



Summary Report for School Choice Market Survey conducted by the Florida School Choice Resource Center at Nova Southeastern University in December, 2006 to February, 2007

Purpose

As subcontracted by the Florida Department of Education for the Voluntary Public School Choice grant, the Florida School Choice Resource Center at Nova Southeastern University conducted a survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather information about the strategies and practices currently employed by Florida's school districts to market school choice options.

The primary objective of this survey was to ascertain the most common and most productive strategies for informing the parents, students and community about school choice within Florida's school districts. Another goal was to determine which districts were not marketing choice to all district populations and provide technical assistance. It was also a goal of this survey to identify the district staff titles of those responsible for marketing school choice and create a data base for networking among the districts. This will facilitate the sharing of information and materials related to marketing of school options. Districts were asked to submit samples of marketing materials, as well, and electronic access to these samples will be provided.

Additional areas of inquiry included: advertising methods and materials being used, budget allocations for marketing school choice, use of marketing professionals, community organization involvement. All information obtained will be made available to all school districts so they can evaluate their own practices and possibly optimize the impact of their marketing strategies. If determined that a district is not marketing school choice, technical assistance will be provided.

Process

All 67 of the Florida districts were asked to participate in this survey online at www.schoolofed.nova.edu/choice/school_choice_marketing_survey.htm. All but two of the districts responded. When called, representatives from Franklin and Columbia County school districts stated that they were not aware of any marketing practices occurring specifically for school choice. Both stated that information about NCLB choice was shared through newsletters and parent events. These districts were not included in the survey tally since the actual survey was not completed, but they were included when looking at trends and making overall observations.

Some smaller districts found that many of the survey questions were not applicable and, regrettably, a survey design flaw frustrated them when they tried to submit their answers. Surveys with numerous "no" answers wouldn't submit until not applicable was chosen in the pull down menu. The survey was

modified and new directions were designed and phone interviews were done when requested. These issues may have caused some inaccurate responses. However, some general trends were easily discernible.

Survey Respondents

There are vast variances in size among Florida’s school districts and there is a correlating variance in school choice options and marketing practices. Another variance among districts was found in staff assignment of school choice responsibilities. Locating the appropriate individual to complete the survey and getting a complete profile of a district’s school choice practices provided a challenge. Therefore, the data collected may not be truly comprehensive but represents the scope of understanding of the respondent.

Grid One identifies the respondent districts and identifies who completed the survey. The variance in job title is easily recognized and implies the common practices for offering school choice within Florida.

| District | Name | Title | Email Address |
|-----------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Alachua | Martha Dean | Program Services Specialist | deanme@sbac.edu |
| Baker | Susan W. Voorhees | Director of Accountability and Special Programs | svoorhees@baker.k12.fl.us |
| Bay | Kathy Israelson | School Choice Coordinator | israeka@bay.k12.fl.us |
| Bradford | Rebecca Reddish | Director of Curriculum | reddish_r@firn.edu |
| Brevard | Vicki L. Mace | Director, School Choice | macev@brevard.k12.fl.us |
| Broward | Frank Vodolo | Executive Director - Education Programs | fvodolo@browardschools.com |
| Calhoun | Greg Jones | Assistant Superintendent | jones_g5@firn.edu |
| Charlotte | April Prestipino | Director of Student Services | April_prestipino@ccps.k12.fl.us |
| Citrus | Renna Jablonskis | Supervisor of Student Services | jablonskizr@citrus.k12.fl.us |
| Clay | Denise Adams | Assistant Superintendent for Instruction | dadams@mail.clay.k12.fl.us |
| Collier | Dale Johnson | NCLB Coordinator | johnsod2@collier.k12.fl.us |
| DeSoto | Robert A. Hrstka | Director of Student Services | robert.hrstka@desoto.k12.fl.us |
| Dixie | Dennis Bennett | Superintendent | dennisbennett@dixie.k12.fl.us |
| Duval | Sally Hague | Director, School Choice | hagues@educationcentral.org |
| Escambia | Dawn Ramirez | School Choice Coordinator | dramirez@escambia.k12.fl.us |
| Flagler | Bette Lathan | Title I Director | lathanb@flagler.k12.fl.us |
| Gadsden | Audrey Lewis-Potter | Parent Services Coordinator | Lewis_a07@firn.edu |
| Gilchrist | Mary Bennett | Director for Special Programs | bennettm@mygcsd.org |
| Glades | Deborah Pressley | Director of Curriculum Services | debbie.pressley@gladesschools.org |
| Gulf | Bill Carr | Assistant Superintendent | bcarr@gulf.k12.fl.us |
| Hamilton | FSCRRRC staff/Brenda Gramham | Title I Coordinator | by phone interview |
| Hardee | FSCRC staff/Dennis G. Jones | superintendent | by phone |
| Hendry | Tom Conner | Superintendent | conner_t01@firn.edu |
| Hernando | David Schoelles | Secondary Curriculum Specialist | schoelles_d@hcsb.k12.fl.us |

