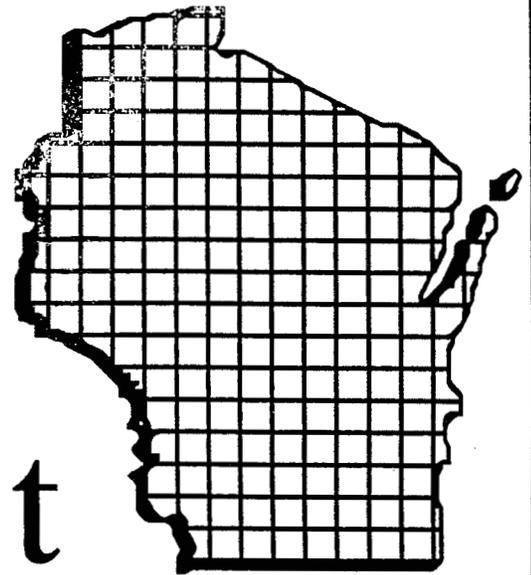


Wisconsin

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Research  
Institute  
Report



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**EXPANDED  
SCHOOL CHOICE  
IN MILWAUKEE**

*A Profile of Eligible  
Students and Schools*

## REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT:

During the last year, there has been a tremendous amount of rhetoric and very little data on expanding the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. We thought it was time to examine who is likely to benefit from this program. To do this, we asked two people with extensive educational research experience to direct this project.

Besides having been the superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools, Dr. Howard Fuller — building on the efforts of the Two Way or No Way organization — was one of the first academics to highlight the negative impact of busing poor black children. He initiated and served on Governor Anthony Earl's study commission to examine public education in metropolitan Milwaukee. He has been involved with education both at Marquette University and the Milwaukee Area Technical College. No one has a better view of the needs of Milwaukee's poorest children than Howard Fuller. Professor Sammis White has more experience researching education in Milwaukee than any academic in this state or country. He is a former head of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Urban Research Center and has worked on numerous educational research projects for various public agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, and the Milwaukee Public Schools. Dr. Fuller and Dr. White were assisted by researchers George Mitchell and Michael Hartmann.

Their report describes a low-income, minority population that is now eligible to improve its educational opportunities. The people who would benefit from expansion of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program are the low-income, minority families living in the poorest neighborhoods in Milwaukee. The children in these families are the students most likely to drop out of the Milwaukee public schools; or, if they do graduate, they do so with minimal reading and math skills.

What the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program offers these children is an opportunity to improve their lives by receiving an education that will prepare them for either college or the work force. The best part is that this opportunity will be provided at no extra cost to the public. Anyone concerned about minority children must consider this a tremendous bargain.

  
James H. Miller

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# EXPANDED SCHOOL CHOICE IN MILWAUKEE

## *A Profile of Eligible Students and Schools*

HOWARD L. FULLER, PH.D. and  
SAMMIS B. WHITE, PH.D.

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## SUMMARY

The State of Wisconsin has approved a significant expansion of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). Supporters identified three primary goals: (1) more educational options for children from low-income families; (2) a better education for those children; and (3) improved performance in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).

During legislative deliberations, a number of questions arose about the scope and impact of the proposed changes. This study seeks to answer several of those questions.

- **Private Schools and Private School Students**

Who attends private schools? What is their demographic profile? What private schools in the City of Milwaukee are eligible to participate in the expanded program? Are they “elite” institutions? Where are they located?

- **Educational Achievement**

How do public school students in MPS compare with public school students elsewhere in Wisconsin? How do they compare with private school students in the City of Milwaukee?

- **Eligible Students**

How large is the total pool of students eligible for the expanded program? What is known about them and their families? How are they doing in school? Where do they live?

This study concludes (i) that the expanded MPCP will meet the goal of increased educational opportunity for students from low-income families and (ii) that these students are among the lowest achievers in MPS. Further research, based on actual results, will be necessary to determine if the expanded program meets the goal of increased educational achievement. Other findings include:

1. **Private schools in the City of Milwaukee aren’t elite.** The demographic profile of private school students and families in the city is similar to the nearly 700,000 students in the 426 Wisconsin public school districts outside the city.
2. **Because of limited income, parents of students eligible for the MPCP choose private schools at a much reduced rate from other parents.** While about 21% of Milwaukee school-age children are in private schools, in low-income neighborhoods the rate is 7% and in middle- and upper-income neighborhoods it is 30%. For children of Milwaukee school teachers, the rate is 33%.
3. **Educational achievement at private high schools in Milwaukee is somewhat higher than at public schools elsewhere in Wisconsin and significantly higher than in MPS.** Comparative measures used to reach this conclusion included: (i) attendance, dropout, and graduation rates; (ii) college entrance test scores; (iii) the percent of seniors likely to be college-bound; (iv) the percent of students taking high school standardized exams; and (v) among public students, scores on those exams.
4. **Students most likely to graduate from MPS attended a private school or a non-MPS public school before high school.**

5. **About 65,000 to 70,000 school-age children in Milwaukee are in families eligible for the MPCP.** Maximum participation under the expanded program is about 15,700. Existing private schools have capacity to accept about 6,400 additional students. There is added capacity for about 1,840 students at several closed private schools.
6. **On average, students eligible for the MPCP perform poorly in school and are less likely to graduate from high school.**
7. **Most eligible students live in areas of high poverty.** More than two-thirds are in families headed by a female with no husband present. About 43% of eligible families receive some public assistance; 45% are headed by someone without a high school degree. Most are from Milwaukee's Black neighborhoods, where low educational achievement and poverty exist side-by-side.

In reaching these and other conclusions, this study includes previously unreported information made available with assistance from the Wisconsin Demographic Services Center. For example, to describe who is eligible for school choice, the Center assisted in preparing a citywide profile of eligible families. The Center also identified the 73 census tracts in Milwaukee in which a majority of eligible students live. To compare public and private school students, the report drew from a new and comprehensive data base released during the course of the last year and made available by the Center.<sup>1</sup>

## I. THE MILWAUKEE PARENTAL CHOICE PROGRAM

“School Choice” emerged in the 1980s as a policy option which proponents said would increase educational opportunity and improve learning. This Section reviews developments in Milwaukee which led to enactment of a limited school choice plan — the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) — in 1990.

### 1. Background

In January 1976, Federal Judge John Reynolds ruled that the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) were segregated unlawfully. MPS responded with a plan to increase racial balance and improve educational achievement. The plan guided MPS actions through the late 1970s and into the 1980s. Along with the state’s Chapter 220 program, the MPS plan integrated most MPS schools and increased integration in suburban Milwaukee public schools.<sup>2</sup>

During those years, various groups questioned the fairness and effectiveness of the MPS plan. They cited two concerns. First, they said a disproportionate number of Blacks were being displaced from their neighborhoods to achieve integration. Second, they disputed MPS claims of significant educational progress for Black students.

Various studies and published reports addressed the first of these concerns.<sup>3</sup> They documented that the primary transportation burden for implementation of integration was borne by Black students. They showed that Blacks’ ability to attend neighborhood schools had been limited by (i) the closing of several neighborhood schools and (ii) the conversion of others to “specialty schools” which most neighborhood students couldn’t attend.

Responding to the second concern, in 1984 Governor Anthony Earl and Superintendent of Public Instruction Herbert Grover named an independent commission to assess the status of educational achievement in metropolitan Milwaukee.<sup>4</sup> Its 16-month study remains the most extensive review of public education ever conducted in the region.<sup>5</sup> The study found that achievement for most MPS students was much lower than for students nationally or in suburban Milwaukee districts. It documented major differences in achievement within MPS. Overall, the study found an “unacceptable disparity in educational opportunity and achievement between poor and minority children...and non-poor and white children on the other.” As a result, it said: “Poorly prepared youth...comprise a significant segment of [the metropolitan] population, enlarging the burdens of our local economic and political systems to support those incapable of supporting themselves.”<sup>6</sup>

These findings marked a turning point in the public’s perception of educational issues in Milwaukee. For years, MPS had reported that a majority of students were performing “at or about national averages.” The District had reached this widely reported conclusion using a since-discarded definition of “average” that included students with scores as low as the 23rd percentile.

Following the study, MPS revised and strengthened its policies for reporting achievement data. This increased candor heightened awareness of educational problems and accelerated the push for “education reform.” While many programs were pursued, results were unsatisfactory. This was particularly true for Black MPS students, identified by the state commission as the District’s lowest performing group. Four years after the 1984-85 state study, an analysis found the following at 11 MPS high schools attended by 79% of MPS Black students.<sup>7</sup>

**TABLE 1 Educational Achievement Among Black Students in MPS, 1987-88**

Category	1987-88 Finding for Black MPS High School Students
Grade Point Average (GPA @ 4.0 scale)	At nine of 11 schools, GPAs were below 1.5. GPAs at the remaining two schools were 1.53 and 1.59.
Course Failure Rates	The percent of courses failed ranged from 26% to 43%.
National Test Scores	At no school were more than 21% above the national average.

Thus, after more than a decade (since 1976) of programs primarily intended to help Black students, their educational performance in MPS remained low. Some proponents of school reform began to advocate "school choice" as a policy which might improve educational achievement. While definitions vary, in the Milwaukee context school choice has focused on ways to let low-income families use public funds to enroll children in non-public schools.

Proponents defended school choice on three grounds: (1) out of fairness, low-income families should have at least some of the choices available to families with greater income; (2) students from low-income families would have a greater chance of succeeding in non-public schools; and (3) choice would strengthen public schools by causing them to focus on satisfying parents and students.

Opponents countered that: (1) the poor performance of MPS students was explained primarily by unstable homes and lack of parental support; (2) school choice would divert funds needed to serve public school students, and (3) choice would result in better students leaving public schools for more exclusive schools. Opponents also have questioned the constitutionality of proposals including religious schools.

What emerged from this debate was the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), sponsored by Representative Annette "Polly" Williams. It was enacted in March of 1990 by the Wisconsin Legislature. As approved, the program was both limited and experimental. Eligibility was restricted to no more than 1% of MPS enrollment and the program was to end after five years. Governor Tommy Thompson vetoed the five-year limitation, thus making the program permanent. In 1993, he proposed increasing eligibility to 1.5% of MPS enrollment. The Legislature approved.

Participation in the program has ranged from 341 students in 1990-91 to 802 in 1994-95.<sup>8</sup> Participating schools have increased from six to twelve. Two factors have kept student participation below the maximum allowed levels (about 1,000 students initially and about 1,500 students since 1993). First, the program limits MPCP students to no more than 65% of a participating school's enrollment (initially, this was 49%). Second, some participating schools have waiting lists because they lack sufficient space to accept additional students.<sup>9</sup>

The state has issued five MPCP evaluations: four from an evaluator hired by the Department of Public Instruction and a fifth from the Legislative Audit Bureau.<sup>10</sup> The reports agree that (i) the program has satisfied participating parents; (ii) involvement of participating parents in their children's education has increased; and (iii) the program has involved students who are among the lowest achievers in MPS. Regarding academic achievement, DPI's evaluator says "...there is no systematic evidence that choice

students do either better or worse than MPS students..."<sup>11</sup> The Legislative Audit Bureau says there is insufficient data for any conclusion to be drawn regarding academic achievement.<sup>12</sup>

In 1995, Thompson proposed removing limits on the number of participants and including sectarian private schools. The Legislature incorporated amendments offered by Representative Williams and then approved Thompson's plan. Table 2 below is a "before and after" comparison of the law as amended.

**TABLE 2 Provisions of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP)**

	Former Law	As Amended in 1995
<b>Eligibility</b>		
Residency	City of Milwaukee	No change
Prior Year School	MPS or no school	Grades K-3: public or private Milwaukee school, or no school Grades 4-12: MPS or no school
Family Income	175% of federal poverty level (\$21,560 for family of 3)	No change
<b>Number of Students</b>		
1995-96	1.5% of MPS enrollment (about 1,550)	7% of MPS enrollment (about 7,250)
1996-97 & thereafter	1.5% of MPS enrollment	15% of MPS enrollment (about 15,700)
<b>Student Selection</b>	Random, per DPI guidelines, if a grade is oversubscribed	No change
<b>Eligible Schools</b>	Nonsectarian private schools in City of Milwaukee	Nonsectarian and sectarian private schools in City of Milwaukee
<b>Enrollment Limits</b>	"Choice" pupils cannot exceed 65% of a school's enrollment	No limit
<b>Per Pupil Payment to Private Schools</b>	About \$3,200 (1994-95 per pupil state aid to MPS)	Lesser of (i) per pupil state aid to MPS or (ii) operating and debt service cost at private school

## II. PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN MILWAUKEE

This Section describes private schools in Milwaukee and students who attend them.

- Milwaukee's private school enrollment of about 24,025 is larger than all but two of the state's 427

public school districts.<sup>13</sup> In demographic terms, Milwaukee private school students don't match the elite image sometimes associated with private schools. Instead, they are most similar to the nearly 700,000 public school students elsewhere in Wisconsin (outside of Milwaukee).

- Largely because of differences in ability to afford private school tuition, a disproportionate share of private school students in Milwaukee are from middle- and upper-income families. Citywide, 21% of parents choose private schools. But in the poorest neighborhoods, about 7% of children are in private schools, compared to 30% in the rest of the city and 33% among public school teachers. This economic division leads to a difference among racial and ethnic groups. Fully 40% of white families send their children to private schools. The rate for Black children is 6% and, for Hispanics, it is 14%.
- Milwaukee's 130 private schools are located throughout the city. At sectarian schools, particularly Catholic schools, most students in Grades K-8 live in neighborhoods near their school. Consequently, enrollment at these schools tends to mirror the surrounding neighborhood in terms of demographic factors. In MPS, lack of space in neighborhood schools requires about 14,000 elementary students to be transported several miles to other schools.
- Average enrollment, per school, is smaller at private schools than in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Now-operating private schools have capacity for about 6,400 additional students.
- At least one in four private schools enrolls a sizable number of students from families with limited income.<sup>14</sup> Schools with the largest number of these children are in or near neighborhoods of above average poverty and minority population. Many of these students are able to attend because their tuition is either fully paid by the government or partially paid by private charity. Among a sample of 33 such schools:
  - Almost half of the students at 12 Catholic schools are from families with limited income.
  - More than 80% of students at 11 independent (non-sectarian) schools are from families with limited income.
  - About half of the students at 10 other schools (9 Lutheran and 1 Christian)<sup>15</sup> are from families with limited income.
- Most sectarian schools are Catholic- or Lutheran-affiliated.<sup>16</sup> At sectarian schools in or near high poverty neighborhoods, non-Catholic and non-Lutheran enrollment is sizable. For example, a majority of Blacks in Catholic schools are non-Catholic. At Lutheran schools with large numbers of low-income children, about half of all students are non-Lutheran.

