

EDUCATION NEWS & NOTES

School Choice Can Help When You're Expecting The Unexpected

by Andrew Campanella

(NAPS)—Count the number of neighbors, relatives, or friends who tried a new form of schooling this year...the number is surprising, isn't it? Coronavirus has disrupted life and education for nearly a year now, and a myriad of families have considered or chosen a new learning environment. The need to share clear resources about learning choices has never been greater.

National School Choice Week (Jan. 24-30) is a public awareness effort designed to do just that. It's a week to spark conversation about what learning opportunities kids need, and how to increase opportunities for families in every zip code. The Week isn't political. Anyone and everyone is welcome to celebrate, share their personal views, and show some love for their favorite school or teacher.

School choice looks different in every community, but across America it includes six main types of schools. Many children thrive in traditional public schools. Yet, public magnet schools, public charter schools, private schools, online schools, and homeschooling bring out the full potential of other children and help them find happiness. You can learn more about what makes each school option unique at schoolchoiceweek.com/mystate.

Besides the six main types of schools, families' choices include whether they can access scholarships and special needs resources, and what class sizes, activities, and teaching methods are offered. Each family has their own priorities, and school choice allows parents to personalize their child's education based on those priorities and the changes life brings.

Speaking of personalization, maybe you or a friend joined a learning pod



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this year. This learning model, which has surged since the pandemic, consists of small groups of kids who learn, explore, and socialize together with the guidance of an adult. Faced with unexpected health and schedule changes, some families have found a lifeline in this extremely personalizable choice.

Amidst this past year's challenges are pivotal reminders. For example, education has a huge impact on children's daily life and happiness, and families urgently need customized, flexible learning environments that work in tandem with their values and routines.

This National School Choice Week, I encourage you to learn more about how education works and what options exist in your state, so that you can better advocate for your child and your community's learning needs. If we all do that, we can ensure that—pandemic or no pandemic—great education becomes a choice, not something left to chance.

• *Andrew 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.*