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Parent Perceptions of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship

Charity C. Roberts

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**PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE
GEORGIA SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLORSHIP**

by

CHARITY ROBERTS

(Under the Direction of Teri Denlea Melton)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand both contributors and barriers to use of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (SB10). Although SB10 was designed to offer parental choice of schools for students with disabilities, it has diminished the capacity of parents to access due process granted through IDEA. Perspectives in this study were provided by parents who chose to rescind their child's participation in the voucher program and parents who continued to access the voucher. Analysis of the lived experiences of parents of students with disabilities in Georgia revealed both similar and diverse experiences, perceptions and concerns regarding educating students with disabilities in private schools.

Findings from current and former participants indicated major contributor themes for SB10 enrollment to be academic and demographic factors such as the perception of qualified teachers and smaller class sizes. Former participant findings indicated academic factors such as perceived lack of individual attention, specialized services, and qualified teachers to be primary reasons for rescinding SB10 enrollment.

Further, the study sought to understand all parents' knowledge of information sources, types of sources available, and use of sources related to SB10 private schools. Analysis of sources of information regarding private school selection indicated that

current participants sought information from internet sources. Former participants sought information from family and friends.

Conclusions based upon the research indicated that parents who had continued enrollment remain satisfied with the voucher program. Although current participants reported continued satisfaction with the academic quality in SB10 private schools, only one attributed satisfaction to his or her child's academic progress. However, findings indicated that a significant percentage of SB10 students do not maintain enrollment in the program and the primary reason for rescinding participation to be academic needs. Parents who chose to return to public school and received special education services through IDEA did so based on their belief that the special services and teacher quality provided in the private school were not satisfactory. All participants in this study agreed that the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship should continue to be available even though former participants reported that it did not meet their needs.

INDEX WORDS: Voucher, Special education, Georgia, Case study, Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, Senate Bill 10, Qualitative study, Parents

PARENT PERCEPTIONS
OF THE
GEORGIA SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

I thank my husband, Rodney Roberts, and sons, Ryan and Tyler Roberts, for all of their patience, support, and love. They have encouraged me so much and I am grateful for their understanding and sacrifices during this effort. To my sons, I hope you will be motivated to achieve high levels of excellence in your education and profession. To my mother, Helen Connell, thank you for instilling in me the love of God and modeling dignity, class, and respect for self. I am grateful for my sister, Chris, and her family (Will, Josey, and Hayden). To all of my extended family who has believed in me along the way . . . thank you! I appreciate your encouragement and for providing me the motivation to achieve this goal. I love you all very much.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	6
Purpose Statement.....	7
Research Questions	8
Significance of the Study	8
Procedures	9
Definitions of Key Terms	10
Limitations and Delimitations.....	11
Chapter Summary	13
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
Introduction.....	15
School Choice	21
Arguments for School Choice.....	23
Arguments Against School Choice.....	24
Vouchers	27
Vouchers for Students with Disabilities	30
Arguments for School Vouchers for Students with Disabilities.....	31
Arguments against School Vouchers for Students with Disabilities	33
State Voucher Programs for Students with Disabilities.....	36
Florida McKay Scholarship Program	37
Ohio Autism Scholarship Program	38
Utah Carson Smith Scholarship Program	39
Arizona’s Scholarship for Pupils with Disabilities.....	39
Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program	40
Proponents of SB10	42
Opponents of SB10.....	44

	Summary of Data for SB10.....	45
	Key Issues of Vouchers for Students Disabilities.....	46
	Chapter Summary	48
III.	METHODOLOGY	50
	Research Questions.....	50
	Research Design.....	51
	Methodology	52
	Sampling and Sampling Procedures	54
	Criterion Sampling.....	55
	Purposeful Sampling.....	56
	Sampling Strategies	57
	Gatekeepers.....	58
	Instrumentation	62
	Questionnaire	63
	Face-to-Face Interviews.....	63
	Pilot Study.....	64
	Data Collection	65
	Questionnaire	65
	Interviews.....	66
	Document Collection	66
	Data Analysis	67
	Quantitative Data Analysis	67
	Qualitative Data Analysis	67
	Document Analysis.....	67
	Integration of Quantitative, Qualitative and Document Data	68
	Reporting the Data	68
	Current Participant Data	69
	Former Participant Data.....	69
	Questionnaire Responses	69
	Interview Responses	69
	Standards of Quality and Verification	69
	Chapter Summary	71
IV.	REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS	72
	Findings.....	72
	Findings From Archive Data	72
	Summary of archive data	73
	Findings From Current Voucher Participants.....	78

	CVP Demographic Data	78
	Quantitative CVP Data	79
	Qualitative CVP Themes	83
	Summary CVP Findings	84
	Findings From Former Voucher Participants	85
	FVP Demographic Data.....	85
	Quantitative FVP Data.....	86
	Qualitative FVP Themes.....	89
	Summary FVP Findings.....	92
	Summary of Findings.....	93
	Summary of Findings for Sub-Questions	93
	Summary of Findings for the Overarching Research Question	97
V.	IMPLICATIONS	99
	Summary	99
	Analysis of Research Findings.....	101
	Discussion of Research Findings	101
	Discussion of Contributor Findings	101
	Discussion of Barrier Findings	107
	Conclusions.....	109
	Implications.....	113
	Recommendations for Implementing Study Results.....	113
	Recommendations for Future Research	114
	Dissemination	115
	REFERENCES	117
	APPENDICES	133
	A. Interview Questions	133
	B. Questionnaire for Former SB10 Participants.....	135
	C. Document Analysis Form	157
	D. Vouchers by State	158
	E. SB10 Map	160
	F. Moustakas' Modifications of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Data Analysis	161
	G. SB10 Enrollment Data	162
	H. Questionnaire for Current SB10 Participants	163
	I. Internal Review Board Acceptance Letter	182
	J. Internal Review Board Amendment Approval 1	183
	K. Internal Review Board Amendment Approval 2	184

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	SB10 Private School Locations by GLRS Regions	73
Table 4.2	Summary of Duplicated Enrollment by Year in SB10 Approved Private Schools.....	74
Table 4.3	Summary of Unduplicated Dropouts Within and After One School Year	74
Table 4.4	Summary of Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity Each Year	75
Table 4.5	Summary of Student Reading Results by Year.....	76
Table 4.6	Summary of Student Math Results by Year	76
Table 4.7	Enrollment of SWD by Gender.....	77
Table 4.8	Comparison of Public and SB10 Students by Free and Reduced Lunch Status.....	77
Table 4.9	SB10 Enrollment Percentages by Exceptionality in Grades K-12.....	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1	94
Figure 4.2	94
Figure 4.3	96
Figure 4.4	97
Figure 5.1	102
Figure 5.2	103
Figure 5.3	108
Figure 5.4	104

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Currently in the United States an intense debate is growing in the field of K-12 education regarding school choice. This ideological deliberation, occurring among parents, legislators, public school advocates, private school advocates, and mass media, concerns implementation of school choice, or more specifically, publicly funded school vouchers for use in private education. By definition, school choice provides informed parents with additional options for school placement and creates a competitive market among schools with the intention of improving academic achievement (Weidner & Herrington, 2006).

Aside from the civil rights perspective, the voucher concept is an extension of a movement in the United States to actively practice the concepts of free market theory in the field of public education. Initially, free market theory was introduced by Milton Friedman in 1955. In a landmark article, Friedman presented market economies as maximum productivity and efficiency in the absence of government control (Moe, 2008). For the past decade, this free market concept has gained momentum as school choice advocates have joined together in multiple states across the nation to support full implementation of vouchers.

A voucher is one method of school choice in which public funds are allocated for students to attend a school of the parents' choice instead of the district-assigned public school (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2009). One specific voucher program model targets students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are found in all racial and economic subgroups. Therefore, special education vouchers have the

potential to impact a large cross-section of students crossing ethnicity, socio-economic status, and geographic region (Weidner & Herrington, 2006).

Currently, there are two cornerstones of policy in the United States that affect the public education of all students. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004) established federal provisions to ensure adequate yearly progress and access to supplementary services. Because millions of U.S. students with disabilities are entitled to services and supplementary support through NCLB (2008) and IDEA (2004), vouchers have the potential to impact public education on a national scale by potentially diminishing the intent and effect of these two national policies. Developed from a civil rights perspective, both of these federal mandates have specific provisions to ensure all students receive a variety of supplemental services that ensure they progress in the curriculum and transition to post-secondary opportunities.

Winters and Greene (2008a) present an opposing perspective to the civil rights model. They consider the vouchers for students with disabilities model to be “a fresh approach to school choice” (p. 1). This particular model has managed to make more significant advancements than voucher programs for other subgroups over the past few years (Greene & Winters, 2008). Currently, 10 states offer voucher programs for students with disabilities, including Georgia (Campanella, Glenn, & Perry, 2011).

To promote school choice for families, Georgia became the fifth state in the nation to propose a voucher program for students with disabilities. The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (GSNS) or Senate Bill 10 (SB10) is the first state legislative act that allowed vouchers to fund school tuition for Georgia students with disabilities. The voucher program debate is important for students in Georgia because there is little, if any,

available research on the long-term effect on students' academic achievement, completion of post-secondary education, or successful transition into the workforce as a result of voucher participation.

Successful transition into the workforce has been a primary focus of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) since the inception of NCLB (2008) and the revision of IDEA (2004). Each state's progress in terms of dropout reduction, high school diploma completion, and post-secondary engagement is measured annually by OSEP. Each state submits an annual performance report to OSEP detailing the number and percentages of dropouts, high school graduates, and post-secondary status of all students with disabilities in the state (M. Musgrove, personal communication, November 28, 2011).

The Georgia Department of Education (2008) reported during the 2007-2008 school year a total of 199,509 students who were eligible for special education services through public schools in Georgia. Of the total number eligible for special education services, 899 students enrolled in the voucher program to attend 117 eligible Georgia private schools, with 825 students completing one full year. The reported cost of the voucher program totaled \$5.6 million, with an average scholarship amount of \$6,273 per student in FY 2008 (National School Board Association, n.d.). In the 2008-2009 school year, the number of participating students in SB10 increased to 1,596 students out of 178,893 eligible students (Georgia Department of Education, n.d. a). In the 2009-2010 school year, SB10 enrollment increased to 1,858 students out of 176,377 eligible students (Georgia Department of Education , n.d. b). Once again, SB10 enrollment increased in FY 2011 to 2,529 out of 176,962 eligible students (Georgia Department of Education ,

n.d. c). As enrollment continues to increase, these statistics indicate that vouchers for students with disabilities are perceived as positive opportunities by parents of students with disabilities.

However, there are significant issues to address with implementation of SB10 (Fain, 2010; Serrie, 2008). For each claim made in support of SB10, there is an opposing position that refutes its effectiveness. While it was meant to provide increased options and flexibility for parents of students with disabilities to enroll their children in a school of their choice, SB10 has resulted in parental rejection of educational cornerstones such as NCLB and IDEA since both require enrollment in public schools to receive the full benefit of the policy provisions.

For example, based on the market theory approach to education, parents should be informed decision makers for their children's education. When considering who conducts research and makes decisions, it is important to identify the primary decision makers within families. Data presented by Morin and Cohn (2008) indicated that women in households play a major role in decisions regarding family. For 43% of the households studied, women were the primary decision makers. In 26% of households, men were the primary decision makers. And, in 31% of households, decisions were made jointly.

Under the provisions of IDEA, parents who participate in a voucher program forfeit all individual entitlement rights known as Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Once parents accept a voucher, they lose all rights to due process and the opportunity to challenge public schools regarding educational services for their children. Under the provisions of IDEA, parents of a child with a disability who seek school choice

options through a private school essentially reject any offer of a free appropriate public education and all associated services. This includes transportation services, extended school year, assistive technology, supplementary aids and services, and related services such as therapy and inclusion supports. Thus, parents must make a choice between the availability of right to individual support services offered through a public school or the option of private school programs with no rights to individual services. It has not been determined if parents comprehend the significance of rejecting their children's rights within IDEA in favor of a voucher.

Public schools continue to be held to high standards in terms of adequate yearly progress for all students, including students with disabilities. Currently, private schools in Georgia are not held to the same accountability measures at the individual student level. It is not clear at this time whether or not students with disabilities participating in voucher programs in Georgia are achieving academically at the rate of their peers in public schools or if they are receiving appropriate services (Müller & Ahearn, 2007). In the *Gainesville Times*, Senator Eric Johnson cited the purpose of special education vouchers in Georgia as “really more about improving public schools than giving vouchers to private schools” (Jordan, 2008, p.1). However, it is unclear at this time how or in what way it could be verified that public schools would be improved by the availability of vouchers for students with disabilities.

When considering vouchers for students with disabilities, conflict can be expected between public and private schools since private schools currently are subject to less government control and standards of achievement. At this point in the progression of implementation, the issue of school choice is in desperate need of solid research and

comprehensive policies at the federal, state, and local levels (Wong & Walberg, 2006). Because SB10 was passed into law in summer 2007, there is no current research on the effectiveness or validity of vouchers specific to Georgia. Thus, it has been necessary to draw conclusions from prior research relating on vouchers in other states.

If market-based educational policies such as SB10 are implemented throughout the U.S. for students with disabilities, the effect of school choice would have an enormous impact on both public schools and private schools (Greene & Forster, 2003). If the principles of IDEA are diminished, as proposed by Etscheidt (2005), it is important to research the outcomes and consequences of voucher programs for students with disabilities.

The implications for students, families, schools, and communities could be significant based on the research findings. Thus, the need for data for public review is essential. Unfortunately, in spite of all the progress made to promote vouchers in Georgia for students with disabilities, the long-term effects of the program have yet to be determined. While these long-term effects can only be determined by conducting longitudinal studies, an exploratory study will set the foundation for future research.

Problem Statement

Currently, there is little or no available true experimental research on SB10. Research findings are available for the Florida McKay Scholarship program which has been duplicated almost in its entirety by Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship program (Greene & Forster, 2003; Weidner & Herrington, 2006). Research findings on the McKay scholarship are mixed and presented by individuals, groups, and organizations with biased positions on vouchers who either strongly oppose or support their use. SB10

has been in effect for only 4 school years. As a result, there is a lack of data available on the effectiveness of the vouchers in Georgia. It is not known if students with disabilities in Georgia are positively or negatively impacted by their parents' rejection of services offered in public schools through IDEA. Although SB10 was designed to offer parental choice of schools for students with disabilities, it has diminished the capacity of parents to access due process granted through IDEA. In addition, it has the potential to impact achievement and post-secondary success for Georgia students with disabilities now and in the future. This exploratory study will shed light on potential contributing factors and barriers experienced by parents who participated in the SB10 scholarship program.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore social and educational contributing factors and barriers resulting from participation in Georgia's voucher program for students with disabilities. The study was conducted from the perspective of parents of students with disabilities.

While many parents are accessing vouchers through SB10, some parents of students with disabilities are choosing to return to public schools for their children's educational services. Therefore, the study sought to understand the decision making process of parents of students with disabilities who chose to rescind participation in SB10 and return to IDEA services in public schools. The study explored views of parents of students with disabilities who opted to rescind participation in SB10 with the intent of promoting future studies to identify the needs of all students with disabilities in Georgia.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following overarching research question: Why do parents of students with disabilities in Georgia decide to rescind voucher participation in SB10? The following sub-questions guided the study:

R₁ What are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia?

R₂ What are the barriers or negative factors of a voucher program that resulted in parents rescinding participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia?

Significance of the Study

SB10 offers an opportunity to research a statewide voucher system available specifically for students with disabilities regardless of family socioeconomic status. SB10 is available only to Georgia students with disabilities who meet eligibility requirements as determined by IDEA. Perspectives collected by this study were provided by parents who chose to rescind their child's continued participation in the voucher program and return them to public school. Study findings may be beneficial to others studying voucher programs in general. Through their experiences, parents were able to offer important insight into contributing factors and barriers resulting from voucher programs for students with disabilities.

In terms of benefits or barriers, it remains to be seen whether or not voucher programs will support students with disabilities in the areas of inclusion and academic achievement. Using data results from this study, the strengths and weaknesses of SB10

may be analyzed by families, public and private school administrators, public and private school staff, and public policy leaders in their quest to develop and refine additional voucher programs.

Procedures

This exploratory study utilized a qualitative design in the case study tradition to explore parent perceptions of the Georgia's voucher program for students with disabilities after rescinding their child's participation in the program. The case study method was selected since a method was needed to analyze complex social phenomena (Yin, 2009) from the first years of inception with little, if any, prior research available. A case study investigation allowed the researcher to collect data through artifacts and interviews with parents in order to understand their perceptions of SB10. Using this method, the researcher had the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of critical decisions regarding educational placement for children with disabilities when school choice is available through a voucher program.

Since there is limited (if any) available research specific to SB10, multiple methods were used to collect data for this case study. The researcher adapted an instrument in the form of a multiple choice, open-ended questionnaire and administered it to two separate populations. Both current and former SB10 participants were sought to participate in the survey appropriate for their child's current enrollment status. The instrument (Appendices B and H) was based on surveys used by Greene and Forster (2003), Teske, Fitzpatrick, and Kaplan (2007), and Weidner (2005) in previous literature about vouchers for students with disabilities. All eligible participants were sought to complete this questionnaire regardless of enrollment status. Fifteen participants

contributed to the study to include twelve current voucher participants and three former voucher participants. The researcher established face validity of the instrument by administering the questionnaire to individuals not involved in the study.

The researcher also gathered data from in-depth semi-structured interviews of three parents of students with disabilities who rescinded participation in SB10. A purposeful sample of three parents of Georgia students with disabilities was selected to participate in face-to-face interviews. According to Creswell (1998), case study design includes limiting the number of participants in order to obtain richer, contextual data. Therefore, the researcher reserved the right to ask clarifying questions, if needed. Additionally, a comprehensive analysis was conducted of artifacts from annual SB10 legislative reports prepared by the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE). The designated gatekeepers for this study were the special education directors for local public school districts that had re-enrolled students from SB10 programs as well as various community educational agencies with social media outlets.

Participants were required to meet the following criteria for inclusion in the study:

(a) The participant must have been the biological mother or father of a child with a disability; (b) The participant must have been the primary care-giver of the child; (c) The participant must speak and understand English fluently; (d) The participant must have taken advantage of SB10 and enrolled his/her child in a private school for one school year (or less) and then must have withdrawn the child and returned to public school.

Definitions of Key Terms

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – A federal law enacted in 1990 that established the provision of a free appropriate public education for all students

with disabilities ages 3 through 21 years within each state. The purpose of IDEA is to ensure equitable participation and educational access for students in special education programs in the United States using individual education plans to provide services for students through a team-based decision model (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Disability – Although many definitions exist, for the purpose of this study, a disability is an intellectual, emotional, and/or neurological impairment that manifests itself in individuals for a sustained period of time and prohibits an individual from performing age-appropriate cognitive and/or academic tasks without specialized instruction and/or supports.

Senate Bill 10 – Senate Bill 10 (SB10) is a Georgia state law passed in 2007 which allows students with disabilities the option to transfer to eligible private schools and subsidizes the cost of enrollment through a voucher. The amount of the voucher is determined by public school funding received for the student during the previous school year (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, 2007).

Current Voucher Participant (CVP) – Parents of students with disabilities who contributed to the research study while their child was enrolled in a private school through the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship program.

Former Voucher Participant (FVP) – Parents of students with disabilities who contributed to the research study while their child was enrolled in public school. These parents had previously participated in SB10 but chose to rescind.

Limitations and Delimitations

The nature of qualitative research studies infers that they are designed not to be generalized across populations of groups. Instead, qualitative methods are used when

little is known about a subject (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005), and the findings may serve as a basis for future studies. The findings of this research study are unique to the perceptions, opinions, and beliefs of the participants in Georgia who were purposively (not randomly) selected. Specifically, the participants were parents of students with disabilities (intellectual, physical, social/emotional, and communication). Therefore, the results of the study were not indicative of responses from parents of children with more severe disabilities who previously participated in SB10 in Georgia. In addition, the results of this study may not be generalized to the larger population of students with disabilities in the United States since the results are restricted to the geographic representation of the survey respondents.

The limitations of this study included the sample size and method of data collection. Three participants comprised the interview method sample, making it a relatively small (approximately 1% or less of the population) sample and, therefore, too small to be representative of the population. The sample consisted of parents of students with disabilities who rescinded participation in SB10. Therefore, the interview method did not include the perceptions of parents who continued enrollment in the voucher program. Considering the questionnaire method of data collection, the researcher made the assumption that the questionnaire measured what it was designed to measure and that participants answered all interview questions openly and honestly. The researcher recognized that participants may self-censor their responses, that the availability of artifacts from the Department of Education was limited, and that the quality of data collection depended on the skills of the researcher.

Chapter Summary

A pressing question remains about the academic and social benefits of voucher programs for students with disabilities. There is an opportunity for research to be conducted about application of SB10 as well as special education voucher programs across the nation. SB10 is a controversial Georgia state law in effect since 2007. It was intended to provide educational alternatives for students in Georgia's special education programs who may choose to transfer to an eligible private or out-of-district school within the state.

Currently, little research, if any, is available that supports or negates the effectiveness of SB10. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the national debate about school vouchers, specifically as they relate to students with disabilities. In addition, little, if any, research exists relevant to SB10 as it applies to students with disabilities living in Georgia. Using a qualitative case study tradition, this study analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the current voucher program in Georgia through the lens of parents of students with disabilities.

The interview sample consisted of three purposively selected parents of Georgia students with disabilities who had previously been enrolled in eligible private schools via SB10 and returned to public schools. Multiple data sources such as a questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and artifacts were coded and analyzed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the voucher system as it applies to students with disabilities whose parents chose to return them to public school. The perceptions of parents of students with disabilities who rescinded participation in SB10 will provide value to the study of voucher program effectiveness for K-12 students with disabilities in Georgia and across

the United States, and will further contribute to the national debate surrounding voucher programs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the historical development of school vouchers for students with disabilities during the 20th century from both a national perspective and the Georgia state perspective. Additionally, the positions of advocates and opponents of vouchers for students with disabilities are presented. Perspectives are presented based on how they may affect students with disabilities.

The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, and a series of similar reports perpetuated a persistent fear that American public schools may be performing beneath their counterparts in other parts of the developed world (Chakrabarti, 2003) and were on a course toward global economic defeat (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). *A Nation at Risk* was the catalyst for an abundance of education reform efforts and began the era of modern development of school choice (Center for Education Research, Analysis, and Innovation, 1999).

Even before 1983, many wanted to solve the problems in America's schools by supplementing federal funding and increasing involvement in the national education system. Examples of such efforts include the initial passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). These initiatives, although perceived to be groundbreaking, brought about relatively slow progress when working in tandem with special interest groups.

President Ronald Reagan had a different perspective. When the report was published, he argued that the way to solve the crisis in American education was to increase parental choice and strengthen state and local control:

I believe that parents, not government, have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. Parental authority is not a right conveyed by the state; rather, parents delegate to their elected school board representatives and state legislators the responsibility for their children's schooling. . . . So, we'll continue to work in the months ahead for passage of tuition tax credits, vouchers, educational savings accounts, voluntary school prayer, and abolishing the Department of Education. Our agenda is to restore quality to education by increasing competition and by strengthening parental choice and local control. I'd like to ask all of you, as well as every citizen who considers this report's recommendations, to work together to restore excellence in America's schools. (Reagan, 1983, p. 2)

According to Lips (2008), President Reagan's philosophical approach to educational reform was based on freedom to choose schools, models of education, and quality instruction, along with the understanding that both families and public schools were responsible for student achievement. This movement was a significant shift from the civil rights model passed in the 1970s to address the education of students with disabilities in the aftermath of the civil rights movement. The legal system was a fundamental component of compliance monitoring for civil rights laws. The laws

developed for students with disabilities were comparable to the equal access protections previously developed for minority students (Greene, 2007).