**TABLE 3** Private Schools in the City of Milwaukee

	# <sup>17</sup>	Enrollment <sup>18</sup>	% of Total Private School Enrollment
Sectarian	93	20,063	83.5%
Independent <sup>19</sup>	37	3,962	16.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>24,025</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

### 1. An Overview: Enrollment, Number, and Type of Private Schools

Research for this report identified 130 private schools in the City of Milwaukee. Table 3 to the left and Tables 4 and 5 on the next page provide various data on these schools. Map 1

**TABLE 4 Private Schools in the City of Milwaukee, High School and Grades K-8**

	# of High Schools	High School Enrollment	# of K-8 Schools <sup>20</sup>	K-8 Enrollment	Total Schools	Total Enrollment	% of Total Private School Enrollment
<b>Sectarian</b>	9	6,407	84	13,636	93	20,063	83.5%
<b>Independent</b>	15	1,312	22	2,650	37	3,962	16.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7,719</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>16,286</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>24,025</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**TABLE 5 Private Schools in the City of Milwaukee, Sectarian and Independent, High School and Grades K-8**

	# of High Schools	High School Enrollment	# of K-8 Schools	K-8 Enrollment	Total Schools	Total Enrollment	% of Total Private School Enrollment
<b>Sectarian</b>							
Catholic	6	4,543	42	9,153	48	13,634	57.0%
Lutheran	2	1,783	32	3,770	34	5,553	23.1%
Christian	0	0	8	553	8	553	2.4%
Jewish	1	81	1	123	2	204	0.8%
Muslim	0	0	1	37	1	37	0.2%
<b>Independent</b>	15	1,312	22	2,650	37	3,962	16.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7,719</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>16,286</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>24,025</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

on page 28 shows their locations.

## 2. Who attends private schools in Milwaukee?

Data in this Section provide a demographic profile of Milwaukee private school students and three other groups: (1) public school students in Milwaukee; (2) Wisconsin public school students, other than in Milwaukee; and (3) Wisconsin private school students, other than in Milwaukee.

One conclusion is that while an image of elitism is sometimes associated with private schools, such a label would not apply in Milwaukee. In fact, private students in Milwaukee are quite similar to the nearly 700,000 public students outside Milwaukee. This similarity is inconsistent with demographic differences between the overall Milwaukee population and the rest of the state's residents. Table 6 on the next page illustrates some of these differences. Yet Table 7, also on the next page, shows that the demographic profile of private Milwaukee students is quite similar to public students elsewhere in Wisconsin.

In some categories, Milwaukee private students and families are different: (1) about 22% are non-white,

**TABLE 6** City of Milwaukee Residents and Residents Elsewhere in Wisconsin<sup>21</sup>

	Milwaukee	Rest of Wisconsin
Population	628,088	4,263,681
% in Poverty	22%	9%
Civilian Unemployment	9%	5%
Families Headed by Females	32%	11%
Non-Minority	61%	96%

compared to 7% for public students in the rest of the state; (2) Milwaukee private student families are more likely to be renters; and (3) they are less likely to come from high income families (above \$100,000).<sup>24</sup> More noteworthy are many similarities in overall family structure and income. These similarities exist despite major demographic differences between residents of Milwaukee and the rest of the state (Table 6).

How can the similarities in Table 7 be reconciled with the differences in Table 6?

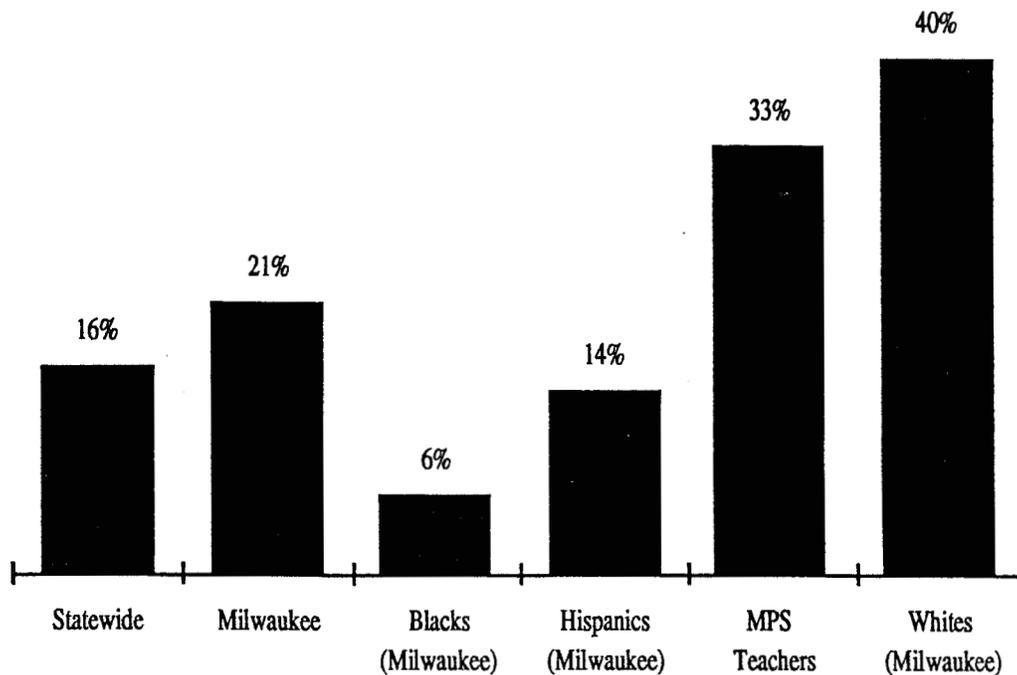
To answer that question, this study analyzed Census data to determine the rates at which different groups of parents chose private schools. While the *average* citywide rate in Milwaukee is 21%, in middle- and upper-income neighborhoods the rate is 30% or higher. A recent study documented that 33% of public school teachers enroll their children in private school.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, only 7% of families in the city's poorest census tracts send their children to private schools.<sup>26</sup>

These differences in who uses private schools explain the anomalies between Tables 6 and 7. That is, while Milwaukee's overall population differs markedly from the rest of Wisconsin, Milwaukee parents and students who opt out of the public schools are not representative of Milwaukee's overall population. Instead, they are much more similar to residents in the rest of the state.

**TABLE 7** Private Students in Milwaukee and Public Students Outside Milwaukee<sup>22</sup>

	Private Students in Milwaukee	Wisconsin Public Students Other Than in MPS
Number of Children	25,099	691,250
<i>Data about them and their families:</i>		
Families Headed by Married Couple	79.0%	81.0%
White Students as % of Enrollment	78.0%	93.0%
Students Above Federal Poverty Level	91.0%	89.0%
Unemployed Parents as % of Total Parents	3.0%	2.0%
Householders Receiving Public Assistance	7.6%	8.1%
% of Householders w/ Children Who Rent	30.2%	23.3%
Parent(s) Without High School Degree	9.0%	10.0%
Households w/ Income over Median <sup>23</sup>	58.0%	55.0%
Households w/ Income over \$100,000	1.7%	3.4%

**FIGURE 1** Percentage of School-Age Children in Private Schools, 1990



The economic differences in who chooses private schools lead to racial differences. While fully 40% of non-minority families send their children to private school, the rates for Blacks and Hispanics are 6% and 14%, respectively. Figure 1 above illustrates.

Does the variation in choice of private schools reflect satisfaction with MPS on the part of low-income, minority parents? As explained below, the answer appears to be no. Instead, the variations more likely are explained by differences in ability to afford private school tuition. These conclusions are supported by (i) scientific public opinion polls and (ii) census data about incomes of those who do and don't choose private schools.

**Public opinion.** Dissatisfaction with MPS does not appear to be confined to a single group (say, for example, whites). To illustrate:

- A 1987 survey of MPS teachers found that 57% would not want their child enrolled at the school where they teach.<sup>27</sup>
- A 1990 survey of a representative sample of Milwaukee residents, conducted for the Milwaukee Public Schools, found that 72% believed children get a better education in private and parochial schools.<sup>28</sup> In this survey, 13% believed MPS schools had improved in the previous five years and 33% believed their children receive a better education than they did.

- A 1992 survey of a representative sample of Milwaukee voters, also done for the Milwaukee Public Schools, found that 72% felt MPS needed “major changes” or a “complete overhaul.”<sup>29</sup> In a separate rating, 45% said MPS is “falling very far short” of desirable; 12% said its performance was as “good as could be expected.”
- An in-depth survey of a representative sample of Milwaukee’s Black community was issued in 1995.<sup>30</sup> It found that 70% believed private and parochial schools provide a better education than MPS and only 21% believed MPS had improved in the prior five years. Similar views were held by middle and low-income respondents to the survey.

While the themes in these polls are consistent, a different pattern is sometimes found, both within MPS and elsewhere, when parents are asked about the school their child attends. For example, an MPS survey in February 1994 found that 90% or more of responding parents had favorable comments on the school their child attended.<sup>31</sup> A possible interpretation of these results is that the more negative views expressed about “the system” will not translate into significant numbers of parents choosing private schools under the expanded MPCP. This simply remains to be seen.

#### *Ability to afford private school tuition.*

- Elsewhere, this report shows that the greatest concentration of poverty in Milwaukee is in neighborhoods with a high percentage of minority families. These are areas where the smallest proportion of school-age children attend private school. Given the opinion polls cited above, there can be little doubt that ability to pay is a major factor in the lower level of private school attendance.
- Data in this Section confirm that middle and upper income families are several times more likely than poor families to choose private schools. Again, there can be little doubt that ability-to-pay is a contributing factor in the higher level of private school attendance.

Table 8 on the next page further establishes ability-to-pay as a major difference between private and public school selection in Milwaukee. For example, MPS families are almost five times as likely to be receiving public assistance as are private school families in Milwaukee. Also, 58% of private school families had incomes above the median, compared to 26% for MPS families. The table also restates the similarity between Milwaukee private students and public students elsewhere.

Table 9, also on the next page, compares: public students in Milwaukee; private students in Milwaukee; public students outside Milwaukee; and private students outside Milwaukee. It highlights interesting distinctions between private school families in Milwaukee and elsewhere: (1) the income of Milwaukee private parents is lower; (2) fewer private Milwaukee families are headed by a married couple; (3) the percent of private households receiving public assistance is higher in Milwaukee; and (4) the share of private Milwaukee families who rent is notably greater.

### **3. Demographic Differences Within MPS**

As Table 9 illustrates, there are significant economic class distinctions between MPS students and students in the other three specified categories. Historically, there also have been distinctions along economic lines *within* MPS. Two programs in particular involving MPS students have contributed to segregation on the basis of economic class.

*Specialty schools.* Specialty schools (or “citywide schools” or “magnet schools”) grew out of the 1976

**TABLE 8** Students in Milwaukee, in MPS and Private Schools, and Public Students Outside Milwaukee

	Students in Milwaukee		Wisconsin Private Students
	<i>In MPS</i>	<i>In Private Schools</i>	Other Than in MPS
<b>Number of Children</b>	94,958	25,099	691,250
<i>Data about them and their families:</i>			
Families Headed by Married Couple	44.0%	79.0%	81.0%
White Students as % of Enrollment	30.0%	78.0%	93.0%
Students Above Federal Poverty Level	57.0%	91.0%	89.0%
Unemployed Parents as % of Total Parents	12.0%	3.0%	2.0%
Householders Receiving Public Assistance	34.6%	7.6%	8.1%
% of Householders w/ Children Who Rent	65.0%	30.2%	23.3%
Parent(s) Without High School Degree	30.0%	9.0%	10.0%
Households w/ Income over Median	26.0%	58.0%	55.0%
Households w/ Income over \$100,000	0.4%	1.7%	3.4%

**TABLE 9** Students in Milwaukee and Outside Milwaukee, in Public and Private Schools

	Students in Milwaukee		Students Outside Milwaukee	
	<i>In MPS</i>	<i>In Private Schools</i>	<i>In Public Schools (Non-MPS)</i>	<i>In Private Schools (Non-Milwaukee)</i>
<b>Number of Children</b>	94,958	25,099	691,250	127,484
<i>Data about them and their families:</i>				
Families Headed by Married Couple	44.0%	79.0%	81.0%	91.0%
White Students as % of Enrollment	30.0%	78.0%	93.0%	96.0%
Students Above Federal Poverty Level	57.0%	91.0%	89.0%	94.0%
Unemployed Parents as % of Total Parents	12.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Householders Receiving Public Assistance	34.6%	7.6%	8.1%	3.3%
% of Householders w/ Children Who Rent	65.0%	30.2%	23.3%	16.1%
Parent(s) Without High School Degree	30.0%	9.0%	10.0%	5.0%
Households w/ Income over Median	26.0%	58.0%	55.0%	65.0%
Households w/ Income over \$100,000	0.4%	1.7%	3.4%	6.6%

federal court ruling described in Section I. Many are in converted schools which formerly were neighborhood schools in the Black community. Specialty schools were intended to offer superior academic programs in racially integrated settings. Independent analyses show that the specialty school program historically relied heavily on selective admission procedures.

For example, a 1986 paper presented to the National Conference on School Desegregation said "...prior school achievement and test scores" were factors in admission to Milwaukee specialty schools. The paper cited "a consistent pattern [within MPS] of counseling students into schools that counselors felt matched their ability."<sup>32</sup>

Substantial additional evidence of selective admission practices was provided in a 1989 analysis.<sup>33</sup> It found that selective admission practices had created a dual system within MPS, with middle- and upper-income families concentrated in specialty schools. This study compared enrollment at the 25 specialty schools in MPS with enrollment at more than 100 other MPS schools. Comparisons were made using three categories: (i) percent of students from low-income families; (ii) percent of students in highly mobile families; and (iii) attendance rates. The comparison showed specialty school students were disproportionately from families with higher income and greater residential stability (i.e. less mobility) than the average MPS student. At all but one of the 25 schools, attendance rates were higher.

**Chapter 220.** Following the 1976 federal court ruling, the state enacted the city-suburban Chapter 220 program, by which minority students from Milwaukee transfer to suburban districts and white students in suburbs transfer to MPS schools.

Many suburban districts in this program have used formal and informal practices to screen minority students.<sup>34</sup> As with the specialty program within MPS, this historically resulted in minority transfer students to suburbs who were much less likely to come from low-income families or families with residential instability (Mitchell, 1989). In demographic terms, minority transfer students historically have been most similar to specialty school students in MPS and most different from minority MPS students in non-specialty schools. This meant that "...suburban minority [student] populations are on average considerably better off than their city counterparts, and thus straightforward comparisons on achievement are very questionable..."<sup>35</sup>

The Chapter 220 program also has had the effect of limiting the number of Milwaukee minority students attending MPS specialty schools. Historically, MPS has agreed to reserve slots in the most desirable specialty schools for suburban transfer students. For example, in 1989-90, 381 Black MPS students were on specialty school waiting lists due to slots used by suburban transfers.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. Other Demographic Issues

**Poor and minority students.** As discussed, Milwaukee's private schools have a smaller share of low-income and minority students than MPS. A different pattern is found in neighborhoods with higher numbers of low-income and minority residents. This reflects the fact that most private sectarian schools tend to draw students from adjacent neighborhoods. A series of maps (Maps 2-7 on pages 29-34, respectively) and Tables 10 and 11 on the next page illustrate this.

Map 2 shows the areas of highest poverty in the City of Milwaukee.<sup>37</sup> Maps 3-5 show areas of high minority and ethnic population (Black, Hispanic, and Asian, respectively). Collectively, Maps 2-5 show considerable overlap between Milwaukee's poorest neighborhoods and those with high minority and ethnic populations.

Within the highlighted areas of Maps 2-5, this study identified 33 private schools (sectarian and independent) with sizable enrollments of minority students and-or low-income students.<sup>38</sup> Map 6 locates these schools. Table 10 presents data on them.