| District | Name | Title | Email Address |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Highlands | Patricia A. Landress | Coordinator, Elementary and Federal Programs | landresp@highlands.k12.fl.us |
| Hillsborough | Pansy Houghton | Supervisor | pansy.houghton@sdhc.k12.fl.us |
| Holmes | Gwen Young | Title I Administrator | youngg@hdsb.org |
| Indian River | Charlene Tardi | Director of Alternative Programs | charlene.tardi@indian-river.k12.fl.us |
| Jackson | Frank E Waller | Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Education | waller_f@firn.edu |
| Jefferson | Gloria A Heath | Director Student Services/NCLB Programs | heath_g@firn.edu |
| Lafayette | Betina Hurst | Director of Assessment, Curriculum & Technology | bhurst@lafayette.k12.fl.us |
| Lake | Harry Fix | Director Of Growth Planning | fixh@lake.k12.fl.us |
| Lee | Leila M. Muvdi | Director/Student Assignment | leilamm@leeschools.net |
| Leon | Lawanda O'brian | Director of School Choice Programs | o'brianl@mail.leon.k12.fl.us |
| Levy | Nan Thornqvist | Supplemental Education Services Coordinator | thornqn@levy.k12.fl.us |
| Liberty | Sue Summers | Director of Instruction | summers_g@firn.edu |
| Madison | Gwendolyn T. Hubbard | Director of Federal Programs | hubbarg@madison.k12.fl.us |
| Manatee | Sheryl Riker | School Choice Specialist | rikers@manateeschools.net |
| Marion | Kevin Christian | Public Relations Officer | kevin.christian@marion.k12.fl.us |
| Martin | Henry A. Salzler | Assistant Superintendent | salzleh@martin.k12.fl.us |
| Miami Dade | Douglas Phifer | Director, Marketing and Special Projects | dphifer@dadeschools.net |
| Monroe | Eleanor Garcia | Title I Director | Eleanor.Garcia@KeysSchools.com |
| Nassau | Sharyl W. Wood | Executive Director of Administrative Services | sharyl.wood@nassau.k12.fl.us |
| Okaloosa | Jeff Scroggins | Director, CHOICE Institutes | scrogginsc@mail.okaloosa.k12.fl.us |
| Okeechobee | Mary Hurley | Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services | hurleym@okee.k12.fl.us |
| Orange | Evelyn A. Chandler | Director, School Choice Services | chandle@ocps.net |
| Osceola | Dr. Sonia Vazquez Esposito | Coordinator of Charter Schools and Educational Choices | espositos@osceola.k12.fl.us |
| Palm Beach | Mary R. Vreeland | Director, Choice Programs | mvreeland@palmbeach.k12.fl.us |
| Pasco | Patti J. Miller | Grant Resource Specialist for School Choice | pmiller260@pasco.k12.fl.us |
| Pinellas | Jim Madden | Director of Unitary Status Implementation | maddenj@pcsb.org |
| Polk | Carolyn Finch | Senior Director of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools | carolyn.finch@polk-fl.net |
| Putnam | Joe Warren | Director of Student Services | jwarren@putnamschools.org |
| Saint Lucie | Michelle Jerger | Director | jergerm@stlucie.k12.fl.us |
| Santa Rosa | Carol S. Calfee | Director of Federal Programs | CalfeeC@mail.santarosa.k12.fl.us |
| Sarasota | William A. Storms Jr. | Supervisor, Student Assignment | william_storms@sarasota.k12.fl.us |
| Seminole | Leslie Reilly | Choices Coordinator | leslie_reilly@scps.k12.fl.us |
| St. Johns | Sallyanne Smith | Director of Special Programs | smiths1@stjohns.k12.fl.us |
| Sumter | Debbie Moffitt | Director of Elementary Education | moffitd@sumter.k12.fl.us |

