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Executive summary

This paper examines the satisfaction levels of parents who have participated in Children First: School Choice Trust, a program that gives grants to lower income Ontario families so that their children can receive private (independent) elementary school education. It compares the satisfaction levels of these families with those of the families who applied for but did not receive a grant from Children First.

One of the unique features of Children First: School Choice Trust is that, because it is based on a random assignment of grants to children, it provides the kind of data that is so rarely available to education researchers. In 2004, and for the first time in Canada, a group of economically disadvantaged Ontario families who shared a desire to send a child to an independent (or private) school of their choosing entered a lottery. Two years later, researchers followed up with Children First grant recipients from that cohort and a random selection of 2004 non-recipients.

The primary purpose of this study is to determine whether parents who applied for a Children First grant believed that their children benefited from having received one. This study analyzes the survey responses of Children First grant recipients to determine whether lower income parents who applied for a Children First grant were more or less satisfied with their children's education at a private school than they likely would have been if their children had attended public school. The study then compares the answers of families whose children attended private school, with or without a grant, to see if there are differences between the responses of these two groups of families.

This study does not attempt to comment on the effectiveness of private or public schooling in general, and it does not assume homogeneity among private or public schools.

The introduction provides an overview of the Children First: School Choice Trust program. It explains the purpose of this study and its limitations, and identifies the groups of student families that are compared in the study: Children First families, non-recipient families whose children attended private schools, and non-recipient families whose children attended public schools. The study is divided into three sections: academic environment, social environment, and student improvement.

In the first section, academic environment, parents were asked to grade their children's school, using the "A" to "F" scale, on seven indicators: academic quality, quality of teacher attention, parents' interaction with teachers and administrators, discipline, curriculum's reflection of parents' values, parental involvement at school, and overall school experience.

For each indicator, Children First families gave their schools a higher rating than non-recipients whose children attended public schools. There was no statistical difference between the scores of families who attended private schools with or without a Children First grant. There were statistically significant differences between the scores of non-recipients at private schools and non-recipients at public schools. Families with children attending private schools reported higher satisfaction than those with children attending public school.

In the second section, social environment, parents were asked about the prevalence of six common social problems—bullying, fighting, drugs, cheating, racism, and stealing—at their children's schools.

For each of these issues, a smaller proportion of Children First families than non-recipients whose children attended public schools reported problems at their schools. There was no statistical difference between the scores of families who attended private schools with or without a Children First grant. There were statistically

significant differences between the scores of non-recipient families with children attending private schools and non-recipient families with children attending public schools. Families with children attending private schools reported fewer social problems than those with children attending public schools.

In the third section, student improvement, parents were asked to indicate whether they saw an improvement or a deterioration in their children over the previous school year with respect to the following indicators: academic performance, social skills, behaviour, and happiness and enjoyment of school. Parents were asked to state whether their children were much better, somewhat better, about the same, somewhat worse, or much worse for each indicator.

Overall, Children First families reported the most improvement in their children. There was no statistical

difference between the scores of families who attended private schools with or without a Children First grant. There were statistically significant differences between the scores of non-recipient families with children attending private schools and non-recipient families with children attending public schools. In every case, a larger proportion of families with children attending public schools than families with children attending private schools reported that their children had worsened. Again, these results were statistically significant.

The study concludes that parents with limited income who desire that their children attend independent school are more satisfied with their children's education when they are able to send their children to such a school. The study provides no basis for concluding that independent schools are superior to public schools for other groups, or on other measures, for these families.

Introduction

Children First: School Choice Trust is Canada's first privately funded program that helps lower income families pay for tuition at an independent elementary school of their choice. It has been operating in Ontario since 2003, and Calgary, Alberta, since 2006. The Ontario program has received more than 34,000 applications from Ontario parents since that time and has served a total of 1,494 Ontario children.

In order to qualify for the grants, families must reside in Ontario, have one or more children entering junior kindergarten to grade eight, and have a household income of less than twice the poverty line, as defined by the Basic Needs Index. At this income level (\$49,123 for a household of four in the 2005-2006 school year), a family is considered to "have the necessities covered but lack a number of the common amenities that most people enjoy."¹

Children First grant recipients are chosen by lottery and must qualify financially to participate in the Children First program. In the 2005-2006 school year, 759 children received a Children First grant, which covered 50% of the cost of tuition at an independent school, up to a maximum of \$3,500 per year.² The remaining portion of the tuition and any ancillary expenses were financed by participating parents.³ In the 2005-2006 school year,

the average cost of tuition was \$4,398 and the average grant was \$2,031, suggesting that the average family contributed \$2,367, not including additional expenses such as books, supplies, and other ancillary fees.

The families who apply for Children First but are not chosen in the lottery are an interesting and important group. Some of these families manage to send their children to an independent school without the help of a Children First grant, while others send their children to a public school. Comparing the survey responses of Children First recipients to the responses of the latter group forms the basis of this study's insights into the effects of our tuition subsidy program, and the effect independent schooling has on the economically disadvantaged families who want this type of schooling for their children.

The purpose of this study

Education policy is notoriously difficult to assess. The effectiveness of a particular school or policy is difficult to identify accurately if we cannot randomly assign children to schools. Without the ability to measure against a comparison group, we lack the ability to differentiate the impact of a school on a child from that of all the other influences in her life, such as parental education, household income, prior achievement, or mother tongue, to name a few.

One of the unique features of Children First: School Choice Trust is that, because it is based on a random assignment of grants to children, it provides the kind of data that is so rarely available to education researchers. In 2004, and for the first time in Canada, a group of economically disadvantaged Ontario families who shared a desire to send a child to an independent (or private) school of their choosing entered a lottery. Two years later,

1 Sarlo, Chris (2001). *Measuring Poverty in Canada*. Critical Issues Bulletin. Fraser Institute.

2 In the 2006-2007 school year, Children First gave 1,200 grants worth 50% of the cost of tuition, to a maximum of \$4,000 per year.

3 Parents are responsible for covering all remaining costs themselves, but are free to seek additional financial support from the school, their families, or other community organizations. In fact, 11.5% of Children First grant recipients receive financial support in addition to the Children First grant.

researchers followed up with Children First grant recipients from that cohort and a random selection of 2004 non-recipients.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine whether or not parents who applied for a Children First grant believed that their children benefited from having received one. Its purpose was to determine whether lower income parents who received grants were more or less satisfied with their children's education at a private school than those who did not receive grants and whose children attended public school.

In a perfect world, researchers would be able to measure the success of the Children First grants program by testing all the students who applied for a Children First grant at the time of application, and then testing them again every couple of years to mark their progress. They would likely include all Children First recipients and a random sample of children from the comparison group (children whose parents applied for the grant but did not win one in the lottery).

Unfortunately, this was not a practical or affordable option. There is no test that all children in Ontario take even once in their elementary school careers. While public school students in Ontario sit the EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) tests in grades three and six, very few independent schools require their students to take it. Some independent schools have their students sit the CAT (Canadian Achievement Test) annually or occasionally, others use the CTBS (Canadian Test of Basic Skills), while others do not believe that the use of these standardized tests is helpful. Ontario's regulation of private schools is so minimal that these schools are not required to test their students.

This means that if researchers wanted to compare the test results of Children First students with those of the comparison group, then they would have had to ask a large sample of our applicants and all of our recipients to sit a test and to agree to return multiple times, over a number of years, for testing. This logistically challenging and expensive proposition was eliminated as an option because of a lack of financial resources and the unlikelihood that parents would agree to participate. The small size of our program also would have compromised the

significance of the findings, whatever they might have been. In light of these many issues, this study resorted to a much simpler method of comparing the quality of schools: asking parents what they thought of them.

The parent survey was delivered in June 2006 to parents who had applied for a grant in early 2004. It seems plausible that during the first year after receiving a grant parents would be more likely to rate their new school highly than they would be later. Thus, the survey was conducted two years later, by which time the parents' responses would be likely to reflect reality, rather than excitement. It is likely that during those two years, parents would have had an opportunity to experience a range of teachers, and to confront disappointments with their new school.

Families who applied for but did not win a grant would have had two years to move on, to recover from their disappointment, and possibly to find that their child's situation could be improved simply by getting a better teacher in the same school, or by changing to a new school, public or independent, without a Children First grant.

This study also compared the satisfaction levels of our applicant families who were attending public schools and independent schools without a grant. This comparison is important because it reveals whether or not Children First families report higher satisfaction levels, not because the schools were better but because winning the grant gave them some reason to want to report higher satisfaction. Perhaps Children First recipients were afraid their grant might be taken away if they reported dissatisfaction, or perhaps the feeling of being lottery winners created euphoria, which coloured their survey responses. This study set out to identify this bias by comparing the responses of recipient families to the responses of those who attended a private school without a Children First grant, and thus felt no pressure to exaggerate their satisfaction on a Children First survey.⁴

4 Comparison group families were given \$5 with the survey as a token of our appreciation for their response to the survey.