**TABLE 10 Low-Income Students at 33 Private Schools in Map 6**

	# of Schools	Students from Families w/ Limited Income	As % of Enrollment
Catholic Schools	12	1,149	47%
Lutheran (9) & Other Christian (1) Schools	10	456	50%
Independent Schools	11	1,607	81%
<i>Total</i>	33	3,212	60%

This study determined that most of the 3,212 students in Table 10 received full or partial financial assistance with tuition. Specifically, 36% received scholarships for 50% of tuition from the Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE).<sup>39</sup> These PAVE students attended both sectarian and independent schools. An additional 21% received full government payment of tuition through the MPCP. These students all attended independent schools.

Together, PAVE and MPCP assisted 57% of the 3,212. This reinforces the point that ability-to-pay is a major factor in determining who can and cannot attend private schools in Milwaukee.

An estimated 300 more students — almost 10% of the 3,212 total, attended independent schools under direct contractual relationships with MPS.<sup>40</sup> These are called “alternative school placements” or “partnership school placements.” They involve students for whom a parent or teacher has recommended a school other than in MPS due to behavior or academic issues. The inclusion of these students means that about two-thirds of those in Table 10 received full or partial financial assistance to attend private school.

Table 10 illustrates that a significant number of low-income students attend private schools in or near the highest areas of poverty in Milwaukee. Schools in these neighborhoods also have a sizable percent of minority students. For example, Table 11 provides minority enrollment data for 21 Catholic schools located on Map 7. Twelve of these 21 schools are among those included in Table 10.

These 21 schools include 19 K-8 schools affiliated with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, one high school (St. Joan Antida) affiliated with the Archdiocese, and one independent Catholic high school (Messmer). Reflecting their location, the 20 Archdiocese schools and Messmer are increasingly focused on serving students from low-income and high minority populations.

**Religious affiliation.** At Catholic schools citywide, about 11% of students are non-Catholic and-or have

**TABLE 11 Minority Students at 21 Catholic Schools in Map 7**

Type of School	# of Schools	Total Enrollment	% Black	% Non-White
Grades K-8	19	4,091	22%	35%
High Schools	2	622	40%	60%
<i>Total</i>	21	4,713	25%	38%

no religious affiliation. At Lutheran schools citywide, about 13% of students are non-Lutheran or have no religious affiliation.<sup>41</sup>

A different pattern exists, however, in neighborhoods with higher numbers of low-income families and increasing minority populations. For example, in these neighborhoods about 70% of Blacks attending Catholic schools are non-Catholic. Further, a growing share of enrollment at the 21 schools described in Table 11 is non-Catholic. A 1994 study analyzed enrollment trends at 17 of these 21 schools.<sup>42</sup> Findings included:

- Minority student enrollment had increased 81% in five years. Minority enrollment increased at 14 of the 17 schools.
- The percentage enrollment of non-Catholic Blacks more than doubled since 1989-90.

Separately, research for this current report identified nine Lutheran schools in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and increasing minority populations. At eight (data was unavailable at the ninth), non-Lutheran enrollment was 35%. About 54% of students at the nine schools were from families with limited income.

## 5. Average Enrollment at Private Schools

Table 12 below compares the average enrollment of private schools in Milwaukee with that in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Private, sectarian high schools, which account for 83% of private high school enrollment, have an average enrollment (705) equal to about 52% of the average MPS high school. At lower grades, average private enrollment at independent schools (133) is 24% of the average MPS school; average enrollment at sectarian schools (162) is 29% of the average MPS school.

	Grades K-8 <sup>43</sup>	High School
All Private	157	336
Sectarian	162	705
Independent	133	94
MPS	550	1,367

## 6. Expansion Capacity

A 1994 survey of private schools by PAVE estimated that they have expansion capacity for 6,400 students. After independently reviewing this survey, the state's Legislative Audit Bureau included it in a February, 1995 report on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program.

This study confirmed the validity of the 1992 PAVE estimate.<sup>44</sup> About 20% of the expansion capacity is at the sectarian high schools, as detailed further in Section III. The rest is at schools serving Grades K-8.

Private school capacity is not necessarily static or confined to existing schools. For example, there are seven closed Catholic schools with an estimated capacity of 1,840 students. Still other closed Catholic schools, now being leased to various parties, have capacity for hundreds more students.<sup>45</sup> Further, prior to the Legislature's approval of the expanded MPCP, four organizations notified the state of their intent to start new independent schools. And, given the various provisions of the adopted legislation, a large existing independent school plans a fundraising campaign to significantly expand its capacity. If the new legislation results in significant new demand, there could be expansion of other existing schools and

other new startups.

## 7. Student Residency

This study analyzed where Grade K-8 students live in relation to the school they attend. It found that a substantial majority of private school students live near the school they attend.<sup>46</sup> This explains why low-income and minority enrollment at private schools is higher in neighborhoods with larger numbers of low-income and minority residents. A similar pattern exists for non-minority students, most of whom are from middle and upper income families.

Among private schools, the pattern of neighborhood schools is stronger among sectarian schools than independent schools. Among sectarian schools, it is strongest among Catholic schools.

These conclusions are based on a review of pupil transportation data provided by the Milwaukee Public Schools. Under state law, MPS is required to provide transportation to most private students who live 2 miles or more from their school.<sup>47</sup> Using data from MPS and total enrollment numbers from the various private schools, Table 13 above shows the number of students receiving transportation from MPS.<sup>48</sup>

Within the Milwaukee Public Schools, about 50% of the system's 55,500 elementary school students are transported to school.<sup>49</sup> According to MPS, the average one-way trip for transported students in MPS is 13 miles and the average time for a one-way trip is 52 minutes. Comparable data were not obtained for students transported to private schools.

Of elementary students transported within MPS, about half (i) attend "specialty schools" or (ii) are students with special mobility needs. The rest — roughly 14,000 — are transported because there is insufficient space in their neighborhood school and because of racial balance programs. This space shortage relates in part to the closing of neighborhood schools and conversion of others to specialty schools, previously described in Section I.<sup>50</sup>

In proposing to expand the state-sponsored choice program to include sectarian schools, Governor Thompson said it would give more students an opportunity to attend a neighborhood school. This statement appears correct, given: the expansion capacity which exists in Catholic and Lutheran schools; the location of these schools (see maps); and the 14,000 MPS students whose neighborhood public school is at or over capacity.

## 8. Private School Cost and Tuition

Table 14 to the right provides average tuition and

**TABLE 13 Private Students Transported per Agreement with MPS**

	Total # of Grade K-8 Students	# Transported per MPS	As % of Students
<b>Sectarian</b>			
Catholic	9,153	513	6%
Lutheran	3,770	540	14%
Other	713	222	31%
<b>Independent</b>	2,650	844	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,286</b>	<b>2,119</b>	<b>13%</b>

**TABLE 14 Per Pupil Cost and Tuition at Milwaukee Private Schools in 1994-95**

	Tuition	Cost
K-8 Schools	\$1,244	\$2,389
High Schools	\$2,820	\$5,012

per pupil costs for 9 private sectarian high schools in Milwaukee and 79 private schools (sectarian and independent) serving students in Grades K-8. The source of these data is information provided by the private schools to PAVE (see Note 9).

### III. PRIVATE AND PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

This Section compares public and private high schools in Milwaukee and public high schools elsewhere in Wisconsin.

- Educational attainment at private high schools in Milwaukee (i) generally exceeds public high schools outside Milwaukee and (ii) substantially exceeds Milwaukee public high schools.
- In the MPS Class of 1994, students most likely to graduate had attended private schools or non-MPS public schools before high school. Those least likely to graduate were enrolled in MPS before high school.
- In Milwaukee, differences between public and private high schools include:
  - Due to higher average attendance rates (96% v. 79%) the average private student will attend 122 more days of school over four years.
  - Private school graduates in 1994 equaled 88% of freshmen enrollment four years earlier. In MPS, the rate was 48%.
  - Of those who do graduate, private school students are much more likely to be college-bound.
  - In 1994, fewer than half of MPS 10th Graders completed all portions of the statewide standardized test intended for the large majority of 10th Graders. MPS scores were substantially lower than those of other Wisconsin public high school students taking the same test.
  - More than 90% of private high schoolers take standardized exams used by the individual schools. Scores are consistently above national averages. Because of differences in exams, private and public standardized test scores are not directly comparable.
- Milwaukee parents are more likely to choose a private high school than they are to choose a private school in Grades K-8.
- In comparison to K-8 private schools, private high schools have fewer students from low-income families and fewer minority students. This can partly be explained by differences in ability to pay: private high school tuition is 127% greater than in Grades K-8 (see Table 14). Also, until now none of the sectarian high schools qualified for the state's choice program, which helps only low-income children.

#### 1. What Schools Were Compared? How?

This Section uses various quantifiable measures to compare three groups of high schools: (1) MPS high schools; (2) public high schools elsewhere in Wisconsin; and (3) private high schools in Milwaukee.<sup>51</sup>

Data for public schools came from MPS and DPI reports. Where feasible, data for MPS were deleted

from statewide totals, allowing a clearer comparison between public schools in the city and elsewhere.

Data for the private schools came from a mailed survey and follow-up interviews. Guidelines and definitions given to the private schools were intended to elicit data which were as comparable as possible to those presented for public schools. These guidelines and definitions are explained in notes following Table 18.

## 2. Why Only High Schools?

A comparison of all 130 private schools in Milwaukee was beyond the scope of this study. Instead, the emphasis was on high school performance and graduation. This was done for two principal reasons:

- The importance of high school graduation is well established. There is abundant research documenting that an individual's income, participation in the labor force, and overall level of opportunity is adversely affected by failing to graduate.
- A primary objective of expanded school choice is to increase high school graduation rates for low-income students in and out of MPS.

## 3. What Do The Comparisons Show?

**Public high schools.** Prior research has shown that educational attainment in MPS high schools is below that of public schools elsewhere in Wisconsin. Table 17 reconfirms that. One comparison has not been widely noted: the much smaller percentage of MPS students who complete all segments of the standardized state test administered to Wisconsin 10th Graders.<sup>52</sup> Further, while a larger share of state students take the test, their scores are significantly higher. It is reasonable to speculate that the gap in MPS and non-MPS scores might have been even greater if more MPS students had been tested.

**Private and public high schools in Milwaukee.** The gap between public and private students within Milwaukee is also sizable. The rate of graduation is almost twice as high in private high schools. Of those who graduate, the likelihood of attending college is almost twice as great among private students.<sup>53</sup> As Table 15 below shows, this is particularly significant in light of the higher dropout rates in MPS. For the class of 1994, private schools had 18% of all freshmen in the city (in 1990-91). Yet in 1994, private schools accounted for 28% of high school graduates and 42% of college-bound graduates. The table also shows that 77% of private high school freshmen were likely to be college-bound, more than three times the rate for MPS freshmen. This is so even though MPS has reported that an increasing percent of graduates pursue post-secondary education.<sup>55</sup>

**TABLE 15 Public and Private Graduation Rates for the Class of 1994**

	MPS	Private	Total	Private % of Total
Freshmen in 1990	7,036	1,504	8,540	18%
Graduates in 1994	3,362	1,321	4,683	28%
College-Bound Graduates, 1994 <sup>54</sup>	1,614	1,162	2,776	42%
College-Bound as % of Freshmen	23%	77%	33%	

**TABLE 16** Prior Schools of MPS Class of 1994 Graduates

	1990 Freshmen	1994 Graduates	Graduates as % of Freshmen
# Who Did Not Attend MPS Middle Schools <sup>56</sup>	1,631	1,125	69%
# Who Did Attend MPS Middle Schools	5,405	2,237	41%
<i>Total</i>	<i>7,036</i>	<i>3,362</i>	<i>48%</i>

#### 4. Who Graduates from MPS?

Table 16 above provides further analysis of the MPS Class of 1994, beginning with the 7,036 freshmen in 1990-91.

MPS provided data about (i) what schools the 7,036 freshmen attended before high school and (ii) which students graduated. The data show that students were 68% more likely to graduate if they had attended a private school or a non-MPS public school prior to high school.

#### 5. Who Chooses Private High Schools in Milwaukee?

As shown elsewhere in this study, citywide “averages” can mask important distinctions. For example, while 21% of Milwaukee school-age children are in private school, the rate is much lower (about 7%) for low-income and minority families and much higher for others (30% for middle- and upper-income families; 40% for whites; 33% for teachers).

There are other notable distinctions. For example, Milwaukee parents are much more likely to choose a private high school for their children than they are to select a private school in earlier grades. Specifically, while on average 21% of school-age children attend private school, the rate is 18% in Grades K-8 and 27% for high school age students.

Despite the larger rate of private enrollment in high school, there is a drop-off in the share of minority students attending private school in Grades 9-12. Citywide, for all grades, 22% of private school students are from minority groups (Table 7). At private high schools, the number is 15% (and thus it is above 22% in Grades K-8).

If a larger share of students attend private high schools (than in Grades K-8) and, at the same time, a smaller share of minorities are in private high schools, non-minority attendance at private high schools must be disproportionately high. The data bear this out. Specifically, Table 17 on the next page identifies 26,847 high school students in MPS and in nine private high schools in 1993-94.<sup>57</sup> While overall about 24% of the 26,847 are in the private schools, 45% of all white students are in the private schools.

Considering the high correlation in Milwaukee between race and income, the reduced minority attendance at private high schools also means fewer low-income students are in private high schools.

**TABLE 17** Comparison of Public and Nine Private High Schools  
in the City of Milwaukee, 1993-94  
*Please see accompanying notes after Table 18*

	Public Schools		Milwaukee
	MPS	Rest of State	Private Schools**
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	20,503	227,781	6,344
<b>Average Enrollment per School</b>	1,367	547*	705
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>			
White	32%	93%	85%
Black	52%	3%	8%
Hispanic	11%	2%	4%
Other	5%	3%	3%
<b>Religious Affiliation;</b>			
% Not of Primary Faith	—	—	15%
<b>% from Families w/ Limited Income</b>	59%	17%	14%
<b>Attendance Rate</b>	79%	93%	96%
<b>Suspension Rate</b>	25%	9.5%	0.9%
<b>Expulsion Rate</b>	0.2%	0.3%	0.85%
<b>Dropout Rate</b>	15%	1.9%	0.6%
<b>Graduation Rate</b>			
Freshmen in 1990	7,036	52,022	1,504
Graduates in 1994	3,362	45,009	1,321
Graduates as % of Freshmen	48%	87%	88%
<b>Composite ACT Score</b>	18.9	21.8*	22.6
% Tested	44%	56%*	85%
<b>Wisconsin 10th Grade Test</b>			
% Taking Complete Test	41	73*	<i>see</i>
	44%	80%	<i>notes</i>
<b>Expansion Capacity</b>	—	—	1,266
<b>Per Pupil Cost</b>	\$7,035	\$6,681*	\$4,502

\* Includes MPS.

\*\* See Table 18.

