



# What Can I Do?

*A few ways you can support school choice*

---

We know that there are many demands on your time in this busy world and we appreciate your attention to this most important issue. You may be wondering,

**“What’s next?”**

**“What can I do to help?”**

**“What part can I play in improving educational choice in my community, state, and country?”**

---

The National School Choice Week team has developed a few suggested follow-up activities.

## For Parents

If you are interested in re-evaluating your children’s current educational environment, here are some things you can do today:

- First, find out how much your child learned last year – and talk to your child about his or her experiences at school. Look up your child’s scores on standardized tests, and ask your school’s principal to explain his/her expectations for student growth. Look online (on state report cards, district report cards, or on [www.greatschools.org](http://www.greatschools.org)) to see how students in your child’s school performed in subjects like reading, writing and math. Use this information to decide whether you want your child to change schools.
- Start to look up different school choice options that might be available to you. Your local school district may not provide this information. Look on your state education department’s website, on the website of a statewide school choice or education reform organization, or make telephone calls to get specific answers from local and state officials. Find out if your state or school district allows students to attend public schools in other areas (this is called public school open enrollment, or inter/intra district school choice), or if you have public charter schools, magnet schools, or statewide virtual schools. And don’t forget private schools! Some states empower parents with scholarships or vouchers to send their children to the private schools of their parents’ choice; even if these programs are not available, you might qualify for financial assistance from the school. Of course, you can also consider homeschooling your children – which millions of families find very effective.
- If you are ready to find a new school for your child, remember that January and February are the key months to research the schools you might send your children to for the upcoming school year. Visit our website and download our informational tip-sheet from our resources page about how to select the right schools for your children.

## For Everyone

- **Research the quality of your local public schools online.** Some states give schools A - F grades, which are available on the website of your state’s department of education. You can also find out how your local schools are doing by visiting [www.greatschools.org](http://www.greatschools.org). If you aren’t happy with the quality of schools in your area – or with the schooling options available to families in your community – send letters to your elected officials requesting that they consider increasing the availability of education options. State and local policymakers – such as your state legislature and governor, or your local school board – actually have much more control over these types of issues than Congress. Visit [www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected](http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected) to find the contact information for your statewide elected officials.

*continued...*

- **Consider writing a letter to the editor** of your local newspaper describing your support for school choice or telling your personal story or views about school choice. A surprising number of people read the opinion pages, and by starting a discussion about school choice in your community, you're making a difference – even if people don't agree with you. You can look up contact information for local newspapers in your area at [www.usnpl.com](http://www.usnpl.com). Keep letters to the editor under 150 words, and send them in via e-mail.
- **Look up the calendar for your local school board meetings** and plan to attend some of them. Even though school choice may not be on the calendar at every meeting, you can have your voice heard if you believe public dollars are not being spent effectively.
- **Research education proposals at the state level.** Set up Google News alerts for key terms – like “school choice” in your state – and contact the offices of legislators who are recommending changes that you agree with; you may be invited to speak at a committee hearing. Find out where your local elected officials (city and state) stand on education issues that matter to you – and then let them know what you think!
- **Get involved in local, state, and national groups.** Join e-mail lists to help you stay informed. Several national advocacy groups provide links to local and state groups that would value your participation. You can find a comprehensive list of education-related groups on our website, [www.schoolchoiceweek.com](http://www.schoolchoiceweek.com).
- **Consider using Facebook, Twitter, and other social media** to post – and repost – information about school choice. (Look up search terms such as “school choice” and “education reform,” or search for hashtags like #schoolchoice and #edreform, to see what people are saying and who is speaking out on issues that matter to you.) If you feel that supporters of educational choice in your community aren't having their voices heard, consider starting your own blog. You'd be surprised at how effective these types of activities can be, and how they can get decision-makers to take notice.

