

# The Academic & Civic Effects of Private School Choice

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*Presentation to the Kansas  
Special Committee on Education*

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# A Little About Me

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- ✓ Born in Washington, DC, raised in Central Minnesota, taught at Columbia & Georgetown, 17 years a proud Arkansan
- ✓ My 25<sup>th</sup> year studying school choice – Distinguished Professor of Education Policy & Endowed Chair in School Choice
- ✓ Led longitudinal evaluations of school choice programs in DC, Milwaukee & Louisiana

# Disclaimer

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



# What is School Choice?

Any government program that provides resources to parents to assist them in enrolling their child in a private school of their choosing

- Vouchers
- Tax-Credit Scholarships
- Education Savings Accounts

# Quality of Statistical Evaluations of School Choice

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How do we deal with “selection bias”?

Methods:



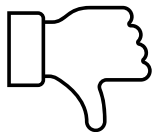
Random assignment experiments



Matching longitudinal studies



Control variables



Uncontrolled descriptive comparisons

# Guide to the Review

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- Only Bronze standard studies or better
- Any private school choice program
- “Stoplight” coding:
  - Positive choice findings overall = **Green**
  - Positive for subgroups = **Light Green**
  - Null = **Yellow**
  - Negative = **Red**

# Five Ways to Slice this Pie

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# Participant Achievement Effects

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# Here We Look Just at Randomized Experiments

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- ✓ They are the most rigorous studies
- ✓ There are enough of them in different places to draw conclusions about the test-score effects of school choice on participants

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Study (N=18)</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Finding – Private School Choice</b>
<b>All Students (8)</b>	Cowen (2008)	Charlotte	+8 pts in reading, +7 pts in math
	Greene (2001)	Charlotte	+ 6 pts on combined reading and math test
	Greene et al (1999)	Milwaukee	+6 pts in reading, +11 pts in math
	Rouse (1998)	Milwaukee	+8 pts in math, no difference in reading
	Lamarche (2008)	Milwaukee	+2.3 pts in math, no difference in reading
	Howell et al (2002)	DC	+3 pts combined reading & math
	Wolf et al (2013)	DC	+4.8 pts in reading
	Anderson & Wolf (2017)	DC	+8.7 pts in reading
<b>Some Students (4)</b>	Barnard et al (2003)	New York	+5 pts in math for students leaving low-performing schools
	Jin et al (2010)	New York	+4 pts in math for students leaving low-performing schools
	Howell et al (2002)	New York	+4 pts for African-American students on combined reading/math test
	Howell et al (2002)	Dayton	+6.5 pts for African-American students on combined reading/math test
<b>No Effects (4)</b>	Webber et al. (2019)	DC	No difference in math or reading
	Krueger & Zhu (2004)	New York	No difference in math or reading
	Bitler et al (2013)	New York	No difference in math or reading by quartile
	Bettinger & Slonim (2006)	Toledo	No difference in math or reading
<b>Negative (2)</b>	Abdulkadiroglu et al. (2016)	Louisiana	-0.4 standard deviation 1-year effect on math
	Mills & Wolf (2019)	Louisiana	-.21 to -.39 SD 4-year effects on math, reading & science

