SCHOOL SAFETY

A three-year analysis of police calls from public schools, private schools in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, and independent charter schools.

MILWAUKEE

2014

School Choice
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report compares the number and type of calls for service to police made by three different school sectors in Milwaukee: (1) schools in the Milwaukee Public Schools system; (2) schools that participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP); and 2R independent charter schools (public charter schools that operate independent of MPS).[1] It also compares the number of resulting arrests at the three sectors.

School Choice Wisconsin (SCW) analyzed three years of calls for service to school addresses in Milwaukee for these three school sectors.[2] For a description of methodology see Appendix B.

Adjusted for enrollment differences, schools in the MPCP and charter schools had substantially fewer calls for service than MPS schools.[3] This was the case regardless of grade level, school enrollment, or geographic location. Arrests resulting from calls for service were also much higher at MPS schools.

Of the three sectors, only MPS had a significant security budget.

HIGHLIGHTS

* *Calls for service per enrolled student were substantially higher at MPS schools than at MPCP schools and charter schools.*

* *Adjusted for enrollment, MPS had more than 27 times as many juvenile arrests and more than twice as many adult arrests as MPCP schools.*

* *Overall, MPS had nearly five times as many violent offense calls for service per student than the MPCP and more than three times as many violent offense calls as charter schools.*

* *MPS high schools had almost four times as many calls for service per student as MPCP high schools and charter high schools.*

* *The reduced levels of safety at MPS schools occurred despite a dramatically higher budget for security than at MPCP and charter schools.*

[1] From this point forward, 2R independent charter schools will be referred to simply as "charter schools" and should not be confused with instrumentality or non-instrumentality charter schools.
[2] For definitions of the pertinent school choice options and a brief history of school choice in Wisconsin, please see Appendix A.
[3] To view an interactive map that lists the name, address, and total number of police calls for each of the schools analyzed in this report, please see the SCW website: www.schoolchoicewi.org.

Introduction

This report uses one key measure of safety — emergency calls to police — to illustrate differences that exist in an urban area that has more educational options than any other city in America. As the debate about school choice continues, the findings help explain the broad popularity of school choice in Milwaukee. These results should inform the discussion, both in Wisconsin and nationally.

In Milwaukee, parents have a wide array of publicly supported education options. They can choose from MPS schools, charter schools authorized by MPS, independent charter schools, private schools, homeschooling, and virtual schools. Beginning in 1990, low-income parents in Milwaukee also have had the option to send their child to a private school in the MPCP, a state-funded school voucher program. More recently MPCP eligibility has been expanded to include middle-income families.

MPS and charter schools are open to all families, regardless of income. MPCP participation consists mainly of children from low-income families. Independent research estimates that schools in the MPCP serve "students with disabilities at about a two-fifths to three-quarters the rate of MPS."[4]

Studies show school safety, particularly in urban areas, is a key factor that parents look at when deciding where to send their child to school. Data in this report suggest that safety might be a major factor in the choices of Milwaukee parents.

The Data

Chart 1 (following page) presents the number of police calls per school year among each of the three sectors. Average annual enrollment for those three years was as follows: 76,187 students for MPS; 28,309 students for MPCP; and 7,487 students for independent charter schools.[5]

[4]School Choice Demonstration Project, Report #35, p. i. http://www.uaedreform.org/downloads/2012/02/report-35-special-education-and-the-milwaukee-parental-choice-program.pdf
[5]The MPS sector includes traditional public schools, alternative schools, partnership schools, contract schools, and both instrumentality and non-instrumentality charter schools. Enrollment in the MPCP includes private pay and choice enrollment in the MPCP schools. The charter school sector in this report includes 2R independent charter schools.
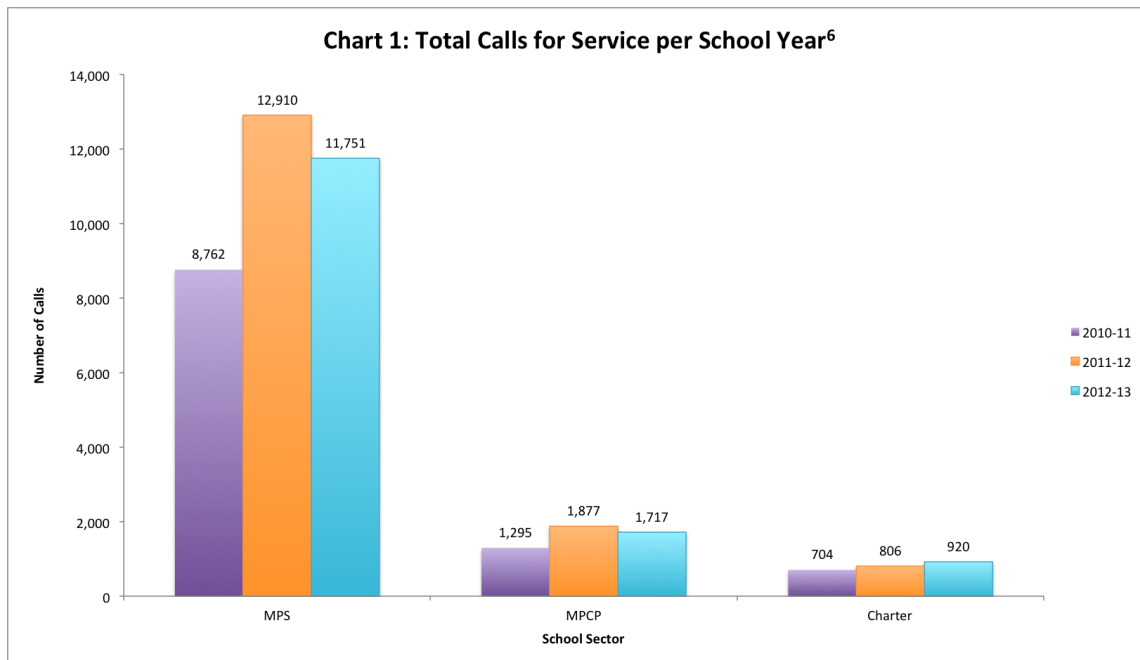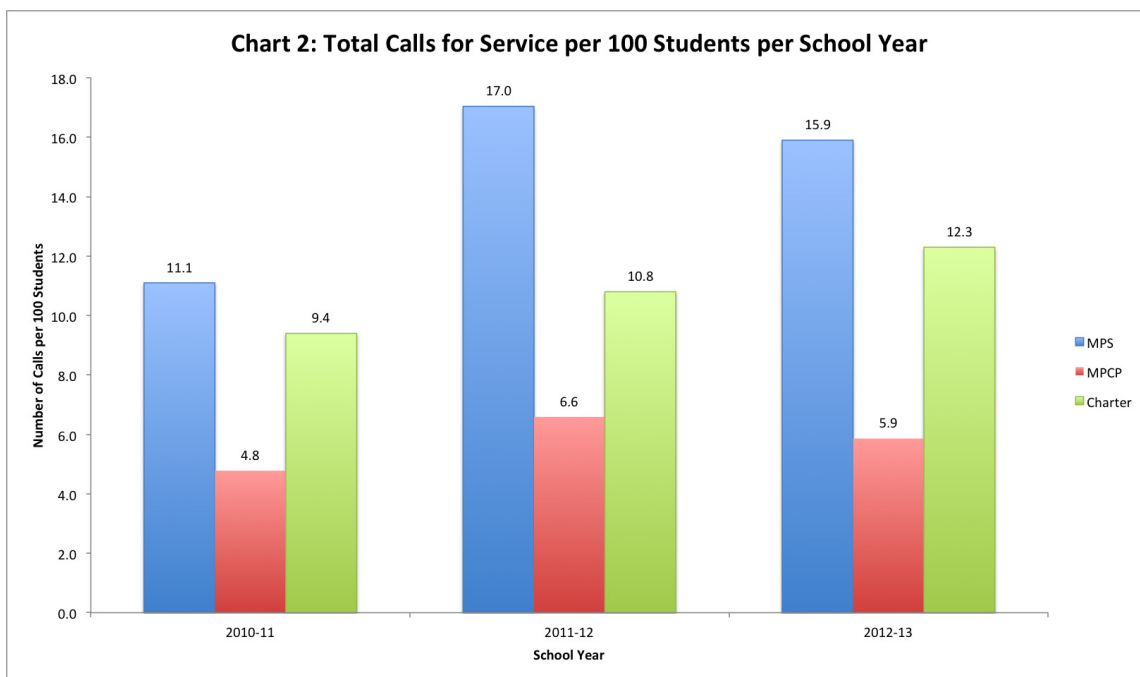
Chart 1: Total Calls for Service per School Year[6]

