PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE BEHAVIOR:
AN EMPirical STUDY

by

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PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE BEHAVIOR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In education the historic tension between the individual and the state lies in who should decide how a child is to be educated - the parent or the state. For over a century the state has controlled, through the public school system, the education received by most of the children and has controlled, through minimum standards, the education received by private school students. Increasingly during the past two decades the public school system has been questioned and the demand for greater choice in schooling has developed as a means to stimulate the school system and to increase individual freedom.

This research focuses on the choice making behavior of parents enrolling their children in kindergarten. The Coquitlam School District was selected because it offers a choice between private and public schools and French and English programs within the public schools; additionally it has a heterogeneous socio-economic structure. The study analyzed the degree of parental choice in schooling, based on parent's search and evaluation of schooling alternatives, and its relation to socio-economic status (SES), measured through parent's education, father's occupation and house value. In addition the use of information and criteria in school selection were studied. The following hypotheses were examined:

**Hypothesis 1:** The degree of parental choice in schooling measured as the percentage of parents who exert an active choice in schooling for their children, will be greater the higher the parent's SES, given the same amount and quality of information available.

**Hypothesis 2:** The degree of parental choice in schooling will be greater the greater the parent's access and ability to use information.
Hypothesis 3: Parents choose (actively or passively) a school for their children according to certain criteria.

Hypothesis 4: The rating of the criteria by the parents will differ among the different social classes. High SES parents will rate higher criterion such as social and physical environment of the school, school's program, and child's personality. Low SES parents will rate higher criteria such as location and cost.

The sample consisted of 300 parents enrolling their children in the five public schools that offer both English and French Immersion programs and those enrolling their children in the two private schools. Parents received a mailed questionnaire containing both structured and open ended questions. The response rate was 63%. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, analysis of variance, and multiple correlation.

Preliminary data analyses showed that "parental choice" was not dichotomous (as initially conceptualized) but rather a continuous variable. Three levels of choice were identified: parents who exert no choice or passive choice (13%); parents who exert a limited degree of choice or narrow choice (49%); and parents who exert a wide choice or a deliberate active one (32%).

Hypothesis 1 relating degree of choice and SES was partially accepted. The data show that passivity does not seem to change along with SES. In fact passive choice parents represent 14% of the lower SES class, 18% of the middle SES class and 10% of the high-middle SES class. However, if only active choice behavior is taken into consideration, narrow choice behavior decreases as SES increases while wide choice behavior increases along with SES.

Hypothesis 2 relating degree of choice and access and ability to use
information, was accepted. The number of information sources parents reported to have used increased along with degree of choice. Passive choice parents most frequently used zero to three information sources, while wide active parents reported to use most frequently nine or more.

Hypothesis 3 was accepted as the data showed that parents do choose a school and program according to certain criteria.

Hypothesis 4 relating types of criteria for choice and socio-economic status, was accepted. Almost all passive choice and a high proportion of low SES parents reported to be concerned about proximity and accessibility of schools. Wide active choice and high-middle SES parents showed greater concern about the availability of a French program. In choosing programs, passive choosers and low SES parents chose the English program more often than wide active choosers and high-middle SES parents.

The findings of this study point to the need for further research before implementing a free market of schools if equality of opportunity is part of the plan. Lower SES groups seem to be at a disadvantage in school choice as they are less informed about their options; the criteria of proximity and access although practical in present terms may not secure the best educational opportunities for the child. Further empirical studies of parental choice making are necessary to increase understanding of the school selection process.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Debate over the quality of public education is endemic in North America. Scholars single out the lack of choice in schooling as one of the causes of poor education. They argue that the monopolistic character of the public school system helps preserve schools unchanged regardless of on-going criticism. To increase choice in schooling several proposals have been developed: vouchers (Friedman, 1966), public schools of choice (Fantini, 1973), and family power equalization (Coons, Clune and Sugarman, 1970). Common to these proposals is the capacity of consumers to select the kind of education desired. Today the question of choice in schooling still concerns many. The recent publication of "Education by Choice" by Coons and Sugarman (1978), the ongoing study on "Currency, Choice and Commitment: An Exploratory Study of the Effects of Public Money and Related Regulations on Canadian Catholic Schools" by Nault and Erickson, (1979) and the report on "The Effects of Choice on Private School Education" by Hannaway and Garner (1979) are just a few examples that attest to present interest in the issue.

Advocates of choice in schooling generally stand against those who favor homogeneous state education. The main arguments of those advocating choice refer to the need for a free market of schooling to improve quality of education (Carlson, 1964). The main assumption behind this argument is that the competition between schools induced by the free market would improve quality of services. Individual choice advocates also believe that choice would cause a better match between learning and teaching styles (Fantini, 1973). In addition they argue that if individuals
are allowed a choice this would result in an increase in individual freedom. Closely linked to the previous argument, individual choice supporters claim that such choice would foster multiculturalism by allowing minorities to decide their own education (Erickson, 1969; Read, 1974; Arons, 1976; Everhart, 1977). Finally individual choice of schools is proposed by those who would like to see private school patrons exempt from paying public school taxes.

In contrast those who favor state intervention argue that it is necessary in order to protect minors from negligent parents (Benson, 1965; Levin, 1968), and also for society to benefit from the external effect caused by an educated population. Further they state that state regulations are required in order to achieve social cohesion by promoting specific common values. Through compulsory public schools children from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds can be educated on the accepted social values (Blaug, 1970).

The present research focuses on the reported school choice behavior of parents living in the Coquitlam School District, British Columbia, who enrolled their children in kindergarten for the fall of 1977. Parents in the sample could choose between private and public schools and within the public schools they had a choice of English or French programs. The study investigates the degree of choice exerted (passive, narrow active or wide active) in terms of socio-economic factors. In addition it researches: the type, number and sources of information available to parents and used by parents; who are the participants in the school choice process; the criteria used by parents in the selection of school and program; and the "price", in terms of distance, transportation means and choice of neighborhood, parents are willing to pay to select a school.
The study consists of seven chapters. This chapter serves as the Introduction. Chapter II reviews the literature by describing briefly the historical influences on parental choice, by examining the issue of individual choice vs. state intervention, and by reviewing case studies in choice in schooling as well as presenting a brief sketch of the history of the influence of the French people in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Chapter III presents an introduction to the problem, the conceptual framework, guiding hypotheses and questions. Chapter IV describes the research design; it tells how the research setting was selected; it describes the setting, the schools, and the population; and it reports on the methods of collecting data on schools and parents. Chapter V describes the schools included in the study trying to give parents going through the process of school choice, maximum of information about each school. Chapter VI reports the findings and presents an analysis of the determinants of school choice: parent's socio-economic status, information, criteria used and "price" paid.

Some limitations of the study must be stated. The study describes the reported choice behavior of parents which may or may not be the actual school choice behavior. In addition, parents in the sample had only three choices. This number of choices is far from that required by a competitive market in schooling. Further, parents showed little ethnic heterogeneity, an important ingredient for testing ability to use information. Finally, no traditional public school (one that offers English only) was included in the sample. Had it been included changes in the proportion of passive, narrow active and wide active choosers could have occurred. In spite of these limitations the study may assist our knowledge of factors influencing parental choice of schools.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW
WHO SHOULD DECIDE EDUCATIONAL GOALS?

Historical Influences

The historic tension between the individual and the state takes a variety of forms. In education, the tension lies in who should decide how a child is to be educated - the parent or the state. This issue is recurrent in history. As an example of historical recurrence we may look briefly into two of the main works that have influenced western education: Plato's "Republic" and Rousseau's "Emile".

The idea of a society being greater than the sum of its individuals and of a governing state that takes care and decides for its individuals was present in the Greek society. Plato in his "Republic" stated

It is obvious to me that when you add one man to another man, it will be better than having two men living on their own, as between them there will be an exchange of help. The true society will provide its citizens with food, shelter, clothing, and wine. (Book II)

This "true" society would also determine the education of its children.

We will educate everyone because good education makes good citizens, and good citizens, helped by good education, become better than they were, better in their nature. Through education we will turn the souls in the right direction. Through public education each man will have the right to better himself and his abilities, and to get trained for a meaningful occupation.

Rousseau, in "Emile", contrasts Plato's and his thoughts on education.

The natural man lives for himself, he is a unit, the whole, dependent only on himself and on his like. The citizen is but the numerator of a fraction whose value depends on its denominator...the whole, that is, on the community, good
social institutions are those best fitted to make a man unnatural, to exchange his independence for dependence, to merge the unit in the group, so that he no longer regards himself as one, but as part of the whole and is only conscious of the common life. (p. 7)

Rousseau, over two hundred years ago, summarized the issue by stating:

To be something, to be himself and always at one with himself, a man must act as he speaks, must know what course he ought to take, and must follow that course with vigour and persistence. When I meet this miracle it will be time enough to decide whether he is a man or a citizen, or how he continues to be both.

Two conflicting types of educational systems spring from these conflicting aims. One is public and common to many, the other private and domestic. (p. 8)

The issue of who should decide educational goals is still unresolved. As an example one may look at American education. Some of the main characteristics of this system are that: it stresses individuality and equality; it is universal, compulsory and provided mainly by the state. Rooted in European history it inherited educational stands that were present in the eighteenth century in Germany and France and also in England in the next century. From the French it received the democratic ideals that serve as a basis for universal education, illustrated by Rousseau's sense of individual worth irrespective of social class. From the Germans it adopted the principle of State Supremacy which entitled the state to impose compulsory schooling. For instance, Hegel viewed schooling as the state's responsibility: to safeguard the child's interests by providing education and to secure its own future by training good citizens (Boyd, 1969).

The continent's influence slowly affected educational developments in England. Thus, the principle of state subsidies to schools was accepted in 1833, but not much was done to foster state universal education. On
the contrary, the worker's increasing literacy was feared and therefore discouraged by the government. But in the second half of the century England could no longer ignore the educational happenings in the rest of the continent and people began to look into the English voluntary educational system. For some its achievements through voluntary schooling in literacy and attendance rate were remarkable. The Newcastle Commission (1851) showed that nearly all children received some schooling. Present educational researchers like E.G. West (1965) argue that these results are good proof of the achievements of voluntary private schooling with no state interference. But Clarendon's enquiry into the Public Schools (1861-64) showed that between 25 to 50 percent of the English school population was entirely without efficient schooling. These conclusions led to the 1870 Educational Act which instituted public elementary education in England. Finally in 1880, compulsory attendance regulations were enacted. Influenced by new settlers, education in North America during the eighteenth century followed mainly the British example.

Schools of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were largely private and informal, but the public sector came to control more of the schooling process through the remainder of the nineteenth century. (Everhart, 1977, p. 505)

Thus, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries "common schools" developed. As Everhart (1977, p. 506) explains,

These...entities, although not 'free' were 'common' in that they served children from families with a wide range of incomes and from various occupations, charging fees that most parents were able to afford.

In the 1830's state subsidized schools, denominational institutions, private academies and privately financed schools competed for clients. A decade later, public and secular education was first introduced in
Massachusetts due largely to the efforts of Horace Mann. Throughout the nineteenth century the common public school system grew due to the interaction of such factors as American devotion to education and the need for defining a common identity for people from different backgrounds. In addition, Everhart (1977) explains the triumph of the common public school system based on the predictability of funding through taxation. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century compulsory school attendance laws were passed in almost all states.

Canada, during the nineteenth century, felt the influence of British immigrants and that of American newcomers. Up to about 1840 in eastern Canada and 1870 in British Columbia, following the British practice, schools for the people included parish, charity, monitorial, Sunday and infant schools. During the next 30 years the dominant educational agency was the common school financed by government grants and local taxation. Liberal influence came later and by 1900 elementary education was free and virtually universal, if not everywhere compulsory. British Columbia made attendance at schools for children between ages seven and fourteen compulsory in 1873 (Phillips, 1957). Along with the issue of public universal education most provinces in Canada faced the question of public support for denominational schools. However, British Columbia remained the one province in which public schools were kept on a non-denominational basis.

During the twentieth century the state school system developed throughout the western world. Compulsory schooling has been effectively adopted almost everywhere. Compulsory schooling has been accused of trespassing on individual and parental rights while not necessarily achieving the
idealistic goal of providing equality for starting in life. On the other hand it has provided the common person, more than ever in history, access to the inherited culture and social mobility.

Analysis of the Issue of Individual Choice vs. State Intervention

The previous section presented an historical sketch to the issue of individual choice vs. state intervention. It is the purpose of this section to analyze the main arguments that have been brought up in relation to the issue of who should decide educational goals.

Arguments in Favor of Individual Choice

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Arguments in Favor of Individual Choice

A. To Stimulate the School System

In North America the dream of public education for all is no longer a question of how many students are enrolled for how long. It has now become a question of quality of education.

In British Columbia, public schools presently serve eighty five
percent of the students. By law attendance is compulsory (Public School Act, Section 121). Through this same law it is required that school accommodation and tuition be made available to all children of school age (over seven and under fifteen) resident in the school district. (P.S.A., Section 158)

Carlson (1964) argues that as a result public schools have become "domesticated organizations", that is service organizations having no control over the clients they are to serve, and students have become clients having in turn no way of influencing the organization they attend.

These "domesticated organizations" (public schools)

Do not compete with other organizations for clients: In fact a steady flow of clients is assured. There is no struggle for survival in this organization...existence is guaranteed. Though this type of organization does compete in a restricted area for funds, funds are not closely tied to quality of performance. (p. 266)

The remedy prescribed for this kind of relationship is that of increasing diversity among schools and allowing individuals to make their own choice through a free market system. Coons and Sugarman (1978) stress the importance of distinguishing among plans proposed to increase diversity to allow choice. As they note, "the definition of eligible schools is critical". (p. 31). As a result authors may be divided into two groups: those who would include all schools (public and private) and those who would only include public schools in the market system.

In the purest case, a free market would mean that all schools would be private enterprises: each would have to offer different types of educational services to attract clients. Parents would buy these services directly from schools and would pay according to their ability (income)
and valuing of education as compared to other goods and services. A modified version of this free system is the voucher scheme. Initially proposed by Adam Smith two centuries ago to preserve a competitive market for schooling, and later adapted by Thomas Paine to favour the poor, the voucher system was revived twenty years ago by Milton Friedman. In order to allow for the presumption that "State finance for education is more appropriate than state provision of education" (West, 1970, p. 51) Friedman proposed a voucher system for financing education. In it, all parents would receive a voucher exchangeable for education at any school that would satisfy minimum educational standards. The value of the voucher would be related to the average costs of education. Parents who wished to do so, could supplement the vouchers and send their children to schools that charged over the standard level. Education would still be compulsory, and minimum standards would be defined but there would be alternative types of schools from which clients (parents and/or students) could choose. Vouchers would be used by the consumer to pay directly for the service being bought. Vouchers could be designed so that their value could be inversely related to the income of the parents. In this way the monopoly of public education would be broken and a more diverse system of education could be developed.

As Downey (1970) forecasted:

The resulting differences among schools would likely be both substantive (emphasis upon the arts, the sciences, and so on) and procedural (emphasis upon various instructional modes.) (p. 98)

Commenting upon Friedman's proposal, Mario Fantini (1973) suggested that the voucher system is already practiced by offering free public education. He states that what is really needed is a wider variety of
alternatives within the public schools so that individuals may exert their choice. Further, he proposes a new framework for our public system of education. A public school of choice system would strongly encourage all parents, students and professionals to participate in the design, development and implementation of teaching and learning environments that best meet their definition of quality education. (Fantini, 1973, p. 34)


One of the most important advantages of a voucher system is that it would encourage diversity and choice within the public school system. Indeed, if the public school system were to begin matching students and schools on the basis of interest, rather than residence, one of the major objectives of a voucher system would be met without even involving the private sector. (p. 241)

Both groups of advocates assume that free choice between alternative schools would create a wider variety of educational institutions, stimulate competition among schools, raise standards, promote educational innovation, increase the responsiveness of schools to the wishes of parents and educate parents. Through competition schools would no longer have their clients assured nor their existence guaranteed. Students and parents would be able to influence the system by either choosing among the offered alternatives that which they preferred (free market) or by participating in the decisions (public schools of choice). As a result only the best alternatives would survive.

The free market has the convenience of completely decentralizing, and making completely private, the decision about the ability and the type of education that is suitable. (Arons, 1972, p. 360)

Downs (1970) pointed out the necessary conditions for choice in schooling to be effective in making schools more responsive:
- Existence of alternative suppliers
- Freedom of the suppliers to offer significantly varying products
- Existence of consumer control over significant resources
- Freedom for consumer preferences to influence resource allocation
- Existence of a means of evaluating outputs
- Existence of an information system available to consumers
- Provision for payment of transportation costs

Some of these conditions could easily be met in the short run. For instance, if accepted as government policy, monies could be allocated towards the payment of transportation and information.

In the medium range (5 to 10 years), given a free market situation, the number of alternative suppliers would tend to increase although the range of different educational services provided would be determined by governmental policies. The need for social cohesion might limit the variety of ideologies imparted by the different schools making the alternative schools diverse in procedures but similar in ideological content.

Consumer control over resource allocation will only exist if the present monopoly of the public school system is modified. Parental involvement, community controlled schools or a voucher system are ways in which school clients can influence the product they will receive.

The development of evaluation tools, necessary for consumer control, is underway. As education deals with people the processes and results are subject to the influence of many variables or sets of variables. Bronfenbrenner (1976) describes these variables as characteristics of the learners and their surroundings (home, peergroup, work place, neighborhood) and the relations and interconnections existing between these environments. Evaluation tools still have to be improved in order to be able to predict precisely how the different variables and their interplay will affect a student. Much research is needed to determine this
effect. Without precise research tools the determinants of choice in schooling will always keep a certain degree of randomness or "good luck" in it.

B. To Improve Match Between Teaching and Learning Style

Students differ in how they learn. Teachers differ in the variety of methods they use. Grouping students by learning style enables the teacher to use that teaching method most likely to work for the majority of students in that class. In relation to this, Fantini (1973) stresses another benefit of public schools of choice. As he states:

The standard school is certainly one alternative of quality education...alternate forms of education are based on different styles of teaching and learning. At present, options are available, but primarily to the upper-middle class in the form of private schools. (p. 83)

But all children should be able to choose the teachers that match their learning styles. In the same way teachers with similar teaching styles should be able to group together to offer an educational alternative. Given the freedom, individuals will select that situation in which learning style and teaching style will be better matched (Fantini, 1973).

C. To Increase Individual Freedom

Individual freedom advocates affirm that persons should have the right to choose the kind of education they want just as they have the right to choose the religion they wish to embrace. In education, as in religion, the ultimate issue is one of values. Whose values are to be imparted? It is contended by advocates of private schools that public schools can only impart values that are common and acceptable to the majority. Minority values are trodden over by the imposition of a common denominator. As Leonard Read (1974) explains:
All the wants and aspirations, the interests and conflicts are combined into an educational potpourri, the ingredients of the compromise being propositional to the popularity of various ideas at the moment. (p. 2)

Stephen Arons (1976) affirms that setting up a public school based on majority choice undermines individual rights. His argument rests on a suit named Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925). The decision in this case guaranteed a private school's right to do business. It declared that it is beyond the power of the state to compel all children to attend public schools. Arons suggests a first amendment reading of "Pierce" based upon the preservation of individual consciousness from government coercion. As a result it would be concluded that parents have a right of educational choice where the implication of value or beliefs is concerned.

Erickson, proposes freedom's two educational imperatives:

- State regulation of non-public schools must encourage the pursuit of pluralistic goals
- State recognition of non-public schools must encourage diverse approaches to the achievement of goals (Erickson, 1969, p. 160-175)

In a later work he states six strategies that could be used to reduce state control of education:

1. "license" educational substitutions
2. accept an "OK" from a "reputable" agency
3. rely on consensual safeguards
4. require professional input, but with few constraints on the product
5. specify ends, not means
6. rely on a disclosure law approach (Erickson, 1973, pp.1/24 1/30)

Robert Everhart (1977) goes even further and questions the need for compulsory school attendance laws. He reminds the reader that in the eighteenth century
The modal activity was to send children to school for the length of time deemed necessary to learn what parents felt needed to be learned. Such flexibility, considered utopian by many modern educational thinkers, was quite common in the late eighteenth century. (p. 505)

The answers then lie in the reexamination of present compulsory attendance laws and the public school system. Alternative schools, for example, could offer programs grounded on a variety of values. The possibility of selecting among different offerings would increase individual freedom, releasing latent creative energies. As a result, new educational solutions could emerge to take the place of the one monolithic public school system.

