percent) times. Support services such as libraries and school lunch programs were given as reasons 75 (4.4 percent) times. The climate of the school -- which included student discipline, school facility, social opportunities and class size -- was given as a reason 355 (21.1 percent) times. Extra-curricular activities such as student organizations, curriculum related activities or athletics were given as reasons for choosing another district 165 (9.8 percent) times. The category of other educational opportunities -- which includes better preparation for higher education, geographic convenience, academic competition, and being an accredited school -- was given as a reason 311 (18.5 percent) times (see Appendix XII).

The reasons given on the 100 randomly sampled approved state choice applications and the reasons listed on the 557 state applications were relatively close. The greatest percentage difference was in the category of curriculum. In the 100 applications, curriculum was given 28.7 percent of the time, while in the applications from the state, curriculum was given as a reason for choosing another district 39.8 percent of the time. Instruction was given as a reason 12.5 percent of the time. Instructional services was listed only 6.4 percent of the time on all of

the applications that the state has on file. Another category that had a small difference was in the category of school climate. School climate was given as a reason 6.5 percent more on the 100 applications that were analyzed than the amount of times that it was mentioned on the total applications on file with the Nebraska Department of Education. The areas of support services, extra curricular and other educational opportunities all together only showed a difference of 3.3 percent from the surveys analyzed in this study and the ones on file with the Department of Education.

Telephone Questionnaire

Twenty-four of the total 235 superintendents that responded were contacted by phone and asked to respond to 12 questions. Of the superintendents called, ten school districts did not participate in the school choice program for the 1990-91 school year and 14 did participate in the choice program. Information obtained by use of the telephone questionnaire was grouped by patterns of responses according to the grounded theory.

Superintendents from the school districts not participating in the choice program were asked in question #6 why they did not participate for the 1990-91 school year and how they will be participating during the 1991-92 school year. The following reasons comprised the responses from the ten schools who did not participate in the choice plan for the 1990-91 school year. Five (50 percent) did not participate because the school board did not want to participate. Two schools (20 percent) did not participate because schools surrounding them did not

participate so they would not have had any students to draw from. Two schools (20 percent) did not participate because the money allotted by the Nebraska state legislature was not adequate enough to cover the cost of educating the choice student. One school (10 percent) did not participate because it was contracting students in at \$5,270.00 per year and to participate would have caused the school district to lose money.

Of the superintendents surveyed who did not participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year, five (50 percent) said during the telephone survey that they will be participating during the 1991-92 school year only as the state mandates. Five (50 percent) of the districts will be participating both as resident and option districts for the 1991-92 school year (see Appendix XIII).

Superintendents were asked in question #7 if the school district participated in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year, why did the district decide to participate? Of the 14 participating school districts, 5 (36 percent) of the superintendents felt they would have to participate sooner or later, so they decided to participate the first year of the choice plan. Three (22 percent) superintendents believed that it would open up possibilities for students to attend their school. Two (14 percent) of the districts were not afraid of losing students to other schools. The remaining 4 (28 percent) schools had separate reasons for participating (see Appendix XIV).

Superintendents were asked in question #8 what they perceived as the advantages or benefits of the choice program for the administrators, staff, students

and parents. There was no pattern in the responses of superintendents from participating districts compared to those who did not participate. The 24 superintendents answered as follows about each of the four groups. Fifteen (63 percent) of the superintendents felt that there were no advantages to the administrators because of the choice plan. Seven (29 percent) believed that the choice plan would make them become more aware of what the school is actually offering to students in all areas. One (4 percent) felt that the gain of students could help justify his job as the superintendent. One (4 percent) felt that the gain of students would give him and the school district prestige (see Appendix XV).

Fifteen (63 percent) of the superintendents believed that there was no advantage to staff members due to the choice plan. Eight (33 percent) felt that the choice plan would cause some self imposed improvement of the teachers. One (4 percent) believed that teachers would have more prestige if the school gained students because of the choice plan (see Appendix XV).

Eleven (46 percent) of the superintendents who were questioned believed that the choice plan would give students the opportunity to get the best education possible. Eight (34 percent) felt that the choice plan would allow unhappy students to move to another district. Two (8 percent) believed that the choice plan would allow students to select schools that offer non-traditional classes. One (4 percent) felt that there were no advantages to students; 1 (4 percent) felt that the choice plan would allow students with special needs easy access to a school that would fit their needs; and 1 (4 percent) felt that the choice plan would allow

students to choose another school that had a winning athletic program (see Appendix XV).

Nine (38 percent) of the superintendents believed that the choice plan gave parents options in selecting programs for their kids. Seven (29 percent) felt that the choice plan would allow parents who get disgruntled with their resident school to choose another district. Six (25 percent) believed that the choice plan could benefit parents because it would give them convenience in geographic proximity. One (4 percent) superintendent felt that parents do not have to wait for a small district to close before they choose to go to a larger district. One (4 percent) believed that the choice concept would give parents more power in pressuring school boards and administrators in times of conflict (see Appendix XV).

Superintendents were asked in question #9 what they perceived as the disadvantages or problems of the choice plan for the administrators, staff, students and parents. Seven (29 percent) of the superintendents felt that funding was the main disadvantage. Four (17 percent) believed that planning for enrollment fluctuations was a disadvantage. Four (17 percent) superintendents felt that a disadvantage to administrators was that it just caused more paperwork. Three (13 percent) believed that the choice plan would bring about more discipline problems. Two (8 percent) believed that if a school loses students by the choice plan, that there will be a considerable amount of community pressure put on the administration. One (4 percent) felt that only problem students will be using the choice plan. One (4 percent) believed that there are no disadvantages for

administrators. One (4 percent) saw transportation as a problem. One (4 percent) believed that the choice program would allow parents the chance to become upset with the administration if they do not like the way school is going (see Appendix XVI).

Six (25 percent) of the superintendents believed that class enrollment changes could be a problem. Six (25 percent) superintendents felt that discipline would be a problem or disadvantage for teachers. Five (20 percent) felt that if a school loses students that it could jeopardize staff positions. Two (8 percent) felt that teachers having to prepare for a wide range of students due to the choice plan could be a problem. One (4 percent) believed that it would be hard for teachers to continually remind choice students of the option school rules and regulations. One (4 percent) felt teachers would have to deal with more negative parents. One (4 percent) felt that there would be no disadvantages for staff. One (4 percent) believed that students who are moving for non-educational reasons would be a problem (see Appendix XVI).

Five (20 percent) superintendents felt that it could be a disadvantage for students, who become disgruntled with the option district, to cope or move back to their resident district at the end of the school year. Five (20 percent) believed that the choice plan would be a disadvantage for students since it gives them an easy escape from problem classmates. Four (18 percent) believed that there were no disadvantages for students due to choice. Three (13 percent) felt that athletic recruitment could be a problem for students. Three (13 percent) believed that

making students aware of what is offered in the option district is a disadvantage. Two (8 percent) felt that peer pressure from students from the previous school would be a problem. Two (8 percent) felt a school may lose too many students and would have to close (see Appendix XVI).