TABLE 18 Selected Data for Nine Private High Schools in the City of Milwaukee, 1993-94

Please see accompanying notes

	Divine Savior Holy Angels	Marquette	Messmer	Milwaukee Lutheran	Pius XI	St. Joan Antida	Thomas More	Wisconsin Institute for Torah Study	Wisconsin Lutheran
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	533	886	287	768	1,696	335	744	81	1,014
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>									
White	92%	82%	25%	87%	92%	53%	91.7%	100%	90%
Black	5%	7%	70%	10%	2%	14%	0.3%	0%	7%
Hispanic	0%	5%	5%	1%	4%	25%	5.4%	0%	2%
Other	2%	6%	0%	2%	1%	8%	2.7%	0%	1%
<b>Religious Affiliation;</b>									
% Not of Primary Faith	20%	20%	60%	12%	14%	22%	8%	0%	2%
% from Families w/ Limited Income	18%	—	37%	—	12%	32%	8%	5%	8%
<b>Attendance Rate</b>	96%	97%	95%	94%	95%	93%	96%	100%	97%
<b>Suspension Rate</b>	0.00%	0.23%	0.31%	4.00%	—	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%
<b>Expulsion Rate</b>	0.00%	2.60%	0.70%	0.00%	1.12%	0.60%	0.40%	0.00%	0.49%
<b>Dropout Rate</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
<b>Graduation Rate</b>									
Freshmen in 1990	140	242	35	192	386	74	200	14	221
Graduates in 1994	117	197	34	171	383	70	158	15	176
Graduates as % of Freshmen	84%	81%	97%	89%	99%	79%	79%	107%	79%
<b>Composite ACT Score</b>	23.3	24.9	18.0	21.5	22.0	19.2	22.9	—	23.8
% Tested	79%	97%	85%	85%	82%	79%	90%	—	79%
<b>Expansion Capacity</b>	33	98	50	875	150	30	30	0	0
<b>Per Pupil Cost</b>	\$4,376	\$6,992	\$4,622	\$5,045	\$2,834	\$3,614	\$3,926	\$8,000	\$3,505

This can largely be explained by the fact that average tuition is 127% more than in private K-8 schools. The expansion of the school choice program to include sectarian high schools will increase the number of minority students able to attend private high schools.

#### NOTES TO TABLES 17 AND 18

Public school information came from MPS and DPI. Researchers for this study deleted MPS from most statewide data. Where this adjustment was not feasible, Table 17 (and these notes) are marked with an \*. Private schools responded to a questionnaire and follow-up interviews. For the single column on Table 17 with data on all nine private schools, researchers weighted the calculations to adjust for enrollment variations.

- **Enrollment, Race & Ethnicity.** MPS numbers are for the system's 15 four-year high schools and exclude students in MPS "Alternative Schools" and private "Partnership Schools."
- **Religious Affiliation.** Private schools provided data on students who were not of the school's primary faith, i.e., Catholic, Lutheran, or Jewish.
- **Students w/ Limited Income.** For MPS and the state, this reflects students eligible for subsidized meals under federal guidelines. See Note 14. Researchers adjusted DPI's statewide number to (1) delete MPS and (2) reflect that high school subsidized meal participation is less than at earlier grades. For private schools in the state-administered meal program, the state's May 4, 1994, participation report was used. Data for other private schools reflects each school's estimate, based on PAVE scholarships, PAVE-eligible students, financial aid, and other data.
- **Attendance Rate.** Average daily attendance divided by enrollment.
- **Suspension Rate.** Number of different students given out-of-school suspensions divided by total enrollment.
- **Expulsion Rate.** Number of pupils expelled divided by total enrollment. For Marquette High School, the term is a misnomer; the school explained that the high rate relates to students with academic rather than behavior difficulties.
- **Dropout Rate.** Number of dropouts in 1993-94 divided by enrollment.
- **Graduation Rate.** MPS, DPI, and each private school provided the number of 1994 graduates and number of enrolled freshmen four years earlier. The data do not account for students who move from or into the district or a particular school after the freshman year. At the Wisconsin Institute for Torah Study, the rate exceeds 100% because of enrollment growth. At Marquette High School, the relatively low rate reflects attrition due to "academic expulsions" (see above).
- **ACT Score.\*** Composite of English, math, reading, and science scores on the American College Test, a college entrance exam widely used in Wisconsin. The percent taking the test is the percent of seniors.
- **Standardized Tests.\*** For public schools, the scores of 41 and 73 are composite National Percentile Rankings for multiple choice questions on Wisconsin's statewide standardized exam for 10th graders. Most private schools provided data on standardized tests they use, but no specific scores are reported due to lack of comparability. Data provided by private schools showed that the percent of students taking various tests was higher than for public schools, particularly MPS. Also, reported scores showed that most private students were well above national averages applicable for the respective tests.
- **Expansion Capacity.** Private schools were asked if they had capacity for additional students.
- **Per Pupil Cost.\*** Public school data was provided by DPI. Research did not establish whether the data (i) between public and private schools or (ii) among private schools is strictly comparable. The relative public and private costs reported in this study are consistent with an exhaustive financial study in 1992-93 study by the Public Policy Forum ("Public and Private School Costs — A Local Analysis"). The private data differ from Table 14, which is for 1994-95.

#### IV. STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

This Section describes who is eligible for the MPCP and how they are performing in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

- An estimated 65,000-70,000 students in Milwaukee are in families with income which makes them eligible for the MPCP. The expanded program allows for a maximum of about 15,700 participants.
- The majority of eligible students live in neighborhoods with the highest concentration of poverty in Milwaukee. These include areas where more than 40% of families are headed by a female and more than 50% of persons have not graduated from high school.
- Between 75% and 80% of eligible students are from minority groups. Blacks comprise about 60% of those eligible.
- Test scores for eligible students are lower than the average scores for MPS students. Eligible students are more likely to be among those who do not graduate from high school.
- Private schools in Milwaukee have the capacity for an additional 6,400 students (more if closed schools are reopened and new schools are started). Most of this extra capacity is at Grades K-8, where MPS now has the greatest space shortage. Some of the extra capacity is in kindergarten grades, where the percent of eligible students attending four- and five-year-old kindergarten is lower than for other children in the city and statewide.
- A substantial number of private schools are located in or near neighborhoods with the largest number of students eligible for the MPCP.

##### 1. Who's Eligible? Sources of Information

Students are eligible for the MPCP if their family income is at or below 175% of the federal poverty level.<sup>58</sup> This Section provides a demographic profile of those eligible, estimates their number, and locates their residency in relation to private schools. This was carried out with assistance from Wisconsin's Demographic Services Center, a unit within the Department of Administration. The Center provided two sets of data. One (the "Citywide Data") estimated the number of persons and households anywhere in Milwaukee with MPCP qualifying income.<sup>59</sup> The other (the "Census Tract Data") identified census tracts where 50% or more of the residents were in households with qualifying income.<sup>60</sup> This is the most comprehensive demographic data available about MPCP-eligible students.

##### 2. The Citywide Data

In 1990, about 35% of Milwaukee residents — 221,547 persons — were in households with income below 175% of the poverty level.<sup>61</sup> About 71% of them were in households with at least one member under 18 years of age, defined for purposes of this study as an "MPCP Household." Using that criterion, about one in four Milwaukee residents — 156,058 — were in an MPCP Household. Table 19 on the next page compares them with residents citywide and with Wisconsin residents outside Milwaukee.

An estimated 61,166 of those in MPCP Households were enrolled in public school. Another 5,962 were in private schools. Based on that 1990 data, the number of school-age children in Milwaukee eligible for

**TABLE 19 Persons in MPCP Households, Compared to City and State Persons, 1990**

	<i>1</i> MPCP Households w/ 1 Member < 18 Yrs.	<i>2</i> Citywide Including Column 1	<i>3</i> Wisconsin Less City <sup>62</sup>
<b>Number of Persons</b>	156,058	628,088	4,263,681
<b>% of Families Headed by Female</b>	69%	32%	11%
<b>% Without High School Diploma</b>	45%	28%	20%
<b>% w/ Public Assistance</b>	43%	15%	6%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
White (Non-Hispanic)	23%	61%	96%
Black (Non-Hispanic)	60%	30%	1%
Hispanic	12%	6%	1%
Other	6%	3%	2%
<b>Median Household Income (\$1989)</b>	\$10,000	\$23,627	\$29,422

the MPCP is 61,166 plus those private students among the 5,962 in Grades K-3. A third group of eligible children would include those about to enter school for the first time. For purposes of this report, it is estimated that eligible school-age children number between 65,000 and 70,000.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. The Census Tract Data

The Citywide Data do not identify where eligible students and families live. The Demographic Services Center assisted by identifying census tracts with 50% or more of the persons in MPCP households. This produced a list of 77 census tracts. Four include a large number of Marquette University students and were excluded from analysis as being unrepresentative.

The remaining 73 tracts are shown in Map 2. The 1990 population of these tracts was 178,542. Fully two-thirds of these residents were in MPCP households. Thus, data about these census tracts gives a representative picture of the neighborhoods in Milwaukee where a majority of MPCP families live. Tables 20 and 21 on the next page compare the 73 tracts with (i) the rest of Milwaukee and (ii) Wisconsin other than Milwaukee.

### 4. Comparing MPCP-Eligible Students With Other School Children

Section II provided demographic data about "average" MPS students and households. It sharply contrasted MPS students with (i) private students in Milwaukee, (ii) public students elsewhere in Wisconsin, and (iii) private students elsewhere in Wisconsin.

The data in this Section describe yet another category of students: those *within* MPS who are eligible for the MPCP. The data also locate and describe the areas of Milwaukee where most of these students live.

**TABLE 20 Demographic Comparison: 73 Census Tracts in Milwaukee, Rest of City, and Rest of State**

	Census Tract Data (73 Tracts)	City Less 73 Tracts	Wisconsin Less City
% of Families Headed by Female	56%	24%	11%
% Without High School Diploma	47%	23%	20%
% w/ Public Assistance	37%	8%	6%
% in Poverty	47%	12%	9%
% Civilian Unemployment	20%	6%	5%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
White (Non-Hispanic)	21%	76%	96%
Black (Non-Hispanic)	61%	18%	1%
Hispanic	13%	4%	1%
Other	4%	2%	2%

**TABLE 21 Income and Housing: 73 Census Tracts in Milwaukee, Rest of City, and Rest of State**

	Census Tract Data (73 Tracts)	City Less 73 Tracts	Wisconsin Less City
Housing Units, % Owner-Occupied	26%	45%	67%
Median Housing Value	\$31,662	\$53,500	\$62,500
Median Household Income	\$12,708	\$23,627	\$29,442

Together, this enables another comparison to be made: between MPCP eligible students and all other school children in Wisconsin. The contrast is even sharper than those set forth in Section II, which showed a clear distinction along economic class lines between MPS students and all others. In comparison to the average MPS family, families of eligible students are even more likely:

- To be headed by someone without a high school diploma.
- To be headed by a sole parent.
- To be receiving some public assistance.
- To be renters.

Maps 8 and 9 on pages 35 and 36, respectively, emphasize two of these points. Map 8 shows the 28 census tracts in Milwaukee where 40% or more of families are headed by a female. Map 9 shows the 38 census tracts where 50% or more of those aged 25 or over have not graduated from high school. *All of the shaded areas in Maps 8 and 9 are among the 73 tracts in Map 2.*

In sum, as illustrated by the above data and the cited maps, the MPCP targets the most concentrated area of urban poverty and racial segregation in the State of Wisconsin.

#### 4. Eligible Students — How Are They Doing in School?

A prominent issue in the choice debate is whether school vouchers will enable more talented students to leave public schools. In the MPCP, the Wisconsin Legislature sought to minimize this. Its goal has been to focus on students likely to be performing poorly in MPS. To achieve this goal, the Legislature used family income as an eligibility threshold, relying on research showing a correlation between income and academic achievement.

In the program's first four years, program evaluators have found that this goal has been achieved. Specifically, DPI's evaluator said "...the choice students in this program enter very near the bottom in terms of academic achievement."<sup>64</sup> Commenting on the evaluator's conclusion, the Legislative Audit Bureau said "...students who applied for the [MPCP] were experiencing academic problems in MPS in that they had lower scores on [standardized] tests taken before they applied...than did other low-income students and MPS students as a whole."<sup>65</sup>

While fewer than 1,000 students participated in 1994-95, this study has estimated that between 65,000 and 70,000 students are eligible for the MPCP. Are those who are eligible but have not participated also among the lower performers in MPS? Can this substantial a number of students also be "...near the bottom in terms of academic achievement" (using the state evaluator's words)?

A variety of data indicate the answer is, quite possibly, *yes*. Overall, MPS' low system-wide test scores mask much lower performance by students from poor and minority families, most of whom are eligible for the MPCP. If the program's participation expands, it is likely that new participants also will not have achieved academic success within MPS.<sup>66</sup>

Section I of this report described the 1984-85 commission created to evaluate Milwaukee area public schools. One finding was a gap in test scores between "low-income" and "non-low-income" students.<sup>67</sup> The commission found that non-low-income students were 50% to 100% more likely than low-income students to score above average on national tests.<sup>68</sup>

Ten years later, the problem appears to have worsened noticeably. For example, Table 22 to the right shows the percentage of Fifth Grade students scoring at or above the national average (50th percentile) on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in 1993-94. The composite (reading and math) scores show a gap of 30 points between low-income and other students. For 1991-92 and 1992-93, the gap was 27.5 and 29.5 points,

**TABLE 22** MPS Fifth Grade Reading and Math Scores, 1993-94, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, % at or Above National Average

	Reading	Math	Composite
Low-Income	30.0	41.0	35.5
Other	63.0	68.0	65.5

respectively.<sup>69</sup> In 1983-84, the gap was 16 points.<sup>70</sup>

A large gap between low-income and other students also is evident on tests administered to Eighth and 10th Grade students as part of the Wisconsin Statewide Assessment System (comparisons to 10 years ago are unavailable, as the WSAS test was not administered then).

**TABLE 23** Eighth and 10th Grade Scores (MPS and Statewide), 1994-95, Wisconsin Statewide Assessment System, National Percentile Rankings, Composite Scores<sup>71</sup>

	8th Grade	10th Grade
State (including MPS)	73	77
<b>MPS</b>		
Systemwide	38	45
Low-Income	27	34
Other	57	59

For the same tests as depicted in Table 22 and Table 23 on the left, Tables 24 and 25 below show the scores of minority group students. Together, these four tables reinforce the substantial overlap, in Milwaukee, between low-income and minority populations.

In summary, Tables 22-25 establish that low-income and minority students are among the lowest achieving students in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Tables 19 and 20 show that these students comprise the substantial majority of those eligible for the MPCP. Taking into account other data in this report, it is clear that the MPCP is targeted to assist the lowest achieving school children in the state.

**TABLE 24** MPS Fifth Grade Reading and Math Scores, 1993-94, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, % at or Above National Average

	Reading	Math
Black	26	35
Hispanic	39	51
White	64	72

**5. Do Eligible Children Live Near Private Schools?**

This report has established that children eligible for the MPCP are most likely to live in low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods with sizable minority populations. These neighborhoods are generally identified in Maps 2-5.

Map 10 on page 37 shows all 130 private schools and relates their location to the 73 poorest census tracts in Milwaukee. It shows a sizable number of private schools in or near the areas of highest poverty in Milwaukee. Map 11 on page 38 locates the nine private high schools (discussed in Section III).

