

# The Academic & Civic Effects of School Choice

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# A Little About Me

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- ✓ Born in Washington, DC, 17 years a proud Arkansan
- ✓ My 25<sup>th</sup> year studying school choice – Distinguished Professor of Education Policy & Endowed Chair in School Choice
- ✓ “Wolf is a well-known advocate of school choice. He bases his advocacy on the research.” (AERA Newsletter)

# Disclaimer

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The opinions expressed here are my own and do not represent the official positions of the University of Arkansas or U of A System.



# Quality of Statistical Evaluations of School Choice

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How do we deal with “selection bias”?

Methods:



Random assignment experiments



Matching longitudinal studies



Control variables



Uncontrolled descriptive comparisons

# Guide to the Review

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- Only Bronze standard studies or better
- Look for the medal!
- Any private school choice program
- Positive choice findings overall = **Green**
- Positive for subgroups = **Light Green**
- Null = **Yellow**
- Negative = **Red**

# Five Ways to Slice this Pie

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# Participant Achievement Effects

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# What Do We Hear About the Achievement Effects of Choice?

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“...there is no evidence that students in voucher schools get higher test scores.” (Diane Ravitch, May 3, 2016)

“...seven of the nine studies [since 2015] found that voucher students saw relative learning losses.”

(Christopher Lubienski & Joel Malin, August 30, 2019)



# Here We Look Just at Randomized Experiments

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Because they are the most rigorous studies

Because there are enough of them in enough different places to draw conclusions about the test-score effects of school choice on participants

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Finding – Private School Choice</b>
<b>All Students (8)</b>	Cowen (2008)	Charlotte	+8 pts in reading, +7 pts in math
	Greene (2001)	Charlotte	+ 6 pts on combined reading and math test
	Greene et al (1999)	Milwaukee	+6 pts in reading, +11 pts in math
	Rouse (1998)	Milwaukee	+8 pts in math, no difference in reading
	Lamarche (2008)	Milwaukee	+2.3 pts in math, no difference in reading
	Howell et al (2002)	DC	+3 pts combined reading & math
	Wolf et al (2013)	DC	+4.8 pts in reading
	Anderson & Wolf (2017)	DC	+8.7 pts in reading
<b>Some Students (4)</b>	Barnard et al (2003)	New York	+5 pts in math for students leaving low-performing schools
	Jin et al (2010)	New York	+4 pts in math for students leaving low-performing schools
	Howell et al (2002)	New York	+4 pts for African-American students on combined reading/math test
	Howell et al (2002)	Dayton	+6.5 pts for African-American students on combined reading/math test
<b>No Effects (4)</b>	Webber et al. (2019)	DC	No difference in math or reading
	Krueger & Zhu (2004)	New York	No difference in math or reading
	Bitler et al (2013)	New York	No difference in math or reading by quartile
	Bettinger & Slonim (2006)	Toledo	No difference in math or reading
<b>Negative (2)</b>	Abdulkadiroglu et al. (2016)	Louisiana	-0.4 standard deviation 1-year effect on math
	Mills & Wolf (2019)	Louisiana	4-year effects on math, reading & science of -.21 to -.39 SD

# Key Questions

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What is distinctive about the Louisiana Scholarship Program?

1. Most highly regulated school voucher program
2. Only 1/3 of private schools participate
3. Schools required to administer the state test

