Educational Policy
2020, Vol. 34(1) 118–143

DOI: 10.1177/0895904819881187
journals.sagepub.com/home/epx
SAGE

Media Strategies in Policy Advocacy: Tracing the Justifications for Indiana's School Choice Reforms

Joel R. Malin[1], Christopher Lubienski[2], and Queenstar Mensa-Bonsu[1]

Abstract

This study treats Indiana (2010-2018) as a case in which to examine media-based coverage, deliberation, and ethical and empirical framings as school choice reforms were being taken up and as they evolved and accelerated. Within this timeframe, Indiana transformed into a leading state in school choice reforms. Both repetitive and shifting justifications were noted, with these patterning roughly into three main phases. Arguments were much more frequently ideological than empirical in nature, and advocates generally (and especially in the first two phases) were observed as holding the upper hand, successfully using the media to frame the debate using their terms.

Keywords

politics of education, media, policy influence, evidence use, knowledge mobilization

[1]Miami University, Oxford, OH, USA
[2]Indiana University Bloomington, USA

Corresponding Author:
Joel R. Malin, Department of Educational Leadership, Miami University, 304 McGuffey Hall, Oxford, OH 45056, USA.
Email: malinjr@miamioh.edu

Media attention toward school choice in the United States has increased, an uptick largely driven by concerns/hopes that President Trump and his administration might accelerate choice reforms, including vouchers and voucher-like derivatives (e.g., education savings accounts, tax-credit scholarships; see Welner, 2008). Thus far, the Trump administration has been unsuccessful at enacting a choice agenda, largely through what we term "mediatization," although arguably the challenges they have faced stem at least in part from this elevated public attention and the active, mediatized resistance that has arisen (Malin, Hardy, & Lubienski, 2019).

This enhanced media focus has importantly also shined light upon the educational privatization processes that have been long underway—indeed, since well before the 2016 presidential election, being vigorously pursued but primarily at *state* levels. Especially since the 2010 mid-terms, system-changing reforms have been advanced and adopted in numerous states, and concurrently—in our view—public/media attention and debate have been inadequate (lagging behind and/or with superficial, uncritical coverage) given their immense implications. Republicans made major gains nationally, in some states (such as Indiana) achieving single-party control of the governorship and legislative chambers. Several such states subsequently adopted bold school choice laws that dwarfed predecessor reforms. However, the media's (and, consequently, the public's) ability to document and explain what was being advanced, why, and its potential impacts was typically weak.

Only recently have scholars clarified key factors underpinning choice reforms. Recent scholarship has demonstrated private interests' major and often covert influence at the state level (Hertel-Fernandez, 2019; Mayer, 2016), including the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC[1]; Au & Ferrare, 2014; Au & Lubienski, 2016) and advocacy networks' (Lubienski, 2018; Lubienski, Brewer, & Goel La Londe, 2016) pivotal roles in advancing/spreading these reforms. Other work has focused on the role of intermediary organizations (IOs) such as advocacy groups, think tanks, and the media in promoting particular policy ideas (Finnigan & Daly, 2014; Jabbar, Goel, DeBray, Scott, & Lubienski, 2014; Scott, Lubienski, DeBray, & Jabbar, 2014). Here, advancing from that work, we introduce the idea of animated and inert IOs to show how the media as an intermediary space can be exploited or utilized for policy promotion.

Although the media, increasingly, has reported upon choice reform underpinnings and politics, again this has typically lagged behind the policy advocacy as it happened; instead, we suggest, the media was routinely and successfully being used and dominated by advocates as a venue wherein they could repetitively and sometimes duplicitously frame problems and solutions on their own terms. A key goal for policymakers and influencers is to create "subjects predisposed toward the values" embodied by particular policies

(Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, p. 22), chiefly by defining and framing issues, problems, and solutions through the media. Although many advocacy groups are increasingly using social media to advance their message, we know that such spaces can often serve simply as echo chambers, where messages often go out largely to audiences of like-minded followers (Goldie, Linick, Jabbar, & Lubienski, 2014). Moreover, more traditional media like newspapers has a level of prestige—due to their longevity, and the professional norms of editors and journalists—which gives messaging through that media some added cachet often not seen in social media.

Consequently, this study examines the more traditional media-based coverage, deliberation, and ethical and empirical framing of Indiana's (2010-2018) school choice reforms as they were being utilized and as they evolved. Within this timeframe, Indiana transformed into, perhaps, the leading state in school choice reforms; Hertel-Fernandez (2019), for example, analyzed 1995-2013 ALEC model bill enactment, finding its Education Reform Package (modeled after one initially passed in Indiana) to be "by far the most copied" (p. 75) provision, with 314 enactments. It is also home to strong policy networks of think tanks and advocacy organizations, such as EdChoice and the Mind Trust, that promote school choice in various forms, which in some ways have served as a national model for the expansion of these policies. Most importantly, Indiana school choice policies/programs have significantly grown over the years, in ways that contradict initially expressed goals and justifications (Turner, Weddle, & Bolonon-Rosen, 2017). This study thus reveals how these reforms were being presented to the public across time, emphasizing how advocates shifted their discourse to justify expansions. How did advocates' arguments and dominant frames evolve, and to what extent was the media (and, by extension, the voting polity) attentive to tensions and contradictions accompanying these shifts? And, did the media discern or question the considerable outside influences impacting—albeit mostly covertly—the state's education policy milieu?

School Choice Reform and Advocacy in the United States

For most, "school choice" refers to policies that allow parents to choose a school for their children. Broadly, this means choosing from various options outside one's local public school, which may include other public schools, publicly funded but privately managed charter schools, or private schools that accept a state-funded voucher as a full or partial tuition subsidy. (Although some groups, such as EdChoice, use the term "school choice" to refer only to programs that allow for choice of private schools.)

Perhaps, the most influential perspective promoting choice has been a market-based argument that encourages individuals to select from a range of autonomous providers to produce better outcomes than a system run by bureaucrats who assign children to schools based on their home addresses. This perspective—sometimes dubbed "market theory"—sees various aspects emphasized by its myriad adherents, although all of them generally agree on the main tenets of consumer choice and competition between more-or-less autonomous providers (Davies, Quirke, & Aurini, 2006; Lubienski & Lubienski, 2004; Walberg, 2000). This is often in response to what is seen as monopolistic control of public funding for education by the state system, which leads to inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, and a lack of innovation because such systems do not incentivize schools to respond to parents' demands for more quality options (Brandl, 1998; Kolderie, 1990). Thus, many market theorists tend to focus on the purported benefits of competition between schools, which should lead to a general increase in quality options and outcomes across the board, although some see choice as a worthy end in itself, irrespective of measurable quality improvement (Hoxby, 2003). Since schools in such schemes are more autonomous, they are typically not bound by collective bargaining agreements—an extra advantage for market theorists who oppose teacher unions (e.g., Moe, 2008). Aligned with this, neoliberal, market-based perspective is often a neo-conservative, family-values constituency, which sees choice as a way to shield children from the secular threat they identify with public schools (Miner, 1996).