Five (25 percent) superintendents believed that there were no disadvantages for parents in the choice plan. Four (17 percent) believed that transportation could be a problem for parents. Three (13 percent) believed that option students parents will have no say in how the option school is operated. Three (13 percent) believed that parents may feel that the option school will not be the school for their children after they have chosen the school. Two (8 percent) felt that if too many students choose another school, it could be a problem for parents. Two (8 percent) felt that if the choice student is unhappy at the option school it could cause discipline problems for them, which in turn could cause problems at home. One (4 percent) felt that the lack of funding for the choice students could cause a financial burden on the parents of the option district. One (4 percent) felt that parents will have a problem with indecisiveness in choosing a school for their children. One (4 percent) felt that parents of option students still having a say in their resident district operation of the school could be a problem. One (4 percent) felt that transportation could be a problem for parents (see Appendix XVI).

Superintendents responded to question #10 as to whether or not the choice program will change their schools' curriculum with 19 (79 percent) of the twenty-four commenting that the choice program would have very little or no

impact on their curriculum. Three (13 percent) of the 24 superintendents commented that student enrollment numbers do somewhat dictate the curriculum; more students mean that more courses must be offered. One (4 percent) believed that it is hard to predict if choice will make any changes after only one year. One (4 percent) felt that if schools do not change their curricula that they might lose students to other schools (see Appendix XVII).

Superintendents were asked in question #11 whether the choice program caused a change in staff effectiveness. Nine (38 percent) felt that the choice plan would not change the effectiveness of the staff. Eight (33 percent) of the respondents believed it was too early to tell whether the staffs' effectiveness was changed. Four (17 percent) felt that there might be change in the effectiveness of the staff if the teachers are concerned about a smaller enrollment in their classes. Three (12 percent) of the superintendents felt that good teachers do not change for reasons like the choice plan (see Appendix XVIII).

The final question that was asked of the 24 superintendents was: "As a school official, what do you perceive as the most important or significant impact of the choice program?" Seven (29 percent) believed the choice plan is significant because it gives dissatisfied students and parents a choice in educational programs. Six (24 percent) felt that competition due to choice program should help improve the education process. Four (17 percent) felt choice is significant as it will lead to back door reorganization or consolidation. Two (8 percent) believed that the choice program has just caused confusion for everyone involved.

Two (8 percent) felt that improvements will be made in academic areas as a result of the choice plan. Two (8 percent) felt that choice has caused movement from one district to another for non-educational reasons. One (4 percent) believed that the choice program is better suited for larger cities and larger school systems (see Appendix XIX).

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

A restatement of the research questions, a summary of the major findings from the various data presented in Chapter IV, a discussion of the implications of these findings for the school districts in the State of Nebraska and conclusions have been included in this chapter.

This study analyzes five aspects of the impact of choice legislation.

(1) Enrollment of students was studied by addressing the number of transfers for the 1990-91 school year.

(2) Reasons given for the transfers from the Nebraska Department of Education.

(3) Change brought about in curriculum and finance in school districts that participated in the choice plan.

(4) Perceptions of superintendents and board chairpersons about the advantages and disadvantages of public school choice as seen from school officials' perspectives.

(5) Practices employed by school district officials were explored to prepare for the future years of choice students.

Research Questions

Question #1: Research question #1 was: How many schools of Class II, III and VI districts participated in the choice program during the 1990-91 school year?

Information gathered from the Nebraska Department of Education indicates that 17 (37 percent) Class II, 106 (50 percent) Class III, and 12 (60 percent) Class VI schools participated either as a resident, option, or resident and option district for the 1990-91 school year.

Question #2: Research question #2 was: How many students transferred during the first year of the choice plan? Information gathered from the Nebraska Department of Education Data Center revealed that 437 kindergarten through eighth grade students and 130 ninth through twelfth grade students transferred, for a total of 567 transfers.

Question #3: Research question #3 was: What are the reasons given by students choosing to attend another school district through the choice plan? The most frequently used reason given by students for choosing another school district on the 100 approved choice applications provided by the Nebraska Department of Education was the need for expanded curricula. The need for expanded curricula indicates that students want to have the opportunity to take a greater variety of course offerings. In order to take more courses, the students might need to choose a larger school district. The reason most given second was smaller class size. The third most given reason was convenience. Convenience for the parents

as they might work in the option district or convenience for the students and parents as they live closer to the option district. Allowing students and parents to choose another school district because of convenience could make students and parents more satisfied with their school district. Fine arts offerings was the fourth most given reason. The need for fine arts programs may indicate that students want more course offerings than the basic requirements. The fifth most given reason for choosing another district did not concern academics, but rather athletics. The availability of athletic opportunities may indicate that students believe that athletics is a vital part of the education system (see Appendices VI-XI).

The variety of reasons that were stated on the choice applications for choosing another school district may reflect the variety of student interests. The findings on their question supports Nathan (1989) belief that there is no one best kind of school.

Question #4: Research question #4 was: How many students are choosing to attend a school with smaller enrollment and, how many are choosing to attend a school with a larger enrollment? Information provided by the Nebraska Department of Education Data Center (see Appendix 5) indicates that the majority of movement of students due to the choice plan was from Class I districts to Class III districts. Students choosing to attend a larger size school district may indicate the need for more course offerings. The next largest number of transfers was within the Class III districts, which may indicate convenience or students' and parents' dissatisfaction with their present school district.

Question #5a: Research question #5a was: How much should the state pay an option district for each choice student that they receive? The responses from the superintendents and the board chairpersons on the mailed questionnaire indicated that the state should pay the state average per pupil cost for each option student. The findings of this question could be very important in notifying the state legislation on how much money should be appropriated for each choice students. This information may indicate to the state legislature that the dollar amount assigned to each choice student needs to be at least the state average per pupil cost.

Question #5b: Research question #5b was: Did the dollar amount accompanying choice students affect your district's decision to participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year? Responses from the mailed questionnaire from superintendents and board chairpersons strongly indicated that the dollar amount assigned for each choice student did not affect whether or not their school district participated in the choice plan. Considering budgeting problems that school districts face, one would think that the financial part of the choice plan would have been a key factor in a school district's participation in the choice plan. The responses to this research question may indicate the school officials are satisfied with the dollar amount (state per pupil cost average) that was assigned per choice student.

Question #6: Research question #6 was: What programs were added or deleted due to the choice program? Responses from questionnaires of school

officials indicated that no programs had been added or deleted due to the choice program. The responses may indicate that school officials are not aware of what courses or programs that could be added to their school which might entice students from other districts to enroll.

Question #7: Research question #7 was: What do superintendents and school board chairpersons perceive to be the general impact of the choice legislation upon the quality of student learning and staff effectiveness in their school districts? The superintendents and board chairpersons that responded to the mailed questionnaire felt that the choice plan had not improved student satisfaction in their school system. This may indicate that the school officials have not had any direct correspondence with the students to actually see if they are more satisfied with their school district now that they have the option to choose another school district.

