WELCOME TO EDCHOICE

THANKS, MILTON

STATE OF SCHOOL CHOICE

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS
By Robert C. Enlow

Earlier this year, we announced that we’d be changing our name from the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice to something that would both celebrate our past and better reflect our future.

Of course, this got me thinking about my first few meetings with Milton and Rose Friedman and how lucky I was to be involved with their legacy foundation. Those meetings seem like so long ago, but the lessons resonate every day: be rigorous and never be satisfied with limited freedom.

These are the same lessons and attitudes that were in plain sight when, on July 29, we announced that we are now EdChoice.

It’s our new name—and it’s the big idea that drives us to fight for K–12 students and families across America.

Our mission is simple: We are champions of choice who believe that empowering all families with full and unencumbered educational choice is the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society.

When we started 20 years ago, there were only five educational choice programs serving fewer than 10,000 students. Today, there are 61 programs in 30 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 400,000 students. But the choices are not equal, and they are certainly not big enough.

Using our rigorous research and unparalleled experience, we already know what works. Our plan is to usher in a new era of educational choice programs built to serve every student and ensure that all families have access to schooling that meets their needs.

Although we will no longer be using their name, we will never lose sight of universal school choice as the Friedmans’ intellectual legacy. We have been honored to be their legacy foundation since 1996 and to be the nation’s only organization solely dedicated to promoting their concept of educational choice. We are honoring their wishes by ceasing to use their names.

As David Friedman said at our 10th and final Friedman Legacy Day celebration on July 29, “I came here tonight to make it clear this is not a matter of rejection of my parents but doing what they wanted done.” They believed in the power of their idea and the work of EdChoice.

The Friedmans believed that government has a responsibility to educate the public, but that doesn’t mean writing every child a mandatory prescription for “public school.” That decision should be up to parents, who now have more options than ever before thanks to new school types, technologies and learning environments.

We trust families to know their kids better than bureaucrats, and we trust they will invest wisely in their educational futures. We know we’ll have to be unrelenting to reach our goal. As we move forward, EdChoice will focus on three main areas to advance high-quality school choice programs across the United States.

We will educate new and diverse audiences about the value of school choice. We will train and equip advocates with the skills they need to rise up and fight for students. And we will engage at the state level to advance programs that offer the most flexibility for all families.

Thank you, Milton and Rose, for giving us the powerful idea that parents should be in the educational driver’s seat.

The engine is revving. It’s time to buckle up. We’ve only just begun.

Welcome to EdChoice.
The major objective of educational vouchers is much more ambitious. It is to drag education out of the 19th century—where it has been mired for far too long—and into the 21st century, by introducing competition on a broad scale.

Nobel laureate Milton Friedman had a vision for schooling in America that would put parents, not bureaucrats, in the driver’s seat. He believed that government is responsible for funding, but not necessarily providing, an education for every child.

Twenty years ago, when he and his wife, Rose, established the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, his vision became our mission.

School choice in America is nothing new. After all, families who can afford it have always been able to buy or rent homes in neighborhoods with high-quality public schools. But what about those who can’t? The key to success is access.

Dr. Friedman believed that knocking down barriers would benefit society as a whole; all families, not just those with the ability to move, should be able to direct the funds set aside to educate their children.

The first modern voucher program in America was a small, local effort in Milwaukee that got started in 1990. For nearly 20 years, the movement grew slowly. There were other cities that followed Milwaukee’s lead, and a few states adopted small programs. Then came 2011, famously dubbed the “year of school choice” by the Wall Street Journal and other media outlets.

More than a dozen states adopted school choice programs that year, including Indiana, which is home to the nation’s largest voucher program, and Arizona, which adopted flexible education savings accounts that are now widely regarded as the future of the movement.

That brings us to today. There currently are 62 educational choice programs in 30 states and the District of Columbia, and public support for school choice continues to grow. Sadly, Dr. Friedman did not live to see the full implementation of the big idea he first wrote about in 1955, but his legacy burns bright as we move forward.

“Our goal is to have a system in which every family in the U.S. will be able to choose for itself the school to which its children go. We are far from that ultimate result. If we had that—a system of free choice—we would also have a system of competition, innovation, which would change the character of education.”

As we continue our work under a new name, we cherish Dr. Friedman’s words—and his powerful vision for a system of education that serves and empowers all families.
WE’VE COME A LONG WAY

In 1996, there wasn’t much choice in education. But over the last 20 years, our organization has helped transform schooling in America. A lot has happened since we got going, and today, we are widely regarded as the number one research organization in the movement and the leading advocates of educational choice for all families. And we’re just getting started.

More than 400,000 children using school choice programs
40 percent of children in schools not assigned by ZIP Code

62 educational choice programs enacted

1,000 legislators trained

Up to $5.1 billion taxpayer dollars saved

120 research reports and counting
WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

EdChoice. It’s a big and powerful idea—and it’s the new name of our organization.

