

January 2019 #19-02

## Summary:

Every January, National School Choice Week shines a spotlight on effective education options for all children. As a mother, I hope all parents can witness joy in their children's faces—not just once or twice a year, but throughout their schooling.

Word Count 627

***“[R]egardless of the school setting parents choose, education should always have children—and parents—as its focus.”***

## Options in Education Fest Celebrates Oregon Parents' Education Choices

By **Bobbie Jager**

As a mother of 13 children (no, that's not a typo) and grandmother of 17 more, I understand the critical role that parents play in the lives of their children. Education can make or break a child's future, and school choice gives parents the power—and the responsibility—to decide what education options fit their children best. That's why I support school choice and National School Choice Week.

Every January, National School Choice Week ([www.schoolchoiceweek.com](http://www.schoolchoiceweek.com)) shines a spotlight on effective education options for all children. A nonpartisan and nonpolitical celebration of educational choice, the Week raises awareness of the different K-12 education options available to children and families. National School Choice Week recognizes all K-12 options, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online academies, and homeschooling.

Started in 2011, National School Choice Week is now the world's largest annual celebration of opportunity in education. Parents, teachers, supporters, and students will gather at more than 40,000 events the week of January 20-26, 2019. These events will celebrate the ways in which school choice has brought quality educational options to millions of households nationwide.

Some parents may not know it, but they do have a wide array of options. In Oregon, school choice runs the gamut, from homeschooling to magnet schools offering specialized programs in subjects like the arts or sciences. Some school districts offer choice through open enrollment (children studying in public schools outside their neighborhood borders).

Some argue that school choice undermines public education. Far from it! For one thing, many school choice options are public options, including open enrollment, magnet schools, charter schools, and online learning. Oregon's publicly funded options include more than a hundred charter schools and 12 virtual (online) schools, all of which have greater autonomy and flexibility than traditional public schools.

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900  
f: 503.242.3822  
info@cascadepolicy.org  
www.cascadepolicy.org



But regardless of the school setting parents choose, education should always have children—and parents—as its focus. However well-intentioned, no school official can ever replace the love, care, and affection that parents will show a child. Because they care so much, and know so much about their sons and daughters, parents are the best-placed individuals to decide the right schooling option for their children. School choice gives them that power, that opportunity, and that voice.

The joy in children’s eyes at National School Choice Week festivities reminds me of my kids’ excitement when they came home from school after completing a big project or doing well on a test. When placed in an environment that nurtures and cultivates their special skills and abilities, children have a chance to shine, and their faces radiate happiness. As a mother, I hope all parents can witness that joy in their children’s faces—not just once or twice a year, but throughout their schooling.

Here in Oregon, we will use National School Choice Week to host the Options in Education Fest 2019: Exploring Your Child’s Education Opportunities, at the Salem Convention Center, Saturday, January 19, 2019. Parents and children can learn more about their options, including programs offered and application processes at various schools. This knowledge will provide parents with the power to make informed choices for their children. For more information and to attend the Options in Education Fest, visit [schoolchoicefororegon.com](http://schoolchoicefororegon.com).

A few years ago, I had the privilege of being named Oregon’s “Mother of the Year.” But in reality, all children see their parents as the Mother or Father of the Year. And all parents who make sure their children receive a quality education—and the better future that comes with it—qualify. So please celebrate National School Choice Week by considering your school options or coming out to the Options in Education Fest. Your children will thank you, both now and for many years to come.

---

*Bobbie Jager, Oregon’s 2012 “Mother of the Year,” is a parental choice advocate and the School Choice Outreach Coordinator for the Portland-based Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization. [A version of this article appeared in The Portland Tribune on December 18, 2019.](#)*

***“When placed in an environment that nurtures and cultivates their special skills and abilities, children have a chance to shine, and their faces radiate happiness.”***

Attention editors  
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute  
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.  
Suite 103  
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900  
Fax: (503) 242-3822

[www.cascadepolicy.org](http://www.cascadepolicy.org)  
[info@cascadepolicy.org](mailto:info@cascadepolicy.org)