



**CONTACT:** Allison Aubuchon, APR  
[communications@allisonaubuchon.com](mailto:communications@allisonaubuchon.com) | 850.766.5255

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## **Expect “School Choice Movement” to Speak Boldly for Families** *New Organization Launches during School Choice Week*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2019)** – National School Choice Week is underway. And in Florida – a state that inspired the nation with its school choices and student outcomes – the “movement” just got stronger. A new organization aimed at ensuring every family can choose the education environment that is best for their child launched this week, aptly named the “School Choice Movement.”

“The School Choice Movement advocates for the improvement and expansion of school choice in all of its forms,” said **Erika Donalds, School Choice Movement chairman of the board, mother of three boys and former Collier County School Board Member.** “We are committed to securing the world-class education options that children deserve, being a resource for the facts, and a bold, honest voice for the school choice movement.”

**[View the School Choice Movement Launch Video](#)**



Donalds recently left her job as a finance executive to follow her passion for education and dive into school choice full-time. During her tenure as a Collier County School Board member, she co-founded the Florida Coalition of School Board Members and served as the group's President. She was appointed to Florida's 2017-2018 Constitution Revision Commission by then-Speaker of the House Richard Corcoran, and recently served on Governor DeSantis' Advisory Committee on Education and Workforce Development. Donalds also runs The Optima Foundation, a non-profit organization established to expand and support superior schools of choice.

"Hoping students can play catch-up later in life is not an option," added **Donalds**. "Children have this critical window for education. I will never fault a parent for doing everything in his or her power to make a better path for their child. For parents who want more for their children, for parents who know a better education setting can and will change their child's entire life, I am proud to speak up for you. Where districts raise roadblocks to competition, or legislators seek to make it difficult to participate, we will work on the side of parents to open up opportunity."

Also leading the organization on its executive board are Shawn Frost and Scott Shine. Shawn Frost serves as the organization's director of advocacy. He is an author, former public school science teacher, and managing member of MVP Strategy and Policy, LLC. Frost served on the Indian River County School Board from 2014-2018 and is also a founder and past president of the Florida Coalition of School Board Members. Scott Shine was elected to the Duval County School Board in 2014, representing the Beaches District and serving on the Value Adjustment Board. He has served in several leadership positions with the City of Jacksonville, including being a member of the Jacksonville Ethics Commission and the Jacksonville Waterways Commission.

The School Choice Movement says it will support transparency of outcomes, so parents have the necessary information along with the ability to move their child to another school if they feel their student is not being well-served for any reason. It states families should not have to go to extreme lengths to gain access to the schools that best serve

them.

“The newly formed School Choice Movement will promote and advocate for every student in Florida to have a world class, customized education through greater school choice options,” said **Representative Paul Renner**. “I am excited to see this group enter the debate as an advocate on the side of students and stand up to those who prefer to defend institutions and the status quo. For taxpayers, school choice programs in Florida continue to provide a quality education option at less cost. That is a fact. The School Choice Movement will support better educational settings in every form and help us take our state's education system to the next level.”

The School Choice Movement says it is working to overcome hurdles to put every option within reach for every family. During the 2019 Legislative Session, the organization will be advocating for:

- **Education Scholarship Accounts** -- Ensure that every family in Florida has access to education freedom and the ability to send their children to a public, private or charter school of their choosing.
- **Independence for Charter Schools** -- Charter schools of choice are currently approved and overseen by their competition. This strained relationship takes funding out of the classroom and is spent on contentious battles between two parties who should be partnering to help children.
- **School Board Term Limits** -- One humongous barrier to the expansion of school choice is the defense of “the way things have always been.” Term limits reduce the power of incumbency and make elections more competitive, in-turn increasing innovative thinking on school boards by bringing in fresh ideas and experiences.
- **Transportation Innovation & Funding** -- Make great schools more accessible to the children who need them most.

“The work toward equity of opportunity for every child continues with the School Choice Movement,” added **T. Willard Fair, president of the Urban League of Greater Miami**. “When a mom or dad wants something better for their child, watch out. The tireless school choice advocates have their work cut out for them every year, but we can help turn the ship when we work together.”

The School Choice Movement says it rejects the idea that pro-school choice means anti-public education, but the organization opposes an education monopoly and encourages proliferation of education freedom, which allows parents to ‘vote with their feet’ and decide which high-quality options are best for their children.

“Parents know their children and their needs,” said **Patti Sullivan, homeschool parent and past president of the Indian River Homeschoolers Association**. “Our decision to homeschool is working for us. For another family, the best classroom may be in a traditional, charter or online setting. When a child finds that right setting, amazing things

happen. At the end of the day, we all want our children to be happy, healthy, and ready for the real world – that should be the measure of success.”

To learn more about how to get involved or to share your story, visit [www.SchoolChoiceMovement.org](http://www.SchoolChoiceMovement.org).

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