

# EDUCATION NEWS & NOTES

## School Choice Champions Kids

by Andrew Campanella

(NAPS)—I remember one specific day in first grade like it was yesterday. It was the day when my teacher saw me hesitate as I started to read aloud to the class. “You can do it,” she told me, as I slowly started speaking. Lo and behold, she was right. I could do it! Her nudge of inspiration changed my life.

Reading isn’t every kid’s passion—some prefer physical science, videography, foreign languages, or global affairs. Whatever their passion may be, a caring teacher and the right learning fit can help children discover their interests and their talents.

That’s what school choice, and National School Choice Week (Jan. 23-29), is about: Championing how wonderful it is that kids have different talents and celebrating the different learning environments that inspire them.

Fortunately, there are many school choices available across America. They include traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online public schools, and homeschooling. Unfortunately, parents often aren’t always provided clear information about those choices.

To help, during School Choice Week, school leaders, parents, and students speak up about the schools and scholarships they love, spreading information and community support so more kids can find the right learning environment for them. While the pandemic has been a catalyst for parents to try new learning options, there are many more opportunities to be shared. You can join the national conversation by visiting [schoolchoiceweek.com](http://schoolchoiceweek.com) or using #schoolchoice on social media.

Those who celebrate the Week reflect America’s diverse school offerings. Some participants teach at or attend traditional public schools. Some love their neighborhood school and some use open enrollment to attend a public school outside their “zone.” Some participants have chosen public charter or public magnet schools, which are free to attend and offer specialized oppor-



**School choice ensures that every child can find a learning environment where they are inspired, successful, and happy.**

tunities, such as bilingual programs or STEM tracks. Others have found homes at private schools steeped in religious tradition. Still others attend flexible online schools, free in most states, or have chosen homeschooling or a learning pod.

If the idea of so much choice in K-12 education seems novel, a quick look around reveals that choice is a profoundly important part of all areas of American life. We value choice and self-determination in what food we eat, religious beliefs we hold, college we go to, and vehicle we buy. When it comes to the education of the next generation, wouldn’t we want to expand learning opportunities and allow families the right to self-determination?

Perhaps the biggest reason to celebrate school choice, however, just requires a look toward our kids. School choice champions kids, reflecting how they need different learning methods, styles and contexts to discover their talents and academic strengths and be inspired for life. Every kid deserves that.

This School Choice Week, I hope you will spread the good news about the different options that exist and help put kids where they belong — at the heart of education. You can do it!

• *Mr. Campanella is president of National School Choice Week and the author of The School Choice Roadmap: 7 Steps to Finding the Right School for Your Child.*