Chart 2 adjusts the data in Chart 1 to reflect enrollment differences. It shows the number of police calls per 100 students.[7]

Chart 2: Total Calls for Service per 100 Students per School Year

[6]MPS was asked about any procedural changes that would account for the dramatic increase in the number of calls for service from years 2010-2011 to 2011-2012. They relayed that no changes were made regarding 911 procedure. The 2013 MPS 911 policy is listed in Appendix C. MPCP schools and charter schools do not have a universal 911 policy due to each schools' autonomy.

[7]Per 100 students and per 1,000 students calculations are made with the assumption of 100% attendance, meaning these numbers are conservative estimates. If we were to calculate them based on average attendance rates, these numbers would be higher.

Chart 3 analyzes how many calls for service resulted in arrests for adults and juveniles in each school sector for the three school years analyzed in this report. MPS had significantly more arrests than both MPCP and charter schools. While MPS enrollment was 2.7 times greater than for MPCP schools, total juvenile arrests were more than 84 times greater than at MPCP schools and total adult arrests were 6 times higher in MPS schools than MPCP schools.

Chart 3: Total Adult and Juvenile Arrests per School System Over Three Years
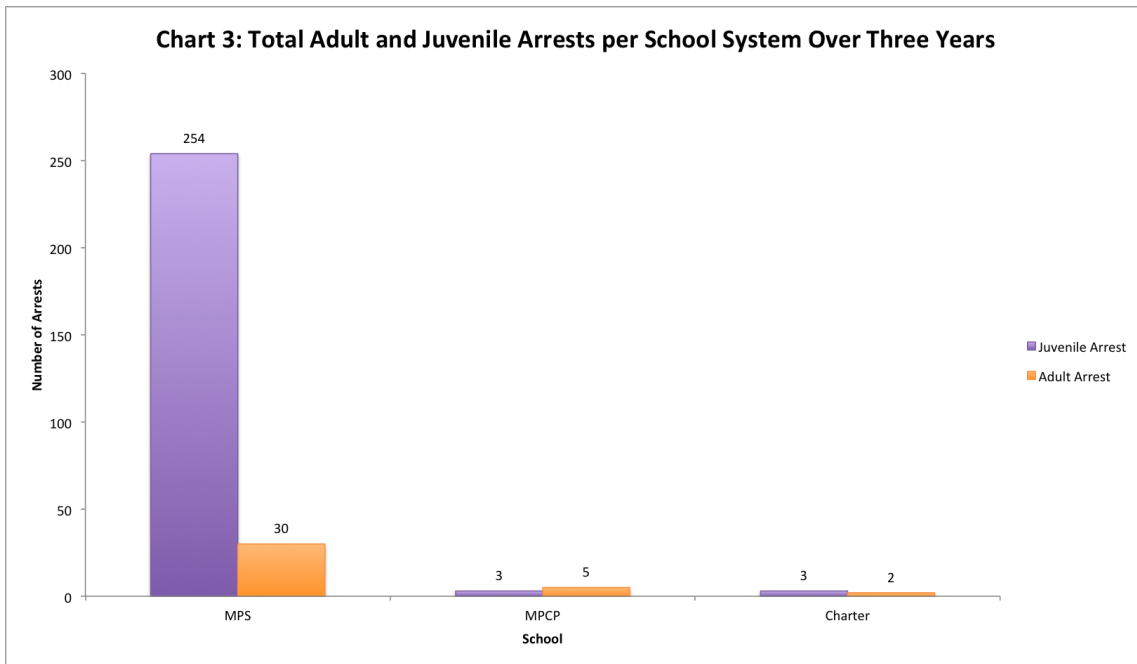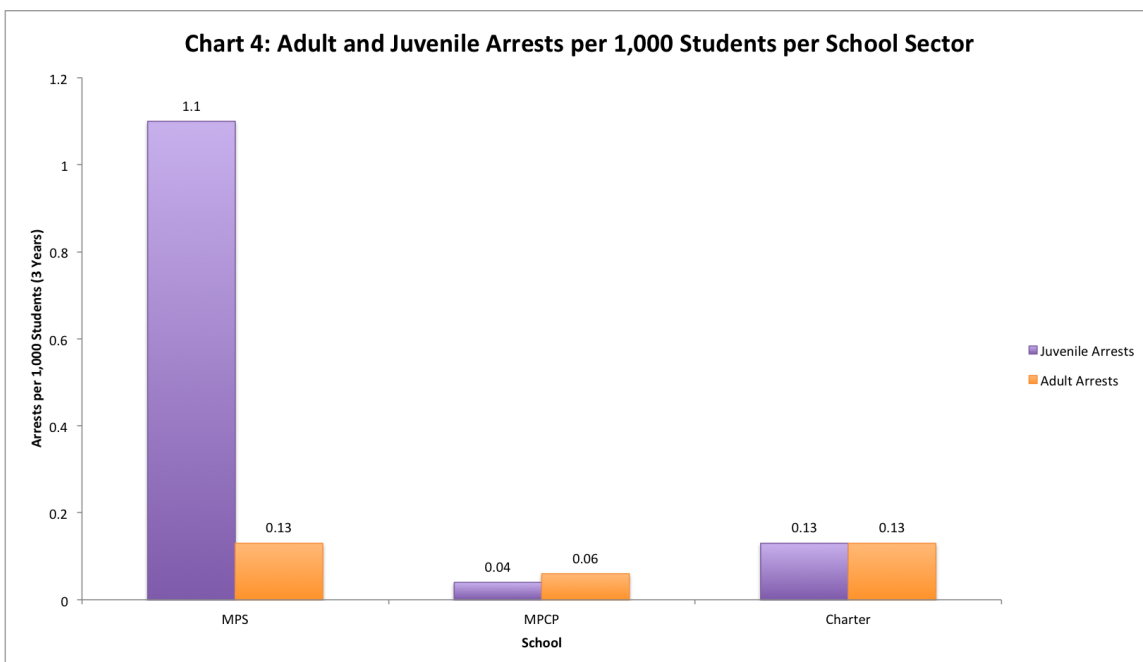