When Maps 10 and 11 are also viewed in the context of Maps 3-5, it becomes clear

**TABLE 25** Eighth and 10th Grade Scores (MPS and Statewide), 1994-95, Wisconsin Statewide Assessment System, National Percentile Rankings, Composite Scores

	8th Grade	10th Grade
State (including MPS)	73	77
<b>MPS</b>		
Black	24	31
Hispanic	33	40
White	62	68

that a sizable majority of private schools are in or near (i) low-income neighborhoods and-or (ii) areas of high minority population.

Maps 6 and 7 show a total of 42 sectarian and independent private schools which already are serving significant numbers of low-income and minority students. Under the expanded MPCP, low-income and minority enrollment at these and many other private schools is likely to increase.

## 6. Early Childhood Education

Section III indicated that high schools might be one potential area of increased private school enrollment under an expanded MPCP.

Kindergarten is another. Currently, because of space shortages in MPS, a disproportionate number of 4- and 5-year old Milwaukee children do not attend school before First Grade. Table 26 above compares the percent of 4- and 5-year olds in kindergarten between (i) MPS families and (ii) all other families (that is, public and private school families outside Milwaukee and private school families in Milwaukee). The much lower rate for MPS families is presumably explained by two factors: a shortage of space in MPS schools and limited ability to afford private school tuition on the part of many MPS families.

**TABLE 26**      **Percentage of Four- and Five-Year-Olds Enrolled in Kindergarten<sup>72</sup>**

	All Private & Non- Milwaukee Public	MPS Families
Number Enrolled in Kindergarten	44,982	3,330
Total 4- and 5-Year-Olds	67,620	8,899
% Enrolled in Kindergarten	67%	37%

## CONCLUSION

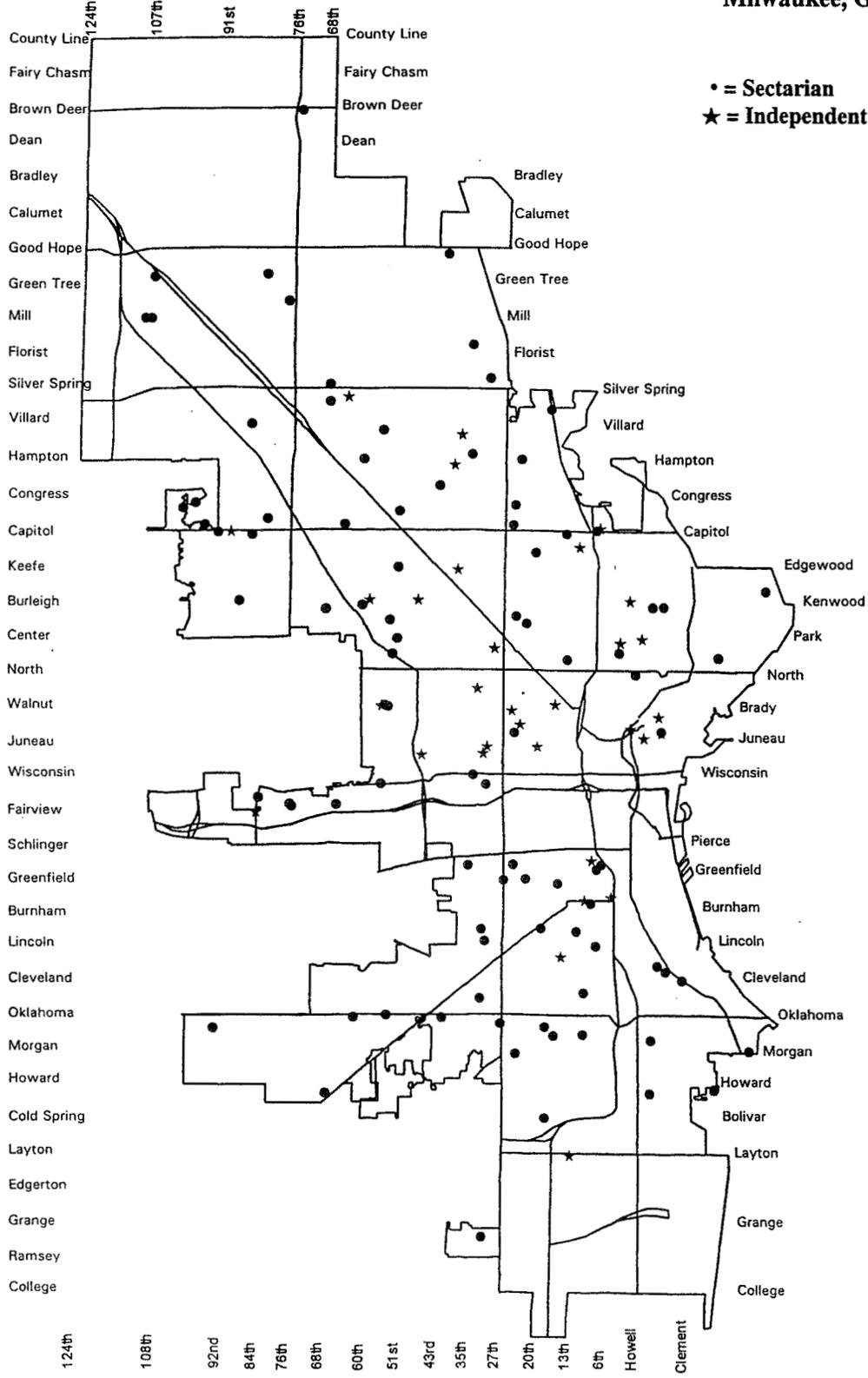
The main goal of this report is to increase the amount of information available about Milwaukee's newly expanded school choice program. It does this primarily by profiling eligible students and newly eligible schools. This approach addresses a variety of questions raised during legislative deliberations.

The stated goals of the expanded MPCP are increased educational opportunity and improved educational achievement. The program is intended to benefit low-income students and, more broadly, is aimed at improved performance throughout MPS.

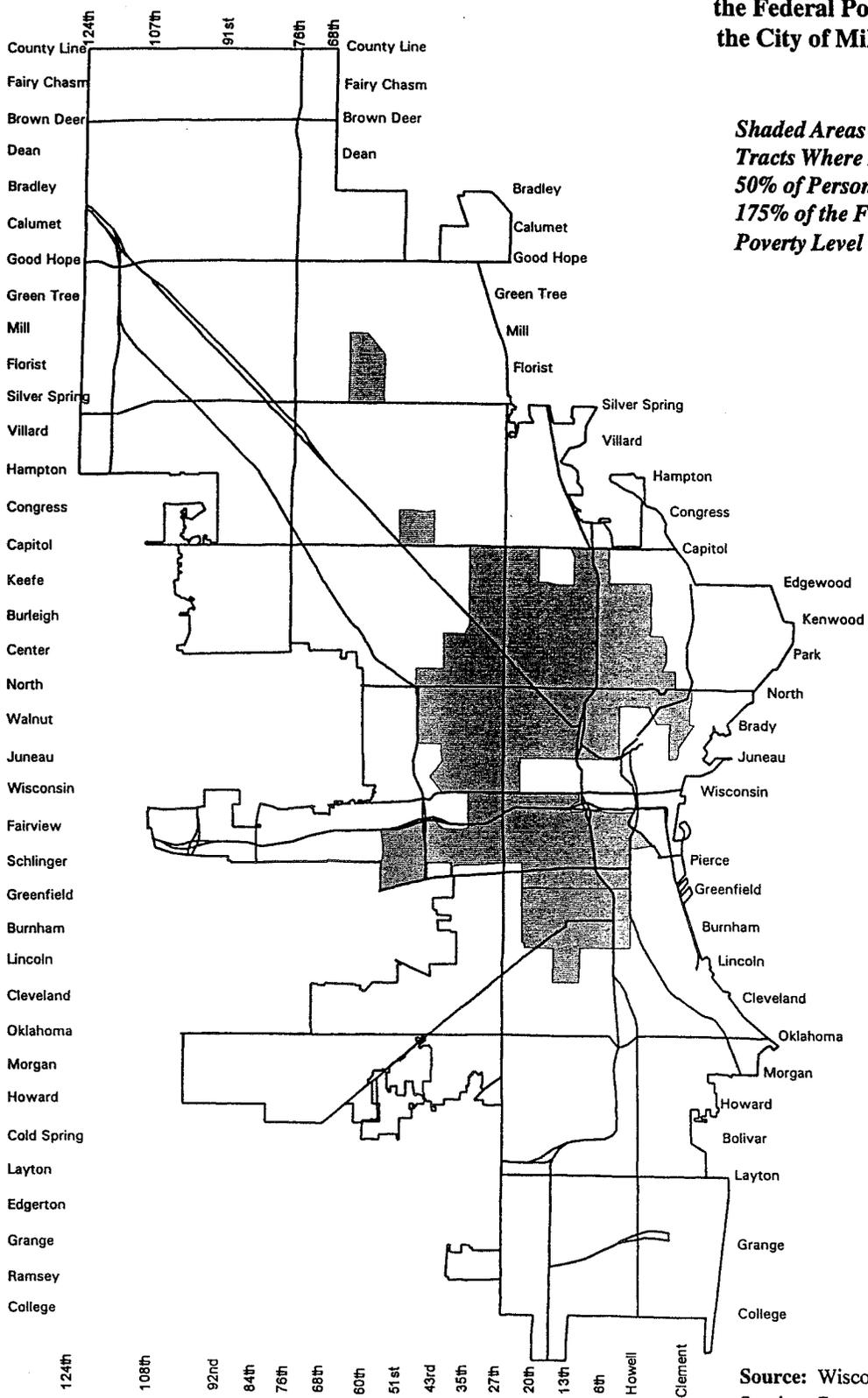
This report establishes that the first of these objectives — increased opportunity — is clearly achievable. The expanded program adds 93 sectarian schools with capacity to enroll several thousand additional students. The new legislation also removes or eases other limits on participation at previously eligible schools. Further, the expanded program makes it easier for new schools to be started which might serve MPCP students. While the new program thus has the clear potential to expand opportunity, use of current income limits continues to target the lowest achieving students in MPS. This study establishes that the majority of these are minority students living in areas of high poverty.

The major remaining question is whether increased educational opportunity will translate into increased educational achievement, both for participating students and, more broadly, within the MPS system. While predicting that is beyond the scope of this report, the need for significant improvement is evident. Evaluation of actual results, extending several years into the future, will be needed to determine if this goal is realized.

**MAP 1 Private Schools in the City of Milwaukee, Grades K-12**



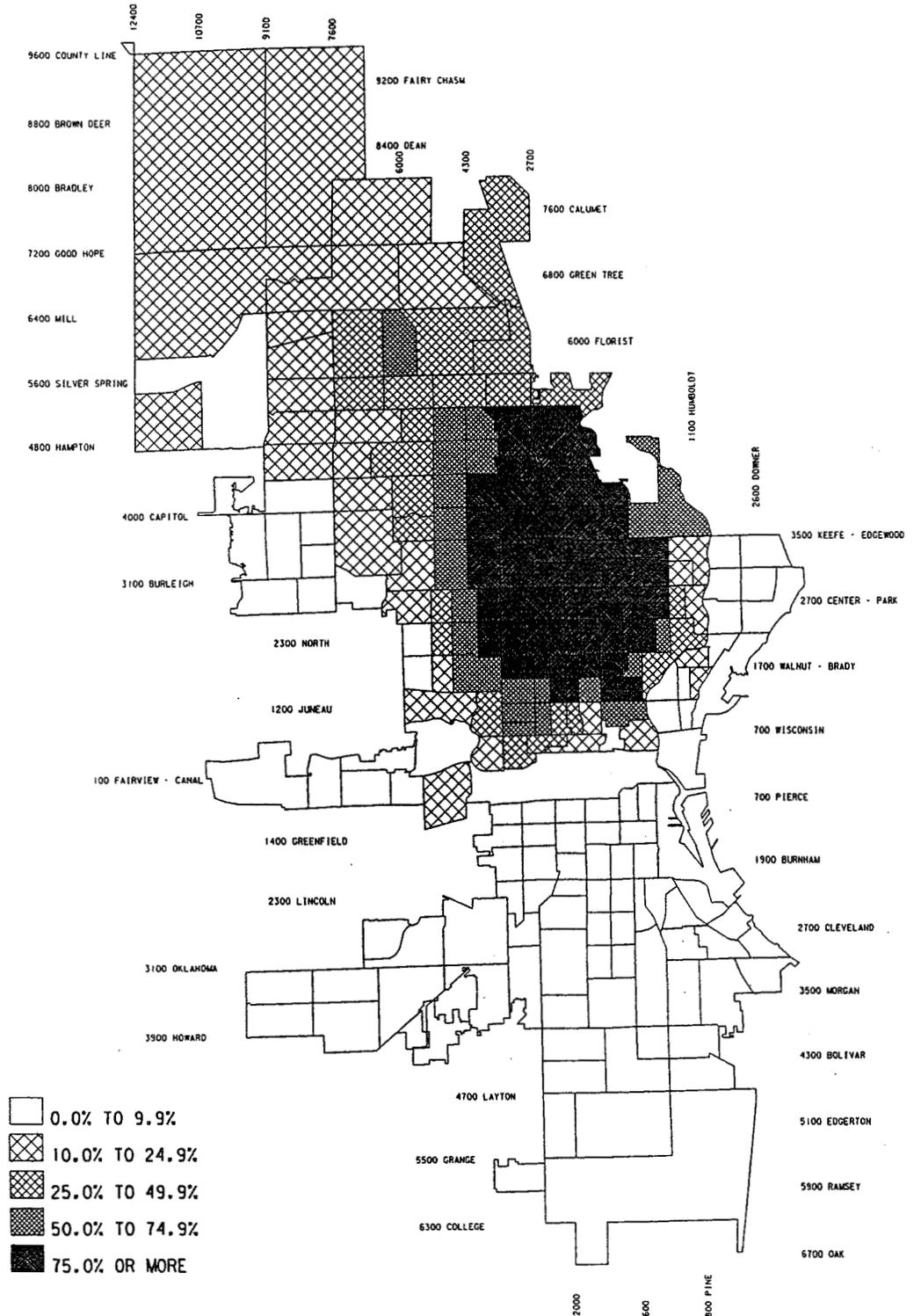
**MAP 2 Persons Below 175% of the Federal Poverty Level in the City of Milwaukee, 1990**



*Shaded Areas Are Census Tracts Where More Than 50% of Persons Are Below 175% of the Federal Poverty Level*