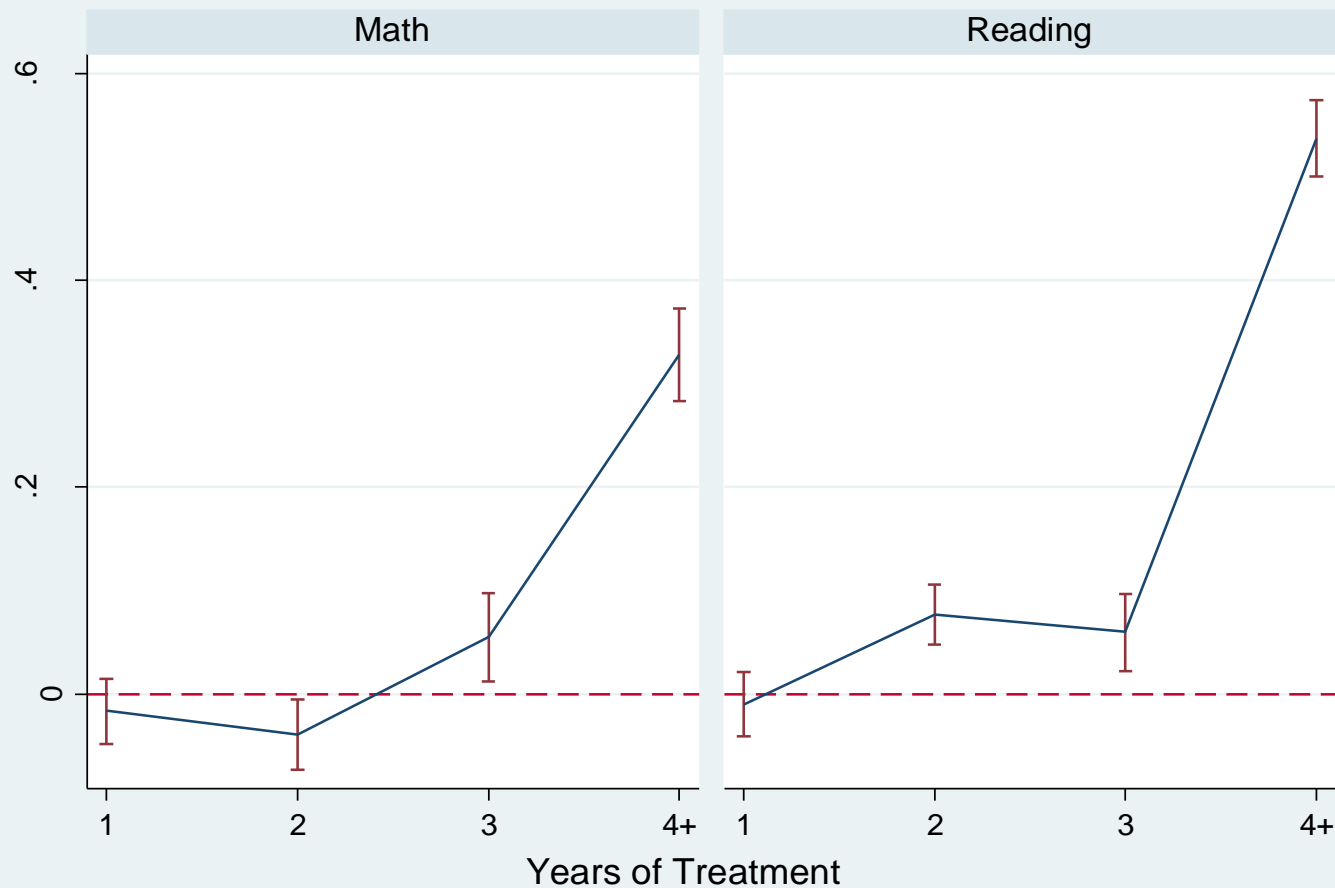
How can commentators distort the findings so much?

1. Include non-experimental and irrelevant studies
2. Cherry pick findings based on subject and year
3. Avoid results from neutral tests

# Meta-Analysis of Rigorous Studies (Shakeel, Anderson & Wolf 2016)



Overall TOT Impacts by Year — Global



# Educational Attainment

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# What Do People Say About Attainment & Choice?

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“The findings for both achievement and attainment are mixed, with no clear patterns.”