Chart 4 analyses this information in terms of per 1,000 students. Adjusted for enrollment, MPS had more than 27 times as many juvenile arrest as MPCP schools and eight times as many juvenile arrests as charter schools. MPS had more than double the amount of adult arrests than MPCP.

Chart 4: Adult and Juvenile Arrests per 1,000 Students per School Sector

Charts 5 and 6 show the total number of municipal citations and citations per 1,000 students that were issued as a result of calls for service per school sector over three years.

Chart 5: Total Municipal Citations

Chart 6: Total Municipal Citations per 1,000 Students
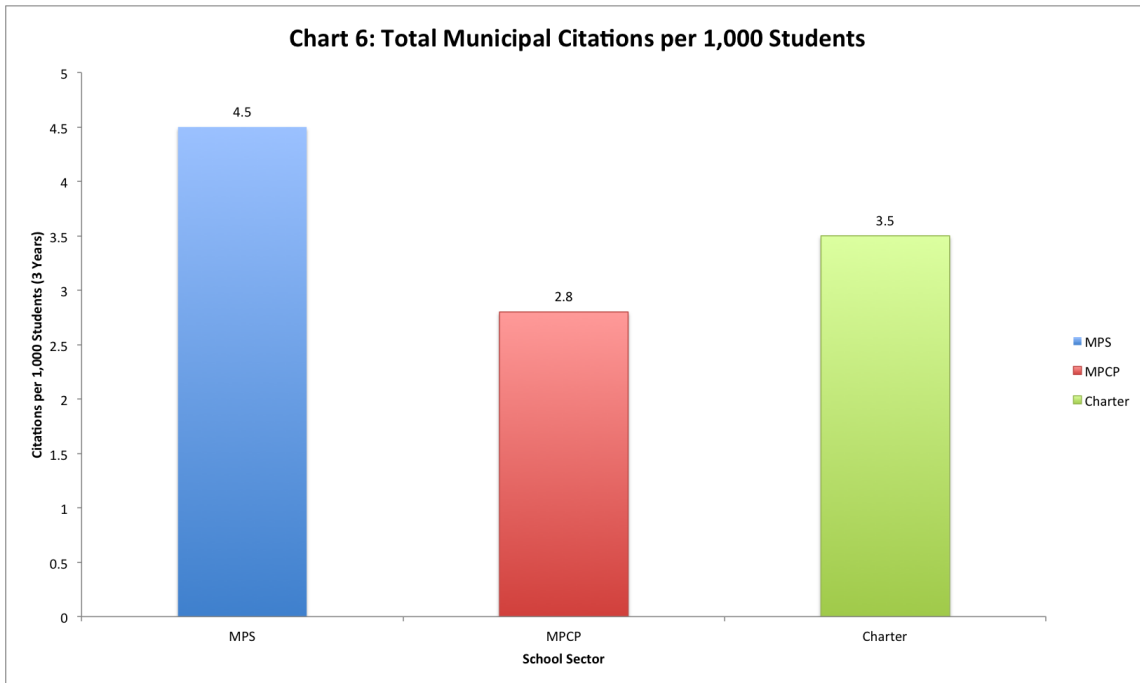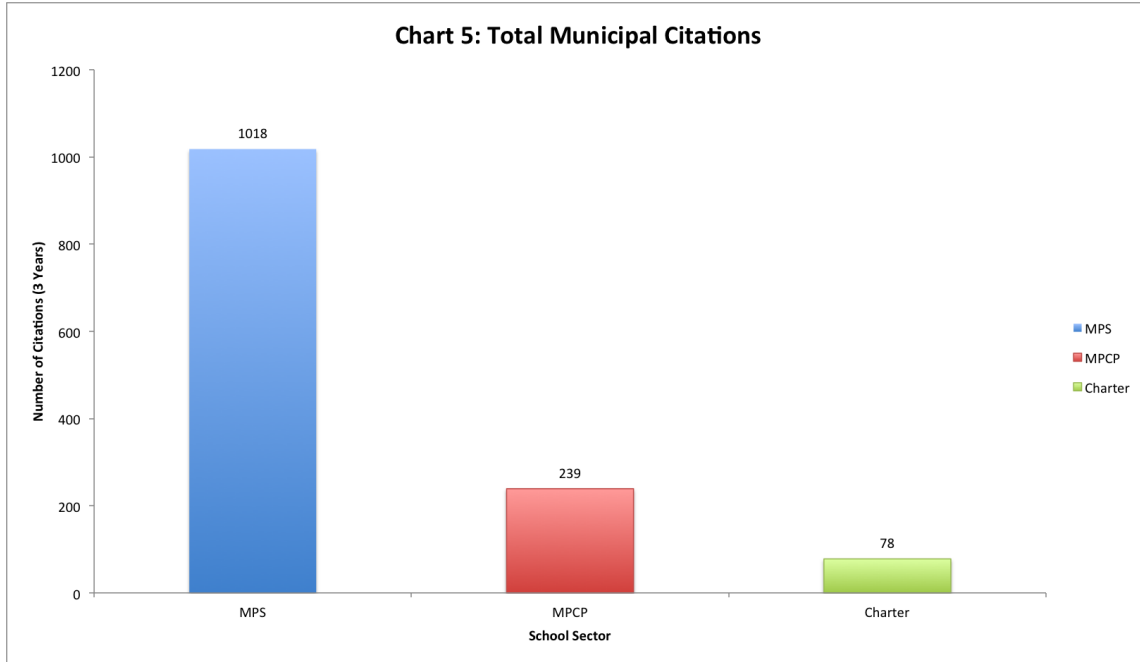
Mobility between sectors is common in Milwaukee. Opponents of school choice often make unsubstantiated claims that private schools expel students at a higher rate thereby "creaming the crop."

