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QuickPoint! – Flexibility and Students’ Needs Should Drive Education Options in 2020

By Kathryn Hickok

Oregon’s experience with COVID-19 will change the ways students in our state are educated. Out of this public health crisis can come a unique chance to improve educational opportunity for all children through a more personalized delivery of education.

Long before schools closed or switched to remote learning formats in March, the landscape of options to meet the needs of K-12 students was already more diverse than ever. Oregon children were receiving a quality education outside the traditional public school system through online schools (including public charters), private and parochial schools, homeschooling, tutoring and learning centers, magnet schools, and more.

Countless Oregon families are now being exposed to homeschooling and distance learning options for the first time. Many may choose to continue learning from home next fall due to their families’ personal circumstances, or because they are discovering that home learning is providing tremendous benefits for their students.

As Oregon leaders look for solutions to enable students to return to school, they shouldn’t ignore the potential of home-based learning options. Flexible, personalized education options already exist that deliver quality education to children in many environments besides brick-and-mortar public schools. All these options should be valued, and parents should have the knowledge and power to choose among them to find the best fit for their students.

Kathryn Hickok is Executive Vice President at [Cascade Policy Institute](http://www.cascadepolicy.org), Oregon’s free market public policy research organization. She is also Director of Cascade’s [Children’s Scholarship Fund-Oregon](http://www.childrenscholarshipfund.org) program, which has provided private scholarships worth more than \$3.3 million to lower-income Oregon children to help them attend tuition-based elementary schools since 1999.