As late as 1971, students with disabilities were being categorically denied enrollment in public schools as a result of a disability. It was during this year that the Supreme Court ruling in the landmark case, *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, determined that mental incapacity could not be basis for denial of enrollment. By 1973, many students with disabilities continued to be denied enrollment in public schools. Congress responded by passing the Rehabilitation Act. One significant part of this act was to eliminate discrimination based on a handicapping condition (e.g. enrollment). After schools opened the doors to students with disabilities, the courts addressed equal access in *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* by refusing to accept inadequate financial resources as a basis for enrollment and provision of services (Horn & Tynen, 2001).

The debates continued into 1975 when Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) which mandated that all children receive a free appropriate public education. The EAHCA has since been renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997 and 2004) and incorporates specific premises for its purpose, such as individual evaluation, eligibility determination, individual education plans and services, and a free appropriate public education (Horn & Tynen, 2001.). Its intent is to provide all state public schools federal funds to assist in provision of services and supports that facilitate the individual learning needs of children. Such services and supports include highly qualified teachers, supplementary aids and services, and progress monitoring. It offers a free appropriate public education to students who require

supplemental instruction, aids, and services in order to progress in the general curriculum.

A significant component of IDEA is that it offers legal remedy for parents of students for whom public schools are not attending to their needs. This protection is only accessible for students who are enrolled in a public school setting. Parents can access due process through mediation and hearings to reach resolution about the determined services and supports designated in their child's individual education plan (Goldstein, 2003). IDEA is primarily viewed as a civil rights law since it aligns with other federal legislation for individuals with disabilities such as the Americans with Disabilities Education Act.

Students with disabilities served in private schools are offered specific provisions for service through IDEA. As a part of Child Find, a public school is responsible for locating and identifying students with disabilities in the community. Students in private schools who are identified as having a disability are entitled to services through a proportionate share mandate if the child is eligible for services that the public school system designates. Only a calculated percentage of federal funds are reserved for provision of services for students in private schools. Once the funds are depleted during any fiscal year, the services may be discontinued until funds are applied in the next fiscal year (USDOE, 2008).

Although conceptualized in the 1960s, consideration of vouchers for students with disabilities arose as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002. One component of this landmark legislation proposed more flexibility for schools and parents. In all previous litigation involving school choice, state programs were viewed in light of the

Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution. The First Amendment Establishment Clause provides for separation of religious institutions and government.

One such example of civil rights legislation that impacts school choice is *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*. This case opened the door for vouchers to be utilized in private settings without violating the Establishment Clause. The ruling was perceived by many commentators to be as significant as *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (Eric Development Team, 2002). This case centered on the 14th Amendment which guarantees equal protection of the laws to all citizens. This was a verdict by the United States Supreme Court in 2002 which ruled five to four in favor of school choice (Wong & Walberg, 2006). In this ruling, the Supreme Court upheld that the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring voucher program was neutral with regard to the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution (The Constitution of the United States, Amendment 1). In accordance with the Supreme Court ruling, a voucher program that meets the requirements of the Constitution must have religious neutrality, specifically, without regard to religion, and must offer true private choice in which the government does not influence the choice of options (Komer & Neily, 2007).

In accordance with increased protection of the civil rights approach for students with disabilities, additional funding was required to support federal civil rights legislation. According to the Snyder and Dillow (2010), a total of 6,606,000 students received special education services during the 2007-2008 school year in the United States. Approximately \$584.7 billion in revenue was collected for public elementary and secondary education among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in fiscal year 2008.

State and local governments contributed 92% of revenue while the federal government contributed 8% (Snyder & Dillow, 2010).

It is significant to note that in light of NCLB, the 1997 version of IDEA had to be revised to align with the provisions of NCLB. Nowhere in the re-authorization was school choice clarified as a provision for students with disabilities. In fact, IDEA clarifies that students with disabilities parentally placed in private schools have effectively rejected their right to a free appropriate public education and all the services therein (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

A school choice movement was formed by special interest groups to counter the perception that federal government control was not the most advantageous form of control for public education. This movement's mission was fueled by the perceived significant financial allocations provided to public education systems and the perceived lack of educational achievement for all students. In a quantitative study, Wong and Langevin (2007) connected the complex relationship between political atmosphere and public opinion and education policy decisions. They ascertained that school choice policy adoption was most likely to happen in states under Republican gubernatorial control with lower classroom spending levels, a longer record of education finance litigation, and a higher numbers of active private schools (Wong & Langevin, 2007). In recent years, substantial attention has been focused on choice in education since this topic is considered to be a reflection of broader political debates in the nation (DeBray-Pelot, Lubienski, & Scott, 2007). As a result, school choice, and vouchers in particular, are among the most fiercely debated mechanisms of public school restructuring (Chakrabarti, 2003).

School Choice

Horace Mann described the purpose of schooling as preparation of students for democratic citizenship (Etscheidt, 2005). Specifically, the interactions among groups form the processes of our society. In recent years, a significant movement in the political and academic arena has brought forth school choice as a perceived way to help achieve a more democratic society. Although conceptualized many years ago, school choice recently has become a prominent and controversial topic in public education. The debates involve issues such as parents' and educators' positions on school choice, public school administration as a free market economy, public accountability, intersection of church and state, and access to individual entitlement for students with disabilities (Howell, Wolf, Campbell, & Peterson, 2002).

The expression *school choice* may be defined as any guiding principle created to enable parents to select the finest educational placement for their children. These opportunities might include public school transfer, charter schools, magnet schools, home schooling, scholarships, vouchers, and tax credits (Komer & Neily, 2007).

The theory of school choice is represented in many different forms with vast variability. School choice is divided into two main components: private sector and public sector. School choice through the private sector entails secular and non-secular schools. These schools can be accessed by families who pay tuition or, in much fewer cases, through scholarship programs. On the other hand, public sector school choice consists of charter schools, magnet schools, and traditional public schools. These schools can be accessed through open enrollment (intra- and inter-district), voluntary integration, and regulated segregation programs (Cobb & Glass, 2009).

Since NCLB makes specific provisions for parental access to school choice, the theoretical basis for federal support of school choice must be considered. Pro-choice advocates perceive a free market economy to be the most efficient means of accessing educational outcomes for students (Moe, 2008). Making individually-based decisions is the premise for the natural systems perspective (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Elements of the natural systems perspective align with the concept of school choice in that emphasis is placed on the individual as opposed to the system. The needs of individual students are at the crux of parental support of school choice which led to the federal mandates of NCLB. Parents, as the primary educators of students' values, beliefs, and culture, have the ultimate responsibility for determining the most appropriate school placement for their children. However, public school advocates argue that a free appropriate public education offered by IDEA meets the expectations of individual student needs.

Schools are open social systems that simultaneously influence society and are influenced by society. Organizational justice is the perception of fairness held by students and parents as members of a public school organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Therefore, within the context of services of public schools, parents and students hold diverse opinions regarding their perception of equity and fairness in the distribution and allocation of these services. As stated by Lee (n.d.), the choice of efficiency does not always co-exist with equity. Many parents seek relief from school choice by accessing safe schools or higher performing schools for their children. Under the provision of IDEA, parents who seek school choice options unilaterally through a private school setting for their children with disabilities essentially reject any offer of a free appropriate public education. Ultimately, FAPE is not supported by the free market theory.

Arguments for School Choice

Advocates of school choice assert that, over the past 25 years, progress has been made by expanding school choice and making public schools accountable to parents and the public. Today, a growing number of American families claim to benefit from the freedom to choose among several schools (Lips, 2008). Advocates argue that school choice can increase educational yield by improving equivalent quality between students and schools while exerting competitive pressure among schools (Koedel, Betts, Rice, & Zau, 2009). One perspective presented by Etscheidt (2005) alluded to the idea that if school choice options are not available to parents, the parents remain in captivity. Etscheidt also proposed that parents will demonstrate a more vested interest in their children's school programs if the choice for school enrollment is decided by the parents. When unencumbered by mandatory zoning and district determinations of school attendance, Etscheidt indicated parents feel a personal sense of accountability.

States are increasing legislative actions to support the growing mainstream popularity of vouchers. As of the 2010 legislative session, 44 states have introduced school choice legislation and 12 have implemented a voucher program (Burke, 2009; Campanella & Ehrenreich, 2010). According to Wolfe (2008), evidence from nine previous gold-standard studies indicates that school choice is beneficial for disadvantaged students with significant educational needs.

Arguments Against School Choice

At this point in the progression of implementation, the issue of school choice desperately needs solid research and comprehensive policies at the federal, state, and local levels according to Wong & Walberg (2006). Multiple factors of school choice are currently unclear especially in terms of long-term implications.

First, the question arises as to the availability of and access to school choice for students from all income levels. Opponents argue that school choice will result in a significant fraction of students, assumed most likely to be the least advantaged of the public school population, being left behind in terms of academic resources and gains. Opponents argue that in leaving these students behind, school choice will further segregate schools along ethnic and socioeconomic lines if school choice models are not designed carefully (Koedel et al., 2009).

Among civil rights leaders, any proposal of school choice via vouchers is met with universal opposition. They perceive that private schools have the power to be selective in their choice of tax-payer supported voucher participants, thus leaving the remaining African American students in the public school setting and further exacerbating the issue of failing schools. Ultimately, school choice is perceived as another means of segregation and augmenting inferior education for students of color.

It is interesting to note, however, that parents of African American students are much more receptive to the idea of school voucher programs. The basis for their consideration lies in the desire to see immediate improvement in the quality of education for their children, regardless of the setting, as opposed to waiting for the issues within the public schools to be resolved (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2000, 2002).

LeCour (2002) encouraged parents to be cognizant of terminology such as *vouchers* and *choice* and their possible underlying consequences, such as separate and unequal educational systems.

In response to this general consensus by parents, LeCour (2002) agreed that public schools serving at-risk students continue to require significant improvement. He did not agree that vouchers are the solution to this problem. He viewed vouchers as an attempt to promote a market system for public education that, ultimately, would reinforce separate and unequal school systems. Epple and Romano (1998) supported this position in their qualitative study by suggesting that the effect of vouchers is to sort students by income and ability. It is of significant concern to voucher critics that students from low income families may not be able to access school choice options since private schools are permitted to charge whatever tuition they determine necessary. If the voucher amount does not cover all the costs of private school education, many students will not access the voucher program (Green & Forster, 2003).

In support of this argument, Weidner and Herrington (2006) declared in their study that vouchers, without income restrictions and without restrictions on the level of tuition charged by private schools, would be used more by advantaged parents and may not amend discrepancies that exist in accessing private school services. Scholars and policymakers worry that programs designed to augment parents' choices of schools for their children might amplify the isolation of disadvantaged students (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2008). One theory is that private schools will accept only the finest students, leaving the most at-risk and low performing students in the public school system (Doerr, Menendez, & Swomley, 1996).

School choice policies may, in fact, further exacerbate school social stratification (Reay & Ball, 1997). These researchers claim the new market economy in education has exacerbated social distinctions of class. Not only in interviews but also in their own accounts, some working class parents are presented as a stigmatized group (Reay & Ball, 1997). Wells and Crain (1992) stated, in their discussion of desegregation and Black parents' educational choice in America, that what is frequently overlooked in the American choice debate is that Black parents have to negotiate more difficult choices than their White counterparts, choices that are mired in the reality of discrimination and domination.

The literature review in a study by Bifulco et al. (2008) referenced several previous studies (Figlio & Stone, 2001; Long & Toma, 1988; Lankford, Lee, & Wyckoff, 1995) which observed that White students are much more apt to enroll in private schools in metropolitan areas with large populations of Black students and that students usually are less likely to choose private schools in areas where the average level of achievement in public schools is elevated. These results suggest private schools tend to “cream skim” students (Bifulco et al., 2008, p. 131), particularly in areas with concentrations of disadvantaged students.

An additional factor to consider is the availability and use of accurate resources by parents in order to make informed decisions about school enrollment. An efficient marketplace of educational options carries the underlying assumption that parents are aware of and investigate possible options for their children's school enrollment. A primary concern in the efficient operation of a marketplace within educational systems is

the awareness and use of information sources by parents among various ethnic and economic groups (Weidner & Herrington, 2006).

Weidner and Herrington (2006) conducted a study that collected information from parents of students who participated in the Florida McKay Scholarship Program. Data collected included the school indicators parents researched when making decisions regarding school enrollment. The study supports the perception that more educated and affluent parents use vouchers more often than less educated and lower income parents. Although Weidner and Herrington (2006) did not find a significant relationship between race, class, and awareness of information sources, Cobb and Glass (2009) described how the lack of access to information by socio-economically deprived families limits them from a first class education.

Vouchers

According to the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (2009), vouchers are payments for expenses of a child's education made directly to the educational institution by public or private sources. Vouchers may target special populations, be funded publicly or privately, are allowable for consideration as scholarships, and may pay all or a portion of student tuition (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2009; Wong & Walberg, 2006). There are two distinct classifications of vouchers: pure vouchers and restrictive vouchers. Pure vouchers have no income level restrictions, no restrictions on type of private school enrollment, no restrictions on admission policies, and no restrictions on tuition and fees. Restrictive vouchers, on the other hand, are available only to students who meet specific criteria,

such as low income status, evidence of a disability, or enrollees of failing schools (Wong & Walberg, 2006).

During the 1800s, Vermont and Maine established the first voucher program to provide educational access for students in rural areas with limited access to public schools (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2009). In 1955, Milton Friedman introduced the term *educational voucher* as a means of improving educational efficiency (Moe, 2008). However, vouchers did not become a means of choice again until 1990 with implementation of the Milwaukee School Voucher program, which had as its focus the promotion of educational reform, not access (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2009).

As of 2010, 12 states and the District of Columbia have implemented 18 voucher, tax credit, or scholarship programs to provide private school options to 179,721 students (Campanella & Ehrenreich, 2010). Seven states and Washington, DC offer taxpayer-funded scholarship programs for students to attend private elementary and secondary schools (Campanella, Glenn, & Perry, L., 2011). According to Wolfe (2008), there is currently a wealth of data available from nine gold-standard, random assignment experimental studies concluding some or all of the participants demonstrated academic gains and parental satisfaction from attending private schools using a voucher. Parental satisfaction has proven to have the largest and most immediate positive effect. Student academic gains have been less consistent, with a smaller, but nonetheless positive, effect. These previous studies of school vouchers primarily involved low-income, inner city students. Wolfe (2008) questioned the effectiveness of statewide universal voucher programs because it is uncertain if the same outcomes would be produced. He stated that

there continued to be a significant need for high quality experimental research on participant effects of voucher programs. The existing research is inconclusive about the effect of offering vouchers to all students within a state regardless of income or academic need.

In spite of the speculation and warnings against school choice as a national agenda, the concept of school choice has resulted in many different options for parents in selecting school enrollment for their children. Across the nation, individual states are pursuing various models of school choice to address the perceived inequity of educational opportunities available to students in at-risk subgroups. The market theory concept suggests that parents are the best judges in determining school selection and educational programs. According to Wolfe (2008), few parents actually investigate all available school options unless their child is not demonstrating adequate performance in the current school. Transferring schools is disruptive socially and academically, and requires significant energy on the part of the parents and child. Therefore, the majority of parents and children seeking vouchers is comprised by at-risk children.

When considering the theoretical advantages of school choice, a perceived by-product of parental choice will be increased competition among all schools and, ultimately, better quality educational programs among all schools. To actually achieve this theoretical concept, Weidner and Herrington (2006) proposed three key factors that work together to create a school-choice market: (a) availability of options, (b) ability to move freely among those schools, and (c) information about the options. One such opportunity to initially create a school-choice market option in the United States came about with implementation of voucher programs. Of the nine voucher programs available

in the United States during 2009-2010, five states offered voucher programs for students with disabilities (Campanella & Ehrenreich, 2010).

Vouchers for Students with Disabilities

As stated in IDEA (2004), the phrase *child with a disability* means a child with intellectual or specific learning disabilities, hearing impairments (to include deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (to include blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, or other health impairments; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. For the purpose of this study, a student with a disability is defined as a child with an intellectual and/or neurological impairment that manifests itself for a sustained period of time and prohibits the individual from performing age appropriate cognitive and/or academic tasks without specialized instruction and/or supports.

Students eligible for special education under IDEA cross racial, language, and income barriers (Weidner & Herrington, 2006). The movement behind full implementation of vouchers could make a considerable and long-term impact on the way students with disabilities are educated in the United States (Hensel, 2010). Within the past decade, multiple states (see Appendix D) have led the nation in proposing or enacting laws that allow students with disabilities the right to access public dollars for the specific purpose of enrolling in private schools (Campanella & Ehrenreich, 2010). The intent of promoting such legislation appears to be for the purpose of providing an expedited withdrawal from public schools for dissatisfied parents. This approach is in direct opposition to previous attempts to fix the perceived deficiencies in the current public education system (Hensel, 2010). Voucher programs for students with disabilities

have been enacted in five states within 10 years (Winters & Greene, 2008b), with these states using different criteria. However, they all are based on the foundation that students may be eligible if they have an active IEP through a public school. As cited by Cullen & Rivkin in 2003, school choice has and will continue to incite debates between the public and private sectors over appropriate identification and provision of services for students with disabilities.

Arguments for School Vouchers for Students with Disabilities

In the 1980s, there was little school choice in America, especially for students with disabilities. Currently, multiple states offer voucher programs for students with disabilities. The primary arguments for full implementation of vouchers for students with disabilities include many different factors such as availability of parental choice and parental satisfaction with selected schools.

Of all the state voucher programs for students with disabilities, the most research has been conducted on the Florida McKay Scholarship Program. Research by Weidner and Herrington (2006) focused on surveying parents in one school district who participated in the scholarship program. The intent was to gauge parental satisfaction, knowledge of resources about the voucher and key factors taken into consideration (such as class size, academic quality, quality of teachers, special education, and curriculum) when choosing between schools. The results of Weidner and Herrington's study indicated that parents who participated in the McKay voucher program are more satisfied with the school their children attend compared to parents of children attending public school. As cited in Müller and Ahearn (2007), the Florida McKay participants in their study agree that voucher programs do, in fact, offer alternatives to current limited options

for students with disabilities in public schools. The participants in Weidner and Herrington's study overwhelmingly believed that the McKay scholarship option for students with disabilities in Florida provided many more school choices for such students.

A separate survey of parents regarding the McKay Scholarship Program determined that parental satisfaction, class size, and student relations were perceived as satisfactory and resulted in no significant cost to taxpayers (Green & Forster, 2003). This study collected data from parents of current and former participants of the McKay Scholarship Program. The focus of the study was to compare the parents' experiences and level of satisfaction with the previous public school to their experiences with the McKay school. This study did not report the academic gains or lack of progress for students who had participated in the voucher program. The survey was conducted via telephone with an established set of questions which addressed parents' satisfaction with the student's public school IEP as well as the school climate, class size, transportation, service quality, and cost of enrollment in public and private settings. The results of this study showed that parents indicated they were more satisfied with the McKay school as opposed to the public school. Similar to the outcomes of Greene and Forster's study, Figlio and Stone (1997) also determined that parental satisfaction was not necessarily attributed toward educational achievement. Parents may, in fact, primarily attribute their satisfaction to school safety, climate, and other social factors.

In 2008, Wolfe proposed parental motivation as a variable that could affect student achievement in a private school regardless of the presence or absence of government-funded vouchers. Therefore, this variable must be taken into consideration

when reporting parental satisfaction. Wolfe (2008) suggested that cognitive dissonance may be the basis of the significant levels of parental satisfaction with private school vouchers. This theory is based on the fact that parents have such a vested interest in their child's performance in the private school that they perceive the school as more effective when, in fact, it performs equally to the previous public school.

Arguments Against School Vouchers for Students with Disabilities

Multiple arguments against school choice, specific to students with disabilities, have been proposed by educational institutions and advocates. Several issues brought forth by public school advocates reference the lack of services provided through NCLB and IDEA to students who opt for private schools. Multiple services and supports provided under IDEA are no longer accessible to students with disabilities once they enroll in a private school.

Opponents of school choice argue that there is limited or no accountability in place for voucher dollars invested in private schools (Müller & Ahearn, 2007).

Opponents warn that parents who take advantage of the vouchers may be giving up procedural protections guaranteed to their children under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Samuels, 2007). Once students with disabilities accept enrollment in a private school, they relinquish entitlement to a free appropriate public education which includes access to specialized instruction to meet their individual needs.

First, *zero reject* is the principle that no student, regardless of disability, will be denied a public education. Unfortunately, students with disabilities who participate in voucher programs are not provided the same type, amount, and level of individualized services available in public schools through an IEP (Müller & Ahearn, 2007). Such

services include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, behavioral support, supportive instruction in general education settings, transportation, specialized instruction, assistive technology, and accommodations for assessments and classroom instruction.

Second, all public school students with suspected disabilities are entitled to a non-discriminatory evaluation based on a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary team approach. Private schools are not required to offer evaluations to determine the need for individualized instructional needs and the evaluations need not be honored in private schools. Therefore, students with disabilities using vouchers to attend private schools would not have access to free non-discriminatory evaluations.

Third, individualized and appropriate services should be available to all students with a documented disability. The determination of services is based on a team approach in conjunction with the parents and students. In the event of disagreement over services and delivery, parents are entitled to due process to ensure appropriate procedural compliance and review (Ohio Legislative Office of Education Oversight, 2005). At the point when parents accept a voucher to enroll their child in a private school, the parents reject access to due process rights.

Fourth, students with disabilities are to be educated and provided supplementary services in the least restrictive environment. IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent possible with typical age-appropriate peers. Etscheidt (2005) described how Florida's McKay Scholarship helped create 82 schools for students with disabilities, thus creating segregated schooling for students with disabilities.

Fifth, teachers in private schools are not required to be highly qualified in accordance with the mandates of NCLB (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2009; Müller & Ahearn, 2007). As informed decision makers, parents have the right to a highly qualified teacher for their child with a disability in public school. Yet, parents of students with disabilities may choose to reject this right in favor of enrollment in a private school that has no requirements for teachers to hold certification in special education (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2009). Therefore, it may be inferred that students with disabilities may not receive instruction from teachers who have graduated from a rigorous academic program specifically in the field of special education. Another issue with teacher qualifications not related to NCLB is that private school teachers may not have the same access as public school teachers to professional learning opportunities that address current educational research. Teachers at private schools may not have knowledge of and proficiency with current intervention strategies and resources for students with disabilities.

From a financial perspective regarding the needs of students with disabilities, opponents of school choice argue that vouchers for students with disabilities lay the groundwork for universal voucher programs that would deplete money from public education (Samuels, 2007). The subject of critical mass is one of considerable importance in the deliberation about voucher programs. Public schools currently sustain an infrastructure of highly specialized resources such as therapists, equipment, teachers, and administrative personnel. These supports would be significantly limited by decreased enrollment in public schools and, thereby, limit the quantity and quality of services for students remaining in public schools (Sailor & Stowe, 2003). Parents who

take advantage of school choice and move their children to a private school, may impact the quality and level of educational opportunities that will be available to more disadvantaged students left isolated in public schools with declining resources (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Cookson, 1994). By all accounts, it would appear to result in separate and unequal schooling.