Alan Borsuk of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* wrote this on January 18, 2014 about the claim:

"I generally have not written about this for one simple reason: A lack of facts to support the claim. I've said for years now that if someone will give me reliable numbers, I'll write about it. No one has. I asked about it again now."

"It's true that students leave the voucher schools after third Friday, but they also leave us after third Friday," said Patricia Gill, dierctor of family and student services for MPS. "We lose about as many students as we gain in terms of to-and-from the voucher schools."

See Appendix F for corresponding data.

Chart 7 (following page) categorizes calls into eight different groups.[8] The chart presents the number of calls per 1,000 students per category for each school sector.

The most frequent reason for a call was "911 Abuse" which includes things such as open line calls or calls that are abandoned before being answered. The origin of these calls is often unknown, yet MPD is often required to respond to the calls even if they do not amount to an actual emergency.[9]

It is important to note that "911 Abuse" calls as a percentage per school sector is relatively constant, meaning that including this category does not misrepresent data of the other call categories.

MPS had about five times more calls for violent offenses than MPCP schools and more than three times more than charter schools.

[8] In total, there were 81 different types of violations that were reported by MPD. A full list of which specific violations were included in each category can be found in Appendix D.
[9] Although MPD does not necessarily have to physically report to each 911 call or each call to service, they do for the vast majority. Therefore, SCW made no differentiation between calls for service that required a police appearance versus the few that did not.

Chart 7: Police Calls per 1,000 Students per Category

Legend:
- MPS
- MPCP
- Charter

X-axis (Category):
- Vehicle/Traffic/Driving: MPS 5.9, MPCP 8.8, Charter 9
- Violent Offenses: MPS 15.9, MPCP 3.5, Charter 5
- 911 Abuse: MPS 60.5, MPCP 18.5, Charter 36.9
- Trbl w/ Juvenile/Subj: MPS 22.8, MPCP 5.7, Charter 6
- Domestic/Custody/Abduction: MPS 1.5, MPCP 1.1, Charter 1.6
- Theft/Non-vehicle Entry/ Property Damage/ Lockout: MPS 10.8, MPCP 6.8, Charter 7.7
- Investigation/Follow-up/Monitoring: MPS 21, MPCP 10.5, Charter 16.1
- Other: MPS 14.6, MPCP 9.8, Charter 13.8

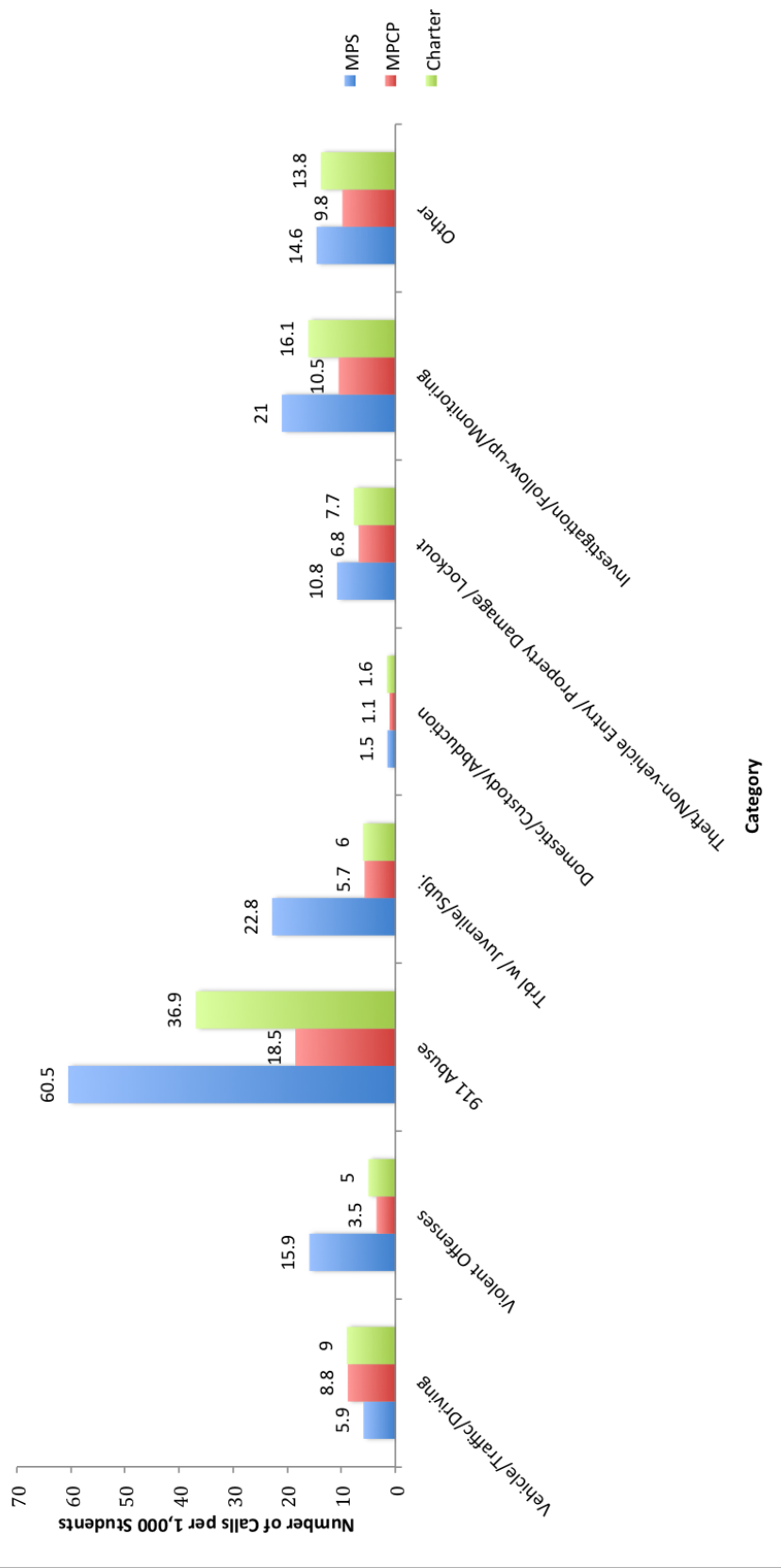Y-axis: Number of Calls per 1,000 Students (0 to 70)

Chart 8 compares high school and non-high school calls for service for each sector. Due to the large variance in school types, only two categories were created: high school and non-high school. A high school is defined as a school that serves grades 9-12 exclusively.[10]