(Lubienski & Brewer, NEPC, 2018)

Attainment Study		Place	Effect
 Wolf et al (2013)	DC	+21 percentage points - Diploma	
 Erickson & Scafidi (2020)	Georgia	+17 percentage points - Diploma	
 Cowen et al. (2013)	Milwaukee	+4-6 percentage points - Diploma	
 Warren (2011)	Milwaukee	+12 percentage points - Diploma	
 Austin & Pardo (2021)	Indiana	No difference – Diploma	
 Austin & Pardo (2021)	Indiana	+8 percentage points – College Enrollment	
 Chingos, Monarrez & Kuehn (2019)	Florida	+6 percentage points – College Enrollment	
 Erickson & Scafidi (2020)	Georgia	+19 percentage points – College Enrollment	
 Wolf, Witte & Kisida (2019)	Milwaukee	+4-6 percentage points – College Enrollment	
 Chingos & Peterson (2015)	New York City	+5-6 percentage points for Blacks – College Enrollment	
 Cheng & Peterson (2021)	New York City	+8 percentage points for mod-dis. – College Enrollment	
 Erickson, Mills & Wolf (forthcoming)	Louisiana	+8 percentage points for H.S. aps – College Enrollment	
 Chingos (2018)	DC	No difference – College Enrollment	
 Chingos, Monarrez & Kuehn (2019)	Florida	+1-2 percentage points – Bachelor’s Degree	
 Wolf, Witte & Kisida (2019)	Milwaukee	+3 percentage points for elem. aps – Bachelor’s Degree	
 Cheng & Peterson (2021)	New York City	+5-7 percentage points for mod-dis. – Bachelor’s Deg.	
 Chingos & Peterson (2015)	New York City	+2-3 percentage points for Blacks – Bachelor’s Degree	

# Why Might Choice Affect Attainment More Than Test Scores?

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- Parents care more about attainment
- Private schools educate the whole child
- Attainment is more malleable
- No evidence that private schools have lower standards for graduation



# Competitive Effects: All Silver Standard

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# What Do People Say About Choice's Effect on Public Schools?

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“Do charter schools, school vouchers and online schools really hurt our neighborhood public schools? You bet they do.”

(Network for Public Education, 2017)

“Is it not possible that giving poor kids a way out will force the public schools to improve?”

(Senator Joe Biden, September 30, 1997)

Study	City/State	Finding
Greene (2001)	Florida	POSITIVE
Greene & Winters (2004)	Florida	POSITIVE
West & Peterson (2005)	Florida	POSITIVE
Figlio & Rouse(2006)	Florida	POSITIVE
Rouse et al (2007)	Florida	POSITIVE
Forster (2008)	Florida	POSITIVE
Winters & Greene (2011)	Florida	POSITIVE
Figlio & Hart (2011)	Florida	POSITIVE
Chakrabarti (2013)	Florida	POSITIVE
Hammons (2002)	Maine	POSITIVE
Hammons (2002)	Vermont	POSITIVE
Forster (2008)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Carr (2011)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Figlio (2016)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Lavertu & Gregg (2022)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Egalite (2014)	Indiana	POSITIVE
Jacob & Dougherty (2014)	Indiana	POSITIVE
Hoxby (2001)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Greene & Forster (2002)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Carnoy et al (2007)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Chakrabarti (2008)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Greene & Marsh (2009)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Mader (2010)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Egalite (2014)	Louisiana	POSITIVE
Greene & Forster (2002)	San Antonio	POSITIVE
Gray, Merrifield, & Adzima (2014)	San Antonio	POSITIVE
Greene & Winters (2006)	Washington D.C.	NONE
Bowen & Trivitt (2014)	Florida	NEGATIVE
Conbolat (2021) 2023	Indiana	NEGATIVE



# Civic Values



School Choice Rally

Statehouse

abc COLUMBIA

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# Civic Outcomes

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- **Political Tolerance** – willingness to extend constitutional rights to disliked groups
- **Political Participation** – involvement in civic activities
- **Civic Knowledge and Skills** – familiarity with the workings of government & the ability to communicate with officials
- **Voluntarism and Social Capital** – unpaid involvement in improving one's community

# What Do People Say About Civic Values & School Choice?

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“Public governance of our schools matters for the health of our democracy.”

