

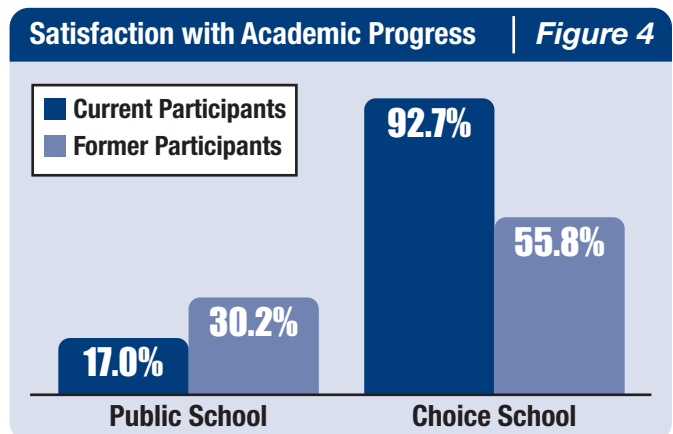
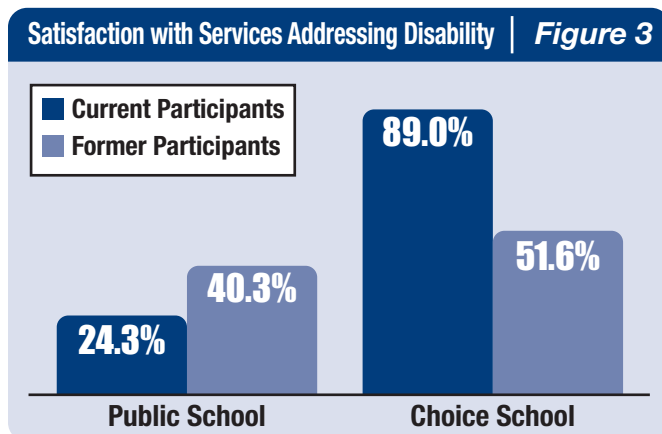
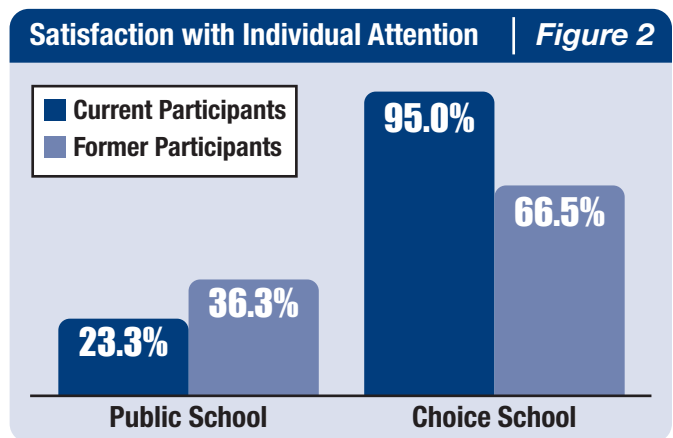
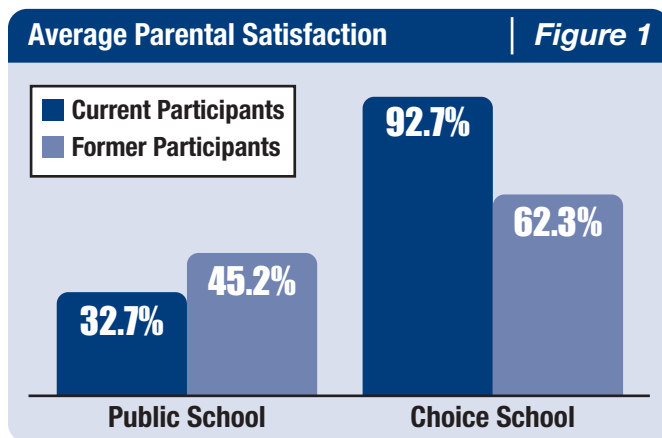


How Special-Needs Scholarships Impact Student Achievement and Parental/Student Satisfaction

Special-needs scholarships are available to students, upon parental request, in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Utah, and Ohio (currently for students with autism, expanding to all students with disabilities in 2012). Special-needs scholarships have grown in popularity and reach since the creation of Florida's McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program in 1999.

In 2003, Dr. Jay Greene and Dr. Greg Forster released the first report on the effect of Florida's special-needs scholarship program. Dr. Greene and Dr. Forster found that:

- in choice schools, participating students were victimized far less because of their disabilities. In public schools, 46.8 percent were bothered often and 24.7 percent were physically assaulted, whereas in choice schools 5.3 percent were bothered often and 6.0 percent were assaulted.
- figures 1-4 show that parental satisfaction and satisfaction with individual attention, services, and academic progress were higher in choice schools:



- special-needs scholarship recipients saw their class sizes drop dramatically, from an average of 25.1 students per class in public schools to 12.8 students per class in choice schools.
- more than 90 percent of parents who have left the special-needs scholarship program believe it should be available to those who wish to use it.

In 2008, Dr. Jay Greene and Marcus Winters of the University of Arkansas released a study analyzing special-needs scholarships' impact on public school achievement.

The authors found that:

- as more nearby private schools began participating in the special-needs scholarship program, public school students with relatively mild disabilities made statistically significant test score improvements in both math and reading.
- as exposure to special-needs scholarships increased, disabled public school students' largest gains were made by those diagnosed as having the mildest learning disabilities.
- for students diagnosed with relatively severe disabilities, their academic proficiency was neither helped nor harmed by increased exposure to the special-needs scholarship program.

Florida's special-needs students using these scholarships have ample access to schooling options, as seen in the table below.

Florida Students Using Special-Needs Scholarships and the Schools Serving Them		
	Scholarship-Using Students	Scholarship-Accepting Private Schools
2010-11	21,054	985
2009-10	20,926	959
2008-09	20,530	897
2007-08	19,852	846
2006-07	18,273	811
2005-06	17,300	751
2004-05	15,910	708
2003-04	13,739	687
2002-03	9,130	518
2001-02	5,013	296
2000-01	970	100
1999-00	2	1

Links to Full Reports

Vouchers for Special Education Students: An Evaluation of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program, Jay P. Greene, Ph.D., Greg Forster, Ph.D., Manhattan Institute: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_38.htm

The Effect of Special-Education Vouchers on Public Schools Achievement: Evidence from Florida's McKay Scholarship Program, Jay P. Greene, Ph.D., Marcus Winters, Manhattan Institute: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_52.htm