# Key Question

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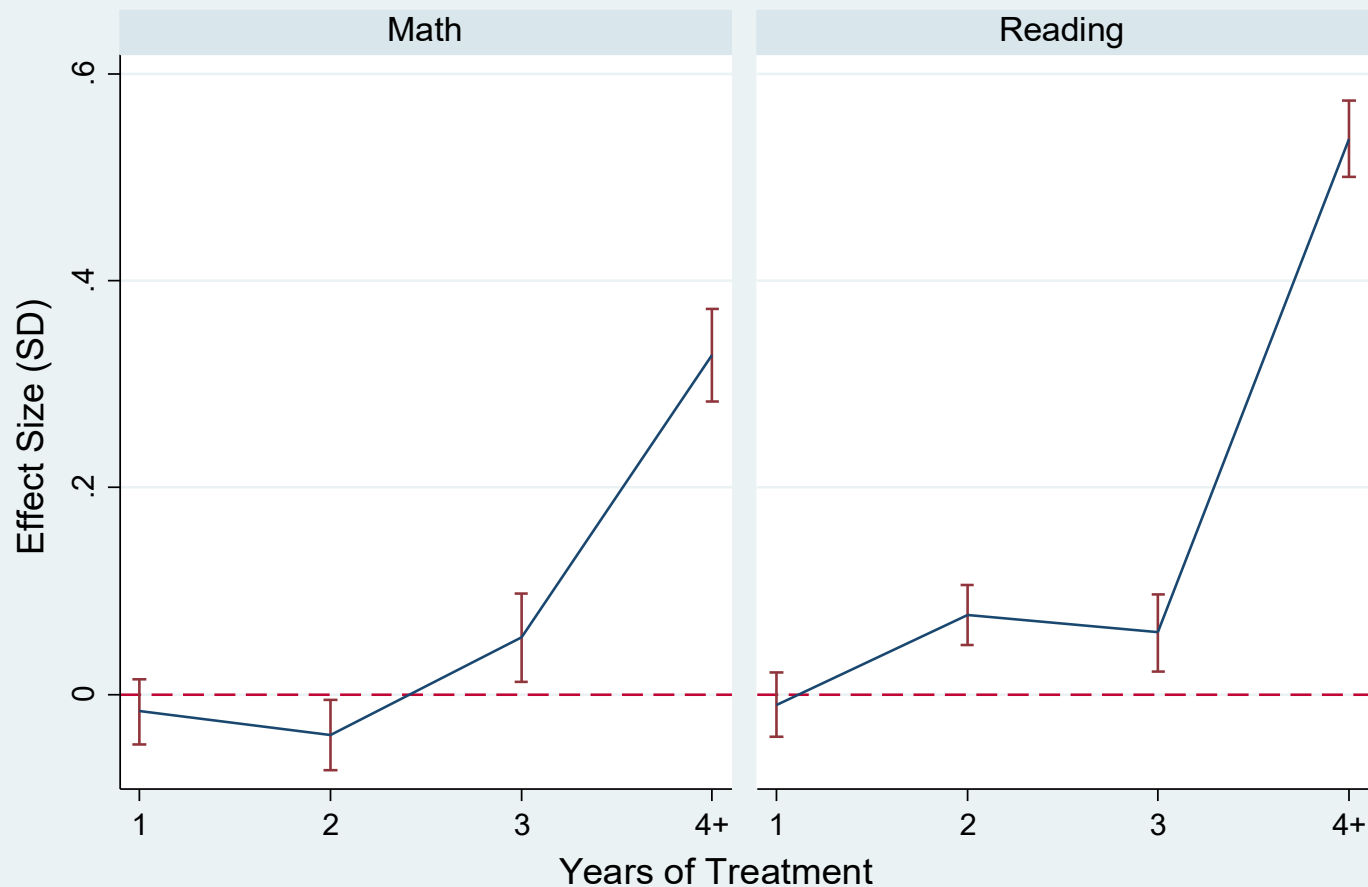
What is distinctive about the Louisiana Scholarship Program?

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

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




















Overall TOT Impacts by Year — Global



# Educational Attainment

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Attainment Study	Place	Effect
 Wolf et al (2013)	DC	+21 percentage points - Diploma
 Erickson & Scafidi (2020)	Georgia	+17 percentage points - Diploma
 Cowen et al. (2013)	Milwaukee	+4-6 percentage points - Diploma
 Warren (2011)	Milwaukee	+12 percentage points - Diploma
 Austin & Pardo (2021)	Indiana	No difference – Diploma
 Austin & Pardo (2021)	Indiana	+8 percentage points – College Enrollment
 Chingos, Monarrez & Kuehn (2019)	Florida	+6 percentage points – College Enrollment
 Erickson & Scafidi (2020)	Georgia	+19 percentage points – College Enrollment
 Wolf, Witte & Kisida (2019)	Milwaukee	+4-6 percentage points – College Enrollment
 Chingos & Peterson (2015)	New York City	+5-6 percentage points for Blacks – College Enrollment
 Cheng & Peterson (2021)	New York City	+8 percentage points for mod-dis. – College Enrollment
 Erickson, Mills & Wolf (2021)	Louisiana	+8 percentage points for H.S. aps – College Enrollment
 Chingos & Kisida (2023)	DC	No difference – College Enrollment
 Chingos, Monarrez & Kuehn (2019)	Florida	+1-2 percentage points – Bachelor’s Degree
 Wolf, Witte & Kisida (2019)	Milwaukee	+3 percentage points for elem. aps – Bachelor’s Degree
 Cheng & Peterson (2021)	New York City	+5-7 percentage points for mod-dis. – Bachelor’s Deg.
 Chingos & Peterson (2015)	New York City	+2-3 percentage points for Blacks – Bachelor’s Degree

# Why Might Choice Affect Attainment More Than Test Scores?

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- Parents care more about attainment
- Public schools are subject to test-score accountability
- Private schools educate the whole child
- Attainment is more malleable
- No evidence that private schools have lower standards for graduation

