Exploring Public School Kindergartens Participating in an Open Enrollment/Inter-District Transfer Program
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Context of the Study

Interschool Open Enrollment
- **most common program in the US and in 47 states**
- **three major components**
  - a policy to allow students to attend a district other than the one in which they reside
  - a policy to specify a set of rules for which districts might accept open enrollment
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- **white school systems are seen as an incentive for quality in the literature, the relationships among multiple school choice policies/programs, geographic, and community are complex**

Related to Interschool Open Enrollment, the grades K-2 school under study has experienced the following changes in early childhood education:
- **schools with higher test scores and well-developed special education programs like the school under study, open enrollment may increase the low-income and disabled student population and provide a wider range of choices and services to families**
- **the most urban districts adjacent to Golden Triangle District (the study site) and the least urban students under inter-district school choice policy in 2018, whereas Golden Triangle District reflected four times the number of applications it could accept due to lack of space and issues related to special education programming**
- **at the time of the study, inter-district open enrollment was allowed at the 5K level but not (except for the school principal and approximately half of the children and families were White.**

Bakhtin’s (1981) Theory of Language in Society

- **Kindergarten represents a boundary between increasing repressive commercialization, the ideological path towards a new world order, and repressive institutional forces reflecting late-capitalism (the multiplicity of language and ideology and political power within the sphere of others as more dominant and ideological) and the international community**
  - students who had once attended the school, had left, and wished to return
- **open enrollment may increase the low income students of color, the signifier serves as a kind of slight in the discourse of the school and home relationships in common early childhood. My study suggests the importance of considering early childhood institutions within policy landscapes like school choice that matter for children and families through a critical lens.**

Method and Data Analysis

- **.fieldwork and ethnographic observations of early childhood professional development and achievement, such as sharing goals and visions, and the importance of interdistrict collaboration**
- **exploring and interviewing faculty, students, and families during the study years**

Discussion and Conclusion

- **several different lenses on school choice**
  - **accredited standards from other top-down policies do not include the full spectrum of the ideological forces that in the literature on school choice (Sherfinski, 2017)**
  - **the evidence on school choice policy, the generalization of context and the choice in the policy context changed**

Findings and Implications

Finding #1: **4K to SK Transitions**
- **students who have attended 4K in the district, live conveniently nearby, and thus are well known to the teachers**
  - **there is enough space and not that many students who wish to return through open enrollment and did not attend 4K at this school**
  - **this is because kids need both win and lose for their educational outcome.**

Finding #2: **Effects of “Wildc Peping” Students and Families**
- **Wildc Peping complements the logic of performativity that seeks to place numbers upon individuals (Ball, 2006)**
  - **critical lenses on school choice policy’**
- **academic standards and other top-down policies do not include the full spectrum of the ideological forces reflecting late-capitalism (the multiplicity of language and ideology and political power within the sphere of others as more dominant and ideological)**
- **stakeholder researchers have teacher voices who have left (almost teachers leave, left, don’t like the climate of the school)**
  - **the children who have attended 4K in the district, live conveniently nearby, and thus are well known to the teachers. There is an element of “space” for the teacher who receives a “wildcard” child because they are less often out of the group.**

Findings Research Questions

- **how does an inter-district school choice policy shape experiences of kindergarten teachers?**
  - **how does this policy influence relationships in an elementary school, in its classrooms, and between the school and families?**
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**Conceptual Framework**