Traditionally in the United States, school choice—as with education overall—has largely been a state or local concern. With the exception of a small experiment in California funded by the federal government in the 1970s (Bridge & Blackman, 1978; Lines, 1993), it has been mostly the states that initiated choice programs, such as the early voucher programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland, or the local program started by the Douglas County (Colorado) school district (Auge, 2011; Usher & Kober, 2011). Charter schools in particular are state creations, authorized in state law, and states have also enacted voucher and neo-voucher programs, sometimes for specific communities, and sometimes state-wide (Welner, 2008; Witte, 2000). However, in recent years and with bipartisan support, the federal government has been actively encouraging choice—usually charter schools, and also the Congressionally mandated voucher program in Washington, D.C. (Dynarski, Rui, Webber, & Gutmann, 2017, 2018). The federal government has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to support the growth of charter schools, identified charter status as one of the sanctions for failing schools under the No Child Left Behind Act, and incentivized states to allow for unlimited growth of charters in the Race to the Top program (Dillon, 2011; Wells, 2011).

In addition to the increasing interest from federal policymakers, the emerging influence of a number of other organizations and interests helps account for the arrival of choice as a national (and international) issue. Prominent and extremely well-resourced philanthropies have found common ground around efforts to advocate for school choice (Lubienski, 2019; Reckhow & Snyder, 2014) and have become much more assertive and strategic in how they advance that agenda (Au & Lubienski, 2016; Saltman, 2010). These strategies involve nurturing and funding policy networks that employ myriad IOs, such as think tanks, advocacy groups, grass-roots and grass-tops efforts, and media outfits in advancing agendas such as school choice (Lubienski et al., 2016; Scott & Jabbar, 2014).

In general, these IOs occupy the connecting spaces in these networks, playing a critical role in conveying information between network actors, particularly by gathering, packaging, and promoting evidence in support of particular agendas (Daly, 2012; DeBray, Scott, Lubienski, & Jabbar, 2014; Jabbar et al., 2014; Lubienski, Scott, & DeBray, 2011; Ness & Gándara, 2014; Piazza, 2016; Scott et al., 2014). For instance, an advocacy organization such as EdChoice—a key player in Indiana's policy formation, but perhaps more importantly a conduit to national and international school choice advocacy—produces its own original research reports, and also offers syntheses of existing information to policymakers that will put its policy goals—such as expanding school vouchers—in the best light (EdChoice, 2018; Forster, 2016). Although such IOs are active in their advocacy around a particular agenda, others, particularly in the media, can be either active players around a particular agenda or passive platforms on which advocacy is performed. Media, by definition, serves as an intermediary, a space for conveying information. Many advocacy IOs have started their own media efforts, such as EdChoice's podcast, The 74, Education Post, or Choice Media—typically in newer, emerging, or non-traditional media spaces—to advance particular policy agendas. But media can also be a more passive space for IOs to use, as is quite often the case with more traditional forms of media outlets that are not themselves active promoters of the ideas associated with a policy network, but can instead be utilized by that network around a particular agenda. Although op-editorials by policy advocates in prestigious, mainstream media outlets are an obvious example of such use of media as a passive intermediary space, other examples abound, such as an advocacy organization getting its people on camera for discussions, speaking "on background" to frame problems (and solutions) for journalists, or otherwise influencing editors on the way an issue should be covered.

Interestingly, the emergence of school choice as a policy issue reflects a general decline of established institutions such as public education and the

media. As such, institutions have increasingly lost credibility with much of the population, and their respective fields have both diversified as new entrants—whether charter schools or alternative media outlets—have risen to fill the void as "jurisdictional challengers" to established institutions (Reckhow & Snyder, 2014). Although in the media field these newer, alternative media outfits like those examples mentioned above tend to be more active intermediaries in aggressively pushing specific policy agendas, we are also particularly interested in the role of media as a passive intermediary space, one which still sometimes has the sheen of a more objective and credible source, since this is where arguments are lodged on behalf of policy agendas.

Indiana Context

During the time period studied, Indiana transformed itself into a trailblazer in terms of school choice and other ALEC-favored education reforms, as signified, for example, by its top rating by ALEC in 2013 (Ladner & Myslinski, 2014; then-Governor Mike Pence wrote the report's preface). Although the state enacted a charter school law in 2001, in short, in the years 2011-2018, Indiana went from being a state (self-)characterized by the localized "Hoosier schoolmaster" caricature to one seen, both by itself and by the nation, as an innovative, entrepreneurial place with cutting-edge education policy (Eggleston, 1871/1913, 1883/1910). This happened by rapidly moving from a deferential respect for local control in community-based school boards to an overriding emphasis on choice and deregulation through charter schools and the country's largest voucher program. A summary of major changes, 2010-2018, is provided in Table 1.

How did such a dramatic shift occur, especially in a state known for its commitment to local control? This study considers this question in part through the lens of discourse and justifications (with a concomitant focus on the nature of news coverage) being put forth through the media. Also key to answering this question is an understanding of certain background conditions. For example, subsequent to the November 2010 election, Indiana Republicans secured solid majorities in both chambers while continuing to operate under a popular Republican Governor, Mitch Daniels, and a pro-reform State Superintendent, Tony Bennett. Meanwhile, the state had formidable advocacy infrastructure in the policy sphere, with the Indianapolis-based EdChoice and Mind Trust channeling intellectual and financial-political support for these reforms, with close ties to key figures in the Republican leadership. Moreover, with relatively weak unions, Indiana had less organized and resourced opposition to such reform efforts. Furthermore, choice was not a completely partisan

Table 1. Major Legal/Policy Changes Related to School Choice in Indiana, 2010-2018.

Year	Description of changes
2010	Indiana's tax-credit scholarship program launched.
2011	Indiana Choice Scholarship program (HB 1003) signed into law (becomes nation's most expansive voucher program); also, HB 1002 is signed into law, allowing most Indiana private (including religious) colleges eligible to sponsor charter schools, increasing funding for virtual charters, and making it easier for charters to take over unused public-school buildings; private school/homeschool deduction program enacted.
2012	Indiana becomes right-to-work state; Pence elected Governor and Messer (of School Choice Indiana) wins his vacated U.S. House seat; Republicans in Indiana legislature gain supermajority.
2013	Indiana lawmakers vote to further expand voucher program; voucher program legality upheld by Indiana Supreme Court.
2014	Public Law 1321, based on 2013 ALEC model policy, allows school districts across the state to create Innovation Network Schools.
2015	Biannual budget continues pre-K pilot program (vouchers), new school funding formula including additional US$500 grant per student for charters, increased funding for virtual charters, facilities funding for charter schools, elimination of voucher cap, increased cap on Scholarship Granting Organization tax credit; Indianapolis Public Schools opens first Innovation Network Schools.
2016	Pence selected as Trump's running mate (Vice President); Holcomb (R) elected Indiana governor.
2017	Biennial budget increases funding for voucher program, without transparency (no separate line item); HB 1384 enables new private schools to receive state funding for student tuition from their onset (eliminates 1-year waiting period); HEA1005 replaces state superintendent with governor-appointed secretary of education, to begin in 2025.
2018	Indianapolis Public Schools website lists 20 Innovation Schools, many incubated by The Mind Trust.