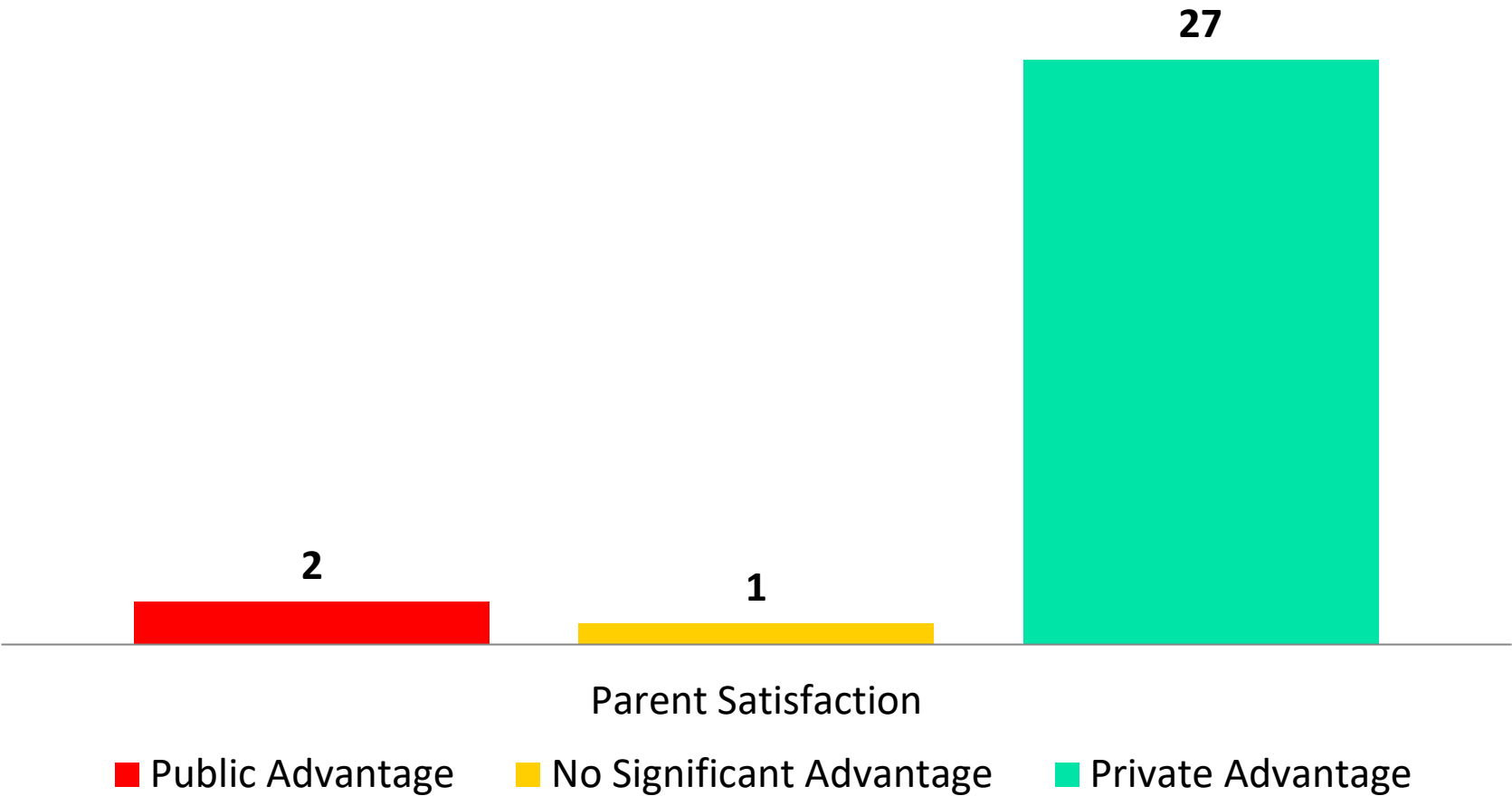
# Parent Satisfaction





# All Findings on Private School Choice & Parent Satisfaction

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# Competitive Effects: All Silver Standard