In short, this study allowed us to assess the value of independent schools for economically disadvantaged families who prefer these schools for their children and are prepared to help pay the tuition.

Methodology

In June 2006, Children First conducted a survey of 396 families who applied for the grant program in 2004.⁵ This included 68 families who were chosen in the lottery and started receiving the grant in the 2004-2005 school year, as well as 328 families who were not chosen. Of the 396 families who received surveys, 78% (308) responded. This study only considered 283 of the 308 families surveyed, in which all children were attending the same kind of school (i.e., independent or public).⁶ The remaining 25 families either homeschooled their children, or did not have all of their school-aged children attending the same type of school. Survey respondents were divided into two major groups:

1. Children First group: 55 parents who sent their children to an independent school with the help of a Children First grant.
2. Comparison group: 253 parents who applied for but did not win a Children First grant in 2004. The comparison group can be further divided into the following subgroups for the purposes of this study:

- a. Public school group: 88 parents who, without a grant, sent their children to a public school or a separate Roman Catholic school.
- b. Independent school group: 140 parents who sent their children to an independent school without the assistance of a Children First grant.

This study examines the satisfaction levels of Children First parents with the academic and social environments of their schools, and reports the improvement (or deterioration) parents had seen in their children since the previous school year. The responses of Children First parents are compared with those of the families who applied for but did not receive a Children First grant (our comparison group). The study then compares the satisfaction levels of parents in the public school subgroup with those of parents who sent their children to an independent school, either with or without a Children First grant (Children First parents and the independent school subset of the comparison group).

In this paper, the term “majority” refers to 50% to 74% of survey respondents and the term “large majority” refers to 75% or more. The results obtained from the survey are presented in three sections: academic environment, social environment, and student improvement. Appendix D presents an analysis of the statistical significance of the findings of the survey.

⁵ A multi-wave tailored design method was used to conduct this mail survey based on Don A. Dillman’s *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. Contact with families was made in four stages, each through a different method: (1) pre-notice phone call; (2) survey mailing; (3) post-card follow-up; and (4) replacement survey mailing.

⁶ Our survey did not distinguish between secular public schools and separate Roman Catholic public schools. There may be systemic differences between the two school groups that are not captured in this study, just as there may be differences between different types of independent schools that are not captured.

Survey results

Academic environment

When evaluating a school, the first thing most parents and researchers consider is academics. If asked, most parents would identify the transmission of academic skills as a school's most important responsibility. If asked to rank an elementary school on the basis of its performance, the first thing most parents would probably want to know is whether the school can teach children how to read, write, add, subtract, multiply, and divide.

Knowing whether Children First students have used their grant to attend a school that has a lower or higher academic standard than a school they would have attended otherwise is important to us as the administrators of Children First. This knowledge is also important to parents, education policy makers, and anyone interested in knowing the effect school choice has on economically disadvantaged families who want to send their children to a different school.

It may be that the parents who want to send their children to private school are so inclined for reasons other than academics. Some parents may unknowingly choose a school with an inferior academic program because it promises something else they value more. For example, some parents may select a school because it teaches values that are closer to their own, or can accommodate their child's special need, or has zero tolerance for drugs or bullying.

Perhaps the parents who tend to want to take their children out of public schools are unlikely to find any school satisfactory. Or perhaps these parents expect independent schools to have higher academic standards, but after a couple of years, they find that the teachers at these schools are not really any better than the ones at their previous schools.

To measure their satisfaction with their schools' academics, teachers, and parental involvement, surveyed parents were asked to grade their school based on seven indicators, using a scale of "A" to "F." These indicators include academic quality, quality of teacher attention, parents' interaction with teachers and administrators, discipline, curriculum's reflection of parents' values, parental involvement at school, and overall school experience.

Overall, Children First parents were more satisfied with the academic environment of their children's schools than the comparison group as a whole. However, our survey revealed a more striking contrast between the satisfaction levels of the parents of public school students and those of the parents who sent their children to an independent school, either with or without a Children First grant. In general, parents in the public school group were much less satisfied with the academic environment of their public schools than the parents in the independent school and Children First groups (for a discussion of the statistical significance of these findings, see Appendix D).

The satisfaction of the parents surveyed, in terms of the seven indicators noted, is discussed below.

1. How would you rate the academic quality of your child's school?

Sixty-nine percent of Children First parents and 52% of the comparison group gave their school an "A" grade for academic quality. This suggests that economically disadvantaged families who want to enrol their children in an independent school benefit (at least in their own eyes) from winning and using a Children First grant. This is true despite the fact that the private schools in which they enrolled their children are modest establishments, as indicated by their average tuition of \$4,783.33 for the 2005-2006 school year.

As figure 1.1 illustrates, Children First parents and parents in the independent school group reported similarly high levels of satisfaction with the academic quality of their children’s schools. Sixty-nine percent of the Children First group and 73% of the independent school group gave their schools an “A” grade, compared with 19% of the public school group. The majority (74%) of parents in the public school group gave their schools either a “B” (44%) or “C” (30%) grade for academic quality.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being an “F” grade and 5 being an “A” grade, the Children First group and the independent school group gave the academic quality of their children’s schools an average score of 4.7, while the public school group gave their schools an average score of 3.7.

Of all the indicators in this section, academic quality received the strongest grades from the Children First and independent school groups, and reflects a very high level of satisfaction with the academic quality of independent schools among the parents surveyed.

2. How would you rate your interaction with teachers and administrators at your child’s school?

When asked to grade their interaction with teachers and administrators at their child’s school, 60% of Children First parents and 50% of the comparison group gave their schools an “A.”

Of the parents in the comparison group, those who sent their children to an independent school reported much higher levels of satisfaction with their interaction with teachers and administrators than those who sent their children to public school. As shown in figure 1.2, parents in the independent school group reported the highest level of satisfaction (67% of respondents gave their schools an “A”). In comparison, 22% of the public school group gave their schools an “A.”

On average, the Children First group gave their schools a score of 4.5, while the independent school group gave a slightly higher score of 4.6. The public school group gave their schools an average score of 3.6.

Figure 1.1: How would you rate the academic quality of your child’s school?

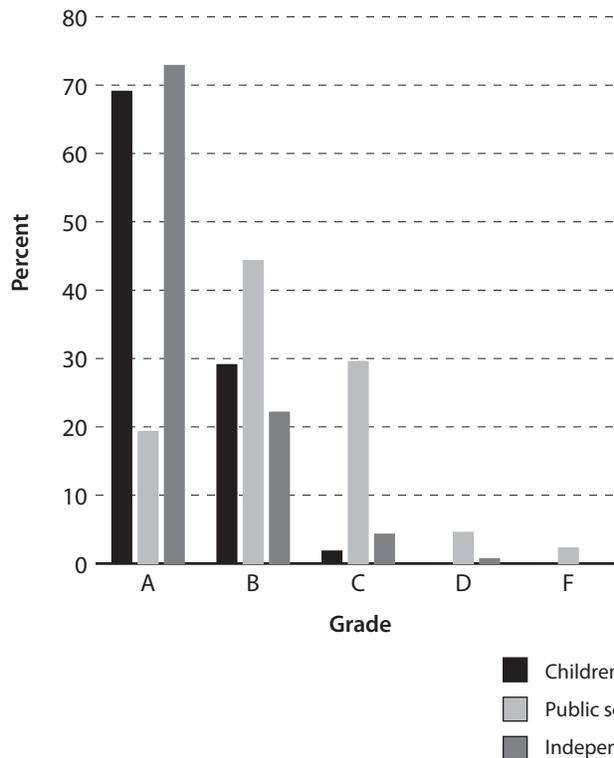
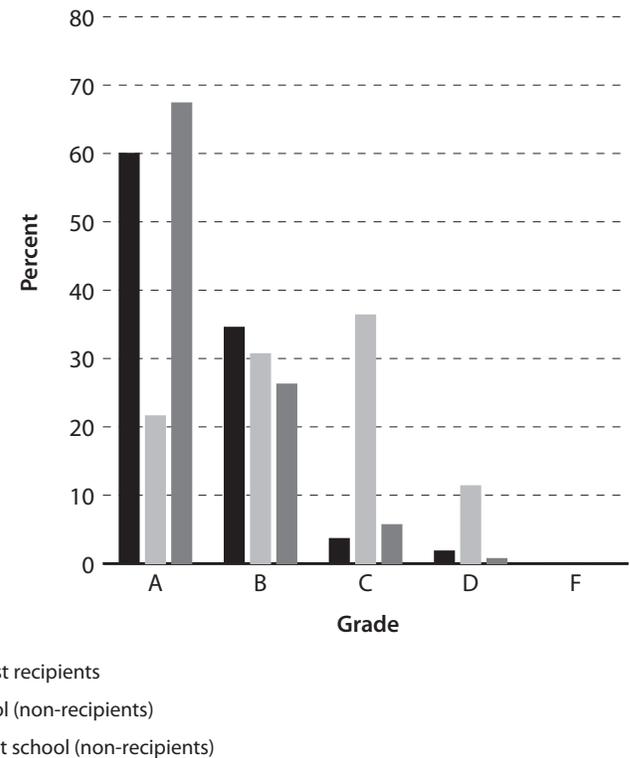


Figure 1.2: How would you rate your interaction with teachers and administrators at your child’s school?