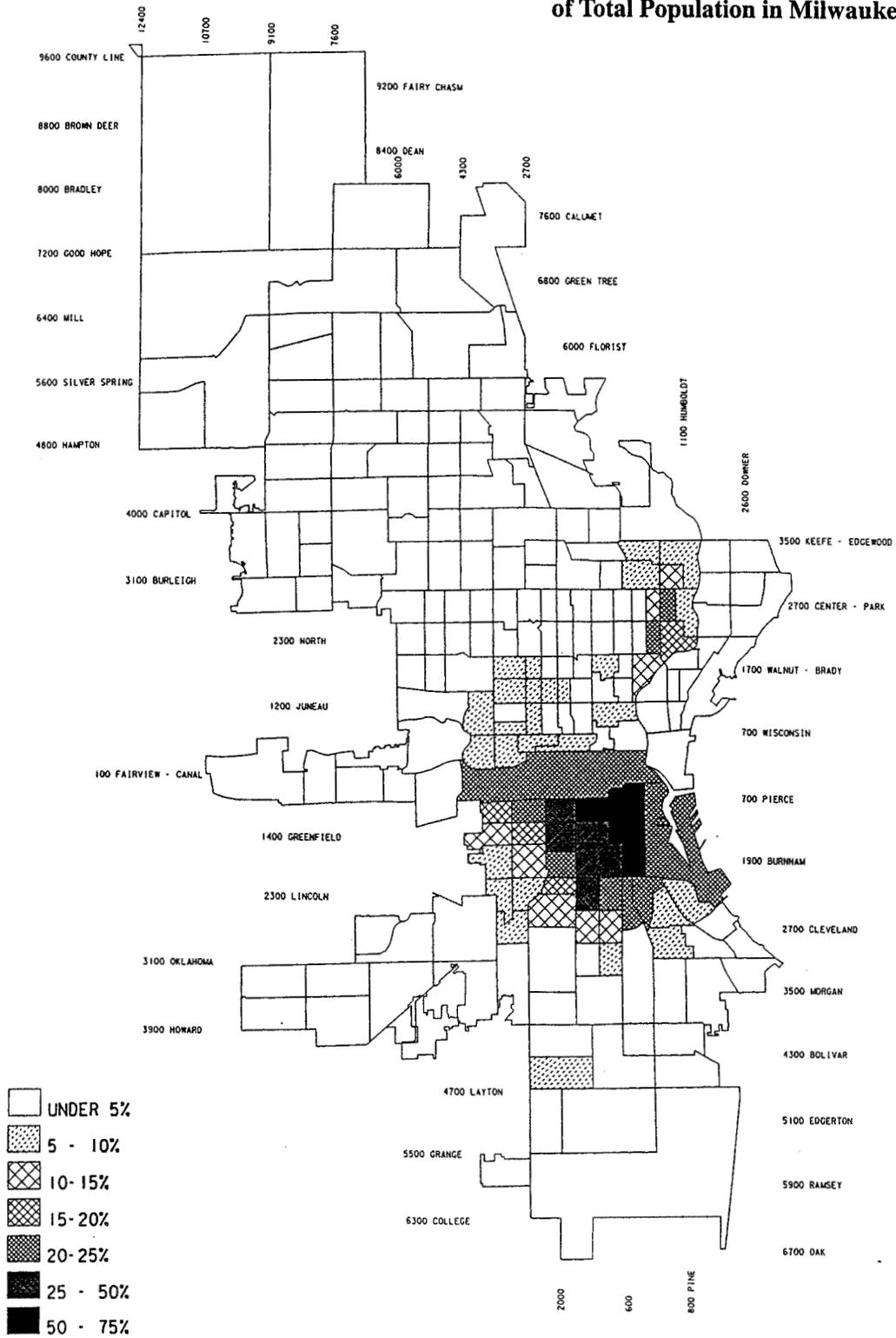
Source: Wisconsin Demographic Services Center

**MAP 3 Black Population as a Percentage of Total Population in Milwaukee, 1990**



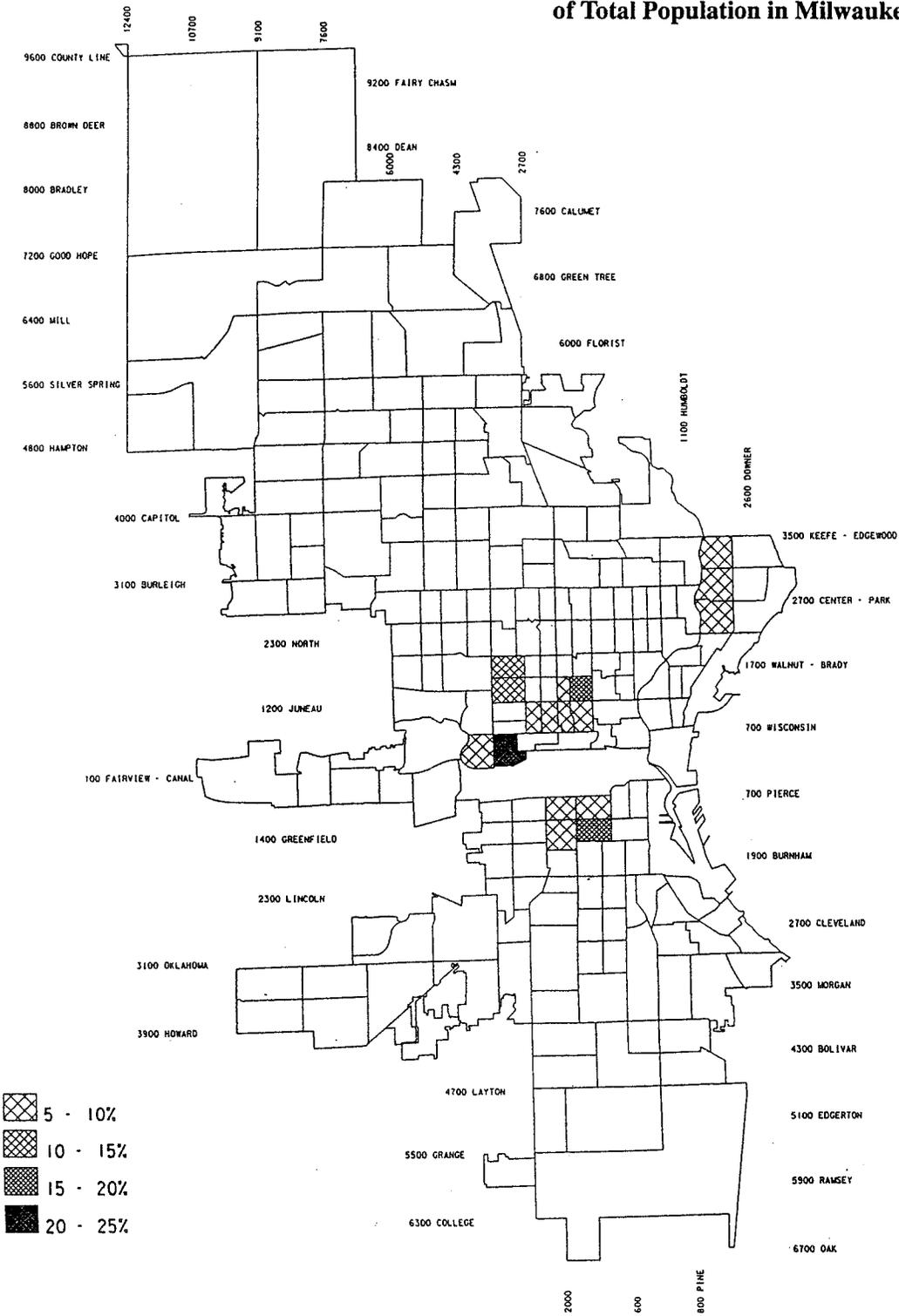
Source: Milwaukee Department of City Development

**MAP 4 Hispanic Population as a Percentage of Total Population in Milwaukee, 1990**



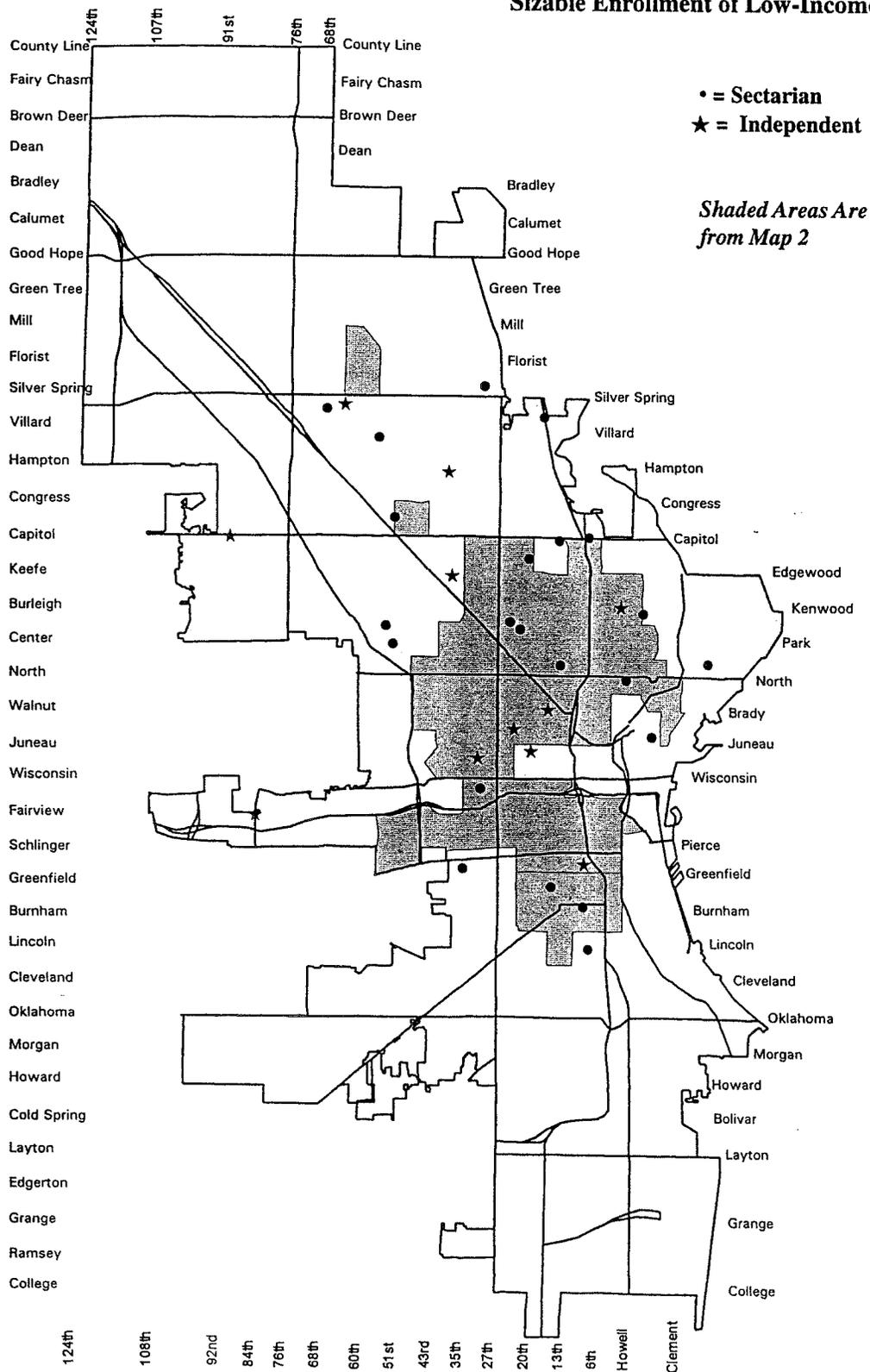
Source: Milwaukee Department of City Development

