

Cascade Commentary

January 18, 2017

Word Count 221

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QuickPoint! – The Oregon Education Solution Whose Time Has Come

By Kathryn Hickok

Next week is <u>National School Choice Week</u>, the world's largest celebration of parental choice and effective educational options for all children.

Students have different talents and needs and learn in different ways. The landscape of options to meet those needs is more diverse today than ever. These options include traditional public schools, charter schools, magnet schools, online learning, private schools, and homeschooling.

Oregon's 2012 "Mother of the Year" Bobbie Jager says, "The word 'choice' in our home means, 'of high quality and carefully selected,' as our children's education and schools should be. As parents, we need to be able to make these choices for each of our children."

Parents—not public school bureaucracies—should be in the educational "driver's seat." To really empower Oregon families, the Legislature should enact Senate Bill 437. This law would give parents who want to opt out of a public school that is not meeting their child's needs a portion of the per-student state funding for spending on their child's education in other ways.

With this "Education Savings Account" (analogous to a debit card for qualifying education expenses), parents can choose the schools or services that will meet their children's learning needs. Parental choice is the way of the future, and Education Savings Accounts for Oregon parents are a life-changing education solution whose time has come.

Cascade Policy Institute will host a National School Choice Week Policy Picnic on Wednesday, January 25, at noon. Oregon's 2012 "Mother of the Year" Bobbie Jager will talk about how she got involved in education advocacy and what's ahead for Oregon parents and students in 2017. Those interested in attending can find more information and RSVP here.

Kathryn Hickok is Publications Director and Director of the Children's Scholarship Fund-Portland program at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

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