



Carrie Sampson's Public Comment on the U.S. Department of Education's Evidence-Based Literacy, Education Choice, and Returning Education to the States Proposed Priorities

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on Proposed Priorities and Definitions—Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions on Evidence-Based Literacy, Education Choice, and Returning Education to the States.

I am an associate professor of education policy and leadership. I have conducted research on elected school boards, community and family engagement, school district leadership, school desegregation, and school choice. I am also the parent of two school-aged children enrolled in public schools in Arizona, which is one of the most hyper-competitive education choice states in the nation.

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the Department of Education's proposed "Education Choice" expansion priorities outlined in ED-2025-OS-0020-0001. This proposal would systematically undermine public education and exacerbate educational inequities.

The Arizona state legislature first established education choice policies in 1994 and expanded them significantly since then. After more than 30 years of these policies, the state has experienced a proliferation of charter schools. The state has also instituted open enrollment— allowing families to enroll their children in schools outside of their residential school district. Arizona also serves as ground zero for the universal Education Savings Account (ESA) policies the Department seeks to expand nationally. The evidence from our state's implementation of education choice policies and priorities serves as a cautionary tale of the harmful consequences of such expansion of education choice.