| District | Name | Title | Email Address |
|------------|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Suwannee | Cheryl Mae Brinson | Federal Programs Coordinator | cbrinson@suwannee.k12.fl.us |
| Taylor | Wanda Kemp | Director of Instruction/Federal Programs | wanda.kemp@taylor.k12.fl.us |
| Volusia | Peggy Hildebrand | NCLB Coordinator | mhildebr@volusia.k12.fl.us |
| Wakulla | Beth O'Donnell | Assistant Superintendent for Instruction | odonnellb@wakulla.k12.fl.us |
| Walton | Marsha Pugh | Supervisor of Instruction | pughm@walton.k12.fl.us |
| Washington | Olin Gilbert | Coordinator of Student Services and Special Programs | Gilbert_O@firn.edu |

General Observations from Survey Results

As might be expected, larger districts, as identified by yellow or red in **Grid Two**, generally offer a greater number of options, allocate larger amounts of money and use a wider variety of marketing strategies. In most cases, the fewer the choice options, the less marketing is conducted. However, **all Florida school districts** disseminate information about NCLB options in some way. Direct parent mailings and/or school and district websites are primary strategies for informing parents about NCLB choice options within the smaller districts (identified as green or no highlight in **Grid Two**). Through follow up phone calls, three of these smaller districts reported that they disseminate information about attending programs offered by neighboring districts, with whom inter-district agreements exist.

Where offering choice is a district commitment, there is staff designated for the one or more of the following responsibilities: facilitating the development of options, providing parent/family/student services, coordinating transportation and related services and/or tracking data related to executing school choice. Since these responsibilities may be divided among different staff, they may conduct different marketing practices that are not always coordinated. In approximately half of the districts there is a separate staff member to oversee the NCLB required options, usually connected to Title I compliance. In follow-up phone conversations, it was found that communication with parents about NCLB options through mailings, phone calls, school site events was not seen as marketing school choice.

In most districts, efforts are made to reach all families within all of the district's populations. The districts that are involved in the VPSC grant as mentor/mentee districts consistently provide a range of marketing strategies regardless of size. It also appears from these results that the mentor/mentee and the large urban districts make efforts to inform all populations through community outreach, language interpretation services, translated written materials, and targeted media use.

Depending of the type of school choice a district offers (NCLB requirements, open choice, controlled choice or combination) the marketing strategies vary. Marketing strategies also vary if charter schools, magnet schools and career academies are offered as school choice within the district. This was ascertained by identifying the districts with the broadest array of marketing strategies and visiting their websites where choice options are identified. Follow up calls were made where information on the website was limited to determine which school choice options are available. It became evident that the type of school choice offered, the number of schools involved in the choice programs, and the number of Title I schools within a district all impact the marketing practices.

Financial allocations vary in accordance with the district size and the range of choice school options available and affected the type of marketing practices used. Most districts use a combination of one or more of the following: district allocations, Title I funds, VPSC Grant allocations, community

contributions, and/or fund raising activities to support marketing cost. In districts with significant percentages of Title I schools, the requirements to offer school choice to students in underperforming schools influenced the marketing budget and practices. While smaller districts relied heavily on school and district websites, newsletters, home mailings and school-based parent activities, larger districts employ media more extensively to address both the required NCLB choice options (school reassignment or SES services) and the voluntary school choice options like charters, magnets and career academies. Home schooling, virtual schools, and private school choices are rarely included in the media advertisements but are sometimes listed on websites and in parent mailings.

The array of options listed below in represent the most commonly used strategies and indicates the relationship between size and the number of strategies. It also illustrates that mentor/mentee districts, with two exceptions, offered of marketing approaches regardless of size.

Grid Two : Most Common Marketing Strategies (Based on 65 districts) **Green** = Mentor/mentee districts with under 40 schools, **Yellow** = Districts with over 40 school, **Red**= Mentor/mentee districts with over 40 schools **Grey**=Mentor/mentee districts with over 100 schools.