School officials felt strongly that student academic achievement has not been affected by the students' ability to choose another school district. The responses may indicate that not enough students have used their option to choose another district to ensure any teaching changes or class size changes in the schools. According to Elmore (1986) academic achievement should increase due to students taking a more serious approach to their school work.

School officials believed that the choice program had not encouraged athletic recruitment in their schools. The responses may illustrate the satisfaction that students have in their schools athletic programs. Loyalty in athletics may play an

important part in whether a student chooses another school and may reduce students opting out of the local school.

In answering the question on whether or not the choice plan had caused any curricular changes in their school system the responses were very one-sided. The vast majority believed that no change in their curricular offerings had taken place due to the choice plan. The responses on this question may indicate the feeling of school officials that they are doing things right in their schools in regard to curriculum offerings and that they do not need to change in any areas.

The majority of superintendents surveyed on the telephone survey believed there definitely has been a visible effect in their district due to choice. The telephone survey substantiated this in that the superintendents said that parents and students felt that schools have to do what they want them to do or they will choose another district for their child. The superintendents perceptions on the telephone survey on this topic of a visible effect on their district differed from the school officials perceptions on the mailed survey. The superintendents and board chairpersons on the mailed questionnaire overwhelmingly felt the choice program had no visible effect on the school district. The difference in the responses from the mailed questionnaire and the telephone questionnaire may indicate the superintendents willingness to talk more openly in a more personal environment.

Question #8: Research question #8 was: What do superintendents and school officials see as the advantages and disadvantages of the school choice legislation? The most frequent response given by superintendents on the

telephone survey was that the main advantage of the choice to students was that it will give students the opportunity to get the best education possible. This answer would seem to indicate that superintendents wanting students to get the best education possible. The major disadvantage of the choice legislation, as shown by the responses on the telephone survey, was the funding. Although funding was not a key factor in whether a school district participated in the choice plan for the 1990-91 school year, this may show that funding for each student is still a factor that needs to be addressed by the lawmakers.

The superintendents surveyed by telephone believed that the most significant impact of the choice legislation is that it gives dissatisfied students and parents a choice in educational programs. The answer that was a close second was that competition due to the choice program should help improve the education process.

Major Findings

The reasons for choosing another school district taken from the Nebraska Department of Education approved application forms reflected that a need for an expanded curriculum is the primary area of importance to students and parents. The need for expanded curriculum possibly explained why the majority of movement from one school district to another was from a Class I district to a Class III district. Oglesby (1990) stated that choice encourages expansion of curriculum opportunities.

The perceptions of school officials was that the amount of money that the legislature appropriated per option student was not a factor in whether the school district participated in the plan. The perception of school officials that clearly stood out is the feeling of not wanting to participate in something new.

Comments were made during the telephone interview about the fear of the unknowns of choice during the first year if their district participated.

An important finding that was established during the telephone survey is that the majority of the superintendents felt that choice will allow students the option to obtain the best education possible. Two findings of the choice legislation on school districts were that dissatisfied parents and students have a choice in educational programs. Raywid (1984) and Randall (1989) both express the same view that choice allows students the option to obtain the best education possible and increases student and parent satisfaction (Raywid, 1984; Randall, 1989). The school choice program should help improve the quality of education for all students in Nebraska.

Recommendations

Since school officials in the state of Nebraska seem to be uneasy about problems that might occur because of the choice plan two studies should be initiated:

1. Evaluation of present legislation - The study should address any problems as concerns that have arisen during the first and second year of school choice in Nebraska and what school officials can do to be prepared.

Due to the number of students who have exercised their option to choose another school district the dollar amount appropriated was less than half the money per student than was intended by the legislature. The Nebraska legislature needs to appropriate more money to make up for the increase in students to bring the funding up to the point intended by their legislation.

2. Need for longitudinal research - The study should focus on students who participate in choice. The study could be beneficial to get more data. Students grade point averages, high school attendance, post-secondary education trends could all be studied. A study would be beneficial if all claims for choice could be tested against reality.

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APPENDIX I
Choice Questionnaire

CHOICE QUESTIONNAIRE
General Instructions

Please respond to each item on this questionnaire that is appropriate to your school district. Read each question carefully and then circle the response that best represents your answer, or fill in the blank when appropriate.

1. What is your class of school District?

II

III

VI

2. What is your position with your school district?

Superintendent

Board Chairperson

3. How many years have you served your district in your present position?

4. How far away from your school district is the closest class II, III, or VI school district?

5. Did your school district participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year?

Yes No

6. If your school participated in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year, to what extent did the district participate?

Resident Option Resident & Option District

7. If your district did not participate in 1990-91, to what extent is your district planning on participating for the 1991-92 school year?

Resident Option Resident & Option District

8. How much money should be allocated by the state for each choice student? _____

On questions 9-15, please rate how you as a school official perceive the effects of school choice on your school district using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
 2 = Agree
 3 = No Opinion
 4 = Disagree
 5 = Strongly Disagree

9. The dollar amount assigned by the legislature for the 1990-91 choice plan affected your district's participation.

1 2 3 4 5

10. The choice program has increased student satisfaction in your school.

1 2 3 4 5

11. The choice program has increased individual academic achievement in your school.

1 2 3 4 5

12. The choice program has promoted athletic recruitment in your school.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Competition for students brought about by the choice program has caused your district to upgrade curricular programs.

1 2 3 4 5

14. Public school choice will reduce drop out rates.

1 2 3 4 5

15. The choice program has had no visible effect on our school district.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX II
Choice Questionnaire

CHOICE QUESTIONNAIRE
General Instructions

Please respond to each item on this questionnaire that is appropriate to your school district. Read each question carefully and then circle the response that best represents your answer, or fill in the blank when appropriate.

1. What is your class of school District?

II III VI

2. What is your position with your school district?

Superintendent Board Chairperson

3. How many years have you served your district in your present position?

4. How far away from your school district is the closest class II, III, or VI school district?

5. Did your school district participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year?

Yes No

6. If your school district did not participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year, please explain why and will the reasons keep you from participating for the 1991-92 school year?
7. If your school district did participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school why did you decide to participate?
8. As a school official, what do you perceive as the advantages or benefits of the choice program for the following groups?
- Administration -
- Staff -
- Students -
- Parents -
9. As a school official, what do you perceive as the disadvantages or problems of the choice procedure for the following groups?
- Administration -
- Staff -
- Students -
- Parents -

10. How will the choice program impact your districts curriculum?

11. Will the choice program impact staff effectiveness?

12. As a school official, what do you perceive as the most important or significant impact of the choice program?

APPENDIX III

Survey Letter



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

BOX 217 • 401 WALNUT STREET • SUTHERLAND, NEBRASKA 69165 • 308/386-4656 • FAX 308-386-2426

Dear Fellow Educator:

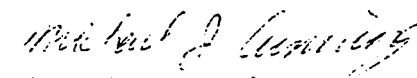
School districts in the State of Nebraska are just completing their first year of the new school choice plan. As a school official, you must deal with the associated changes that may have occurred in your district to meet the requirements of LB 183.