Chart 8: Calls for Service per 100 Students per School Type[11]
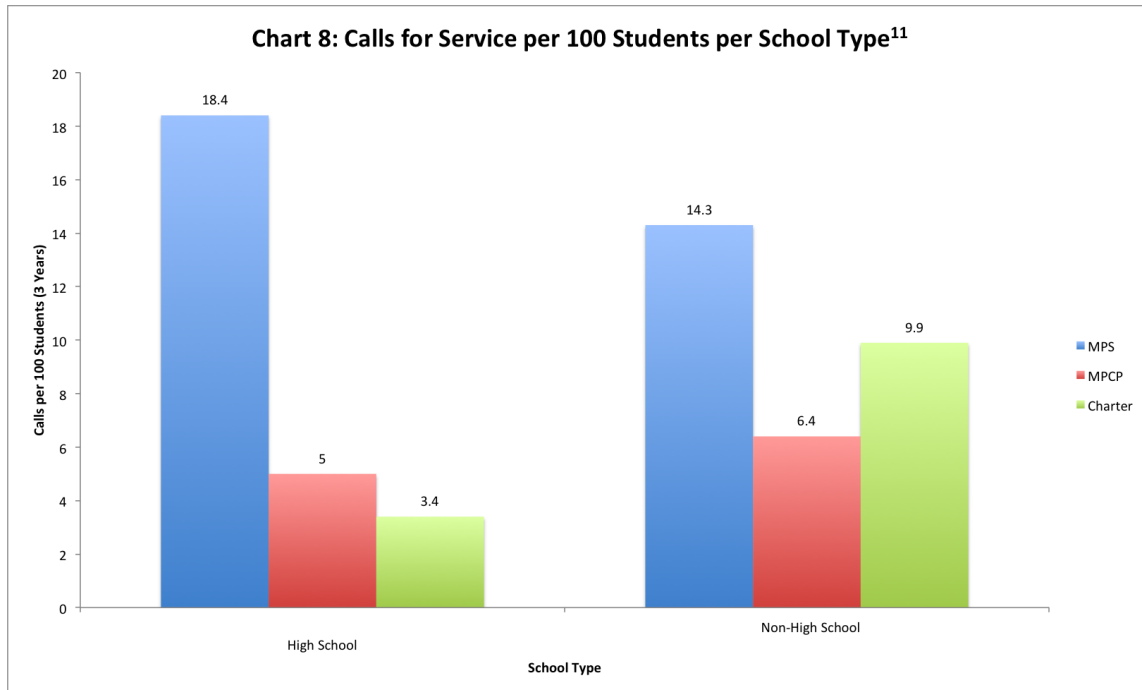
Security Budget

MPS has a substantial security budget, including a central safety operations budget of $11.1 million. Separately, the MPS Department of School Safety and Security has funding of $439,078. Additionally, in each of the last three years, MPS has employed between 241-257 Safety Aides.[12]

By comparison, among 42 schools in the MPCP that SCW surveyed, nearly two-thirds do not budget for security, 10% paid only one security staff member, and 24% simply paid for a security system.[13]

Only two of the schools from the SCW survey hired any security guards – 90% of the MPCP schools that responded to the survey do not have any kind of security staff. Most of the schools responded with an explanation that there is no need for physical, paid security guards.

[10] More analysis on MPS and MPCP high schools can be found in Appendix E.
[11]Charter data are less reliable than MPS and MPCP data due to a much smaller sample size (e.g. only two charter high schools) and also less consistent enrollment in schools (schools studied did not necessarily operate all three years studied in report). Therefore, the following is as accurate a comparison of data as possible, but caution should be used when making generalizations from these data.
[12]http://www5.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/dept/budget/files/2012/01/07-Schools1.pdf
[13]SCW sent surveys to every school in the MPCP in order to collect data on school security, safety, and overall environment. Forty-two out of 117 MPCP schools responded and have their answers included in this report. These 42 schools account for 27.8% of MPCP enrollment.

Why fewer police calls at MPCP schools?

There are many possible explanations as to why schools in the MPCP have markedly fewer calls for service.

One reason may be the general differences in environment between MPCP schools and MPS schools. In describing the day-to-day environment at their schools, surveyed administrators at MPCP schools most frequently used words such as "safe," "family," "structured," "focused," and "respectful."[14]

Nine percent of surveyed schools require both uniforms and ties and 70% require some kind of uniform. [15] By comparison, 13% of MPS schools require uniforms.[16] The U.S. Department of Education studied the effect of school uniforms in its 1996 report, *Manual on School Uniforms*. This report outlined potential benefits including:

- "Decreasing violence and theft--even life-threatening situations--among students over designer clothing or expensive sneakers.
- Helping prevent gang members from wearing gang colors and insignia at school.
- Instilling discipline in students.
- Helping parents and students resist peer pressure.
- Helping students concentrate on their school work.
- Helping school officials recognize intruders who come to the school."[17]

In 2012, the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute (WPRI)[18] commissioned a poll and focus groups involving parents and teachers of students in MPS. Some parents of students in the MPCP were also interviewed and asked their opinions on MPS and MPCP schools with which they were familiar.

MPS focus group parents raised concerns regarding "violence, bullying, and the lack of attention to scholastic activities, particularly for middle and high school students." Those parents also stated that they experienced "poor and/or nonexistent communications between school and family, safety consideration, low expectations, and curriculum." [19]

Parents whose children participate in the MPCP gave higher marks for each of those categories. They also gave MPS schools the same low marks as the parents of students in MPS schools regarding violence and bullying (and many of these parents have taken their children out of schools in MPS to go to schools in the MPCP). MPCP parents said their schools are disciplined and focused on education in a family atmosphere. As noted in the report, "MPS parents were considerably less satisfied with their children's school than were choice parents." [20] School safety is a major factor in their level of satisfaction.

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[14]Responses from SCW survey.
[15]Responses from SCW survey.
[16]http://m.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/school-directory/by-program/777
[17]https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSDFS/actguid/uniforms.html
[18]http://www.aei.org/files/2013/05/29/-pathway-to-success_170815996739.pdf
[19]http://www.aei.org/files/2013/05/29/-pathway-to-success_170815996739.pdf, p. 141-142
[20]http://www.aei.org/files/2013/05/29/-pathway-to-success_170815996739.pdf, p. 142

Conclusion

As measured by the number of calls for service, municipal citations, and arrests, schools in the MPCP and independent charter schools have a safer environment than schools in MPS. MPCP schools and charter schools have fewer calls for service, citations, and arrests each year, regardless of school grade level or total enrollment. The numbers reported from MPS are substantially higher, with some of the most frequent calls being reported as battery, trouble with a juvenile, fights, and sexual assault.

Officials and parents at MPCP schools are more satisfied with the safety and performance of their schools, while those who work in or send their children to MPS believe that the lack of discipline and safety in the schools leads to a less productive performance academically. [21]

[21]http://www.aei.org/files/2013/05/29/-pathway-to-success_170815996739.pdf

Historical Context and Definitions

This report focuses on three different types of school systems that are available to students in Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), and independent charter schools.