D. To Foster Multiculturalism

Canada's population today is composed of many ethnic groups. The majority group is the Anglo-Saxon with over 40% of the population. Next come the French with 30% and the German speaking people follow third with about 8%. Italians, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Native Indians, Inuit, Hungarians, Ukrainians and others join in to form what is usually called the Canadian cultural mosaic. In recent years the federal government policies have fostered multiculturalism on the grounds that the cultural contribution of each group helps to make Canada a better country.

In 1963, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was formed. In its 1970 report, the commission expressed that Canada should be bilingual in both English and French languages. Further, it recommended an institutional rather than individual bilingualism; that is, that services should be provided in both official languages so that the majority of Canadians could remain unilingually English or French.

As the commission discussed bilingual and bicultural policies, the
idea of Canada being a mosaic, developed into Canada being a multicultural country. In 1971 Prime Minister Trudeau enunciated a multicultural policy within a bilingual framework. This policy assumes that all Canadians participate in either the English or French institutional system and includes among its aims a) to help immigrants learn either English and/or French  b) to assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society  c) to promote cultural exchange among all cultural groups.

Canada shows its long held multicultural tradition through the variety of public educational systems available across the country.

- a single, public school system, which employs no members of religious orders (British Columbia).

- a single public school system which employs members of religious orders and may have schools with a denominational character owing to informal arrangements (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba).

- a public school system with separate denominational schools as part of the system. All schools and trustees are governed by the same regulations (Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta).

- a dual school system, a Roman Catholic system and a Protestant system each operating independently of each other (Quebec).

- a multiple denominational system (seven denominations in 1960) and no public school system (Newfoundland). (Cheal, 1963, p. 19)

In spite of the variety of public school systems there are many minority ethnic and religious groups whose values are not represented in those inculcated by the public schools. Should members of these groups accept the majority values or should they be able to preserve their own cultural identity? A wider variety in the types of schools available would help minority groups maintain their own character.
E. To Avoid Double Taxation

In most cases public school systems are financed through taxes and private schools have no access to these public monies. Parents who wish to send their children to private schools have to pay public school taxes as well as tuition fees at the private school. Thus, choice in schooling is restricted for the majority of parents who are not able to pay twice.

In general all the arguments stated in favor of individual choice maximize, as a common denominator, private benefits. Only the improvement of the whole school system through a free market could be thought of as an exception to this, provided that the improvement produces social benefits. But those concerned with society as a whole look critically at individual choice. They believe that the free market needs to be regulated by the state in order for it to achieve social benefits as well.
Arguments in Favor of State Intervention

A. To Protect Minors

Even the most ardent supporters of laissez-faire policy accept that the critical responsibility of government is to give protection to its citizens.

During the 19th century proponents of state intervention in education argued that there is a need for government to guard children from ignorant or negligent parents. Parents, it was argued, could deprive their children from education in order to make them work. Or, parents would just keep children away from school due to other pressing needs that left little space for formal education. And yet others thought parents were just incompetent to make the decision. Thus in order to protect children, governments first passed laws to subsidize schools, later instituted public schools and finally established compulsory school attendance laws. Public universal schooling became a part of life for almost everybody in England and North America since the end of the nineteenth century. Education was available to all children, but not all children benefited from it equally. For the last two decades social scientists have focussed on the unequal results of this universal schooling.

The argument of state intervention for protection of the children is now based on the need to provide equal educational opportunities for all students. Clearly what is meant by equal educational opportunity has not been agreed on. For some it is a question of offering 12 years of schooling, free of charge, with all children exposed to a definite curriculum. Other authors, [see for example Wise (1968); Owen (1974); Coons, Clune and Sugarman (1970)] define it as a need for equality of inputs:
equal per student expenditures, equal teacher training, experience, salaries, morale, expectations - other personnel equal, i.e. counsellors, the same facilities, equipment, similar peer group, equal access to curriculum of their choice. Still others [for instance Kozol (1972) and Holt (1964)] say that "real" equal opportunity will only be reached when the effects of schooling for individuals of unequal background and abilities are the same. Therefore, schools should provide students with as much help as necessary for them to achieve equal results.

Some suggestions aimed at improving schooling effects include:

- new educational methods; pre-school head start programs, alternative schools, choice in the public school system, individualized learning, open education.

- new financial formulas: increasing centralization in the management of educational funds to attend to areas of different needs (Benson, 1965); family power equalizing system suggested by Coons, Clune and Sugarman (1970); family choice in education act developed by Coons and Sugarman (1971); proposal made by the Center of Public Policy (Sizer, 1969).

Unequal educational opportunities are often linked in the literature to the inequities produced by the property tax as used to finance public schooling. Due to the local character of this tax, educational resources may be unequally distributed throughout a province, school districts and even neighborhoods within the same district.

To illustrate, let us assume that the population in British Columbia is equally interested in education, adopts a 40.0 mill rate, and that the provincial government does not participate in educational funding. In 1975 variations in taxable wealth per pupil among school districts in
the province ranged from $9,906 (Ocean Falls) to $66,009 (Lillooet) (BCTF, 1976, Table 1). Thus, per pupil expenditures, in our example, could go as high as $396 and $2,640 respectively. Although per pupil expenditures cannot be directly linked to quality in schooling, a difference in expenditures of over six times would probably lead to different educational outcomes.*

Students in Lillooet would probably have more and better resources that could allow for richer experiences. In order to make the example real, the initial assumptions must be raised. Mill rates vary throughout the province. In 1975 the actual mill rates for these school districts were 27.01 and 47.65 respectively (BCTF, 1976, Table 2). In addition, the provincial government does share in financing operating and capital costs, thus balancing out financial inequalities. Government policy determines the extent to which it will participate in educational funding to promote equal educational opportunities.

A study done in the United States concludes that:

The degree of variation in school spending in the forty-nine states with local school districts showed that...the pattern is one in which some children within a state have two, three, and four times as much spent for their schooling as do other children. (Berke, Campbell and Goettel, 1972, p. 5)

Two recent legal cases in the United States have confronted this issue. In Serrano vs. Priest (1971) the California Supreme Court accepted the fiscal neutrality standard proposed by Coons, Clune and Sugarman (1970)-which states that quality of education may not be a function of wealth, other than the wealth of the state as a whole. The California Supreme Court stated:

* In any case such a discrepancy would constitute prima facie evidence of inequality.
The California public school financing system...conditions the full entitlement to (education) on wealth, classified its recipients on the basis of their collective affluence and makes the quality of a child's education depend upon the resources of his school district and ultimately upon the pocketbook of his parents. We find that such financing system as presently constituted is not necessary to the attainment of any compelling state interest. Since it does not withstand the requisite "strict scrutiny," it denies to the plaintiffs and others similarly situated the equal protection of the laws. 487 P2d at 1263. (in Kirp and Yudof, 1974, p. 582)

As a result:

lawyers in some thirty-eight states...pressed similar suits. In most instances plaintiffs' claim was upheld. (Kirp and Yudof, 1974, p. 583)

One of the several cases brought to the courts was San Antonio Independent School District (Texas) v. Rodriguez. Its importance is that it was the first case to reach the Supreme Court of the U.S.. In 1969, the Texas system of financing public education was challenged. A class action was brought on behalf of school children throughout the state who are members of minority groups or who are poor and reside in school districts having a low property tax base. In its judgment the district court held the Texas school finance system unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The state appealed and the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the district court. The opinion of the Supreme Court was based on the following arguments as expressed by Mr. Justice Powell:

Despite these recent increases, (in state aid to school districts), substantial interdistrict disparities in school expenditures found by the district court to prevail in San Antonio and in varying degrees throughout the state still exist. And it was these disparities, largely attributable to differences in the amounts of money collected through local property taxation, that led the district court to conclude that Texas' dual system of public school financing violated the equal protection clause....
We must decide, first, whether the Texas system of financing public education operates to the disadvantage of some suspect class or impinges upon a fundamental right explicitly or implicitly protected by the Constitution, thereby requiring strict judicial scrutiny. If so, the judgment of the district court should be affirmed. If not, the Texas scheme must still be examined to determine whether it rationally furthers some legitimate, articulated state purpose and therefore does not constitute an invidious discrimination in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. (in Kirp and Yudof, 1974, p. 585)

The Supreme Court concluded that the Texas system of school financing does not operate to the peculiar disadvantage of any suspect class, and that it is not the product of purposeful discrimination against any group or class. Within the Supreme Court there were dissenting opinions that criticized the decision and affirmed the initial judgment of the district court.

In Canada there have been no similar law suits. Still the concern about the relationship between equal educational opportunities and school finance is present. An illustration of this is the operation of the "Commission of Inquiry on Property Assessment and Taxation of British Columbia". A position paper presented by the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF) on March 1976, to this commission was based on two major principles:

1. That the provincial finance system should ensure equality of sacrifice on the part of all taxpayers and guarantee equal educational opportunity.

2. That education finance systems must co-ordinate allocation of revenues and the governance of schools to produce high levels of local interest and autonomy, maximum awareness of local educational needs and equality of educational opportunity. (p. 1)

BCTF suggested that the provincial government should participate to a greater extent in financing education to overcome the effects of...differences in the ability to pay of its various citizens...The province must not deny to any
child, through its choice of a financing system, equal access to quality education. Nor must it continue to impose unreasonable and unfair tax burdens on local property owners. (p. 3)

The present provincial government of British Columbia has not accepted the BCTF's recommendations. In fact, the educational system in the province financed mainly through direct grants to school districts from the provincial government and local property taxes, is relying increasingly more on local revenues. In 1975, operating costs budgeted for the basic education program were raised locally through a "Basic Levy of 26.5 mills plus whatever additional levy districts require for operating" (B.C.S.T.A., Fall 1975, p. 25). For 1977, it was 37.5 mills (B.C.S.T.A., August, 1977, p. 39) and for 1978 the Basic Levy is estimated at 42.5 mills (Education Today, January 1978, p. 3).

A comment made by Mr. Justice Stewart of the U.S. Supreme Court in the suit of San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez illustrates the issue of local funding as it relates to equal opportunities.

The difficulty with the Texas system, however, is that it provides a meaningful option to Alamo Heights and like school districts but almost none to Edgewood and those other with a low per pupil real estate tax base. In these latter districts, no matter how desirous parents are of supporting their schools with greater revenues, it is impossible to do so through the use of the real estate property tax. In these districts the Texas system utterly fails to extend a realistic choice to parents, because the property tax, which is the only revenue-raising mechanism extended to schools districts, is practically and legally unavailable....

If the State aims at maximizing local initiative and local choice, by permitting school districts to resort to the real property tax if they choose to do so, it utterly fails in achieving its purpose in districts with property taxes so low that there is little if any opportunity for interested parents rich or poor, to augment school district revenues. (in Kirp and Yudof, 1974, pp. 594-5)

Authors concerned with these inequities urge governmental participation in schooling to varying degrees. In their opinion, equal educational
opportunity is a widespread ideal in North America today. The state has a role in ensuring that every child gets an equal start in life.

B. Neighborhood or External Effects or Spillover Effects of Education

Classical economists of the 19th century favoured compulsory education decreed by the state in order to foster moral and civic improvement and promote social discipline of the labour force. A democracy needed literacy; industrial development needed educated workers. Therefore, it was the state's role to see that people became educated.

In the 20th century this argument developed still further. It became general belief that education affects not only the people's moral and civic notions, and the labourer's discipline, but also that it produces external effects that affect a country's productivity. Economists define external effects of education as the benefits that accrue to other people by the increase in education of one person. External effects may be reflected in the market mechanism (pecuniary external effects) or may accrue without having an effect on the price system (real external effects). An illustration of the former case would be the training of skilled professionals in which the number of trainees affects the salary of the whole group of skilled professionals. The latter is depicted by the discovery of a new medicine in which case the full benefits do not go to the educated inventor but to society as a whole.

Hence if educational decisions were left entirely in private hands, there would be social under-investment in education because no one would be motivated to bear the cost of discovering potential talent or the cost of conducting pure research. (Blaug, 1970, p. 30)

Advocates of state intervention contend that it is the role of the government to help parents purchase "enough" education so that the external
effects society requires may be achieved.

Along with this reasoning the belief increased that education has direct effects on a country's development. Schultz (1961) stated that an economic growth policy should assign a major role to education as investment in schooling is a major source of addition to human capital. Denison (1962) showed that

about 21 percent of the economic growth of the United States between 1929 and 1957 (was due) to education. (Schultz, 1967. p. 44)

Based on studies such as these, public expenditures on education grew extraordinarily throughout the world during the '60's. Governments justified these expenses based on the external benefits of education. But as Blaug (1970) contends, no one has proven that these external benefits of education exist and if they do how they relate to the spillovers of the other social services such as medical care.

C. To Build Social Cohesion

Another reason usually given to justify state intervention is that free state education should be provided in order to achieve social cohesion. Almost everyone would agree that, even though individuals are the basic democratic unit in a society, their functioning as a community requires them to adhere to at least a minimum set of common values. Through compulsory public schools, children from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds can be educated to this point.

Presently in North America, social cohesion is threatened by social and racial issues. Minority groups voice their discontent over income and opportunity differentials. Many look to the public school system and criticize it for not having been able to prevent this. They say that public schools have not been successful in their socializing function. To improve
the effects of public schooling new and more relevant curricula have been developed.

D. Natural Monopoly that Occurs in Areas of Low Population Density

In addition to the above stated arguments favoring state intervention, English classical economists and modern economists accept state intervention when necessary. Areas with little population will most likely not attract private school entrepreneurs. If for any reason one does settle there (probably organized by a church), there will not be a variety of schools to choose from - thus preventing the free market to function. In this case state intervention is welcomed.

E. To Account for Imperfections of the Capital Market which Do Not Permit Access to Private Loans for Education

Families purchase education from their current income rather than their lifetime incomes. Imperfections in the capital market do not permit families to get loans for education. Many writers stress that educational capital is not available in terms comparable to physical capital, because with conventional loans (like house mortgages) the physical asset can be repossessed in case of default (West, 1975).

West states that externalities are interdependent with capital market imperfections. Therefore it is desirable that the state intervene and finance the education of children from poor families.

The most significant arguments borne against individual choice in schooling relate directly to the ones used to favor state intervention. Protection of minors and the need to account for external effects are raised continually as the basic reasons that would lead a community's decision. In addition another important point has been brought up in
relation to purchasing education on a free market basis: the lack of tools which parents could use to compare different educational offerings and lack of information on the various schools. An illustration of these criticisms is offered below.

Protection of Minors from Their Parents and Their Educational Opportunities

School choice in a free market is made on the basis of the parents' values. Children are exposed to their parents' values at home. If parents select schools congruent with their values how can children get acquainted with diverse ideas? Arons (1971) raises the question of whose individual rights is society supposed to protect: the children's rights or parents' rights? He states

There is often quite a gap between what the parents think is a good education and what the students think. (p. 360)

If in addition one considers Kohn's (1969) findings on the relationship between social class and values, one wonders further if allowing parental school choice will be an effective way to use education as a tool for equalizing opportunities. Kohn's research came to the conclusion that

In Italy and the United States, middle class parents put greater emphasis on children's self-direction, working-class parents on their conformity to external standards. (Kohn, 1969, p. 198)

The implication of class difference in values and orientation can be extended to the perpetuation of inequality.

Whether consciously or not, parents tend to impart to their children lessons derived from the conditions of life of their own social class - and thus help prepare their children for a similar class position. An obvious factor is the higher educational and occupational aspirations that parents of higher class position hold for their children. Less obvious but perhaps more important: Class difference in parental values and child-rearing practices influence the development of the capacities that children someday will need for coping
with problems and conditions of change. The family, then, functions as a mechanism for perpetuating inequality. (Kohn, 1969, p. 200)

Socio-economic status (measured by education and occupation) and students' aspirations were also found to be related in a study done in British Columbia. Wennewold (1975) showed that students' educational aspirations are affected by their father's education. Male students whose fathers had less than grade eight aspired mainly to finish high school (24.7%), to get a trade or vocational training (21.0%) or some community or college diploma (16.6%). In contrast, male students whose fathers had a post-graduate degree aspired mainly to receive a post-graduate degree (50%), a bachelor's degree (14.5%) or some community or college diploma (11.8%) (Table 32, p. 66).

The study also shows that students' career choices are influenced by their father's occupation. The main occupations chosen by male students whose fathers are skilled workers are skilled worker (30.5%), engineer/researcher (13.0%), artist/performer/sportsman (10.9%). In contrast sons of doctors/lawyers mainly preferred to become doctor/lawyer (26%) or engineer/researcher (26%) (Table 35, p. 73).

Other studies such as Coleman (1966) and Jencks (1972) have shown the importance of influence of the family in determining a child's future.

The child through the family is connected to the rest of the community. The position of the family in relation to the community will affect the child. If education is made available through the free market the existing gap in income and opportunities will tend to increase. Henry Levin, in criticizing Friedman's proposal of educational vouchers, reminds the reader that in order for a person to operate successfully in a free market it is
desirable to have

desirable to have geographic mobility, education, income, access to capital (credit) - the very things which the poor lack and the middle class possess. (Levin, 1968, p. 8)

He stresses that "geographical location of schools becomes a salient feature of the market place" and forecasts that as in the case of other marketable goods the number of schools offering alternatives and the quality of the programs offered would be lower as well as more expensive in the poorer areas than in the wealthier ones. Benson (1965) takes a similar stance when he states:

A poor man has as much chance of removing his children from the hideously inadequate - and often structurally dangerous - schools of his own area and placing them in the well-staffed, generously-provisioned institutions of the rich man's town as he does of crashing the golf club marked "For Members Only". (p. 62)

Friedman's state vouchers for education included the possibility of families adding private expenditures to buy better quality schooling. Levin criticizes this proposal for it would give rich families, who have the resources to do so and usually have a small number of children, a chance to get better schooling than low income families. Thus schools supported by rich families could charge higher prices, pay higher wages and hire better personnel. This would increasingly lead to more unequal opportunities.

An Educational Free Market System Does Not Ensure the External Effects Of Education that Accrue to the Rest of Society

The argument based on external benefits of education states that persons outside the family unit receive benefits from each child's education. If education were left to the family, individual choice could be such that either the quality and/or the quantity of education purchased would not be sufficient to cause the external effects the community desires. The
community would not get the social benefits of education. As a result, a free market system will not necessarily provide the putative external effects.

**Lack of Evaluation Tools and Adequate Information on Schools**

Levin raises another question on the free market system by stating that:

The fact that education as a good is difficult to define or measure also violates an important premise of the competitive market. (1968, p. 9)

He then goes on to say that educational units are difficult to define and that:

Given the fact that even professional educators have no objective way of rating schools, how are the parents of the poor to compare them? (p. 9)

As a result, it is evident that there is a need for standardized tools to measure school efficiency so that any parent, regardless of social and cultural background, may make an informed choice. The existence of an information system available to consumers is vital. One of the main assumptions in the classical model of free competition is that consumers have equal access to information. In addition to the lack of evaluation tools parents do not have sufficient information to make a choice of schools due to other factors: political-bureaucratic circumstances make it difficult for a public school district to publicize "ratings" of the quality of schools (measured through any standard). The availability of the public neighborhood school has decreased the need for getting information on alternative schools, thus crippling consumer habits of looking for the best value for their money. Socio-cultural differences among parents limit their ability to use the information. An extreme case, but very frequent in Canada, is that of the new immigrant who does not know where
to obtain information and at best even if he does get it, he does not know the language, does not share the cultural framework, also does not know how to understand and interpret it. The quality of information is crucial to the free market system. If schools start competing among themselves how will parents be protected from misleading propaganda? What will be considered good sources of information? If the government is to stay out of the market, who will protect parents from advertising or hucksterism?