OUR MISSION

The EdChoice mission is to advance educational freedom and choice for all as a pathway to successful lives and a stronger society.

EDUCATE

EdChoice is a national leader in school choice research. We publish dozens of studies, surveys, legislative analyses and blog posts each year to help the public, the media and key stakeholders understand how school choice is affecting families and students across the United States and internationally. Our premise is simple: The more people know about and understand educational choice, the more they can help advance the movement.

Learn more at www.edchoice.org/Research

TRAIN AND EQUIP

For too long, parents have been told to sit down, be quiet and let the professionals handle their kids. Policymakers have similarly been bullied by those who seek to protect and preserve an educational system that has chronically failed many of those who most depend on it as their pathway to a successful life. We offer a selection of trainings to help school choice supporters learn how to advocate for high-quality programs that put students first.

Learn more at www.edchoice.org/Training

ENGAGE

We know from experience that bringing new school choice programs to fruition takes a lot of hard work, and we know true educational choice faces long odds in places where allegiance to the past comes before serving students. That’s why we’re focused on engaging at the state level where it makes the most sense while supporting school choice efforts more broadly with our research, outreach and trainings.

Learn more at www.edchoice.org/StateWork
WHAT’S IN A NAME

Our new logo embodies our new organization with its sleek, modern design and bold colors. It also reflects the personality of EdChoice. It took more than a year to arrive at a look that encapsulates who we are as well as what we’re trying to accomplish. We believe it’s the perfect representation of all that we’ve done—and all that’s yet to come.

NEW LOGO BREAKDOWN

Education is trapped in a box but it is beginning to emerge
Choice is bold and so is the font

The lean of script font is propelling education toward choice
Choice is thinking outside the box

As we look toward a nation where educational choice is more universal and available than ever before, we will embrace our mission and our core values:

We are **intellectually honest**.
We are **trusted experts**.
We are **nonpartisan**.
We are **forward thinking**.
We are **optimistic**.
NATION CELEBRATES THE 10TH AND FINAL FRIEDMAN LEGACY DAY

Relive the day as we share some of the highlights from our big Indianapolis event.

For 20 years, the Friedman Foundation proudly advanced Milton and Rose D. Friedman’s vision of educational choice for all families. This year, we got a new name—EdChoice—and celebrated the 10th and final Friedman Legacy Day by saying thanks to the Friedmans one last time.

EdChoice President and CEO Robert Enlow announces the organization’s new name.

Milton and Rose Friedman’s son David explains that the name change is in keeping with his parents’ wishes.
WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL THE SUPPORTERS WHO HELPED US CELEBRATE THIS YEAR

Catherin Leonardi
Mark Richards
Maurice McNicholas
William Wessinger
Douangmala Khounnavongsa
Timothy Brothers
James Marotta
Curtis Everett
Jeffrey Warner
John Klawiter
Brice Vickery
Petron Konar
Brigid O’Neill
Rueben Riemer
John Duckworth
Thomas Finch
Donald MacDonald
Living Trust
Elliott Grayson
John Duckworth
Sharel Stager
Beverly Peterson
J. Seckelmann
Duane Enger
William Olivito
Joseph Carpenito
Jim Harris
Steven Kaatz
Judith Flohr
Evelyn Rehagen
Carmen Perry
Stanley S. Harris Trust
Frank Walterscheid
Earl Rondin
Betty Ernst
George Evans
Gladys Abell
Charles Moon
Donald Robinson
Larry Johnson
Bjorn Eek
Thomas Jakubowski
Samuel McEldowney
Alan Campbell
William McNagny
Margaret Chase
John Corothers
Rochelle Pearl
Mary Ellen Stroup
Willie Hardison
Paul Schauwecker
Robert Fennell
William Albers
George Hutter
Helen Goltl
Michael Phillips
Charles Sarahan
Bertram Siegel
James Perry
Robert Galgan
James Schul
Roger Passarella
D. Swindle
Stewart Mathis
Nicholas Mastroianni
H. Ford
Dean Scalia
Lyman Parrigin
David Parker
Joanne Aarseth
Stephen Davidson
Wendell Freeman
Rick Whitener
Douglas McKissack
Robert Silverman
Jarold Evans
Arlene Akina
Lawrence Fauci
Brian Kelly
Ann Doege
Ralph Childs
Norma Dorfner
Bruce Mowat
John Kirchmann
David Anderson
Michael Brockelman
David McMillan
Arthur Margulis
Harriet Chase
Leigh Johnson
Michael Crucitt
Peter Knapp
Michael Vanderveen
John Musker
John Hazel
Ronald Tellier
Edwin Manske
Frederick Thatcher
Stephen Elkins
Albert Richardson
Frederick Geissinger
J. McGraw
Richard Cooley
Francis Sheahan
Mark Clinard
Wyatt Haskell
Robert Pruger
Luis Mola
John Creedon
Benjamin Bernstein
Dennis Marten
Warren Roberts
Richard Marx
Richard Marx
Henry McDonnell
John Cross
Robert Gatliff
David Ihle
Sylvia Kosciolk
Arlene Nickerson
Thomas Reilly
Virgil Cicoria
John Kirscher
Dr. & Mrs. Richard A. Bilas
Jeanne Jennings
Marvin Kooper
Nick Runnebohm
Richard Timberlake
Jim Hicks
Everett Berg
Donald Dunn
Phyllis Nicholas
George Shultz
John Ackerman
Kurt St. Angelo
The Cly-Del Manufacturing Company
School choice. The term was demonized in my teacher credentialing courses and by my own mother, who had been teaching in public schools since she was 20 years old. Everyone was doing it, so I toed the line as well, but only for a short while.