Finally, from a perspective of sound fiscal practices, Serrie (2008) argued that fundamental services such as education should not be established on a free market theory which engages risk using taxpayer dollars. The risk involves the unknown long-term effects on student academic achievement, readiness for post-secondary education, and readiness for a global workforce.

State Voucher Programs for Students with Disabilities

Implementation of state voucher programs has joined political and educational forces at the national, state, and local levels. Proponents of voucher programs are present in educational organizations, research institutions, and political forums. These collective groups have joined forces to design state policy that would provide flexibility within the current state educational statutes. By design, voucher programs are the responsibility of state and local taxpayers. In many cases, state legislators were instrumental in constructing the design of state voucher programs to address a perceived need identified in each individual state.

Currently six states offer voucher programs for students with disabilities (Alliance for School Choice, 2012). In many states, voucher legislation has been introduced by political leaders with ties to an individual with disabilities. Jon Peterson proposed the Ohio Autism Scholarship program while he served as an Ohio House

Representative (Olivier, 2007). Florida's McKay Scholarship Program was introduced by Senator John McKay. Both state legislators are parents of children with disabilities. Senator Tommie Williams of Georgia demonstrated his support of legislation (introduced by Senator Eric Johnson) by providing a personal story of his niece, Ava, who was diagnosed with autism (*From the Upper Chamber*, 2007).

Florida McKay Scholarship Program

Florida set the precedent for vouchers with the Florida McKay Scholarship Program. The Florida Department of Education describes this voucher as parent-directed choices with student-directed funding. This program, which began in 2000, allows students to receive a voucher equal to the cost the public school would have spent on the child. According to Mead (2007), the program provides parents with an alternative to expensive legal proceedings and complicated bureaucracy. Vouchers may be used at a public or private school of their choice. The law provides a voucher program for all students in Florida public schools with an individual education plan. Students whose parents transfer to Florida under permanent orders from the Armed Forces are also eligible.

The voucher amount is equivalent to the total funding for the individual student in the public school. Families may supplement the voucher with personal funds if tuition exceeds the provided amount, and the selected private schools may be religious or secular. Private schools are not required to follow previous student IEPs or develop new ones. In FY 2011, the McKay scholarship was accepted by 22,198 students and \$148,566,368 was paid to scholarship program participants. The state-calculated maximum scholarship amount for individual students enrolled during the 2010-11 school

year ranged from \$4,752 to \$19,510, with an average scholarship amount of \$7,209 (Florida Department of Education, 2011).

As of June 2011, 1,013 schools were registered with the Florida Department of Education as approved programs for voucher participation (Florida Department of Education, 2011). The requirements for participation have increased since implementation in the form of statutory safeguards. These safeguards were due, in large part, to a significant amount of fraud identified on the part of participating schools in the early years of the program. Current criteria includes measures such as a physical site location with regularly held classes, sound fiscal practices, compliance with health and safety codes, participation in criminal background checks with fingerprinting, and a non-discrimination policy (Florida Statute XLVIII §1002.39(6)(f); §1002.39(8)(d); §1002.421). Academic accountability is available to parents through required written progress reports on an annual basis as well as participation in statewide annual assessments if requested by parents (Florida Statute XLVIII §1002.39(8)(c)-(d); §1002.39(5)(f)).

Ohio Autism Scholarship Program

Enacted in 2003, the Ohio Autism Scholarship is a voucher program for students ages 3 to 21. To be eligible, students must be diagnosed with an autism-spectrum disorder and registered in the public school special education system. Students may use the voucher whether or not they were previously enrolled in public schools, although students not previously enrolled in public schools must formally transfer into the public school system (they do not need to actually leave their private schools). As of 2009, 1,300 students accepted vouchers through the program and 198 schools registered with

the state as approved service providers. The maximum voucher amount available per student for educational services is \$20,000 per year to be reimbursed by the state (Campanella & Ehrenreich, 2010).

Utah Carson Smith Scholarship Program

Implemented in the 2005-2006 school year, the Carson Smith Scholarship for Students with Special Needs offers vouchers of up to \$20,000 in tuition assistance to students who have autism or an autism spectrum disorder (Campanella & Ehrenreich, 2010; Samuels, 2007). Similar to Florida, the Utah statute allows resident students who were enrolled in public school during the previous year with an IEP to apply for a scholarship. There are two distinct differences between Utah's program and Florida's program. New scholarship recipients participate via a lottery when the number of applicants exceeds the allocated funding amount. Also, students previously enrolled in private schools may be eligible for vouchers if a school assessment team can determine that the student has a disability and would qualify for services (Osterstock, Herring, & Buys, 2008). In terms of historical significance, the Carson Smith Scholarship Program is deemed landmark legislation. Marc Egan, Director of Federal Affairs for the National School Boards Association, brought to light the significance of the Carson Smith scholarship program in that he perceived it to be the beginning of eventual full-scale private school vouchers for all students (Samuels, 2007).

Arizona's Scholarship for Pupils with Disabilities

Arizona enacted the second voucher program for students with disabilities in 2006. Similar to the McKay scholarship in design, this program served 158 students during the 2007-2008 school year at a cost of \$2.5 million (Alliance for School Choice,

n.d.). During 2008-2009, the program increased enrollment to 244 students with expenditures of \$625,355 (Campanella et al., 2011; Keller, 2009).

Of all the voucher programs for students with disabilities, Arizona has experienced significant setbacks in terms of implementation. This voucher program was declared unconstitutional by the Arizona state appeals court because it was deemed to provide aid to private or sectarian schools (Keller, 2009). A historical summary in three literature reviews by Lips (2006), Samuels (2007), and the National School Board Association (n.d.) outlined the initial program passage as well as legal disputes which have passed from the Arizona state court to the United States Supreme Court. The format of the voucher program has evolved from a state funded voucher program to a tax credit program (now referred to as Lexie's Law) as a result of the program being struck down by the Arizona Supreme Court in 2009 (Walsh, 2008). Several state and national organizations joined together to dismantle Arizona's voucher program for students with disabilities on the grounds that vouchers are unconstitutional. On April 4, 2011, the United States Supreme Court ruled five to four in favor of maintaining the Arizona Scholarship Tax Credit program. This landmark case, the Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn, will now serve as a precedent for any future voucher litigation in the United States.

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program

Designed to provide vouchers to Georgia students with disabilities, the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship program (SB10) was modeled after a previous scholarship program implemented by Florida (McKay Scholarship) in 1998. This act created scholarships for public school students with disabilities. Parents may select an eligible

private or public school. This state legislation offers public and private school choice to students with disabilities who desire to transfer to another system for any reason and utilize the per pupil funding generated by the state funding formula to subsidize the cost of tuition.

To participate, a student must be determined, under the criteria outlined in IDEA to have a disability, must have spent the prior year in a Georgia public school, and must have an active IEP. Parents who are not satisfied with their child's current school services have the option to enroll the child in a public or private school that meets their child's needs. The child is eligible to continue enrollment in the selected school until he or she graduates or reaches age 21. Parents participating in the voucher program accept responsibility for transportation (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

On January 31, 2007, SB10 was introduced in the Georgia Senate. Senate President Pro Tem Eric Johnson stated that SB10 was developed as a replica of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program. From its inception in the Georgia General Assembly, SB10 was met with strong opposition by multiple educational organizations despite strong support by policymakers. Eric Johnson appealed to Georgians to make the commitment to give every child who is accepted by a private school a voucher equal to the taxes spent on the child's education (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2009). Johnson stated that the actual issue is whether or not parents should have the freedom to decide where their children are educated based on the parents' reasons. He clarified that he perceived that vouchers help kids in public schools (SWGA, 2009). Senator Johnson went on to report his concern about the presence of myths about vouchers. At the time of his initial presentation, Senator Johnson maintained the position

that lawmakers recognize that students with disabilities may have exceptional needs that regular schools cannot meet (Samuels, 2007).

On January 31, 2007, the Georgia Senate passed the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. After an extensive debate over the state's role in funding education, vouchers became available to students with disabilities in Georgia (Fain, 2010). Sonny Purdue, Governor of Georgia, signed into state law SB10 for students with disabilities on May 18, 2007 and SB10 was implemented on July 1, 2007. As of the end of the 2010-2011 school year, 2,529 students were enrolled in the GSNS program at a total cost of \$16,219,717. The average scholarship was \$6,860 (GADOE, 2011).

Analysis of public data reported by the Georgia Department of Education (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011) shows that 417 students to date have returned to public school within their first year of voucher participation. Further, 1,384 students returned to public education after at least one year of voucher participation. A total of 1,966 students with disabilities chose to return to public education or another option such as home or charter school. The *estimated* total unduplicated enrollment count of all students who have enrolled in SB10 is 4421. Therefore, the total *projected* recidivism rate is anticipated to be 44% of the entire SB10 population (see Appendix G).

Proponents of SB10. SB10 reinforces the belief of policymakers and special interest groups that parents are best equipped to make decisions for their children, including decisions about educational placement that will best serve the interests and needs of their children (Ga. Stat.33 § 20-2-2110-2118, 2007). The intent is to allow parents to tailor educational placement and services specific to the needs of the student by

making independent choices of schools and redirecting state funds to the selected schools.

Advocating for school choice, Helen Waters, Executive Director of the Matthew Reardon Advanced School in Savannah, Georgia, suggested that many parents of students with disabilities in Georgia believe that public school educators were unresponsive to their children's needs (Eckenrode, 2007). This assertion is supported by a survey conducted by the Friedman Foundation which concluded that 82% of Georgia voters believe that parents (as opposed to school administrators) make the best decisions for children, and that 59% of participants favored a voucher program for students with disabilities (Enlow, 2007).

One of the intended outcomes of SB10 is to increase parental satisfaction through the option of private school enrollment for students with disabilities as opposed to continued placement in public educational programs. According to Wolfe (2008), previous research clearly finds parents are more satisfied with their child's private school placement, but the specific reasons for their high level of satisfaction remain unclear. Moe (2008) stated one advantage of school choice is that parents of children with the greatest need and little control over their children's education may now have expanded opportunities.

Carpenter and Peterson (2007) presented their position that SB10 represents an initial attempt to empower parents by providing the opportunity to choose the best education possible for their children in a public or private school. They present the position that parents are best equipped to make educational decisions for their children

and must be provided the opportunity to tailor educational programs to the specific needs of their children.

Opponents of SB10. Voucher opponents posit that SB10 negatively impacts students with disabilities by allowing segregation, undermining student rights otherwise available to students with disabilities in public schools, and by reducing funding for public schools to support special education programs mandated by IDEA (American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, n.d.). The federal government has addressed educating students with disabilities through multiple civil rights mandates culminating in IDEA (2004). In addition, educational reform policies such as No Child Left Behind address issues that affect the education of students with disabilities. Specifically, highly qualified teachers are a requirement for all students, including students with disabilities (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002). Some of the major concerns expressed by public school advocates for students with disabilities include issues of access to free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and provision of highly qualified teachers for students with disabilities. While public school students with disabilities are required to receive instruction from highly qualified special education teachers, no such mandate applies to students who opt for a private school under SB10. In addition to these areas of discussion, a criterion for participation in SB10 includes parental revocation of individual entitlement provided by IDEA for their child.

SB10 was met with strong and harsh criticism by the public school establishment. Opponents of the bill argued SB10 serves as a means of “privatizing education” (Downey, 2007, p. 18A). In Morton (2007), Cloud stated that SB10 is an instrument of separation and segregation that proposes expenditure of public funds in private schools or

service centers while emphatically prohibiting any added public accountability for their effectiveness. Adding to this criticism, the Southern Education Foundation (n.d.) asserted that Georgia's laws regarding vouchers have failed to provide for an effective assessment of student performance in private schools. The Foundation's report noted that Georgia's K-12 public schools must administer more than 85 state-mandated tests which are all publicly reported while Georgia's private schools receiving tax-funded tuition report minimal data or none at all.

Martin Gould, a senior research specialist at the National Council on Disability, pointed out that those who use vouchers to attend private schools may be giving up IDEA protections. He stated that in spite of parental frustration with public schools, this is a clean break with all of their federal rights. By accepting a voucher, Mr. Gould asserted, parents make a leap of faith in moving to private schools that might not be justified. IDEA requires all public school systems to provide a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities. Parents who deem their children are not getting a suitable education have the right to a due process hearing. In doing so, parents may pursue a complaint against the school district all the way to federal court (Samuels, 2007). Students with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private school are still entitled to certain protections such as those outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991). Still, they generally do not have access to the more specific protections for students that are provisions under IDEA (Samuels, 2007).

Summary of data for SB10. Although no true experimental research studies of SB10 currently exist, data is available from various sources specific to Georgia. For example, Pusey & Scafidi (2010) conducted research on parent satisfaction for current

participants of SB10 for the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE). Ninety-five families enrolled in SB10 schools were surveyed about their experiences with both their former public school and current private school. Survey results indicate that parents who accepted the SB10 voucher were often unhappy with their local public school while the same parents reported significantly higher satisfaction with the current private school. Many families (76%) were paying \$3,000 or more per year above the scholarship. Considering specific factors such as academic progress, individual attention, school responsiveness, safety, teachers, and school, parent responses indicate significantly higher satisfaction in all areas. The demographic data of participants included 61% white, 37% African-American, and 2% other. Pusey & Scafidi (2009) published the same survey the prior year for GPEE which reported similar results. In this study, regarding parent perceptions of IEP services, 40% reported concern about actual delivery of IEP services and experiences with harassment as a result of a disability (Pusey & Scafidi).

Key issues surrounding vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia.

When debating the effectiveness of the voucher system for students with disabilities in Georgia, the key issues to consider are whether or not vouchers for students with disabilities directly improve students' educational achievement, access to post-secondary opportunities, immersion in their community, and readiness for the workforce. This issue is especially critical for students with disabilities since these students are determined to be the most at-risk for educational success and independent adult living. Because students with disabilities forgo their right to individual IDEA protections if their

parents choose to access state vouchers, the effect of such decisions will be debated at the state and federal policy level (Hensel, 2010).

As of yet, the education community has conducted relatively little scholarly research on voucher programs for students with disabilities in terms of the significant purposes for such programs, their legal implications, and consequences for public policy. Recent empirical research has not provided evidence that supports or negates the effectiveness of school choice. Many previous studies are perceived as poorly designed randomized studies conducted by special interest groups. The groups often have pre-determined agendas in relation to school choice. The current debate is construed as pro-disability or anti-disability by individuals or groups with larger agendas (Hensel, 2010).

Instead of creating and implementing educational programs based on experiences with one individual's educational experiences, Hensel (2010) proposed all parties should view the concept of vouchers in terms of the advantages and disadvantages for special education programs as a whole as well as for all students with disabilities. Voucher programs for students with disabilities are a monumental endeavor with significant long-term impact on the nation's educational system as well as the success of individuals with disabilities. Therefore, their use requires thoughtful consideration and careful implementation.

From the conceptual framework to full implementation, voucher programs involve multi-faceted issues. Sailor and Stowe (2003), in a policy paper for the National Council on Disability, emphasized that the concept of providing vouchers to students with disabilities is not a direct path and is hindered by multiple important concerns. Specifically, the rationale for providing vouchers to general education students for the

purpose of escaping low performing schools is not sufficient rationale for students with disabilities to do the same. An editorial in the *St. Petersburg Times* (2002) emphasized that “even the best endeavors, and especially new ones, need careful oversight and continued improvement” (p. 10A).

In their haste to address concerns of parents and special interest groups, states have passed voucher legislation for students with disabilities in the absence of practices and procedures based on sound research and guidelines. In 2002, the *St. Petersburg Times* accused Florida oversight personnel of covering their eyes when evaluating the effectiveness of the state voucher program. Sailor and Stowe (2003) interpret the editorial as a call for accountability standards and oversight of private schools that accept vouchers for students with disabilities.

Not all school choice options result in social stratification. According to Wolfe (2008), it is highly suspect to base a statewide voucher program for students with disabilities on results of experimental voucher programs targeted to inner city students with low income levels. There are major implications for all parties involved in policies for students with disabilities due to the perception that power may shift along with financial resources (Greene, 2007).

Chapter Summary

In summary, voucher programs have shown positive effects in terms of both parental satisfaction and student achievement. Studies have shown a significant percentage of voucher participants are satisfied with their private school experience. However, there is a faction of participants who have not been satisfied. Further, it is not known if all students, regardless of income or academic need, benefit from vouchers. As

students with disabilities comprise a cross-section of race, ethnicity, and academic achievement, it is unclear as to the effectiveness of a statewide voucher program specifically for students with disabilities. Therefore, there is an immediate and significant need for research on the long-term benefits of vouchers and private school enrollment for students with disabilities. The need for quality research is expanding in conjunction with the number of states, schools, and students who have and will be impacted by school choice and, particularly, voucher movements.

The current debate is construed as pro-disability or anti-disability by individuals or groups with larger agendas. Critics perceive that vouchers for students with disabilities are an entry point to universal school choice. Instead, the results of data analysis of the educational benefit for students with disabilities must be taken into consideration. Although it is considered to be a difficult task to critique a program that appears to benefit a vulnerable population with which the public sympathizes, this movement must be analyzed with an objective lens to ensure a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities is not renounced in the name of choice.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory case study investigated the perceptions of parents of students with disabilities relative to SB10. Creswell (1994) concluded that the process of qualitative research is inductive. This method of research is well-suited for exploratory topics in which the theory base and variables are unknown.

The case study design of this research used concurrent procedures from multiple sources including qualitative data from interviews with three purposefully selected participants, document review, and questionnaire responses from all available, eligible participants to answer the overarching research question and specific sub-questions.

Research Questions

As a means to explore the perceptions of parents of students with disabilities concerning vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia, the following overarching research question was considered: Why do parents of school students with disabilities in Georgia decide to rescind voucher participation in SB10? Additionally, the following sub-questions served to further define the study:

- R₁ What are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia?

- R₂ What are the barriers or negative factors of a voucher program that resulted in rescinding participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia?

Research Design

A collection of rationally-related assumptions or concepts that drives research is referred to as a paradigm (Ritzner, 1975). Theoretical perspectives are a way in which people view the world, how the world works, and what is important. Whether explicit or implicit, all research is based on some theoretical orientation. In order to develop a theoretical framework, survey research for eligible participants comprised the first part of this study. This method provided an opportunity to gauge the perceptions of a sample of the available population. The researcher developed a 50-question structured questionnaire on *SurveyMonkey*® using three previous surveys and formatted the survey to address both former and current SB10 participants (see Appendices B and H). Parents of both current and former SB10 participants were sought to participate in the questionnaire that was appropriate for their child's current enrollment status. Fifteen participants contributed to the study to include twelve current voucher participants and three former voucher participants.

The social construction of reality is the premise of constructionism (Crotty, 1998). The concept that truth is relative and dependent on one's perspective is the philosophical foundation of the constructionist paradigm. The subjective human creation of meaning and knowledge is recognized by constructionists as dependent upon human interactions with the world within a social context. Therefore, the primary method for this study used face-to-face interviews with three parents of students with disabilities. The parents were purposefully selected to participate in an interview.

A ten-question semi-structured interview protocol was developed by the researcher to use during respondent interviews as the primary means of data collection.

For the interview and questionnaire, the researcher placed primary emphasis on parent perceptions of satisfaction with vouchers and sources of information available to assist with the decision-making process. To further clarify strengths and weaknesses of the voucher program, the views and perceptions of previous voucher participants were the primary focus of the study. The researcher viewed this population as having valuable insight regarding the current voucher policy given that this population is rarely discussed in the literature. The researcher determined that the qualitative methodological design via the case study method was the best design for this research study since the sample population was considered small and access to all available participants was limited.

Methodology

According to Yin (2009), theory development is essential to the research design phase in case studies. When analyzing a phenomenon in which the context is important and the events cannot be manipulated, a case study is an appropriate method for developing understanding of theoretical dispositions and hypotheses (Yin, 1993).

Inductive logic is prevalent in qualitative methodology because it explains a phenomenon in rich contextually-bound forms (Creswell, 1994). Inductive by nature, descriptive, or non-experimental case studies examine and describe the contemporary, real-life context in which a phenomenon occurred (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003).

The case study method explores the multiple facets of a phenomenon within its natural context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies are distinctly different from other research designs, and Chronbach (1975) described case studies as contextual interpretation to reveal the interaction of significant factors within a phenomenon. The primary focus considers process, context, and discovery rather than

outcomes, variables, and confirmation. Merriam (1988) supported the position that case study methodology reveals insights into educational practice and may directly influence future research and policy. Addressing problems by seeking to understand may improve practices.

The central tendency of all types of case studies is to illuminate the implementation, outcomes, and reasons for a decision or set of decisions (Schramm, 1971). Thus, the decision making process of individuals or groups is a major focus of case studies because case studies consider contextual conditions of contemporary phenomena in real life (Yin, 2009). The lived experiences of each individual participant are captured through the case study method. Glesne (1999) concisely stated, “A phenomenological study focuses on descriptions of how people experience and how they perceive their experiences of the phenomena under study” (p. 7). Thus, the recognition of how participants understand and create meaning from their experiences serves as an end in and of itself.

In multiple-case studies, analytic generalization involves applying the framework of a previously developed theory to the case study results as a means of achieving replication (Yin, 2009). In order to collect and report robust and reliable research findings, a multiple-case study method allows the researcher to analyze data results from multiple sources and settings within and across each setting. As a means of creating a holistic understanding of the research phenomenon, researchers may collect quantitative survey data using case study methods. According to Yin (2003), the use of a multiple-case study method allows an opportunity for literal replication (predicting similar results) or theoretical replication (contrasting results for predictable reasons).

One common purpose of case studies is to evaluate publicly supported programs at the federal, state, and local levels (Yin, 2009). Theory is essential to the design of evaluation. Therefore, it is imperative that the theory distinguish between the substantive remedies of the program and the program implementation process (Bickman, 1987). Case studies are appropriate for better understanding the dynamics of a program, particularly when the future of a program is contingent upon evaluation and there is an absence of programmatic success (Merriam, 1988). At times, case studies provide opportunities to develop new lines of inquiry, further conceptualize facts, and determine patterns of factors within a particular case (Foreman, 1948). Additionally, multiple case studies are appropriate when the researcher strives to gain greater insight into a phenomenon by concurrently analyzing multiple cases within one research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Since SB10 is a state level public program supported by state taxes, it is imperative that SB10 be analyzed in terms of program design and implementation. The perceptions of parents of students with disabilities who chose to rescind participation will add significant value to the consideration of SB10 policy revision and program review. Reasons for declining continued participation will shed light on current flaws (if any) in program design as well as implementation. The results of this study may begin the foundation for future research of SB10 and other state voucher programs.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The identified target population for this study is all parents of students with disabilities in Georgia who have ever participated in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship program. Identification of families participating in SB10 is protected

through FERPA. Therefore, this study required analysis of public reports and assistance of multiple gatekeepers to attempt seeking identification and consent of all possible participants.

Criterion Sampling

Criterion sampling was selected by the researcher to identify parents of students with disabilities to participate in the study. The primary identified population for this study was parents of students with disabilities who rescinded participation in SB10 and returned their children to public school. This population was identified through review of the Georgia Department of Education SB10 annual report and contacts with Georgia school districts that reported student enrollment in SB10. This process was necessary to access potential participants as this data is not readily available for privacy reasons.