On the other hand supporters of state intervention have been harshly criticized by other social scientists. They claim that individuals should have a right to choose in education. The arguments about the external effects of education, the need for social cohesion and that of natural monopolies are refuted, as follows:

*Individual Rights*

To illustrate, J.S. Mill in the past century and Friedman, Wiseman, and West today accuse the government of trespassing on individual rights and people's privacy by imposing compulsory public education and by choosing not to subsidize other alternative schools. They argue that no one has proved that parents are generally "incompetent to educate their children". Therefore, the government should interfere only in those cases of parental negligence, which are usually a minor proportion of all parents. Furthermore, they see the role of government in education only as a supervisor that should state and control the rules and regulations for schooling. Individuals they say, should be free to select the quantity and quality of schooling they wish to purchase. With regards to equal opportunities one important distinction is made. There is a difference between the financing of education and the provision
of educational services. In order to give equal access to schools the government may interfere in the financing of schools. It is argued that the government should better finance schooling through the parents and leave the provision of schooling to private enterprises. Thus parents with the money can vote for the kind of schooling they desire. The government can require that "each child receive a minimum amount of schooling of a specified kind" (Friedman, 1968) without having to provide schooling services.

External Effects

In answering the neighborhood effects argument brought up by those advocating government intervention because it provides greater social benefits than private ones, Friedman argues that government should subsidize only certain kinds of schooling. Elementary schooling, which has the effect of raising the population's literacy level should be subsidized, but, for instance, vocational education should not as the benefits of this kind of education accrue directly to the individual. West, agreeing with Blaug's previous point, states that no one has been able to measure the external effects of education. Their existence still remains to be proven (West, 1975).

Social Cohesion

Advocates of individual choice initiate their discussion by postulating: "A society which takes the freedom of the individual (or family) as a prime social aim" (Wiseman, 1960). Taking this as a starting point they see public schooling as an indoctrinating agency that runs overtly against individual parent's right to decide about his/her children's education. The ideology of the public schools being an average of the
ideologies of the major power groups in society leaves much to be desired for members of minority groups and even for parents who may be part of the power groups. Thus, advocates of free choice in schooling demand a system that will allow real choice.

The other reason for government intervention was that of local monopolies developing in small communities. This last argument accepted in the past century is now refuted by the advocates of individual choice on the basis of improved transportation and communication systems which permit easier access to isolated communities.

The pros and cons of both positions have been presented. It remains to each individual to define his/her position as to who should determine children's education. The main arguments of those advocating individual choice - to stimulate the school system and to increase individual freedom should be weighed against the main arguments of those fostering state intervention to promote equal educational opportunities and to secure social cohesion. Individual freedom and equality are two values that have to be carefully considered in the framework of the social and economic characteristics of the people involved. As a social choice the final answer will be greatly determined by the prevalent social attitudes, beliefs and values.

A Review of Case Studies of Choice in the School System

So far, most of the literature reviewed is the expression of educated personal opinions. As Sonnenfeld (1973) remarks, "the evidence on family choice in schooling is almost non-existent" (p. 30). Empirical studies are now starting to be conducted.

In order to learn about family choice a social experiment was fostered by the U.S. Federal Government in Alum Rock, California. Approximately
15,000 students from kindergarten through grade 8 were allowed to choose among different public elementary schools that offered different programs, for a period of four years. Coons and Sugarman (1978) relate:

As a result, a significant percentage of families chose to send their child to other than what would have been his assigned school; the numbers making such an election became sizable as the program matured - 5 percent of the children in the first year, but 15 percent in the second and third....

Much practical learning was acquired about enrollment logistics, school site budgeting, techniques for informing families about choices, and transportation problems under choice.

However, Alum Rock was hardly the full experiment we propose. First, no high school students were included. Second, families could not choose public schools outside the district. Third, teachers were...guaranteed their jobs. ...Finally, no private schools participated in the experiment. (pp. 215-6)

Uchitelle and Nault (1977) studied school choice behavior of parents afforded public school options in the Collegeville school system (a suburban midwestern American school district), where school choice is available to about 7,000 elementary students as an accepted practice. The authors argued that:

A study of their choice behavior would seem useful in providing insight into the type of choice behavior which might be anticipated from parents participating in a program of multi-option education. (p. 5)

For this purpose 48 mothers of children who were using Collegeville schools for the first time were interviewed.

Uchitelle and Nault conclude that:

two thirds of the parents used their choice opportunities to select the school they felt was most suited to their child (p. 34).

The qualitative differences of the schools and the high educational level of the parents in the population seem to explain this active choice
behavior. In addition they report:

The data suggests that parents at the lower ends of the socio-economic range among the parents studied were less likely to have heard about their choice opportunity and to have researched and deliberated over their option.

This cluster of parents appeared most concerned in making their choice about the nature of the school and school environment to which their child would be exposed. (pp. 34-35)

The present author is unaware of other empirical studies of choice in schooling. More and fuller experiences as the above mentioned have to be researched before safely implementing on a large scale, an educational system that would allow choice.

Brief History of the French Influence in the Lower Mainland, B.C.:

In order to focus on the present study the dual cultural heritage initially found in Canada, that of the Protestant English and the Catholic French peoples, must be considered. The values and traditions brought in by both groups of settlers have been in constant rivalry. The quest for preservation of both cultures through the provincial educational systems has been long. Many political battles have been fought over the issue since confederation. And today the issue is still unresolved. Strong stands taken in the last decade by the Province of Quebec have wakened the rest of the country and reminded of long past treaties (Treaty of Utrecht, 1713 and Treaty of Paris, 1763), that guaranteed French settlers the right to keep their culture. At the time the issue resided solely on liberty of religion. Later, French speaking Catholics have argued that there is a straight connection between religion, culture and language, thus making a case in favour of educating their children in French.

The first French-Canadians who came to British Columbia were the
"Voyageurs" who came in search of furs hired by fur-trading enterprises such as the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company at the end of the eighteenth century. Peace River, the first French-Canadian settlement in the province, was established in 1805.

As HBC spread throughout the province, numerous posts were erected with the aid of French-Canadians. In 1827 French-Canadians and Metis built their first post in the Lower Mainland and called it Fort Langley.

For more than 50 years the Voyageur dominated the land, pushed forward the frontiers of settlement and controlled the nature of the development of the land. (Cowley, 1977, p. 5)

The fur trade gave way to the gold rush and the development of farming, lumbering and mining. French-Canadians participated in these activities as well.

Catholic priests and nuns established in the 1860's a hospital, a boy's school, a girl's school and a church in New Westminster.

By 1871 when B.C. joined Confederation, ... the Catholic Church administered by French-speaking clergy was strongly entrenched and still growing in B.C. (Cowley, 1977, p. 5)

But, the increase of non-French immigration eroded the French position in the province.

Maillardville, a French community in Coquitlam, B.C. was erected by people from Quebec. During 1909-1910, the Ross McLaren Mill established just below the present community of Maillardville, recruited French-Canadian lumbermen in the East. Between 500-750 persons came out to B.C.

A town began to develop, originally centered around the Church in Laval Square, but which since has spread out in all directions.

Over the years it was known by a number of names, some not too complimentary. It was called Shacktown, Frenchtown and Pareville, until it finally derived its name from the postal station name: Maillardville. The name came from Father Maillard, a continental
French Oblate cure who first administered the local church. The community prospered and its French character has been retained even today although it is not nearly as apparent as it was in the past. (Cowley, 1977, p. 5)

The French-speaking population in B.C. today is estimated around 35,000-50,000. Still, descendants of French-Canadians are conservatively estimated to amount to 100,000.

With time, the French community got organized. The education of their children and the preservation of their culture were among their main concern. For years through the Franco-Columbian Federation they demanded from the Provincial Department of Education the recognition of their rights to educate their children in French.* This petition was denied on the basis that schools in B.C. had to instruct in English as this is the language spoken by 90% of the population in the province.

In the meantime the Coquitlam School Board had already shown an interest in French instruction by instituting French in elementary schools in grades 5, 6 and 7, for 80 minutes per week. After the negative answer of the Department of Education of B.C. the Franco-Columbian Federation approached the Coquitlam School Board. The Board reacted favorably to the demand and in 1968 got permission from the Department of Education to offer the first French Immersion kindergarten in B.C. that was to teach two hours in French and half an hour in English. Along with the approval, a few constraints were placed by the Department: 1) French kindergarten had to be offered in a school where English kindergarten was also available 2) one fifth of the time had to be spent teaching in English and 3) yearly evaluations were requested.

* The information on the development of French Immersion Programs in Coquitlam, B.C. was kindly offered by Ms. Florence Wilton, Associate Supervisor - French for Coquitlam School District, in an interview with the author.
A district wide enquiry showed that parents living around School No. 3 (close to New Westminster and Maillardville) were the ones who showed greatest interest in the program. Thus, the program was established in this school. Federal funds helped the development of French programs.

The initial year of the French immersion program was for Franco-phones. In subsequent years the students enrolled in Coquitlam were predominantly Anglo-phones. By 1972 the School Board was establishing a French Immersion kindergarten wherever there was a sufficient number of parents interested.

Recently there has been a change in the School Board's policy. Six schools spread throughout the school district had French Immersion by 1976. So the School Board felt it was time to start consolidating and building up the programs already initiated. One school eliminated its French program because it had few students; its proximity to another French Immersion school permitted an easy transfer of the children. Thus, presently there are five public schools that offer French Immersion programs in the Coquitlam School District: School No. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Evaluation of these programs has shown that in grades one and two the immersion group still lags behind the control group in reading, work knowledge, word analysis and spelling. However, the immersion pupils are performing at a higher level in mathematical computation. There is a substantial transfer to English language skills on the part of the French Immersion classes. (Kaufman and Shapson, 1976, p. 6)

Coquitlam's experience has set a trend in the province's education. It has influenced private Roman Catholic schools that were established within the boundaries of the school district. In effect, based on the need to educate children not only in the language of their ancestors but
also to teach them about their culture and to transmit Catholic morals and religious instruction, Roman Catholic Schools felt it their duty to offer bilingual education. A year after the Immersion Program had started at School No. 3, a French kindergarten was opened at School No. 1, situated just across from School No. 3, and later at School No. 2. Both are elementary coeducational schools that offer instruction from kindergarten through grade 7. In addition School No. 1 has a group of pre-schoolers.

School districts such as Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby are offering similar programs. Other school districts are still considering the possibility. The demand has now increased as it includes French and English families.
CHAPTER III
THE STUDY

Introduction: Background and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to contribute empirically to knowledge about family choice in schooling. It will attempt to identify the processes and contingencies of family choice of schools and programs. In addition it will describe through socio-economic indicators those parents who are making a choice.

The study will contribute as well to educational administration in that it will inform policy makers about the sources of information parents use, the people involved in the decision making and the criteria used in the final selection of a school and program. Insight into parental choice behavior will provide people fostering multi-option education with better tools to shape their proposed changes.
Conceptual Framework:

Two conceptual studies will provide the general framework. The first of these, by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968), is a decision-process model of consumer behavior. In this model the conduct of the consumer is initiated by stimuli determined basically by the way information is processed by the consumer and the environmental influences affecting the consumer and his/her personality. The model consists of five processes linked in a sequence: (1) problem recognition (2) alternative evaluation-internal search, (3) alternative evaluation - external search, (4) purchase and (5) outcomes. (Sonnenfeld, 1973, p. 11)

The second conceptual study to be used is a model developed by Sonnenfeld (1973) to be specifically applied to the case of family choice in schooling. For his analysis he adapted the model developed by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell. As he states:

(1) Families recognize discrepancies between the schooling which their children are receiving (or are scheduled to receive) and the schooling which they would prefer, (2 and 3) They search for and evaluate alternative ways of resolving this discrepancy (4) They select a school; and (5) They experience the consequences of, and reevaluate, their decision. (p. 12)

In addition, the purposes of the Uchitelle and Nault (1977) study were considered. It was felt of interest to have similar objectives in order to allow for possible comparisons of results. As the authors state:

The purpose of the study .... was to examine the school choice behavior of the Collegeville parents who lived within three optional attendance zones and who were sending their children to the Collegeville schools for the first time. Interviews with the parents addressed three related questions:
1) (Did) parents who were offered a choice deliberate about the options available to them or (did) they choose a school on the basis of one or two narrow choice criteria. (Proximity and racial composition).

2) What procedures (did) the parents follow in selecting a school?

3) What criteria (did) the parents use in making their final decision? (pp. 5-6)

Both studies, that of Sonnenfeld and the one by Uchitelle and Nault share a common concern: do parents choose on the basis of all the available options open to them or do they choose based on, as Uchitelle and Nault state, "one or two narrow choice criteria”? (p. 5)

Correspondingly, Sonnenfeld addresses this issue and divides choices in schooling into "active" and "passive". He defines

Passive choices are those situations in which families consider no more than one schooling alternative in selecting schools for their children, i.e. ....families automatically sending their children to their local neighborhood school" (proximity). On the other hand, "active choices" are .... those situations in which families select a school for their children only after serious consideration of multiple schooling alternatives. (1973, p. 12)

The present research will discriminate between active and passive school choices. In order to study both types of parental choices it is important to first consider the context in which parents select a school.

Parents face a range of schooling options that are determined by the interaction of several variables in a specific context. Figure 1 indicates the main variables.

Parents may increase their control over the range of school choices by selecting an area of residence that offers wide variety of options or by considering as feasible school options, those that may require transportation
Variables Affecting the Range of Schooling Options

- Educational laws, rules and regulations on school attendance and school finance
  - School district's size
  - Number and differentiation of schooling alternatives
    - Population's socio-economic heterogeneity
    - Available information: quality and quantity
      - Monetary accessibility of schools; price and availability of subsidies
      - Physical accessibility of schools: proximity of each school option
  - RANGE OF CHOICE OF SCHOOLING OPTIONS
    - Student's characteristics and abilities: physical, mental
    - Family's characteristics:
      - Ethnicity
      - Values
        - Cultural background
        - Income
      - Socio-economic status: Occupation, Education
      - Parents' marital status
      - Family size: Number of children, Number of other dependents
arrangements. Additionally they may set up their own school or alternative programs within established schools. Finally, they may decide not to send their children to school, and satisfy the law by teaching them at home.

Parental choice is the expression of a behavior that emerges from the interrelationship of attitudes, character traits and environmental determinants. The parent's desire for control over the child's education and the range of choice of schooling options will determine if a parent's choice behavior is active or passive.

The Problem, Guiding Hypotheses and Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine school choice behavior of parents through an empirical case study. It will focus on parents living in Coquitlam, B.C., who can choose from three different elementary school programs. Within the public school system parents can choose to enrol their children either in the English Program as determined by the Provincial Ministry of Education or the French Immersion Program as implemented by the Coquitlam School Board and approved by the Provincial Ministry of Education. As well, the private school system offers a religious (Roman Catholic) and bilingual (French and English) program. There are two such schools in Coquitlam.

Parents living within the Coquitlam school district boundaries are facing these alternatives and they are making either active or passive choices.

For this study, passive choice is defined as the behavior of parents who, based on the criteria of proximity, have considered only one school and have chosen a program with no deliberation on the alternative one.
In contrast, active choice is defined as the behavior of parents who select a school and:
- consider one school only but for reasons(s) other than proximity.
- consider more than one alternative school.
- choose a program after deliberating over alternative ones.

In order to examine parent's school choice behavior two questions were initially posed: first it seemed interesting to identify which parents actively choose a school for their children? In what ways do active choice parents differ from passive choosers? Second, why do parents choose a school for their children? Passive choice parents exert their choice by considering only one alternative school. Why do they consider just one alternative? Active choice parents generally consider several alternative schools. What stimulates these parents' search?

Finally, the decision-process that parents follow to exert their choice is analyzed. How do active and passive parents choose? Which is their information source, how do they process the information, who participates in the decision process, what are the criteria used in the final selection?

In order to isolate the effect of parental choice from family choice only parents enrolling children in pre-school and kindergarten were considered. It was felt that young children would have only minimal influence over the school selected.

Which parents actively choose a school for their children? Some parents introduce their children to day-cares, play-schools, pre-schools before formal school starts. Still, most parents choose a school for their children when their offspring reach the age of five and are enrolled in kindergarten. From then on, parents go on choosing either by keeping their children in
the same school or by enrolling them in another institution.

In general, throughout British Columbia public elementary schools are located so that students have walking access to them. Therefore, the public neighborhood school usually becomes the first alternative parents consider. In Coquitlam, five public elementary schools offer two different programs: English and French. Parents sending their children to these schools then have to make a choice of programs. Parents may also choose from outside the public school system. The two private Roman Catholic schools offer a different program: religious and bilingual education. These are the choices the educational market offers to parents in the Coquitlam school district.

A number of social scientists concerned with family choice in schooling suggest that parents are rational consumers. Therefore, given the possibility of choice (existence of educational alternatives), parents will select that school that maximizes the family's expected net benefits, given family's preferences, income and other resources constant. This line of thought is based on the following assumptions:

- parents have clear educational philosophies and expectations from schools.
- parents are informed about the alternative options they have.
- education is a good for private consumption.

In general, these assumptions would tend to be true the higher socioeconomic level of the parents. Better educated parents tend to have clearer purposes for the education of their offspring, have better access to information either because they have "better connections", better access to the media, feel more secure to inquire or visit schools, or if better education is coupled with higher income, because they may have more time to invest
in gathering the information. Better educated and higher income parents will tend to perceive education as a tool for making a living and a ways of acquiring knowledge for its own sake. This position, argued by Benson (1965) and Levin, (1968), was discussed in detail in the Literature Review.

One could expect the previous consideration to become true the higher the socio-economic level of the family. Yet, if there is a strong value like religious preference or ethnicity (i.e. Native Indian Groups), or a specific culture (i.e. "Hippie Culture" in which usually high education level is linked to low economic level) the hypothesis of greater parental choice in schooling as positively related to SES, would not necessarily hold true.

According to the above arguments the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 1**

The degree of parental choice in schooling (PCS) measured as the percentage of parents who exert an active choice in schooling for their children, will be greater the higher the parents' socio-economic status (SES) given the same amount and quality of information available (I).

\[
PCS = F(SES) \quad I = k = constant
\]

Other questions related to this hypothesis are:

A) Can a proportion of passive choice be due to a previous search of the market, i.e. search done for older siblings?

B) What percentage of parents enrolling their children in the English Program considered the alternative French Program?

*How Do Parents Choose a School for Their Children?*

In order to answer this question a decision-process model based on Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968) and Sonnenfeld (1973) was adapted, (See Figure 2).
In this case study the stimulus is the need parents feel to send the child to kindergarten. Then, the problem is stated, which school? Next they search for and evaluate alternative schools. To do this parents have to process information on the alternative schools. Exposure, attention, comprehension and retention will be steps in information processing. The range of school alternatives considered will be determined by the variables previously discussed. (See Figure 2)

Most parents nowadays consider kindergarten as a fundamental educational experience. Although kindergarten attendance in B.C. is not compulsory, a majority of the students enrolled in grade 1 were voluntarily sent to kindergarten the previous year. Thus, when the child reaches the age of five in B.C., parents feel the need to choose a school.

How extensive is the range of choices parents have? The search for possible alternatives is somewhat restricted. The family cannot change the existing provincial school laws nor the rules and regulations set up by the Ministry of Education, the School Board and the schools. Changes
in the public school system are difficult. A parent's initiative to be successful needs organized action, lobbying, access to policy-makers and/or economic-political power. It is easier for parents to influence private than public schools. Still results will depend on a group of active concerned parents that push in order to achieve their objective. However change needs time and parents enrolling their child will have to accept the established procedures. Thus, the number of schools available and the amount and quality of information parents receive from the School Board and the schools is limited in the short run.

Monetary accessibility in the short run is determined by school fees and available subsidies. Private schools can be more or less accessible depending on how expensive their fees are and if alternative ways of financing are available to parents. In some cases parents will move their residence close to "the right kind of school" when it is time for the child to attend school.

Tiebout (1956) states that families choose the district in which they live considering the kinds and levels of local public service and taxes. Thus the family locates in the district that provides the tax service package that maximizes its net benefit. Schools, transportation, medical care are among the public services offered, (Benson, 1975, pp. 98-101). Do families "shop around" for public services before moving into a neighborhood?