3. How would you rate the quality of teacher attention to your child?

When asked to grade the quality of teacher attention to their child, 67% of Children First parents and 49% of the comparison group gave their schools an “A” (figure 1.3). Children First parents reported similar satisfaction levels to those reported by the independent school group (64%), and much higher satisfaction levels than those reported by the public school group (26%).

Even though this indicator received more “A” grades from the public school group than any other indicator in this section, the difference between the satisfaction levels of public and private school parents is still remarkable. The percentage of independent school parents who gave their school an “A” is 2.5 times the percentage of public school parents who gave this grade.

The average score for the Children First group (4.6) was slightly higher than the score for independent school group (4.5), and considerably higher than the score for the public school group (3.7).

4. How well does your school’s curriculum reflect your values?

Of all the indicators in this section, parents in the public school group reported the least satisfaction when asked if their schools’ curriculum reflected their values. Only 13% of parents who sent their children to public school gave their schools an “A” for this indicator, while the majority of parents in the Children First (65%) and independent school (74%) groups gave the top grade.

Furthermore, as figure 1.4 illustrates, over half (55%) of the public school group gave their schools a “C” or lower, and one-fifth gave their schools a “D” (15%) or an “F” (5%). No Children First parents responded with a “D” or “F,” and only 1% of the independent school group gave their schools less than a “C” on this question.

On average, parents in the public school group gave their schools a lower score for this indicator (3.3) than the Children First group (4.6) and the independent school group (4.7).

Figure 1.3: How would you rate the quality of teacher attention to your child?

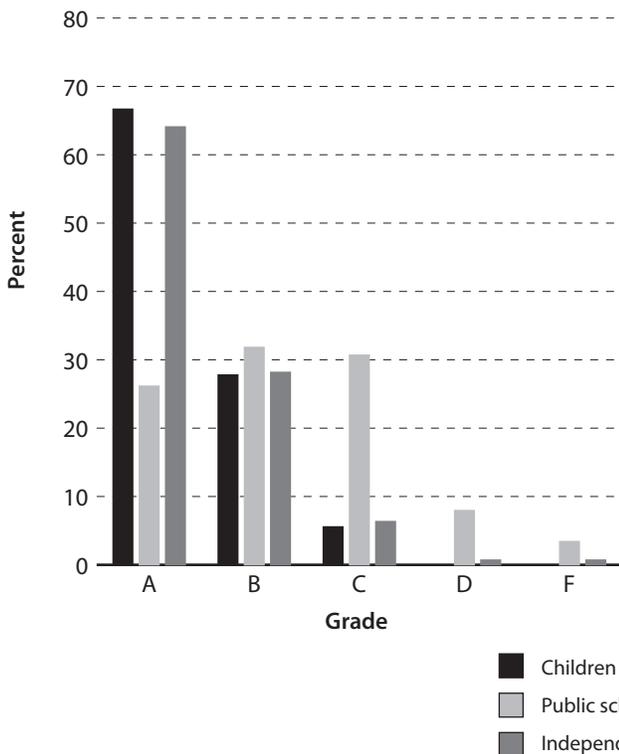
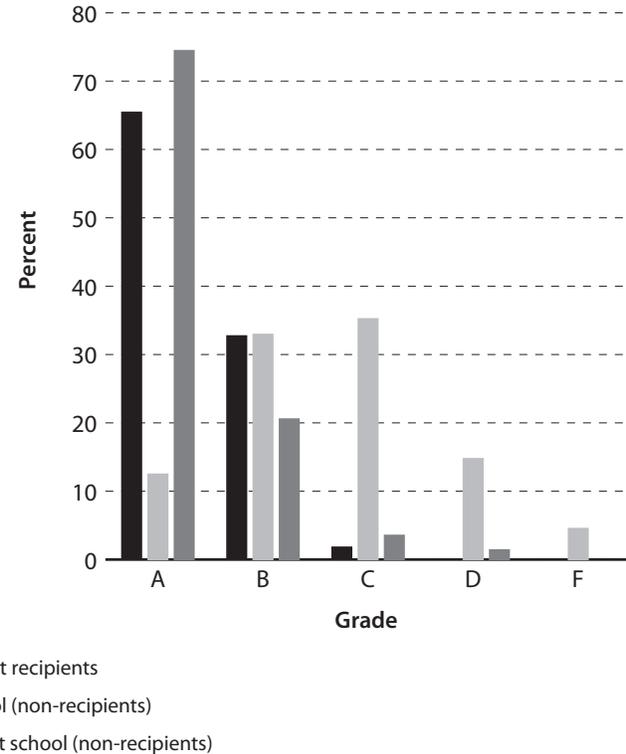


Figure 1.4: How well does your school’s curriculum reflect your values?



5. How would you rate the discipline at your child's school?

This indicator received particularly poor grades from parents in the public school group, 51% of whom gave their school a "C" or less for discipline, compared to 4% of Children First parents and 6% of independent school parents (figure 1.5).

The public school group gave their schools an average score of 3.5 for discipline, while the Children First and independent school groups gave their schools a 4.5.

6. How well does your child's school foster parental involvement?

Both the Children First and independent school groups reported high satisfaction with parental involvement at their schools. Sixty-four percent of the former and 67% of the latter gave their schools an "A," compared with 21% of the public school group. The modal score for the public school group for this indicator was a "C" (figure 1.6).

On average, parents in the Children First and independent school groups gave their schools a score of 4.4 and 4.5, while parents in the public school group gave their schools a 3.6.

Figure 1.5: How would you rate the discipline at your child's school?

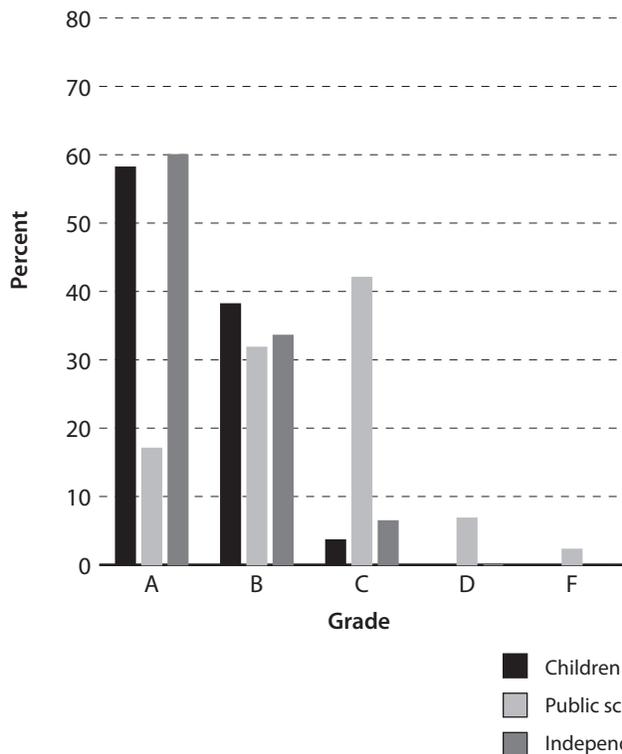
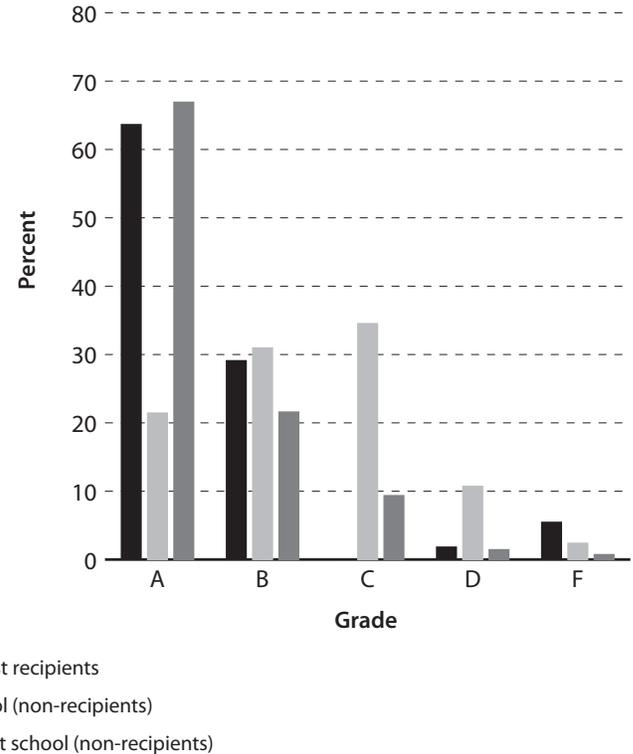


Figure 1.6: How well does your child's school foster parental involvement?