Note. ALEC = American Legislative Exchange Council.

issue, since groups like the Mind Trust—due to the state's empowering the Democratic mayor of Indianapolis the unique ability to grant charters—brought many "third way" Democrats into alliances with Republicans on choice issues; nonetheless, vouchers in particular were primarily associated with a conservative Republican agenda. At the same time, as has been true in many Midwestern cities, urban Catholic schools were threatened with financial decline due to demographic shifts, and thus Catholic officials welcomed

vouchers as a potential lifeline. Also framing these reforms, Daniels had recently implemented deep (US$300 million) cuts to education funding in Indiana and had overseen a major shift in terms of how schools would be funded (assuming state control). Indiana had also previously begun additional school choice reforms—for example, allowing a certain number of charter schools since 2001 and allowing inter-district school choice (though receiving districts were free to reject inter-district applicants; as an example of such programs and their consequences, see Lubienski, 2005).

Offering, perhaps, the most comprehensive treatment of such political-financial influences is Shaffer, Ellis, and Swensson (2018), who particularly documented a strong ALEC influence running through Indiana education reforms and claimed that educational policymaking was itself being privatized. Since mid-2016, some in-depth media reporting has also highlighted certain actors and strategies. Also, through the review process, we noted key actions/influences at vital moments (though often superficially covered): a US$500,000 ad campaign launched by the Foundation for Educational Choice in support of the 2011 voucher legislation (Associated Press, 2011); well-timed, advocacy-sponsored/organized rallies (D. Martin, 2011a, March 31); immediate and vigorous legal support by the Virginia-based Institute for Justice (Kramer, 2011); and more.

Method

The authors conducted Nexis Uni searches for Indiana-pertaining school choice news during the time period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2018. Search results were arranged by date—oldest to newest—and (after some snowballing also occurred in the process of reviewing) a database containing 1,136 unique (non-duplicative) news items/articles was created. We then sought to identify qualitative patterns related to our main research question, regarding the nature and evolution of mediatized justifications for Indiana school choice programs. Our approach stressed how language conveys a communicative action; we sought to understand the systematic manner in which this occurred (Johnstone, 2018). We followed an iterative process, adopting both deductive and inductive approaches (Miles & Huberman, 1994). More specifically, we drew out patterned justifications within news extracts (induction) and with attention to time and context/conditions (e.g., so as to detect time- and context-based shifts if/when they occurred), and doing so also in light of existing literature and theorizing in relation to school choice programs and the ways they too are constantly in flux. A priori justification patterns, identified and described in a national study (Malin et al., 2019), provided some initial order and a means of coping with voluminous data, but

we remained open to unanticipated patterns. We were particularly interested in discerning and exemplifying how supportive justifications shifted across time and/or in response to shifting politics, events, or other contextual elements—and, if/when shifts occurred, we sought to understand (to the extent possible) how/why this might have been occurring.

Results

Analyses revealed both repetitive and shifting justifications as choice reforms were advanced, and fluctuating (though generally increasing) amounts of questioning. Although not entirely clean, we discerned patterns related to three main phases: first, "ethicization," school choice was frequently framed as a social justice issue, and there was very little in-depth coverage of how/why these reforms were being financially and strategically pursued/supported. Second, "epitomization and expansion," Indiana was promoted as a choice darling, and advocates' attention shifted toward doing more, even as it became increasingly clear that stated intentions/justifications were misaligned with reform realities. Finally, in the third phase, "sleight of hand," advocates were increasingly pressured to respond to critiques, but still pressed forward—with some newish language/concepts (e.g., a "menu of options") mixed with some of the older language (e.g., "civil rights issue of our time"), often with some degree of impunity given their initial promises.

Ethicization: April 2010 to April 2011

When the 2011 voucher legislation was being debated, a key talking point for then-Governor Daniels and State Superintendent Bennett was that this was to be a targeted program for the neediest families—thus, a matter of *social justice*. For instance, D. Martin (2011b, January 10) reported,

> Daniels told reporters in his office Monday that his voucher proposal—one backed by state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett—would only be available for low-income families. He said it's a matter of justice and fairness that low-income families have some of the same options as their wealthy neighbors, who can buy a house in a good school district or pay private school tuition.

Daniels said,

> At some point up the income scale, the choice is there—people can live where they want to live, choose a nongovernmental school if they want.

A tension existed even then, however, in that what was being considered in 2011—though paling in comparison with what now exists—was quite bold, upon its passage becoming the nation's "most expansive voucher program" (D. Martin, 2011d, April 21). In addition to representing a sea-change for the state's education policy, relative to other states, Indiana's program was accessible to "a much larger pool of students" from the start, including those within "families of four making up to $60,000 a year," even if they were "already in excellent schools" (D. Martin, 2011d, April 21). These facts contradicted much within-state rhetoric.

Turner et al. (2017), looking back for *NPRed*, reflected,

> Indiana lawmakers originally promoted the state's school voucher program as a way to make good on America's promise of equal opportunity, offering children from poor and lower-middle-class families *an escape from public schools that failed to meet their needs*. (italics added)

In reality, however, eligibility criteria were unrelated to the quality of students' public-school options. Nevertheless, media coverage contained substantial "calming discourse" on the part of in-state advocates and legislators, downplaying the proposed reforms' scope. For instance, State Legislator Karickhoff, a choice supporter, argued, "The impact of the bill is so very small" (as quoted in Smith, 2011), and the bill's author, Representative Robert Behning, offered reassurance that the proposal was not an indictment of public schools or teachers (Allen, 2011). (Behning, chair of the House Education Committee, served as ALEC state chairman from 1996 to 2004; SourceWatch, 2019.) Such statements contrasted with intense rhetoric typically coming from national advocates who were deeply involved in these reforms' genesis and enactment and who, for example, lamented poor students "trapped in K-12 schools" (DeVos, in Stratford, 2016) and portrayed school choice as "the civil rights issue of our time" (Messer, 2016).

Although key state-level actors' language was usually more subtle, they appeared to benefit from such discourses of derision (Kenway, 1990)—for example, actively positioning themselves as pragmatists trying to disrupt the status quo on behalf of poor families, but running up against entrenched special interests. After a legal challenge to the voucher program, for example, Daniels commented derisively, "There the union goes again, putting their financial self-interest ahead of the interests of children and Indiana's low-income families" (as cited in Kusmer, 2011).