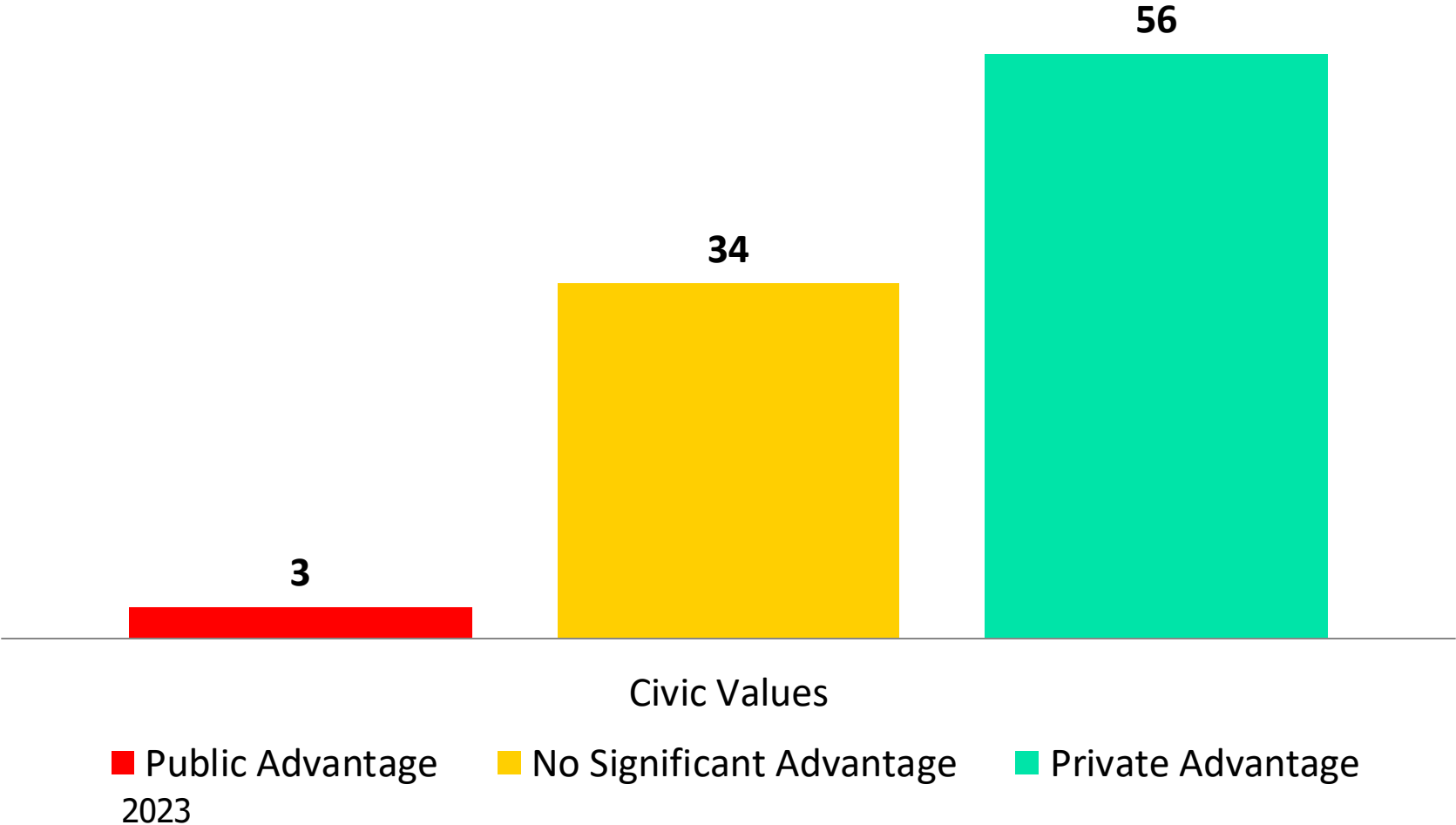
(Diane Ravitch and Carol Burris, *Washington Post*, November 4, 2018)

“...voucher programs could end up resembling ...ethnic cleansing.”

