

School Choice and the Future of American Democracy

School Choice and the
Future of American Democracy

Scott Franklin Abernathy

The University of Michigan Press

Ann Arbor

Copyright © by the University of Michigan 2005
All rights reserved
Published in the United States of America by
The University of Michigan Press
Manufactured in the United States of America
⊗ Printed on acid-free paper

2008 2007 2006 2005 4 3 2 1

No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form
or by any means, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise,
without the written permission of the publisher.

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Abernathy, Scott Franklin, 1966–

School choice and the future of American democracy / Scott
Franklin Abernathy.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-472-09901-6 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-472-09901-9 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-472-06901-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-472-06901-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. School choice—United States. 2. Educational vouchers—
United States. 3. Charter schools—United States. 4. Educational
equalization—United States. 5. Education—Political aspects—
United States. I. Title.

LB1027.9.A24 2006
379.1'11'0973—dc22

2005006879

For Sara

In memory of Arthur, Rita, and Russell

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

1 | Faith in the Markets 1

2 | Leaving the Public Schools Behind 21

3 | Over the Principal's Shoulder 49

4 | Charter Schools, Parental Involvement, and the
Public School Principalship 73

5 | The Vote 89

6 | The Personal, the Political, and the Economic 101

Appendix A 117

Appendix B 121

Appendix C 128

Notes 133

References 147

Index 155

Acknowledgments

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MY DISSERTATION ADVISERS: R. Douglas Arnold, Larry M. Bartels, and Jennifer L. Hochschild. At each step of the process, Doug, Larry, and Jennifer guided and often pushed me to go beyond what I thought I could do. Graduate students are, in many ways, the interaction terms of their advisers, combining diverse thoughts and approaches in trying to make something of their own. The care and thoughtfulness of these three individuals have helped make this project much more than would have been possible otherwise and have made me feel very, very fortunate. I owe so much to all of them, but especially to Doug.

I would also like to offer special thanks to Lawrence R. Jacobs of the University of Minnesota and to anonymous reviewers of the manuscript. Their comments and suggestions were crucial in framing the arguments that transformed the dissertation into a book. Any mistakes and omissions are mine alone.

I would like to thank the graduate students, faculty, and staff of the Politics Department at Princeton University for their guidance, suggestions, and assistance over the years. In particular, I would like to thank Jameson Doig, Fred Greenstein, Christopher Mackie, Tali Mendelberg, Nathan Scovronick, Thomas Romer, Christa Scholtz, and Keith Whittington. At the University of Minnesota, I am indebted to pretty much everybody for their help, suggestions, commiseration, and/or encouragement. For specific advice on and suggestions for this project, I would like to thank Christopher Federico, John Freeman, James Farr, Timothy Johnson, Jeffrey Lomonoco, Joanne Miller, Wendy Rahn, and David Samuels.

This research was partially funded through a grant from the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs Faculty Interactive Research Program, and I would like to thank Tom Scott, Will Craig, and CURA's staff for their invaluable assistance. I would also like to thank Robert J. Schmidt, Executive Director of the Minnesota Association of

Secondary School Principals, and P. Fred Storti, Executive Director of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association. In addition, I am indebted to Rossana Armson, Pam Jones, and Marc Wagoner from the Minnesota Center for Survey Research and graduate student assistants Angela Bos and Jeff Hubbard.

Many others outside of Minnesota and Princeton have contributed as well, including John J. DiIulio Jr., R. Kenneth Godwin, Sanford Gordon, Jeffrey Henig, Gregory Huber, Jeffrey Lewis, Kenneth Meier, Suzanne Mettler, Robert Maranto, Michael Mintrom, J. Eric Oliver, Mark Schneider, and Paul Teske. I owe much to all of these scholars. I would also like to thank Jim Reische, Amy Anderson, Kevin Rennells, and the staff of the University of Michigan Press for all of their help and assistance.

This project would not have been possible without the generosity of the public school principals in my studies. Though they remain anonymous, I would like to thank them for their commitment, openness, and insight. I would also like to thank my parents. They gave me the 1990 Cadillac DeVille that I used to traverse the highways and byways of New Jersey, and so much more. Finally, I would like to thank the Ramones for "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker." This book would not have been the same without it.

Scott Abernathy
Minneapolis
June 2005