Indiana Republican policymakers operated from a position of strength, in control and accessing predominantly uncritical and/or sympathetic media. For instance, representatives of advocacy organizations like School Choice

Indiana (SCI) were portrayed gently and leveraged the media to frame the reform push to their liking, as when Bloomington's *Herald-Times* described SCI as a "non-profit group . . . which advocates for educational opportunities for children" (Nolan, 2011). Certainly, there were quotes from reform opponents—for example, the counter-claim that "providing vouchers . . . [means] diverting public tax money to private schools" (Joel Hand of the Indiana Coalition for Public Education, as quoted in D. Martin, 2011c, February 14). However, no articles were found to deeply examine systemic forces behind these reforms or to explore the factual bases of justifications.

Certain deep-level justifications were evident and remained so (albeit with minor iterations) throughout the full study period. These included shifting the focus from the demand (parental freedom to choose) to supply side, particularly around the notion of *competition*, which justified the reforms in two senses. First, according to this claim, school choice reforms were necessary so that students could compete in the new economy (and/or the state could develop a qualified workforce). Following the passage of several key choice (and other) reforms, for example, Governor Daniels predicted that these would "make a significant difference in [Indiana's] economic prospects" (as cited in Cavanagh, 2011). Second, the idea was that competition would compel *all* schools to improve, as House Speaker Bosma and Bennett and others claimed.

Two other key and lasting justifications revolved around the notion that "parents (who know best) want this"—thus, they simply need to be trusted/empowered. Exemplifying the latter theme, Daniels told lawmakers,

> Look at those faces . . . Will you be the one to tell the parents, "Tough luck?" Are you prepared to say to them "We know better than you do?" We won't tell you where to buy your groceries or . . . get your tires rotated, but we will tell you, no matter what you think, your child will attend that school, and only that school. (as cited in D. Martin, 2011e, January 15)

Exemplifying "parents want this," choice advocates pointed to charter school waiting lists, organized splashy rallies and then highlighted how well-attended they were, and commissioned school choice polls and publicized results. Such techniques and justifications continued to be observed over the years. "Putting students first" was a related, key mantra; Superintendent Bennett, for example, referred to Indiana's "Putting Students First Agenda" and Governor Daniels used this language as well (again implying that adult interests unjustly held sway).

Another justification, albeit sharply contested years later, was that the reforms (and especially the voucher program) would save taxpayers' money; this claim might have been particularly important given the timing

(post-recession, in the midst of a deep budget cut for Indiana education). As D. Martin (2011e, January 15) reported,

> The Daniels administration says the proposal shouldn't cost the state anything. Details are still being worked out by Republicans who control the Legislature, but the general idea is that money that would typically go to a public school for educating a child would be given to an eligible parent to use at a private school instead. The state may not give parents the entire amount, however, which could mean the state could save money through the program, said Office of Management and Budget Director Chris Ruhl.

Ruhl told lawmakers,

> You actually generate savings from those kids.

This justification, like others, found echoes and reinforcement by national advocates. Also buried in this quote but sometimes explicitly articulated (and evident across phases) was the idea that school funding should "follow the child"; as Bennett stated, "The philosophical opinion of the General Assembly is that the money follows the students" (McCollum, 2012). (In the second phase, this phrasing became increasingly apparent, used by Pence among others.) But the idea of taxpayer savings, in itself, was important—and appeared to originate with national advocates like the Indianapolis-based Friedman Foundation for Education Choice (FFEC; now EdChoice).

Epitomization and Expansion: May 2011 to June 2016

The second phase began after Governor Daniels signed the 2011 pieces of legislation into law, especially the voucher program; an immediate media linguistic shift was evident. First, national advocates were quick to laud Indiana as "at the head of the class" (FFEC, 2011, n.p.) and to suggest that other states would/should follow suit. For example, per Lindsey Burke of the Heritage Foundation,

> The Hoosier State is empowering parents through school choice and ensuring it responds to the needs of children . . . These are reforms that should be—and are likely to be—mimicked by reform-minded state leaders throughout the country this year, to the benefit of parents, children, taxpayers and teachers. (CitizenLink, 2011, n.p.)

Simultaneously, however, they suggested that this was merely the first step, with more needing to be done. For example, Robert Enlow of the FFEC

(2011, n.p.) praised Indiana leaders while suggesting they had moved closer to – but had not yet reached – "(Milton) Friedman's vision of liberty in education for every child."

Likewise, the Heritage Foundation (2011, n.p.) celebrated the achievement while adding a caveat:

> But, although these options are proliferating, millions of children across the country are still trapped in government schools that fail to meet their needs, fail to provide them with a quality education, and in some cases, even fail to provide for their safety.

Nevertheless, Indiana provided a bold example to which advocates could now point—as ALEC did when in 2014 they named Indiana the best state for education policy (Ladner & Myslinski, 2014). This was true even as advocates sought to justify going further than Indiana had.

Some advocates took pains to claim that these "choice reforms" were driven by bipartisan consensus—by pragmatic folks reaching across the aisle—but in fact the Indiana voucher reform was almost entirely supported by Republicans and opposed by Democrats. Making such claims in part hinged on conflating several reforms under the banner of "school choice"—a term which otherwise many, including EdChoice, strategically apply only to vouchers or voucher-like programs (e.g., Keller, 2017).

Governor Pence (November 2012-2016), among others, took the "we must do more" ball and ran with it, notwithstanding that his initial education plan was released quietly on a Friday and that he customarily avoided interviews/unplanned statements regarding his education proposals. Pence (among others) continued the tradition of tying education reforms to the state's prosperity:

> To keep Indiana on a roll, we need to keep innovating and investing in our future. And without question, investing in high quality education for our children is our top priority . . .
>
> We must do better. The future prosperity and happiness of Hoosier children demands that we do. (Pence, 2014)

A necessity for many in Phase 2 was to justify reform expansion. In part, this was accomplished through vague but powerful messaging like the above. Another tactic was to show/persuade that there existed a high level of demand for, and/or satisfaction regarding, this programming. For example, advocates (most conspicuously SCI) diligently informed parents about the new voucher program and provided families sign-up support. Then, these same advocates pointed to enrollment numbers as demonstrating high demand.

On a national level, too, cases were made that demand was routinely high, creating waiting lists or necessitating dramatic lotteries. For instance, per Indiana U.S. House Rep. Messer (previously SCI President and friend of Pence who moved into his vacated House seat), "more than a million kids in cities across America languish on wait lists for the charter school of their choice" (Messer, 2016). Advocates continued to organize "rallies" and then effectively publicized them, highlighting attendance numbers and "enthusiasm" as indicative for the groundswell of public support/demand for more choice.

