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QuickPoint! – Oregon Should Increase Parents' Education Options to Help Every Child Succeed

By Kathryn Hickok

January 24-30 is National School Choice Week, the world's largest celebration of parental choice in education and the diversity of options available to help today's students learn. Since 2011, National School Choice Week has affirmed that "every child deserves an effective, challenging, and motivating education."

"School choice" means empowering parents to choose the education options that are best for their individual children's needs, goals, talents, and circumstances. Traditional public schools, public charter schools, magnet schools, online learning, private and parochial schools, and homeschooling are all paths to success for K-12 students. Empowering parents to choose among many options can unlock the unique potential of every child. More than half the states in the U.S. currently give families more flexibility to direct their children's education through educational choice programs including scholarships, education tax credits, and Education Savings Accounts.

As Oregon works to reopen schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially urgent that policymakers recognize that each family needs to find the right fit for their student to learn effectively and safely. All options should be valued, and education policies should promote parents' ability to choose among them to help their child succeed.

Kathryn Hickok is Executive Vice President at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization, and Director of Cascade's Children's Scholarship Fund-Oregon program. CSF-Oregon 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.

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