**MAP 5 Asian Population as a Percentage of Total Population in Milwaukee, 1990**

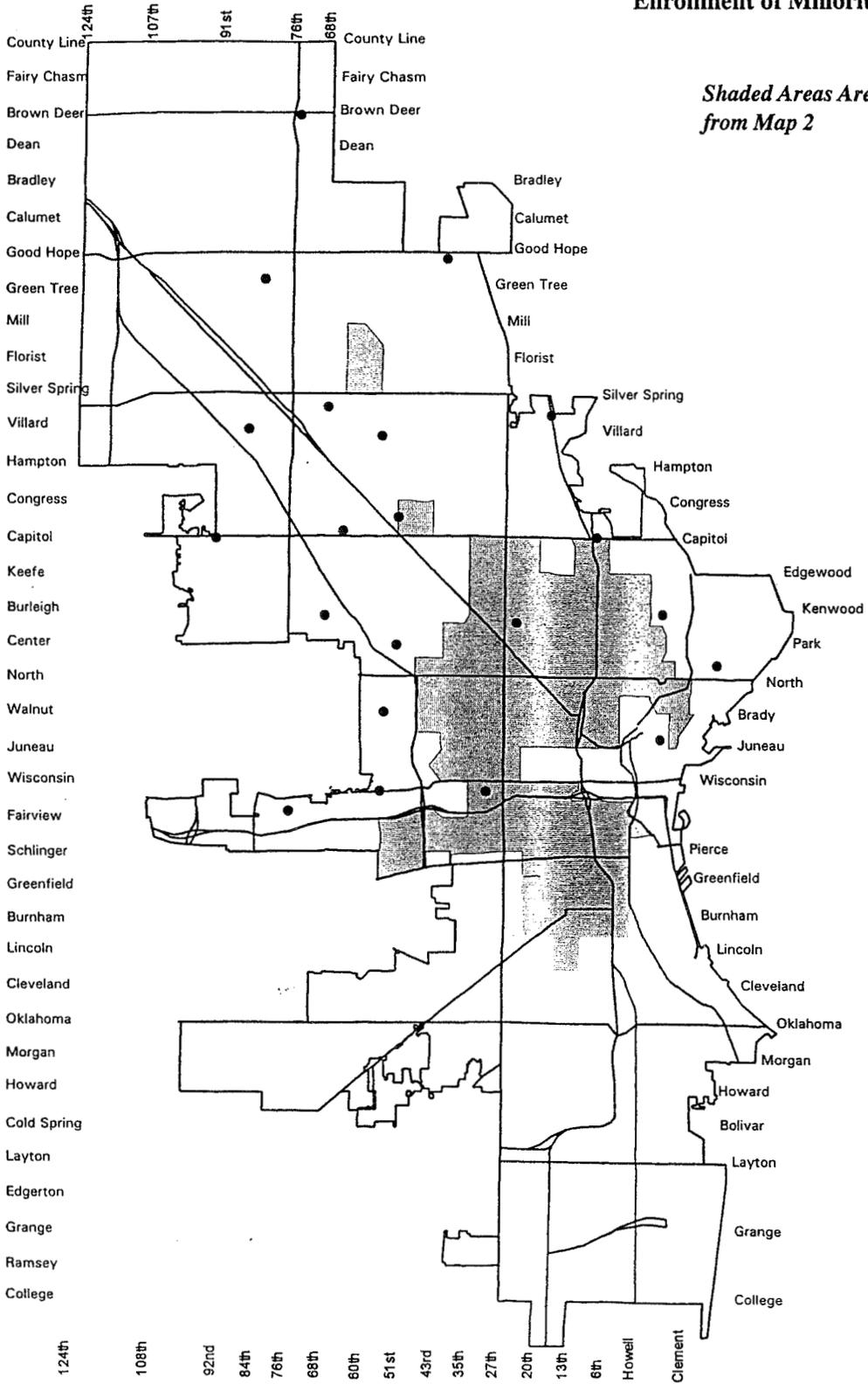


Source: Milwaukee Department of City Development

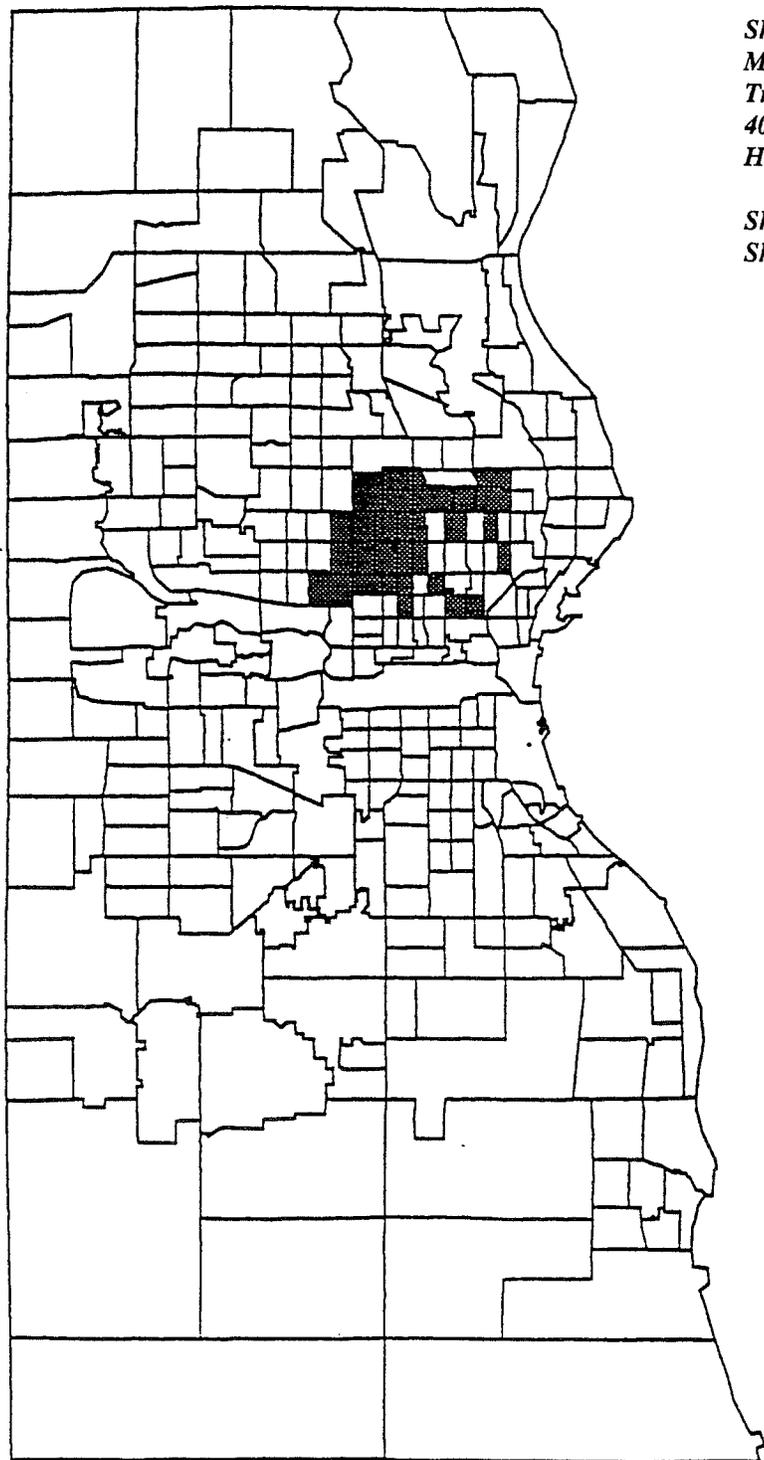
MAP 6 33 Milwaukee Private Schools with a Sizable Enrollment of Low-Income Students



**MAP 7 21 Catholic Schools with Sizable Enrollment of Minority Students**



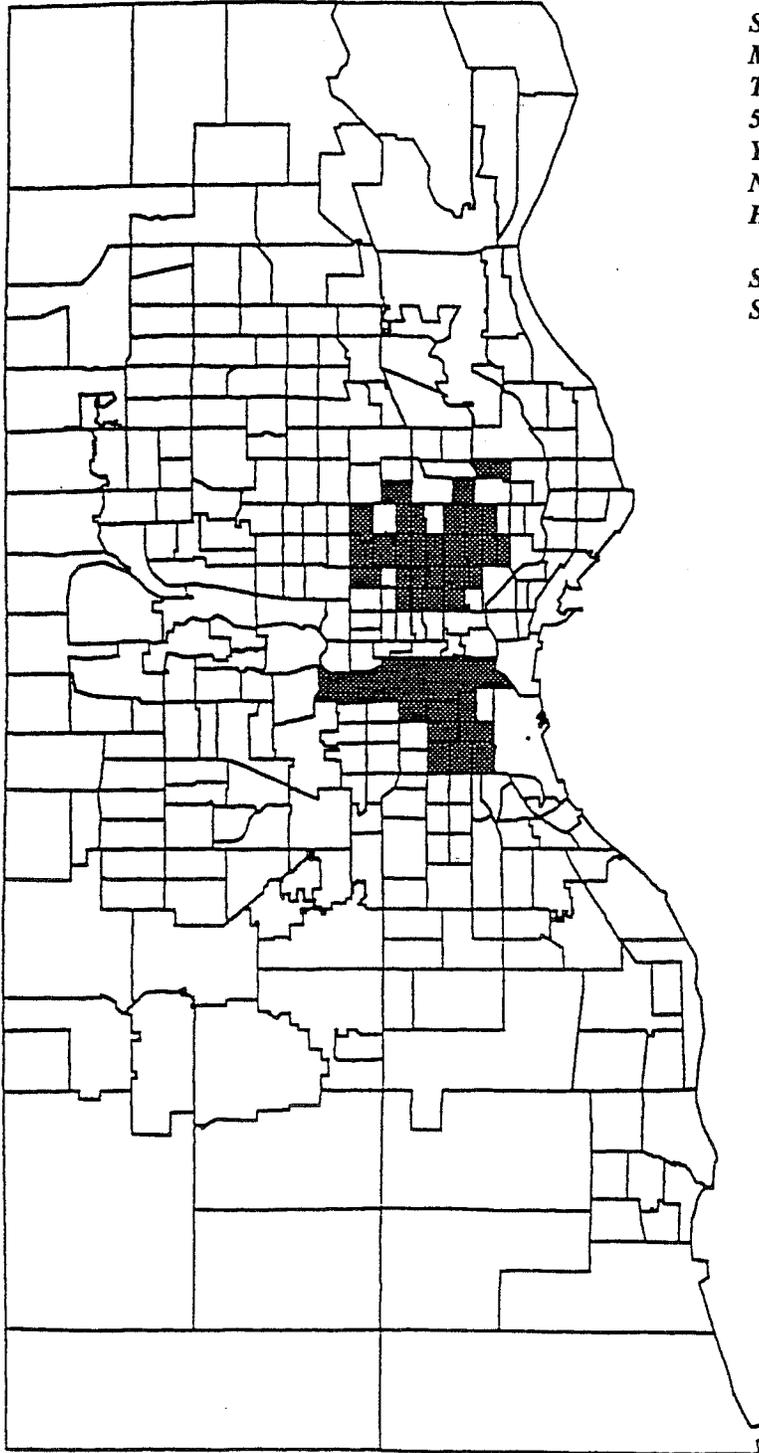
**MAP 8 Female-Headed Families with Children in Milwaukee County, 1990**



*Shaded Areas (All in City of Milwaukee) Are Census Tracts Where More Than 40% of Families Are Headed by Females*

*Shaded Tracts Are Within the Shaded Area from Map 2*

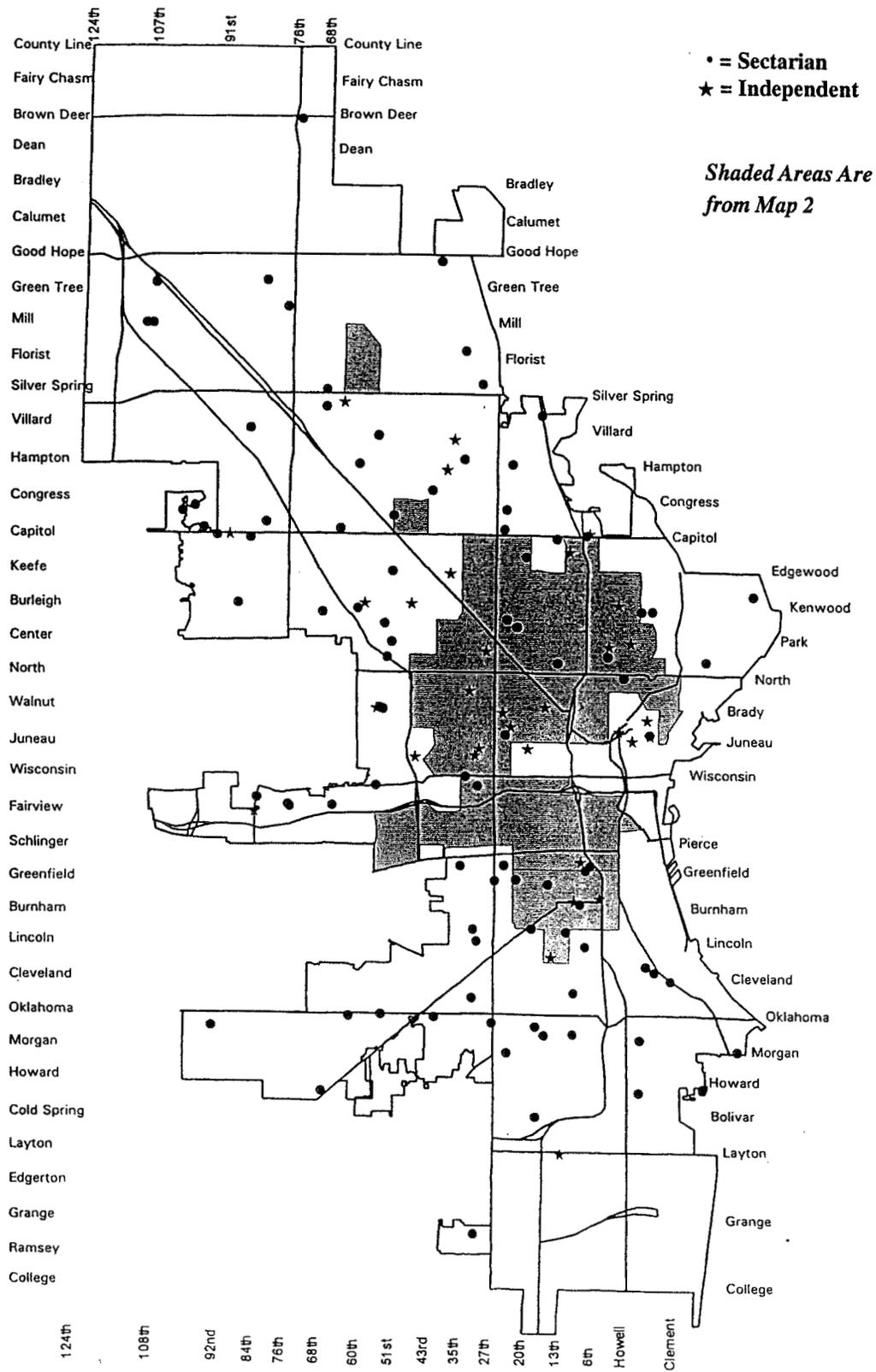
**MAP 9** Persons Age 25 Years and Older Not Graduating from High School in Milwaukee County, 1990



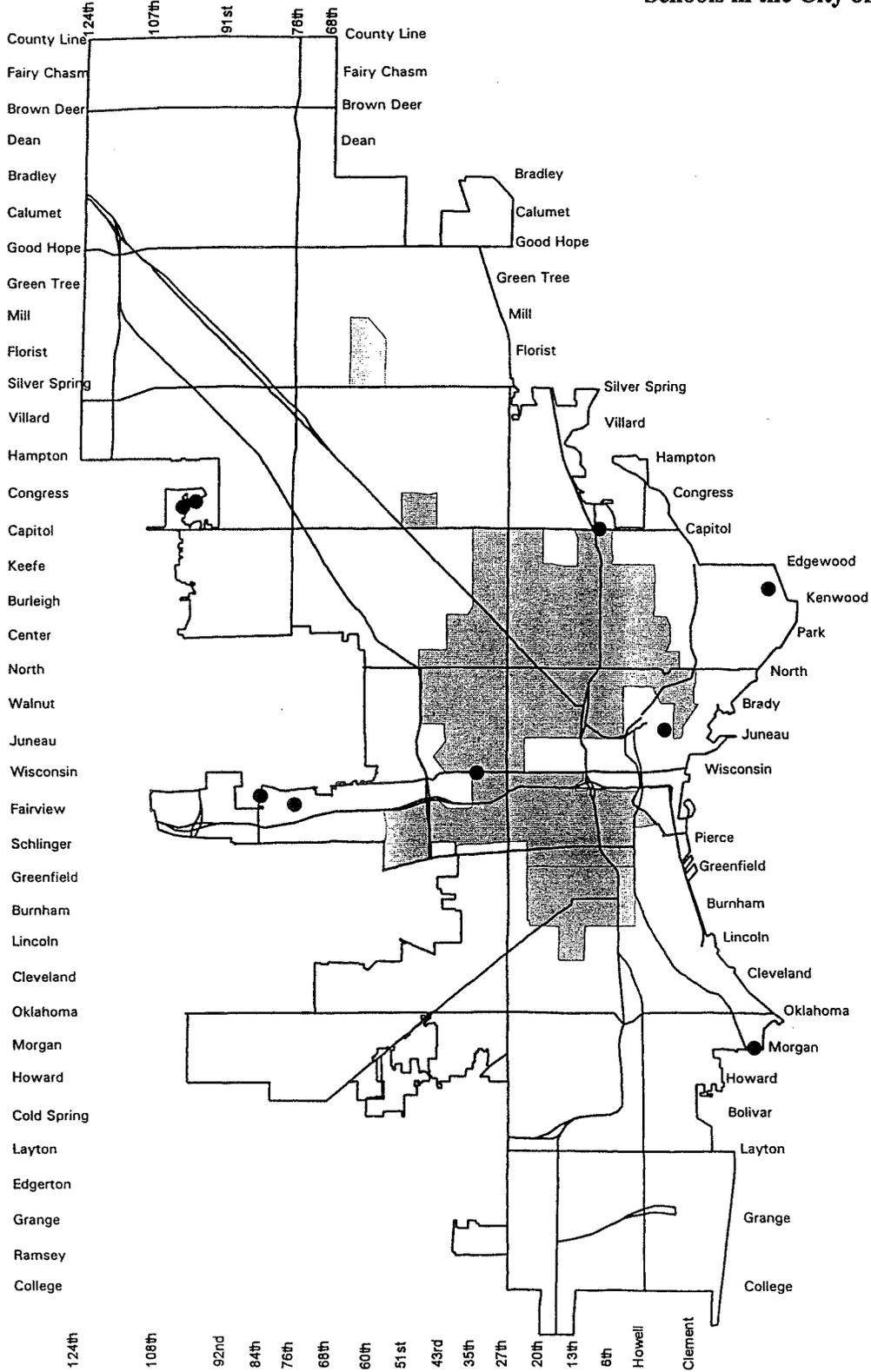
*Shaded Areas (All in City of Milwaukee) Are Census Tracts Where More Than 50% of Persons Age 25 Years and Older Have Not Graduated from High School*