Uchitelle and Nault (1977) found that:

Over half the parents interviewed reported that one reason why they moved into Collegeville was the good reputation of the schools. (p. 7)

Would this be true in the case of a more heterogenous population than the one studied by Uchitelle and Nault? Factors such as values, socio-
economic status, family characteristics, parents' access and ability to use information, specific characteristics of the child are already determined at the start of the school choice process and will certainly influence the search and the final decision. Parental values play a determining role. They affect the processing of information, influence the perception of alternatives and the perception of what the child needs. I believe that parents will be more receptive to information on schools that they perceive to be close to their expectations. Critical differences among schools may develop when a parent considers subtle things such as the school environment, the peer group, the principal's personality, the staff's attitude or more concrete things as fees, program, religious education, or facilities.

Finally, parents' values will also affect the perception of a child's needs. Discipline, moral education, art or outdoor education may be "prescribed" by the parents for their children according to what they perceive as the child's "needs".

The effect of socio-economic status in determining the range of options considered was discussed to introduce hypothesis 1. Income level, education and occupation were said to have strong influences. Likewise, there are family characteristics that could narrow the range of choices. For instance, a family burdened with economic problems may disregard private schooling or busing without considering subsidization policies.

Consumer theory assumes good access to information. In reality this is not always easy. The generation of information on schools, their programs, philosophies and staff is only a first step. Yet it is not sufficient to insure that parents receive and use the information supplied. The effectiveness of the message can be diminished by language difficulties,
population mobility and quick changes in the characteristics of a neighborhood. Greater Vancouver has had exceptional changes in the last twenty years. Population has grown, new suburbs have developed. Presently, almost 30% of the residents of Greater Vancouver do not speak English as their mother tongue. In addition, the population is extremely mobile. For example, 40% of Vancouver's (municipality) population has lived in their dwelling for less than two years (Statistics Canada, 1971). So, parents' access to information may be affected by their knowledge of English, the number of years they have lived in the neighborhood, their exposure to people and the media and the characteristics of the neighborhood.

Considering all the above the following hypothesis is stated.

**Hypothesis 2**

The degree of parental choice in schooling (PCS) will be greater the greater the parents' access and ability to use information (PI); that is the better the parents' mastery of English (E), the greater the number of sources of information they have contact with (C), given schooling alternatives (S) and the same amount and quality of information available (I).

\[
PCS = f(PI) = (E, C) \quad S = k_1 \quad I = k_2
\]

\[
K_1 \text{ and } K_2 = \text{constants}
\]

Other questions related to this hypothesis were posed in order to learn more about the decision process:
a) What are the main sources of information about schools and programs used by parents?

b) Who participates in the decision making process?

c) Who makes the final decision?

d) What is the country of origin of parents in the sample?

e) What are the main reasons for choosing a house in the area?

In addition to the degree of parental choice exerted it is interesting to know what criteria parents use to select schools. Do parents choose by using definite criteria?

The public school of choice advocates anticipate that families offered choices will select schools which match their preferences for the content and structure of schooling. (Uchitelle and Nault, 1977, p. 15)

Do criteria for school selection vary with socio-economic status? Are the determining criteria based on practical or educational considerations?

Social scientists have demonstrated that behaviors differ greatly in different social strata and subcultures of society. (Hollingshead and Radlich, 1958, p. 9)

Uchitelle and Nault (1977) working with a population of parents "unusually well-educated" as they report, found that over two-thirds of the parents used their choice opportunities to select the school they felt was most suited for their child. The cluster of parents studied, appeared most concerned in making their choice about the nature of the school and the classroom environment to which their child would be exposed. (p. 35)

Their conclusions report that the class and school climate (defined in large part by teacher behavior) to which the child would be exposed was their (the parents') major choice criterion. (p. 35)
It can be said that this study confirmed the predictions of the advocates of public school of choice.

Parental choice in schooling as a behavior will be influenced by the parents' values, which in turn will be influenced by social class; the choice of a school will be determined by what the parent wants for his child. Kohn (1969) reports that data collected for a study across the U.S.A. and a similar study done in Turin, Italy, show a similar relationship of social class to parental values.

Middle class parents put greater emphasis on children's self-direction, working-class parents on their conformity to external standards. (Kohn, 1969, p. 46)

Furthermore, educational administrators concerned with choice in the public schools expressed that parents usually have clearer ideas of what they wish to avoid in a school than what the school should be like. Is there congruence in the criteria for choosing a school or program and the criteria for avoiding it? When choosing a school (either passively or actively) parents have certain criteria. If this is the case the criteria that influence a parent's selection of schools could be one of more of the following:

(1) Location of the School
   - distance from the school
   - safety of the route
   - proximity of the school to after school child care

(2) Costs
   - direct costs (tuition, fees)
   - indirect costs (transportation fees, lunch costs)
   - induced costs (peer group)
   - opportunity costs (parents' time spent driving to school)

(3) Social and Physical Environment of the School
   - motive of the student body, sibling's and friend's
   - atmosphere of the school
   - school's physical plant
(4) School's Program
- general pedagogical approach
- unique course offerings (i.e. religious education, French instruction)
- quality of the teaching staff

(5) Child's Personality, Capabilities and Interests.
As this list of criteria may be incomplete the parent's questionnaire included both an open and a closed ended question. The following hypotheses are stated:

**Hypothesis 3**

Parents choose (actively or passively) a school for their children according to certain criteria, (CR).

PCS = F (CR)

**Hypothesis 4**

The influence of certain criteria in the final school selection varies according to the parent's socio-economic level. It is predicted that high SES parents consider that social and physical school environment, school's program, and child's personality are important factors in determining school choice. In contrast one would expect school choice of low SES parents affected mainly by location of the school and costs.

A related question is stated: What is the "mean price" (measured in terms of distance and transportation means) that active parents are willing to "pay" for the desired schooling?
CHAPTER IV
METHODOLOGY

Selection of the Research Setting

Two conditions were established in selecting a setting. First, the school district where the study was to be carried out should offer parents a clear choice within the public elementary school system and also have private schools established in the area. Second, if possible, the population living in the area should be socio-economically heterogeneous.

A phone survey was done to determine which school districts in the lower mainland of British Columbia offered choices within the public elementary school system. In general the response was that there was no choice, students were supposed to enrol in the school closest to their home. A few school districts (i.e. Vancouver, Surrey, North Vancouver) allow students to cross boundaries. But three conditions must be fulfilled. a) that parents have "good reasons" for their petition; b) that the requested school has space; and c) that the corresponding administrators be informed about the case. In some districts the change involves both the principal of the school the child was supposed to be in and the principal of the requested school. In other districts, in addition to both principals the central administration is also involved and is the one to give final approval. Thus, if a parent really wishes to send his/her child to a specific public school he/she can do so only by going through some red tape. However, not many parents are aware of the possibility as school boards do not publicize their policy on this matter.

Coquitlam School Board became the focus of attention as it offered
two distinctly different programs: English and French instruction. Although students enrolling in the English program are usually expected to enrol in the school closest to their home, they may select another school in consultation with both principals. Furthermore some students attending French Immersion Programs do come from outside the usual school's catchment area. In addition, two Roman Catholic private elementary schools are established within the Coquitlam School District's boundaries. As school fees are low ($10-15/month for a child enrolled in kindergarten) and there are subsidies, for those in need, parents may consider these schools with almost no monetary restraints. Consequently, parents in Coquitlam can choose from a variety of schools and programs.

Generally the population living within the Coquitlam School District's boundaries is of middle socio-economic level. But there are pockets of low and others of high socio-economic level families. Of the seven schools that were considered two are located close to low SES areas and one in a high SES area. So, the main conditions initially stated, school choice availability and SES heterogeneity, are met by the Coquitlam School District.

Once the school district was chosen permission to do the research was sought from the Board of School Trustees of Coquitlam and from the principals of the two private schools. Permission was granted and a high degree of cooperation was received from the principals.
The Area

Coquitlam School District includes three municipalities: Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody. Total population in 1971* was: 84,488 (Coquitlam, 53,073, Port Coquitlam 19,560, Port Moody 10,788, other areas 1,088). When comparing occupations in these three municipalities to the Greater Vancouver Regional District as a whole a similar occupational pattern can be seen. However, a higher percentage of individuals is engaged in secondary rather than tertiary industry. (See Table 1)

Family income in this area also follows the average trend for Metropolitan Vancouver. For 1971 average total family income in Metropolitan Vancouver was $10,664. Figures for the three municipalities were: Coquitlam $10,987, Port Coquitlam $10,441, and Port Moody $10,306. (Lioy, 1875, p. 89)

The following maps show graphically the distribution of average household income, education, occupation, housing value and ethnicity for Coquitlam School District. The last map shows the distribution of a composite value that combines the previous five variables. (See Figures 3-8 respectively)

The seven schools included in the study are shown on the map. From this map the general socio-economic characteristics of each school's

*The 1971 census was used because it was the most recent data available. However, recent land subdivisions have attracted new people to the area and this may affect the overall socio-economic composition of the population.
Table 1

Labour Force by Industries by Municipality, 1971*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary**</th>
<th>Tertiary***</th>
<th>Not Stated</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Males</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
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<td>10.5</td>
<td>79.3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>23.2</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><strong>Coquitlam:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>78.0</td>
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<td>62.2</td>
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<td><strong>Port Moody:</strong></td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>61.7</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: Lioy, 1975, p. 82-84.
** Secondary industry = manufacturing, construction, processing.
*** Tertiary industry = transportation, communication, trade, finance, community, business and personal services, public administration and defence.
COQUITLAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMPOSITE OF FIVE VARIABLES (INCOME, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, HOUSING VALUE, ETHNICITY)

FIGURE 8: COMPOSITE OF INCOME, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, HOUSING VALUE AND ETHNICITY
catchment area can be easily appreciated.

The Schools

I visited the seven selected schools and interviewed each of the principals. The object of these interviews was to collect information on the alternative choices parents could make. Interviews were structured and followed a predesigned questionnaire (See Appendix A). From the interviews a description of the schools in terms of enrollment, class size, teacher qualifications, program, curriculum, textbooks, facilities, parent participation, information provided to parents before enrollment, average student's socio-economic level, and extra-curricular activities was obtained. Information requested was of the kind that would help parents in the area to better select a school.

The Population

Parents enrolling their children in the five elementary public schools that offer both English and French programs and those enrolling their children in the two private schools were considered as the target population. It was felt that the older the children the more they could influence the final selection of schools. So, in order to isolate parental choice of schooling, only parents enrolling their children in preschool (only one school) or kindergarten (all seven schools) for the year 1977-78 were considered.

Student's addresses were obtained from the school principals. In all there were 311 students. Due to parents enrolling a child in more than one school or enrolling more than one child in the same school the number of parents was reduced to 300.
Method of Collecting Data

Before determining the size of the sample the method for collecting data was considered. The dilemma was whether to conduct personal interviews or to send out questionnaires. Although interviews are, in some ways, a more precise instrument than questionnaires as they allow a variety of responses that usually cannot be predicted when designing the instrument, they were rejected because of time constraints. As a result it was decided to collect data through a self-administered questionnaire. As the core of the questionnaire would touch on personal values and attitudes it was felt that greater flexibility in the responses could be achieved by including both structured and open ended questions.

Pilot Test of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed based on the guiding hypotheses in the study. This instrument was pre-tested in a sub-urban community similar to Coquitlam. The population's characteristics in the testing sample were similar to those of the actual one.

The questionnaire was distributed to 14 parents. Instructions were given to the respondents to record the amount of time spent in answering and to comment on any ambiguous questions. All parents that were approached responded.

As a result of the testing of the draft questionnaire some questions were reworded. Two questions were dropped as there was little variation in the answers to them.

The length of the questionnaire was considered adequate as respondents reported having taken an average of 25 minutes to complete it.
Envelopes containing the following items were mailed first class to each of the parents who were enrolling children in pre-school or kindergarten in one of the seven schools included in the study:

A covering letter signed by the researcher that introduced the questionnaire and asked parents to complete it. This stressed the anonymity and confidentiality of the responses (Appendix B).

A covering letter signed by the Coquitlam Superintendent of Schools, for those parents patronizing public schools. This communicated the Board of School Trustee's approval of the study and stressed that participation was voluntary and anonymous (Appendix C).

The Questionnaire (Appendix D).

A self-addressed and prestamped envelope for parents to return anonymously the answered questionnaire.

Two weeks after the questionnaires were mailed a 33% response rate was reached. In order to accelerate responses 220 reminder letters were mailed (Appendix E).

After a period of two months, of the 300 mailed questionnaires, 185 responses and 5 undelivered questionnaires had been returned. As a result the final rate of return was 63%. A chart showing the incoming flow of questionnaires is presented in Appendix F.

Questionnaires were mailed at the end of June 1977. The timing of the distribution may have affected the rate of return. On the one hand the questionnaires reached parents at the time they had just made their school choice and the issue was still alive. This may have encouraged them to answer. On the other hand many respondents may have neglected the petition as they were preparing or already gone for their summer holidays.
### Table 2

Population and Sample Size by Schools and Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Parents in sample n</th>
<th>Responses by program n</th>
<th>Total Responses n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Eng. K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fr. K</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fr. K</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Eng. K</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fr. K</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Eng. K</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fr. K</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Eng. K</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fr. K</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other schools**

|                     |       |                 |                      |                       |                  |
|                     |       |                 | %                   | %                      |                  |
| **Total**           | 311   | 300             | 100%                |                       | 185              |

68.
The questionnaire was first drafted based on the key questions that were to be studied:

* Which parents actively choose a school for their children?
* How do parents choose a school?

After the first draft of the questionnaire I was made aware of Uchitelle and Nault's recent study on parental school choice behavior, in which data were collected by interviewing parents. As a result the questionnaire was influenced by Uchitelle and Nault's interview guide.

The first question aimed at identifying the relationship of the respondent to the child. The covering letter asked that the questionnaire be completed by the person in the family closest to the child.

The next two questions aimed at determining the number of children living at home and for whom the respondent is responsible and the place the child being enrolled in kindergarten occupies among the children in the family.

Questions 4-7 aimed at identifying the school and program the child was enrolled in and whether parents had considered before enrolling the child other alternative schools and programs.

Choosing a school other than the nearest to home has its "price". This could be measured as the cost in time and money of driving the child to school and the greater risk of accidents if the child is to go by him/herself. In order to determine the "price" parents were willing to pay respondents were asked to identify the distance between their house and the school and the means by which the child would usually get to school.
To describe the decision process model of parental choice, respondents were asked to identify the participants in the decision and the people who actually made the final decision (questions 9 and 10). Further, questions were addressed to determine the sources of information on schools and programs used (question 14-16).

In order to identify the criteria used in selecting a school three questions were included:

1) An open ended question asked parents to give reasons for their choice of school and programs (question 8).

2) A Likert Scale was constructed including 18 factors that people might consider when choosing a school. Respondents were asked to rank each item according to its importance. The scale constructed from 1-5 assigned 1 as very important and 5 very unimportant. The list of factors was adopted from the list of reasons used in the Uchitelle and Nault Study (interview guide, p. 2).

3) A last question aimed at identifying things that parents wish to avoid and therefore could influence the decision. For greater comprehensiveness the question was left open ended. Since part of the literature reviewed indicated a strong relationship between socio-economic status and access to information and better schooling (Benson, 1965, and Levin, 1968), it was felt that a socio-economic description of active choice parents might be of interest. Questions were addressed to identify the parents' educational level, occupation, ability to speak English, and birthplace. In addition parents were asked to report the main language spoken at home.
Questions relating to household income are touchy. In order to avoid a negative feeling towards the questionnaire housing value was used as a proxy variable. Respondents were asked to identify the street in which they lived and the street at the nearest corner. For reasons of confidentiality they were asked to omit their home number. This information was then used to identify the corresponding census tract. The respondent's house value was estimated by using the 1971 census that reports average housing value for each census tract.

As one of the hypotheses stated that the degree of parental choice would be greater the longer the parents' residence in the neighborhood, respondents were asked to report the number of years they had lived in B.C. and in the present house. Greater mobility was felt to be negative as it could limit parent's knowledge of available schooling opportunities.

Tiebout's (1956) theory of district choice according to kinds and levels of local public service and taxes was tested through the last question. A Likert Scale with 8 items was constructed to include the main reasons parents could consider to move into a neighborhood. Respondents were asked to rate each item from 1 to 5, 1 being very important and 5 very unimportant.

The following chart shows the relationship established among the hypotheses and guiding questions and each one of the items included in the questionnaire.
Guiding Hypotheses and Questions

Questionnaire Item Number:

Hypotheses 1:

PCS = f (SES) 4; 5a; 5b; 6; 7; 18; 19; 20; 21; 30.

1a) Can a proportion of passive choice be due to a previous search of the market? 2; 3; 4; 5b; 6; 7.

1b) What percentage of parents enrolling their children in the English Program considered the alternative French Program? 5a; 5b.

Hypotheses 2:

PCS = f (I) = f (E,C) 4; 5a; 5b; 6; 14; 15; 16; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27;

2a) What are the main sources of information about schools and programs used by parents? 14; 15; 16.


2c) Who makes the final decision? 10; 1.

2d) What is the country of origin of parents in the sample? 25; 26; 27.

2e) What are the main reasons for choosing a house in the area? 31.

Hypotheses 3:

PCS = f (cr) 8; 13; 17.

Hypotheses 4:

The influence of certain criteria in the final school selection varies according to the parent's socio-economic level. 8; 13; 17.

4a) What is the "mean price" that active parents are willing to "pay" for the desired schooling? 11; 12.
CHAPTER V
THE SCHOOLS

An active choice of schooling is based on knowledge about the possible alternative schools available. In order to collect information about the schools included in the study, I interviewed school district personnel and the principals of each of the seven schools. The information was collected trying to take a parent's point of view. Thus, questions were designed to elucidate similarities and differences among public and private schools, and French and English programs, and to compare the different public schools in the sample. The analysis that follows in this chapter is based upon data collected in those interviews. All claims are the result of principal's points of view.

There are only two private schools in the area of the Coquitlam School District, Schools 1 and 2. Both schools are located within the Coquitlam Municipality and are relatively close to each other.

Some distinctive features of the two private schools are:

* religious education (Roman Catholic)
* bilingual education for all students (French and English)
* fees are paid by the parents (average monthly kindergarten fee per student: $12.50)
* average total school enrollment: 167 students
* average kindergarten class size: 16 students
* most of the teachers possess a B.C. teaching certificate (1 teacher out of 9 does not have any certification)
* both schools follow provincial curricular guidelines
* both schools are structured; children are assigned to each class level according to their ages
* strong parental participation
* small classes permit closer student supervision.

There are five public elementary schools that offer both French Immersion and the English program in the Coquitlam School District: two in
Coquitlam Municipality, one in Port Moody and two schools in Port Coquitlam.

Some distinctive features of these five schools are:

* non-denominational education
* students may receive their instruction either in English or French
* "free" (parents pay through taxes only)
* average total school enrollment: 465 students
* average French kindergarten class-size - 20 students
* all teachers possess a B.C. teaching certificate
* schools follow provincial curricular guidelines
* four of the five schools offer a traditional structured program: students are assigned to each class level according to their age.
* all five schools use ability groupings within each classroom usually to teach language arts and mathematics
* some parental participation

One school must be discussed separately. Of all seven schools studied, School 7 is the one that offers parents and students the greatest choice. It has a French Immersion and an English Program. The French Program is administered through a traditional system. Within the English Program parents can choose to enrol their children either in a traditional or an open area program. Open area programs are offered for grades 1 and 2 and 5, 6 and 7. In this latter group one can find children working in multiple groupings. In addition instruction is individualized through performance contracting.

A comparison of French Immersion and English Programs shows that the contents of both programs are the same, the only difference being the language of instruction. Also, the French Immersion curriculum is the same for all five schools. Teachers have a choice of materials but they tend to use the same textbooks in all five schools. In the French Immersion Program, total instruction in French is offered in kindergarten, grade 1 and 2. Instruction in English and French starts in
grade 3. Children from French Immersion Programs who finish elementary school may continue having 50% of their instruction in French in grades 8 and 9, by going to Como Lake High School. This will probably be extended to grade 12 as there is a commitment from the board to continue the program.