| District | News- letter | District Mailings | School Mailings | Website | News- paper | Parent Center Events | TV | School Choice Fair | Radio | Promotional Items |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| Alachua | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Baker | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Bay | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Bradford | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
| Brevard | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| Broward* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Calhoun | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Charlotte | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Citrus | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Clay | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Collier | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| DeSoto | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Dixie | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Duval* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Escambia | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Flagler | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Gadsden | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Gilchrist | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No |
| Glades | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Gulf | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Hamilton | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Hardee | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Hendry | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |

| District | News- letter | District Mailings | School Mailings | Website | News- paper | Parent Center Events | TV | School Choice Fair | Radio | Promotional Items |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------|----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| Highlands | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Hillsborough* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Holmes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Indian River | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Jackson | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Jefferson | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Lafayette | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Lake | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Lee | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Leon | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Levy | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Liberty | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Madison | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Manatee | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Marion | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Martin | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Miami Dade * | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Monroe | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Nassau | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Okaloosa | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Okeechobee | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Orange* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Osceola | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Palm Beach* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Pasco | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Pinellas* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Polk* | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Putnam | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Saint Lucie | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Santa Rosa | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Sarasota | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Seminole | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| St. Johns | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| Sumter | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Suwannee | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Taylor | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

| District | News-letter | District Mailings | School Mailings | Website | News-paper | Parent Center Events | TV | School Choice Fair | Radio | Promotional Items |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Wakulla | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Walton | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Washington | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No |
| Yes answers | 53 | 51 | 48 | 49 | 48 | 40 | 28 | 27 | 23 | 23 |
| No answers | 12 | 14 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 25 | 37 | 38 | 42 | 42 |

Staff Responsible for Marketing School Choice

There is great variance among the Florida districts as to who is assigned responsibility for school choice. It was clear that in many of the larger districts, multiple staff members share various responsibilities for offering, managing, marketing and tracking data for school choice. Since NCLB requires that school choice be offered to students in persistently lower performing schools, some responsibilities often are delegated to the Title I staff or Projects and Grants departments. A list of contacts with titles and emails was obtained to create a database for ongoing communication and networking (**Grid One**). This grid identifies the respondents only. Below is a list of job titles that were also cited as having some level of responsibility for school choice. These staff members may also be involved in marketing some types of school choice. This very large range of titles makes communication and networking about school choice difficult at a state level. With turnover in personnel and frequent realignment of job responsibilities, an up-to-date contact list is difficult to maintain.

Table One

Others responsible for school choice (not survey respondents)

- Director of Title I
- Manager, Student Assignment
- Director or Supervisor, Charter Schools
- Executive Director or Director School Choice
- Coordinator or General Director or Senior Director or Director or Specialist or Manager of Student Services
- Executive Director or Director or Coordinator Federal Projects
- Director Student Services
- Executive Director or Director or Coordinator, No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- Supervisor or Coordinator Student Services
- Executive Director or Director or Coordinator, Federal Projects
- Director Student Services
- Executive Director or Director or Coordinator No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- Supervisor or Coordinator School Choice
- Coordinator or General Director or Senior Director or Director or Specialist or

Manager, Charter Schools
Executive Director or Director or Coordinator, Parent Services
Coordinator, Choice Technology Pupil Placement and Support programs
Supervisor, Grants and Research - Officer or Coordinator, Student Assignment
Director or Supervisor, Planning, Policy, and Program Evaluation
Manager or Project Manager or Executive Director, Federal Projects
Director, Charter Schools - Executive Director or Director, Unitary Status
Implementation
Director, Student Assessment

The variances in titles and distribution of responsibilities among staff within each district made obtaining inclusive information about school choice marketing difficult in this online format. District visits or interviews that include all staff members involved with school choice might be the most effective means of ascertaining the full scope of school choice marketing and information sharing strategies employed.

Types of media used

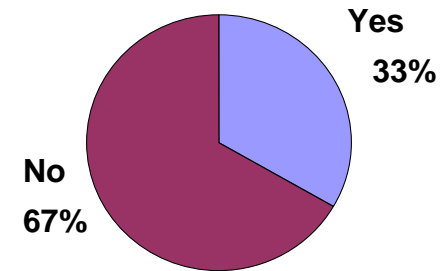
Use of media varied considerably across Florida districts. District size and the number of school choice options seemed to be the major factors in the different media used. Radio and TV were used consistently in larger districts and a number of mid sized districts. If radio and TV used in larger districts with multiple ethnic populations, marketing ads are translated for the largest population and use the media stations serving these groups. Later in the report the translation of marketing materials will be used as one indicator that district are making an effort to reach all the families in their service areas. While there are some districts where translation is not indicated, in most areas of Florida language can create a barrier to reaching and informing families.