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Study (N=29)	City/State	Finding
Greene (2001)	Florida	POSITIVE
Greene & Winters (2004)	Florida	POSITIVE
West & Peterson (2005)	Florida	POSITIVE
Figlio & Rouse(2006)	Florida	POSITIVE
Rouse et al (2007)	Florida	POSITIVE
Forster (2008)	Florida	POSITIVE
Winters & Greene (2011)	Florida	POSITIVE
Figlio & Hart (2011)	Florida	POSITIVE
Chakrabarti (2013)	Florida	POSITIVE
Egalite (2014)	Indiana	POSITIVE
Jacob & Dougherty (2014)	Indiana	POSITIVE
Egalite (2014)	Louisiana	POSITIVE
Hammons (2002)	Maine	POSITIVE
Hoxby (2001)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Greene & Forster (2002)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Carnoy et al (2007)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Chakrabarti (2008)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Greene & Marsh (2009)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Mader (2010)	Milwaukee	POSITIVE
Forster (2008)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Carr (2011)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Figlio (2016)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Lavertu & Gregg (2022)	Ohio	POSITIVE
Greene & Forster (2002)	San Antonio	POSITIVE
Gray, Merrifield, & Adzima (2014)	San Antonio	POSITIVE
Hammons (2002)	Vermont	POSITIVE
Greene & Winters (2006)	Washington D.C.	NONE
Bowen & Trivitt (2014)	Florida	NEGATIVE
Conbolat (2021)	Indiana	NEGATIVE