MPS is the traditional public school option for students. As of the 2013-2014 school year, this district has 165 schools and enrolled 78,502 students. The average enrollment for the school years included in this report was slightly below this number, at 76,187 students per year. In total, 228,561 students were enrolled in MPS for the three years analyzed in this paper.

The MPCP was created in 1990, and is the country's first school choice voucher program. This program allows low-income families who reside in the City of Milwaukee to enroll their children in private schools that they could not otherwise afford through the use of an educational voucher. In its first year, seven private schools in the city accepted 341 students. Today, the MPCP has expanded to include 113 schools in the metro-Milwaukee area and serves over 25,000 students annually. Most schools that participate in the MPCP enroll both choice and non-choice students. High schools in the MPCP tend to serve a smaller percent of choice students than elementary and middle schools do. This report accounts for 84,925 total students (both voucher and private pay) that attended 117 MPCP schools over three years.

In 2011, choice expanded to Racine through the Parental Private School Choice Program and in 2013 limited school choice opportunities were made available throughout the state with the creation of the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program. The Milwaukee and Racine programs no longer have enrollment caps in place.

Charter schools, which are publicly-funded government schools, were first introduced to Milwaukee in 1993. They differ from traditional MPS schools because they have fewer regulations and different governing authorizers. Also, enrollment is not based on geographical assignment, but rather anyone in the district can enroll provided the school has space available. Charter schools are one form of public school choice.

There are two main types of charter schools: charters authorized by MPS, whether instrumentality or non-instrumentality, and 2R independent charter schools which are not authorized by MPS, but rather by other government bodies such as the City of Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Instrumentality charters have the least independence from MPS and all staff and faculty must be employed by MPS. Non-instrumentality charter schools, on the other hand, are authorized by MPS but have increased independence in regards to hiring faculty and staff – they can hire outside of the MPS district. In this report, both instrumentality and non-instrumentality charters are categorized as MPS schools.

2R independent charters are the most flexible type of charter school. Governed by autonomous boards, they operate as a separate school district. A third, less prevalent type of charter school is a virtual school. For school years 2010-2013, there were an average of 7,487 2R independent charter school students, or 22,461 total students, at 45 schools in Milwaukee.

Appendix B

Methodology

Using the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD)'s Open Records Request service, SCW requested and received paper copies of the calls for service for three academic years for Milwaukee school addresses. Through manual tallying, SCW recorded the total number of calls per school from August 1 to June 30 for school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 for each of the 292 locations listed on the reports. This accounts for nearly every school in MPS, nearly every school in the MPCP, and nearly every charter school in Milwaukee.

Due to scheduled activites at school locations after regular school hours and on weekends, the calls were calculated throughout each day. All sectors were treated equally. Instances that were counted when no scheduled activities were at the school would impact each sector equally as schools are dispersed throughout the entire city and in the same neighborhoods. As school locations are still under the responsibility of the school after hours, SCW included all calls.

SCW scanned all the police call logs and used Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to create searchable files in order to separate out individual types of calls.

The calls for service categories were then searched per school sector. Search algorithms were compared to raw numbers to assure accuracy and random comparisons were made to eliminate the searches from including data artifacts.

Analysis of disposition codes on the calls for service police sheets allowed SCW to determine how many adult arrests (C1), juvenile arrests (C2), and municipal citations (C12) were made at each school sector.

EMERGENCY (911)[22]

1.   If an employee suspects that a child is in imminent danger (i.e., left alone or unsupervised, in need of immediate medical assistance, in an actively violent situation or at immediate risk of further harm) it is the responsibility of the school administrator/designee to inform the reporting person that he/she should call 911to facilitate the quickest and most appropriate response. Do not allow the child to leave the school. The child should remain at school under the school administrator's supervision.

2.   It is not necessary for the employee to confer with or seek the permission of the school administrator or other supervisory staff before making the report, but after the initial report is made to the BMCW or MPD, the school administrator is to be informed as soon as possible.

3.   The initial reporting staff person shall complete the reporting form (**Suspected Abuse/Neglect Form**). Once the school administrator knows of the suspected child abuse or neglect, he/she also becomes a mandated reporter. Both the initial reporter and the school administrator may be subject to legal penalties for not reporting.

4.   The school administrator should ensure the staff that a copy of the **Child and Abuse & Neglect Reporting** form is placed in each employee's school staff manual at the beginning of the school year. The school administrator will communicate the guidelines and procedures to all employees for filling out the suspected child abuse or neglect report form.

5.   It is the responsibility of the school administrator or designee to inform employees that the facts of the incident are to be **_kept confidential_** and are not reported to any unauthorized external source (e.g., the media).

Section 48.981 further states that those who willfully violate the law by failing to file a report as required may be fined and/or imprisoned as well as subject to legal action by the abused child's parent or guardian if it is established that the school employee(s) had prior knowledge which, if reported, may have prevented further injury.

The law also provides immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that results by reason of the action for any person or institution participating in good faith in making a report of a suspected abused or neglected child. In addition, any reports and records made and maintained by government agencies and other persons, officials or institutions must be kept **confidential**. The person or agency maintaining the written reports may not disclose any information that would identify the reporter or the subject of the report.

School administrators should contact their Regional Executive Specialist if he/she has any questions about reporting child abuse and neglect, guidelines, policies and procedures, indicators of possible maltreatment, or any situation regarding suspected child abuse or neglect.

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[22]Taken from the 2013 MPS Administrators Manual, which can be accessed at http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/ doc/101837/School+Administrators+Manual

Appendix D

Vehicle/Traffic/Driving: traffic stop; theft vehicle; traffic hazard; oai/intox driver; entry to autos; SUSp pers/auto; reck use of weap; reckless vehicle; stolen vehicle; park and walk; TS targeted; parking trbl

Violent Offenses: battery; fight; threat; sex assault; battery cutting; shots fired; subj w/gun; drug dealing; robbery st arm; robbery armed; subj w/weap; dead on entry; bomb threats

911 Abuse: 911 abuse; 911 abad b/4 ans; 911 open line

Trbl w/ Juvenile/Subj.: trbl w/juv, trbl w/subj; call for police

Domestic/Custody/Abduction: child abuse/neglect; child custody; abduction; viol rest order; family trouble

Theft/non-vehicle Entry/ Property Damage/ Lockout: entry; theft; trespasser; property damage; property pickup; property; lock out; fire; graffiti; burglar alarm

Investigation/ Follow-up/ Monitoring: assignment; follow up; special assign; schl monitoring; investigation; welfare chk; schl perimeter; warrant service; business check; vacant house chk; escort

Other: inj/sick pers; missing chk/report; acc pdo; truant; schl presentation; missing rpt crit; subj wanted; acc pi; missing return; ACC UNK INJ; photo assign; loose animal; sunj stop; cruelty animal; lunch; schl safety mtg; add info; ind exposure; courty duty; subj down; altered currency

Appendix E

This appendix compares select MPS and MPCP high schools to demonstrate that regardless of certain factors, MPCP high schools had fewer calls for service.