One question that was not asked was whether they use the local theatres to inform families and students about school choice. Six larger urban districts put the use of theatre ads under the “other” category in the media section. Four of these districts offer the theater ads in more than one language.

Radio

There were 23 of 65 districts surveyed that use radio for marketing school choice. The most common type was local AM/FM stations. However, 7 district also share information on public broadcasting networks and 6 use school or university radio stations. The large urban districts consistently reported using radio announcement on multiple stations, in more than one language. Further inquiry into what languages are employed in media advertisement and determining the effectiveness in reaching various populations may be needed.

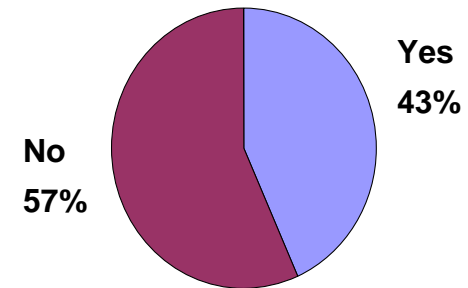
Radio Station



Television:

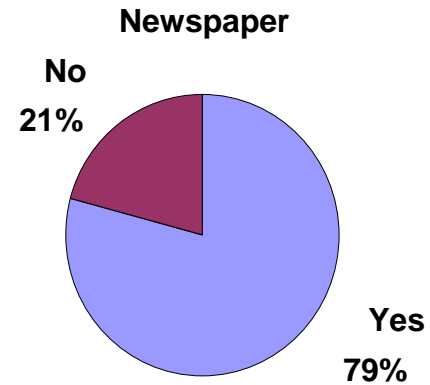
There were 8 of 65 districts that reported using television ads or announcements to convey information about school choice. In all but 9 instances, the same districts that used radio also employed TV marketing. There were 2 districts that do not use radio but have announcements on local television stations. There were 3 respondents that use radio only. Local network affiliate stations were the most common vehicle for spreading information. It was usually only in the large districts that the local cable and/or public broadcasting were used. Two counties reported using only public broadcasting

TV Station



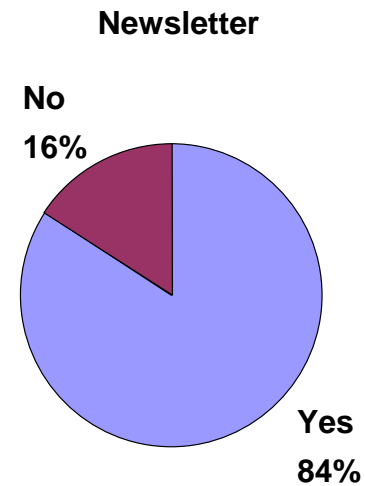
Newspapers:

A strong majority of districts use city and community newspapers to inform families and students about school programs and to market the options available. There were 49 districts that cited as using city newspapers, 58 use community newspapers and 15 districts that use their widely distributed district newspapers to reach student, parents and stakeholders. The majority used a combination of two or more newspapers. **The use of newspapers was frequently sited as one of the top three most effective means of marketing school choice**



Newsletters:

A strong majority of districts (58) utilize newsletters, with respondents, 24 using only school newsletters to market school choice. Eleven (11) market school choice only in district newsletters and 24 use both print advertising and communication media. Further investigation into how these are distributed and whether recipients use them to get information about school choice may be needed.



Types of Media Used (continued)

Visual Advertising

Billboards, public and school bus, and van signs are used primarily in the largest districts (8 total) and vehicle or stationary signs were not cited as one of the most effective methods use by any district.

Websites

Forty nine (49) districts use their websites to present their school choice options and many school websites refer to some type of school choice options. The exceptions were those 13 districts that have less than two schools at each grade level. In most of these 13 districts, choice information was given out by individually dealing with students' families to comply with NCLB requirements through letters mailed to the home and school site parent events.

By conducting follow-up phone calls, it was ascertained that the effectiveness of websites for reaching the majority of the families that might benefit from information about choice was not being determined by tracking either hits or referrals. None of the districts cited the website as one of the three most effective marketing methods.

Parent and Community Events

School-site and District-wide School Choice Fairs

Many districts reported using fairs to advertise the educational options in their districts. The majority use school-site fairs. Frequently, high schools offer career fairs to help students determine the high school major/minors, academy program or smaller learning community they wish select. A large number of elementary school fairs provide information about the in-district options for student including charter and magnet programs.