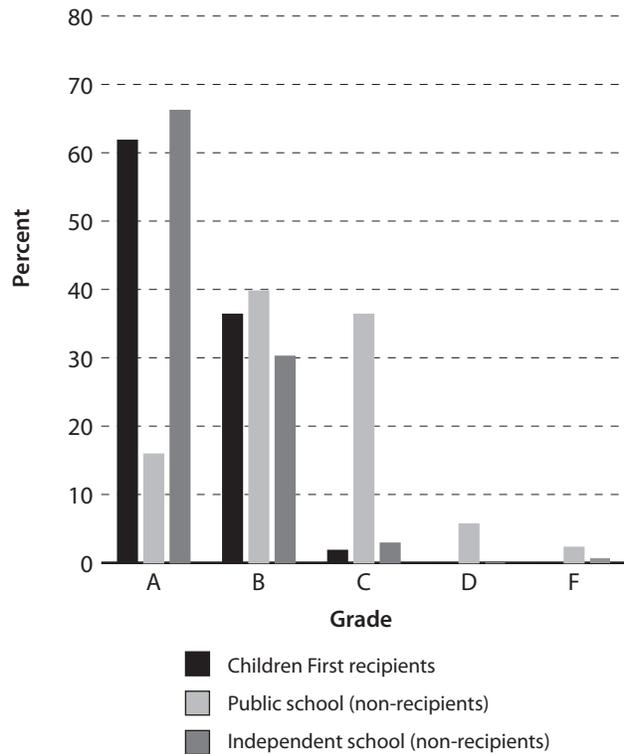
7. How would you rate your overall school experience?

Overall, the Children First group reported high satisfaction with their schools. Sixty-two percent of these parents and 46% of parents in the comparison group gave their schools an “A” (figure 1.7).

A more substantial divergence is evident when the Children First group is compared with the subgroups of the comparison group. The Children First and independent school group reported much higher levels of satisfaction than the public school group. Sixty-six percent of the independent school group, and 16% of the public school group gave their schools an “A” for this indicator. Seventy-six percent of the public school group gave their schools a “B” (40%) or a “C” (36%). Fortunately, very few parents gave their school a “D” or lower.

Both the Children First and independent school groups gave their schools an overall average score of 4.6 and the public school group gave their schools an average score of 3.6.

Figure 1.7: How would you rate your overall school experience?



Social environment

There is more to a school than academics. Parents hope that their children's formal education will contribute positively to their social development. At the very least, most parents hope that their children will not be damaged by bullying, racism, drugs, or other negative social problems in the school setting, and most acknowledge that some schools, whether public or independent, provide healthier social environments than others.

The parent survey provided us with an opportunity to understand the prevalence of social problems present at the schools Children First grant recipients attended. It also allowed us to compare the prevalence of those problems to their prevalence in the schools attended by the comparison group. The survey asked parents whether fighting, stealing, cheating, bullying, racial conflict, or drugs were problems at their children's school. The

most commonly reported problems by all the parents were bullying and fighting.

Both the Children First group and the comparison group experienced more problems with bullying than any other issue discussed. However, as figure 2.1 illustrates, approximately three times as many parents who sent their children to a public school (55.3%) than parents from the Children First (18.2%) and the independent school groups (17.3%) reported that their children experienced problems with bullying.

Fighting was the second most reported problem in the social environment category. Forty percent of parents in the public school group, 5.7% of the Children First group, and 9.4% of the independent school group reported that their children experienced fighting at their schools (figure 2.2).

Figures 2.3 to 2.6 clearly illustrate that far more parents in the public school group than those in the Chil-

Figure 2.1: Was bullying a problem at your child's school? ("Yes")

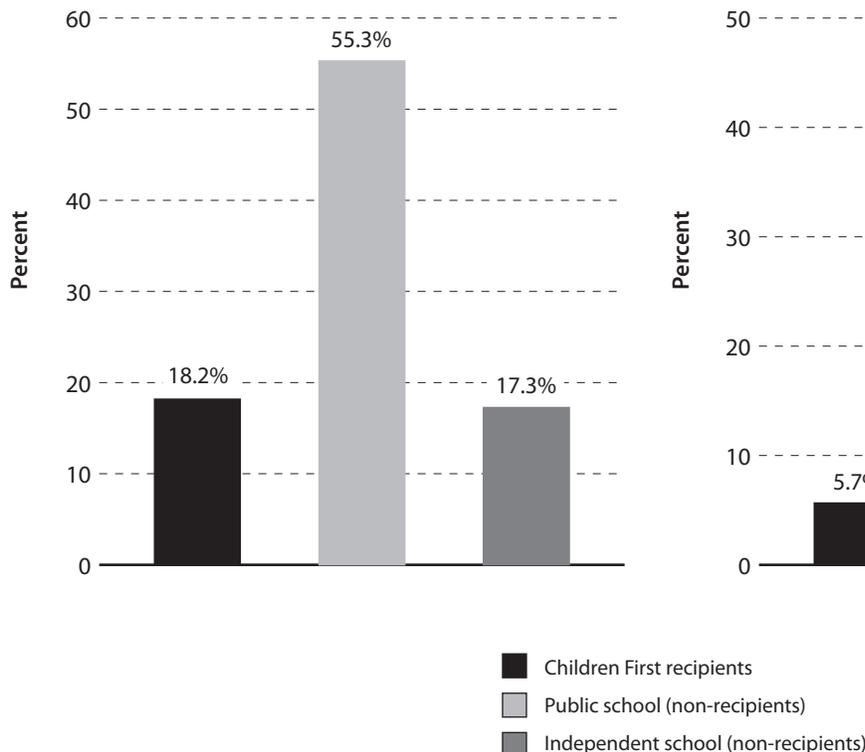


Figure 2.2: Was fighting a problem at your child's school? ("Yes")

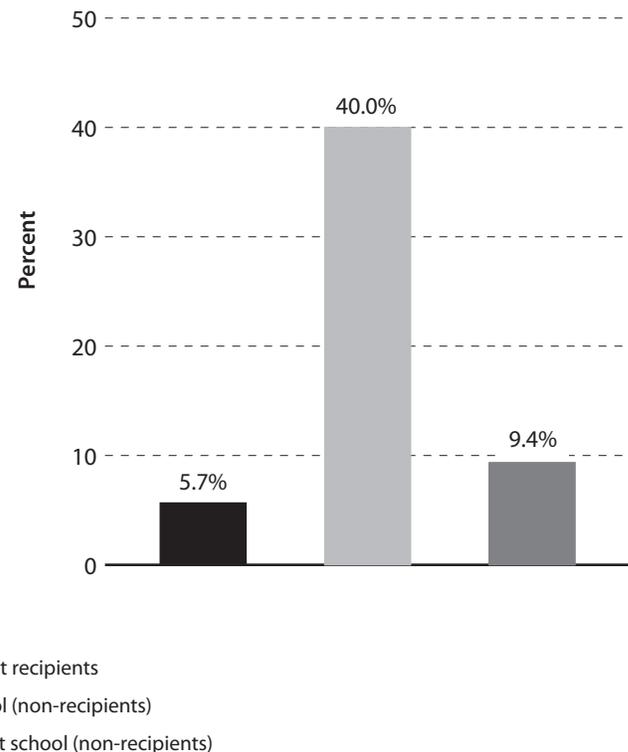


Figure 2.3: Were drugs a problem at your child's school? ("Yes")

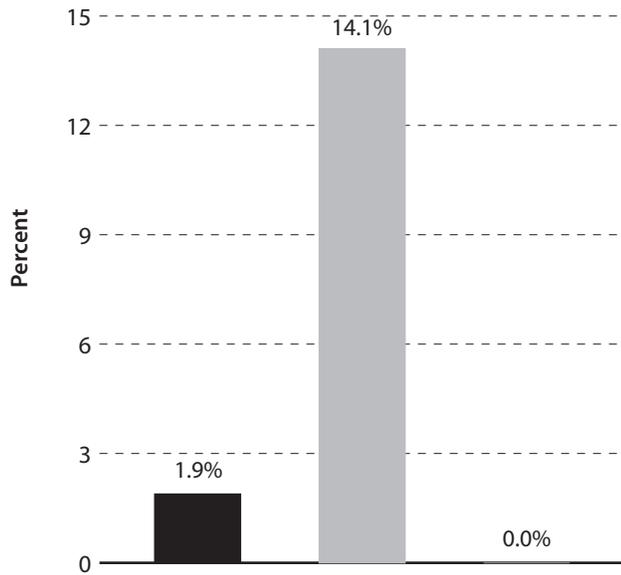


Figure 2.4: Was cheating a problem at your child's school? ("Yes")