The parent must have been the biological parent of a student with a disability in grades 1-12 and must have accepted the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship at any point since its inception in 2007-2008. Parents were required to speak English as their primary language. Initially, mothers were the primary participants in this study, but an IRB amendment request was approved to remove this criterion (Appendix K). This population was identified for participation because mothers are perceived by the researcher to be primary decision makers for their children in terms of educational experiences (Morin & Cohn, 2008). However, the researcher located fathers who were active decision makers for their children and willing to participate in the study. The researcher determined that this would add context to the overall results when considering feedback from fathers. Total sample size for this study was 15 to include 12 current voucher participants and 3 former voucher participants. Ultimately, the intent of the

study was to provide a voice to a larger population of parents of students with disabilities who are considering access to vouchers.

The questionnaire component of the data collection allowed for the perceptions of current and former SB10 participants. The reason for including current participant responses was to provide feedback from this population as a means of comparison to former SB10 participants. Frequency and averages were used to examine categorized responses to the questionnaire. Parents who responded to the study are referred to as *participants*, *CVP*, or *FVP* throughout the remainder of this study. *CVP* represents parents of current voucher participants. *FVP* represents former voucher participants.

Purposeful Sampling

To identify participants for face-to-face interviews and completion of an online questionnaire, the researcher selected the first three respondents who agreed to participate in the interview component of the research and met eligibility criteria. Geographic location of each participant was considered in an effort to have adequate representation from all regions of Georgia, if possible.

Purposeful sampling is defined by Patton (1980) as selecting samples from which one may learn the most about the population the researcher chooses to discover and understand. With purposeful criterion sampling, the intent is to include various participants who meet a pre-determined set of standards to ensure the participants fit the study's purpose, available resources, research questions, and constraints (Patton, 1980; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Purposeful sampling was also selected to address issues with identification of total population size. During 2010-2011, Georgia public schools served 157,763 students

with disabilities in grades 1 through 12 (GADOE, 2012). During this same year, 2,529 SB10 students were in grades 1 through 12. This equates to less than 1% of the total population of students with disabilities in Georgia. From 2007 to 2011, a total of 1,966 students with disabilities returned to public school after rescinding participation in the SB10 private school voucher program (see Appendix G). The total enrollment of SB10 participants from 2007 to 2011 cannot be verified by the researcher because this information was not confirmed by the Georgia Department of Education. An accurate sample size could not be determined based on limited information available regarding total population size.

According to Creswell (2003), studying a sample of a specific population via a survey provides a quantitative description of attitudes or opinions of the population through generalization of the sample. The researcher desired to shed light on the current policy and implementation of SB10 in Georgia. The identified population had experiences with SB10 and perceptions of those experiences. Since participants chose not to continue accessing private school services through the voucher program, they helped the researcher understand the perceived positive attributes and perceived adverse aspects of SB10 policy and program implementation. The interview and questionnaire format of this study provided participants an opportunity to share their experiences and to elaborate and expand on their positions.

Sampling Strategies

The research topic directed selection of study participants as these individuals had experience with this particular phenomenon. In order to sufficiently access all possible

participants, the researcher was required to request permission and assistance of organizations that had access to contact information of such participants.

Gatekeepers. Gatekeepers were necessary agents in this study. Multiple gatekeepers were contacted in search of assistance with accessing potential participants. These gatekeepers were identified in the private school, public school, and community sectors. The researcher desired to provide multiple means of notification to potential participants via social media as well as school contacts.

All participants were located by gatekeepers. Public school gatekeepers included the special education directors within each school district. Private school gatekeepers were the school headmaster or designee. Community gatekeepers were individuals in Georgia with a primary focus on disseminating information regarding students with disabilities, public school policy, private school policy, and/or families of students with disabilities.

All eligible participants were contacted by phone, email, or letter by a gatekeeper to seek their participation in the study. The gatekeeper was provided a letter by the researcher to submit to all eligible participants. Each potential participant was asked if he or she was willing to participate in an online survey and face-to-face interview which outlined assurances that the respondent's information would remain confidential and secure.

Public school gatekeepers. The primary participants for the research study were identified through the public school special education program in Georgia. During FY 2011, 79 school districts and special education programs were affected by SB10. Each public school special education program is supported by a professional learning network

known as the Georgia Learning Resources Systems (GLRS). This same agency provides information and training to families of students with disabilities. The researcher sought the assistance of GLRS directors to distribute information about the study to special education directors. The researcher contacted via email each GLRS region director to request assistance with seeking out school district gatekeepers and potential participants. The researcher followed up with each GLRS director via phone calls and personal face-to-face contacts.

Fourteen GLRS directors were contacted by the researcher to serve as gatekeepers. Of the 14 requests submitted, 13 directors responded in the affirmative and made contacts with their regional special education directors via email, phone, and face-to-face meetings to share information about the study. The researcher, via GLRS, requested assistance from the special education director to identify possible eligible participants and contact the participants on behalf of the researcher.

The special education directors in each district served as gatekeepers since they have primary knowledge of eligible participants' confidential student demographic information through their district student information system. With this database, the gatekeeper can access student demographics, parental contact information, primary area of exceptionality, and primary language. The gatekeepers selected one or more options to contact eligible participants which included a social media announcement, website posting, or letter via email or mail on behalf of the researcher to all eligible participants.

Many school districts in Georgia have policies regarding requests for research. All metro districts have an individual application process for access to participants from within each school system. Approximately 42%, or 1,065 students combined, in these

districts participated in SB10 during FY 11. Therefore, it was inferred that a significant number of potential participants for the research study were located within these districts. The researcher completed and applied for individual permission to conduct research in Dekalb, Fulton, Gwinnett, and Rockdale districts. All four districts denied the research request based on the premise that research activities are typically reserved for employees or that the required duties of staff would exceed allowable limits.

Private school gatekeepers. In order to gauge the perspectives of current SB10 participants, all private schools in Georgia were contacted via email (or phone, if necessary) and asked to disseminate information to all possible participants. The initial sample size of the questionnaire for current SB10 participants was based on the 2010-2011 Georgia Department of Education Georgia Special Needs Scholarship report to the legislature. According to this report, 2,529 students were enrolled at 175 private schools. The researcher attempted to locate the website, physical address, and email contact for each of the 175 schools and successfully located 138 schools. The researcher requested assistance from the private school administrator or designee to serve as a gatekeeper by identifying possible eligible participants and contacting the participants on behalf of the researcher.

The private school administrators in each district served as gatekeepers since they had primary knowledge of eligible participants' confidential student demographic information through their district student information system. With this database, the gatekeeper can access student demographics, parental contact information, primary area of exceptionality, and primary language. The gatekeepers selected one or more options

to contact eligible participants including social media announcement, website posting, or letter via email or mail on behalf of the researcher to all eligible participants.

Of the 138 identified private schools, 13 replied to the request for participation. Two private schools responded that no potential participants were enrolled at the present time. Seven schools chose not to participate leaving four schools available for participation.

Data from current SB10 participants was collected in this study for comparison between former and current SB10 participants. The questionnaire was modified to address questions from a current enrollment perspective. No face-to-face interviews were designated for current SB10 participants because the online survey addressed their participation in sub-question one. Therefore, the request to participate in face-to-face interviews was removed from this questionnaire.

Community gatekeepers. A fourth method of notification for the study involved the researcher approaching multiple community and policy organizations in Georgia to assist as gatekeepers for the study via their social media outlets. Twenty-five organizations were identified by the researcher as sources of information about Georgia education policy, special education, family supports, and/or school choice. All 25 organizations were contacted via email with a formal request to serve as a gatekeeper to identify possible participants. Of the 25 potential community gatekeepers, only Parent to Parent of Georgia agreed to serve as a gatekeeper by posting an announcement of the study on their Facebook page.

Continuing the use of social media, the researcher created a Facebook page specifically about the GSNS. Links to this page were distributed to all 25 community

organizations, public schools, and private schools via gatekeeper consent. In addition, links to the page were posted on all available public community organization Facebook pages which allowed public comment.

To ensure parents were informed about confidentiality and informed consent, the formal parental consent notice for former SB10 participants and current SB10 participants were imbedded into the first page of the surveys. Parents acknowledged receipt of their rights and agreed to continue participation by progressing through the survey.

During the data collection phase, the researcher submitted an amended IRB request to remove criteria from the potential participant descriptions (Appendix J). In the initial IRB request (Appendix I), students with specific learning disabilities were identified as potential participants because this category of identification was one of the two largest classifications of students with disabilities. The researcher removed this criterion, however, after interest was expressed by private schools excluded from the study due to lack of available participants (see Appendix J). As a result, four private schools distributed the survey on behalf of the researcher.

Instrumentation

The case study method limited the total number of participants to include in this study. Therefore, triangulation of data was determined by the researcher to strengthen the quality of data from limited participants. Credibility of the research is supported through the use of multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories (Creswell, 1998, Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) so the researcher selected interviews, surveys, and artifact analysis as means of analyzing the research questions.

Questionnaire

Surveys by Greene and Forster (2003), Teske, Fitzpatrick, and Kaplan (2007), and Weidner (2005) were adapted for use with the identified population of eligible participants (Appendices B and H). The survey by Greene and Forster (2003) was used in Florida to gather information about parent perceptions of the McKay Scholarship Program for students with disabilities. The survey by Teske, Fitzpatrick, and Kaplan (2007) was administered in Denver, Milwaukee, and Washington, D. C. Low-to-moderate income parents were asked to participate in order to determine how well informed and satisfied they were with school choice. In addition, parents' knowledge of information sources was sought. The study by Weidner (2005) was conducted in Duval County, Florida, for McKay Scholarship participants. The researcher sought to determine participating McKay private school parents' level of satisfaction with available information and information sources regarding the voucher program.

Because this SB10 research was meant to be a descriptive study, psychometrics regarding the survey were not established. However, these issues are of lesser importance to the purpose of this case study since the researcher sought to provide a foundation in which future studies may be developed using psychometrics.

The survey was completed by participants using *SurveyMonkey*®. Embedded logic was used to preclude inclusion in the survey if the participant's answers to criteria questions did not meet participant guidelines specified in the sampling procedures.

Face-to-Face Interviews

Interest in understanding the experiences of people and how they construct meaning from their experience is the root of in-depth interviews (Seidman, 1998).

Although there are limits to fully understanding the perceptions of others, in-depth interviews provide an opportunity to understand their actions as well as an overall phenomena in which little is known. Interviewing provides an avenue of inquiry when the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people make of their experiences. The intent of collecting data through in-depth interviews is to present participants' experiences in a compelling and sufficient manner such that readers can connect to the experience, learn how it is created, and expand their knowledge of the issues reflected within the experience (Seidman, 1998).

Demographics, such as geographic location in Georgia, were considered in the selection of interview participants in attempt to include participants from all geographic areas. Three face-to-face interviews were conducted by the researcher using a questionnaire based on existing research about vouchers (Appendix A). Once a potential participant gave permission to be contacted by the researcher via phone, email, or letter, the researcher established a date to interview the participant at a location and time convenient to the participant. Using the established questionnaire (Appendix A) as a guide, the researcher sought responses to the questions while taking into consideration participation, behaviors, meanings, interactions, constraints, symbols, and strategies of the participant. The researcher reserved the right to make additional contact with interview participants to ask explanatory questions and further refine responses.

Pilot Study

Permission to complete the study was obtained from Georgia Southern University and from each parent participating in the study. Prior to the research process, a pilot study was conducted for both the online questionnaire and the face-to-face interviews.

Three parents of students with disabilities not selected for participation in the study were approached by the researcher and asked to answer an online questionnaire via *SurveyMonkey*®. From the three parents who consented to participate in the pilot, one was chosen to engage in a face-to-face interview. Feedback from the participants in terms of the quality, accuracy, and appropriateness of questions was incorporated into revision of the online questionnaire and interview questions.

The case study method allowed the researcher to probe each participant's decision making process in choosing to re-enroll his or her child in public school. Using previous survey questions by Green and Forster (2003), Teske, Fitzpatrick, and Kaplan (2007), and Weidner (2005) provided a previously established framework for measuring the perceptions of parents of students with disabilities.

Data Collection

Questionnaire

The purpose of a questionnaire in a qualitative study is to analyze a population sample in terms of characteristics, attitudes, or beliefs. This method relies totally on participants' accurate and honest responses. Questionnaires may include structured response categories as well as open-ended responses. The questions should be scrutinized for bias, sequence, clarity, and face validity. Typically, small groups participate in case studies (Bowman, 2009, Creswell, 1998). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher administered the questionnaire (Appendices B and H) to 15 participants in the survey population (12 current voucher participants and 3 former voucher participants).

Interviews

The research questions and sub-questions serve as the framework for the interviews with participants (Appendix A). The goal of the researcher was to provide three participants with an opportunity to expand on their survey responses. A face-to-face interview allowed for collection of rich, thick, and descriptive responses from a small sample of the population. Interview responses were stored on a compact disc in the researcher's home before and after the responses were transcribed.

Document Collection

One form of unobtrusive data analysis is document or artifact analysis. This form of data collection may supplement interviews and observations as a means of portraying the values and beliefs of study participants. To further triangulate the data, the researcher reviewed, analyzed, and synthesized archival quantitative data in the form of annual reports to the legislature available from the Georgia Department of Education from 2008 to 2011. Data are reported in Tables 4.1 through 4.9. By collecting this data in addition to interviews and questionnaires, the researcher sought to find additional information that may add context to participant responses regarding their satisfaction with private schools and knowledge of information sources. The use of unobtrusive observation methods is particularly useful for triangulation by elaborating on the perspectives and complexity of a phenomenon. Documents may suggest the need for further interview questions as a continuation of the research (Bowen, 2009). In addition, the potential for bias is reduced when the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis

A primary strategy for viewing and exploring data from multiple perspectives in case study research is triangulation of data sources. Using multiple sources of evidence in the data collection phase of research allows for convergent lines of inquiry (Yin, 2009).

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher began data analysis by reviewing questionnaire results from both current and former participants. Data was reported in terms of percentages and averages. Responses were classified according to their alignment with the research sub-questions and ranked from highest to lowest response in percentages and averages. Similar responses from multiple questions were grouped and the top three topics were identified by the researcher.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were derived from the results of questionnaires and interviews completed by all participants using Moustakas' Modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis (Appendix F). Using this method of data analysis, the researcher analyzed, coded, and synthesized data in interviews and open-ended responses on the questionnaire into meaningful units or themes. Within the process of examining the collected data, the researcher defined in detail participants' perceptions and recorded all relevant data by determining meaningful units and themes.

Document Analysis

Artifact analysis was a third method of data collection relevant to this research study (see Appendix C). To support triangulation, artifact documents were analyzed by

the researcher. Specifically, annual reports to the Georgia legislature were collated by data fields or topics. The researcher attempted to discover themes within and among the documents by identifying, ranking, and calculating available data into synthesized quantitative units. By analyzing artifacts, the researcher sought to determine if a relationship exists between the quantitative data reported to the legislature by SB10 private schools and data emerging from the qualitative and quantitative components of this study. This information added context to the overall private school academic performance of SB10 students and was analyzed in conjunction with parental responses in the questionnaire and interview process. Results of the analysis are represented in tables.

Integration of Quantitative, Qualitative, and Document Data

The multiple-source data of case studies may be converged in the analysis process to add strength to the research findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). It is essential to ensure convergence so that the overall case may be understood instead of its various parts or contributing factors (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Contributor and barrier themes were constructed separately and together to determine common and varying themes (Figures 4.1 through 4.4)

Reporting the Data

Within the context of case study research, both the researcher and the reader have definite responsibilities. In terms of reporting the data, the researcher must synthesize the results from a complex phenomenon into a format easily understood by the reader (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The reader must then determine whether or not the findings may be applied to their own experience.

Current Voucher Participant Data

Results from the CVP questionnaire are presented in narrative form and figures (Figures 4.1 and 4.3). The researcher emphasized the three highest and three lowest ranking responses from all participants when reporting CVP data.

Former Participant Data

Questionnaire responses. The findings from the FVP questionnaire are reported in narrative form and figures (Figures 4.2 and 4.4). The researcher emphasized the three highest and three lowest ranking responses from all participants when reporting the data for FVP.

Interview responses. The findings from the FVP interviews are reported in narrative form using percentages and averages following the format of the overarching question and sub-questions. Interview questions were categorized within the appropriate context to present a flow of information following the research questions.

Standards of Quality and Verification

To ensure value and logic of a case study, questions addressed by the researcher may serve as standard criteria in which the research trustworthiness is evaluated. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed four constructs that consider the qualitative paradigm and include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility ensures that the subject was accurately identified and described. It is essential that the researcher be perceived as trustworthy to potential participants. The development of rapport ensures effective communication between the participant and researcher. The dialogue in a trusting relationship will yield significantly richer data as

opposed to data from a guarded participant. In addition, the triangulation of data helps achieve credibility as there are multiple sources of data presented to support or refute the other findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability is primarily the responsibility of the researcher who desires to generalize results from the original researcher's findings. Upon reviewing the presented data, the reader should feel as if he or she has been an active participant in the research and can make a decision as to whether or not the research results could be applied to his or her own situation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this study, there are representative samples of SB10 participants from each year since implementation and from multiple disability classifications including specific learning disabilities, autism, emotional behavior disorder, speech/language impairment, and other health impairments. Selecting participants and reporting data from all subsets ensured that the results of this study will be meaningful to other individuals. The end product of rich, thick data supports transferability since the in depth data may be identified by the audience.

Dependability involves accounting for changing conditions, and designs in the analyzed phenomenon through cultivated understanding of the setting. The framework of the study supported dependability since some of the research methods have already been used in previous studies of the McKay voucher in Florida. The research questions were derived from available research about vouchers which will lead to opportunities for replication of the study.

Confirmability aligns with the concept of objectivity in which the researcher aims for the findings of the study to be confirmed by another study. The research questions were piloted to ensure they were not biased in any way and that they prompted accurate

responses from participants. In addition, the researcher provided direct quotes from participants to substantiate findings.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the perceptions of parents of students with disabilities who rescinded their children's participation in a private school voucher program. The sample was comprised of 12 current voucher participants who participated in an online questionnaire. In addition, three former voucher participants were purposefully selected to participate in face-to-face interviews and complete an online questionnaire. The results are presented using a case study tradition since this research was a foundational study for the Georgia school voucher program. Case studies are an effective method for research in which there is little, if any, available information about the topic. The findings from the questionnaire, artifacts, and narratives from the interviews are presented in a descriptive format.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

This study explored social and educational contributing factors and barriers to participation in Georgia's voucher program for students with disabilities. Currently, there is a gap in the literature on private school vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia. This study was conducted from the perspective of parents of students with disabilities who rescinded participation in the SB10 voucher program. The overall purpose of this study was to identify common themes among parents who participated in the voucher program, particularly former participants, regarding their experiences, satisfaction, and sources of information.

Findings

The findings are presented in the following order: Archival, current voucher participants, former voucher participants, and summary. This format provides a scope and sequence that ranges from general to specific.

Findings From Archive Data

Since the inception of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship in 2007, the Georgia Department of Education submits annual reports to the state legislature that summarize demographic data and student academic performance by subgroup. The following narrative describes current SB10 student data reported in the Georgia Department of Education annual reports to the legislature for 2008 through 2011. Report findings are listed in Tables 4.1 to 4.9 by items reported annually in the summary.

Summary of archive data. The findings reported in Table 4.1 show that a significant number of SB10 private schools are located within the metro Atlanta area. As of June 2011, a total of 134 private schools are concentrated within the metro region while 49 schools are located across Georgia. Appendix E also provides a visual representation of the geographic location of SB10 private schools within Georgia.

Table 4.1

SB10 Private School Locations by GLRS Region

GLRS Region	School Total
Metro East	78
Metro West	35
Metro South	21
Total Metro	134
Coastal	10
West Central	8
Middle GA	5
Southwest	5
North Central	4
North GA	4
Northeast	4
East GA	4
East Central	3
Northwest	2
South Central	2
West GA	1
Southeast	1
South GA	0
Total Other	49

Enrollment information presented in Table 4.2 demonstrates that participation during each school year has increased since the inception of SB10 in 2007. Initial enrollment in 2007 was reported at 899 students while enrollment has increased to 2,529 in 2011.

Table 4.2

Summary of Duplicated Initial Enrollment by Year in SB10 Approved Private Schools

Enrollment	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
	899	1,596	1,858	2,529

However, as total enrollment appears to be increasing, Table 4.3 reports the total number of students who have rescinded participation in the SB10 voucher program during the past 4 years has also increased. As of June 2011, 1,966 students with disabilities have accepted and rescinded the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. The amount expended on vouchers for students who rescinded is projected to be \$19,377,085 (see Appendix G).

Table 4.3

Summary of Unduplicated Dropouts within and After One School Year

	FY 08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Total
Left mid-year	74	133	210	165	582
Left after full year		150	234	1,000	1,384
Total	74	283	444	1,165	1,966

Data presented in Table 4.4 compare enrollment in public and private schools by ethnicity. According to the findings, the majority of ethnic subgroups are proportionate between private and public schools. However, the Hispanic subgroup demonstrated a significant discrepancy; public school enrollment was more than 10% higher than SB10 private school enrollment. The opposite was evident for the White subgroup; SB10 private school enrollment was more than 10% higher than public school enrollment.

Table 4.4

Summary of Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity Each Year

	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Total Enrollment by Year	899	1596	1858	2529
Asian				
private	1.00%	1.00%	1.10%	1.38%
public	NA	NA	3.40%	3.00%
Black				
private	40.00%	39.30%	41.00%	38.87%
public	NA	NA	37.30%	37.00%
Hispanic				
private	1.00%	1.60%	1.40%	2.10%
public	NA	NA	11.40%	12.00%
Native American				
private	0.00%	0.30%	0.20%	0.20%
public	NA	NA	0.30%	0.00%
Multi-Racial				
private	3.00%	2.30%	2.70%	2.53%
public	NA	NA	2.90%	3.00%
White				
private	55.00%	55.50%	44.00%	54.92%
public	NA	NA	44.80%	44.00%

SB10 private schools are mandated to submit to the Georgia Department of Education an annual summary of progress for each participating SB10 student. The results are reported for reading and math. Table 4.5 reports the progress of participating students in reading for a 4-year time period. Based on analysis of the data, approximately 65% of SB10 students achieved reading progress of one or more school years. This level of achievement is equivalent to the performance of students with disabilities in Georgia public schools according to the state of Georgia AYP Report (2011).

Table 4.5

Summary of Student Reading Results by Year

Progress Level	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Average by Progress Level
No Progress	NA	12%	25%	12%	16%
Less than 1 Year	NA	21%	10%	24%	18%
One School Year	NA	37%	38%	41%	38%
More than 1 School Year	NA	30%	27%	23%	26%
Combined Progress					
One or more school year		67%	65%	64%	65%

Table 4.6 reports the progress of participating students in math for a 4-year time period. Based on analysis of the data, approximately 65% of SB10 students achieve math progress of one or more school years. This is approximately 13% higher than performance of students with disabilities in public school according to the state of Georgia AYP Report (2011).

Table 4.6

Summary of Student Math Results by Year

Progress Level	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Average by Progress Level
No Progress	NA	11%	25%	12%	16%
Less than 1 Year	NA	23%	12%	23%	19%
One School Year	NA	36%	38%	41%	38%
More than 1 School Year	NA	30%	25%	24%	26%
Combined Progress					
One or more school year		66%	63%	65%	65%

Enrollment by gender is reported in Table 4.7. Data indicates there is a 20% higher enrollment rate of males with disabilities in SB10 schools than all males in public schools (K-12). Conversely, there is a 20% lower enrollment rate of females with disabilities in SB10 private schools than all females in public schools (K-12). Therefore,

it may be inferred that parents of male students with disabilities at a higher rate than their female counterparts.