Chart 9 denotes the enrollments of three MPS and three MPCP high schools that are similar in size.

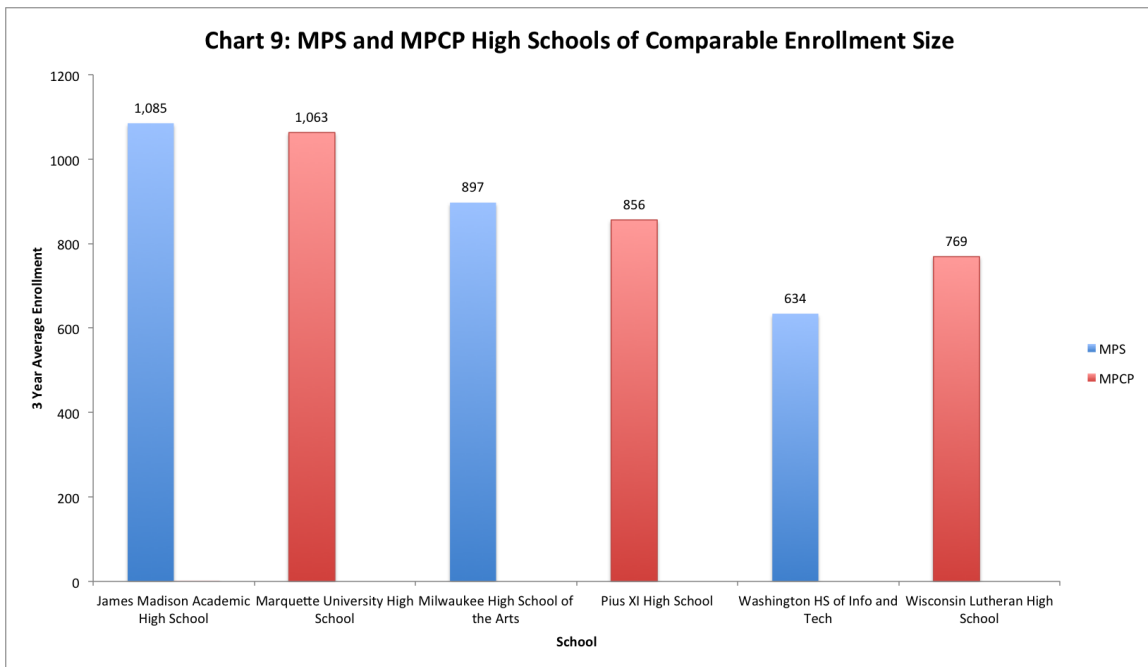**Chart 9: MPS and MPCP High Schools of Comparable Enrollment Size**

Chart 10 shows the calls per 100 students for three years for the selected high schools. MPS high schools have much higher rates than MPCP high schools for calls for service, denoting that a school's enrollment size does not correlate with the number of police calls.

Chart 10: Calls for Service per 100 Students for MPS and MPCP High Schools with Comparable Enrollment

School	Calls per 100 Students (3 Years)
James Madison Academic High School	20.7
Marquette University High School	1.5
Milwaukee High School of the Arts	36.4
Pius XI High School	2.6
Washington HS of Info and Tech	53.1
Wisconsin Lutheran High School	1.5
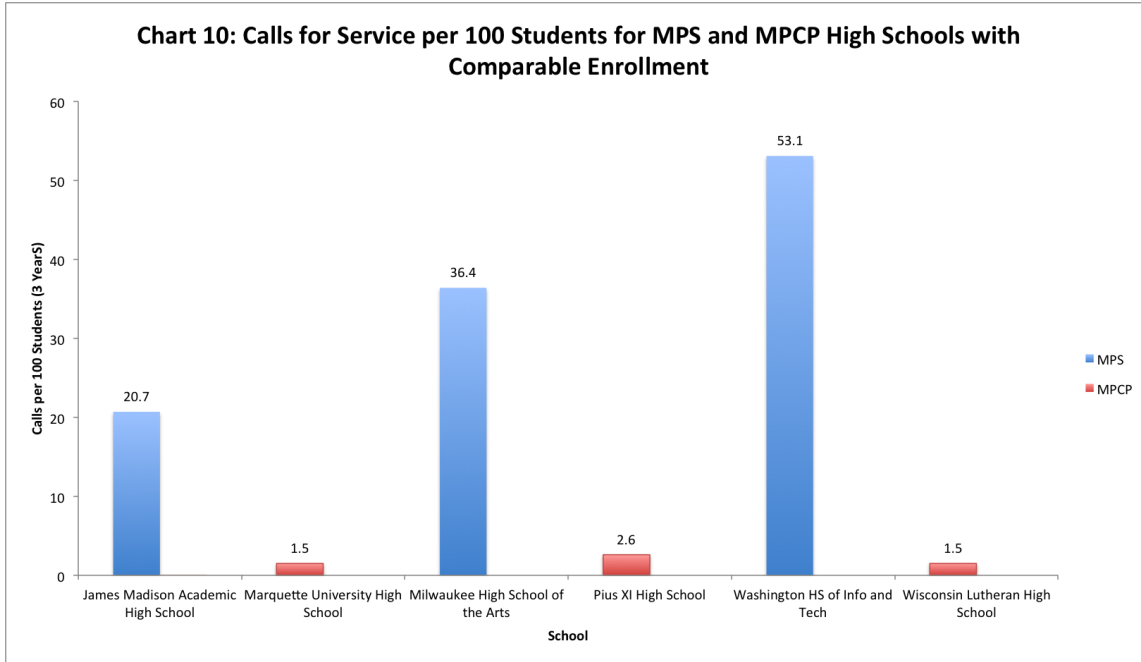
Chart 11 compares the enrollment of MPCP high schools whose enrollment is composed of nearly 100% voucher students with MPS high schools of similar size.