The purpose of the study is to determine if the choice plan has made an impact in your district and what will you be doing differently to prepare for future years of choice. The perceptions of superintendents and school board chairpersons about the advantages and disadvantages of school choice will be valuable in establishing a base of information for future studies.

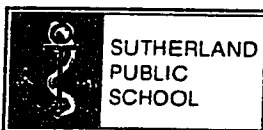
Because of your position as superintendent, I would sincerely appreciate your participation in this study. The questionnaire requires approximately ten minutes to complete. Your response will be held in strict confidence and will only be used for statistical purposes.

Please return the questionnaire by April 19, 1991 in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope. I will be following up on this survey with a telephone questionnaire with 10% of the respondents. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Educationally,


Michael J. Cuning
Superintendent

APPENDIX IV
Follow-up Survey Letter



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

BOX 217 • 401 WALNUT STREET • SUTHERLAND, NEBRASKA 69165 • 308/386-4656 • FAX 308-386-2426

Dear Board President:

You will recall that several weeks ago, I sent to you a questionnaire regarding the new school choice plan. As you have not responded to that initial inquiry, I am sending you a second copy of the same questionnaire with the hope that you can complete and return it to me in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope at your earliest convenience.

Your response will be held in strict confidence and will be aggregated for statistical purposes only; no individual responses will be revealed. Please return the enclosed questionnaire by June 1, 1991.

Educationally,

Michael J. Cuning
Superintendent

APPENDIX V

**Movement Of Students Between Classes of Districts Based
Upon Approved Applications**

TABLE C
 MOVEMENT OF STUDENTS BETWEEN CLASSES OF DISTRICTS BASED UPON APPROVED APPLICATIONS
 1990-91

	<u>From Resident District</u>						<u>To Option District</u>						<u>Percent of Applications Received</u>
	<u>Class 1</u>	<u>Class 2</u>	<u>Class 3</u>	<u>Class 4</u>	<u>Class 5</u>	<u>Class 6</u>	<u>Class 1</u>	<u>Class 2</u>	<u>Class 3</u>	<u>Class 4</u>	<u>Class 5</u>	<u>Class 6</u>	
Class 1	237						40	14	180	0	0	3	41.80
Class 2	55						0	0	54	0	0	1	9.70
Class 3	256						39	32	173	0	0	12	45.15
Class 4	0						0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Class 5	0						0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Class 6	19						0	4	8	0	0	7	3.35
TOTAL	567						79	50	415	0	0	23	100.00

NDE
 EOP/CJD
 June 3, 1991

APPENDIX VI
Instructional Personnel

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

Counselor available.

Elementary Guidance Counselor.

Specialized teachers at the junior high level.

Diversity of teaching philosophy from year to year.

Separate teacher for each grade or portion thereof.

Mother group/supportive staff/aides.

One-on-one basis, teacher/student - teacher/parent.

The option school has more veteran teachers.

Want her to go to the option school because more continuity of teachers.

Quality of high school teachers.

Middle school counselor.

We feel that the education staff would be more able to catch any problems, or decreasing grades and help our child to improve on more of an individual basis, her skills in learning.

The consistency in administration and faculty is allowing the system to work towards the highest quality of education.

Teachers in specialized field of study.

APPENDIX VII

Curriculum

CURRICULUM

Larger class enrollment with increased academic competition.

Expanded curriculum options.

The option school district offers an exploratory foreign language program to elementary students.

The option school district provides for a more comprehensive elementary and high school music program.

The overall curriculum has a larger variety including advanced computers, office procedures, general business, school publications, life skills, a much advanced art and speech program, and a more diversified agriculture program including a power technology class.

The basic opportunities.

My son attended their school before our family moved into the other district and we are satisfied with his progress as he is enrolled in special education.

Algebra, home economics, wood shop, home mechanics, band, orchestra, vocal music, software class, academic tales, Spanish.

Larger classes.

Physical education advantages.

Arts and music advantages.

Opportunities to choose high school courses.

Access to labs, shops, home economics, computer classes, physical education, shop, woodworking, mechanics, foreign language, typing, drivers education, school newspaper, journalism.

More educational opportunities in music and physical education.

He is enrolled in special program.

Available computer usage and instruction.

Elementary computer use.

CURRICULUM

Gifted and enrichment programs.

Individual art programs.

Computer class, guidance, industrial arts, home economics, physical education, art, electives, band and chorus -- these classes are offered in addition to the basic math, geography, science and English classes.

Business field.

Music, band, and vocal, computer skills, physical education.

Expanded curriculum.

The option district provides a more complete academic schedule.

A more varied and complete curriculum.

A much stronger arts program, band and vocal, drama.

Availability of individual instrumental instruction (band) and sectional instructional.

Art, music, computers and physical education.

Enrichment activities.

Free time music.

Full time vocational agriculture program.

Vocational agriculture classes.

Wide diversity of classes.

More opportunities in the area of music, drama, and the arts. We feel the quality of the teacher and the educational opportunities are much better.

Enrichment programs.

Art, music, computer, science, outside resources.

Physical education.

CURRICULUM

Special Education, help with math and writing.

Curriculum is causing undo stress because of being accustomed to smaller school.

Shop, home economics and band.

Broader more specialized areas of instruction are offered in math and science and English.

A computer curriculum is required to enhance computer literacy.

Art, home economics, physical education, agriculture and music are specialized areas of the curriculum offered to students.

Learning center.

Option district offers: Spanish III, advanced biology, keyboarding, word processing, business law, adv. algebra, adv. physics, chemistry, speech, literature, and world history on a yearly basis where the resident district doesn't.

Wider range of subjects.

Greater computer access.

Student art, future problem solvers.

More study time because of seven classes per day compared to eight.

English, social studies, math, earth science, P.E., introduction to computers, speech, English composition, health, home economics, industrial technology, business, art, agri-tech, vocal music, instrumental music.

I believe that the option school will give a better education.

Cooperative learning, spalding program, educational assemblies.

Would affect grades if moved to another school.

Better opportunities in music, P.E. and more.

Fifth year math (Calculus), honors English, 1st, 2nd, 3rd year French.

CURRICULUM

Broader curriculum.

Music (Band and Vocal), P.E., computer skills.

Certified music, art, P.E. instruction.

Possibility of accelerated math/reading. Computer instruction, current textbooks and references.

This school district provides the programs and course that our budget needs.

More choice of classes, to further his education.

Aside from the required classes the district offers courses in Spanish, shop, home ec., band and vocal music.

There is a broad area covered in the field of science.

Music and P.E.

Quality education.