# Civic Values

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School Choice Rally

Statehouse

abc COLUMBIA

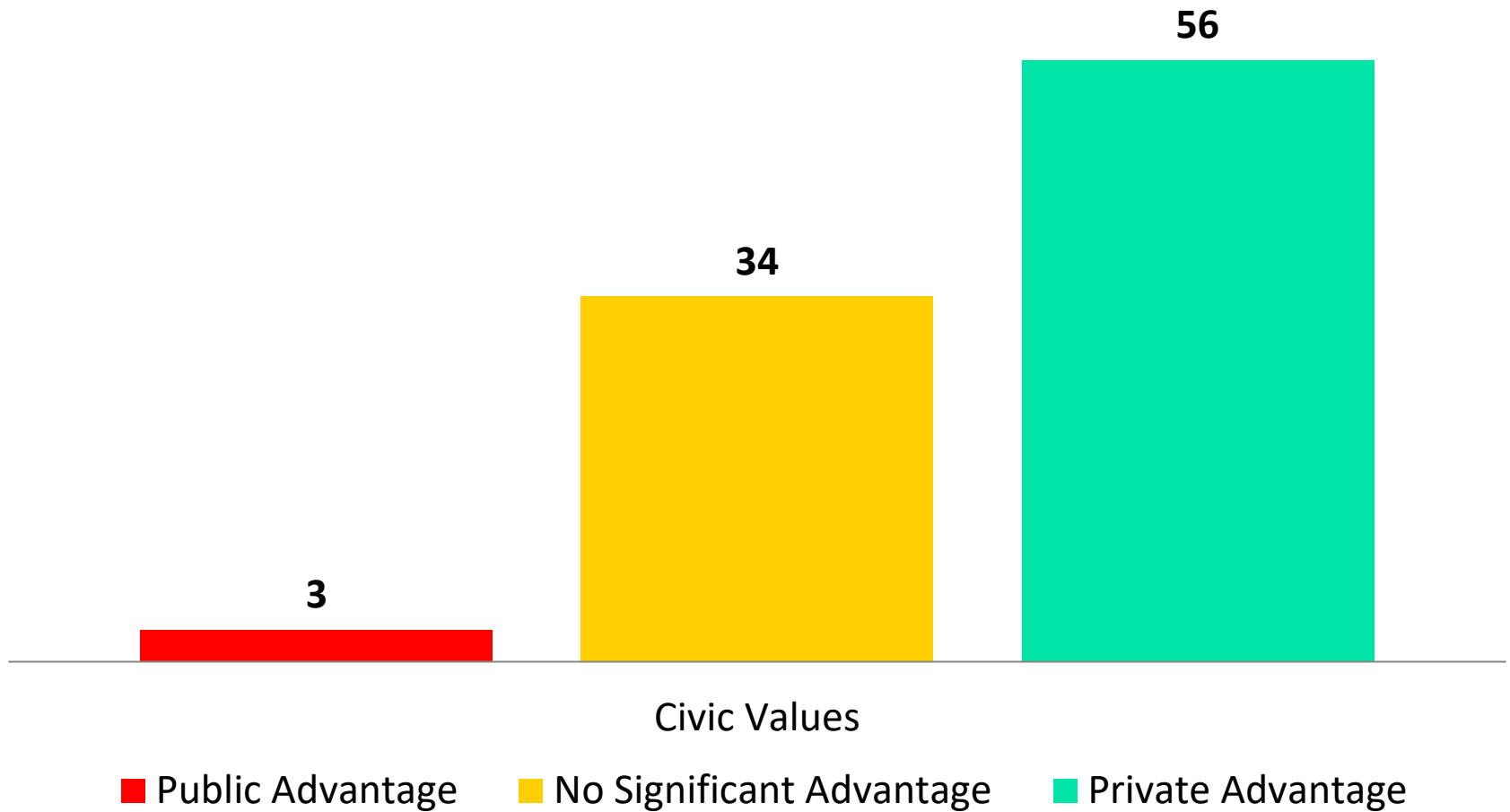
# Civic Outcomes

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

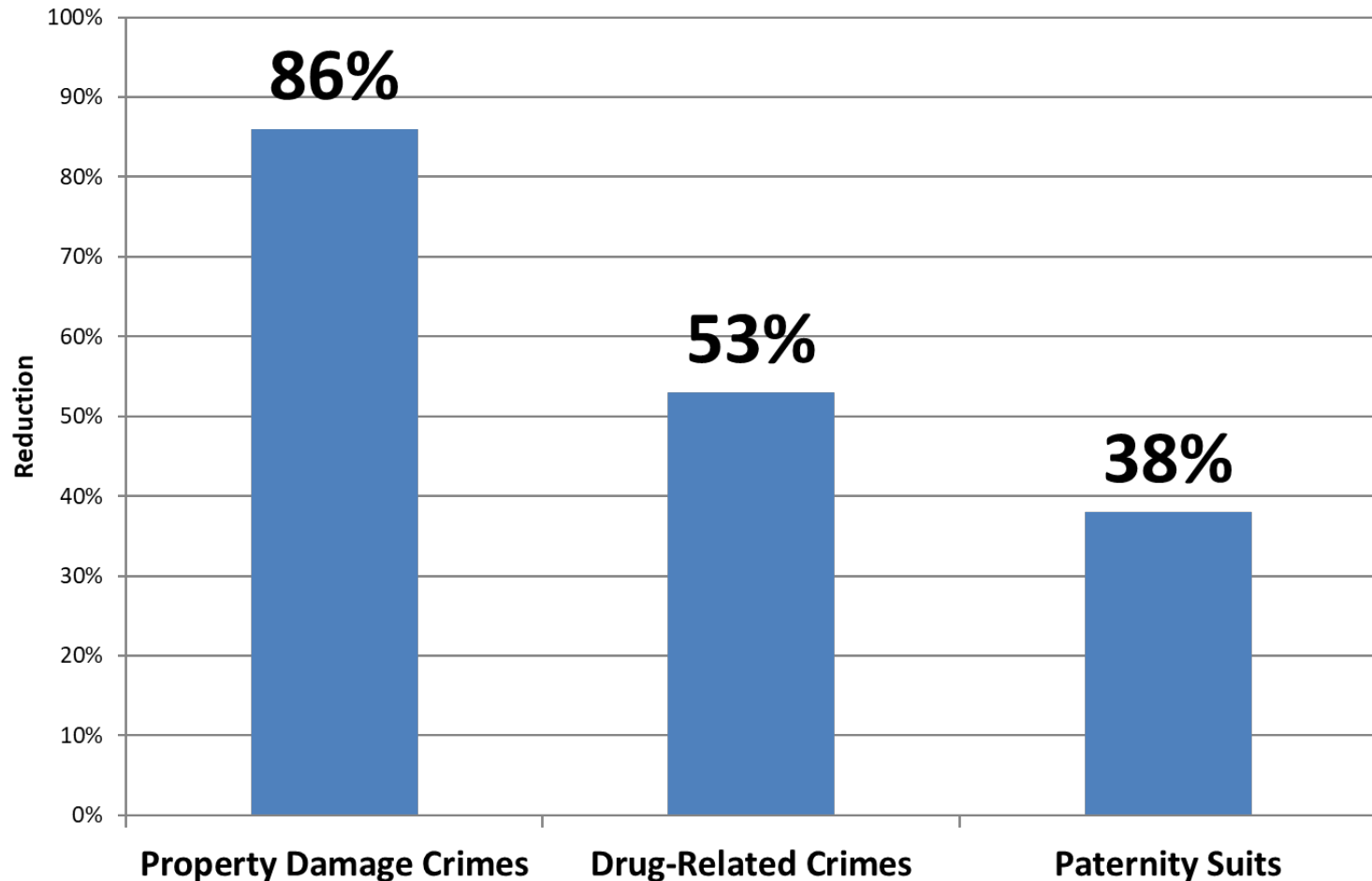
# All Findings on Private School Choice & Civic Outcomes

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

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# Summary: Private School Choice

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



# For More Information

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Electronic versions of nearly 100 school choice reports at:

<https://scdp.uark.edu/>

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