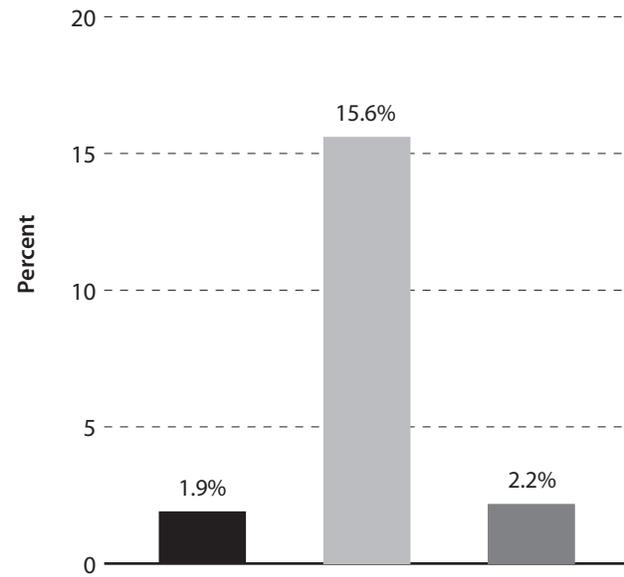


Figure 2.5: Was racism a problem at your child's school? ("Yes")

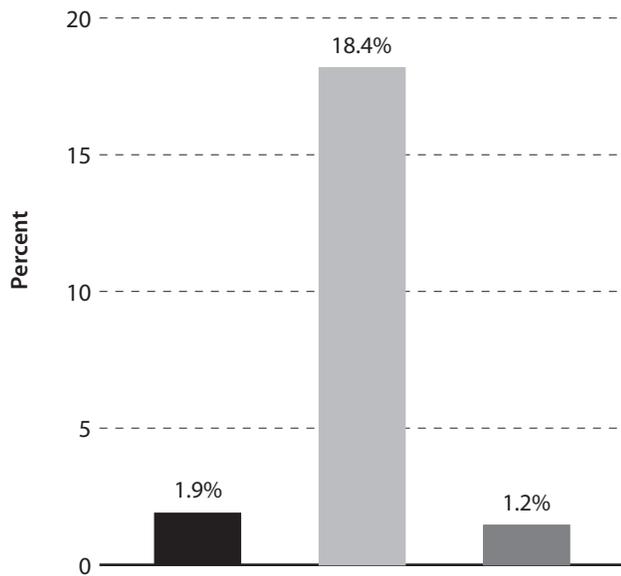
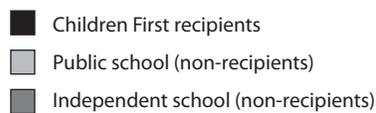
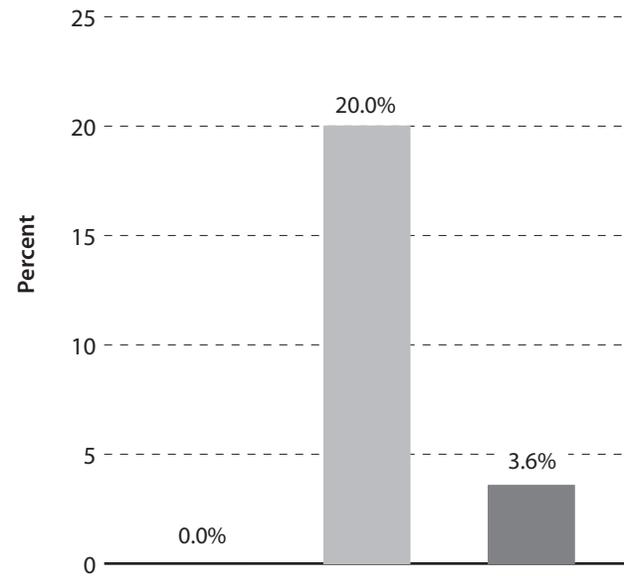


Figure 2.6: Was stealing a problem at your child's school? ("Yes")



dren First and independent school groups reported problems with drugs, cheating, racism, and stealing at their schools (see Appendix D for a discussion of the statistical significance of these findings).

Overall, while Children First parents reported much fewer social problems at their schools than the comparison group as a whole, the results of the survey suggest that parents who sent their children to an independent school (including the Children First group and independent school subgroup) experienced far fewer social problems than those who sent their children to a public school.

Student improvement

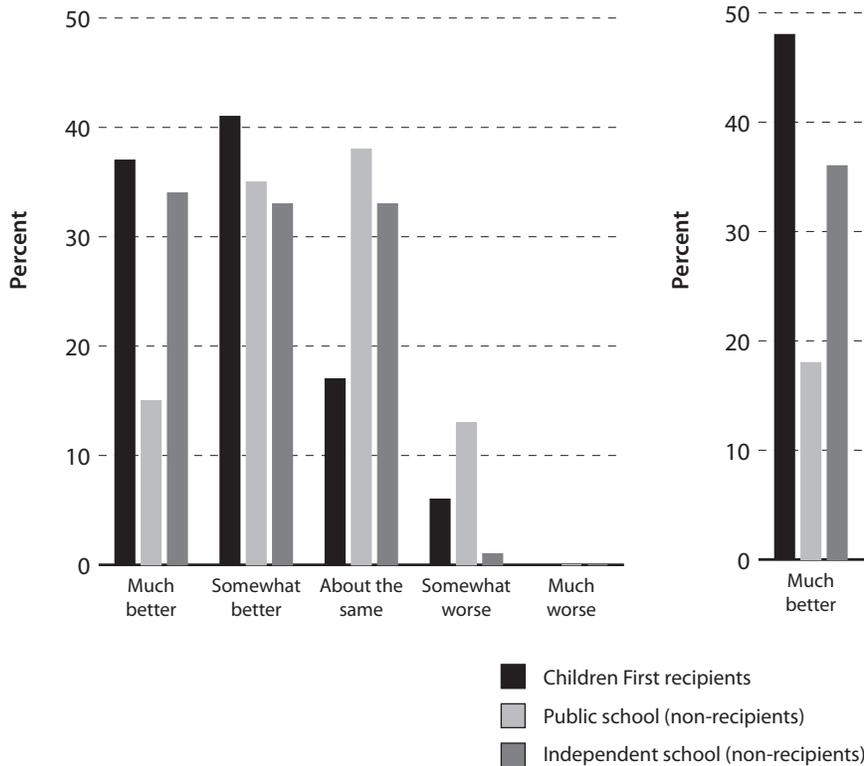
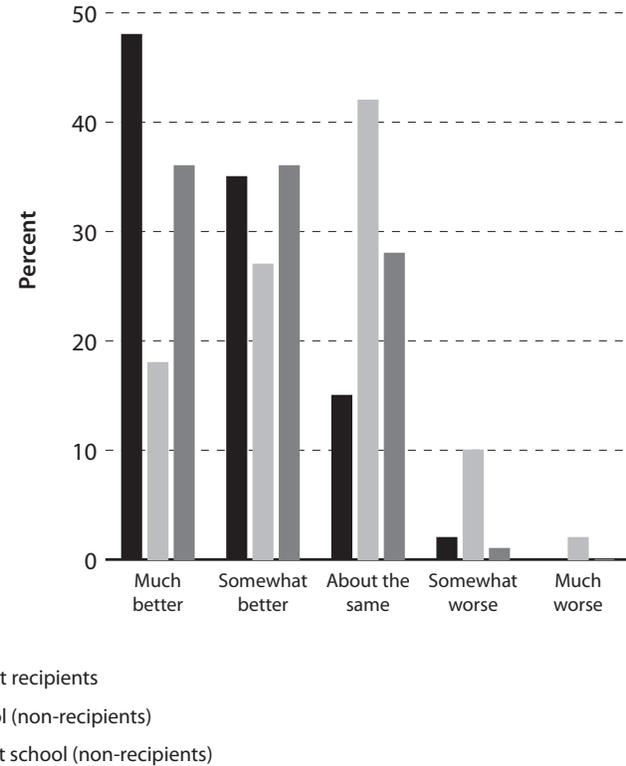
Parents were asked to report if they saw an improvement in their child over the previous school year for the following indicators: academic performance, social skills, behaviour, and happiness at their schools. Respondents indicated whether their child was much better, somewhat better, about the same, somewhat worse, or much worse for each indicator.

When compared with the comparison group as a whole, as well as the subgroups, the Children First group saw the most improvement in their children for all four indicators. While the survey results in the academic and social environment sections revealed a strong similarity between the Children First group and the independent school subgroup, results in this section do not demonstrate the same degree of similarity. This may be because the majority of families in the Children First group had only recently been able to send their children to a school of their choice after winning a Children First grant, while those in the independent school group may have been sending their children to an independent school for a longer period of time.