Chart 11: MPCP High Schools with Most Choice Students v. MPS High Schools of Comparable Enrollment

School	3 Year Average Enrollment
North Division HS	326
Destiny High School	280
Community High School	227
St. Joan Antida	273
Grandview High School	225
Travis Technology HS	219

Chart 12 shows calls for service per 100 students for the aforementioned high schools. Overall, the MPS high schools have comparatively more calls for service per student than the MPCP high schools.
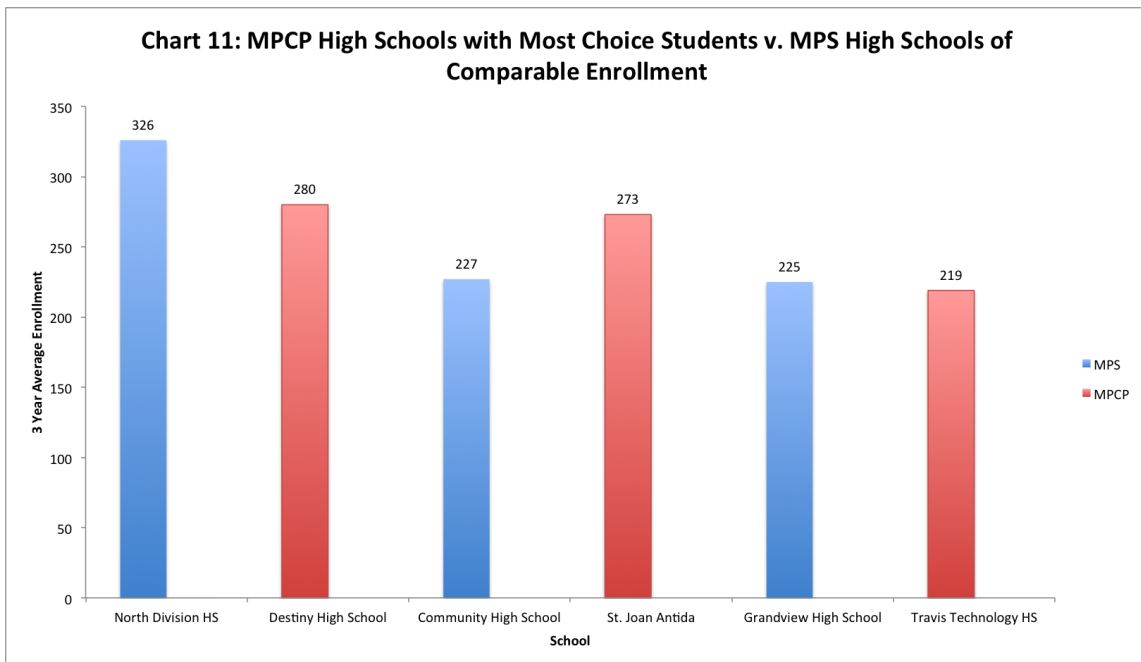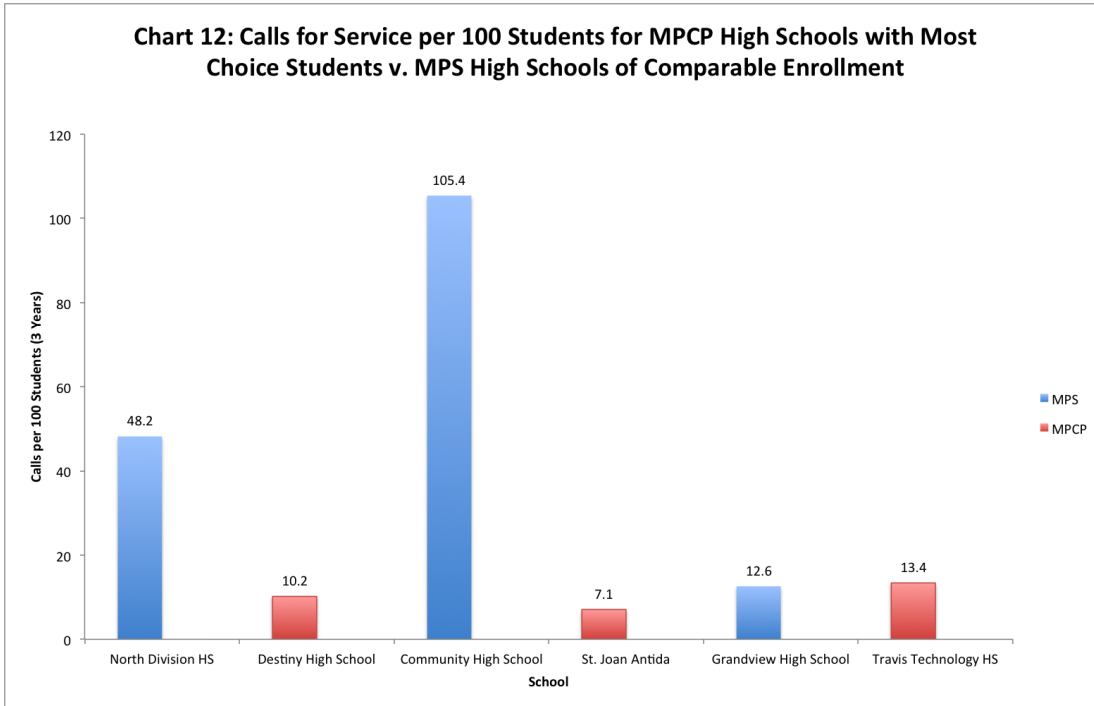
Chart 12: Calls for Service per 100 Students for MPCP High Schools with Most Choice Students v. MPS High Schools of Comparable Enrollment

School	Calls per 100 Students (3 Years)
North Division HS (MPS)	48.2
Destiny High School (MPCP)	10.2
Community High School (MPS)	105.4
St. Joan Antida (MPCP)	7.1
Grandview High School (MPS)	12.6
Travis Technology HS (MPCP)	13.4

Legend: ■ MPS ■ MPCP

Appendix F

Lastly, a listing of enrollment trends through the years highlighted show that no substantive exodous occurs from the MPCP schools.

Enrollment Growth/Decline Within School Years and Year to Year 2010-2013 from DPI:

MPS

YEAR	FALL	SPRING	PUPIL CHANGE FALL TO SPRING	% PUPIL CHANGE FALL TO SPRING	PUPIL CHANGE SPRING TO FALL	% PUPIL CHANGE SPRING TO FALL
2010-2011	80,934	81,489	+555	+0.7%	-2,359	-2.9%
2011-2012	79,130	79,967	+837	+1.1%	-1,604	-2.0%
2012-2013	78,363	78,328	-35	-0.04%	+188	0.2%
2013-2014	78,516					

MPCP

YEAR	FALL	SPRING	PUPIL CHANGE FALL TO SPRING	% PUPIL CHANGE FALL TO SPRING	PUPIL CHANGE SPRING TO FALL	% PUPIL CHANGE SPRING TO FALL
2010-2011	20,996	20694	-302	-1.4%	2,504.0	12.1%
2011-2012	23,198	22762	-436	-1.9%	1,946	8.5%
2012-2013	24,708	24,420	-288	-1.2%	1,314	5.4%
2013-2014	25,734					

2R Independent CHARTER

YEAR	FALL	SPRING	PUPIL CHANGE FALL TO SPRING	% PUPIL CHANGE FALL TO SPRING	PUPIL CHANGE SPRING TO FALL	% PUPIL CHANGE SPRING TO FALL
2010-2011	7,448	7,198	-259	-3.5%	13	0.2%
2011-2012	7,202	7,120	-82	-1.1%	725	10.2%
2012-2013	7,845	7,692	-153	-2.0%	717	9.3%
2013-2014	8,409					