The two private schools follow a different scheme for instructing in French. The following chart compares French instruction in all seven schools.

Table 3
Percentage of French Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Public Schools</th>
<th>Private School 1</th>
<th>Private School 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre-school</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, in Coquitlam, children going to French Immersion programs offered by public schools ultimately have more instruction in French than those going to private schools.

Information collected for each school is summarized in the following pages. It is intended to help parents who have to make a choice. Therefore, most of the information about each school can be compared to that of the other schools. In some cases though, the conversation with a principal brought in different aspects of a school which have no parallel information. Still they are included to increase available information on schools.
Interviews with Principals

School: No. 1 (private)

Students: Coeducational;

Total enrollment: 160
Number of Pre-school classes: 2
Number of kindergarten classes: 1
Students in each pre-school class: 15
Students in kindergarten: 18
Students' SES: low 10%
               middle 75%
               high 15%

Personnel: Teachers: All teach in English and French 9
Kindergarten Teachers: (teaches both pre-school groups - twice a week each - and kindergarten)
Number of years in the school:
   principal: 9
   teachers (average) 4.6

Qualifications:
B.C. Certificate: 6
certified in other provinces 2
non-certified: (11 years experience and two years of University courses) 1

Curriculum: Religious Roman Catholic and bilingual school. English and French languages are taught. B.C. curriculum is followed for English instruction; own French Program, which is different from French Public Schools Program.
The school is structured: children are assigned to grades according to their age level.

There are no multiage activities.

Classes are small, so enrichment programs can be provided, and special attention can be given to students who have difficulties.

Facilities: Good: The school has science equipment that has been donated by the parents. Other equipment include Xerox machine, film and overhead projectors.

The school has its own library and gymnasium.

It has access to the Coquitlam Learning Resource Centre and uses it every week.

Among the equipment the school would need are a machine for showing video-tapes and more cassettes.

Facilities could accommodate 100 more students.

Parent Participation: Parents are very active. They meet every two months; 50% of the parents participate in the meetings. Meetings are called to listen to guest speakers on: psychological issues, Bill 33, drugs, school library.

Parents also organize outings, pay for the transportation, organize swimming lessons, hot-dog sales and block parenting.

Transportation: 30% of the children are transported to school.

The school provides no transportation.

Information Available: The school actively seeks new students. Advertisements are placed in the local newspapers (i.e. The Columbian, The Enterprise), as well as in the church bulletin.

Parents are informed about the school when they phone, and later
they receive written forms from the school.

Cost and Financial Aid: Kindergarten fee per month: $15.00. Students whose parents cannot pay the monthly fee are subsidized by their local parish. In turn, their parents are asked to work at bingo or with the parish organization.

Four scholarships are available for the four best students (two boys and two girls) from the Catholic Woman's League: $50.00 awards are given to each student towards their school fee.

School: No. 2 (Private)

Students: Coeducational;

- Total enrollment: 175
- Number of kindergarten classes: 2
- Students in each K class: 15
- Students' SES: low -
- middle 100%
- high -

Personnel: Teachers: French: 7

- English: 2
- Total: 9

Kindergarten teachers: 1

Number of years in the school:

- principal 2
- teachers (average) 5.5

Personnel's qualifications:

- B.C. Certificate: 8
- non-certified (11 years experience) 1
Curriculum: Roman Catholic and bilingual school, English and French languages are taught. The B.C. curriculum is followed; the school is structured; children are assigned to grades according to age level. A special crafts program is held one hour a week during six weeks. Students in grades K-3 and 4-7 are redistributed according to their interests.

Classes are small; students with special needs receive individual attention.

Textbooks used: English: books provided by the Department of Education of B.C. French: Serie Feuille de'Erable.

Facilities: Good: The school has its own library. Whenever possible, it uses the Coquitlam Learning Resource Centre.

There is a need for a new gymnasium.

Facilities could accommodate 40 more students.

Parent Participation: Parent's Club met three times during the year 76-77, to learn about: administrative rules of the school, Bill 33, and prepare for graduation, Sports Day and outings.

Parents help with transportation and building repairs.

Transportation: 27 children (15%) are transported to school every day by their families. The school has no bus.

Information Available: Advertisements are placed on the church bulletin. Parents are informed about the school when they phone.

Cost and Financial Aid: Kindergarten fee per month: $10.00. Students whose parents cannot pay the monthly fee are subsidized by the local parish. In turn, their parents are requested to participate in Bingo nights. In general, subsidies are $5.00 per child per month or $7.00 per two or more children a month. 45% of the students get some kind of aid. Only 3% of the students get a complete subsidy.
**School:** No. 3 (public)

**Students:** Coeducational:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total enrollment:</th>
<th>420</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students enrolled in French Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K - g.7:</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of kindergarten classes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total | 4 |

**Number of students in each K class:** 15

**Students' SES:**

- low: 60%
- middle: 38%
- high: 2%

The area is composed of a large transient population, mainly because of low rental housing. There is a large welfare group and many split-up parents. Interaction among students of both programs is common.

**Personnel: Teachers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total (F.T.E.) | 19 |

**Number of kindergarten teachers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of years in the school:

principal 1

teachers: (average) 4.5

Personnel's Qualifications: B.C. Certificate: all

Staff very amenable to the French and English programs. No conflicts about bilingualism.

Curriculum: Within this school there is a choice of programs: French or English. Both programs are taught from K - 7.

The French program is the oldest in Coquitlam school district. It was established nine years ago.

The school is structured, students are assigned to each grade according to their age level. In the primary grades (g. 1-3) level systems are used. Throughout all the grades ability groups are established within each class, mainly for teaching mathematics and language arts. Instruction is group oriented. Interest areas are established in each classroom to attend to individual needs.

Children in the English program in this school are more exposed to French than in a school which does not offer such a program. This results in a better attitude toward the French language.

Facilities: Average: There is an old building with a new annex attached to it. The new area accommodates only K, 1 and 2. Playing fields are inadequate. Two new adventure playgrounds have just been built.

A learning resource centre was just established.

Facilities could accommodate 30 more children.

The available equipment is adequate, although more video and 16 mm equipment would be useful.
Parent Participation: A Parent Auxiliary group meets informally basically to handle hot-dog sales, fund-raising, to supply coffee when required. The group is very dedicated. They meet mainly to coordinate activities, not to decide administrative functions. The group is not politically active.

Transportation: 3% of the children are transported specially into school by their parents. The school does not provide transportation. Since 1974, a Federal French grant provided money (20¢/mi.) for parents to transport their children to schools where a French Program was taught. This grant was discontinued in April, 1977.

Information Available: The school does not send out information. The French Program, has been established for several years now and is well known. Once parents enrol their children in kindergarten they get a brochure from the School Board and a briefing from the school. The majority of French kindergarten and 60% of the English kindergarten parents got a briefing on the school.

Several articles and programs have reported on this school's experience during the last year (i.e. CBC and Channel 10).

Cost and Financial Aid: Free

School: No. 4 (public)

Students: Coeducational;

Total enrollment: 424

Enrollment in French Program (K - 5) 86

Number of kindergarten classes:

French: 1

English: 1
Kindergarten enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students' SES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personnel: Teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (FTE)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Aids

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of kindergarten teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personnel's qualifications: All teachers have a B.C. Certificate, except for the French kindergarten teacher. In September, 1977, there will be a new French kindergarten teacher that is certified.

Number of years in the school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>(average) 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school has been structured up to this year. Within each classroom students are grouped according to their abilities. Instruction is individualized to a great extent in the Primary years. In September '77, students in the English Program in grades 1-2-3 will be regrouped according to their ability levels for language arts and mathematics.

Teachers set their own goals and programs. Instruction, expectations and standards are all internal in the classroom. Teachers can choose from two or three different Mathematics and Reading Programs.

A cultural program was held this year every Friday afternoon for six weeks. Students from grades 1-7 could choose among eight activities according to their interests.

A special enrichment program for gifted children will be developed starting September '77.

Facilities: Good: There is a very good learning centre. Children go there for enrichment and remedial work.

Parent Participation: A year ago parents and teachers worked together to establish goals for the school. Parents' interest was so high that a sample of parents had to be selected from all those involved. Due to parent's concern on academic standards, the learning resource centre became more specific in dealing with language arts and skills.

This year one meeting was called to deal with discipline.

There are 60 parents who constantly work as volunteers in the school. They help in the library, learning centre, classroom, P.E., music, drama, and field trips.

Transportation: Twelve children (2.5%) are transported to school from outside the area. Transportation costs were subsidized by the Federal Government.
Information Available: Information is provided to parents enrolling their children in kindergarten (both English and French). Parents are invited to a meeting in February to talk about both programs. Other meetings of the parents with the principal and the teachers are held in May. Then more information about the curriculum is handed out. An Open House is held in the evening so that working parents can attend. Other individual meetings are held with the parents on their request.

Children entering kindergarten the following year are invited to attend, for one hour, a regular session to get acquainted with the environment.

Information has been available to the public through special programs filmed by CTV, a program on CBC, and newspaper writings.

Cost and Financial Aid: Free.

School: No. 5 (public)

Students: Coeducational;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total enrollment:</th>
<th>496</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in French Program (K - 2)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of kindergarten classes:</td>
<td>1976-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten enrollment</td>
<td>1976-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French:</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English:</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students' SES:

low 10%
middle 65%
high 25%

Average working class district, few professionals; stable population.

Personnel: Teachers: 1976-77

French: 3.2
English: 19.1
Total (FTE) 22.3

In 1977-78, five teachers will be added to French program (kindergarten) and 15 will be taken away from the English program.

All teachers possess a B.C. Teaching Certificate.

Number of years in the school:

principal: 6
teachers: (average) 6

No resentment exists among French and English teachers.

Curriculum: This school offers a choice of programs: English or French. The French Program has been taught for three years. The coming year it will also absorb the students in the French Program at Miller Park Elementary School.

The school is structured. There are no multiage activities with the exception of grade 7 students helping with younger ones.

Most classes have ability groups within each class. Students are usually divided into three or four groups for this purpose. Teachers are concerned with individual differences, but instruction is not individualized.

The program is traditional: "spelling and the tables" are taught. Parents expect such a program.
For extra-curricular activities such as outings and swimming, students from both English and French programs go together.

Facilities: Facilities are good; although the layout of the school provides for inadequate storage and office areas.

There is a limited learning resource centre. It will be expanded next year.

This school is placed in a beautiful setting, beside a forest that includes two lakes.

The school has faced a decreasing enrollment in the past years. There is an available capacity for 100 more students.

Parent Participation: A parent group exists. Its activities are coordinated to the school's activities through a liaison group. The parent group is an informal group, that assists in activities such as: sports day, field trips, block parent programs.

The school calls parent meetings 2-3 times a year to discuss topics such as: core program, block parenting, school's philosophy, changes in the curriculum, and to hand out report cards. The few comments from the parents that have been received, have been taken into consideration.

Transportation: 60% of the students in the French Immersion kindergarten are transported by their parents to the school. This percentage diminishes to about 40% for French Immersion grades 1 and 2.

Four children are transported to special classes at this school. Special class children get free transportation from the school district.

Information Available: There is no formal information available to parents before they enrol their children. The school has a reputation. Parents are welcome to come and look at the school on an informal basis.
There has been some information given about the school in relation to a French concert that was held in the district for French Program schools.

**Cost and Financial Aid:** Free

**School:** No. 6 (public)

**Students:** Coeducational;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total enrollment:</th>
<th>1976-77</th>
<th>1977-78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French Program enrollment:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of kindergarten classes:</th>
<th>1976-77</th>
<th>1977-78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten enrollment:</th>
<th>1976-77</th>
<th>1977-78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English:</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the enrollment for the French Immersion kindergarten and g. 1 is small, it may be necessary to have a combined K-g. 1 class, for the year 1977-78.

**Students' SES:**

- low: very few
- middle: 80%
- high: almost none

Most of the children come from working and business parents. Some parents are engineers and accountants. There are almost no doctors or lawyers among the parents.
Personnel: Total FTE teachers: 22

For the coming year 1 or 1½ teachers will be included in the total of 22 for the French Program.

All the teachers are B.C. certified and are experienced.

Number of years in the school:

principal: 2

teachers (average) 4½ years.

Curriculum: The school is structured, except for one enrichment class that combined the best students from grades 5, 6 and 7. This group worked in an open area under one teacher. This special class worked well, but will not be carried on due to lack of personnel.

In the primary levels there are at least three ability groups within each class. Children in this school receive individual attention and individual help if needed, but instruction is not individualized.

The program is traditional: "We believe in repetition until the children learn the skills, specially in language arts and arithmetic".

The French Program will be offered at School No. 6 for the first time on September 1977 for kindergarten and grade 1.

Facilities: Good: It has all the necessary facilities and equipment.

There is a learning resource centre for the primary grades. A teacher is available every morning for children who need special help.

With the initiation of the French Program, the school will be used up to its complete capacity.

Parent Participation: Parents are very interested in cooperating with the school's activities. They are informally organized into a Parent Auxiliary. Their activities are mainly to raise funds, they help with Sports Day and
transportation and supervision for swimming and outdoor field trips.

The school fosters parent participation.

Transportation: Presently there are two special classes in the school. Of the children in the special classes five are transported by a school district bus.

Information Available: No written information is handed out to parents before they enrol their children. If requested by the parents, interviews with the principal are held. About 90% of the parents enrolling new children talk to the principal during the previous year. Usually those parents that enroll their children in September talk only to the secretary.

There has been information about the school delivered by the T.V. and local newspapers.

Cost and Financial Aid: Free.

School: No. 7 (public)

Students: Coeducational;

Total enrollment: 521

Enrollment in French Program: (K-g. 1) 36

Number of kindergarten classes:

French: 1

English: 2

Kindergarten Enrollment:

French: 19

English: 40

Total: 59
Students' SES:

- low: 15%
- middle: 60%
- high: 25%

The school is located in an above average SES area, population in general is stable. Transient children tend to come from the townhouses.

**Personnel:**

- Teachers:
  - French: 2
  - English: 20.5
  - Total (FTE): 22.5

- Teacher Aids:
  - French: 9 hrs./wk.
  - English: 2

- Monitor: French Program has one monitor from SFU who comes twice a week.

**Number of kindergarten teachers:**

- French: .5
- English: 1.0

All teachers possess a B.C. Teaching Certificate.

**Number of years in the school:**

- principal: 1
- teachers (average): 5

**Curriculum:** School No. 7 offers a variety of choices to parents enrolling their children. It offers a French and an English program. The French program is administered through a traditional system.

Within the English program, parents can choose to enroll their children either in traditional or an open area program.
The school is semi-structured. It is structured in terms of organization and expectations from students.

Open area programs are offered for grades 1 and 2 and grades 5, 6 and 7. In this latter group, one can find children working in multiage groupings.

Instruction is not individualized, children work in ability groups, for subjects such as reading, arithmetic and social studies.

In the open classroom for grades 5, 6 and 7 contracting with the students is used, thus tending instruction to be more individualized.

The program in the school is a mixture between a traditional program and new techniques.

Choice of programs to parents is limited by the number of students enrolling in each kind of setting.

Facilities: Average. The building was designed for open area instruction. It is not suitable for a mixed program. It has poor storage facilities.

More seminar rooms and larger storage areas would be needed.

As for equipment, there is a need for a video tape recorder, more reel to reel recorders and listening posts.

Given the present student/teacher ratio the school is used to its full capacity. In theory the building could accommodate 650 students which would mean 37 students/class.

Parent Participation: There is a mixture of staff attitudes towards parent involvement. For example on the French Program, kindergarten parents are frequently invited in, particularly those who are bilingual, whereas g. 1 parents participate less.

In general, parental involvement is high. There are 35-40 parents who help regularly in activities such as making posters, helping to mark, hearing youngsters read, in general all teacher aid functions. The school
encourages these activities.

The school is also a community school.

All parents are invited to participate in open houses, discussions about the core curriculum and block parent programs.

There are plans to expand the school's activities to parental education programs. Activities would be held for small groups in three week sessions, once a week.

Transportation: Only two children are presently transported specially into the school.

It is expected that more children will be transported for French kindergarten, starting this September '77.

Information Available: Information about the French Program is available to parents through the local press, the community school and parents who already have children in the school.

Parents are increasingly asking for information about the school.

Parents enrolling their children in the French Program ask for more information and have higher academic expectations than parents enrolling their children in the English Program. Only about 5% of the parents enrolling their children in the English Program ask for information.

Starting September '77 a school newsletter will be published to inform parents about schedules, behavior expectations, etc.

Local newspapers have written about activities held in the school.

Cost and Financial Aid: Free

The above is some of the information parents could get from the school system if they actively searched it. Few parents interview all principals from all the alternative schools they were considering. So how does this information reach most parents? What are the schools and the school board
doing in order to help parents choose the kind of education their children will get?

The following describes the information available to parents living in the area.

The Coquitlam School Board advertises in the newspapers the date for kindergarten registration and that parents can choose among English or French Program. Public schools send notes home with the older children asking parents to notify neighbors about kindergarten registration. In addition, a week before registration time, schools hold open houses so that parents can visit a kindergarten class and speak to the teachers.

The two private schools place advertisements on the Church Bulletin and inform parents when they phone. School No. 1, in addition, seeks students by placing advertisements in the local newspapers. Of all seven schools, the greatest effort to inform parents is made by School No. 4. Information is provided to parents enrolling their children in kindergarten (both English and French). In February, parents are invited to a meeting to talk about both programs. In May, other parent-principal and parent-teacher meetings are held to hand out more information about the curriculum. Also, an Open House is held in the evenings so that working parents can attend. Other individual meetings are held with parents on their request. Finally, children entering kindergarten the following school year are invited to attend for one hour a regular session to get acquainted with the environment. The French Immersion Program has also received publicity through the media. Newspapers, radio and T.V. have informed the public about the experience. Special events such as French concerts or projects have also been the focus of the press.
CHAPTER VI
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS*

Members of different social classes, by virtue of enjoying (or suffering) different conditions of life, come to see the world differently - to develop different conceptions of social reality, different aspirations and hopes and fears, different "conceptions of the desirable". (Kohn, 1969, p. 7)

The following chapter focusses on the analysis and interpretation of the data. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section includes the definition and operationalization of the variables - parental choice in schooling and parents' socio-economic status - and discusses the relationship between these two variables. In addition the relationship between degree of parental choice and each one of the SES components - mother's and father's education, father's occupation, and house-value is presented. The second section includes an analysis of the relationship between information and parental choice. Further, the use of sources of information, as reported by parents, is ranked. Chi-square analyses are presented between number of sources of information used and school choice, socio-economic status, and father's education. Finally, participants in the process of school choice are identified. The third section presents the criteria that refer to choice of school and program. An analysis of the relationship between the main criteria used in the selection of a

*Throughout this chapter reported percentages are rounded off to the nearest percent; therefore, they may not add up to one-hundred.
school and program and degree of choice as well as socio-economic status is presented. The fourth section refers to the "price", measured in terms of distance and means of transportation to school, parents are willing to pay, and its relationship to degree of choice and parents' socio-economic status. In addition, a rating of the main reasons for choosing a house in the area are presented. It is suggested that if parents move into an area attracted mainly by the availability of good schooling, then moving expenses should be considered as part of the "price" parents are willing to pay for education. A summary of the main findings ends the chapter.

Relationship Between Socio-Economic Status and Parental Choice:

The intent of the following analysis is to trace the relationship between socio-economic status of parents and their reported school choice behavior. The expected relationship between these two variables is formulated through:

**Hypothesis 1**

The degree of parental choice in schooling (PCS) measured as the percentage of parents who exert an active choice in schooling for their children, will be greater the higher the parents' socio-economic status (SES), given the same amount and quality of information available (I).

Symbolically:

\[ \text{PCS} = f(\text{SES}) \quad I = k_1 = \text{constant} \]

In this formula SES is the independent variable, PCS the dependent variable and I is given and constant.

**The variables: definition and operationalization**

a. Parental choice in schooling (PCS):

Initially, following Sonnenfeld's model, parental choice in schooling was conceptualized as a dichotomous variable. As stated in Chapter
III, school choice was defined as either active or passive. Preliminary data analyses showed that parental choice was not dichotomous, but rather that it moved on a continuum as shown in Figure No. 9.