Table 4.7

Enrollment of SWD by Gender

	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Male				
private	71%	69%	70%	71%
public	NA	NA	51%	51%
Female				
private	29%	31%	30%	29%
public	NA	NA	49%	49%

Note. Public school data was retrieved from http://app.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_ethnicsex.display_proc.

In Table 4.8, eligibility for free and reduced lunch was compared between all public school students (K-12) and SB10 private school students. The data indicates in FY10 there were 23.9% more students in public schools eligible for free and reduced lunch than SB10 private schools. This discrepancy increased to 33% in FY11.

Table 4.8

Comparison of Public and SB10 Students by Free and Reduced Lunch Status

School Type	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
SB10 student total	34%	32%	32%	24%
Public student total	NA	53%	56%	57%

Note. Data for public school free and reduced lunch was retrieved from <http://archives.gadoe.org/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&StateId=ALL&T=1&FY=2011>

Table 4.9 presents a summary of SB10 enrollment by primary disability and year. According to the latest FY11 data, students classified as having other health impairments,

specific learning disabilities, and autism represent approximately 70% of the total SB10 enrollment. Conversely, students in public schools classified in these areas represent 44% of the total special education population K-12. Enrollment percentages of students with autism and other health impairments are significantly higher in SB10 schools than public schools.

Table 4.9

SB10 Student Enrollment Percentage by Exceptionality in Grades K-12

FY11		
	<u>SB10 Schools</u>	<u>Public Schools</u>
Other Health Impairment	29.18%	14.00%
Specific Learning Disability	28.55%	30.00%
Autism	12.22%	00.06%
Total	69.95%	44.06%

Findings From Current Voucher Participants

The following narrative describes data collected and analyzed from the current voucher participant (CVP) sample. The sequence of data analysis is presented in the following order: CVP demographic information, quantitative CVP data, qualitative CVP data, and summary of CVP data.

Current Voucher Participant (CVP) demographic information.

Twelve participants completed the questionnaire for parents whose children are currently enrolled in an SB10 school. The children of seven participants (58.3%) were identified as having a specific learning disability: three (25%) with autism and two (16.7%) with an emotional/behavior disorder. Eight children (66.7%) were male and four

(33.3%) were female. Ten participants (83.3%) were Caucasian, one (8.3%) was African American, and one (8.3%) was classified as other.

In terms of the parents' education level, four participants (33.3%) indicated post graduate degree completion, five participants (41.7%) reported college degree completion, and three participants (25%) reported some college enrollment. Nine participants (75%) reported annual incomes exceeding \$75,000. Two participants (16.7%) reported incomes between \$40,000 and \$74,999. One participant (8.3%) reported income of less than \$40,000. Ten (83.3%) participants reported ineligibility for free/reduced lunch and two participants (16.7%) reported eligibility. When asked about their location in Georgia, three participants (25%) indicated their residence was in metro Atlanta, three participants (25%) in northeast Georgia, and six participants (50%) in northwest Georgia.

Quantitative Current Voucher Participant (CVP) data. Current participants indicated their level of satisfaction with different aspects of their SB10 private schools. For this question, participants could select multiple responses and results were reported in rating averages. An analysis of results shows the areas of highest average satisfaction were SB10 class sizes (97.92), school size (97.92), and academic quality (95.83). The three lowest areas of satisfaction were quality of transportation programs (70.45), costs/expenses (70.83), and facilities of the SB10 schools (85.42). These findings represent parental satisfaction with vouchers to be aligned with class/school size and academic quality. Only one CVP reported he/she was *very dissatisfied* with individual attention given to his/her child, quality of services for the child's disability, academic progress made by his/her child, and school's responsiveness to his/her child's needs. One

CVP reported *dissatisfied* with facilities, quality of teachers, and communication with staff. In contrast, 11 of 12 CVPs were *very satisfied* with class sizes and communication with school staff regarding their child's education. Ten of 12 CVPs were *very satisfied* with individual attention given to their child, quality of teachers, and school's responsiveness to their child's needs. Overall, 10 CVPs reported they were *very satisfied*, one participant reported *satisfied*, and one participant reported *very dissatisfied* with their child's experience in an SB10 school.

At this point in the questionnaire, one Current Voucher Participant discontinued the survey. Therefore, remaining data analysis includes 11 participants. Each of the 11 remaining CVPs ranked reasons for enrolling in SB10 from most important to least important. The researcher combined responses from rankings in the number one and two columns to present the following analysis. The top two reasons reported for enrolling in SB10 were dissatisfaction with the prior public school (72.8%) and ability to attend private school (45.5%).

In researching private schools for SB10 enrollment, five CVPs (45.5%) used the Internet to learn more, two (18.2%) consulted friends and/or relatives for information, and two (18.2%) reported consulting with the private school and Georgia Department of Education. One CVP (9.1%) reported receiving information from the public school, public school teacher, and advocacy groups. The most valid source of information regarding SB10 schools reported by four CVPs (36.4%) was the Georgia Department of Education. Another four CVPs (36.4%) reported the Internet to be most valid source of information, while two CVPs (18.2%) reported the private school itself to be the most valid source. One CVP (9.1%) reported friends/relatives to be the most valid source.

Private school type varied among the 12 CVPs and included non-religious (27.3%), religious (54.5%), and disability specific (18.2%) schools. In terms of difficulty locating an eligible SB10 private school, three CVPs reported *not at all difficult* (27.3%), four CVPs reported *not too difficult* (36.4%), two CVPs reported *somewhat difficult* (18.2%), and two CVPs reported *very difficult* (18.2%). Difficulties encountered in locating an eligible private school were ascribed to the following reasons: Lack of knowledge of eligible schools (18.2%), cost of tuition (54.5%), distance from home (27.3%), and lack of available services (36.4%). Ten CVPs (90.9%) applied to one school, while one (9.1%) applied to two schools.

All 11 participants reported that specific information was available regarding (in order from highest to lowest) location of SB10 school (90.9%), costs and expenses (81.8%), school size (81.8%), class size (72.8%), academic quality (72.8%), teacher quality (63.6%), facilities (63.6%), special programs (63.6%), transportation options (63.6%), values/culture (54.5%), curriculum (54.5%), and religious instruction (54.5%). Ten participants (90.9%) reported they were able to get all necessary information regarding the private school prior to enrollment. One participant reported that he/she was unable to get information on academic quality, teacher quality, and special programs of SB10 schools.

Eleven CVPs (100%) reported their decision to enroll occurred after they reviewed websites and talked to SB10 school principals/administrators. Ten CVPs (90%) visited the SB10 schools with their child. Nine CVPs (90%) talked to teachers and read brochures. Seven CVPs (64%) talked with other parents or students. Six CVPs (64%) attended parent meetings to get more information.

CVPs reported their satisfaction with the availability of information for several factors of SB10 schools. All CVPs (100%) were *very satisfied* with information about the location of SB10 schools. Nine CVPs (81.9%) were *very satisfied* with knowledge of resources regarding values/culture, school size, class size, curriculum, and discipline and safety. One CVP (9.1%) reported *dissatisfied* with available information on quality of teachers and transportation options. One CVP (9.1%) reported *very dissatisfied* with available information on special programs offered at the SB10 schools. Overall, when considering the single most important factor in choosing to enroll in an SB10 private school, CVPs selected academic quality of the school (27.3%) and special programs offered (27.3%) as the two top factors.

The researcher compared CVPs' satisfaction levels by categories with their reported knowledge levels by category. Two of four categories (school values/culture and curriculum) were ranked as the lowest (54.5%) in terms of available information prior to enrollment. However, many CVPs (81.8%) reported they were *very satisfied* with their knowledge of these factors.

The CVPs were asked to reflect on their actual experiences and compare them to perceptions of the private school services they held prior to enrollment. When considering whether or not the private school provided all services and supports reported to be available, two of the 11 CVPs (81.8%) reported the private school did not provide all the services and supports that were stated as available. The respondents reported the lack of available services to be *very serious* and *not too serious*. In contrast, 10 CVPs (90.9%) reported that the support provided for their child's learning needs was adequate. Three CVPs (27.3%) reported their child demonstrated behavior difficulties in private

school. The behaviors were reported as *somewhat serious* (33.3%) and *not too serious* (66.7%). Negative interactions based on disability between their child and other students were reported by the CVPs as *very often* (9.1%), *sometimes* (18.2%), and *never* (72.7%).

Overall, two CVPs (18.2%) reported a *somewhat serious* concern with their child having no IEP in the private school while nine CVPs (81.8%) reported no concern. Ultimately, all CVPs (100%) felt the SB10 scholarship should continue to be available.

When considering transportation, four of 11 CVPs (36.4%) reported difficulty with transporting his/her child to the private school. Actual travel distance to and from school was reported as less than 10 miles (72.3%), 20 to 30 miles (27.3%), and more than 30 miles (0%).

When considering financial expenses, nine CVPs (90.9%) reported paying tuition and fees above the amount covered by SB10. Actual expenses reported by four CVPs (40%) exceeded \$5,000, two CVPs (20%) reported \$3,000-\$5,000, two CVPs (20%) reported \$1,000-\$3,000. Approximately 55% of CVPs pay more than \$3,000 in tuition each year.

Qualitative Current Voucher Participant (CVP) participant themes. The analysis of data continued as the researcher read the CVP responses to open-ended questions on the online questionnaire. The responses were categorized into contributing factors and barriers to participating in SB10 private schools.

Contributing factors for CVPs. Common themes were organized and reported from most relevant to least relevant in response to the research sub-question: What are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia? Each of the 11

CVPs shared his or her perceptions of factors contributing to participation in a voucher program for students with disabilities. Their summarized statements follow.

Four major themes emerged from the online questionnaire responses: (a) highly qualified teachers, (b) school and class size, (c) school values and culture, and (d) financial support. Regarding perceptions of staff quality, CVP Two reported his/her child was making great strides and CVP Eight perceived his/her child to receive a quality education. CVP Six preferred enrollment in a school specifically for children with learning challenges. CVP Eight appreciated the one-on-one attention. CVP One also reported satisfaction with SB10 class sizes and school culture. According to CVP One, Four, Six, Eight, and Nine, accessing an SB10 school without the voucher program would be impossible.

Barriers for CVPs. Regarding parents' knowledge of SB10 information sources, another theme emerged. One component of SB10 addresses parental notification of the availability of this scholarship. Public schools are required to notify parents on an annual basis about how to access information regarding GSNS. Multiple parent comments addressed their lack of awareness of the scholarship program. CVP Two stated that upon inquiring about the voucher program no one could provide any information. CVP Four reported he/she found information about the scholarship through his/her own research. CVP Nine explained that he/she was never notified about the voucher program by other possible sources.

Summary of Current Voucher Participant (CVP) findings. Based on analysis of findings from CVPs, the primary factors in selecting an SB10 private school were

class and school size, highly qualified teachers, school values and culture, and financial support. Barriers to participation were lack of available information about the program.

Findings From Former Voucher Participants (FVP)

The following narrative describes data collected and analyzed for the former voucher participant (FVP) sample. The sequence of data analysis is presented in the following order: FVP demographic information, quantitative FVP data, qualitative FVP data, and a summary of FVP data.

Former Voucher Participants (FVP) demographic data. Three FVPs completed the questionnaire for parents whose children were previously enrolled in an SB10 school. All three FVPs' (100%) children have been diagnosed with Autism. All three children (100%) were male. FVP One and Three (66.7%) were Caucasian and FVP Two (33.3%) was African American.

In terms of education level, all three FVPs (100%) indicated post graduate degree completion. Annual income ranged among the three FVPs with one FVP (33.3%) reporting annual income exceeding \$75,000, one FVP (33.3%) reporting income between \$40,000 and \$74,999, and one FVP (33.3%) reporting income of less than \$40,000. FVP Two and Three reported ineligibility for free/reduced lunch and FVP One (33.3%) reported eligibility for free/reduced lunch. When asked about their location in Georgia, 66.7% (FVP One and Three) indicated their residence to be in southeast Georgia and 33.3% (FVP Two) in metro Atlanta. The types of private schools attended by the FVPs were diverse. FVP One enrolled his/her child in a religious-based rural school; FVP Two enrolled his/her child in a non-religious metro school; and FVP Three enrolled his/his child in a disability-specific private school.

Quantitative Former Voucher Participants (FVP) data. FVPs indicated their satisfaction with different aspects of the SB10 private school. The highest satisfaction levels were reported with class size and school size. Lowest levels of satisfaction were reported with quality of special programs offered and quality of teachers within the SB10 school. Two of the three FVPs reported dissatisfaction with individual attention given their child, quality of services for their child's disability, and academic progress made by their child. All three were dissatisfied with the SB10 schools' responsiveness to their child's needs. In contrast, two of the three FVPs were satisfied with their communication with school staff regarding their child's education.

Overall, two of the three FVPs reported overall dissatisfaction with their child's SB10 school experience and one of the three reported very dissatisfied with their experience. Each of the three FVPs reported a different response for the most important reason they accepted the voucher. They included: Dissatisfied with prior public school, wanted more academic progress for their child, and sought enrollment in a school that specialized in their child's disability. Secondary reasons were reported as wanting more individual attention, problems with students at the public school, and more academic progress by appropriate grouping of students.

In researching private schools for SB10 enrollment, two of the three FVPs (66.7%) consulted friends and/or relatives for information about their school choices and the same number indicated this source of information was the most valid/accurate prior to enrollment. Other research tools included newspapers/TV, advocacy groups, and advertisements.

School type was evenly distributed across the three FVPs and included non-religious, religious, and disability specific. The FVPs reported locating an eligible private SB10 school as *not too difficult* (66.7%) or *not at all difficult* (33.3%).

Difficulties encountered in locating an eligible private school were evenly distributed among the following reasons: Lack of knowledge of eligible schools, cost of tuition, distance from home, lack of available services, and no known factors. Two FVPs (66.7%) applied to one school while one (33.3%) applied to two schools.

All three Former Voucher Participants reported the availability of specific information about academic quality, special programs offered, locations, costs and expenses, curriculum, and class sizes. Only one FVP reported knowledge of information sources for religious instruction, discipline and safety, and transportation options. All three FVPs (100%) reported they were able to get all necessary information about the private school prior to enrollment. All three reported their decision to enroll occurred after they visited the school with their child, talked with teachers, principals, and parents, and reviewed brochures, websites, and had parent meetings. The FVPs' highest level of satisfaction was with the availability of information about religious instruction, discipline and safety, values and culture, class size, school size, and curriculum. Overall, when considering the single most important factor in choosing to enroll in an SB10 private school, FVPs selected academic quality of school (33.3%), special programs offered (33.3%), and values/culture (33.3%) as the three top factors.

The FVPs were asked to compare their actual experiences to their perceptions of the private school services they held prior to enrollment. When considering whether or not the private school provided all services and supports that were reported to be

available, two of the three FVPs (66.7%) reported the private school did not provide all of the services and supports stated as available. Both respondents reported the lack of available services to be *very serious* and the support provided his/her child's learning needs to be *inadequate*. Two of the three FVPs (66.7%) reported their child demonstrated behavior difficulties while enrolled in private school. The behaviors were reported as *somewhat serious* (50%) and *very serious* (50%). Negative interactions based on disability between their child and other students were reported by the FVPs (33.3%) as *very often*, *often*, and *sometimes*.

FVPs were asked about their reasons for returning to public school after experiencing private school with the voucher program. The most important reasons for returning to public school were academic quality, special programs, and values/culture of the SB10 schools. Secondary reasons for returning to public school were quality of teachers in the SB10 schools (100%).

Highest levels of satisfaction in the public school were reported in the areas of special education programs offered, facilities, location, expenses, discipline and safety, curriculum, and transportation. Two FVPs were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the public school academic quality, teacher quality, class sizes, school size, and values/culture. Additionally, respondents reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the current public school in the areas of quality of services for their child's disability and quality of facilities/equipment.

Overall, none of the three FVPs reported a concern with their child having no IEP in the private school. Ultimately, all three FVPs (100%) reported that the SB10

scholarship should continue to be available. However, two FVPs reported they were *very satisfied* with their current public school.

When considering transportation, only one FVP (33.3%) reported difficulty with transporting his/her child to the private school. Actual travel distance to and from school was reported as less than 10 miles (33.3%), 20 to 30 miles (33.3%), and more than 30 miles (33.3%).

When considering financial expenses, all three FVPs (100%) reported paying tuition and fees above the amount covered by SB10. Actual expenses reported by the FVPs were less than \$500, \$1,000-\$3,000, \$3,000-\$5,000.

Qualitative Former Voucher Participants (FVP) themes. The data analysis continued as the researcher read the transcriptions of the three face-to-face interviews through the lens of complex social phenomena analysis. This section presents face-to-face interview responses about parent perceptions of private school enrollment under SB10. Data were grouped using data transformation with categories. Common themes were organized and reported in terms of answering the overarching research question: Why do parents of students with disabilities in Georgia decide to rescind voucher participation in SB10? Each of the three FVPs shared his or her perceptions of the contributing factors as well as barriers to participation in a voucher program for students with disabilities.

Contributing factors to FVP SB10 participation. The first research sub-questions asks, what are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia? FVP responses are summarized in the statements that follow. Four positive

and contributing themes emerged from the analysis and included (a) individual attention, (b) staff quality, (c) family and friends, and (d) class/school size.

Based on results of the interviews, individual attention to their child's specific needs played a significant role in the selection of SB10 eligible private schools. All parents preferred more one-on-one attention from school staff and more intense and frequent instruction. Staff quality was another positive factor for parents. Prior to enrollment, all FVP parents chose to enroll in an SB10 private school with the expectation and understanding that teachers and support staff would have highly specialized skills and knowledge in order to provide high quality instruction for their child. FVP Two was persuaded by the private schools affirmation, "They told me they could help him."

Regarding sources of information used when deciding to attend an SB10 school, all parents placed significant emphasis on the views, perceptions, and feedback from family and friends who were knowledgeable about the private school. Parents' desire for small class/school size was a motivating factor in accepting a voucher.

Barriers to FVP SB10 participation. The second research sub-question asked: What are the barriers or negative factors of a voucher program that resulted in their rescinding participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia? Responses are summarized in the statements that follow. Three barriers or negative themes emerged from the analysis and included: (a) lack of individual attention, (b) lack of specialized services, and (c) lack of highly qualified staff.

Attention to individual needs and one-on-one instruction were reported as a primary reason for parents selecting a private school for their child with a disability. The

experiences in the SB10 school did not meet the FVPs' expectations. FVP Three summarized his/her child's experience as limited one-on-one instruction with specialized staff and limited attention to his needs with highly qualified staff. FVP One reported similar experiences, reporting that the attention for special needs kids was not there as he/she had been told it would be and that attention to his/her child's special needs was not met.

When considering special services in the private school setting, responses from all three Former Voucher Participants indicated a perceived lack of a special program. When questioned by the researcher about his/her perception of special services in the private school, FVP One reported, "There was no special education program at all. My child had no IEP. There were no special education teachers." FVP Two reported there were no special education programs or services at all in his/her child's SB10 private school. FVP Three responded that he/she did not get answers to questions in meetings and conferences and perceived the specialized instruction to be "lacking." FVP Two reported that the curriculum and instruction in his/her child's private school was very challenging, to the point of causing stress for his/her child. He/she attributed this to the lack of instructional accommodations provided in the private school setting which promoted instructional challenges. FVP Three indicated his/her dissatisfaction with the private school experience by describing how he/she did not get the measurable results expected. FVP Three felt through his/her experience that the SB10 private school services were no better than what public schools could offer.

When considering quality of staff, all three FVPs reported concerns with the qualifications of staff in the private schools. For example, FVP One reported, "He had a

teacher that did not seem qualified to handle a special needs child.” FVP One also was concerned because it appeared no teachers were available who had experience working with children with special needs. FVP Three supported this position and noted that the staff could have been more in tune with his/her child’s needs. FVP Three’s observation was that the staff was always in transition by having available short-term staff that rotated through on a continuous basis. He/she summarized by stating, “I did not feel that the school was stable.” Upon reflection, FVP Three supported his/her decision to enroll his/her child in a private school thinking that if his/her child went to a specialized school he/she would experience more success. However, he/she observed a limited number of staff and a variety of disabilities present in each class. More specifically, FVP Three stated, “the staff was so small they had to be many things to many people.”

The researcher specifically inquired about each FVP’s reasons for returning their child to public school. FVP Three responded, “We wanted results and did not get them.” FVP One cited the availability of a special education program and the ability of public schools to work with him/her. FVP Two relayed his/her perception that he/she did not believe his/her child was accepted in the private school based on conversations with private school administration and teachers.

Summary of Former Voucher Participants (FVP) findings. Prior to enrollment, all responses by FVPs pointed to several positive factors that led to their decisions to enroll their child with a disability in an SB10 private school. Access to more individual attention, highly qualified staff with specialized skills, and smaller class and school sizes were the primary reasons for enrollment. These factors were reinforced by family and friends of each FVP as positive factors. However, all FVP responses

indicated an overall perception of significant limitations in individual attention provided their child, specialized instruction, and staff quality as a result of their personal experiences with SB10 private schools.

Summary of Findings

Through the process of case study research design, the overarching research question and sub-questions were studied. A summary of the findings from both current and former SB10 participants reports overall major themes among both categories of participants. Using triangulation of qualitative, quantitative, and artifact data, this research process assisted with providing a specific lens for viewing voucher use for students with disabilities in Georgia.

Summary of Findings for Sub-Questions.

Findings for the sub-questions were reported separately in terms of contributing factors and barrier factors. Findings from both current and former voucher participants are included in sub-question one and two.

Summary of contributing factors. The first sub-question was this: What are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia? This question was summarized by the researcher based on analysis of all available data from current and former participants (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

Figure 4.1. Current Voucher Participant Contributors

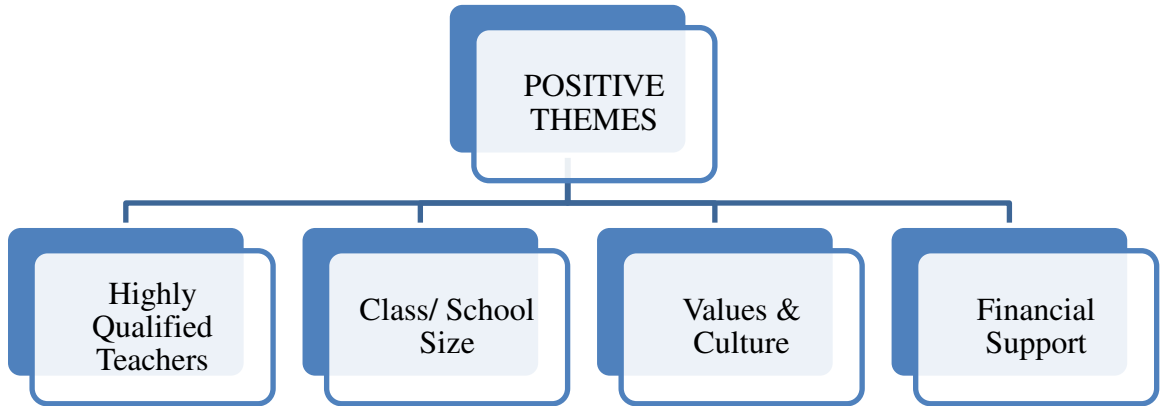


Figure 4.1. Four major factors significantly contributed to CVPs’ decisions to enroll their child in an SB10 private school: (a) highly qualified teachers, (b) class/school size, (c) school values and culture, and (d) financial support. These factors significantly contributed to CVPs’ decisions to enroll their child in an SB10 private school.