Later on, as the policies were revised to facilitate broader participation in Indiana choice programming, new arguments were set forth to justify opening things up even more. For instance, Mike McShane (then at the American Enterprise Institute, now at EdChoice) argued there was a supply-side issue in that there were not enough schools to keep up with parental demand; his favored solution was funding to attract high-quality charters and private schools. Using similar reasoning, Governor Pence funneled (through a biannual budget) more funding to charter schools:

> Chris Atkins, director of Pence's Office of Management and Budget, said the increases are necessary to attract additional charter school companies to Indiana. "We're concerned that some higher-quality charter operators are not willing to look at locating here or investing here because of our charter financing system." (Carden, 2015)

During the Pence years, as choice programming expanded, the fact that some students were attending "failing schools" continued to be used as fodder: "Despite our progress, we still have more than 100,000 students in D and F schools, and 170,000 in C schools" (Pence, 2014). Policy details, though, stood in sharp distinction to promises—expansions were not (and never had been) targeted toward students in particular schools. Moreover, the changes Pence championed shifted the population of students accessing choice programming in the opposite direction. As the (Republican) state superintendent recently noted, the clear majority of students receiving vouchers have never attended public schools, and "the fastest-growing demographic for using vouchers are white, suburban students" (Rollins, 2019).

Policymakers like Pence and other advocates continued to employ these misleading rationales even as the program expanded, and—in an age when Pence and other officials have called for more accountability for schools—were hardly held to account for their misleading promises through the media. Although we noted some critical and competing quotes/commentary and coverage beginning to appear, during this phase, advocates clearly still held

the upper hand. They were not held back policy-wise, even as their justifications increasingly misaligned with what they were actually doing.

Still, we noted to some extent a shift in rhetoric from school choice for *some* (e.g., a targeted or at-risk population) toward "high quality options/choices for *all*,"—a foot-in-the-door strategy of justifying the program for a small population before expanding it to all, and that echoes almost verbatim the claims of one of school choice's biggest funders, the Walton Family Foundation (Lubienski, 2017).

Pence and others increasingly employed the vague notion of encouraging/stimulating innovation as a way to improve schools, with Pence's education plan lacking details but apparently intended to attract investment to support "innovation" (LoBianco, 2012). At local levels, these efforts were also occurring—especially in Indianapolis, under the influence of the Mind Trust, a neoliberal advocacy organization with increasingly predominant links to the major national funders in "corporate" education reform, including the Walton and Dell Foundations, which was described as "[helping] to incubate charter and other new schools in Indiana" (on the role of these major funders, see Reckhow & Snyder, 2014).

Overall, perhaps, most noteworthy were the generally weak (or sloppy/misleading) justifications for the reforms that were being advanced when considering the specific policy details. Despite—or perhaps because—this sloppiness and inaccuracy, the Epitomization/Expansion phase saw the passage of multiple aggressive school choice promoting reforms, including dramatic expansions to what had already been a singularly bold voucher program. The justifications used in Phase 2 thus served more so to activate deep frames (e.g., related to individual freedom or prosperity; see Lakoff, 2008) than to provide empirical data or factual information, which was "effective" in that it enabled reform expansion.

Sleight of Hand: June 2016 to 2018

In the presidential campaign of 2016, then-candidate Trump's education platform was essentially summed up by two words: "school choice." Indiana Governor Mike Pence was a strategic choice for his Vice President in this regard. Soon after Pence was selected, national-level attention toward Indiana's school choice reforms began to increase, and this attention intensified after he nominated frequent Pence ally Betsy DeVos for U.S. Secretary of Education. Although DeVos and Trump were quite interested in scaling up these programs, they paid little attention to the empirical record—ironic in an age of "evidence-based policy." In fact, research was indicating that the three main promises of these reforms—equity, achievement, and efficiencies—were

not playing out as reformers had promised (Berends & Waddington, 2018; Eckes, Ulm, & Mead, 2016; Turner et al., 2017; Waddington & Berends, 2018). The main implication for this study was that school choice advocates shifted their stated rationales for these programs through the media, and with the implicit consent of the media, which failed to hold policy advocates accountable for their previous promises.

As an overriding context for this phase, reform advocates continued to push for additional changes and expansions in Indiana (and beyond), including "freeways" that would enable new private schools to receive voucher funding more quickly, and educational savings accounts that advocates said would expand parents' liberty, but that a Democratic opponent called "vouchers on steroids" (in Banta, 2016). Reform advocates continued to successfully usher in program expansions and stymie opposition. For instance, in the 2017 legislative session, the cap on tax scholarships was raised, a new law enabled students to take individual classes outside public schools, and a preschool expansion bill created a new pathway to kindergarten voucher dollars. Meanwhile, lawmakers killed three attempts at tightening charter authorization (Cavazos, 2018).

In this phase, certain linguistic shifts were observed, although they were nuanced and contradictory. Detailed critiques of Indiana school choice programming began to appear—though almost exclusively from national outlets—and advocates countered such challenges sometimes by shifting their messaging or emphases. Critiques addressed various issues, including the following: poor academic outcomes; changing student demographics (including that a majority of current recipients never attended public schools, and that the fastest growing demographic was White and suburban); financial information suggesting that the program was increasingly costly to the state; and stories demonstrating that "choice" was exercised by schools more so than families, and that schools sometimes discriminated. There was also some fairly in-depth questioning of the motives (again, at the national level) underlying these reforms—for example, the notion that, perhaps, a key motivation was to privatize public education rather than, for example, engaging in social justice work or saving poor children.

Within state/local news outlets, in-depth critique was unusual, but increasingly choice opponents were quoted. For example, Indiana State Teachers Association President Theresa Meredith described vouchers as subsidies (Doran, 2017) and argued vouchers distract and detract from supporting the many students in public schools—two key and commonly expressed concerns. More pointedly, Fort Wayne Superintendent Wendy Robinson challenged these reforms as an "assault on public education" (Turner et al., 2017).

Responding to these heightening challenges, *Chalkbeat's* Shaina Cavazos (2017) detected significant shifts in advocates' discourse. She observed, "Once held up as a way for kids to escape failing schools, voucher rhetoric nowadays has shed that aspect to focus squarely on the value of parental choice." Exemplifying this shift, Representative Behning responded to negative empirical outcomes and associated calls for accountability as follows:

> Student performance is just one measure of vouchers' success or failure. Parents choose for a variety of reasons. It's not always academics . . . I think the best judgment is parental choice. (as cited in Turner et al., 2017, n.p.)

Behning's view aligns with national advocates like DeVos, who increasingly present choice as an end in and of itself, irrespective of empirical outcomes (Malin et al., 2019). There were also increasingly assertions that efforts to "advance school choice" and "improve traditional public schools . . . go hand in hand" (Todd Rokita [R-IN] Testimony for U.S. House Subcommittee Hearing, 2017), presumably in response to the aforementioned counterclaims that these choice programs were detrimental to public education.

However, there is some continuity in advocates' messaging, even as it stood increasingly in opposition to the facts on the ground. For instance, social justice rhetoric and/or messages of choice success still appeared frequently, even as voucher and voucher-like programming opened to wealthier families (e.g., a family of five making US$106,500), as incoming data showed that more than half of voucher recipients never attended public schools, and as negative financial and empirical information accumulated. Still, Enlow claimed that Indiana's voucher program was reaching the students it was designed to reach (Allen, 2017). Representative Behning likewise resisted increased calls for accountability and oversight, opining that the voucher program could only be viewed as a failure when parents stop choosing to use vouchers to leave the state's public schools (Turner et al., 2017). Again, this sentiment ignores that the majority of Indiana voucher students had, by this point, never attended public schools.