The music program is highly supported by the school system and has both an instrumental and vocal instructor. The program allows the student unlimited opportunity to excel in their area.

Opportunities to take a greater number of math related subjects.

Option district can provide much better exposure and opportunity for greater education in the following areas: academic, competition, music, business skills, foreign language.

Art skills.

Drama.

Classes for excellent students that excel in the classroom.

Music and band programs.

Physical education.

CURRICULUM

Computer education.

Departmentalize instruction.

Elective subjects of home economics, typing, agriculture and computer.

Elective subjects of home economics, typing, agriculture and computer.

French awareness classes.

APPENDIX VIII

Support Services

SUPPORT SERVICES

Library media, texts, resources, supplies, and equipment facilities are excellent, adequate and up to date.

School lunch program is a plus.

Hot lunch program available.

Library media.

More personalized attention.

Transportation to and from school.

Bus route have better roads.

Larger library.

Complete media opportunities.

Literacy -- larger library.

Library facilities.

APPENDIX IX

Climate

CLIMATE

Progressive, positive learning environment and atmosphere with exhibition of strong school/community pride.

Five day school week.

The option school district provided for full kindergarten rather than half days.

We feel this would be beneficial to our child. Because it is in a smaller school he would receive more individual attention.

My son is in special education and move would interrupt the educational process and be detrimental to my son's educational development.

Positive life styles.

Availability of exploratory classes.

Greater preparation for high school.

Better socialization for students.

Variety of teachers to minimize boredom.

One teacher per grade level, therefore, more class time per subject.

Cooperative learning and social skills.

A more personal student teacher relationship.

Smaller class size.

Has a no fail policy that encourages the student to study. The classes are small and there is individual help. The standards for education and moral conduct are in keeping with the family traditions.

More children in grade level.

The ration of students to teachers is a major factor. It allows students more individual attention which enhances their educational opportunities.

Smaller class size allows a greater chance in receiving scholarships to state supported colleges.

CLIMATE

School promotes self-esteem and motivations which has unveiled learning achievement.

Social interaction.

We believe that the larger class size represent a more comprehensive environment, providing a bigger challenge both socially and academically.

Social interactions.

Class size to stimulate competitiveness.

Big virtue of a larger enrollment a more comprehensive program of screening and growing. Students to accelerated or remedial curriculum is practically available.

The kindergarten program is all day and all year instead of half days and half a year giving these student an added boost for the rest of their elementary years.

Association with older students.

More sound education.

Smaller class size.

Cheerful, pleasant.

Educational quality, student discipline, class size, kinder environment.

Social contact.

Optimum class size.

Lower student teacher ration.

Increased opportunities for social interactions.

Friendly warm atmosphere conducive to education and self-esteem building and free from socio-economic pre judgements.

She would not be alone in her grade and she would also have other students her age.

CLIMATE

Resident district has not been able to meet unique personnel and emotional needs.

We feel that there would be more students in each class so that there is more discussion.

There is more in depth study in each class and it is more of a high school setting.

Smaller class size.

No peer pressure from other students to try drugs, alcohol or sex.

We feel that our son would be better served by the environment and attention he would receive in a smaller school. Their personnel, familiar attention received would fit into our lifestyle and our way of raising our son that the larger school cannot provide.

Want to have our child in a larger school where she will have someone in her class and have competition.

The larger the grade school our child goes to the less of a shock she will have when she attends high school in a larger town.

Broader base of student exposure to improve social skills.

I believe the school will offer my child a variety of learning experience, through a structured classroom setting with larger classrooms that will enhance her education.

A more suitable learning environment for a conscientious student. Quieter -- carpeting and central locker location, cut down noise, more spacious -- no trailers, no crowded study halls, larger stricter with more control and stricter control, no eating in study halls, individualized study skills organized better -- resource center available, construction started before a dire need, smaller classes, larger cafeteria and sitting area.

An environment more conducive to education.

Smaller classes.

CLIMATE

School district offers a smaller teacher to student ratio therefore we feel our daughters educational growth will be stimulated by a more individualized educational environment.

They have set number fifteen or more, then they split the class so that a teacher has more time with each child. Also, I would like for both of my children to attend summer school.

Has special discipline problems which will be better served by special staff at the option district.

Larger classrooms offers opportunity for improved socialization and self evaluation. She is presently in a class of 4 boys and 3 girls. We feel this is too small for optimum classroom dynamics.

Small class size.

More of rural setting close relationship with school personnel and peers; family accepted values.

The size of classes are smaller.

Individual attention given because of size of classes.

Small school environment.

Small class size.

Needs challenge of more classmates.

Smaller class size.

Smaller class size.

More individualized attention, better student-teacher ratio.

It is a larger school with more classes and more students.

Attend a small class B high school and she would be more comfortable in a smaller high school.

Safe environment with institution for emergencies.

CLIMATE

More children in her grade.

Much more individual instruction due to class size available.

There is much more emphasis on independent study, almost an open classroom approach to learning, activity oriented, but with limits.

The school size makes it more of a family atmosphere and the fact that different ages of students are in the same classroom help to eliminate "peer pressure", also being located where it is, rural offers a less high pressure atmosphere not nearly as many outside negative influences. The school has every modern convenience for education available to them.

Stable school system.

Smaller class size.

Closer student teacher association.

More direct supervision.

More favorable peer acceptance.

Advantages of self-containment.

A more positive atmosphere for self-worth, social development which she will not get in a class of four.

Advantages of self-containment.

Diversity in social contact.

College preparation which will be increasingly important in the future job market.

APPENDIX X
Extra-Curricular

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Because none of my friends go to this school and I have a better chance in sports and I've always been in a small school and my parents would rather have me there.

Availability of athletic programs.

Sports program offered -- volleyball, football, basketball, track and cheerleading.

The school is proud of its high participation rate in school activities.

Sports activities offered to both boys and girls.

Roller skating after school in the gym and swimming in the pool.

More opportunities in athletics.

Has already participate in jr. high track program and would like to continue his education there.

Increased opportunities for participation in school activities.
5-8th basketball track.

Small group size (coach/student ratio with more opportunities to receive extra help. Greater chance of participation).

She will be able to participate in sports and more activities that they don't have here.

Sports (basketball and track) jr. high.

Sports are available such as football, basketball and track.

Wrestling.

Duality extra-curricular activities (Sports, FFA)

Greater number of competitive sports.

Wider range of extra-curricular activities.

More competitive coaches in sports activities.

Sports program.

Certified coach in sporting events.

APPENDIX XI
Other Educational Opportunities

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Strong emphasis on academic excellence.

In case of emergency as if problems arise Mrs. _____ is employed in the district and would be more readily available.

I would like my daughter to attend district # because of quality of education she will receive. I would also like her to attend a larger school district. Finally since I teach in the same district I will be able to monitor her learning more closely.

A college prep English course will be offered allowing my son to get 6 hours of credit for college.

