

Minnesota parents urged to start school search for 2014-2015 school year right now

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If Minnesota parents want to choose new schools for their children for the upcoming (2014-2015) school year, they need to start researching the schooling options available to their children right away. That's the message from organizers of National School Choice Week, which this week featured 90 events across the North Star State and a history-making 5,500 events nationwide.

School Choice Week focused attention on the importance of empowering parents with the freedom to choose the K-12 schools that best meet their children's individual learning needs. The effort's president, Andrew Campanella, said that the longer parents wait to exercise the options available to them, the less choices they'll have.

"The process of beginning to research new schools for your children for 2014-2015 should begin right now," Campanella said. "Seats in great schools are already filling up for the next school year, so parents can't afford to wait until the spring or the summer if they want to select a different school for their children. The winter is the time to start."

Campanella said that parents should start the school selection process by making a list of desired attributes that they hope to see in the ideal school for their child -- such as student achievement in key subject areas, parental involvement at the school level, class sizes, the theme of a school, or the qualifications of school personnel -- and then visit schools that match the criteria developed by the parent.

"It's important that parents visit the schools that their children might possibly attend, and ask as many questions as necessary of teachers, principals, and other parents," Campanella said. "Selecting a school for your child is a very personal decision. Every child is unique and different, and there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to educating children."

National School Choice Week raises awareness of the need for effective education options for parents, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, magnet schools, online academies, private schools, and homeschooling. The goal of the effort is to inform and educate parents about the school choice options available to them, while providing a platform for families to demand even greater opportunities.

For a list of the specific types of school choice programs and policies in Minnesota, visit www.schoolchoiceweek.com/states