Thus, what we see in this third phase is both some level of continuity and even more so a seemingly substantive shift away from focusing on student outcomes to more nebulous measures of ideological orientation. That is, although they continue to employ some of the same terms as before, reformers now appear to jettison their earlier concerns with poor children and quality education and instead express a greater allegiance to simply deregulating schools and moving children out of the state school system. Perhaps, implicit in this is an unstated admission that the reforms will not (or were never meant to) work in the ways that had been initially promised, such as increasing

achievement, lowering costs, or improving access to quality education for poor children. But spurred on by more public criticisms of their policies, advocates are, perhaps, now more open about their agenda.

In sum, then, it appeared that increasingly critical coverage somewhat affected advocates and, perhaps, shaped their subsequent media messaging and strategies. However, most media coverage, especially within Indiana, continued to be superficial, with very little documenting the how and why behind Indiana's dramatic post-recessionary education policy shifts.

Discussion

The Indiana case offers some useful insights in understanding how mediatization of policy problems around school choice shapes conceptualizations of a complex issue. Specifically, it highlights the role of the media as a dual-mandated intermediary space, showing its frequent use/function as an inert, non-critical vessel of political messages, as opposed to its potential as an intermediary animated in its scrutiny of those seeking to leverage its power.

In an age of declining faith in institutions epitomized by a president's attacks on established media outlets, the demise of the daily newspaper and other major alterations of the media landscape (e.g., the blending of entertainment and politics, the explosion of new and low-quality news sources, and the rise of social media; Lepore, 2018) have, we believe, rendered traditional media including local and regional newspapers increasingly vulnerable to exploitation and less well positioned to adequately cover, much less fact-check, key state policy discussions. Few newspapers, for instance, can afford to assign a reporter to the statehouse (Anderson & Donchik, 2016). Many small-town newspapers are hungry for editorial content and may be willing to offer space to ready-made op-editorials or commentary pieces from experts at state-level think tanks. Also, these same news sources tend to be reliant on advertising dollars and thus are often reluctant to question programs/initiatives being favored by elites on whom they rely for financial support. They may sometimes also themselves buy into reform narratives or broader, neoliberal assumptions. Moreover, in reform-happy and non-transparent policy environments like that of Indiana, during this time period, it is challenging (and this is by design; see Hertel-Fernandez, 2019) and fatiguing for both citizens and members of the press to stay abreast of, much less vet, policy discussions.

This concern points to the role of media organizations as both active and passive spaces for policy advocacy, and the inherent tension is conveying and vetting messaging around public debates. On one hand, media is the site for public discussions and serves as a space where advocacy around an issue

occurs, through op-editorials, or through "messaging" by conveying information to reporters that explicitly or implicitly shapes their stories. On the other hand, journalistic organizations bear a professional responsibility to check claims, refuse to print falsehoods, call into question tenuous claims by advocates and policymakers, and—importantly—to hold individuals (and organizations) accountable for their claims if they turn out to be false. In the case we described above, the media is apparently serving its first function, as a space for messaging, but largely failing in the latter areas, particularly in imposing accountability on assertions made in the spaces they control.

In Indiana, policymakers set out a policy agenda clearly centered on offering opportunities for disadvantaged children while also reducing the budget burden on the state. However, the empirical outcomes raise serious concerns about these policies. Academic outcomes in Indiana charter schools are often generally flat compared with public schools, and students using vouchers to attend private schools have seen large negative impacts on their learning (Berends & Waddington, 2018; Waddington & Berends, 2018). At the same time, rather than rescuing poor children from failing schools, the voucher program is increasingly becoming a subsidy for middle-class White families whose children have always been enrolled in private schools. Consequently, the state unexpectedly had to spend additional tens of millions of dollars to fund this subsidy. Thus, it could be argued that policymakers' initial elevation of poor children was exploitative, at best, and that those children are less likely to use these options and are often harmed when they do.

Of course, policymakers have done little to directly respond to the empirical evidence that undercuts their justifications for the program, instead simply repeating simplistic claims about the purported benefits of such programs, or reverting to more theoretical assertions about the value of freedom and choice. This latter response represents a strategy of moving the goalposts (Lubienski & Malin, resubmitted), with which the media is complicit, as initial goals have not been met, and new, more abstract, and less measurable objectives are suddenly introduced.

Interestingly, this is happening in an age where policymakers emphasize the need for accountability for schools. Frustrated with bureaucratic forms of accountability through school boards and central offices, policymakers now look instead to alternative forms of accountability, such as to an authorizer, in the case of charter schools, or to accountability to the parents who choose a school, in the case of all school choice schemes. However, as initial goals for choice programs are ignored with impunity, it raises the question of holding policymakers accountable for their promises for these programs. As the current (Republican) state superintendent, perhaps, slyly noted in observing the damage to the public system through these policies, and the lack of will to

reign in these programs, "There is just not an appetite for accountability" (Rollins, 2019).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD


Joel R. Malin https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6642-3434

Note

1. ALEC can be understood as a "coalition that has attempted to reconcile the varied preferences of big businesses, firebrand conservative activists, and wealthy donors" (Hertel-Fernandez, 2019, p. 24). It has largely and intentionally operated in secrecy, with its primary function and selling point for its non-public servant members relating to the ability to craft and share model state-level legislation (i.e., a means to influence or even privatize state-level and cross-state policy) such as their widely copied Indiana Education Reform Package. Its members include state legislators from across the country, who through ALEC access not only policy proposals (legislative language) but also ideas, research, networking, talking points, polling information, and expert witnesses (Hertel-Fernandez, 2019). ALEC's role in education policy—for example, around educational privatization, curbing collective bargaining, and pension reform—has been profound (Horsford, Scott, & Anderson, 2019).

References

Allen, K. (2011, February 17). School vouchers bill advances to full Indiana House. *South Bend Tribune*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Allen, K. (2017, January 29). Indiana could offer preview of nationwide voucher program. *South Bend Tribune*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Anderson, G. L., & Donchik, L. M. (2016). Privatizing schooling and policy making: The American Legislative Exchange Council and new political and discursive strategies of education governance. *Educational Policy*, *30*, 322-364.

Associated Press (2011, January 3). Ads to back school choice. Retrieved from https://duboiscountyherald.com/b/ads-to-back-school-choice

Au, W., & Ferrare, J. J. (2014). Sponsors of policy: A network analysis of wealthy elites, their affiliated philanthropies, and charter school reform in Washington state. *Teachers College Record*, *116*(8), 1-24.

Au, W., & Lubienski, C. (2016). The role of the Gates Foundation and the philanthropic sector in shaping the emerging education market: Lessons from the US on privatization of schools and education governance. In A. Verger, C. Lubienski, & G. Steiner-Khamsi (Eds.), *The global education industry* (pp. 27-43). New York, NY: Routledge.