Parent and Parent Center Events

Most districts with more than 20 schools have some type of parent information service, either by auto phone calling, online services or through parent resource/information centers. There are 12 districts with 40 or more schools that have parent information or parent resource centers. Often this is an office within the district office or at one of the centralized schools. In districts with over 100 schools there is at least one stand-alone parent assistance facility and often satellite locations within the larger districts. These centers are designed to be the hub of the school choice marketing practices . They may also be charged with providing direct assistance to families seeking initial pupil placement or searching for school choice alternatives. The staffing, services and purpose of these centers varies and so do the marketing responsibilities and practices.

The variance of parent support centers is another indication that there are considerable differences across the Florida's districts concerning school choice practices. Through this survey it was evident that the types of school choice being offered, marketed and supported is not consistent. Further inquiry into the types and roles of parent centers may be needed and information about their most cost effective and productive practices should be ascertained and shared to help promote more consistency and efficiency for informing parents about school choice.

The majority of districts reported having some type of parent events. Due to the wording of the survey question, there may have been some confusion about parent center events and school or district hosted parent event. Since districts responded yes to this question when they do not have an established

parent center further inquiry to clarify the difference between center versus school and district events might be helpful. One third of the districts responded that they did not host any parent center events.

The most commonly reported parent events are open houses. Events related to sharing food and information, were also identified by a slight majority of those answering “yes” to hosting parent center events. There are 12 districts that cited offering classes of some type for parents and 8 responded that they offer child centered activities where school choice information is shared.

Community Partnerships:

Approximately one-third of the districts reported partnering with community organizations in some way to reach the families within their region with information about school choice. Churches were cited most frequently as the vehicle for community outreach. Rotary/Kwianis and civic organizations. Boys and Girls Clubs were also identified as partners. YWCA/YMCAs and community recreation and sports organizations were also cited by a small number of districts.

Kiosks:

Booths for disseminating information within mall, libraries, social service agencies and civic centers are being used in only 9 of the Florida districts.

Promotional Items:

About one-third of the districts reported using promotional items to raise awareness about school choice. The most common items used were: Pens/pencils, tote bags, calendars, cups, rulers, key chains and note pads. One district uses luggage tags and mouse pads, as well. These items are most commonly given out at community and sports events, district meetings, open houses, and school choice fairs. A few (6 districts) cited this methods of advertising as one of their three most effective.

Home Mailings:

Mailing brochures, newsletter, flyers and pamphlets sent to the homes within the service areas were **the most common marketing practices** across the state and was **most frequently reported as one of the most effective marketing practices** to market school choice. A template for developing these promotional materials can be found on the website at www.schoolofed.nova.edu/choice along with samples from some of the Florida school districts. Some of the materials being used were sent in with the survey as samples and will be submitted with this report. Over two-thirds of the districts reported mailing from the district level and equal number mail information items from the schools. Only 10 districts reported home mailings were done to communicate with enrolled students’ families when a school is identified as lower performing. This number is consistent with the districts who offer only SES support for failing schools since they do not have enough schools to offer relocation and do not usually have inter-district agreements. Some districts mailed information only to the enrolled students’ mailing lists. About one-third mail information about school choice to the whole service areas.

Budget and Use of Marketing Funds

Contracting Marketing Companies:

Only 9 school district reported contracting with professional marketing service to provide information on school choice. All of these were larger districts.

District Marketing Department:

There are 8 districts that have established separate marketing departments with full-time staff. Within these districts, the range of marketing strategies is greater. All of these districts have budgets greater than \$ 5,000.00. Three (3)of these districts hired professional marketing services to help them develop a plan and design materials for marketing school choice.

Advertising Budget for School Choice:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| \$ 0- 500.00 | 26 | districts |
| 501- 1000.00 | 7 | “ |
| 1001- 2000.00 | 2 | “ |
| 2001- 3000.00 | 6 | “ |
| 3001- 4000.00 | 0 | “ |
| 4001- 5000.00 | 3 | “ |
| 5000- and above | 12 | “ |

There is relationship in the degree of marketing conducted and the budget allocation for that purpose. By cross-referencing the districts with the larger budgets, it was also realized that they are the districts with a considerable percentage of Title I schools and all have more than 50 schools. Where controlled or open enrollment school choice are offered there is a broader range of options and an increase in the practice of either hiring marketing companies or having designated marketing departments and personnel at the district level.