*Shaded Tracts Are Within the Shaded Area from Map 2*

MAP 10 Private Schools in the City of Milwaukee



**MAP 11 Private Sectarian High Schools in the City of Milwaukee**



## NOTES

- 1 The *School District Data Book* is a large electronic library (44 CD-ROMs) published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). It contains the largest set of private and public school data ever assembled. Data for this study was drawn primarily from Disc D17. For further information, contact Ted Drews, NCES, (202) 219-1731.
- 2 In 1976, 14 of 158 MPS schools were integrated (defined as Black enrollment of 25% to 45%). By 1988-89, 112 of the system's 138 schools were integrated (defined as Black enrollment of 25% to 65%) and 10.5% of suburban enrollment consisted of minority students, more than twice the level which would have existed without the state's Chapter 220 transfer program. See "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee," George A. Mitchell, *Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Report*, Vol. 2, No. 5, June 1989.
- 3 For example: (i) "The Impact of the Milwaukee Public School System's Desegregation Plan on Black Students and the Black Community (1976-1982)," Howard Fuller, Ph.D., 1985 doctoral thesis at Marquette University; (ii) "School Desegregation Ten Years Later — Why It Failed," Bruce Murphy, *Milwaukee Magazine*, September, 1986; and (iii) "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee."
- 4 The Study Commission on the Quality of Education in the Metropolitan Milwaukee Public Schools was named in the spring of 1984 by Governor Anthony Earl and DPI Superintendent Herbert Grover.
- 5 The Commission final report, *Better Public Schools*, was submitted in October 1985.
- 6 *Better Public Schools*, p. 11.
- 7 "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee." The analysis excluded the four MPS high schools which used selective admission practices. A discussion of these practices is in Part 3, Section II, of this report.
- 8 September pupil counts from the Department of Public Instruction.
- 9 Choice proponents say the removal of these limits and inclusion of sectarian schools will increase participation. They cite the privately financed PAVE program, started in the 1992-93 school year. Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) provides scholarships to Milwaukee students in families with income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Scholarships equal 50% of tuition. Recipients may attend any private sectarian as well as non-sectarian schools. In its third year (1994-95), PAVE awarded 2,649 scholarships.
- 10 The state's evaluator, John F. Witte, is a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He and a team of researchers have issued annual reports following each of the program's initial four years. The most recent is "Fourth Year Report — Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," issued in December 1994. The statute creating the program also directed that the Legislative Audit Bureau issue an evaluation during the program's fifth year. The LAB report ("An Evaluation of Milwaukee Parental Choice Program" Report 95-3) was issued in February 1995.
- 11 "Fourth Year Report — Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," p. v. A critique of Professor Witte's evaluations says they are biased against finding school choice effective because they do not control adequately for various demographic factors regarding the participating students. See "A Critique of the Witte Evaluation of Milwaukee's School Choice Program," by Paul Peterson, Center for American Political Studies, Harvard University, Occasional Paper 95-2, February 1995.
- 12 "An Evaluation of Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," summary page.
- 13 The two larger public school districts are Milwaukee and Madison. The third largest public district, Racine, has about 22,800 students.
- 14 In this study "families with limited income" and "low income" mean those eligible for the federal government's subsidized school lunch program. Families at or below 130% of the federal poverty level are eligible for free lunch. Families between 130% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced prices.

- 15 In this study, "Christian" refers to eight non-Catholic and non-Lutheran schools representing other Christian denominations.
- 16 In discussing sectarian schools, this study focuses on Catholic and Lutheran schools because they enroll more than 96% of students at sectarian schools in Milwaukee. In Grades K-8, there also are eight Christian schools, a Muslim school, and a Jewish school. At the high school level, there are nine sectarian schools. See Section III.
- 17 Based on criteria defined in state law, there were 123 "private schools" in Milwaukee in the 1994-95 school year. See Sections 115.001(3r), 118.165(1), and 118.167, *Wisconsin Statutes*. Research for this report identified (i) some listed schools no longer in operation and (ii) several agencies not listed but which provide substantial educational programs under contract to the Milwaukee Public Schools. The total of 130 schools used for this report reflects adjustments for these two factors.
- 18 Enrollment data reflects a combination of information from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Missouri Lutheran and Wisconsin Lutheran Synods, and individual calls to various schools. Total private school enrollment of 24,025 reflects students attending private school in Milwaukee regardless of their residence. The June 1994 *Child Census* of Milwaukee residents identifies 28,190 children in private school. The larger number primarily reflects the inclusion of Milwaukee children attending suburban private schools and 18- and 19-year olds in private colleges.
- 19 "Independent schools" in this report are non-sectarian. Included are the 12 schools and 802 students in the MPCP as of September 1994. Several of the 37 independent schools primarily serve special categories of students, including those with various learning disabilities or histories of behavior difficulty.
- 20 This total includes private schools serving students in all or some of the grades between kindergarten through Eighth Grade. Not all of these schools will serve students in each grade.
- 21 1990 U.S. Census data, per the Wisconsin Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration.
- 22 The number of students, and data about them and their families, come from 1990 Census data assembled in the *School District Data Book*. See Note 1. The 1990 number of private students in Table 7 is not comparable to the 1994 number in Tables 3-5. For example, Table 7 includes Milwaukee students attending private schools outside of Milwaukee. Tables 3-5 do not.
- 23 The income used for this calculation is \$35,082, which is the 1990 median income for Wisconsin households *with children* and differs from the median of \$29,442 for all Wisconsin households, with or without children. Source: *School District Data Book*, General Characteristics Profile Summary (001) and Economic Profile (CO4).
- 24 Table 7's Milwaukee enrollment number (25,099) includes Milwaukee students attending suburban private schools (University School, Brookfield Academy, and others). These students' families are likely to be more affluent than families whose children are in Milwaukee private schools. Offsetting this, to some degree, is the table's *exclusion* of several hundred suburban families whose children attend private schools in Milwaukee, such as Marquette High School.
- 25 Sources: (i) the *School District Data Book* (see Note 1); (ii) "Where Connoisseurs Send Their Children to School," by Denis P. Doyle, May 1995, for The Center for Education Reform; and (iii) *City of Milwaukee Child Census*, June 30, 1994, Milwaukee Public Schools.
- 26 A description and discussion of these census tracts is in Section IV. Also see Map 2.
- 27 "Dual Standards Among Teachers: This School Is Good Enough for Other Kids but not My Child," by Richard Bingham, Paul Haubrich, Sammis B. White, and John F. Zipp, *Urban Education*, Vol. 25, No. 3, October 1990.
- 28 "Research Study," prepared for the Milwaukee Public Schools by Hyco, Inc., a Milwaukee market research firm, August 1990.
- 29 "Milwaukee Public Schools — Survey and Focus Groups," Peter D. Hart Research Associates, April 1992.

- 30 "Black Public Opinion in Milwaukee," Sammis B. White, *Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Report*, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 1995.
- 31 The results of this survey were reported to the MPS School Board in August 1994. MPS said about 17,000 parents responded.
- 32 The author of the paper is UW-Madison Professor John Witte, the current evaluator of the MPCP. Witte had served in 1984-85 as staff director for the state study commission described in Section I. His 1986 paper was presented to the National Conference on School Desegregation, September 5, 1986, at the University of Chicago.
- 33 "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee," p. 75-78. See Note 2.
- 34 See: (i) "Metropolitan Desegregation in Wisconsin - Chapter 220 After Three Years," Professor William Kritek, UW-Milwaukee, 1979; (ii) "Staff Report #4" to the 1984-85 state study commission; (iii) "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee;" (iv) "Milwaukee's City-Suburban Interdistrict Integration Program: A Review of the Student Application & Assignment Process," Professor Harold Rose, UW-Milwaukee, January 1990; and (v) "The Academic Performance of City-Suburban Chapter 220 Students: A Response to Superintendent Ken Moe's Analysis," George A. Mitchell, February 1995.
- 35 From Witte's 1986 paper. See Note 32.
- 36 "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee" p. 79.
- 37 The shaded area includes the 73 Milwaukee census tracts where more than half of the residents have income below 175% of the federal poverty level. Further discussion of these 73 tracts is in Section IV.
- 38 See Note 14 for definition of "families with limited income" and "low income."
- 39 See Note 9.
- 40 The estimate comes from "Alternative Program Enrollment Information As Of 6/5/95" from MPS.
- 41 Data for Catholic schools is based on a 100% sample. Data for Lutheran schools is based on a survey of all 34 Lutheran schools which produced data for 27 schools regarding number of students who are not Lutheran. Data regarding religious affiliation was not collected for non-Lutheran and non-Catholic sectarian schools.
- 42 "Comparative Analysis of Selected Milwaukee Archdiocesan Schools," Hanover Consulting Group, July 1994, commissioned by the Archdiocese to evaluate enrollment trends and related issues at selected schools in central Milwaukee.
- 43 Includes any school with classes in some or all of Grades K-8. Some schools start at kindergarten and continue through Eighth Grade; in others, the highest grade is below Eighth; in still others, such as MPS middle schools, the lowest grade is Sixth. See Note 20.
- 44 In May 1995 researchers for this study surveyed all Lutheran K-8 schools and all sectarian high schools. In addition, they reviewed a 1993-94 capacity estimate prepared by the Archdiocese regarding K-8 Catholic schools in Milwaukee. Together, these sources produced estimated expansion capacity of 5,831, or 91% of the PAVE estimate. The PAVE survey also included independent, non-Catholic, and non-Lutheran schools, which explains the difference.
- 45 March 21, 1994 letter from Rev. Leslie A. Darnieder, Retired Assistant Superintendent for Schools, Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
- 46 "Near" in this context means within two miles.
- 47 See Section 121.54(2)(b)(1), *Wisconsin Statutes*. Under this section, transportation can be by traditional "yellow buses" or by other arrangements between MPS, private schools, and-or groups of parents. These "other arrangements" correspond

most closely to car-pooling systems where parents are reimbursed for costs.

- 48 Table 13 relies on data from several dozen private schools. To the extent that some might not supply MPS with complete paperwork, the data is incomplete and might understate the number of private school children who are transported.
- 49 This *excludes* those transported to suburban districts under the Chapter 220 program.
- 50 A 1993 referendum to provide funds for additional schools in these neighborhoods was defeated. As one consequence, for the foreseeable future thousands of students will continue to be transported to other schools due to lack of space. Within existing neighborhood school space limitations, MPS has sought to increase options for students to attend neighborhood schools. This includes reserving 55% of entry-level seats at new specialty schools for students within a one-mile “walk zone.” This policy is in effect at 10 schools for the 1995-96 school year.
- 51 In this Section, “private high schools in Milwaukee” are the nine sectarian schools in the city: Messmer, Thomas More, Marquette, Pius XI, Divine Savior Holy Angels, St. Joan Antida, Milwaukee Lutheran, Wisconsin Lutheran, and Wisconsin Institute for Torah Study. Fifteen private independent high schools are not included because (i) they enroll only 17% of high school students not in MPS high schools; (ii) they primarily operate under contract with MPS to serve MPS students; and (iii) available information on these schools does not conform to the comparison model used in this Section.
- 52 The state’s test consists of: multiple choice questions in five subject areas; two writing exercises; and four “short answer” segments. The low percent of MPS students completing all segments reflects (i) MPS’ low attendance rate, which means that many students take none of the tests, and (ii) a disproportionate number of MPS students who complete only a portion of the tests.
- 53 The proxy for likelihood of attending college is the percent of seniors taking the American College Test entrance and placement exam. Separate data on college attendance was provided by some of the private high schools. When compared with records kept by MPS, it confirms that a private high school graduate is much more likely to attend college.
- 54 See Note 53.
- 55 “Annual Report to the Community: The Milwaukee Public Schools,” November 1994, p. 12.
- 56 No data was available as to how many of these 1,631 freshmen attended private or public school prior to high school.
- 57 This total excludes 1,312 Milwaukee students in private independent high schools
- 58 For a family of three, this is \$21,560. For each additional family member, it increases \$4,340.
- 59 The source of this data was the 1990 Census of Housing and Population, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) for Wisconsin (5% sample).
- 60 The source of this data was the 1990 Census of Housing and Population, Summary Tape Files 1A (complete count) and 3A (100% weighted sample).
- 61 Data is available for those *below* 175% of poverty level, whereas program eligibility includes those *at or below* that level.
- 62 Median Household Income (\$29,422) includes the City of Milwaukee.
- 63 This estimate is consistent with separate data from MPS on the number of students eligible for the federal subsidized meal program. Specifically, in 1993-94 about 68,941 students were eligible. The maximum income for eligibility is 185% of federal poverty level. The maximum for the MPCP is 175%, which is 95% of 185%. In turn, 95% of 68,941 is 65,149. This does not include any eligible private school students in Grades K-3 or students about to enter school for the first time.
- 64 “Fourth Year Report – Milwaukee Parental Choice Program,” p. 10. The italics are Professor Witte’s.

- 65 "An Evaluation of Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," p. 31.
- 66 Further support of this comes from independent evaluations of the PAVE program by Maureen Wahl, Ph.D., who is Director of Research at Family Service of America. Wahl's research identified that PAVE students who transferred from public schools "consistently scored lower than did" students who had only attended private schools. See "Second Year Report of the PAVE Scholarship Program – An Evaluation Study by Family Service of America."
- 67 Low-income was defined by this study to mean eligibility for the subsidized lunch program, a criteria (at or below 185% of poverty level) which corresponds generally with MPCP eligibility (175% of poverty level). See Note 14
- 68 *Better Public Schools*, Table 1, p. 20.
- 69 "1993-94 Report Card," Milwaukee Public Schools, p. 9.
- 70 *Better Public Schools*, Table 1, p. 20, shows that 49.3% of non-low-income students were at or above the 50th percentile in composite reading and math scores (Fifth Grade), compared to 33.3% for low-income students.
- 71 The "national percentile ranking" shows where a student or group of students scored in relation to a national sample of those taking the test. The state's ranking of 73 for Eighth Grade students means half of those tested scored at or above the 73rd percentile.
- 72 *School District Data Book*.

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## **ABOUT THE INSTITUTE**

The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute is a not-for-profit institute established to study public-policy issues affecting the state of Wisconsin.

Under the new federalism, government policy increasingly is made at the state and local level. These public-policy decisions affect the lives of every citizen in the state of Wisconsin. Our goal is to provide nonpartisan research on key issues that affect citizens living in Wisconsin so that their elected representatives are able to make informed decisions to improve the quality of life and future of the state.

Our major priority is to improve the accountability of Wisconsin's government. State and local government must be responsive to the citizens of Wisconsin in terms of the programs they devise and the tax money they spend. Accountability should apply in every area to which Wisconsin devotes the public's funds.

The agenda for the Institute's activities will direct attention and resources to study the following issues: education, welfare and social services, criminal justice, taxes and spending, and economic development.

We believe that the views of the citizens of Wisconsin should guide the decisions of government officials. To help accomplish this, we will conduct semiannual public-opinion polls that are structured to enable the citizens of Wisconsin to inform government officials about how they view major statewide issues. These polls will be disseminated through the media and be made available to the general public and to the legislative and executive branches of state government. It is essential that elected officials remember that all the programs established and all the money spent comes from the citizens of Wisconsin and is made available through their taxes. Public policy should reflect the real needs and concerns of all the citizens of the state and not those of specific special-interest groups.