By keeping the student at the same elementary school after school care needs can be appropriately met because our change of residence is beyond half of the school year the student would not benefit from the change.

Go from a non-accredited school to an accredited school.

Both parents work in the other district and we have been paying tuition for a couple years and we prefer our kids to stay at that school.

More activities and competition in her grade.

For the 1989-90 school year he is attending on a tuition basis. We would like to continue sending him to the same school in 1990-91 under the options enrollment.

Both FFA and vocational agriculture are available in the option district.

When our children advance to the high school level, we will be closer to school (transportation via a state highway).

Since the children's mother is currently employed in the option district transportation is easily provided. She will also be quickly accessible should the children require attention at school.

Enrollment large enough to financially justify classes.

Considerations deal with distance, children arrangements and convenience.

We both teach in the option school district.

Convenience of school schedule.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

More children enrolled. Sister is going to school because there aren't any girls in resident district. So we want family members in the same school. Also, there aren't any younger children in the resident district.

Offers high school.

North Central Accredited School district.

I plan to move back out on the farm and would like to stay in the same school.

Near home.

Option district is accredited rather than approved.

Parents are both teachers at the school. Educational progress may best be monitored by her parents if she attends the same school in which her parents are teachers.

This school would help prepare her better for high school so she would not have a big adjustment going into ninth grade.

Closer to work place (handy to pick up).

Next year he will be sent there anyway.

All the staff is willing to work hard for the children's best education.

Way more individual attention per student.

Child has attended this option school for the last two years.

The best option to her is that the classroom will contain only one grade level that will enable her to learn at the same rate as students her age. We live 1 mile away from and four miles from the option school.

Closer for a non-driving high achiever to participate.

Is attending the high school at the present time. If she attends high school, she will have to board with a family in the option district. Now she can live at home and attend the district.

Have been attending this school for the vocational agriculture program.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Convenient has always attended this school.

More competition.

Parents moved out of the district and she would prefer to continue her sequential program and graduate from this school.

We have tuitioned our children for two years to the option school.

The bus goes right by our house on its everyday route.

I work in the option district and it is easier for me to pick the children up if they get sick or if something should happen to one of them.

I teach in option district which will enable me to have a bigger part in her education.

Going into his senior year and he wants to finish here.

All three other family members in city daily.

Same school system as her sister.

Accredited system.

Older brother already attend the option district.

Competition.

Competition with others in same grade.

We know that being in "town" school isn't for everyone, but please consider seriously the transfer please. We honestly feel he has outgrown the "country" school and is emotionally, academically and physically ready to meet a new challenge.

The primary reason that the student needs to move is geographical reason and convenience. Both parents work in the community and it is thus more convenient to have the children attend school in same community where both parents work.

As his parents we feel that the transition to school system need to be made before high school level and feel he is academically and socially ready now.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Request made not because of curriculum but because parent is getting married in November. Future husband works in option district. Mother works in option district. We wish to have our children to the school where mother is in case of emergencies.

Option district has a 4 day week 5 day week can be tiring.

Step father works in option district which would allow for more opportunity to be involved in all school activities.

North Central Accredited.

APPENDIX XII
Educational Opportunities

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AS REPORTED
ON THE 1990-91 PARENT APPLICATION FORM
FOR CURRENT FULLY APPROVED STUDENTS

Curriculum Area	Number of Responses
<u>Curriculum</u>	125
Agriculture	21
Art	39
Business	26
Marketing	0
English Language	18
Foreign Language	25
Health Occupations	0
Health/Physical Education	73
Home Economics (Includes Consumer & Occupational)	17
Industrial Arts	20
Mathematics	26
Music	107
Natural Science	27
Social Science	9
Trades & Industrial Occupations	4
Elementary Education	0
Special Education	16
Driver Education	4
Drama	5
Misc. Curriculum (Includes ROTC, Gifted, Photo, etc.)	15
Diversified Occupations	0
Chapter 1	12
Career Education	2
Computing	78
Vocational Special Needs	2
Total Curriculum Responses.....	671
<u>Instructional Personnel</u>	39
Teachers	52
Counselors	13
Administrators	4
Total Instructional Personnel Responses.....	108
<u>Support Services</u>	14
Library	34
School Lunch Program	27
Total Support Services Responses.....	75
<u>Climate</u>	95
Student Discipline	7
School Facility	20
Social Opportunities	79
Class Size	154
Total Climate Responses.....	355
<u>Extra-Curricular</u>	75
Student Organizations (Includes St. Council, Hon. Soc.)	6
Curriculum-Related Activities (Includes FBLA, FFA & etc.)	17
Athletics	67
Total Extra-Curricular Responses.....	165
<u>Other Educational Opportunities</u>	38
Better Preparation For Higher Education	23
Geographic Convenience	116
Currently Contracting With District	51
Academic Competition	51
Accredited School	26
Class 1 Secondary Student Attending Option Dist.	6
Total Other Educational Opportunities Responses.....	311

Report as of May 31, 1991

APPENDIX XIII

Reasons for Not Participating

Question #6

If your school district did not participate in the choice program for the 1990-191 school year, please explain why and will your district be participating in the choice program for the 1991-92 school year?

The schools around our district did not participate. Yes, we will be participating both as a resident and option district for next year.

We are contracting in students at \$5,270 per year. Participating in the choice program would not be of any assistance to our students. We will participate only as mandated by the state.

The school board felt that it was not necessary. We will be participating only as a resident district.

Due to school board action. We will be participating during the 1991-92 school year.

The school board just wanted to wait and see how the choice plan went around the state. We will be participating only as mandated by the state.

Our school did not participate because the money allotted was not enough on a per pupil basis. We will only be participating as the state mandates for the 1991-92 school year.

We did not participate because the state did not allow any consideration for special education dollars and the program was not funded intelligently. When our decision was made not to participate, the funding was not the per pupil cost. Yes, we will be participating both as a resident and option district for the 1991-92 school year.

The board of education did not want to participate because it was not mandated and the board wanted to see what would happen on the funding. No, we will not be participating as a resident and option district for the 1991-92 school year.

We did not participate because of the board of education did not feel that the dollar amount was sufficient for each student. Yes, we will be participating for the 1991-92 school year.

Our district did not participate because the other school districts around us didn't, so we would not of had any students to draw from. Yes, we will be participating for the 1991-92 school year as both an option district and resident district.

APPENDIX XIV
Reasons for Participating

Question #7

If your school district did participate in the choice program for the 1990-91 school year, why did you decide to participate?

We decided to participate because it was not going to have an effect on us, because the other school districts around us did not participate in the program.

We felt it was good legislation and our district had minimal fears of losing substantial numbers of students.

We felt that it would open up the possibility to have students attend our school.

The board felt that we were going to have to participate sooner or later so we might as well get started.

The plan provided help for some families that lived much closer to another school and would be a convenience to them.

We have to participate next year anyway, so why not start exchanging discipline problems this year. The only student that will be choicing will be students who cannot get along in their own school district.