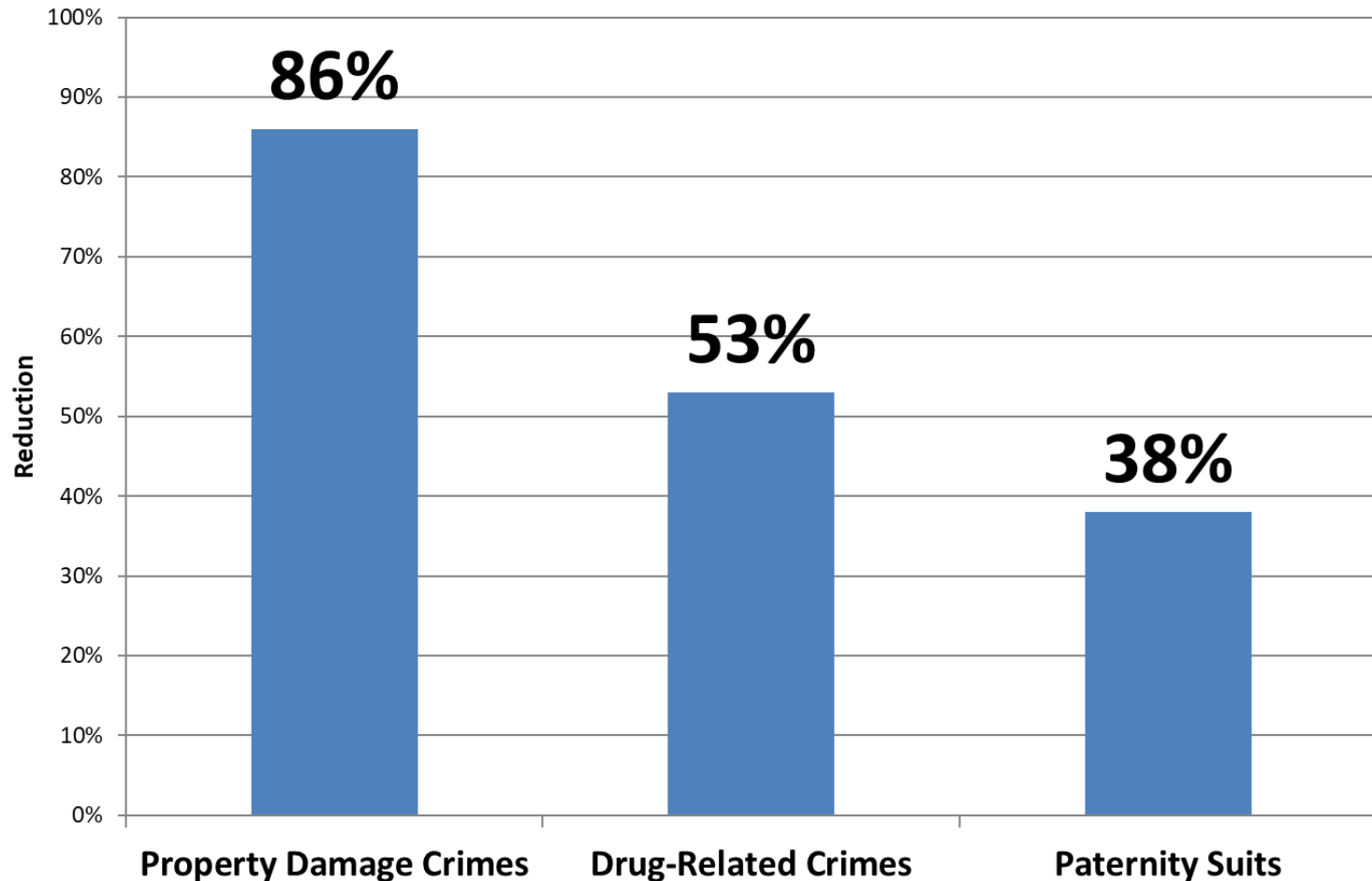
(David Berliner, Legislative Testimony, May 1999)

# All Findings on Private School Choice & Civic Outcomes

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# Reductions in Crime & Paternity Suits Due to Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (DeAngelis & Wolf 2020)