Auge, K. (2011, March 16). Douglas County school board unanimously OKs voucher plan to help pay for private-school tuition. *The Denver Post*. Retrieved from https://www.denverpost.com/2011/03/15/douglas-county-school-board-unanimously-oks-voucher-plan-to-help-pay-for-private-school-tuition/

Banta, M. (2016, November 23). Unity the theme for state Legislature's Organization Day. *The Herald-Times*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Berends, M., & Waddington, R. J. (2018). School choice in Indianapolis: Effects of charter, magnet, private, and traditional public schools. *Education Finance and Policy*, *13*, 227-255. doi:10.1162/EDFP_a_00225

Brandl, J. E. (1998). Governance and educational quality. In P. E. Peterson & B. C. Hassel (Eds.), *Learning from school choice* (pp. 55-81). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Bridge, R. G., & Blackman, J. (1978). *A study of alternatives in American education: Family choice in schooling* (Vol. IV). Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

Carden, D. (2015, January 17). Pence budget does little for Munster, region schools. *The Times*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Cavanagh, S. (2011, May 12). Indiana education package bears conservative stamp. *Education Week*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Cavazos, S. (2017, July 5). The first major study of Indiana's voucher program might not change much for the state's strong pro-school choice legislature. *Chalkbeat*. Available from https://www.chalkbeat.org/

Cavazos, S. (2018, February 14). Indiana lawmakers aren't cracking down on virtual charter schools despite calls for change. *Chalkbeat*. Available from https://www.chalkbeat.org/

CitizenLink. (2011, April 28). *Landmark school choice bill heads to Indiana governor; Oklahoma takes up tax-credit scholarship program* [Press Release]. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Daly, A. J. (2012). Data, dyads, and dynamics: Exploring data use and social networks in educational improvement. *Teachers College Record*, *114*(11), 1-38.

Davies, S., Quirke, L., & Aurini, J. (2006). The new institutionalism goes to the market: The challenge of rapid growth in private K-12 education. In H.-D. Meyer & B. Rowan (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in education* (pp. 103-122). Albany: State University of New York Press.

DeBray, E., Scott, J., Lubienski, C., & Jabbar, H. (2014). Intermediary organizations in charter school policy coalitions: Evidence from New Orleans. *Educational Policy*, *28*, 175-206. doi:10.1177/0895904813514132

Dillon, S. (2011, September 13). With bipartisan support, law on expansion of charter schools passes the House. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/14/education/14educ.html

Doran, L. (2017, August 16). The Indiana case study: Does education benefit from competition? *Inside Sources*. Available from https://www.insidesources.com/

Dynarski, M., Rui, N., Webber, A., & Gutmann, B. (2017). *Evaluation of the DC opportunity scholarship program: Impacts after one year*. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20174022/

Dynarski, M., Rui, N., Webber, A., & Gutmann, B. (2018). *Evaluation of the DC opportunity scholarship program: Impacts two years after students applied* (NCEE 2018-4010). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, U.S. Department of Education.

Eckes, S. E., Ulm, J., & Mead, J. (2016). Dollars to discriminate: The (un)intended consequences of school vouchers. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *91*, 537-558.

EdChoice. (2018). *The ABCs of school choice: The comprehensive guide to every private school choice program in America*. Retrieved from https://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ABCs-of-School-Choice-2018-Edition-1.pdf

Eggleston, E. (1910). *The Hoosier school-boy*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap. (Original work published 1883)

Eggleston, E. (1913). *The Hoosier school-master: A story of backwoods life in Indiana*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap. (Original work published 1871)

Finnigan, K. S., & Daly, A. J. (Eds.). (2014). *Using research evidence in education: From the schoolhouse door to Capitol Hill*. New York, NY: Springer.

Forster, G. (2016). *A win-win solution: The empirical evidence on school choice, fourth edition*. Retrieved from https://www.edchoice.org/research/win-win-solution/

Goldie, D., Linick, M., Jabbar, H., & Lubienski, C. (2014). Using bibliometric and social media analyses to explore the "echo chamber" hypothesis. *Educational Policy*, *28*, 281-305.

The Heritage Foundation. (2011, August 17). *School choice in America 2011: Educational opportunity reaches new heights* [Press Release]. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

The Foundation for Educational Choice (2011, May 5). Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels signs historic voucher bill into law. Retrieved from https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/indiana-gov-mitch-daniels-signs-historic-voucher-bill-into-law-121328389.html

Hertel-Fernandez, A. (2019). *State capture: How conservative activists, big businesses, and wealthy donors reshaped the American states—And the nation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2019). *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hoxby, C. M. (2003). School choice and school productivity: Could school choice be a tide that lifts all boats? In C. M. Hoxby (Ed.), *The economics of school choice* (pp. 287-341). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Jabbar, H., Goel, P., DeBray, E., Scott, J., & Lubienski, C. (2014). How policymakers define "evidence": The politics of research use in New Orleans. *Policy Futures in Education*, *12*, 1013-1027.

Johnstone, B. (2018). *Discourse analysis* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: John Wiley.

Keller, T. (2017). *12 myths and realities about private educational choice programs*. Retrieved from https://ij.org/report/12-myths-realities-private-educational-choice-programs/

Kenway, J. (1990). Education and the Right's discursive politics: Private versus state schooling. In S. Ball (Ed.), Foucault and education: Disciplines and knowledge (pp. 167-206). London: Routledge.

Kolderie, T. (1990). *Beyond choice to new public schools: Withdrawing the exclusive franchise in public education* (8). Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED327914

Kramer, J. (2011, July 20). Indiana's new school choice program is constitutional. *The Institute for Justice*. Retrieved from https://ij.org/press-release/indiana-school-choice-release-5-5-2011/

Kusmer, K. (2011, July 1). 1st salvo fired in Ind. school voucher court fight. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Ladner, M., & Myslinski, D. J. (2014). *Report card on American education: State education rankings*. Arlington, VA: American Legislative Exchange Council. Retrieved from https://www.alec.org/publication/report-card-on-american-education-20thedition/

Lakoff, G. (2008). *The political mind*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Lepore, J. (2018). *These truths: A history of the United States*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

Lines, P. M. (1993). *Parents and their informational resources: A reassessment of findings from Alum Rock*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center, U.S. Dept. of Education.

LoBianco, T. (2012, September 7). Pence's education plan light on detail. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Lubienski, C. (2005). School choice as a civil right: District responses to competition and equal educational opportunity. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *38*, 331-341.

Lubienski, C. (2017). Redefining equality through incentive-based policies. In S. Parker, K. N. Gulson, & T. Gale (Eds.), *Policy and inequality in education* (pp. 153-168). New York, NY: Springer.

Lubienski, C. (2018). The critical challenge: Policy networks and market models for education. *Policy Futures in Education*, *16*, 156-168. doi:10.1177/1478210317751275

Lubienski, C. (2019, April). *What "good" is schooling? The new edu-philanthropies and education reform*. Paper presented at the "Silicon Valley Philanthropy: 'Disruption' and the Implications for Educational Development" International Research Symposium, Stanford University, Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, Palo Alto, CA.