My Ah-Ha Moment

My first teaching assignment was in an inner-city elementary school, where 100 percent of the students were in the free and reduced-price lunch program and all but one of my students was an English Language Learner. The school was under a lot of scrutiny by district officials to raise test scores. Feeling the pressure, I dug in.

I remember one specific lesson, a language arts lesson during our uninterrupted three-hour daily block of language arts, regarding spelling patterns. I recalled reviewing the lesson the day before and thinking of my students, how disengaging the lesson would be, especially for an "at-risk" population, so I decided to implement different learning modalities into my lesson.

The lesson itself dictated I write the words on the board and read them aloud, and then refer to the alphabet chart, sounding out each letter while they sat, stationary, absorbing it all. This lesson aligned with the presumption that my fifth graders could not read or write and, thus, must be delivered via this scripted curriculum in my hands.

I looked out into my classroom of 36 students, eyes glazed over from boredom and hunger, and altered the lesson right then and there.

I printed out the words, affixed sticky tape to the back and distributed them at random to each group. I told the students to try to read the words together and make sense of them and then discern if there was any pattern. Even my most struggling students were engaged in the lesson for once. Just then, a district official walked in, and by lunchtime, I had a letter in hand stating I was being placed on an improvement plan. Apparently, I didn't know how to teach.

I looked at my classroom of struggling children, the ones statistics say often drop out and continue generational poverty, and my heart ached. My students were not failing school; school was failing them, and I didn't want to be a part of it.

What It's Like “Switching Sides”

I do not have anything against public school, although it may seem so. I am against banning school choice.

FROM STATUS QUO DEFENDER TO EDUCATIONAL CHOICE ADVOCATE

This educator of 15 years is ready to share her story and inspire other teachers to speak out.

By Gretchen Davies
“Twenty years ago, before this body of evidence existed, there was some excuse for making policy based on speculation, anecdotal observation, and intuition. Today, the effects of these programs are known, and there is no longer any excuse for policymakers and opinion leaders to be ignorant of the facts.”

When we published this report in 2009, only 19 studies existed on the effects of school choice. Since then, opponents of school choice have built up their arsenal of false claims in their efforts to misinform and drive down support. Now, 100 empirical school choice studies from across the country are available to bring us closer to the truth.

WHAT OPPONENTS SAY: School choice doesn’t improve outcomes for students.

THE TRUTH: The majority of gold-standard studies of school choice programs find kids do better with school choice. Of the 18 random-assignment studies on the topic, 14 show positive effects; two show no visible effect; two show negative effects.

This edition of A Win-Win Solution is the first to feature studies that find negative effects on choice participants. Both of those studies examined the same program—the Louisiana Scholarship Program. The reports show student deficits in the program’s first year, but student improvement in its second year. Because its results appear to be anomalous, researchers are watching this program closely. For a more thorough breakdown of that study’s findings and what they mean for parents and policymakers, visit our blog at www.edchoice.org/LAoutcomes.

WHAT OPPONENTS SAY: School choice worsens racial segregation in schools.

THE TRUTH: Public schools are more segregated now than they were in the 1960s, according to Gary Orfield, an education professor and co-director of the Civil Rights Project. Not one study has ever found school choice causes segregation in schools. Actually, data show school choice programs help students leave more segregated schools to join more integrated schools. Of the 10 empirical studies on the topic, nine show a positive effect; one shows no visible effect; none show a negative effect.

WHAT OPPONENTS SAY: Private schools have a bad influence on kids.

THE TRUTH: Many studies find school choice programs have a positive effect on students’ civic values, including tolerance for the rights of others, likelihood to vote or volunteer and more. Of the 11 studies on the topic, eight find a positive effect; three find no visible effect; none find a negative effect. In fact, one study finds school choice reduces the likelihood of a student engaging in criminal activity after graduation.

SYNTHESIS OF 100 EMPIRICAL SCHOOL CHOICE STUDIES FINDS POSITIVE OUTCOMES

As educational choice grows, so does the evidence proving it works.

The educational choice track record: Hall of Fame Numbers

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Advancing educational freedom and choice for all as a pathway to successful lives and a stronger society.