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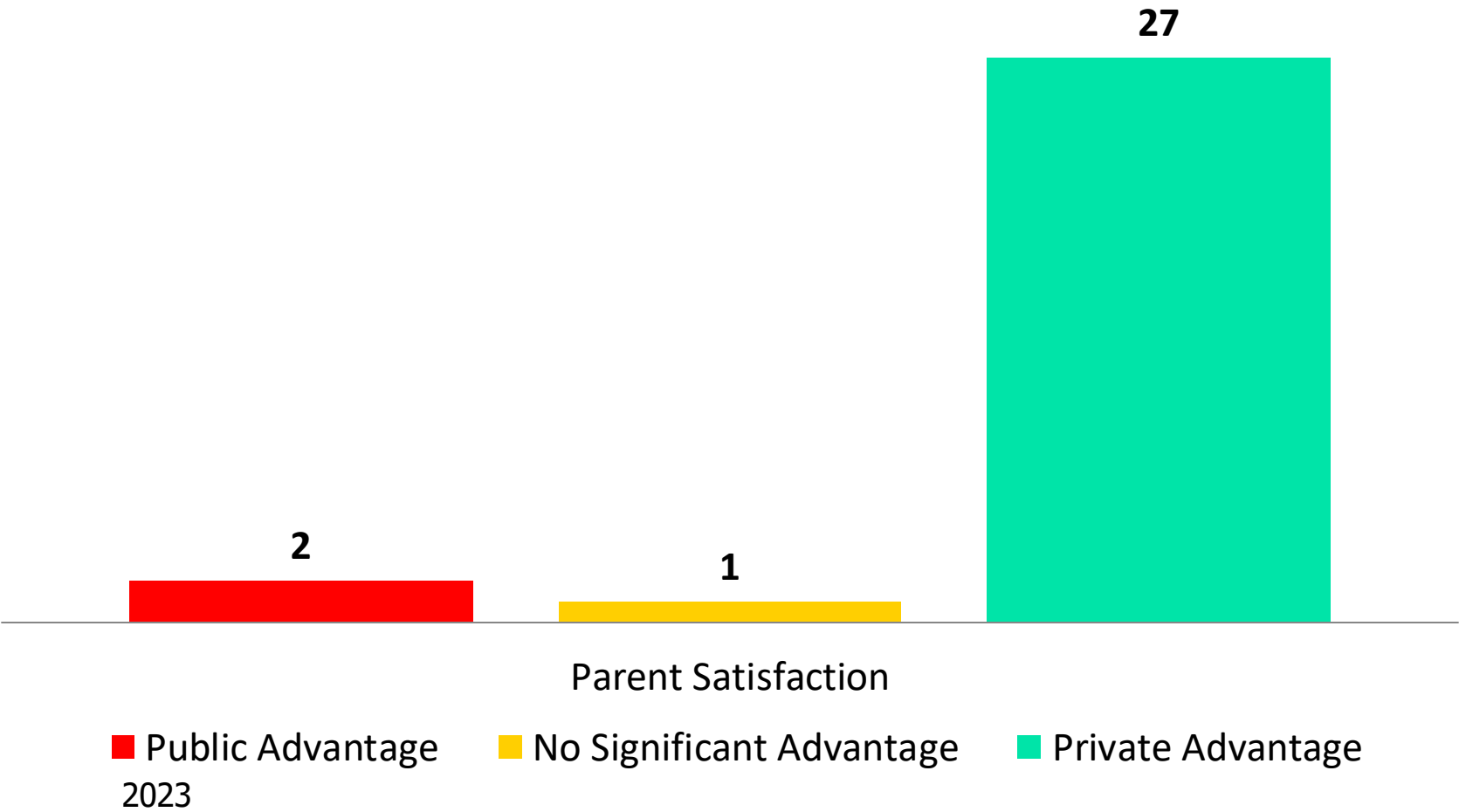
# Parent Satisfaction