Figure 4.2. Former Voucher Participant Contributors

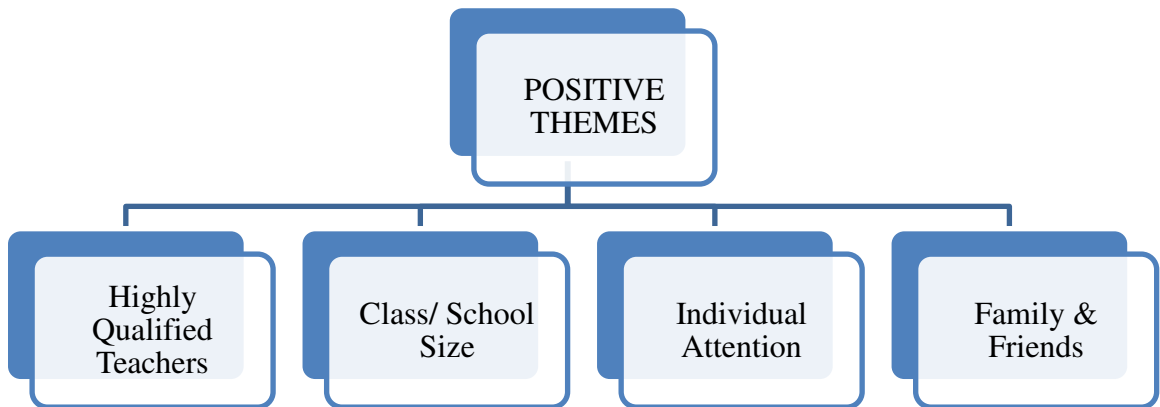


Figure 4.2. Four major factors significantly contributed to FVPs' decisions to enroll their child in an SB10 private school: (a) individual attention, (b) highly qualified teachers, (c) family and friends, and (c) class/school size. Attention and staff quality and class/school size were viewed by FVPs as positive motivators to enroll in SB10 private schools. FVPs primarily relied on information from family and friends for information about SB10 schools.

When analyzing the data from current and former participants, it appears that both placed significant emphasis on highly qualified teachers and class/school size prior to enrollment in an SB10 private school. Additionally, CVPs valued school culture and financial assistance while FVPs valued individual attention provided to their child and feedback from family and friends regarding school selection. One of the mostly highly rated criteria for both current and former participants was class and school size. This factor remained constant for both former and current participants.

Summary of barriers. The second sub-question asked this: What are the barriers or negative factors of a voucher program that resulted in their rescinding participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia? Analysis of data from current and former participants is summarized in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. Findings indicate significantly different perspectives between former and current participants about barriers to participation. CVPs indicated an overall high satisfaction with the program and only identified one barrier to participation, lack of information about availability of the program. However, FVPs' perspectives differed drastically in the level of satisfaction with their SB10 experience, specifically in the areas of teacher quality, specialized instruction, and individual attention provided their child. The researcher noted consistent perspectives among CVPs regarding many of the positive and

contributing factors. In contrast, many FVPs' perceived contributing factors became barriers to participation in the SB10 voucher program.

Figure 4.3. Current Voucher Participant Barrier

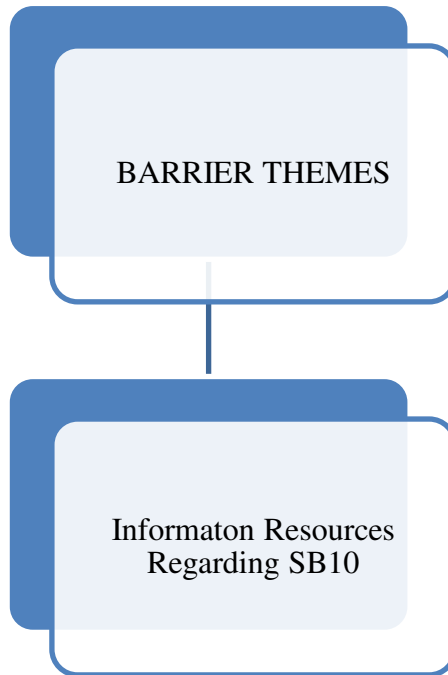


Figure 4.3. CVPs identified information sources about SB10 as a perceived barrier to participation in SB10. From the perspective of CVPs, this significantly hindered parents' decisions to enroll their child in an SB10 private school. CVPs perceive there is not enough awareness about the program.

Figure 4.4. Former Voucher Participant Barriers

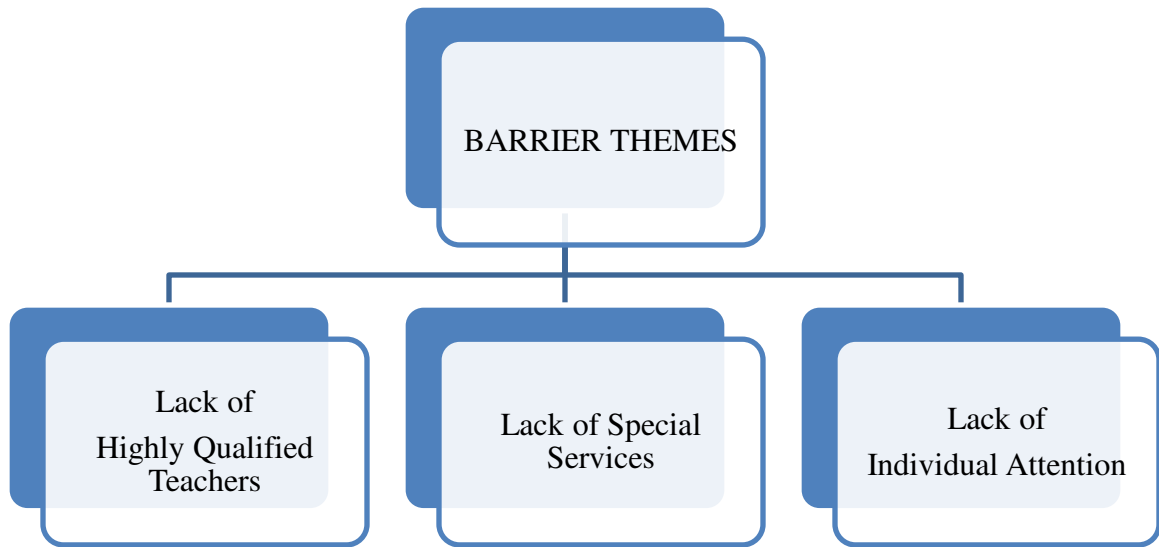


Figure 4.4. FVPs identified three perceived barriers to participation in SB10 schools: (a) lack of highly qualified teachers, (b) lack of special services, and (c) lack of individual attention.

Summary of findings for the overarching research question. The overarching question for this research question was: Why do parents of students with disabilities in Georgia choose to rescind participation in SB10 private schools? After comparing contributing factors and barrier themes emerging from former participant data, the researcher determined that at least two contributing factors (highly qualified staff and individual attention) shifted to barriers for the FVPs. Specifically, parent perceptions of the lack of highly qualified staff and individual attention became primary factors in parents' decisions to return to public education. In addition, class and school size were perceived by parents after participating in SB10 voucher schools to be of less significance than access to specialized instruction. This specialized instruction was not

perceived as available in the FVPs' schools. Therefore, specialized services became a major factor for FVPs in deciding to rescind voucher participation.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This chapter summarizes research findings from this qualitative study conducted in the case study tradition. The case study method was used to seek feedback from parents about their perceptions of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (SB10) as well as their knowledge and use of available resources to inform them of the scholarship. The purpose of the study was three-fold. First, results of this study will provide parents in depth information and an analysis of the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship and assist them with making more informed decisions about voucher program participation. Second, it will provide feedback to public and private schools in Georgia about program attributes parents perceive as positive and negative as well as their experiences with public and private school programs for students with disabilities. Third, information from this study may assist policymakers in Georgia as they continue to refine school choice legislation for students with disabilities.

Chapter I provides an introduction to this study and a brief overview of market theory, school choice, school vouchers, and vouchers for students with disabilities. Overall, school choice is a significant factor in the K-12 educational system and, as it develops, has the potential to affect children across the United States (Alliance for School Choice, 2012). Research focusing on the social and academic effects of school vouchers is sporadic and sometimes biased, especially for students with disabilities. In Georgia, foundational studies on school vouchers for students with disabilities are necessary to begin the process of longitudinal research in the state.

Chapter II presents a comprehensive, historical scope and sequence of school choice spanning a century and establishes a solid foundation for the focus of this study on the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. The researcher outlines the foundations of the free market concept, evolution to the concept of school choice, vouchers as a model, and students with disabilities as a target population for vouchers. A historical overview of the voucher movement across states (specifically Georgia) is given, providing a comprehensive backdrop for this research topic.

Chapter III describes the study's methodology. The exploratory case study method addressed parents' perceptions of school vouchers for students with disabilities from the perspective of parents who continued and chose to rescind participation. The case study compared the perspectives and experiences of current and former participants and sought reasons for discontinued participation from former participants. In addition, the study provided an artifact analysis of available SB10 data.

Three Former Voucher Participants were purposefully selected to participate in a face-to-face interview. By reducing the number of participants, the researcher collected data that was perceived to be richer, deeper, and more complex than what could be collected in a quantitative method with a larger population. A comprehensive analysis of the research problem was provided by the convergence of qualitative data from multiple sources such as artifacts and interviews. Quantitative data available through an online questionnaire from a larger participant population provided supporting evidence of the themes developed through the concurrent procedures.

Chapter III also presents the rationale for using a descriptive case study within the phenomenological paradigm along with justification of the case study method, sampling,

collection, validity, response rate, and data analysis and management. The researcher followed the steps described in Moustakas' Modifications of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Data Analysis (Appendix F). In conclusion, Chapter III presents an overview of how the data were reported.

Analysis of Research Findings

Chapter IV presents a description of the study findings in tables, narrative, figures, and participant demographics. The data were summarized by the researcher in narrative form using the data transformation analysis approach where all responses were categorized by themes and the number of occurrences was recorded. Applying a horizontal perspective to the identification of each meaningful unit using reflection, imaginative variation, and analysis allowed for creation of a textural-structural description of each FVP's experiences. From the review of the textural structural data, three major themes for sub-question one and three major themes for sub-question two emerged. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive composite textural-structural description summarizing the findings of the overarching question and sub-questions.

Discussion of Research Findings

This section discusses data from this study in relation to previous literature regarding school choice, vouchers, and vouchers for students with disabilities. Similar themes, gaps, and contradictions between findings and literature are discussed.

Discussion of Contributor Findings

Discussion of findings for positive reasons for enrolling in the GSNS (SB10) relate to the following research studies: In 2008, Wolfe cited evidence from nine previous gold-standard studies supporting the position that certain sub-groups of students

with significant educational needs make academic gains while attending private schools using a voucher. Green and Forster (2003) reported class size in private schools to be satisfactory for participating voucher parents. Weidner and Herrington (2006) concluded that vouchers provided more options to parents via financial support.

The responses from current participants to the first sub-question, what are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia, revealed three major themes emerging as contributors to participation in SB10: (1) Academic, (2) Demographics, and (3) Economic (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Current Voucher Participant (CVP) Contributor Themes

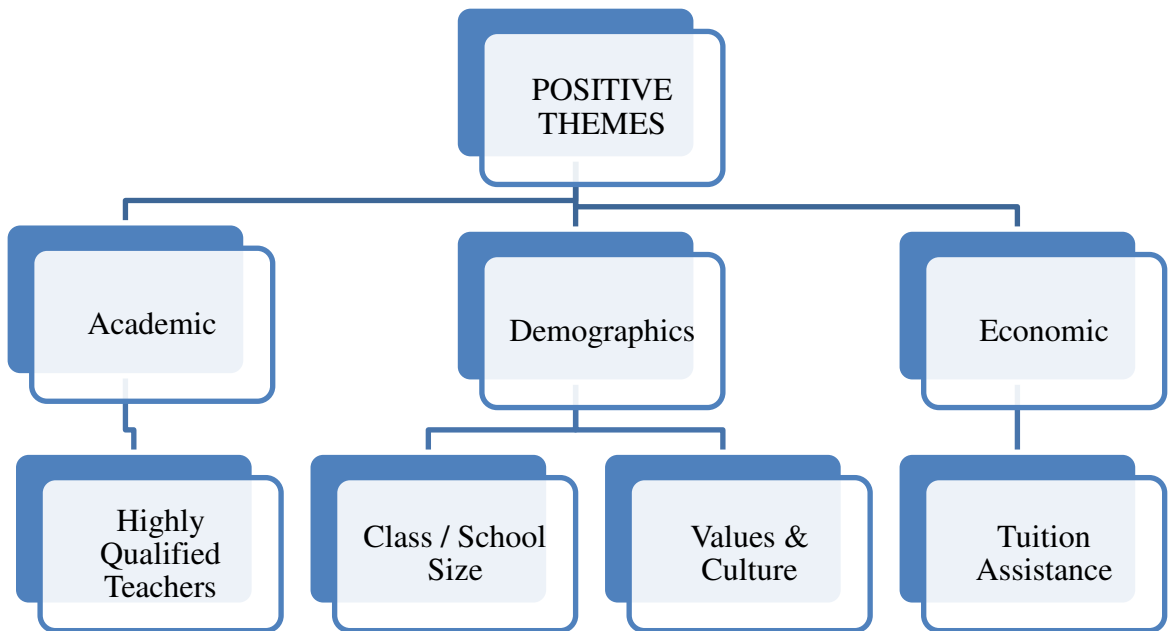


Figure 5.1. The figure above depicts three major factors that emerged from the data analysis: (1) Academic (2) Demographics and (3) Economic. Within these overall factors, major themes emerged that significantly contributed to parents' decisions to enroll their child in a SB10 private school from the perspective of CVPs. Regarding academics, highly qualified staff was viewed as a positive motivator to enroll in SB10 private schools. For demographics, parents placed significant emphasis on school values and culture as well as class/school size. Last, available tuition assistance was a positive

factor as many CVP indicated that enrollment in SB10 schools would not be possible without it.

The responses from former participants to the first sub-question, what are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia, revealed three major themes: (1) Academic, (2) Sources of Information, and (3) Demographics (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2. Former Voucher Participant (FVP) Contributor Themes

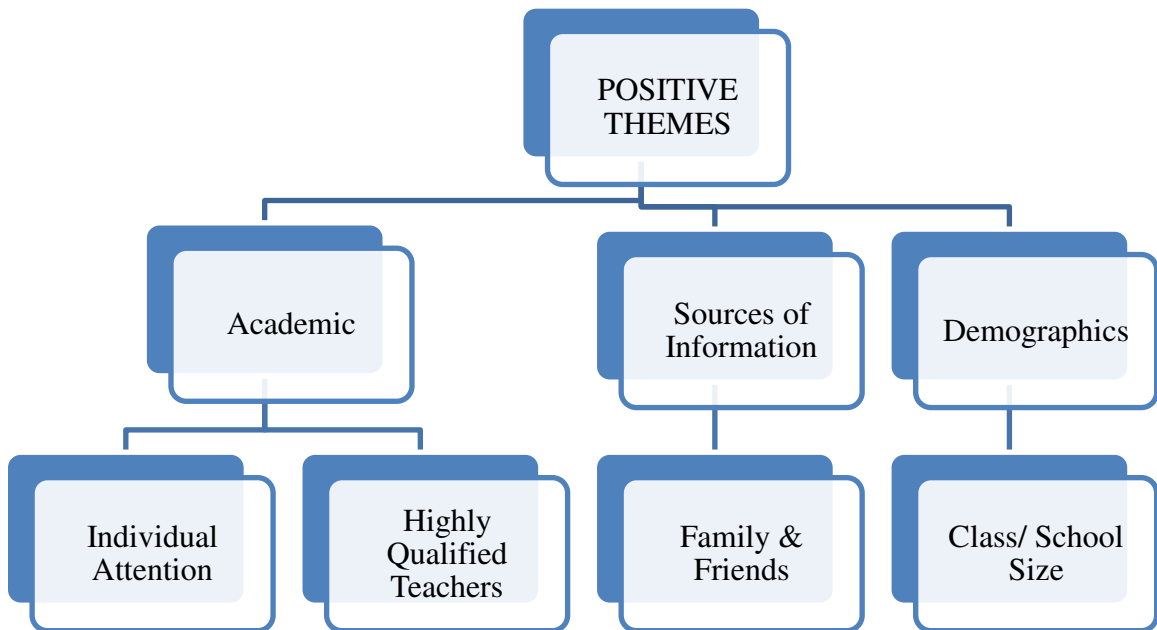


Figure 5.2. The figure above depicts three major factors that emerged from the data analysis: (1) Academic (2) Sources of Information and (3) Demographics. Within these overall factors, major themes emerged that significantly contributed to parents’ decisions to enroll their child in a SB10 private school. Regarding academics, individual attention and staff quality were viewed by parents as positive motivators to enroll in SB10 private schools. For sources of information, parents primarily relied on information from family and friends. When considering demographic positive factors of SB10 schools, one theme (class/school size) emerged as a motivating and positive factor of accepting a voucher for their child with a disability.

When analyzed collectively, the responses from current and former participants to the first sub-question, what are the contributing or positive factors of a voucher program that encouraged participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia, revealed two major themes: (1) Academic factors and (2) Demographic factors (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4. All Participant Contributor Themes

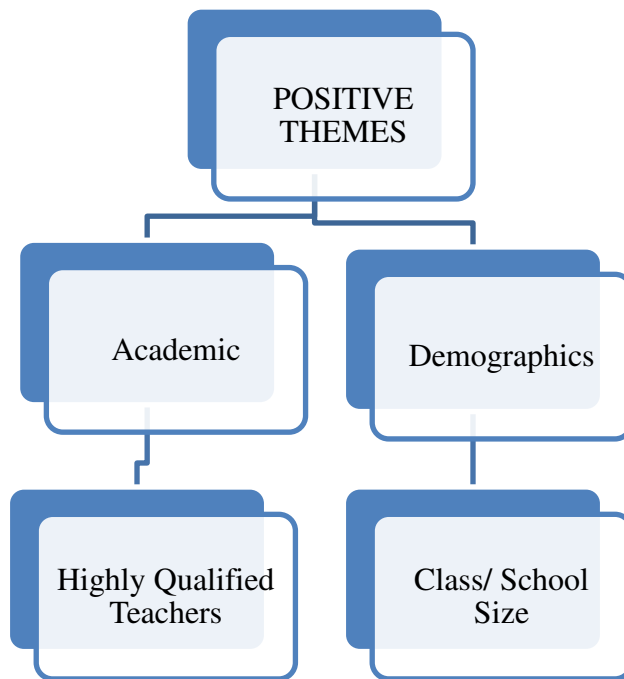


Figure 5.4. Two major themes emerged from the analysis of responses from current and former participants: (a) academics and (b) demographics. Within these themes, two factors contributed to current and former participants' decisions to enroll their child in an SB10 private school. Regarding academics, highly qualified teachers were viewed by current and former participants as a positive motivator to enroll in an SB10 private school. In terms of demographics, class/school size emerged as a motivating factor for current and former participants enroll in an SB10 private school.

Specifically, within the area of academics, the findings are similar to those of Greene and Forster (2003) and Weidner and Herrington (2006) who determined that parents of students with disabilities reported higher levels of satisfaction with private

schools. This is supported high satisfaction levels reported by Current Voucher Participant responses in chapter four. Results of this study also support Wolfe's (2008) research regarding parents' lack of specific reasons for satisfaction with private schools. The CVPs in this study did not clearly articulate reasons for their satisfaction with academic progress in private schools and justification for selecting an SB10 school other than highly qualified staff; however, they reported having limited knowledge about staff qualifications prior to enrollment.

In addition, the results of this study support Pusey and Scafidi (2010) by indicating that parents were not satisfied with their public school. Dissatisfaction with public school was a primary reason reported by CVP in chapter four for choosing to participate in a voucher program. Their primary reasons for selecting a voucher were dissatisfaction with the public school and the ability to attend a private school. These responses do not clearly specify the aspects of the private school that were appealing. Therefore, similar to Wolfe's findings, parents of this study may experience cognitive dissonance by having such a vested interest in their child's success in the private setting where, in fact, the private school performs equally as well as the public school. This is supported by archival data from the Georgia Department of Education (2011) which indicated that approximately 65% of students with disabilities in SB10 private schools achieve at least one year's academic growth in reading and math. This limited academic growth may dispute the position in Koedel et al. (2009) that educational yield is increased by exerting competitive pressure among schools. Data also supports, in part, findings by Wolfe (2008) that academic gains in private schools are smaller and less consistent, but positive.

The Southern Education Foundation (n.d.) asserts that achievement ratings provided by private schools must be reviewed with caution as methods of data reporting are inconsistent and limited across schools. This is based on the Foundation's position that Georgia's voucher policy has not established an effective performance measurement for students with disabilities enrolled in private schools.

Although the CVP indicated higher satisfaction with private schools, it is necessary to consider the perspectives of the 1966 students and families who no longer participate. Thus, it may be inferred that this school choice did not meet their needs or that they experienced demographics or economic barriers.

Also in terms of academic factors, it is important to consider teacher quality specifically for students with disabilities in private school settings. As stated by Müller and Ahearn (2007), teachers in private schools are not required to meet standards of high quality in accordance with IDEA. As a result, in this study, the researcher determined that although the desire for highly qualified teachers was a strong motivating factor in selecting an SB10 school, FVPs reported high levels of dissatisfaction with teacher quality. CVPs did not address actual experiences with teacher quality to refute the position of FVPs.

In terms of teacher quality, it is essential to address specialized instruction and services. Samuels (2007) reported parents of students with disabilities who accept vouchers actually reject their individual entitlement to specialized instruction through IDEA. Results of this study indicate that all FVPs determined the availability of specialized instruction in the SB10 private school to be dissatisfactory, prompting them to return to public schools to accept a free appropriate public education.

Within the theme of demographics, the results of this study indicate class and school size are significant factors for parents of students with disabilities in choosing to accept a voucher. Comparison of perspectives from both current and former participants indicates class and school size continue to be positive factors. However, in relation to individual attention provided to students within a reduced class size model, parents of current participants did not place high priority on individual attention while former participants indicated the lack of individual attention as a significant factor in rescinding a voucher for SB10 schools.

It is important to note that there are two significant factors that were not addressed in the contributor findings for voucher participants: Socio-economic status and race. These two issues were not explicitly reported as primary reasons for choosing a voucher program. However, it has historically been surmised that participants are not completely forthcoming and honest regarding their perceptions of socio-economic status and race.

Discussion of Barrier Findings

When analyzed collectively, the responses of current and former participants to sub-question two, what are the barriers or negative factors of a voucher program that resulted in their rescinding participation in SB10 as perceived by parents of students with disabilities in Georgia, revealed one major theme: academic factors (Figure 5.3). The results of this study indicate findings similar to Wolfe (2008). He stated a need for high quality experimental research on the participant effects of voucher programs especially taking into consideration the reported levels of academic gains made by students with disabilities in private schools in Georgia as indicated in Tables 4.5 and 4.6.