Figure No. 9
School Choice Behavior

Parents who answered the questionnaire are grouped on this continuum according to their answers to five questions that identified the school (question 4), and program the child is enrolled in (question 5a), whether parents considered the alternative program (question 5b) or other alternative school(s) before making the final selection (question 6), and the reasons for choosing a school and program (question 8). Consequently, parents (n = 185, unless otherwise stated) are grouped into three groups according to the degree of choice exerted:

(i) Passive or no choice: parents in this group exert no choice and enrol the child in the school closest to home without thinking of other possibilities. These parents represent 13% of the sample. Operationally:
* they enrol their child in the neighborhood public school (question 4 = 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7)
* they choose the English program (question 5a = 1)
* their reported criteria for choice are: proximity, access and opportunity (question 8A 01 = 1) or they report no explicit reason (question 8A 09 = 1)
* they select the English program without considering the alternative one (question 5b = 2) or they report no reason for choosing this program (question 8B E8 = 1)

(ii) Active, narrow choice: parents in this group exert a limited degree of choice. Basically, parents in this group consider only one school—the one they enrol their child in (question 6 = 2). This group of parents is the largest of the three and includes 49% of the sample. Parents are considered narrow active choosers if they report to do one of the following:
* they choose a public school (question 4 = 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7) and before selecting the French or English program (question 5a = 1 or 2) they consider the alternative one (question 5b = 1)
* they choose a public school (question 4 = 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7) and the French program (question 5a = 2) with no consideration of the alternative program (question 5b = 2)
* they choose a private school (question 4 = 1 or 2)

Parents who consider the French program only or just one private school are labelled active choosers. Their choice is not the ordinary one because it involves the influence of other criteria aside from proximity. Although they have considered one school and/or program only,
they presumably have done some deliberation before the final selection.

(iii) Active wide choice: parents in this group enrolled their children in a school only after considering one or more alternatives (question 6 = 1). The degree of parental choice in schooling is considered to be greater than the one exerted by the two previous groups. In order to select a school for their children these parents do a greater market search. They do not limit their choices to what is given to them, i.e. the neighborhood public school. They consider other alternatives. Active wide choice parents represent 32% of the total sample. Table 4 shows the proportion of parents in each group.

Table 4
Percentage of Parents Included in each Category of Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Choice</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No Choice: Passive</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Narrow Choice: Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English program, considered French</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French program, considered English</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French program, did not consider English</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private school</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Wide Choice: Deliberate Active:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English program, considered French</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French program, considered English</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French program, did not consider English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private school</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Missing Cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of parental choice by schools shows that in all public schools in the sample the majority of parents considered the alternative English and French program offered, but did not consider another school. Analysis of active parental choice by schools shows that private school parents (schools 1 and 2) exert a wider choice than public school parents (schools 3 to 7). Private school parents have considered one or more alternative schools more often than public school parents before enrolling their children in a school. Degree of choice, as previously defined, is wide for private school parents whereas it is narrow for public school patrons. Evidence of the above can be seen in Figure 10.

These findings may be partly a function of the sample. The fact that parents in public schools are compelled to make a choice between French and English programs may have resulted in a disproportionately large number of narrow active choosers than would otherwise be the case. Since the two private schools in the sample are Catholic, non-Roman Catholic parents may be discouraged from considering these private schools as alternatives because they do not share those religious beliefs. Parents may perceive the choice of program in the public schools as the only alternative available in Coquitlam. Finally, no traditional public school (one that offers English only) was included in the sample. Had it been included, changes in the proportion of passive, narrow active and wide active choosers could have occurred.
b. Parents' socio-economic status (SES);

For the purpose of the present research socio-economic status of parents is defined as a composite variable that includes:

* mother's educational level
* father's educational level
* father's occupation
* house value

As in Hollingshead's study (1958, p. 66) families are placed in socio-economic groups based on the following assumptions:

(1) that social stratification exists in the community;

(2) that status positions are determined mainly by a few commonly accepted cultural characteristics;

(3) that items symbolic of status may be scaled and combined by the use of statistical procedures so that a researcher can quickly, reliably, and meaningfully stratify the population.

Mother's and father's educational level (question 18) are each
Figure 10: Parental Choice by School

Percentage of parents in each school

Degree of choice

1 = passive choice
2 = narrow active choice
3 = wide active choice

School

private

public

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

each school
measured on a scale from 1-7, with 1 equivalent to complete elementary education and 7 to university post-graduate education.

Father's occupation (questions 20 & 21) is measured on a scale from 1-8, based on Pineo & Porter's occupational prestige scale for Canada (Pineo & Porter, 1967).¹

Mother's occupation is difficult to scale. Only 23% of the mothers in the sample are working (doing a task and receiving payment in cash for it). Ranking housekeeping in the scale became a problem. Therefore, this index was excluded from the SES scale.

House values (question 30) included in the sample vary from $13,000 to $46,000, as reported by Statistics Canada's 1971 census. These values are translated into a scale that ranges from 1 to 7 by dividing the difference between the highest and the lowest house value into seven equal categories. Thus, house value is scaled on a similar basis as education and occupation.

In order to form a socio-economic scale, the numbers of the various indices were added. As a result, the socio-economic scale used in the study ranges from 4-29.

In order to form a socio-economic index the numbers of the various indices are added as follows:

¹ Pineo and Porter replicated a study done in the United States by the National Opinion Research Centre, 1964. The research design which they adapted required all respondents to rank 204 occupational classes. These classes were: 1-unskilled; 2-semi-skilled; 3-skilled; 4-clerical and sales; 5-proprietors, managers and officials small; 6-proprietors, managers and officials large; 7-semi-professional; 8-professional.
As a result the socio-economic scale used in the research ranges from 4-29. In order to observe the relationships between socio-economic status and the other variables included in the study it is desirable to form, according to parents' SES score, groups with equal number of parents in each. As the SES scale is discrete (solutions with fractions are not possible) it is not possible to break the sample in three equal groups.

Instead, the distribution that forms three groups (as even as possible) is adopted, and the following SES groups defined:

(i) low: scale 4 - 15, which included 31% of the sample.
(ii) middle: scale 16 - 19, with 32% of the sample.
(iii) high-middle: scale 20 - 29 with 23% of the sample.

There are 14% of missing cases due to omissions in the data for one or more of the SES components, (see Figure 11).

To estimate the socio-economic class of one family one must know it's address, the parents' educational level and the father's occupation. For example, let us say that Joe Smith lives with his wife in an area in which average house value is $13,000; Mr. Smith has completed his elementary schooling and Mrs. Smith has finished grade 10; Mr. Smith is an unskilled laborer. On the other hand the Johnson's live in an area in which average
Figure 11: Socio-economic Distribution of the Sample

- 1 = low = 35.6%
- 2 = middle = 37.5%
- 3 = high-middle = 26.9%
house value is $35,000, Mr. Johnson is a high-school graduate, Mrs. Johnson has ten years of schooling and Mr. Johnson is a painter. A third family in the sample are the Williams who live in an area with an average house price of $30,000, Mr. Williams has completed college, Mrs. Williams finished high school and Mr. Williams is a salesman. Finally the Abbotts live in a $38,000 house, Mr. Abbott is a lawyer, who finished graduate school and Mrs. Abbott is a university post-graduate. The SES score of each family is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Smiths</th>
<th>Johnsons</th>
<th>Williams</th>
<th>Abbotts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's occupation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SES score</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the Smiths and Johnsons would be placed in the lower SES group, the Williams in the middle SES group and the Abbotts in the high-middle SES group. Some error may have been introduced in doing this arbitrary classification as the Johnsons with a score of 15 may be more similar to the Williams who have a score of 17 than to the Smiths who scored 5. This obviously introduces some error into the composite SES score. In spite of this error, the original twenty-three categories were collapsed into three in order to focus on possible patterns that the data could show. The result of reducing the number of categories is that the number of responses in each category increases thus permitting statistical analysis. As the range is smallest in the middle group chances of making an error are greater
when placing families in this group. For this reason, the developed SES measure is better for correlating SES with other measures.*

Pearson correlation coefficients (Appendix G) show that father's occupation ($r = .89$) and father's education ($r = .85$) are highly related to the family's SES. Next in importance is mother's education ($r = .72$). House value as an estimate of family income shows little relationship to SES ($r = .45$). There is a distortion effect as these coefficients are inflated as the composite SES index includes the variable involved in the correlation.

In order to calculate the descriptive statistics, each SES group is assigned a score: low = 1; middle = 2; high-middle = 3. Parents in the sample as a whole are on the average middle class ($M = 1.9$). Average SES scores by school range from 1.6 to 2.2. Following the same criteria by which the population is divided into three SES groups, schools in the sample can be classified as four serving below middle SES families and three serving above middle SES families. This, which may seem a contradiction to the average population's SES above reported, occurs due to the regrouping of parents by schools. Extreme values counterbalance in the total sample whereas these differences become apparent when analysing the patterns by school. The SES results by school are in accordance to the general characteristics of population in the area as reported by Statistics Canada (1971). An illustration of the above is presented in the histogram in Figure 12.

* Non response rates were: parent's education = 4%; father's occupation = 10%; mother's occupation = 3%; house value = 4%. The combination of these led to a 14% rate of missing SES cases.
Figure 12: Socio-economic Distribution by School

- □ = 1 = low SES
- □ = 2 = middle SES
- □ = 3 = high-middle SES

Percentage in the sample

1  2  3
   4  5  6  7
   8  9

1  2  3
   4  5

private

public

SES
School
Testing Hypothesis 1*

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is a positive relationship between parental SES and the degree of school choice. A cross-tabulation between variables was calculated to test this hypothesis. From Table 5 one can conclude that choice does not seem to change along with socio-economic status. In fact passive choice parents represent 14% of the low SES group, 18% of the middle group, and 10% of the high middle group. Also a comparison of Figures 10 and 12 shows that the lowest SES school does not have the greatest concentration of passive choosers. However, if only active choice parents are considered, narrow choice behavior tends to decrease as SES increases (61% to 39%), while wide choice behavior tends to increase along with SES (26% to 51%). When parental behavior of the high-middle SES group is analyzed one can conclude that there is a positive relationship between SES and parental choice. High middle class parents in the sample tend to show a more active behavior.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-middle</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2 = 7.79; \text{ d.f. } = 4; p < .10$ (a) row percentages add to 100%

* Throughout the following statistical analyses, actual levels of significance are reported, so that readers may derive their own conclusions.
The educational level of both parents is related to degree of school choice. Twenty out of twenty-four of the mothers who are passive choosers have up to twelve years of schooling. If the analysis is focussed on active choice parents only, wide choice is more predominant for mothers with one or more years of college, while narrow choice is more predominant for mothers who have up to high-school education (Table 6).

Table 6
Mother's Education and School Choice (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother's Education</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Wide</th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to high-school</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one or more years of post-secondary education</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 11.03; \ d.f. = 2; p < .01$  (a) row percentages add to 100%

Father's education shows a similar relationship to choice as mother's education. A high proportion of passive and narrow choice fathers have up to twelve years of schooling. On the other hand the majority of fathers who report a wide choice behavior have one or more years of post-secondary education (Table 7).

Distinct patterns appear when occupations are grouped into two categories, namely: wage and salary earners. Unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, clerical and sales workers form the first category. The second includes proprietors, managers, and officials of small and large enterprises, semi-professional, and professional workers. Although passive choice shows no relationship to father's occupation, there is a
Table 7
Father's Education and School Choice (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to high-school</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one or more years</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of post-secondary</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 16.75; \text{ d.f.} = 2; p < .001; \text{ (a) row percentages add to 100\% } \]

A positive relationship between the degree of active choice exerted and father's occupation. A high proportion of fathers from the low occupational category exerted a narrow choice. Fathers from the higher occupation category split almost evenly into a narrow and wide choice behavior. The relationship between parental choice and father's occupation is shown on Table 8.

Table 8
Father's Occupation and School Choice (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wage earner</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary earner</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Wide</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 5.05; \text{ d.f.} = 2; p < .10; \text{ (a) row percentages add to 100\% } \]

The fourth SES component is house value. It is included as an estimator of family income. Although passive choice shows no relationship to house value, there is a positive relationship between the degree of active choice and house value. The proportion of narrow choice
decreases as house value increases. On the other hand, the proportion of wide choice increases along with house value (Table 9). The chi-square test shows that there is 27% of probability that these results could have resulted from sampling error alone. In spite of this, house value is included as part of the SES composite following Hollingshead's (1958) study, "Social Class and Mental Illness". In his study he utilized residence, occupation and education in order to establish an Index of Social Position (p. 66-67).

Table 9
House Value and School Choice (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Value (thousands of dollars, 1971)</th>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 24</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 28</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 - 45</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 5.21; \text{d.f.} = 4; p < .27; \quad (a) \text{row percentages add to } 100\% \]

Two questions were stated along with Hypothesis 1.

Is a proportion of passive choice behavior due to a previous search of the market?

A previous search of the market implies an active choice behavior. In this study 26% of the children whose parents show a passive choice behavior are first born children. Thus 74% of passive choice parents may have done an active choice before. On the other hand, if only first born children are considered (47% of the sample) only 7% of parents are passive, 38% exert a narrow choice, and 54% exert a wide choice behavior \( x^2 = 32.6; \text{df.} = 10; p < 0.05 \).
The second question is:

What percentage of parents enrolling their children in the English program considered the alternative French program?

Parents enrolling their children in kindergarten are informed about both programs. While 50% considered both alternatives, 24% decided to enrol their children in the English program. The reasons for choosing a program are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Information and Parental Choice:

Information is the key to rational choice. Parents who deliberately wish to select a school or program have to collect information on the different alternatives. Thus, it becomes important to determine what are the sources parents usually tap in order to get information, and who are the people that participate in the decision making process and in the final decision.

Hypothesis 2 predicts the relationship between parent’s access and ability to use information and choice of schools in Coquitlam.

The degree of parental choice in schooling (PCS) will be greater the greater the parent’s access and ability to use information (PI): that is the better the parent's mastery of English language (E) and the greater the number of sources of information they have contact with (C), given schooling alternatives (S) and the same amount and quality of information available (I).

Symbolically:

\[
PCS = f(PI) = (E,C) \\
S = k_1 = \text{constant} \\
I = k_2 = \text{constant}
\]

Schooling alternatives (S) are arbitrarily defined as being the same for all families living within the Coquitlam School District. In some
instances this is not the case. In all, 6% of the parents considered schools established outside the district's boundaries. Most of these families live close to other school districts. They considered schools outside the Coquitlam School District because they were close to their homes. Only three respondents (2%) considered schools requiring a long drive. Furthermore, the two private schools in the district are economically if not philosophically reachable by all parents. Consequently, the assumption of equal schooling alternatives open to all families in the district is true for 94% of cases in the sample.

The second assumption, that the amount and quality of information available about schools in the district is the same for all parents can also be rationally sustained. As stated in Chapter V available information varies from school to school. The Coquitlam School Board informs all parents enrolling their children in Kindergarten about the availability of the French and English programs. In addition each school informs parents through different means. Some schools passively respond to parents who approach them (administration, principal and/or teachers); others actively inform prospective clients through newsletters, open houses, or teacher-parent conferences. Thus, information is available to all parents. Still, how much of this information reaches parents? How much is used? What variables affect the amount of information used by parents to select a school? Do wide active choice parents seek more information than passive choice parents? Some of these questions are answered below.

Most of the parents in the sample speak English at home (91%). Chi Square tests relating degree of choice to reported ability to speak
English proved to be non significant ($x^2 = 1.1; \text{d.f.} = 2; p < .58$).

Families who speak other than English at home use mainly French (6%), Chinese (2%), and German (1%), ($n = 173$). Nobody in the sample reported a poor knowledge of English. This could be due to the reduced number of non-English speaking parents in the sample. A study done by Bridge (1978) shows that information is closely related to the ability to speak English. In his sample, Mexican-Americans who were interviewed in Spanish had less knowledge about the Alum Rock Voucher Choice System than Mexican-Americans who were interviewed in English (p. 515).

The majority of parents in the sample are Canadian born, (mother = 80%, $n = 173$; father = 76%, $n = 169$). In this sample, no significant relationship exists between degree of choice exerted and mother's or father's birthplace. A crosstabulation between mother born in Canada and degree of choice gives a $x^2 = 1.8$ with $\text{d.f.} = 2$ and $p < .40$. Chi Square tests done to relate father born in Canada and school choice attain similar results ($x^2 = 1.4; \text{d.f.} = 2; p < .50$).

In order to analyze the main sources of information used by parents when selecting a school I developed a rank system. The percentage of parents who reported having used each one of the information sources to select the present school is shown on Table 10, column (2). Each source was then ranked. Neighbors, friends and the principal of the selected school ranked in the first three places. In the same table, the percentage of parents who reported having used each one of the information sources to learn about other schools is shown on column (4). This time, an important proportion of parents (40%) reported not having used any source of information. Those who did ask about other schools, talked
Table 10: What Are the Main Sources of Information Used? (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>Total Ranking Score (1)</th>
<th>Present School (n=182) % (2)</th>
<th>% Ranking (3)</th>
<th>Other Schools (n=182) % (4)</th>
<th>% Ranking (5)</th>
<th>Programs (n=142) (b) % (6)</th>
<th>% Ranking (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Neighbors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Friends</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Literature from school system</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Principal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School system central office</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teacher in the school</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. School meeting</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. No one</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. No one, because I knew the school</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Influential community leader</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Questions admitted more than one response. Therefore percentages add over 100.
(b) 40 private school respondents were omitted as they have no choice of programs.
mainly to their neighbors and friends. Parents who were informed about the availability of English and French programs in the public schools (Table 10, column 6) received their information mainly through the literature from the school system, their friends and neighbors. Once the sources of information for the selected school, the other schools and the programs were ranked, I calculated a total ranking score (see Table 10, column 1) by adding the three separate scores. In this way it can be seen that the main information sources for school selection are neighbors, friends and literature from the school system.

Chi-square analyses between number of information sources contacted and degree of choice show that passive parents most frequently get the information from none to three sources (42%, n = 174), while wide active choice parents have contact with nine or more information sources (43%). Both for passive and wide active parents Hypothesis 2 holds true. Still the same does not occur for narrow choice parents. Further details can be seen on Table 11.

Chi square tests show a relationship between the socio-economic status of parents and the number of information sources used. None to three sources of information were reported to be used more often by low SES parents while nine or more information sources were more frequently used by high-middle SES parents (Table 11).

As expected, father's education is closely related to the amount of information the family has before selecting a school. Fathers who have a year or more of post secondary education have greater access and use more information than those who have high-school education or less (Table 11).
Table 11

School Choice, Socio-economic Status; Father's Education
and Number of Information Sources Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Choice</th>
<th>Number of Information Sources Used (a)</th>
<th>0-3</th>
<th>4-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>9 or more</th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrow</td>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wide</td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 23.5; d.f. = 6; p < .01$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 18.4; d.f. = 6; p < .01$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to high-school</td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one or more years</td>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of college</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 11.5; d.f. = 3; p < .01$; (a) row percentage add to 100%

The decision making process involved both parents in above 90% of cases. Still, the final decision was made predominantly by the mother (96%, n = 182). In comparison 76% of fathers are reported to have made
the final decision. Almost 10% of the children participated in the decision process, while 3% are reported to have a say in the final decision (Table 12).

Table 12
Participants in the School Choice Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant:</th>
<th>Who participated in deciding which school and/or program the child would go to? (a)</th>
<th>Who made the final decision? (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relative</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 182

(a) and (b): Both questions admitted more than one response. Therefore percentages add to over 100.

Criteria for Choice in Schooling:

The criteria used for selecting a school are important elements of choice behavior. Chapter III presented the concern common to Uchitelle and Nault (1977) and Sonnenfeld (1973) involving the criteria used in school selection: do parents choose based on one or two narrow criteria? do parents exert active or passive school choices?

Hypothesis 3 suggested that parents do choose based on some criteria.