We decided to participate, because we knew we were going to have to eventually.

We feel that our school district can compete for students in this area quite successfully as we offer a wide variety of academic and extra-curricular activities.

We felt that it was just a matter of time before it was the law so we just as well participate now.

Because I was not very smart. If I would have known then what I know now we wouldn't have participated. The only students that we have received are trouble makers, and we don't really need them.

We decided to participate in the program as our school is centrally located among several school systems from both rural and city areas.

The board of education felt that we might as well get a jump on other schools in the area that did not participate this year.

We felt that we had a good chance of receiving several students from surrounding school districts.

The school board felt that whatever dollar amount that we receive for each student that the amount would help off set tax dollars.

APPENDIX XV
Advantages and Disadvantages

Question #8

As a school official, what do you perceive as the advantages or benefits of the choice program for the following groups?

Administration:

Really there are not any benefits for us.

There are none.

None.

It makes us cognizant of the education that we give our students.

I feel that it makes you aware of your own programs and facilities even more.

No benefits for administrators.

No benefits.

Possible gain of students, which would help justify my job.

Prestige if the school gains students from surrounding school districts.

There are very few benefits.

It gives the administration the opportunity to look at why students want to leave the school district.

There are really no benefits.

There are no benefits for the administration.

No benefits except dealing with disgruntled parents threatening to choice their children to another district.

There are not any benefits for the administrators in the district.

We can work on program improvements with the idea that if we don't change programs that we might loose students.

None.

Question #8

The administration does not benefit.

We have the opportunity to visit with parents who feel that another district, may be better for their child. It allows us to sell our district to them.

There are no benefits for the administration.

It gives us the opportunity to look at the curriculum in more detail.

We do not have any benefits as we just get stuck with doing the paper work.

It opens up dialogue with surrounding school districts about programs and course offerings.

Staff:

No benefits for the staff.

No benefits as parents and students who are unhappy with the staff have a new option.

It will allow the staff to do some self-improvement.

No benefits except disgruntled parents.

No benefits, just dealing with parents threatening to take their kids to another school district.

There are no benefits for the staff.

None.

The staff will get involved to see if any programs need to be added or deleted.

The staff does not have any benefits due to the choice plan.

There really are not any benefits.

The staff will have prestige if they get more students in their classes.

The staff will have more input into curriculum decisions if new program are to be added due to the choice.

Question #8

No benefits.

Definitely no benefits for the staff.

It makes the staff aware of what other schools are doing when they get students from other school districts.

Choice makes the staff think about the benefits of a good education.

Teachers will have to babysit a student who could not get along in another school district.

Definitely no benefits.

The benefits are limited for the staff, as they might lose students which could hurt or make their classroom situation better or may gain or lose student that could help the atmosphere in the classroom.

The staff may have more say in what is being offered in the curriculum.

There are not any benefits for the staff.

The staff will not benefit unless they have some say in what students may leave or be accepted into the school.

The staff may become better teacher in order to entice students into their class from surrounding schools.

There are no benefits.

Students:

To select courses or other school situations they want to be in.

There are not any benefits for the students.

It allows them the opportunity to move to schools with special programs.

If they are not happy they can move to another school district.

Allows the students the best education possible.

Question #8

They can go to whatever program best fits their needs.

They can get programs that they want.

Choice of educational programs.

It gives them an option of programs.

It allows students to move to a bigger schools.

They can opt for better quality education.

If the students are unhappy they can leave.

Students have the opportunity to have a choice if they feel they are not getting what they want from the present district.

They can attend the district of their choice.

They can go to schools with winning athletic programs.

Disgruntled students can go to another district.

Students can get a variety of courses and a flexibility in scheduling.

Better program selections.

Unhappy students will a have a new option.

They will have new opportunities, hopefully more course offerings.

The students will be able to choose whatever school they want.

Students who do not like a teacher or administrator can leave their district.

Students can decide whatever school that they want to go to.

Students can go to a school that offers what they want.

Question #8**Parents:**

For parents in very small districts it means that they do not have to wait until the district closes before they choose to a bigger district. The parents have more power to select.

Parents have more options for their kids.

Parents have more program selections for their students to participate in.

Parents have the right for personal preference.

Parents do not actually have any benefits except it gives them an option for their children when they as parents become disgruntled.

It gives the parents the ability to pressure school boards and administration.

They are able to choose the district of their choice for their kids.

The geographic proximity to the option district may enhance the parents satisfaction in certain schools.

If they are unhappy they can leave.

It can simplify transportation for parents and give them a better educational opportunity for their child.

They have the chance to select the school for their child.

It gives them an option for their kids.

It may provide convenience for the parents.

Parents may have more convenience living closer to the district where they are opting their kids to.

Parents have the opportunity to send their kids where they want.

It allows parents to choose what they feel is the best education possible for their kids.

Parents may be able to move their kids if they are unhappy with the school.

Question #8

It gives the parents the opportunity to run from trouble.

Parents have an option of attendance in school systems more to their liking and geographic locations.

Parents may have the opportunity to move their kids when they become unhappy with the school.

Parents can choose the school that best fits their children's needs.

Parents have another mechanism to threaten to do something if they are unhappy with a teacher or administrator.

If parents are unhappy, they can take their kids elsewhere.

Parents can become more involved in the operations of the school where they feel that they can move their kids if something negative happens.

Parents can take their kids to another school if they are unhappy.

APPENDIX XVI

Disadvantages of Choice

Question #9

As a school official, what do you perceive as the disadvantages or problems of the choice procedure for the following groups?

Administration:

The cost paid for educating an option student is too low compared to actual costs involved.

The disadvantage is the funding that was assigned to each choice student.

The money that was assigned was not enough.

Too many problem students will use choice as an escape.

Planning for enrollment fluctuations could be a problem.

There are no advantages or disadvantages.

Fluctuations in student population and funding. Small schools may suffer.

Paper work and a possible reaction from public on the amount of state monies allotted.

A lot more paperwork.

In our case the funds from the state do not come close to paying the cost of providing service.

More paperwork.

Transportation could be a problem.

Special education students could cause a financial problem.

Movement of problem students into the district and parental pressure to do things their way or they will leave.

Gives parents the opportunity to be upset with the administration.

Political problems in the community if the school district loses quite a few students due to choice.

Question #9

Potential of possible discipline problems.

Interpretation of rules and regulations.

More paperwork for the administrators.

How do you work with the public that supports your district with tax dollars and those parents who do not reside in your district?

Planning for enrollment increases and decreases could be a problem.

Coming up with the dollars to educate the students is a problem since the state did not pay the per pupil cost.

It causes the administrators more work.

Staff:

Not knowing how many students that they will have in their classes could be a problem.

It may be hard for the students to remember all of the rules and regulations of the choice program.

Could be a chance for increased discipline problems.

May have to put up with students discipline problems.

Staff may have to deal with parents with the attitude that I choiced into your district, so you have to put up with what I say to you.