A larger proportion of families in the public school subgroup than those in the Children First group and the independent school subgroup reported that their children had actually worsened in terms of all four indicators (see Appendix D for a discussion of the statistical significance of these findings).

1. Academic performance

Parents in the Children First group saw more improvement in their children's academic performance over the previous school year than the comparison group did. Thirty-seven percent of the Children First group reported that their children's academic performance was much better, and 41% reported that it was somewhat better. The corresponding numbers for the comparison group as a whole were 27% and 34%. Comparing the Children First group to the subgroups revealed that less than half as many parents in the public school group (15%) reported that their children's academic performance was much better than the previous school year (figure 3.1). Further-

Figure 3.1: How has your child changed in terms of his or her academic performance?**Figure 3.2: How has your child changed in terms of his or her social skills?**

more, 13% of the public school group reported a decline in their children's academic performance, while only 6% of the Children First group and 1% of the independent school group reported a decline.

On a scale of -2 to 2 , with -2 being much worse and 2 being much better, the Children First group gave their schools an average score of 0.9 . This means that, on average, Children First parents found that their children's academic performance had somewhat improved. Similarly, parents in the independent school group gave their schools an average score of 1.0 , while the public school group gave their schools a 0.5 .

Overall, all three groups saw some improvement in their children's academic performance; however, parents in the Children First and independent school groups saw more improvement than those in the public school group. None of the parents in any of the groups reported the lowest score (-2) for this indicator.

2. Social skills

A large majority (75%) of Children First parents and the majority (61%) of the comparison group as a whole reported that their children's social skills improved over the previous school year (figure 3.2). Forty-eight percent of parents in the Children First group and 32% of the comparison group reported that their children's social skills were much better, while 27% of the former group and 29% of the latter group reported that they were somewhat better.

A large majority of the independent school group reported that their children's social skills improved. Thirty-six percent said their children's social skills were much better and another 36% said their skills were somewhat better. The proportion of the public school group that reported improvement in their children's social skills was lower than the proportions of both the Children First and independent school groups. Compared to the public school group, 2.7 times as many parents in

the Children First group and twice as many in the independent school group reported that their children had much better social skills. The larger part of the public school group reported that they saw no change in their children's social skills from one year to the next.

Parents in the Children First group reported an average score of 1.3, meaning that their children's social skills were between somewhat better and much better. Though lower than the Children First group, parents in the independent school group, which reported an average score of 1.1, also said that their children's social skills had somewhat improved. The public school group reported an average score of 0.5 for this indicator.

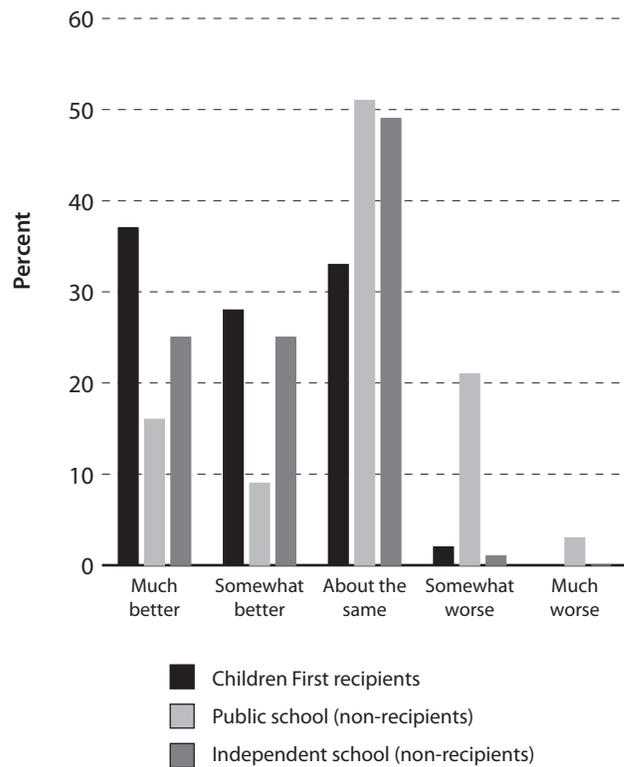
3. Behaviour

The majority of parents in the Children First group (65%) and 41% of the comparison group as a whole reported improvement in their children's behaviour (figure 3.3).

Almost all the parents in the Children First group (98%) and the independent school group (99%) reported that their children's behaviour had remained the same or improved over the previous school year. The most common answer given by parents in the Children First group was that their children's behaviour was much better (37%), while the most frequently offered answer from parents in both comparison group subgroups—51% of the independent school group, and 49% of the public school group—was that their children's behaviour was about the same as it was in the previous year. Twenty-four percent of the public school group reported that their children's behaviour had actually worsened since the previous school year. Twenty-one percent of those parents said it was somewhat worse, while 3% said it was much worse.

With an average score of 0.1, parents in the public school group reported the least improvement in their children's behaviour over the previous school year. On average, the Children First group, with an average score of 1.0, reported that their children's behaviour had somewhat improved. For this indicator, the independent school group reported an average score of 0.8.

Figure 3.3: How has your child changed in terms of his or her behaviour?



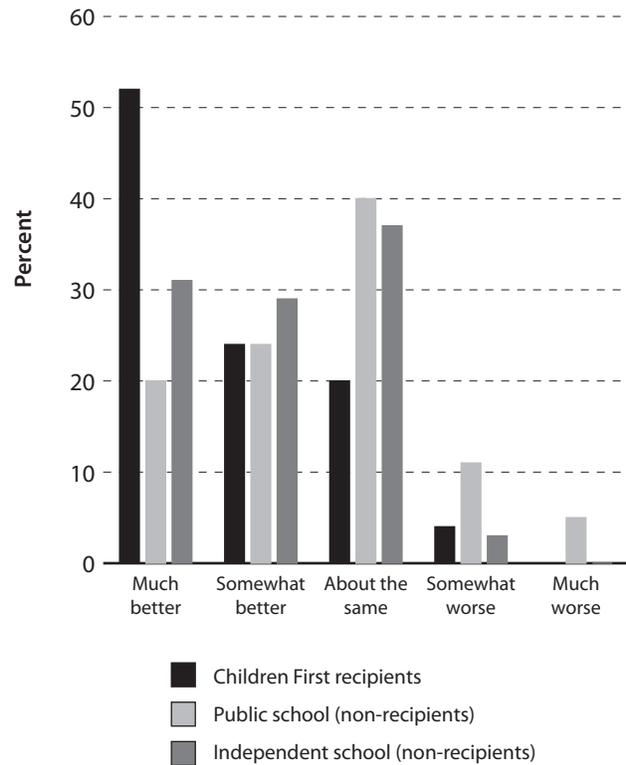
4. Happiness and enjoyment of school

Children First parents reported a more dramatic improvement in their children's happiness or enjoyment of their schools than those who did not win a grant did. Fifty-two percent of the Children First group reported that their children were much happier at their schools and 24% reported that they were somewhat happier (figure 3.4). Not surprisingly, the most common answer given by parents of children attending public schools (40% of respondents) was that there was no change in their children's happiness and enjoyment of school since the previous school year. But it was encouraging to see that more parents from the public school group reported that their children's enjoyment of school had improved than had deteriorated since the previous year. However, a small majority (56%) of the families who sought a Children First grant and did not switch to an independent school did not see their children's enjoyment of their schools improve. Sixteen percent of the public school group indi-

cated that their children's happiness and enjoyment of their schools had worsened: 11% indicated that it was somewhat worse, while 5% said it was much worse. In comparison, 4% and 3% of the Children First group and independent school group, respectively, indicated that their children were somewhat worse, while none indicated that their children were much worse.

The majority of independent school group parents (60%) and Children First parents (74%) reported that their children's happiness had improved since the previous year. The Children First group reported an impressive average score of 1.2 for this indicator, which was three times higher than the average score given by the public school group (0.4). The independent school group reported an average score of 0.9.

Figure 3.4: How has your child changed in terms of his or her happiness and enjoyment of school?



Conclusion

The survey results strongly suggest that Children First parents are more satisfied with the academic and social environment of their school, and have seen more improvement in their children than parents in the comparison group. This suggests that these children were helped by their Children First grant in three significant ways. First, grant recipients attended schools that their parents found to be better than their previous schools based on a variety of measures. There was not a single measure for which the comparison group reported a higher score. Second, Children First families reported fewer problems in their schools' social environment. Fighting, stealing, cheating, bullying, racial conflict, and drugs were all reported to be problems less frequently by Children First parents than by the comparison group. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Children First parents found that their own children had benefited from their school more than the parents of children who did not win a grant. More Children First families than comparison group families reported that the academic performance, behaviour, social skills, and happiness of their children improved. This would seem to indicate that the parents surveyed believed their children had benefited from the grant in a wide variety of ways. As is discussed in Appendix D, all of these findings have statistical significance.