**Hypothesis 3**

Parents choose (actively or passively) a school for their children according to certain criteria, (CR).

\[ PCS = f(CR) \]
Throughout this study, criteria have been used to discriminate between active and passive school choices. Two items in the questionnaire related to criteria for choice. Question 8, which was open ended, inquired about the reasons for choosing a school and a specific program (when applicable). Intentionally, parents were given first a chance to an unstructured response. Question 13, which was closed ended, offered eighteen alternative criteria for selecting a school. Parents ranked the importance of these criteria on a Likert scale.

The criteria for school choice reported in Question 8 were grouped into nine categories:

1. **Access, proximity and opportunity**: in all, 54% (n = 182) of the respondents mentioned these reasons for school choice. Parents reported that they chose a school because it was close to home, or because they lived within the school's boundaries and "it is the school where the child is supposed to go to". Many parents considered the route's safety. Some selected the school according to its convenience: i.e. "the school is close to a play school where I will drive another child", or, "the school is close to a day care", were some of the responses.

2. **Choice of French program available**: in all 32% of parents mentioned the availability of a French program as a criterion for school choice. Of the 115 parents who enrolled their children in a French program in a public school, 59 chose the school because there was a choice of programs. Some of the responses were: "the school offers a choice of English or French"; "I thought it good to have a choice of programs - I would have preferred to have an even wider choice of programs". Some parents felt that the
French program was so important that it was the main reason for choosing the location of their home. Some children had already attended French Language Playschool and the parents wished they continue learning the language when it is easiest.

3. **French Canadian Cultural Values and Religion:** of the 35 respondents who enrolled their children in a private school 17 mentioned this reason for choice. Parents reported choosing a school because it teaches the Roman Catholic religion, it teaches morals and respect, and because it is French and Catholic (i.e. "I want my children to learn as much as possible about their religion and language"). One respondent mentioned that: "in this (private) school there is an atmosphere supportive of French Canadian culture not available elsewhere".

4. **School reputation:** for 30% of the respondents this is an important criterion. School reputation influenced parents in their choice. Other families' experience, results with older children in the same family or the parent's own experience, guided the selection.

5. **School Climate:** only 4% of the respondents considered school climate in making their choice of school. A small number of parents reported they liked the school because "it has good parent-teacher-school communication"; "it is small"; "it has a good community spirit"; "it has a friendly, warm, relaxed atmosphere". Parents who visited the school remarked they liked the teachers and the pupils, they found it clean and orderly.

6. **Perception of the administration and teaching style:** this criteria was mentioned by 11% of the respondents. Parents chose
7. **Academic reasons:** only seven out of 182 respondents mentioned academic reasons for their choice. Some parents are concerned with the students' academic achievement. Responses varied. For example: "I chose the school to give the child a specialized schooling within the public school system". Another answer said: "We chose a private school because we believe a child should learn more academically than what is taught in a public school kindergarten". Some parents felt their children are bright and need more stimulation.

8. **Peer group selection:** three parents (2%) were concerned about their children's friends and considered this when choosing a school.

9. **Other:** only two parents (1%) mentioned that they chose a private school because they were not satisfied with the public school system.

Parents in this sample, when asked to report their own reasons for choice, show primarily a concern for access, proximity and opportunity of the school. Their second concern is the availability of French instruction. A third criterion that influenced choice is the school's reputation. Some parents also mention the ability of the administration and teachers and the importance of preserving French values and religion. Finally, a small number of parents are concerned about school climate,
academic reasons and peer group. If a high percentage of parents had expressed that they chose a school for no reason at all or had not mentioned any reason, Hypothesis 3 would have been rejected. As no respondent expressed to have chosen a school for no reason at all and only 8% of parents failed to respond to this question, Hypothesis 3 is accepted. Parents do choose a school (actively or passively) based on certain criteria.

Let us now look at the three main criteria used for school choice and the degree of choice exerted (Table 13). Passive choice parents are more concerned about the school being close to home and/or being of easy access (96%) than narrow choice parents (60%) or even wide choice parents (37%). There is an important difference among the percentage of narrow choice and wide choice parents who reported having taken access into consideration for their school choice.

Wide active parents are more influenced by the availability of French language instruction than narrow choice parents (69% and 23% respectively). By definition no passive choice parents are concerned about French instruction. A higher percentage of passive choice parents rely on the school's reputation for their choice (38%); next come narrow choice parents (35%). Wide choice parents' reported behavior is less influenced by the school's reputation (16%).

The number of parents who mentioned other criteria for choosing a school is too small to warrant cross-tabulations of the data.
Table 13
Criteria Used in School Selection and Degree of Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Choice (a)</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Wide</th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Access, proximity &amp; opportunity:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 23.3; p &lt; .01^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Choice of French available:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 44.6; p &lt; .01^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. School reputation:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 5.8; p &lt; .05^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N (column) 24 87 49 160
*d.f. = 2 (a) column percentages add to 100%

Hypothesis 4 suggests that there is a relationship between the criteria that influenced school choice and socio-economic status of the parents.

**Hypothesis 4**

High SES parents consider that the social and physical school environment, school's program and child's personality are important factors in determining school choice. In contrast, low SES parents will choose a school considering mainly location of the school and cost.

The range of answers received to Question 8 did not include cost and few parents mentioned the child's personality as a factor that influenced
their decision. The criteria more often reported partially prove Hypothesis 4 (Table 17).

High-middle SES parents reported to have considered the availability of French instruction more often than middle and low SES parents. On the other hand low SES parents were more often concerned about access, proximity and opportunity of the school than narrow or wide active choice parents. Passive and narrow active parents are more concerned about school reputation than wide active parents. The number of people reporting on other criteria is too small to warrant statistical analyses.

Table 14
Criteria Used in School Choice and Socio-Economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>SES (a)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High-Middle</td>
<td>N (row)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Access, proximity &amp; opportunity:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 1.7; p &lt; .40^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Choice of French available:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 16.7; p &lt; .01^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. School reputation:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.5; p &lt; .11^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.f. = 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) column percentages add to 100%
Because criteria for choice is important in the operationalization of degree of choice, it seemed interesting to test the degree of consistency of the respondents. When a closed ended question is used respondents choose more criteria than they mention in the open ended question.

Table 15

Response Consistency for Proximity and Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School was close to home (question 13a)</th>
<th>Mentioned</th>
<th>Not Mentioned</th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 45.7; p < .002^* \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The route to school was safe (question 13b)</th>
<th>Mentioned</th>
<th>Not Mentioned</th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (column)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 16.8; p < .002^* \]

*d.f. = 4 (a) row percentages add to 100%
For example, people in the study find that "school was close to home" is an important factor in the decision process (73%). However of the people who feel it's an important factor only 55% mentioned access, proximity and opportunity on their own initiative (Table 15). Cross-tabulation between Questions 8 and 13 are only meaningful for "access, proximity and opportunity" with "the school was close to home" and "the route to school was safe". Parents show their concern about the route's safety; 86% of the respondents ranked "the route to school was safe" as important. However only 56% mentioned this factor on the initial open ended question (Table 15).

Parents rate as most important factors such as adequate curriculum, school atmosphere, good teacher and principal. Route safety and closeness to home rank 6 and 9 respectively. Both these factors were included in "access, proximity and opportunity" in the open ended question where they ranked first by far. Likewise, "choice of French language available" which ranks second in the open ended question, ranks 8th in the closed ended question as "special programs available" and 13th with "second language taught" (Table 16). In order to focus on emerging trends the five categories of responses were collapsed into three. Responses rated as very important were added to the important ones; likewise answers rated as very unimportant were added to the unimportant ones (Table 16).

* Non-response rates for both questions were very similar; Question 8 had an 8% and Question 13 had a 6.7% of non-responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Important %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Unimportant %</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adequate curriculum</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School atmosphere</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good teacher</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Principal's attitude</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good discipline</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Safe route</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Accessible principal and teachers</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Special programs available</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Close to home</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Good library and learning resources</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Comfortable facilities</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Student's achievement-high</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Second language taught</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Other children's background similar</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Religious education</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>No extra cost</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>On the way to work</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Selective admittance</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Criteria Used in Choice of Program:

In the sample, 81% of the parents patronize public schools that offer a choice between English and French programs. Question 8 (open ended) asked parents to state the reasons for selecting a specific program. The reasons reported were grouped into the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Choosing a Program</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academic</td>
<td>6. Academic</td>
<td>7. Political; Canada is bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Political; B.C. is</td>
<td>7. Political; Canada is bilingual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and background</td>
<td>and background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of a second language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Academic Reasons:** parents who enrol their child in the English program for academic reasons (21%) are concerned about the demands a second language may impose on the child. Some also feel that students in the French Immersion program do not do as well in English later on. Other parents would like their children to learn French but not in an immersion program; they wouldn't mind some hours of French. Several parents chose the English program because the French one has not operated long enough and it's continuation is not sure. Others were concerned about the possibility of continuing the French program if they moved to another school district.

2. **Political Reasons:** a few parents (6%) chose the English program and stated the following reasons: "We chose the English program
because we are tired of the Federal Government's efforts towards bilingualism"; "I do not feel it is necessary to make French the second language in Canada as there are so many other languages which could also be considered as second languages"; "There is little use for French in British Columbia"; "I feel that teaching French in schools is a waste of money and teachers' efforts"; and "I do not want my son taking French".

3. Children's Characteristics and Background: parents when choosing a program considered the child's abilities. Some parents felt their child could not cope with another language because the child: "is young"; "has learning problems"; "is already bilingual" or "speaks French only"; and the parents mentioned that they speak English only and that they would be unable to monitor their child's schooling if it is in French. A previous negative experience in the family with the French program influenced the placement of one child. On the other hand, families who already had one child in the English program were reluctant to start a younger child in the French one.

4. Perception of the Teachers: three respondents chose the English program because they and the children liked the English kindergarten teacher.

5. Misinformation and Other: one respondent chose the English program because she was unaware that English speaking children could attend a French Immersion program.

6. Academic Reasons: Parents who chose the French program felt that through it they could provide their children an additional
stimulus and/or challenge. In general parents chose to place children in this program if they had had several years of preschool experience and/or were already reading in English. Several parents enrolled their children in the French program because it is easier to learn a second language when young and it would be better than learning French in high-school only. One wide active respondent stated: "We gave a tremendous amount of thought as to the program we chose. Finally we decided to make kindergarten a trial period. If it does not work, we will put her in the English program".

7. Political Reasons: a number of parents feel strongly that Canada is a bilingual country and that the only way to accomplish this is to start a second language at an early age when there are no prejudices evident. A respondent said that, "the child, as a Canadian, should have a good knowledge of French".

8. Children's Characteristics and Background: parents mentioned that the child is mature enough and able to tackle a French Immersion program. Parents who spoke French or who have French ancestry tended to enrol their children in the program. Families who already had other children in the program who were enjoying it, enrolled the younger child in it as well.

9. French Program's Reputation: parents chose the French program because friends of the child are doing well in it. They also feel children get a more personal attention in this program.

10. Present and Future Benefits of any Second Language: the majority of parents who chose the French program feel that it is
good for their children to learn another language in order to broaden the child's views. Some parents felt French would be very beneficial for the child in the future when he needed to find employment or to move around the world. Several parents stressed that they would have chosen almost any other language program had it been available, as the additional language does not necessarily have to be French.

A ranking of the criteria for choice of programs and the percentage of responses in each category can be seen on Table 17.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Choosing a Program</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>% of responses in each category</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>% of responses in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Present &amp; future benefits of a second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's characteristics and background</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Children's characteristics and background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misinformation and other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Program's reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square tests done between degree of choice and the criteria used for selecting the English program show that passive parents chose the program (25%) more often than narrow parents (9%) and wide choice parents (0%). Passive choice parents also selected the English program for political reasons more often than narrow and wide choice parents (25%, 5% and 0% respectively). In addition passive choice parents report
choosing the English program because of the child's characteristics and family background more often than narrow and wide choice parents (33%, 23% and 8% respectively) (Table 18).

Chi square tests done between the degree of choice and the criteria used for selecting the French Immersion program show that wide active parents choose the program for academic reasons more often than narrow choice parents or passive choice parents (31%, 13% and 0% respectively). Wide choice parents also choose to send their children to the French program considering present and future benefits more often than narrow and passive choice parents (33%, 31% and 4% respectively). Narrow choice parents are more concerned with the child's characteristics and family background than wide choice parents (14% and 12% respectively) (Table 18).

Most of the chi square tests done between socio-economic status and criteria for choice of program are non-significant, that is the probability that the observed relationship could have resulted from sampling error alone is high. For this reason the following analysis refers only to those tests which were statistically significant at $p < .10$.

There is a higher percentage of low SES parents who chose the English program for academic reasons (mainly, the French program had academic problems) than middle or high-middle SES parents. Equally a higher percentage of low SES parents chose the English program considering the child's characteristics and background than middle or high-middle SES parents. On the other hand there is a higher percentage of high-middle SES parents who chose the French program considering the child's characteristics and background than middle or low SES parents (Table 19).
### Table 18: Criteria Used in Selecting a Program and Degree of Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Choice (a)</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Wide</th>
<th>N (row)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic reasons</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 12.7; p &lt; .002^*$</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 18.1; p &lt; .01^*$</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's characteristics and background</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 7.4; p &lt; .02^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>French</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic reasons</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 12.9; p &lt; .001$</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present and future benefits</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 7.8; p &lt; .02^*$</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's characteristics and background</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.0; p &lt; .13^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N (column) | 24 | 87 | 49 | 160 |

*d.f. = 2* (a) For each criterion, column percentages add to 100%
Table 19
Criteria Used in Selecting a Program and Socio-economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>SES (a)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High-Middle</td>
<td>N (row)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic reasons</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$x^2 = 5.7; p &lt; .06^{*}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's characteristics</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and background</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$x^2 = 13; p &lt; .01^{*}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's characteristics</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$x^2 = 4.9; p &lt; .09^{*}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N (column) 57  60  43  160
*d.f. = 2 (a) For each criterion, column percentages add to 100%

"Price" of Choice

The last question that remains to be answered is what is the "price", measured in terms of distance and means of transportation to school, that parents are willing to pay? Active choice parents pay a higher "price" than passive choice parents in order that their children receive the education they think is best. Fifty percent of the wide active choice parents live over one mile away from the school they enrolled their child in and 67% drive their children to school. On the other hand, 74% of the narrow active choice parents reported to live closer than half a mile to school.
and 82% of their children walk to school. Passive choice parents show a
similar but more pronounced pattern as that of narrow choice parents:
96% of passives live closer than half a mile to the selected school and
the same percentage of their children walk to school (Table 20).

Table 20
"Price" and Degree of Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How far do you live from the school?</th>
<th>Degree of choice (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than ½ mile</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ - 1 mile</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 mile</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 56.6; p &lt; .01^* )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will the child usually get to school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (public or other paid transportation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 54.8; p &lt; .01^* )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N (column) 24 90 60 174
* d.f. = 4 (a) column percentages add to 100%

High-middle socio-economic status parents pay a higher "price" than
middle and low socio-economic status parents. Forty-four percent of the
high-middle SES parents choose a school that is farther than one mile
from their houses, and 65% drive their children to school. In contrast,
58% of middle SES parents live less than a mile away from the selected school and 67% of their children walk to school. Low SES parents in the sample chose a school that was less than half a mile away from their home (75%), and 84% of their children will walk to school (Table 21).

Table 21

"Price" and Socio-economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How far do you live from the school?</th>
<th>SES (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1/4 mile</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 - 1 mile</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 mile</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 20.2; p &lt; .01^*$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How will the child usually get to school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will the child usually get to school?</th>
<th>SES (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (public or other paid transportation)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 28.9; p &lt; .01^*$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N (column)</th>
<th>57</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>43</th>
<th>160</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*d.f. = 4    (a) column percentages add to 100%

In spite of the high costs involved in a change of residence, some parents may feel motivated to do so in order to send their children to a desired school. Question 31 was included in order to evaluate whether parents move into an area motivated by a search for better schooling.
Parents were asked to rank on a scale from 1 - 5 (1 = very important, 5 = very unimportant) the reasons for choosing to live in the area.

Data show that the main reasons for choosing a house in the area are reasonably priced housing, good community services and the availability of schools with a good reputation. Almost 54% of the respondents report that schools' reputation is an important factor for moving into the neighborhood. This finding confirms Uchitelle and Nault's study (1977) where they found that:

over half the parents interviewed reported that one reason why they moved into Collegeville was the good reputation of the schools (1977, p. 7)

A ranking of all items shows that the main reason parents had to move into the area is that housing was reasonably priced. Next come considerations regarding the quality of community services and schools in the area (Table 22).

Table 22
Criteria for Moving into the Neighborhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Housing was reasonably priced</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community services were good</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We heard there were good schools around here</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. House values seemed to be on the rise; it was a good investment</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The community was close to where my spouse/I work</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We thought there were a lot of other people with life styles similar to our own</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22 (cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. We liked the fact that in this neighborhood there were people from many different countries</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Friends encouraged us to move</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

Parental choice in schooling was analyzed along two main dimensions: degree of school choice and parent's socio-economic status. Data collected through a mailed questionnaire was used to test four hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1** suggested that there is a positive relationship between the degree of choice exerted and socio-economic status. Evidence showed that if parents are divided into two groups according to the degree of choice reported - passives and actives - the hypothesis is not rejected. But, if active choice parents are studied further and divided into narrow and wide active choosers, there is a tendency in favor of the tested hypothesis. In fact, narrow choice behavior decreases as SES increases, while wide choice behavior increases along with SES. When the high-middle SES parent's reported behavior is analyzed, there tends to be a positive relationship between socio-economic status and parental choice.

Further, analyses between parental choice and SES components were done. The data showed that the educational level of both parents is related to the degree of school choice. A high proportion of passive parents reported to have up to twelve years of schooling. If the
analysis is focussed on active choice parents only, reported narrow active choice behavior is more predominant for cases in which mother's or father's education is up to twelve years of schooling; on the other hand, parents with one or more years of college reported more often a wide choice behavior. There is no relationship between father's occupation and parental school choice where parents are divided into passive and active choosers. Still, when active choosers are divided into narrow and wide actives, there is a positive relationship between the degree of active choice exerted and father's occupation.

Hypothesis 2 predicted a relationship between parent's access and ability to use information and choice of schools in Coquitlam. The three main sources of information reported to have been used to learn about the selected school, other alternative schools and/or a program are: neighbors, friends and literature from the school system. A high percentage of parents reported that they did not use information to learn about other schools. Passive and low SES parents reported most frequently that they used 0 - 3 sources of information, while wide active and high-middle SES parents reported most frequently to use 9 or more sources of information. The number of information sources most frequently reported was 6 - 8 by narrow choice parents and 4 - 5 by middle SES parents. Father's education appeared closely related to the amount of information the family reported to have used to select a school. Fathers with one or more years of post-secondary education have greater access and use more information than those with twelve years or less of schooling. Thus the data supported Hypothesis 2. In this sample, the decision making process involved both parents, but the
final decision was predominantly made by the child's mother.

Hypothesis 3 stated that parents choose (actively or passively) a school for their children according to certain criteria. Hypothesis 4 added that parents, according to their SES, would choose based on different criteria. It was predicted that high SES parents would be more concerned about the adequacy of the social and physical school environment, the school's program and the child's personality. In contrast low SES parents would choose based mainly on the school's location and its costs. The data confirmed both Hypothesis 3 and 4. Parents in the sample did choose a school and program according to specific criteria. The main criteria reported for choice of school were: access, proximity and opportunity; choice of French program available; and school reputation. The main criteria reported for choice of English program were: academic reasons; children's characteristics; and political reasons. Parents who chose the French program considered mainly: the present and future benefits of having a second language, academic reasons, and children's characteristics and background. Almost all passive choice parents and a high proportion of low SES parents showed a high concern about the school being close to home and/or being of easy access. Wide active choice parents and high-middle SES parents showed a higher concern about the availability of a French program. With respect to choice of programs, passive and low SES parents chose the English program more often than wide and high-middle SES parents.

Costs of schooling were measured in terms of distance to the selected school and means of getting the child to school. The data
showed that active choice and high-middle SES parents pay a higher "price" than passive choice and low SES parents in order that their children receive the education they believe to be best. About half of the wide active and the high-middle SES parents live over one mile away from the selected school and almost seventy percent planned to drive their children to school. In contrast a great majority of passive and low SES parents live closer than half a mile to the selected school and about ninety percent of their children walk to school.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS

From the study three levels of choice were identified: parents who exert no choice or passive choice (13%); parents who exert a limited degree of choice or narrow choice (49%); and parents who exert a wide choice or a deliberate active one (32%).