Staff may have less students to fill their classes with.

Staff may lose their jobs if to many students leave and the school has to close.

There are not any advantages or disadvantages for the staff.

There aren't any.

Possibly larger classes for staff.

Dealing with the types of students that will be transferring.

Question #9

Students may be moving for non-educational reasons.

Enrollment fluctuations may affect class size.

The staff will not have any advantages or disadvantages.

The staff will have to do a good job to aid in recruiting students for programs.

You must have good programs in all areas.

Dealing with problem students may cause a problem.

Teachers will have a wider range of students academically.

The staff will have an added load because of student increases.

Not all students accepted will be of the better students in learning and behavior.

If students leave the district it could cause some specialty areas such as art and home ec. to be terminated.

It could cause an increased load in class size.

Disciplining the students who don't have ownership to the school could be a problem.

It could cost student jobs if the school loses students.

Students:

The situation may be less than what was perceived to be in the option school.

The new school could be too much of an adjustment for the student to deal with.

Students may feel that the option district is still not good enough for them.

It serves as an easy escape for problem students.

Students will be recruited for extra-curricular activities.

Question #9

It may be hard to get them involved in all areas of the school.

Making them aware of what is being offered in the option district.

There are no advantages or disadvantages for the students.

They will have more curricular offerings.

The student may be harmed because they don't have to stay in their school and face up to a problem.

Students have an easy way out.

Movement to another school usually takes a period of adjustment.

No advantages or disadvantages.

Students will not see any advantages or disadvantages.

Students may lose their school if too many choose another school district.

The students that are left will have to shoulder more of the burden to carry on the school's activities and programs.

Problem students will still be a problem.

Peer pressure from their old school may be tough on students.

There is not any advantage or disadvantage.

Students may lose friends because of choice plan.

Students will be pressured to go to another school for athletic reasons.

Students may have more problem kids in their classes.

If students are unhappy with the district that they choiced into they will be stuck there for the whole year.

Parents:

Parents of option students really have no say in how the option district is run.

Parents of option students still vote in the resident district where their children do not attend.

There are no advantages or disadvantages for parents.

Travel could be a problem.

Parents still may be indecisive about their child's education.

The per pupil cost will rise as you lose students with out doing anything to the budget.

Parents will lose the school for their kids if to many students choose another district.

There are no problems for the parents.

Parents have a lot of advantages such as convenience and no disadvantages.

Taking kids to another district could be a problem.

Transporting their children to the option district.

Having their child with more problem kids could cause discipline problems at home.

There are no problems or disadvantages.

Marketing your own school so parents know what the school can do for their student.

It is to easy for the parents to escape a problem in the resident district.

It allows parents the opportunity to go along with their child's problems instead of facing the problem.

The option school may not be everything that the parents had hope for.

Question #9

Parents are allowing students to run away from their problems.

Schools may close if too many students leave the district.

Good students may be faced with discipline problems in the classroom which may affect the parents at home.

Transportation could be a problem.

There are no problems for the parents.

Parents will not take ownership of the option district since they are not paying any taxes to the school.

APPENDIX XVII
Impact on Curriculum

Question 10

How will the choice program impact your districts curriculum?

There will be more students throughout K-12 to enroll in classes.

Probably will have little impact.

No impact on the curriculum.

No impact on the curriculum at this time.

It won't affect the curriculum in our district.

Hasn't impacted the curriculum at the present time.

Student numbers somewhat dictate curriculum.

It will have minimal impact.

Very little impact on the curriculum.

It will not have an impact on the curriculum.

Initially it won't have an impact.

There won't be an impact.

We will probably lose students, to schools with new facilities and extra frills.
It is to early to tell.

None at all.

There will be some motivational factor to make changes in the curriculum.

No impact at all on the curriculum.

It is to early to tell if there will be any impact on the curriculum due to the choice plan.

No impact at all.

Very little impact at this time.

Question #10

It is hard to say after only one year.

If schools don't change curriculum they might lose students.

It will not have an impact on our curriculum.

No impact, as we have to offer certain courses to meet rule 10.

It won't have any impact on the curriculum in our school.

APPENDIX XVIII
Impact on Staff Effectiveness

Question #11

Will the choice program impact staff effectiveness?

No, it will not.

It is too early to tell at this time.

It might if teachers are concerned about their classes.

I doubt it if it will have any impact on staff effectiveness.

No, it won't in our district.

It will if there are no students left to work with.

No, it will not.

No, the staff will not change in teaching strategies.

No, the teachers will teach as they always have.

No, it will not affect the teachers teaching.

Unforeseen, as it is too early to tell.

It's easy to say it could or should have but I don't think it will.

Teachers aren't going to change their teaching to draw kids in or prevent losing them.

Good teachers don't change for reasons like this, and shouldn't.

Not at this time.

No effect on teaching at all.

I don't think so at this point in time anyway.

I think it is doubtful if the teacher will change in their teaching strategies.

Unlikely, if teachers will change.

Question #11

If any, the staff will have a more diverse range from top to bottom of student abilities to teach. This could result in more challenging situations (plus or minus) for the staff.

It possibly could if you have concerned teachers.

It is too early to tell at this time.

Good teachers will adapt to any situations.

It won't change the majority of teachers as they are set in their ways.

APPENDIX XIX

Most Significant Impact of Choice

Question #12

As a school official, what do you perceive as the most important or significant impact of the choice program?

Confusion for everyone involved.

The fact parents and students now have a choice as to where they send and attend. I see this as a major benefit to those who wish to take advantage of this opportunity.

It gives dissatisfied parents and students an option.

Competition of school systems should help improve the educational process of all students.

I don't believe educational advantage will be the significant determiner in choice students. It will be determined more by distance, transportation, athletics, and problems encountered at the home school.

Very little significance, except the exchange of problem students.

Thus far, other than parental convenience there has not been an important or significant impact.

The instability, especially in small district, and the idea that parents can move students (only once thank God) for any reason they choose. In my opinion, more times than not this will be for non-educational reasons.

The opportunity for parent and child to select the school that best fits their preference and educational expectations.

Choice of educational opportunities.

Unhappy people can go somewhere else.

Fact that people have the choice of where their children will be going to school.

It is a more backdoor reorganization.

It is a stepping stone to a voucher system and the distraction of public education.

Question #12

The plan is better suited for larger cities and school systems.

The out state smaller western schools will not benefit from the program and probably will be hurt the most.

School districts that have been redistricted and are large will probably lose perimeter students to other districts.

Paperwork, money and confusion.

Transportation questions, sports decisions and comparisons between big and small schools. It is a consolidation bill.

Competitive environment becomes a part of the educational system - whether this is good or bad, only time will tell.

I feel in some instances, it will lead to improvements in certain areas.

More options available to parents and students.

Some parents will be happier. Some students will have different opportunities in academics and activities.

Some schools may have problems with too many students at one grade level or to few. Public support for resident district may be weakened.