A more in depth comparison between the Children First group and the comparison group subgroups reveals that the Children First group and the independent school group reported similar levels of satisfaction with their schools. Though economically disadvantaged, parents in

both these groups managed to send their children to an independent school of their choice.

Compared to those in the public school subgroup, parents who sent their children to an independent school (including parents in the Children First group and the independent school subgroup) were much more satisfied with academics, teachers, and parental involvement at their schools. The Children First and independent school groups also reported considerably fewer social problems at their schools. Parents in the Children First and independent school groups were clearly more successful at finding a school that fit their children's needs since they reported the most improvement in their children over the previous school year. In contrast, parents in the public school subgroup reported the least improvement in their children.

Parents in the comparison group applied for the Children First program with the hope of gaining access to an independent school. The findings in this study help us to understand the reasons why these parents are unsatisfied with public schools, and some of the ways in which they believe independent schools help their children

This study provides no basis for concluding that independent schools are superior to public schools, or that either public or privately funded schools are homogeneous in character or quality. Nevertheless, parents of limited income who would like their children to attend an independent school are clearly more satisfied with their children attending an independent school than a public school.

Appendix A: Survey mailed to the public school and independent school comparison groups

CHILDREN FIRST PARENT SURVEY

START HERE

Please answer the following questions for your children who are in grades 1-8.

1. What type of school do your children currently attend? *(please check all that apply)*

- Public school
- Independent school
- Home school

2. What type of school did your child(ren) attend last year? *(please check all that apply)*

- Public school
- Independent school
- Home school

3. For the following factors, please circle the mark you would give your child(ren)'s school for the current school year:

Academic quality:	A	B	C	D	F
Quality of teacher attention to your child:	A	B	C	D	F
Your interaction with teachers and administrators at the school:	A	B	C	D	F
Discipline:	A	B	C	D	F
Curriculum reflects your values:	A	B	C	D	F
School fosters parental involvement:	A	B	C	D	F
Overall school experience:	A	B	C	D	F

4. How many times per month (on average) did you talk to your child(ren)'s teachers this year?

Please specify: _____ times per month

5. Were any of the following things a problem at your child(ren)'s school this year?

Fighting:

Yes No

Stealing:

Yes No

Cheating:

Yes No

Bullying:

Yes: No

Racial Conflict:

Yes No

Drugs:

Yes No

6. In general, since last school year, how has/have your child(ren) changed in the following areas?

Academic Performance:

- Much Worse
 Somewhat Worse
 About the Same
 Somewhat Better
 Much Better

Social Skills:

- Much Worse
 Somewhat Worse
 About the Same
 Somewhat Better
 Much Better

Behaviour:

- Much Worse
 Somewhat Worse
 About the Same
 Somewhat Better
 Much Better

Happiness/Enjoyment of School:

- Much Worse
 Somewhat Worse
 About the Same
 Somewhat Better
 Much Better

7. Would you like to be e-mailed a grant application for the 2007-2008 school year when they become available in January 2007?

- Yes → Indicate e-mail address _____
 No

We thank you for your cooperation in filling out this survey.

All answers will be kept strictly confidential.

*Please return the completed survey within one week to
 Children First by using the stamped, addressed envelope.*

Appendix B: Survey mailed to parents in the Children First group

CHILDREN FIRST PARENT SURVEY

START HERE

Section A: Family Characteristics

Please complete the information in the following section for mother and father.

1. Your race:

	Mother	Father
Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caucasian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Latin American	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arab/West Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	-----	-----

2. Your religion:

	Mother	Father
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	-----	-----

3. Your country of birth (not your child's):

	Mother	Father
Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	-----	-----

4. The total number of children in your family: (all children)

Please specify: -----

5. The sex and country of birth of all of your children who receive a Children First Grant:

Number of male children	-----	-----
Number of female children	-----	-----
Number born in Canada	-----	-----
Number born elsewhere	-----	-----
→ Please specify countries	-----	-----
	-----	-----

6. Your first language:

	Mother	Father
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	-----	-----

7a. Your employment status:

	Mother	Father
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	-----	-----

7b. If you checked “Employed” for the previous question, are you:

	Mother	Father
Full-time (30hrs/week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part-time (Less than 30hrs/week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Highest level of education completed: (please check one)

	Mother	Father
Elementary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Your current marital status:

- Never legally married (single)
- Legally married (and not separated) (common law)
- Separated, but still legally married
- Divorced
- Widowed

Section B: Financial Information

10. If you did not receive a Children First grant, would you still be able to send your child(ren) to an independent school?

- Yes
 No

11a. Do you receive another form of financial assistance to help you pay for your child(ren)'s tuition?

- Yes How much per year? _____
 No

11b. If you checked "Yes" to the previous question, which one of the following provides you with the additional financial assistance? (*please check all that apply*)

- School How much per year? _____
 Place of worship How much per year? _____
 Family How much per year? _____
 Other: _____ How much per year? _____

12. How much do you (as parents) pay per year for your child(ren)'s school tuition? (*not including extra fees, uniforms, books, equipment, etc. Please indicate the amount you pay in total for all your children enrolled in Children First*)

Amount per year: _____

13. How much do you (as parents) pay your school per year in addition to tuition? (*for extra fees, uniform, books, equipment, etc. Please indicate the amount you pay in total for all your children enrolled in Children First*)

Amount per year: _____

14. Are you on social assistance?

- Yes
 No

Section C: Independent school

15. For the following factors, please circle the mark you would give your child(ren)'s independent school for the current school year:

Academic quality:	A	B	C	D	F
Quality of teacher attention to your child:	A	B	C	D	F
Your interaction with teachers and administrators at the school:	A	B	C	D	F
Discipline:	A	B	C	D	F
Curriculum reflects your values:	A	B	C	D	F
School fosters parental involvement:	A	B	C	D	F
Overall school experience:	A	B	C	D	F

16. How many times per month (on average) did you talk to your child(ren)'s teachers this year?
Please specify: _____ times per month

17. Were any of the following things a problem at your child(ren)'s independent school this year?

<u>Fighting:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<u>Stealing:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<u>Cheating:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<u>Bullying:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<u>Racial Conflict:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<u>Drugs:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

18. In general, since last school year, how has/have your child(ren) changed in the following areas?

<u>Academic Performance:</u>	<u>Social Skills:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Much Worse	<input type="checkbox"/> Much Worse
<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Worse	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Worse
<input type="checkbox"/> About the Same	<input type="checkbox"/> About the Same
<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Better	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Better
<input type="checkbox"/> Much Better	<input type="checkbox"/> Much Better
<u>Behaviour:</u>	<u>Happiness/Enjoyment of School:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Much Worse	<input type="checkbox"/> Much Worse
<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Worse	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Worse
<input type="checkbox"/> About the Same	<input type="checkbox"/> About the Same
<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Better	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Better
<input type="checkbox"/> Much Better	<input type="checkbox"/> Much Better

19. Please circle the mark you would give your experience with Children First:

Communications assistance from Children First:	A	B	C	D	F
Overall satisfaction with the program:	A	B	C	D	F

20. Please feel free to add any additional comments you would like to share with us: _____

*We thank you for your cooperation in filling out this survey.
All answers will be kept strictly confidential.
Please return the completed survey within one week to
Children First by using the stamped, addressed envelope.*

Appendix C: Survey response rates

Group	Surveys mailed	Responses received	Response rate
Children First group	68	55	81%
Comparison group (including families with children attending independent, public, and other types of schools)	328	254	77%
Totals	396	309	78%

Appendix D: Analysis of statistical significance

Several tests were performed on the findings in order to evaluate the statistical significance of the results. Questions were grouped in three different categories: academic environment, student improvement, and social environment. Independent T-tests were performed for questions related to academic environment and student improvement, in order to evaluate the difference between two means. Pearson's chi-square tests were performed for questions related to problems in the social environment.

In each case, an analysis was performed three ways. First, the survey responses of Children First recipients, all of whom attended independent schools with financial assistance from the program, were compared with those of the families who applied for but did not win a grant, and sent their children to public school.

Next, the tests considered the answers of all the non-recipient families. The analysis compared the answers of families whose children attended independent schools without a Children First grant with those of families whose children attended public schools. This test was intended to reveal whether lower incomes families who desired an independent school education for their children reported different levels of satisfaction depending on whether their children attend independent schools or public schools.

Finally, the analysis considered all the families whose children attended independent schools. It compared the responses of Children First families who received a grant for two years with those of the families who had applied for a grant but did not receive one. This test was intended to reveal whether the receipt of a grant changed the experience or the reported experience of the children who attended an independent school.

In all cases, if the significance values were small (less than 0.05), we could infer that the means of the two groups analyzed were significantly different.

Questions related to social environment were evaluated using Pearson's chi-square test. This test was performed in order to examine whether there was an association between two categorical variables: type of school and social problems associated with the school. In other words, the Pearson chi-square test was performed to assess whether the two variables were independent. In all the cases, if the significance values were small (less than 0.05), we rejected the hypothesis that the variables were independent and accepted the hypothesis that they were related in some way.