Sources of funding:

Primary funding source for school choice marketing is through district allocations. However, over half of the districts use Title I funds and all but two of the Voluntary Public School Choice mentor/mentee sites applied some of the award to marketing school choice. Only three districts reported using fundraising and donations. Three sites use other (unspecified) grant funds. The size of the district and the need to service multiple demographic populations seems to influence the degree and type of marketing conducted. Media is most commonly and most extensively used in large multicultural districts.

Most effective marketing practices

The following were cited as the most effective marketing methods:

- **District and school mailing** were named by over half of the districts as one of their three most effective marketing methods.
- **Newsletters and newspapers** were identified as one of the three most effective marketing practices by a majority, as well.
- **Parent center events and school and district choice fairs** were chosen by approximately one-fourth of the districts as one of their three most effective strategies.

Radio and TV were cited as most effective by only half of the districts that employ those medias for marketing. Promotional items were cited as effective in only a very few cases.

Therefore, it is concluded that mailing to families and distributing information at parent/school or parent/district events is seen to be the most effective reaching and affecting the broadest audience. However, effectiveness of this method of advertising requires addressing language barriers. Most districts translate materials into one or more languages. It would be necessary to have significant family and parent feedback to determine if the perception of effectiveness cited by the respondents is accurate.

Marketing Materials and Media Ads made available in Other Languages

Only 20 districts do not translate their written or media information for marketing school choice into at least one other language. The vast majority of districts translate either/or written materials, phone messages and/or media ads into Spanish. There were 8 districts that translate school choice materials into Haitian/Creole. Additionally, 4 translate some school choice materials into Portuguese. Other languages used for school choice materials that were identified by one or more districts include Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, Ukrainian, and Russian.

Possible Conclusions to be drawn

The clearest message from the survey results is that marketing school choice is directly related to the amount of school choices being offered and the commitment of the district to offer school choice. This conclusion was reached by looking at the budgets, dedicated personnel, range of strategies employed and promoting choice on school and district websites. Grid Two clearly represents the range of options and size of districts. The large urban districts in Florida support this conclusion.

An influencing on these conclusions was the lack of consistency in offering school choice within this state. Size is the biggest determinant of school choice options. In larger districts marketing school choice appears to be closely tied to the number of Title I schools. Allocation of Title I funds to marketing school choice, in compliance with NCLB requirements, resulted in efforts to reach all parent populations and may have affected the array of options available. In districts that have been developing a range of voluntary school choice options, such as charters, magnets and career academies, there are more methods of marketing employed. In the districts offering both Title I compliance and the voluntary school choice options, the use of marketing professionals is most common and district office marketing departments also exist.

Districts That May benefit from Technical Assistance

The following grids identify districts that may benefit from technical assistance for marketing school choice. They may find it helpful to be exposed to methods other districts of approximate size, with similar demographics use to market school choice. There were three areas of response on the survey used to identify districts that might benefit from assistance with marketing school choice.

Identified in Grids Three and Four are school districts that:

1. Indicated that they do not employ any methods of marketing school choice.
2. Use one or more of the most commonly used marketing strategies but do not translate materials into other languages
3. Have more than one school at each level and offer school choice options but do not use local media to market school choice.

Grid Three identifies those districts in **green** that did not identify any methods of marketing school choice: identifies those districts in **red** that are using one or more of the most commonly used marketing methods but did not indicate they translate into other languages. These districts might be contacted to determine if the need exist for translated materials. If so, samples and resources could be shared.

Grid Three

| District | Newsletter Type | School Mailings | District Mailings | Parent Center Event Type | Language/s Translated |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Alachua | Not Applicable | No | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Baker | Not Applicable | No | No | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Bay | Not Applicable | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Bradford | School | Yes | Yes | Other | Spanish |
| Brevard | School, District | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Broward | School | Yes | Yes | Parent Classes | Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese |
| Calhoun | Not Applicable | No | No | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Charlotte | School | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish |
| Citrus | School | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish |
| Clay | School | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Collier | School | No | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| DeSoto | School | Yes | No | Open House, Food/Information Events, Child Activities/Information | Spanish |
| Dixie | District | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Duval | District | Yes | Yes | Child Activities/Information | Other |
| Escambia | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Parent Classes, Child Activities/Information | Spanish, Other |
| Flagler | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Child Activities/Information, Other | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Gadsden | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Parent Classes, Child Activities/Information | Spanish |
| Gilchrist | School | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Glades | School, District | No | Yes | Open House | Spanish |
| Gulf | School | Yes | No | Open House | Not Applicable |
| Hamilton | District | No | No | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Hardee | District | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish |
| Hendry | School | Yes | Yes | Open House, Child Activities/Information | Spanish |