Figure 5.3. Former Voucher Participant (FVP) Barrier Theme

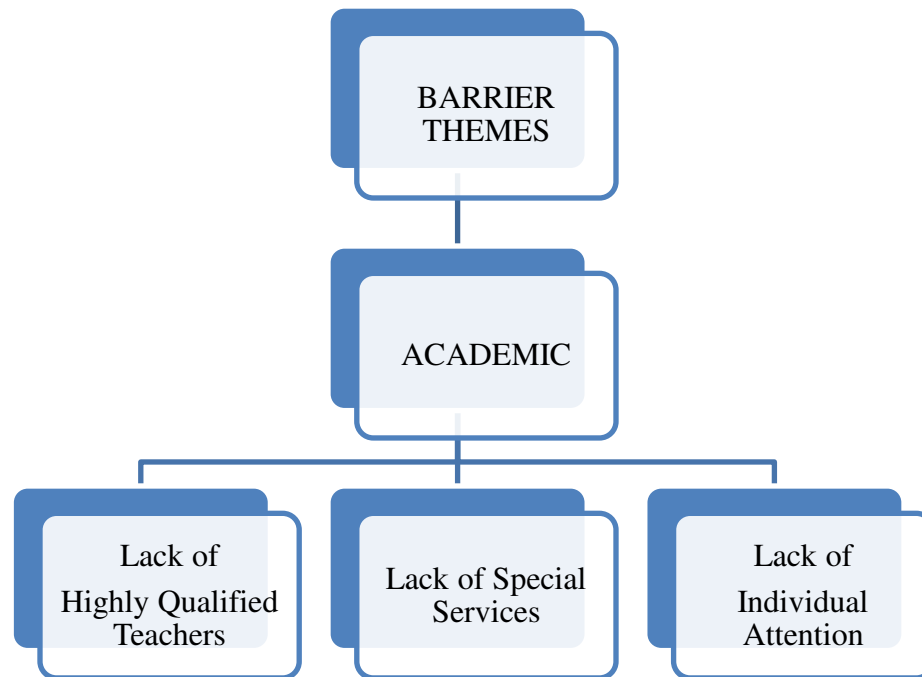


Figure 5.3. Three major themes emerged from analysis of FVP responses about their decision to withdraw their child from an SB10 private school: (a) lack of highly qualified teachers, (b) lack of special services, and (c) lack of individual attention. Attention and staff quality were viewed by parents as barriers to continued enrollment in SB10 private schools. These themes are classified under academics.

Based on findings from the interviews, academic factors play a significant role in the decision to rescind participation in SB10 eligible private schools. Specific examples such as concerns about staff quality, lack of individual attention, and lack of special education services emerged as common themes among FVPs who decided to withdraw their child from the private school. These findings would suggest that private schools need teachers highly qualified in special education instruction. Teachers of SB10 eligible private schools would benefit from professional learning in characteristics of disabilities as well as methods and strategies to address specific learning needs of students with disabilities. By doing so, private schools may make progress toward bridging the gap between individual needs of students with disabilities and their academic success.

Conclusions

Through this study, the researcher desired to shed light on possible reasons parents' rescinded participation in Georgia's voucher program that may reflect the lived experiences of the 1,966 additional students whose parents have rejected the voucher program. Analysis of the lived experiences of 15 parents (12 current and 3 former) of students with disabilities in Georgia revealed both similar and diverse experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and concerns regarding educating students with disabilities in private schools. These lived experiences fall within two themes: academics and demographics.

When considering academic experiences for both current and former participants, the data indicated that Current Voucher Participants were, overall, least satisfied with their child's academic progress in public school when compared to other public school factors. Therefore, improved academic progress was a major reason they chose a voucher program. Although CVPs reported continued satisfaction with the academic quality in SB10 private schools, none ever reported satisfaction with their child's academic progress. In comparison, although academic quality was a major reason Former Voucher Participants selected SB10 schools, FVPs indicated dissatisfaction with their lived experiences of academic quality for their child.

Additionally, the data indicated CVPs were least satisfied with their knowledge of teacher quality prior to enrollment; FVPs were least satisfied with teacher quality after enrollment even though perception of teacher quality was one of the strongest factors for choosing enrollment in an SB10 private school. These findings conclude that parents of students with disabilities make assumptions about the availability of highly qualified

teachers without having adequate information while considering private school placement via a voucher.

Participants in the study described similar perceptions prior to enrollment in terms of teacher quality and school demographics such as class/school size. After lived experiences in a variety of private school settings, participants described diverse perceptions of teacher quality. Parents who chose to return to a public school setting and received special education services through IDEA did so based on their belief that the special services and teacher quality provided in the private school were not satisfactory. Both current and former participants reportedly maintained consistent perceptions about school/class size prior to and after enrollment in SB10 schools.

Participants in the study described diverse perceptions of individual attention and specialized instruction prior to enrollment. CVPs, overall, were least satisfied with attention to their child's needs provided in public school. FVPs consistently reported that individual attention was a major contributing factor in their decision to enroll in SB10 schools. However, data analysis indicates FVPs were very unsatisfied with individual attention and responsiveness to their child's needs in SB10 schools. CVPs indicated they were least satisfied with the specialized instruction provided in public schools. However, they were also least satisfied with their knowledge of available special instruction in SB10 private schools. Specialized instructional services emerged as a primary factor in FVPs choice to enroll in SB10 schools. After lived experiences with specialized instruction in SB10 schools, FVPs were dissatisfied to the point where they returned to public schools to access such services.

Although there were limitations in this study due to the limited sample size, the data provided a clear understanding of why parents choose to rescind participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. Using the phenomenological approach, the researcher sought to describe the quality of the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher agrees with Sailor and Stowe (2003) who stated that providing vouchers to students with disabilities is not a direct path and is hindered by multiple concerns. One concern addressed in this study, aside from parent perceptions of satisfaction with SB10 private schools, was parents' knowledge and use of information sources for SB10 school selection. Weidner and Herrington (2006) proposed that parental awareness and use of information sources among all ethnic and economic subgroups is essential to an effective educational market. Results of this study indicate that parents often may make inaccurate assumptions of guaranteed positive outcomes via private school enrollment. These assumptions may be founded upon acquired information and perceptions of private school teacher qualifications, specialized services and individual attention prior to enrollment.

This study did consider a gap between ethnic and economic sub-groups when comparing awareness and use of knowledge sources similar to Teske, Fitzpatrick, and Kaplan (2007). However, data did indicate a possible gap along ethnic and economic lines among Georgia's parents of students with disabilities who participate in SB10. Specifically, the majority of participants who currently use the voucher program reported researching information on their own primarily using the internet and GADOE as sources. In contrast, all former voucher participants primarily relied on family and

friends to inform them about the voucher and available schools. Parents within subgroups who do not have access to these resources may not be aware of the program. Further, in light of Pusey and Scafidi's (2010) study which showed 76% of current voucher participants pay more than \$3,000 per year for tuition and this study's findings that indicate 58% of current voucher participants pay more than \$3,000 per year, it is essential to consider the possibility that there may be a gap in use of vouchers by economic sub-groups. In addition, supporting the position of Epple and Romano (1998), Weidner and Herrington (2006) and Bifulco et al. (2008), segregation of students by income and race may be an unintended effect of vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia. Nowhere did parents indicate dishonesty during this study. However, parents are not frequently honest about finances and socio-economic status. One factor that needs to be considered in future studies is the possibility of limited access to informational sources by parents of students with disabilities within minority sub-groups.

In summary, it is important to note that in support of Greene and Forster (2003) and Weidner and Herrington (2006), all participants in this research study (including former participants) strongly agreed that the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship should continue to be available even though former participants reported that it did not meet their needs. In light of participants' experiences and according to the literature and results of this study, expansion of the free market theory (Serrie, 2008) without solid research and comprehensive state and federal policies (Wong & Walberg, 2006) poses a significant, long-term risk to the academic achievement of students with disabilities. A key issue to address is ensuring that school choice has a direct and positive impact on the educational achievement of students' with disabilities.

Implications

Parent responses to the overarching research question that guided the research study provide recommendations for consideration by public school administrators. Given a perceived sense of dissatisfaction by parent participants with public schools and their special education programs, it is critical to investigate in more detail why some parents of students with disabilities express dissatisfaction with public schools and choose to utilize vouchers in the first place. By conducting an objective and systematic investigation, public schools can look for root causes underlying parent dissatisfaction and establish a framework for effectively and positively addressing the problems. As a result of this research, public schools may analyze and reflect on their practices regarding parent and school communication, teacher quality, delivery of specialized instruction, attention to individual student needs, and school values/culture. In addition, educational agencies may increase communication with parents of students with disabilities regarding the availability of SB10 through additional avenues to ensure mass awareness.

Recommendations for Implementing Study Results

Multiple research studies could be conducted as a continuation of this dissertation in the areas of academic achievement, specialized instruction, school culture, and parental knowledge of information sources about voucher programs for students with disabilities.

Therefore, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct a research study to determine if a relationship exists between public school culture and the satisfaction level of parents of students with disabilities that leads to enrollment in voucher programs.

2. Conduct a survey to determine the critical factors of parent and teacher/administrator relationships that result in parental dissatisfaction in public school programs and acceptance of vouchers for students with disabilities.
3. Conduct a study to determine if a relationship exists between the level and type of specialized instruction provided to children in an SB10 private school and the degree of parental satisfaction.
4. Conduct a quantitative study to determine if a relationship exists between teacher efficacy as it relates to students with disabilities in SB10 private schools and student achievement.
5. Conduct a study to determine reasons (if any) for low enrollment of Hispanic students with disabilities in SB10 private schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study presented a case study analysis of parent satisfaction with the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, as well as analysis of parental research regarding SB10 private schools and the sources they used to collect information about the voucher program for students with disabilities. The perspectives of parents who rescind participation in the SB10 voucher program provide insight into perceptions of voucher program quality, especially given the fact that dropout rates are significant for SB10. In addition, the types of information and information sources about the voucher program need to be more publicly communicated in a variety of formats so parents may make more informed decisions. This study began to answer some questions, but raised other

questions that should be studied further. The following questions are raised as possible future research on SB10:

1. What types of information did/will parents of students with disabilities use to conduct their research on private school teacher quality, curriculum, and values/culture?
2. How do parents of students with disabilities measure satisfaction with the individual attention provided to their child? What are the relevant factors?
3. How and to what degree does SB10 staff participate in professional learning related to instructing students with disabilities?
4. What special education programs and/or services are provided at SB10 private schools?
5. How do SB10 private schools report to the state legislature academic progress of students with disabilities and verify data accuracy/validity of such data?
6. Does disparity exist in the availability of SB10 voucher schools/programs outside the metro Atlanta area?
7. What role, if any, does socio-economic status, race, and bullying play in parents' decisions to enroll their child with a disability in SB10 private schools?

Dissemination

A plan for disseminating and publishing findings of this study is required by the researcher's graduate program. As mandated by the College of Graduate Studies, this dissertation will be released through the typical channels. One of the 15 participants

requested a copy of the study which the researcher will provide once the study is completed. The researcher will also submit a proposal to share results with Georgia Southern University's Graduate Symposium, Georgia Council for Administrators of Special Education, and Georgia Association of Educational Leaders. In addition, the study will be submitted for publication to the *Peabody Journal of Education*, *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, and other journals in the field of special education.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Aligned with literature and overarching research questions

Question	Literature	Research Questions Addressed
1. How satisfied were you with private school?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003); Teske, P., Fitzpatrick, J., & Kaplan, G. (2007); Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006)	1
2. Why did you choose to use a voucher for private school enrollment?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003); Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006); Wolfe, P. J. (2008).	1
3. Why did you choose private over another public school?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003), Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006); Wolfe, P. J. (2008).	1
4. What criteria did you use to select this private school? What were the most influential factor(s)?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003), Teske, P., Fitzpatrick, J., & Kaplan, G. (2007); Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006)	1
5. What resources did you use in selecting a private school?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003); Teske, P., Fitzpatrick, J., & Kaplan, G. (2007); Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006)	1
6. Was the information available on your private school of choice accurate?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003), Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006)	2
7. While attending private school, was your child in a more or less	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003), Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006)	1, 2

restrictive environment in terms of time spent with non-disabled peers?		
8. Why did you choose return your child to public school after using a voucher? Describe all reasons. Which of these was the primary reason?	Greene, J. P. & Forster, G. (2003), Weidner, V. R. & Herrington, C. D. (2006)	2
9. Are there other contributing and positive factors about using a voucher that we have not talked about that you would like to discuss?		
10. Are there other barriers and negative factors about using a voucher that we have not talked about that you would like to discuss?		

Last...Is there anything else aboutthat I have not already asked you?

APPENDIX B

SB10 SURVEY—FORMER PARTICIPANTS

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

Participant Notice 1

3-8-12

Dear Parent:

My name is Charity Roberts. I am a graduate student enrolled in the doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. I am completing this study in partial fulfillment of a degree in P-12 Educational Leadership. My dissertation topic addresses school vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia. The title of the study is: Parent Perceptions of SB10: A Case Study of Parents Who Rescinded Participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. I am interested in analyzing the perceptions of parents who continue participation in the voucher program as well as those who re-enrolled their child with a disability in public school after previously attending a private school using SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship).

The primary goal of this study is to understand both the positive and negative attributes of SB10 from the perspective of parents who chose not to continue participation in a voucher program for students with disabilities. In addition, the survey seeks to understand parents' knowledge of information sources, types of sources available, and use of these sources. This survey has been sent to all possible participants (i.e. parents of students with disabilities in grades 1-12).

The objective of this study is to solicit feedback from parents concerning their perceptions of private schools ability to meet the needs of their child with a disability. In accordance with this objective, the participants are asked to complete a web-based questionnaire via Survey Monkey®. To be eligible for participation, you must be the biological mother or father of a student in grades 1-12 in Georgia with a disability. Your primary language must be English.

Participant Notice 2

There are no known psychological, physical or emotional risks or discomforts expected beyond your normal daily routine for participating in the study. Any results of the study will be reported as parents' perceptions only and no names will be used in the study.

Although there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, this study will provide a better understanding of parent perceptions of school vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia. By participating in this study, you will contribute to the knowledge base of voucher programs and assist policy leaders in developing sound educational policies for students with disabilities in Georgia.

This anonymous questionnaire consists of closed and open-ended questions that will ask for your thoughts and perceptions of your child's experience with his/her SB10 school as well as your child's experiences with his/her public school. You are asked to respond within 10 days of receipt of the questionnaire. The closing date is March 30, 2012. The questionnaire consists of 51 questions in four sections. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

As a research participant, information you provide will be anonymous and you are asked to avoid any references that could be used to identify you, your child, or school(s). No names or other identifiers will be collected in this study unless you agree to be a participant in face-to-face interviews and allow the researcher to review educational records. Data will be maintained in a secure location following completion of the study and all data will be destroyed after three years.

Please note that your completion of this anonymous questionnaire will serve as consent to participate in this study. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you agree to participate, please respond to the questionnaire located in SurveyMonkey®.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact me (Charity Roberts) at (912) 536-5517, or you may contact Dr. Teri Denlea Melton, Dissertation Committee Chairperson, at (912) 478-0510.

For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-478-0843. Your consent to participate in this research is strictly voluntary and you may decline to participate, refuse to answer any question(s), or withdraw anytime during the study without penalty or retribution. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H12087.

Title of Project: Parent Perceptions of SB10: A Case Study of Parents who Rescind Participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program
Principal Investigator: Charity C. Roberts, Statesboro, GA 30460, charityroberts96@gmail.com
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Teri Denlea Melton, P.O. Box 8131, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA 30460, 912-478-0510, tamelton@georgiasouthern.edu

Sincerely,

Charity C. Roberts
Student, Georgia Southern University
charityroberts96@gmail.com
912-536-5517

Dr. Teri A. Melton
Professor, Georgia Southern University
tamelton@georgiasouthern.edu
912-478-0510

1. IMPORTANT: If you only intend to preview the survey please copy/paste this link into your web browser:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JXCM53N>

Do you agree to participate in this online survey?

- YES
 NO

PART I- CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

2. Are you the biological mother or father of a child currently in grades 1-12?

- YES
 NO

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

3. Is English the primary language spoken at home?

- YES
 NO

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

***4. Does your child CURRENTLY attend a private school through SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)?**

- YES
 NO

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

***5. Please select the category that best describes your child's disability:**

- Specific Learning Disability
 Other Health Impairment
 Speech/Language Impairment
 Intellectual Disability
 Autism
 Emotional/Behavior Disorder
 Other

PART II- DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please select the criteria that most closely describes your background.

6. Child's gender:

- MALE
 FEMALE

7. Child's Race:

- CAUCASIAN
 AFRICAN AMERICAN
 HISPANIC
 OTHER

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

8. What is the highest level of education of the child's parent completing the survey?

- 8th Grade or Less
- Some High School
- GED
- High School Diploma
- Vocational School
- Some College
- College Graduate
- Post Graduate

9. This child's family annual income (in dollars) is:

- Under \$40,000
- \$40,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 +

10. Is your child eligible for the Free/Reduced Lunch program?

- YES
- NO

11. List your (survey participant) geographic region of Georgia:

- Metro Atlanta
- Northeast Georgia
- Northwest Georgia
- Middle Georgia
- Southeast Georgia
- Southwest Georgia

PART III - PRIVATE SCHOOL QUESTIONS

The following questions ask for information about the PRIVATE SCHOOL your child attended with the SB10 voucher.

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***12. In each of the following areas, how satisfied were you with the SB10 private school in which your child was previously enrolled? Please rate the following areas:**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Academic quality of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious instruction at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/Culture of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***13. Particular to your child's experiences, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the SB10 private school in the following areas:**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No information available
Individual attention given to your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of services addressing your child's disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic progress your child was making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School's responsiveness to your child's needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***14. Overall, how would you rate your child's experience with the SB10 private school?**

- Very Satisfied
 Satisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Very Dissatisfied
 No Information Available

***15. Choose the reasons you decided to participate in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship from the list below in order of importance (1 = Most Important and 13 = Least Important).**

	1 Most Important	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Least Important
Ability to attend private school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissatisfied with prior public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more individual attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems with other students at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted smaller classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted religious school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted improved morals/values instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private school specialized in child's disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted better discipline/behavior management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more academic progress (general)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more academic progress (inappropriate grouping of students)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more academic progress (student not challenged)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems with teachers/administrators at prior public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>												

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

INFORMATION SOURCES

*** 16. BEFORE enrolling in the SB10 private school, how did you learn about SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)? Select all that apply.**

- Friends/relatives
- Private school informed me
- Public school informed me
- Church/synagogue
- District special education office
- Child's public school teacher
- Newspapers/TV
- Advocacy group(s)
- Web/internet pages
- Georgia Department of Education
- Advertisements

Other (please specify)

*** 17. From your perspective after participating in the voucher, what was the single most VALID/ACCURATE source of information about SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship) that you considered BEFORE your child was enrolled? Please select one.**

- Friends/relatives
- Private school informed me
- Public school informed me
- Church/synagogue
- District special education office
- Child's public school teacher
- Newspapers/TV
- Advocacy group(s)
- Web/internet pages
- Georgia Department of Education
- Advertisements

Other (please specify)

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***18. Who was the primary person who gathered information in order to make the decision about the private school placement prior to enrollment? Please select one.**

- Mother
- Father
- Mother and Father
- Grandparent
- Other relative or caretaker

***19. What kind of SB10 school did your child attend?**

- Private- non-religious
- Private- religious
- Disability specific (i.e. School for Autistic)

***20. How difficult was it for you to locate an eligible private school for your child under SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)?**

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Not too difficult
- Not at all difficult

***21. What factor(s), if any, caused difficulty in locating and applying for an eligible private school under SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)? Please select all that apply.**

- Lack of knowledge of eligible schools
- Cost of tuition
- Distance from home to eligible school
- Lack of available services
- No known factors

***22. About how many private schools did you apply to when making a choice to send your child to an approved SB10 school?**

- One
- Two
- Three or more

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***23. PRIOR to enrollment, what information did you have available to help make your decision about attending a SB10 school? Select all that apply.**

- Academic quality of SB10 school
- Quality of teachers at SB10 school
- SB10 school facilities
- SB10 special education programs offered
- Religious instruction at SB10 school
- Location of SB10 school
- Costs and expenses of SB10 school
- Discipline and safety of SB10 school
- Curriculum at SB10 school
- Class sizes at SB10 school
- SB10 school size
- Transportation options of SB10 school
- Values/Culture of SB10 school
- No information available

***24. PRIOR to enrollment, were you able to get all the information you wanted before making your decision to enroll in a SB10 school?**

- YES
- NO

If NO to question 23

Participants only respond to this question if they answer no to Question 23

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***25. What information were you unable to get before making your decision about school choice PRIOR to enrollment?**

- Academic quality of SB10 school
- Quality of teachers at SB10 school
- SB10 school facilities
- SB10 special education programs offered
- Religious instruction at SB10 school
- Location of SB10 school
- Costs and expenses of SB10 school
- Discipline and safety of SB10 school
- Curriculum at SB10 school
- Class sizes at SB10 school
- SB10 school size
- Transportation options of SB10 school
- Values/Culture of SB10 school

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***26. Please respond YES or NO to the following questions. In making the decision to enroll in a SB10 school, did you...**

	YES	NO
visit any of the SB10 schools you applied to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bring your child visit any of the SB10 schools you applied to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk to the teachers at any of SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk to the principals or administrators at any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk with the parents or students at any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
get brochures or printed information from any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
review any websites to get information from any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
attend any parent meetings to get information from any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***27. Overall, how satisfied were you with the information you had available BEFORE making your decision to enroll in a SB10 school?**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Academic quality of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious instruction at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/Culture of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***28. Overall, what was the single MOST important factor in making the choice to enroll in a SB10 school?**

- Academic quality of SB10 school
- Quality of teachers at SB10 school
- SB10 school facilities
- SB10 special education programs offered
- Religious instruction at SB10 school
- Location of SB10 school
- Costs and expenses of SB10 school
- Discipline and safety of SB10 school
- Curriculum at SB10 school
- Class sizes at SB10 school
- SB10 school size
- Transportation options of SB10 school
- Values/Culture of SB10 school

***29. Did you feel that the private school provided all the services and supports that it stated it would provide?**

- YES
- NO

If NO to question 28

***30. How serious did you perceive the lack of availability of services and supports?**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not too serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't Know

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***31. In your opinion, did the private school staff provide your child adequate support for his/her learning needs?**

- YES
- NO

***32. Did the school report that your child demonstrated behavior problems while enrolled in private school?**

- YES
- NO

***33. If so, how serious were these problems?**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not too serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't Know

***34. Was transporting your child to his/her private school easy or difficult?**

- EASY
- DIFFICULT

***35. How many miles did you travel to transport your child to the SB10 private school?**

- Less than ten miles
- Ten to twenty miles
- Twenty to thirty miles
- More than 30 miles

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***36. Did you pay any tuition or fees ABOVE what is covered by the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship?**

- YES
- NO

***37. How much more tuition and fees did you pay ABOVE what is covered by SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship) ANNUALLY?**

- Less than \$500
- \$500-\$1,000
- \$1,000-\$3,000
- \$3,000-\$5,000
- More than \$5,000

***38. Was it a concern for you that your child did not have an IEP at the private school?**

- YES
- NO

***39. How serious a concern was this?**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not too serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't Know

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***40. To what extent, if any, did your child report negative interactions with other students at his/her private school specifically because of his/her disability?**

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't Know

41. Do you think the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship should continue to be available to disabled children in Georgia or do you think it should be discontinued?