Academic environment

Independent T-tests were performed in order to evaluate two means. First, the tests compared the responses of parents to the seven questions related to their school's academic environment (academic quality, interaction with teachers, quality of teacher attention, curriculum, discipline, parental involvement, and overall school satisfaction). Tables 1.1 to 1.3 summarize the results.

When the responses of Children First recipients were compared with those of the public school group on questions of their school's academic environment, the statistical analysis showed that the two groups were significantly different (at 5% level). This means that for each of the questions, it can be inferred that Children First recipients were more likely to be satisfied than non-recipients with children attending public schools with respect to the seven indicators noted above.

The responses of non-recipients whose children attended independent schools were compared with

Table 1.1: Children First recipients (CF) versus non-recipients whose children attended public schools (PS)

		t statistic	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Mean	Std. deviation	Comments
Academic quality	CF	7.888	139.843	0	4.67	0.511	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.74	0.903	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Interaction with teachers	CF	6.678	139.258	0	4.53	0.663	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.63	0.951	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Teacher attention	CF	6.622	139.23	0	4.61	0.596	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.69	1.054	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Curriculum	CF	9.952	136.291	0	4.64	0.522	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.34	1.027	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Discipline	CF	7.945	140.961	0	4.55	0.571	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.55	0.934	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Parental Involvement	CF	4.831	137	0	4.44	1.014	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.58	1.020	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Overall school experience	CF	8.111	139.594	0	4.60	0.531	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				3.63	0.891	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.

Table 1.2: Children First recipients (CF) versus non-recipients whose children attended independent schools (IS)

		t statistic	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Mean	Std. deviation	Comments
Academic quality	CF	0.014	193	0.989	4.67	0.511	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.67	0.593	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Interaction with teachers	CF	-0.784	193	0.434	4.53	0.663	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.61	0.631	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Teacher attention	CF	0.559	192	0.577	4.61	0.596	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.55	0.713	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Curriculum	CF	-0.527	193	0.599	4.64	0.522	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.69	0.613	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Discipline	CF	0.101	193	0.919	4.55	0.571	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.54	0.616	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Parental Involvement	CF	-0.679	191	0.498	4.44	1.014	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.53	0.785	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Overall school experience	CF	-0.121	192	0.904	4.60	0.531	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				4.61	0.620	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.

Table 1.3: Non-recipients whose children attended public schools (PS) versus non-recipients whose children attended independent schools (IS)

		t statistic	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Mean	Std. deviation	Comments
Academic quality	PS	-8.593	134.355	0	3.74	0.903	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.67	0.593	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Interaction with teachers	PS	-8.576	135.401	0	3.63	0.951	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.61	0.631	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Teacher attention	PS	-6.719	137.104	0	3.69	1.054	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.55	0.713	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Curriculum	PS	-11.104	126.313	0	3.34	1.027	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.69	0.613	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Discipline	PS	-8.816	134.885	0	3.55	0.934	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.54	0.616	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Parental Involvement	PS	-7.283	142.356	0	3.58	1.020	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.53	0.785	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Overall school experience	PS	-8.984	138.128	0	3.63	0.891	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				4.61	0.620	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.

those of non-recipients whose children attended public schools. The two groups were significantly different in every instance.

When Children First recipients were compared with the independent school group, there was no significant difference between the two groups. In other words, Children First recipients were as satisfied as non-recipients whose children attended independent schools with their schools' academic quality, interaction with teachers, teacher attention, curriculum, discipline, parental involvement, and overall school experience. In other words, there appeared to be no difference in the responses of the two groups of families whose children attended independent schools. Whether or not families received assistance from Children First, their reported satisfaction with their children's schools was statistically the same on all measures of their schools' academic environment.

Student improvement

Independent T-tests were performed in order to evaluate the four questions related to student improvement (academic performance, social skills, behaviour, and happiness/enjoyment of school) by comparing the means of the different groups of responding parents. Again, comparisons were made between Children First recipients and the public school group; the independent school and public school subgroups; and the Children First group and the independent school subgroup. Tables 2.1 to 2.3 summarize the results.

When Children First recipients were compared with non-recipients whose children attended public school, the statistical analysis showed that the two groups were significantly different (at 5% level). This means that for each of the questions, it could be inferred that Children

First recipients were more likely to be satisfied with their children's academic performance, social skills, behaviour, and happiness/enjoyment of school than non-recipients whose children attended public school.

Similar results were revealed when the answers of non-recipient families whose children attended public schools were compared with those of families whose children attended independent schools. The two groups were significantly different.

The findings were different when the answers of Children First recipients were compared with non-recipients whose children attended independent schools. In this case, the results showed that there was no significant difference between the groups. In other words, Children First recipients appeared to be as satisfied with their children's improvement as the families who did not receive a Children First grant but still sent their children to independent schools.

Social environment

Pearson's chi-square tests were performed in order to evaluate the responses regarding the social environment of the schools. Parents answered six questions regarding perceived social problems at their children's school. These problems included bullying, fighting, drugs, stealing, cheating, and racism. Table 3 summarizes the results.

The results demonstrated that there was a relationship between the type of school the children attended (public or independent) and the perceived social problems at those schools. This could mean that non-recipients whose children attended public schools perceived more social problems at their children's schools than Children First recipients or non-recipients whose children attended independent schools.

Table 2.1: Children First recipients (CF) versus non-recipients whose children attended public schools (PS)

		t statistic	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Mean	Std. deviation	Comments
Academic performance	CF	3.711	140	0	1.09	0.875	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				0.52	0.897	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Social skills	CF	5.105	140	0	1.30	0.792	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				0.49	0.983	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Behaviour	CF	5.062	139	0	1.00	0.890	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				0.14	1.036	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Happiness	CF	4.524	140	0	1.24	0.910	The two groups are significantly different.
	PS				0.44	1.081	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.

Table 2.2: Children First recipients (CF) versus non-recipients whose children attended independent schools (IS)

		t statistic	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Mean	Std. deviation	Comments
Academic performance	CF	0.68	190	0.497	1.09	0.875	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				1.00	0.837	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Social skills	CF	1.774	189	0.078	1.30	0.792	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				1.07	0.815	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Behaviour	CF	1.761	190	0.08	1.00	0.890	There is no significant difference between the means.
	IS				0.76	0.846	It can be inferred that CF recipients are equally satisfied as IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Happiness	CF	2.542	189	0.012	1.24	0.910	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				0.88	0.887	It can be inferred that CF recipients are more satisfied than IS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.

Table 2.3: Non-recipients whose children attended public schools (PS) versus non-recipients whose children attended independent schools(PS)

		t statistic	Degrees of freedom	Significance value	Mean	Std. deviation	Comments
Academic performance	PS	-4.065	224	0	0.52	0.897	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				1.00	0.837	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Social skills	PS	-4.588	160.853	0	0.49	0.983	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				1.07	0.815	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Behaviour	PS	-4.895	223	0	0.14	1.036	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				0.76	0.846	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.
Happiness	PS	-3.137	159.35	0.02	0.44	1.081	The two groups are significantly different.
	IS				0.88	0.887	It can be inferred that IS recipients are more satisfied than PS attendants in terms of the variable analyzed.

Table 3: Perceived social problems at children's schools, all parents

	Pearson Chi-Square	Df	Sig.	Comments
Bullying	40.936	2	0	There is a significant relationship between this variable and the type of school.
Stealing	24.832	2	0	There is a significant relationship between this variable and the type of school.
Fighting	40.294	2	0	There is a significant relationship between this variable and the type of school.
Racism	25.5	2	0	There is a significant relationship between this variable and the type of school.
Drugs	24.413	2	0	There is a significant relationship between this variable and the type of school.
Cheating	17.913	2	0	There is a significant relationship between this variable and the type of school.

About the authors

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Claudia Hepburn is the managing director of the Fraser Institute's Ontario Office, Director of Education Policy, and founder of Children First: School Choice Trust, Canada's first privately funded school choice program. She is the co-author of many peer-reviewed education studies including *Why Canadian Education Isn't Improving* (2006), *The Canadian Education Freedom Index* (2003), the editor of *Can the Market Save Our Schools* (2001), and the author of *The Case for School Choice: Models from the United States, New Zealand, Denmark and Sweden* (1999). Ms. Hepburn is the host of the Institute's Behind the Spin series in Toronto and a frequent media commentator on education issues. She is an editorial board member of the *Journal of School Choice*, and her articles appear in newspapers across Canada. She has a BA in English from Amherst College in Massachusetts, and an MA and BEd from the University of Toronto. Ms. Hepburn was named one of Canada's Ten Most Inspiring Women in 2006 and one of the Top 25 Canadian Women of the Year in 2008 by the *Women's Post*.

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