| District | Newsletter Type | School Mailings | District Mailings | Parent Center Event Type | Language/s Translated |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Highlands | School | Yes | Yes | Food/Information Events | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Hillsborough | School, District | Yes | Yes | Food/Information Events, Other | Spanish |
| Holmes | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events | Not Applicable |
| Indian River | Not Applicable | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Jackson | School | No | No | Open House | Not Applicable |
| Jefferson | District | No | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Lafayette | Not Applicable | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Lake | School, District | Yes | No | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Lee | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Leon | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish, Other |
| Levy | District | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish |
| Liberty | District | No | No | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Madison | District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Parent Classes, Other | Spanish |
| Manatee | School, District | No | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Marion | District | No | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Martin | School | Yes | No | Open House, Child Activities/Information | Spanish |
| Miami Dade | School, District | No | Yes | Other | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Monroe | School | Yes | No | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Nassau | District | No | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Okaloosa | School | Yes | No | Open House | Spanish |
| Okeechobee | School | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Orange | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Other |
| Osceola | Not Applicable | No | Yes | Food/Information Events | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Palm Beach | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Parent Classes, Child Activities/Information | Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese |

| District | Newsletter Type | School Mailings | District Mailings | Parent Center Event Type | Language/s Translated |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Pinellas | School, District | Yes | Yes | Other | Spanish |
| Polk | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Parent Classes | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Putnam | School | Yes | Yes | Open House | Spanish |
| Saint Lucie | District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Parent Classes | Spanish, Haitian Creole, Other |
| Santa Rosa | School | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Sarasota | School, District | Yes | Yes | Open House, Child Activities/Information | Spanish, Russian, Other |
| Seminole | School, District | Yes | Yes | Other | Spanish |
| St. Johns | Not Applicable | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Sumter | School | Yes | No | Open House, Food/Information Events | Spanish |
| Suwannee | School | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Other | Spanish |
| Taylor | School | Yes | Yes | Open House, Food/Information Events, Parent Classes, Child Activities/Information | Not Applicable |
| Volusia | School, District | Yes | Yes | Other | Spanish |
| Wakulla | Not Applicable | No | Yes | Open House | Not Applicable |
| Walton | School | Yes | Yes | Not Applicable | Spanish |
| Washington | School | Yes | Yes | Open House | Not Applicable |

Grid Four identifies those districts that have more than two schools at each level but do not use any form of media to market school choice. It may be helpful for these districts to have access to samples of media advertisement and public service announcements available in other districts. A list of resources and contact information for those districts willing to share materials could be posted on FDOE, The Florida Public School Choice Consortium and the Florida School Choice Resource Center websites.

Grid Four

| District | Type of Radio Station | Type of TV Station | Newspaper Type | Languages |
|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Baker | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Calhoun | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Flagler | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Spanish, Haitian Creole |
| Jackson | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Lafayette | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Lake | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| St. Johns | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Sumter | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Spanish |

Note: Columbia and Franklin School districts should also be added to this list of district to be contacted to offer technical assistance due to phone interview where district contract state that no specific marketing for school choice was occurring.

What we know from this survey:

- **More marketing practices are in place in districts that offer multiple choice options at every grade level.**
- **Marketing choice is seen as a priority issue in primarily mid size and large districts.**
- **Variety of marketing practices are more prevalent where NCLB requirements are a motivator due to the number of lower performing schools**
- **The degree of marketing conducted, and budget allocation, correlates to indicators of a district's commitment to offering choice. Mentor/Mentee VPSC grant sites show indications of commitment to choice.**
- **District websites clearly promoting choice options correlates to those district conducting the most marketing**
- **Marketing to various ethnic populations by translating materials, using community outreach and target media markets is more prevalent in the larger school districts with numerous Title I schools**

Recommendations for Further Inquiry

Further inquiry could be helpful in designing strategies to assist Florida school districts in offering equitable school choice. Areas of inquiry might include:

- **Effectiveness of marketing efforts in minority communities**
- **Satisfaction level of families and parents**
- **Relationship of marketing choice options and student performance**