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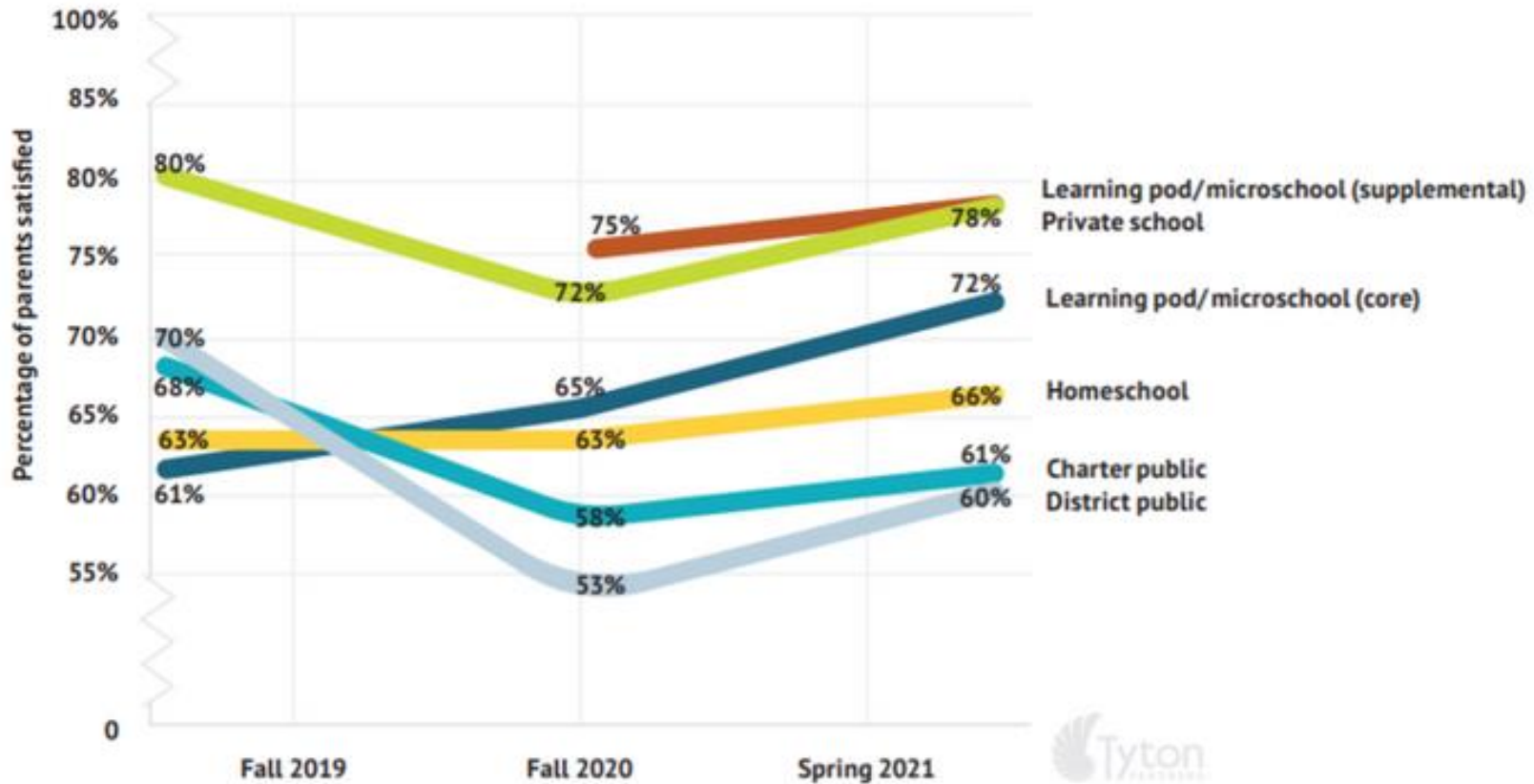
# All Findings on Private School Choice & Parent Satisfaction

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# Parent Satisfaction Rates

Parent satisfaction, by school type and time period



District public n = 1,169-1,172

Homeschool n = 184-185

Charter public n = 127-128

Learning pod/microschool (core) n = 91-92

Private school n = 578-579

Learning pod/microschool (supplemental) n = 454-455

# Summary: Private School Choice

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- ✓ Tends to increase or have no effect on participant test scores
- ✓ Consistently drives participants to higher levels of educational attainment
- ✓ Helps the students left behind in public schools
- ✓ Boosts civic outcomes
- ✓ Makes parents happy



# For More Information

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Electronic versions of nearly 100 school choice reports at:

<https://scdp.uark.edu>

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