Hypothesis 1 relating degree of choice and socio-economic status (SES), was rejected. The data show that passivity does not seem to change along with SES. In fact passive choice parents represent 14% of the lower SES class, 18% of the middle SES class and 10% of the high-middle SES class. However, if only active choice behavior is taken into consideration, narrow choice behavior tends to decrease as SES increases while wide choice behavior tends to increase along with SES.

Hypothesis 2 relating degree of choice and access and ability to use information, was accepted. The number of information sources parents reported to have used increased along with degree of choice. Passive choice parents most frequently used none to three information sources, while wide active parents reported to use most frequently nine or more.

Hypothesis 3 was accepted as the data showed that parents do choose a school and program according to certain criteria.

Hypothesis 4 relating types of criteria for choice and socio-economic status, was accepted. Almost all passive choice and a high proportion of low SES parents reported to be concerned about proximity and accessibility of schools. Wide active choice and high-middle SES
parents showed greater concern about the availability of a French program. In choosing programs, passive choosers and low SES parents chose the English program more often than wide active choosers and high-middle SES parents.

Individual choice advocates affirm that choice in schooling is an effective means to make schools more responsive to public demand. In theory a free market of schooling would develop competition among schools and increase educational alternatives offered. In the present study alternative suppliers were found to exist but in small numbers and with little variation in the service they offered. Although the study included seven schools, parents in Coquitlam faced few different alternatives. Five of the schools are public, have the same common administration, and show little difference in offerings amongst themselves. Both the French and English programs are common to all five schools. Only one of the public schools offered a wider variety of choices, French and English programs and within the latter a choice of traditional or open education. So in fact, most parents patronizing public schools are faced with only two options. On the other hand, both private schools offer a bilingual (French and English) and Catholic education.

Consumer control over resources spent in schooling requires that parents be informed on the development of school activities and its outcomes. Most parents in the sample have little control over what happens in the school they choose. Parent participation, a key to information, means helping with transportation and fund raising in five schools and acting as teacher aids in only two schools.
Parents in the sample do have freedom of school choice. They are not limited by school boundaries nor by the cost of private schools. In general parents' freedom of choice is limited only by a lack of means to evaluate educational outcomes from each alternative school and a lack of a systematic information system available to all parents. Another limiting factor of school choice is the lack of a transportation system. For a high proportion of passive parents and low SES parents distance to school and access are the most important criteria for school choice. In addition these parents have less information than active or higher SES parents. Although passive and low SES parents face the same educational alternatives they do not wish or they are not able to explore them. Choosing a school demands time and perhaps passive or low SES parents cannot afford to invest time in gathering information. Another explanation suggests that less educated parents may be less able to seek information as they may feel more intimidated in talking to principals and staff than those more educated. Economic factors may also effect freedom of choice. The data shows that children who are driven to school belong mainly to high-middle SES families. Perhaps low SES parents consider the neighborhood school more often because they know they are not able to drive the child to another school.

A free market of schooling needs to be monitored so that these imperfections do not affect disadvantaged groups. Equality of educational opportunities should go beyond equal offerings. School options should be truly available by providing transportation. Members of disadvantaged groups should be aided in school selection through systematic information and counselling.
The findings of this study point to the need for further research before implementing a free market. Parental choice of schooling should be studied considering comparisons between different districts. Results of the study would probably vary if other districts are included. For example in this study, the population's homogeneity with respect to language spoken at home (mainly English) and parent's birthplace (mainly Canada) did not test parent's ability to use information as related to parent's language and cultural background. Sampling procedures limit the generalization of the findings. Of the seven schools included in the sample the two private ones are Roman Catholic. Choice within the district for non-Roman Catholic parents may thus be limited to public schools only, where they have a choice between two programs. Parental choice behavior may be different in a setting where a greater variety of options are available.

Future research could further examine why Anglophones chose French Immersion versus English Program. Another study could focus on: a) Roman Catholics who choose public vs. private schools and their reasons for doing so and b) non-Roman Catholics who choose to send their children to Roman Catholic schools although they have other religious beliefs. Other studies could be developed to analyze parental school choice and educational outcomes. When choice is available does student achievement improve? Is parental involvement increased? Does a better match between student's learning style and teacher's teaching style occur? Are schools more responsive to parent's demands? Briefly, do the expected outcomes of the free market materialize?
APPENDIX A

Questionnaire to Principals
QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRINCIPALS

1. Name of the school: Public Private

2. Enrollment:
   a) Total
   b) French Program
   c) English Program
   d) Number of Kindergarten classes: Number of students in each class:
      French
      English

3. Teachers:
   a) Total number
   b) Number of teachers in French Program
   c) Number of teachers in English Program
   d) Number of kindergarten teachers
      French
      English
   e) Qualification of kindergarten teachers
   f) Average number of years teachers have worked in the school:
Program and curriculum:
Is the school structured?
Is there an open classroom program?
Are there multi-age groups?
Is there a learning resource center?
Are there ability groupings?
Is instruction individualized?
Is the program traditional?
Is there a graded classroom structure?
Do the private schools follow the provincial curriculum?
Do the private schools use other textbooks than the public schools?

Facilities: Good Average Bad

Are there any facilities or equipment the school would really need, and does not have?

Do the private schools hire personnel that is not certified?

Parent participation:
How often are there P.T.A. meetings?
What are they called for? What are the usual topics to be discussed?
Is there parental cooperation with the school?
In what activities do parents participate?

Student's SES:
What percentage of children in your school are of:

High Middle Low SES?

What percentage of children in the school have to be transported, either by bus or car?
11. Does the school provide transportation?
   
   Free
   
   Yes
   
   Paid
   
   No

12. Private School:
    
    What is the fee a parent pays for a child to be enrolled in kindergarten?

13. Are there scholarships available for low SES students?
    
    Yes
    
    No

14. If yes, what do they consist of? What % of the applications for scholarship are approved?

15. Does the school provide information to parents before they enrol their children?
    
    Yes
    
    No

   - Written if requested
   - Written and distributed to the families
   - Interviews with the principal
   - Meetings with parents
   - Through the church

16. Does the school have capacity for more students than those presently enrolled?

17. Does the school actively go out to enroll students?

18. Has there been any information distributed through the media (articles written, T.V. or radio programs, ads), about your school during the last year?
    
    Yes
    
    No

   What?    Where?    When?
APPENDIX B

Researcher's Covering Letter
June 1977

Dear Parent or Guardian

We would like to ask your help in a research project. We wish to know parents' concerns related to the schooling their child will receive.

You were picked because you are enrolling a child in kindergarten.

We would like to ask the parent or guardian who is more closely in contact with the child, to complete the following questionnaire. The response to the questionnaire should not take longer than thirty minutes.

All the data that will be collected will be anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential.

When you finish, please put the questionnaire into the enclosed self-addressed, pre-stamped envelope and mail it back to us.

Thank you for your important contribution.

Yours sincerely

Susana Cogán
APPENDIX C

Superintendent's Covering Letter

Ms. Susana Cogan,
Faculty of Education,
Simon Fraser University,
Burnaby 2, B. C.
V5A 1S6

Dear Ms. Cogan:

At its meeting on June 14, 1977, the Board of School Trustees approved the distribution of your questionnaire as submitted relating to "PARENTAL CHOICE IN SCHOOLING". In granting this approval it is understood that any person participating does so entirely voluntarily and anonymously. It is further understood that the results of the study will be made available to the Board.

I wish you success as you undertake this research project, and look forward to your findings.

Yours very truly,

G. M. Paton,
Superintendent of Schools.

GMP/jn
APPENDIX D

Questionnaire to Parents
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the child?
   - Father 1
   - Mother 2
   - Legal Guardian 3
   - Other, please specify ____________

2. Please state the number of children in the family that are living at home and for whom you are responsible. ____________

3. What place, among the children in the family, does the child you are enrolling in kindergarten occupy? ____________

4. School your child is enrolled in: ____________

5. If your child is enrolled in a school where there is a choice of program:
   a) Please state the program he/she will be in:
      - English 1
      - French 2

   b) Before you enrolled your child in this program, did you consider placing him/her in the other program?
      - Yes 1
      - No 2

6. Before you enrolled your child, did you consider sending him/her to another school:
   - Yes 1
   - No 2

If no, please go to question #8
7. If yes, what other schools did you consider? Please name the schools; state if they are private or public, and the main reason for not enrolling your child in each school you regarded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Briefly state the main reason for not enrolling child in this school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(14-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(17-18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Why did you decide to enroll your child in the present school? If your child is enrolled in a school where there is a choice of program, please state the reasons for selecting the one you did. (Please be as detailed as possible. If necessary, use the back of the page.)

(19-20)

(21-22)

9. Who participated in deciding which school and/or program the child would go to? (Please circle as many as relevant.)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Guardian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Who made the final decision? (Please circle as many as relevant.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Circle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Guardian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. How far do you live from the school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Circle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1/2 mile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1/2 - 1 mile</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 mile - 2 miles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 2 miles - 5 miles</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 miles - 10 miles</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 miles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. How will the child usually get to school?
(Please circle one only.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Circle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride a bicycle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride in a car (either family or friend)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Bus (free)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi (or other paid transportation)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. In choosing a school for their child, some people have considered the following factors. Please look at each factor and rank it according to the importance you would give it. (Please circle the corresponding number.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Undecided about its importance</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>The school was close to home.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[37]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>The general atmosphere of the school was the sort we wanted for our child.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[38]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>The school provided religious education.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[39]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>The principal's attitude toward the children was good.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[40]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>The route to school was safe.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[41]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>The school's curriculum was adequate.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[42]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Former students' achievement was high</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[43]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td>The children's background was similar to our own.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[44]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i)</td>
<td>The teacher was good.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[45]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j)</td>
<td>The school was on the way to work.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[46]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k)</td>
<td>The principal and teachers were accessible.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[47]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l)</td>
<td>The school admitted certain groups of children only.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[48]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m)</td>
<td>There was a good library and/or resource learning centre.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[49]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n)</td>
<td>The physical facilities were comfortable.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[50]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o)</td>
<td>The discipline was good.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[51]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p)</td>
<td>The school offered special programs suited to the child's need.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[52]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q)</td>
<td>The school demanded no extra costs (i.e. buying text books, art materials, monies for special events).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[53]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r)</td>
<td>A second language was taught.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>[54]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Before you enrolled your child in the present school did you get information about this school from: (Please circle as many as relevant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School system central office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature from the school system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher in the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential community leader such as schoolboard member, political leader, school volunteer, or neighbour active in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one, because I knew the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Before you enrolled your child in the present school did you get information about other schools from: (Please circle as many as relevant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School system central office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature from the school system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher in the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential community leader such as schoolboard member, political leader, school volunteer, or neighbour active in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one, because I knew the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. If your child is enrolled in a school where there is a choice of program did you get information about the programs from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School system central office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature from the school system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher in the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential community leader such as schoolboard member, political leader, school volunteer, or neighbour active in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one, because I knew the school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. When choosing a school for your child was there anything that you wanted to avoid? If yes, please state as fully as possible.

Yes 1
No 2

18. Please indicate the highest educational level completed. (Please circle one number per person only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mother or Guardian</th>
<th>Father or Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (incomplete)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (completed up to Grade 7)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Secondary (Grades 8 to 10)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary (Grades 11 to 12)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University graduate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University post-graduate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Are you presently working either part-time or full time? (Please consider "working" to mean doing a task and receiving payment for it)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother or Guardian</th>
<th>Father or Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If both Mother and Father are working, please go to question #21.

20. If you presently are not working are you: (Please circle one only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother or Guardian</th>
<th>Father or Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homemaking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On adult training or retraining</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently unemployed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving welfare assistance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner or retired</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled or ill</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Please indicate the present occupation of each parent or guardian.

Father or Guardian: Name of job __________________________

(If you are a supervisor, please state the number of people under your responsibility) __________________________

Please describe as carefully as possible the work you do: __________________________________________

Mother or Guardian: Name of the job __________________________

(If you are a supervisor, please state the number of people under your responsibility) __________________________

Please describe as carefully as possible the work you do: __________________________________________
22. Is English the main language spoken at home? Yes 1 No 2

If yes, please go to question #25.

23. What is the main language spoken at home?

French 1 Italian 2 Chinese 3 Japanese 4 Hindi/Punjabi 5 Portugese 6 German 7 Other, please specify ____________

24. How would you rate your knowledge of English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother or Guardian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father or Guardian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Were you born in Canada?

Yes 1 No 2

26. If you were born in Canada please state the province.

Province

Mother or Guardian

Father or Guardian

27. If you were born abroad please state the country.

Country

Mother or Guardian

Father or Guardian
28. How many years have you (the respondent) lived in B.C.  

29. How many years have you lived in this house?  

30. Please name the street in which you live and the street at your nearest corner. (For confidentiality reasons, please do not include your home number)  

31. Why did you move to this neighbourhood? Please rank the importance of each item for your decision from 1 - 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Undecided about its importance</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) The community was close to where my spouse/I work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Friends encouraged us to move into it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) We heard there were good schools around here.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Housing was reasonably priced.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) We thought there were a lot of other people with life styles similar to our own.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) House values seemed to be on the rise; it was a good investment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Community services were good (i.e. transportation, hospitals, shopping centres).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) We liked the fact that in this neighbourhood there were people from many different countries.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your cooperation!
APPENDIX E

Reminder Letter

Dear Parent:

On June 1977, a questionnaire was sent to you. You were asked to assist in a project on parents' concerns on schooling, by answering it.

Up to this date many questionnaires have been received but, it is necessary for the study to have all the questionnaires back. Therefore, your prompt answer is very important.

If you have already participated in the study, please ignore this letter and accept our thanks for your assistance. If you have not done so, please fill in the questionnaire and mail it back in the envelope that was attached to it.

Thank-you very much for your cooperation and help.

Sincerely,

Susana Coghn
Appendix F: Response Rate

300 Questionnaires mailed on June 24, 1977
220 Reminder letters mailed on July 8, 1977
185 Questionnaires received by Sept. 9, 1977
Appendix G: Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among the SES Scale and Its Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Mother's Education</th>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>House Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>1.000**</td>
<td>0.725**</td>
<td>0.852**</td>
<td>0.886**</td>
<td>0.446**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(160)</td>
<td>(160)</td>
<td>(160)</td>
<td>(160)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.575**</td>
<td>0.484**</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(178)</td>
<td>(170)</td>
<td>(178)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.678**</td>
<td>0.182**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(166)</td>
<td>(171)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.215**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(164)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers in parentheses are sample sizes

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
May 21, 1979

Dear

In June 1977 I approached your school in order to do a research on Parental Choice in Schooling. Thanks to your valuable cooperation I was able to do the study. A summary of the study and its findings is attached.

Should you wish to know further details please contact me at 420-1161.

Thank you again for your time and help.

Yours sincerely,

Susana Cogan
The historic tension between the individual and the state takes a variety of forms. In education the tension lies in who should decide how a child is to be educated - the parent or the state. For over a century in North America, general consensus has given the state the responsibility to determine education. The state controls through the public school system the education received by most of the children and controls, through minimum standards and requirements, the education received by private education students. Increasingly during the past two decades the education system and its outcomes have been questioned. As a result demand for greater choice in schooling has developed as a means to stimulate the school system and to increase individual freedom. Yet supporters of the present educational system argue that it fosters equal educational opportunities and it secures social cohesion. The following research was developed to study the determinants of parental school choice in view of these two positions. The study focuses on parents living in the Coquitlam School District of British Columbia. This district was selected because within its area parents enrolling their children in kindergarten have available to them a choice between private and public schools. It also offers within the public school a choice of English or French program. Another reason for selecting this school district is that socio-economically the population living in this area is heterogeneous: mainly average middle class but low and high-middle class families reside in some areas of the district. The study was developed along two main lines: degree of parental
choice in schooling and parental socio-economic status (SES). In addition it investigated information and criteria used by parents while going through a school selection process. In order to identify the processes and contingencies of family choice of schools and programs the following hypotheses were tested:

**Hypothesis 1:** The degree of parental choice in schooling measured as the percentage of parents who exert an active choice in schooling for their children, will be greater the higher the parent's SES, given the same amount and quality of information available.

**Hypothesis 2:** The degree of parental choice in schooling will be greater the greater the parent's access and ability to use information.

**Hypothesis 3:** Parents choose (actively or passively) a school for their children according to certain criteria.

**Hypothesis 4:** The rating of the criteria by the parents will differ among the different social classes. High SES parents will rate higher criteria such as social and physical environment of the school, school's program, and child's personality. Low SES parents will rate higher criteria such as location and cost.

The study focussed on parents enrolling their children in the five elementary public schools that offer both English and French Immersion programs and those enrolling their children in the two private schools. It was felt that the older the children the more they could influence the final selection of schools. So, in order to isolate parental choice of schooling, only parents enrolling their children in pre-school or kindergarten in any of the seven schools for 1977-78 were considered.

Student's addresses were obtained from the school principals. In all there were 300 students who qualified according to the above criteria.

Based on the above mentioned hypotheses a questionnaire was
developed. A copy of the questionnaire was mailed to the parents of the 300 children. Sixty-three percent of parents responded. District personnel and the principals of each of the seven schools were interviewed to determine the extent to which alternatives were available to traditional school programs, and the extent to which information about these alternatives was available to parents. The information was collected trying to take a parent's point of view. Thus, questions were designed to determine similarities and differences among public and private schools, and French and English programs, and to compare the different public schools in the sample. Correspondingly, the amount of information available to parents through the School Board, the school (principal and staff), and the media was identified.

Preliminary data analyses showed that "parental choice" was not dichotomous (as initially conceptualized) but formed a continuum. Three levels of choice were identified: parents who exert no choice or passive choice (13%); parents who exert a limited degree of choice or narrow choice (49%); and parents who exert a wide choice or a deliberate active one (32%).

Hypothesis 1: relating degree of choice and SES, was partially accepted. The data show that passivity does not seem to change along with SES. In fact passive choice parents represent 14% of the lower SES class, 18% of the middle SES class and 10% of the high-middle SES class. However, if only active choice behavior is taken into consideration, narrow choice behavior decreases as SES increases while wide choice behavior increases along with SES.
Hypothesis 2 relating degree of choice and access and ability to use information, was accepted. The number of information sources parents reported to have used increased along with degree of choice. Passive choice parents most frequently used none to three information sources, while wide active parents reported to use most frequently nine or more.

Hypothesis 3 was accepted as the data showed that parents do choose a school and program according to certain criteria.

Hypothesis 4 relating types of criteria for choice and socio-economic status, was accepted. Almost all passive choice and a high proportion of low SES parents reported to be concerned about proximity and accessibility of schools. Wide active choice and high-middle SES parents showed greater concern about the availability of a French program. In choosing programs, passive choosers and low SES parents chose the English program more often than wide active choosers and high-middle SES parents. The findings of this study are congruent with findings in other studies. Parents of lower socio-economic status were less likely to be informed about the alternative schools and programs offered. Their major concern was school proximity and access. On the other hand, high-middle class parents were more likely to be better informed and to report academic concerns in school choice. The criteria reported by high-middle socio-economic status parents for choice of schools related mainly to the availability of a French program in the selected school. These parents considered the knowledge of a second language to be beneficial to their children. They also felt that their children needed more of an academic challenge than that provided by the English program.
The findings of this study point to the need for further research before implementing a free market of schools if equality of educational opportunities are to be part of the plan. Lower socio-economic groups seem to be at a disadvantage in school choice as they are less informed about their options. The criteria used for school choice (proximity and access) although practical in present terms may not secure the best educational opportunities for the child.

Further empirical studies are needed in the area of parental choice of schools in order to increase our understanding of the school selection process. In addition thought should be put into ways of systematically informing all parents about the different school alternatives available to their children pointing out for example, similarities and differences in philosophy, curriculum, academic-vocational-artistic-sport offerings and staff qualifications. Education programs should be developed to inform parents about future implications of school and program choice.
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