Lubienski, C., Brewer, T. J., Goel La Londe, P. (2016). Orchestrating policy ideas: Philanthropies and think tanks in US education policy advocacy networks. *Australian Educational Researcher*, *43*, 55-73. doi:10.1007/s13384-015-0187-y

Lubienski, C., & Lubienski, S. T. (2004). *Re-examining a primary premise of market theory: An analysis of NAEP data on achievement in public and private schools*. New York, NY: National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education.

Lubienski, C., & Malin, J. R. (resubmitted). Moving the goalposts: The evolution of voucher advocacy in interpreting efficacy research. *Journal of Education Policy*.

Lubienski, C., Scott, J., & DeBray, E. (2011). The rise of intermediary organizations in knowledge production, advocacy, and educational policy. *Teachers College Record*, *22*, 1-3. Retrieved from http://www.tcrecord.org

Malin, J. R., Hardy, I., & Lubienski, C. (2019). Educational neoliberalization: The mediatization of ethical assertions in the voucher debate. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *40*, 217-233. doi:10.1080/01596306.2019.1569880

Martin, D. (2011a, March 31). Advocates: Indiana can lead US in schools overhaul. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Martin, D. (2011b, January 10). Advocates say most Hoosiers want school changes. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Martin, D. (2011c, February 14). Bill would send taxpayer cash to private schools. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Martin, D. (2011d, April 21). Ind. Senate OKs most expansive voucher plan in US. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Martin, D. (2011e, January 15). Indiana lawmakers working on details of voucher plan. *The Associated Press State & Local Wire*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Mayer, J. (2016). *Dark money: The hidden history of the billionaires behind the rise of the radical right*. New York, NY: Doubleday Press.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCollum, C. (2012, August 11). Charter, private schools show increased enrollment. *The Times*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Messer, L. (2016, January 29). Why school choice helps all kids (not just a few). *The Daily Signal*. Retrieved from https://www.dailysignal.com/2016/01/29/why-school-choice-helps-all-kids-not-just-a-few/

Miner, B. (1996). Splits on the right: Implications for education. In R. Lowe, B. Miner, L. Miller, B. Peterson, & R. Tenorio (Eds.), *Selling out our schools: Vouchers, markets, and the future of public education* (pp. 72-77). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Moe, T. M. (2008). Beyond the free market: The structure of school choice. *Brigham Young University Law Review*, *2008*, 557-592.

Ness, E. C., & Gándara, D. (2014). Ideological think tanks in the states: An inventory of their prevalence, networks, and higher education policy activity. *Educational Policy*, *28*, 258-280. doi:10.1177/0895904813515328

Nolan, B. (2011, August 12). School vouchers praised for broadening educational options. *The Herald-Times*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

Pence, M. (2014, December 18). A case for making the grade in Ind. *Journal & Courier*. Retrieved from https://www.jconline.com/story/opinion/2014/12/18/pence-case-making-grade-ind/20588579/

Piazza, P. (2016). Antidote or antagonist? The role of education reform advocacy organizations in educational policymaking. *Critical Studies in Education*, *60*, 302-320.

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2009). *Globalizing education policy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Reckhow, S., & Snyder, J. W. (2014). The expanding role of philanthropy in education politics. *Educational Researcher*, *43*, 186-195. doi:10.3102/0013189x14536607

Rollins, E. (2019, March 7). Arming teachers a "bad, bad, bad idea." *The Herald-Times*, pp. A1-2. Retrieved from https://www.hoosiertimes.com/herald_times_online/news/schools/state-s-education-chief-arming-teachers-a-bad-bad-bad/article_b4d2f2ab-37d3-5864-aa8d-baa49c83cf78.html

Saltman, K. J. (2010). *The gift of education: Public education and venture philanthropy*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scott, J., & Jabbar, H. (2014). The hub and the spokes: Foundations, intermediary organizations, incentivist reforms, and the politics of research evidence. *Educational Policy*, *28*, 233-257. doi:10.1177/0895904813515327

Scott, J., Lubienski, C., DeBray, E., & Jabbar, H. (2014). The intermediary function in evidence production, promotion, and utilization: The case of educational incentives. In K. S. Finnigan & A. J. Daly (Eds.), *Using research evidence in education: From the schoolhouse door to Capitol Hill* (pp. 69-92). New York, NY: Springer.

Shaffer, M. B., Ellis, J. G., & Swensson, J. (2018). Hoosier lawmaker? Vouchers, ALEC legislative puppets, and Indiana's abdication of democracy. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, *14*(4), 4-13.

Smith, S. (2011, March 31). Statehouse activity picking up. *Kokomo Tribune*. Retrieved from Nexis Uni.

SourceWatch. (2019). *Indiana ALEC positions*. Retrieved from https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Indiana_ALEC_Politicians

Stratford, M. (2016, November 23). Trump selects DeVos as education secretary. *Politico*. Retrieved from https://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/betsy-devos-education-secretary-trump-231804

Turner, C., Weddle, E., & Bolonon-Rosen, P. (2017, May 12). The promise and peril of school vouchers. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/05/12/520111511/the-promise-and-peril-of-school-vouchers

Usher, A., & Kober, N. (2011). *Keeping informed about school vouchers: A review of major developments and research*. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED522161

Waddington, R. J., & Berends, M. (2018). Impact of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: Achievement effects for students in upper elementary and middle school. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *37*, 783-808. doi:10.1002/pam.22086

Walberg, H. J. (2000, July 12). Market theory of school choice. *Education Week*, *19*, 46, 49. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2000/07/12/42walberg.h19.html

Wells, A. S. (2011, February 9). Why bipartisanism isn't working for education reform. *Education Week*, *30*, 28-29. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/01/27/20wells.h30.html

Welner, K. G. (2008). *NeoVouchers: The emergence of tuition tax credits for private schooling*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Witte, J. F. (2000). *The market approach to education: An analysis of America's first voucher program*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Author Biographies

Joel R. Malin in an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Miami University. Malin's research focuses on research-practice-policy connections, and upon the leadership and organization of complex, cross-sector collaborations. His book, The Role of Knowledge Brokers in Education (edited with Chris Brown), was published by Routledge in 2019.

Christopher Lubienski is a Professor of education policy at Indiana University. His research focuses on education policy, reform, and the political economy of education, with a particular concern for issues of equity and access. His current work examines (1) organizational responses to competitive conditions in local education markets, including geo-spatial analyses of education opportunities, and research on innovation in education markets, and (2) policymakers' use of research evidence as influenced by advocacy organizations. His newest book, Learning to Teach in an Era of Privatization (edited with T. Jameson Brewer), was published by Routledge in 2019.

Queenstar Mensa-Bonsu is a Doctoral student at Miami University. Her research interests concern global educational policy.