- Continue to be available
- Discontinue

PART IV - PUBLIC SCHOOL QUESTIONS

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***42. After you returned your child to public school, please rank the reasons why you chose to discontinue using the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship.**

1= Most Important

10=Least Important

	Most Important	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Least Important
Academic quality of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/culture of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***43. What kind of school does your child currently attend?**

- Public- neighborhood
- Public-assigned through IEP
- Public- parent choice
- Public- magnet
- Charter school

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***44. In each of the following areas, how satisfied are you with the public school in which your child is currently enrolled? Please rate the following areas:**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No information available
Academic quality of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/Culture of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***45. Particular to your child's experiences, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the public school in the following areas:**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No information available
Individual attention given to your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of services addressing your child's disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic progress your child was making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of school's facilities & equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of your child's teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School's responsiveness to your child's needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***46. Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school your child currently attends?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

***47. Was there anything not asked that you would like to address or explain?**

- YES
- NO

If YES to question 47

***48. Please include any additional responses or explanations you would like to add.**

***49. Do you have any other specific comments you would like to make regarding your perceptions of the SB10 school in which your child was previously enrolled?**

- YES
- NO

If YES to additional comments

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

***50. What specific comments you would like to make regarding your perceptions of the SB10 school in which your child was previously enrolled?**

***51. Your descriptive feedback would be very helpful in understanding private school vouchers for students with disabilities.**

Would you agree to take part in a face-to-face interview with the researcher in order to share more specific and in-depth information regarding SB10?

The interview would take place at a location convenient to the participant and would last a maximum of 45 minutes.

YES

NO

If YES to question 50

***52. If you agree, provide the following contact information:**

Name:	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>
Address 2:	<input type="text"/>
City/Town:	<input type="text"/>
State:	<input type="text"/>
ZIP:	<input type="text"/>
Email Address:	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number:	<input type="text"/>

Link to Current SB10 enrollment survey

Participants are directed to the correct survey link for continued participation.

Please copy/paste the link below in your web browser to continue participation. Your response requires that you answer questions specific for participants who have children CURRENTLY enrolled in a SB10 private school. Your feedback is

SB10 Survey - discontinued participation

very important.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JM3HJGQ>

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is greatly appre...

APPENDIX C

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS FORM

Name of Document: _____

Date Collected: _____

Date of Document: _____

Collected From: _____

Date of Analysis: _____

Contributors	
Construct	Evidence

Barriers	
Construct	Evidence

APPENDIX D

VOUCHERS BY STATE

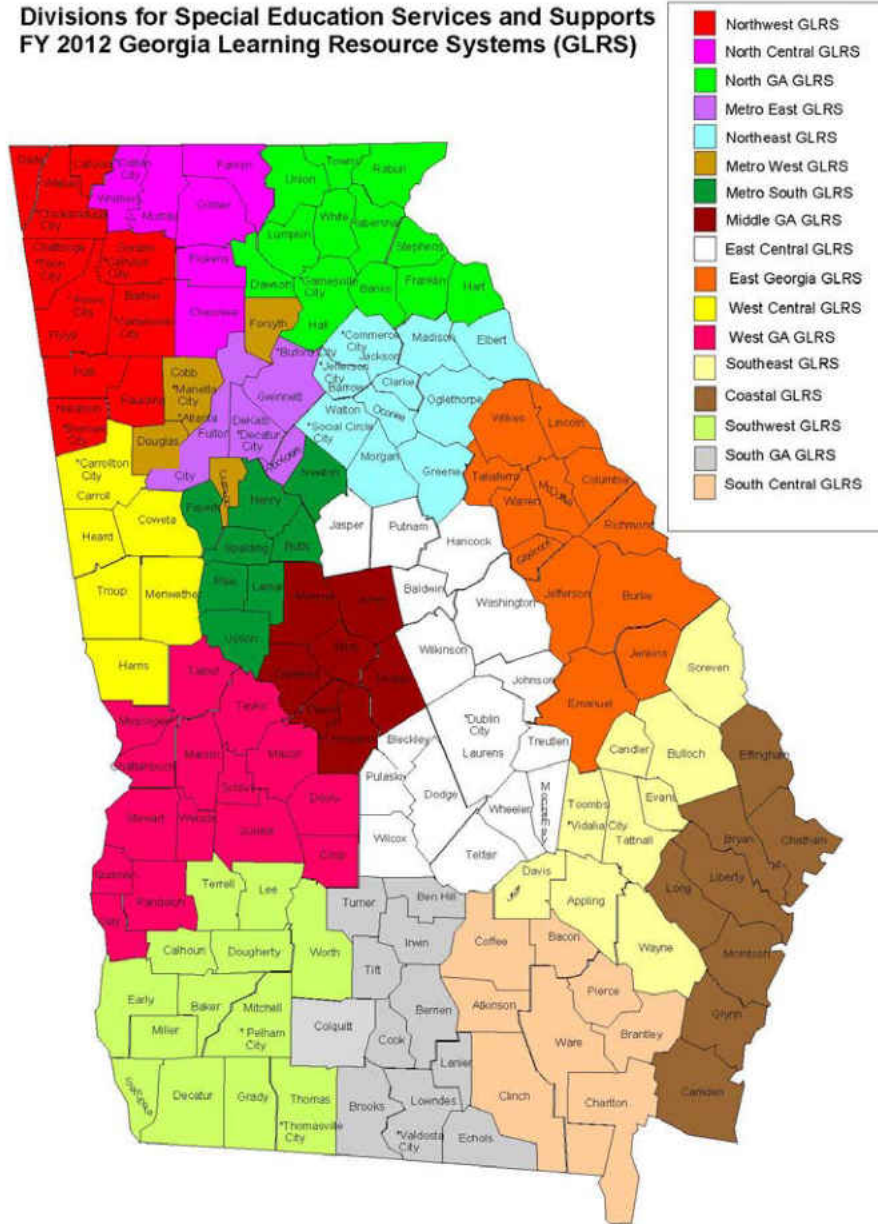
STATE	STATUTE/ PROGRAM	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR	VOUCHER AMOUNT	Cost to the State	CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY	2009-2010 ENROLLEMENT	2009-2010 PRIVATE SCHOOL PARICIPATION	AVERAGE SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT PER STUDENT
FLORIDA	§1002.39 McKay Scholarship Program	1999	\$4,746 to \$19,133	\$138.6 million	Enrollment at Florida public school for all or part of previous year and current IEP.	20,926	959	\$7,144
OHIO	§ Autism Scholarship Program	2004	\$20,000 per student per year maximum or \$7,000 per quarter	\$25.6 million	Enrollment at public school for all or part of previous year and diagnosis of autism by school district	1,500	Unknown	\$15,500

UTAH	§ Carson Smith Scholarship Program	2005	\$3,865.50 or \$6,442.50 per student maximum (based on hours of service)	\$2.6 million	Students do not have to be enrolled in public school or have a current IEP	43	602	\$6,442.50 per student maximum
GEORGIA	§20-2-2110 to §20-2-2118 Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program	2007	\$2,580 to \$15,100	\$7.1 million	Enrollment at public school for all or part of previous year and current IEP.	2,068 (FY 10)	175	Average = \$6,342 (FY 10)

APPENDIX E

SB10 MAP

**Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports
FY 2012 Georgia Learning Resource Systems (GLRS)**



APPENDIX F

MOUSTAKAS' MODIFICATION OF THE STEVICK-COLAIZZI-KEEN METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Moustakas present his version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method, which is constructed from his modification to methods of analysis used by the three authors.

The steps for this are given as follows:

1. Using a phenomenological approach, obtain a full description of your own experience of the phenomenon.
2. From the verbatim transcript of your experience complete the following steps:
 - a. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
 - b. Record all relevant statements.
 - c. List each non-representative, non-overlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meanings of units of the experience.
 - d. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
 - e. Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience. Include verbatim examples.
 - f. Reflect on your own textural description. Through imaginative variation, construct a description of the structures of your experience.
 - g. Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of your experience.
3. From the verbatim transcript of the experience of each of the co-researchers' experiences, complete the above steps a to g.
4. From the individual textural-structural description of all co-researchers' experiences, construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole.

You will see from this how crucial the idea of inter subjectivity is both as a finding of phenomenological research and as a means to the application of phenomenological ideas to social science- or practically any- research question.

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX G

SB10 ENROLLMENT DATA

	Enrolled	Completed	Dropouts	Did not return next year	TOTAL RESCINDED	New by year	Scholarship Total Expended
FY 08	899	825	74		74	899	\$5,417,425
FY 09	1596	1463	133	150	283	697	\$9,294,728
FY 10	2068	1858	210	234	444	472	\$12,641,932
FY 11	2529	2364	165	1000	1165	461	\$16,219,717
Total Rescind by Year			582	1384	1966	2529	\$43,573,802
FY 08-11	Total Unduplicated Count	4421	FY 08-11 Total Percent of Rescinders	44%	Total Average Scholarship Amount Expended on Rescinded SWD FY 08-11		\$19,377,085

Note:

4421 students have enrolled in SB10 at any time

1966 students have dropped out of the program from FY 08 to FY 11

44% of students who participated have rescinded

APPENDIX H

SB10 SURVEY—CURRENT PARTICIPANTS

SB10 Survey - currently use

Participant Notice 1

3-8-12

Dear Parent:

My name is Charity Roberts. I am a graduate student enrolled in the doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. I am completing this study in partial fulfillment of a degree in P-12 Educational Leadership. My dissertation topic addresses school vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia. The title of the study is: Parent Perceptions of SB10: A Case Study of Parents Who Rescinded Participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship. I am interested in analyzing the perceptions of parents who continue participation in the voucher program as well as those who re-enrolled their child with a disability in public school after previously attending a private school using SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship).

The primary goal of this survey is to understand both the positive and negative attributes of SB10 from the perspective of parents who chose to continue participation in a voucher program for students with disabilities. In addition, the survey seeks to understand parents' knowledge of information sources, types of sources available, and use of these sources. This survey has been sent to all possible participants (i.e. parents of students with disabilities in grades 1-12).

The objective of this study is to solicit feedback from parents concerning their perceptions of private schools ability to meet the needs of their child with a disability. In accordance with this objective, the participants are asked to complete a web-based questionnaire via Survey Monkey®. To be eligible for participation, you must be the biological mother or father of a student in grades 1-12 in Georgia with a disability. Your primary language must be English.

Participant Notice 2

There are no known psychological, physical or emotional risks or discomforts expected beyond your normal daily routine for participating in the study. Any results of the study will be reported as parents' perceptions only and no names will be used in the study.

Although there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, this study will provide a better understanding of parent perceptions of school vouchers for students with disabilities in Georgia. By participating in this study, you will contribute to the knowledge base of voucher programs and assist policy leaders in developing sound educational policies for students with disabilities in Georgia.

This anonymous questionnaire consists of closed and open-ended questions that will ask for your thoughts and perceptions of your child's experience with his/her SB10 school as well as your child's experiences with his/her public school. You are asked to respond within 10 days of receipt of the questionnaire. The closing date is March 30, 2012. The questionnaire consists of 51 questions in four sections. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

As a research participant, information you provide will be anonymous and you are asked to avoid any references that could be used to identify you, your child, or school(s). No names or other identifiers will be collected in this study. Data will be maintained in a secure location following completion of the study and all data will be destroyed after three years.

Please note that your completion of this anonymous questionnaire will serve as consent to participate in this study. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you agree to participate, please respond to the questionnaire located in SurveyMonkey®.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact me (Charity Roberts) at (912) 536-5517, or you may contact Dr. Teri Denlea Melton, Dissertation Committee Chairperson, at (912) 478-0510.

For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-

SB10 Survey - currently use

478-0843. Your consent to participate in this research is strictly voluntary and you may decline to participate, refuse to answer any question(s), or withdraw anytime during the study without penalty or retribution. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H12087.

Title of Project: Parent Perceptions of SB10: A Case Study of Parents who Rescind Participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program

Principal Investigator: Charity C. Roberts, Statesboro, GA 30460, charityroberts96@gmail.com

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Teri Denlea Melton, P.O. Box 8131, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA 30460, 912-478-0510, tamelton@georgiasouthern.edu

Sincerely,

Charity C. Roberts
Student, Georgia Southern University
charityroberts96@gmail.com
912-536-5517

Dr. Teri A. Melton
Professor, Georgia Southern University
tamelton@georgiasouthern.edu
912-478-0510

1. IMPORTANT: If you only intend to preview the survey please copy/paste this link into your web browser:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JX273FV>

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- YES
 NO

PART I- CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

2. Are you the biological mother or father of a child currently in grades 1-12?

- YES
 NO

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

SB10 Survey - currently use

3. Is English the primary language spoken at home?

- YES
 NO

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

***4. Does your child CURRENTLY attend a private school through SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)?**

- YES
 NO

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

5. Please select the category that best describes your child's disability:

- Specific Learning Disability
 Other Health Impairment
 Speech/Language Impairment
 Intellectual Disability
 Autism
 Emotional/Behavior Disorder
 Other

PART II- DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please select the criteria that most closely describes your background.

6. Child's gender:

- MALE
 FEMALE

7. Child's Race:

- CAUCASIAN
 AFRICAN AMERICAN
 HISPANIC
 OTHER

SB10 Survey - currently use

8. What is the highest level of education of the child's parent completing the survey?

- 8th Grade or Less
- Some High School
- GED
- High School Diploma
- Vocational School
- Some College
- College Graduate
- Post Graduate

9. This child's family annual income (in dollars) is:

- Under \$40,000
- \$40,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 +

10. Is your child eligible for the Free/Reduced Lunch program in public school?

- YES
- NO

11. List your (survey participant) geographic region of Georgia:

- Metro Atlanta
- Northeast Georgia
- Northwest Georgia
- Middle Georgia
- Southeast Georgia
- Southwest Georgia

PART III - PRIVATE SCHOOL QUESTIONS

The following questions ask for information about the CURRENT private school your child attended with the SB10 voucher.

SB10 Survey - currently use

12. In each of the following areas, how satisfied are you with the SB10 private school in which your child is currently enrolled? Please rate the following areas:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Academic quality of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/Culture of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious Education of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***13. Particular to your child's experiences, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the SB10 private school in the following areas:**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No information available
Individual attention given to your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of services addressing your child's disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic progress your child is making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of school's facilities & equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of your child's teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School's responsiveness to your child's needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - currently use

***14. Overall, how would you rate your child's experience with the SB10 private school?**

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- No Information Available

***15. Choose the reasons you decided to participate in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship in order of importance from the list below (1 = Most Important and 13 = Least Important).**

	1 Most Important	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Least Important
Ability to attend private school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dissatisfied with prior public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more individual attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems with other students at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted smaller classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted religious school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted improved morals/values instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private school specialized in child's disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted better discipline/behavior management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more academic progress (general)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more academic progress (inappropriate grouping of students)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wanted more academic progress (student not challenged)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems with teachers/administrators at prior public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - currently use

INFORMATION SOURCES

*** 16. BEFORE enrolling in the SB10 private school, how did you learn about SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)? Select all that apply.**

- Friends/relatives
- Private school informed me
- Public school informed me
- Church/synagogue
- District special education office
- Child's public school teacher
- Newspapers/TV
- Advocacy group(s)
- Web/internet pages
- Georgia Department of Education
- Advertisements

Other (please specify)

*** 17. What was the single most VALID / ACCURATE source of information about SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)? Please select one.**

- Friends/relatives
- Private school informed me
- Public school informed me
- Church/synagogue
- District special education office
- Child's public school teacher
- Newspapers/TV
- Advocacy group(s)
- Web/internet pages
- Georgia Department of Education
- Advertisements

Other (please specify)

SB10 Survey - currently use

***18. Who was the primary person who gathered information in order to make the decision about the private school placement prior to enrollment? Please select one.**

- Mother (You)
- Father
- Mother and Father
- Grandparent
- Other relative or caretaker

***19. What kind of SB10 school does your child attend?**

- Private- non-religious
- Private- religious
- Disability specific (i.e. School for Autistic)

***20. How difficult was it for you to locate an eligible private school for your child under SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)?**

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Not too difficult
- Not at all difficult

***21. What factor(s), if any, caused difficulty in locating and applying for an eligible private school under SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship)? Please select all that apply.**

- Lack of knowledge of eligible schools
- Cost of tuition
- Distance from home to eligible school
- Lack of available services
- No known factors

***22. About how many private schools did you apply to when making a choice to send your child to an approved SB10 school?**

- One
- Two
- Three or more

SB10 Survey - currently use

***23. PRIOR to enrollment, what information did you have available to help make your decision about attending a SB10 school? Select all that apply.**

- Academic quality of SB10 school
- Quality of teachers at SB10 school
- SB10 school facilities
- SB10 special education programs offered
- Religious instruction at SB10 school
- Location of SB10 school
- Costs and expenses of SB10 school
- Discipline and safety of SB10 school
- Curriculum at SB10 school
- Class sizes at SB10 school
- SB10 school size
- Transportation options of SB10 school
- Values/Culture of SB10 school
- No information available

***24. PRIOR to enrollment, were you able to get all the information you wanted before making your decision to enroll in a SB10 school?**

- YES
- NO

SB10 Survey - currently use

***25. What information were you unable to get before making your decision about school choice PRIOR to enrollment?**

- Academic quality of SB10 school
- Quality of teachers at SB10 school
- SB10 school facilities
- SB10 special education programs offered
- Religious instruction at SB10 school
- Location of SB10 school
- Costs and expenses of SB10 school
- Discipline and safety of SB10 school
- Curriculum at SB10 school
- Class sizes at SB10 school
- SB10 school size
- Transportation options of SB10 school
- Values/Culture of SB10 school

SB10 Survey - currently use

***26. Please respond YES or NO to the following questions. In making the decision to enroll in a SB10 school, did you...**

	YES	NO
visit any of the SB10 schools you applied to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bring your child visit any of the SB10 schools you applied to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk to the teachers at any of SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk to the principals or administrators at any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk with the parents or students at any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
get brochures or printed information from any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
review any websites to get information from any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
attend any parent meetings to get information from any SB10 schools?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - currently use

***27. Overall, how satisfied were you with the information you had available BEFORE making your decision to enroll in a SB10 school?**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Academic quality of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious instruction at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SB10 school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/Culture of SB10 school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - currently use

***28. Overall, what was the single MOST important factor in making the choice to enroll in a SB10 school?**

- Academic quality of SB10 school
- Quality of teachers at SB10 school
- SB10 school facilities
- SB10 special education programs offered
- Religious instruction at SB10 school
- Location of SB10 school
- Costs and expenses of SB10 school
- Discipline and safety of SB10 school
- Curriculum at SB10 school
- Class sizes at SB10 school
- SB10 school size
- Transportation options of SB10 school
- Values/Culture of SB10 school

***29. Do you feel that the private school provides all the services and supports that it stated it would provide?**

- YES
- NO

***30. How serious do you perceive the lack of availability of services and supports?**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not too serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't Know

SB10 Survey - currently use

***31. In your opinion, does the private school staff provide your child adequate support for his/her learning needs?**

- YES
- NO

***32. Has the private school reported that your child demonstrates behavior problems while enrolled?**

- YES
- NO

***33. If so, how serious are these problems?**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not too serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't Know

***34. Is transporting your child to his/her private school easy or difficult?**

- EASY
- DIFFICULT

***35. How many miles do you travel to transport your child to the SB10 private school?**

- Less than ten miles
- Ten to twenty miles
- Twenty to thirty miles
- More than 30 miles

SB10 Survey - currently use

***36. Do you pay any tuition or fees ABOVE what is covered by the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship?**

- YES
- NO

***37. How much more tuition and fees do you pay ABOVE what is covered by SB10 (Georgia Special Needs Scholarship) ANNUALLY?**

- Less than \$500
- \$500-\$1,000
- \$1,000-\$3,000
- \$3,000-\$5,000
- More than \$5,000

***38. Is it a concern for you that your child does not have an IEP at the private school?**

- YES
- NO

***39. How serious a concern is this?**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not too serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't Know

SB10 Survey - currently use

***40. To what extent, if any, has your child reported negative interactions with other students at his/her private school specifically because of his/her disability?**

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't Know

41. Do you think the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship should continue to be available to disabled children in Georgia or do you think it should be discontinued?

- Continue to be available
- Discontinue

PART IV - PUBLIC SCHOOL QUESTIONS

***42. In each of the following areas, how satisfied were you with the public school in which your child was previously enrolled? Please rate the following areas:**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No information available
Academic quality of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public school facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public special education programs offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costs and expenses of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline and safety of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Class sizes at public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public school size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation options of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values/Culture of public school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SB10 Survey - currently use

***43. Particular to your child's experiences, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the previous public school in the following areas:**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No information available
Individual attention given to your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of services addressing your child's disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic progress your child was making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication with school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School's responsiveness to your child's needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***44. Overall, how satisfied were you with the public school your child previously attended?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

***45. Was there anything not asked that you would like to address or explain?**

- YES
- NO

If YES to question 44

***46. Please include any additional responses or explanations you would like to add.**

SB10 Survey - currently use

***47. Do you have any other specific comments you would like to make regarding your perceptions of the SB10 school in which your child was previously enrolled?**

YES

NO

If YES to additional comments

***48. What specific comments you would like to make regarding your perceptions of the SB10 school in which your child was previously enrolled?**



Link to Previous SB10 enrollment survey

Participants are directed to the correct survey link for continued participation.

Please copy/paste the link below in your web browser to continue participation. Your response requires that you answer questions specific for participants who have children PREVIOUSLY enrolled in a SB10 private school. Your feedback is very important.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JMXK8Y5>

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is greatly appre...

APPENDIX I

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-478-0843		Veazey Hall 2021
		P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Charity Roberts
Dr. Teri Melton

CC: Charles E. Patterson
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Initial Approval Date: 10/10/11

Expiration Date: 9/20/12

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H12087** and titled "**Parent Perceptions of SB10: A case study of mothers who rescinded participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program.**" it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable. You are authorized to enroll up to a maximum of 400 subjects.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. Total project approval on this application may not exceed 36 months. If additional time is required, a new application may be submitted for continuing work. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX J

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD AMENDMENT APPROVAL 1

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-478-5465		Veazy Hall 2021
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	P. O. Box 8005 Statesboro, GA 30460-8005

To: Charity Roberts
Dr. Teri Melton

Cc: Charles E. Patterson
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: 01/30/12

Original Approval Date: 10/10/11

Expiration Date: 09/20/12

Subject: Status of Research Study Modification Request – Exempt

After a review of your Research Study Modification Request on research project numbered **H12087** and titled **“Parent Perceptions of SB10: A Case Study of Mothers Who Rescinded Participation in the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program.”** it appears that your research modification does not change the conditions of your previous exemption. The research involves activities that do not require approval by the Institutional Review Board according to federal guidelines.

Modification Description: Increased the potential participants and removed specific learning disabilities criteria.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research is exempt from IRB approval. You may proceed with the proposed research.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX K

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD AMENDMENT APPROVAL 2

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-478-5465		Veazey Hall 2021
		P. O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460-8005

To: Charity Roberts
Teri Melton

Cc: Charles E. Patterson
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: March 8, 2012

Expiration Date: September 20, 2012

Subject: Status of Research Study Modification Request

After a review of your Research Study Modification Request on research project numbered **H12087** and titled **"Parent Perceptions of SB10: A Case Study of Parents Who Rescinded the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship."** your request for modification appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your modification request to increase the number of participants by changing the "mother" criteria to "parent," the "elementary" criteria to "grades 1-12," and changing appendices E, F, H, J, and L.

The expiration date of your original application approval remains in effect. If additional time beyond your expiration date is required to complete your data collection and analysis and there have been no further changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. If your project will require approval beyond 36 months from the initial approval date, a new submission and review will be required. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, another change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary; you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to provide the final information to allow your file to be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer