Philadelphia is on the leading edge of the marketization trend in school reform. The name for this trend is the “portfolio” model.

“Portfolio” school district: one in which low-performing schools are closed and managers construct a portfolio of high performing schools that include charter schools and may direct some public monies to private and parochial schools.

Existing federal policy support the market or portfolio approach, which has contributed to market strategies having become the dominant and common sense view of school reform in the current era.

Various discourse has emerged surrounding this issue concerning the influences which charter schools can have on school systems as a whole. Specifically, those against privatization worry about:

● the lack of equity as a result of disproportionate closings of low-income and minority schools.
● damage to the public school system as a whole, which cannot compete in the same way,
● further contribution to inequality and lack of opportunity for the disadvantaged.

This research project will be focusing on the impact of advocacy groups on discourse within the media. Thus, we will look at the Philadelphia Daily News and the Philadelphia Tribune and examine the changes in discourse over time as more and more research and ideas come into being surrounding school choice.

By examining the ways in which advocacy groups talk about these issues, and looking for similar language within news articles, we feel that we will be able to more clearly judge what the public is being educated about and how this may affect changes to education policy in the future.

1. Analyze websites and interviews with corporate and public school advocacy groups in order to get an idea of the general language used by each side
2. Use general search terms to find relevant articles within both newspapers; narrow down these articles further by focusing on ten specific events from January 2012-Present
3. Establish a code book with relevant subject topics surrounding the school choice discourse, match these codes with the language used by advocacy groups
4. Using Dedoose, input the relevant articles and code them
5. Analyze the codes by looking at their prevalence within articles over time
6. Draw conclusions based upon changes in discourse

Our preliminary findings include specific language which is used by advocacy groups:

Public School Agenda

● Fair funding formula
● Equitable funding

Corporate Agenda

● High-quality schools
● Return on investment

As well as “bucket terms” which will be used to code individual articles:

1. Governance
   a. participation/decision-making
   b. structure
2. school choice/closures
3. funding
4. achievement/school practices
5. elections
6. common groups/actors mentioned

Our preliminary research has enlightened us to the fact that media scans are tedious and difficult to accurately perform. Our main concerns include:

1. finding an accurate, representative number of articles which will allow us to sufficiently study changes over time, while limiting the number to one that allows the project to be completed within a reasonable amount of time
2. coding and looking for those terms and components which accurately represent the main discourse of the media over time
3. coding in a non-biased way which will allow for changes over time to be seen accurately

As well as "bucket terms" which will be used to code individual articles:

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   a. participation/decision-making
   b. structure
2. school choice/closures
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4. achievement/school practices
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