

Landmark Study on Georgia's K-12 Options Unveiled at School Choice Week Event

Universal education choice can begin in fall 2018, says study author

ATLANTA, GA, USA, January 23, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Atlanta – Georgia can and should implement universal educational choice for K-12 students beginning in the fall of 2020, national education expert Dr. Ben Scafidi told attendees today at a Georgia Public Policy Foundation Leadership Breakfast celebrating National School Choice Week.

Scafidi, a professor of economics at Kennesaw State University and Senior Fellow at the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, unveiled a comprehensive, 54-page study at today's event: "[Georgia 2020: Educational Choice for All K-12 Georgia Students.](#)"

In it, he proposes a system that would enable families "to choose the schools and non-school education services they deem best for their children" and educators "to offer their best versions of school and other educational services to the public."

“

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Ben Scafidi



Georgia's winners of ExcelinEd's school choice video contest were honored. From left, Ryan Mahoney and Adam Peshek of ExcelinEd, Grand Prize winner Cabral Clements, People's Choice winner Damacia Howard, and Georgia Public Policy Foundation Vice President Benita Dodd.

Scafidi's landmark study outlines a plan that would provide students with universal education savings accounts (ESAs); increase to \$150 million the cap on donations to the tuition tax credit scholarship program; offer ESAs to homeschool students and add ESAs to Georgia's special needs scholarship program; equalize student funding between traditional public and charter public schools; increase the funding for cyber charter schools, and allow local school boards to opt out of the current state testing system and choose instead from among annual norm-referenced tests on a state-approved list.

“By my count, there are 13 different policy actors – either elected officials or government agencies – that govern schools in the traditional public school sector,” Scafidi notes.

“When parents ask for specific accommodations for their children – whether large or small – it is often difficult for public school employees to make changes to help these children, even when they agree with the parents.

“Universal choice across education sectors for families, coupled with permissionless entry for educators, would allow for a ‘free’ and universal system of K-12 education that is analogous to the free systems for many goods and services that have enriched humanity.”

The estimated 60 attendees included representatives of the state Board of Education (past and present), the Georgia Charter Schools Association; the State Charter Schools Commission; several charter schools including Georgia Cyber Academy (online charter school) and Brighten Academy of Douglasville; the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and several colleges; the United Negro College Fund; the Foundation for Excellence in Education (ExcellinEd); Georgia’s GOAL Student Scholarship Organization; the Faith and Freedom Foundation; YouScience, a career guidance tool that partners with the TCSG and state Department of Education, and several candidates for political office.



Showing off their trademark National School Choice Week scarves at the Georgia Public Policy Foundation's event are Scott Johnson, State Board of Education member; Foundation Vice President Benita Dodd; Mark Peevy, Executive Director of Secondary Educatio

The Foundation joined Ryan Mahoney of ExcellinEd in honoring Georgia-based winners of ExcellinEd's national Choices in Education Video Contest. They were announced this week to coincide with National School Choice Week. Cabral Clements of Atlanta took home a grand prize of \$15,000 for highlighting his experience at North Springs Charter High School, and People's Choice winner Damacia Howard of Union City, Ga., a ninth-grader at Georgia Cyber Academy, won \$5,000 for her video about her online education.

National School Choice Week (January 21-27) annually marks the Foundation's first event of the year. Last year about 28,000 events around the nation celebrated this nonpartisan, nonpolitical public awareness effort; this year, there are more than 32,000 events and Gov. Nathan Deal officially proclaimed January 21-27 as Georgia School Choice Week.

Access the study by Dr. Ben Scafidi here:

http://www.georgiapolicy.org/ftp_files/IAEDChoicefinal180121.pdf.

About Ben Scafidi: Scafidi is a professor of economics and founder and director of the Education Economics Center at Kennesaw State University. He is a Senior Fellow with the Georgia Public Policy Foundation and a Friedman Fellow with EdChoice (formerly the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice). Previously, Scafidi served as director of education policy for the Georgia GOAL Scholarship Program; as the first chair of the state of Georgia's Charter Schools Commission; as a member of Georgia's Charter Advisory Committee; as the Education Policy Advisor to Governor Sonny Perdue; on the staff of both of Governor Roy Barnes' Education Reform Study Commissions, and as an expert witness for the state of Georgia in school funding litigation. He received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Virginia and his bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Notre Dame. Scafidi and his wife, Lori, live with their four children in

Kennesaw.

[About the Georgia Public Policy Foundation](#): Established in 1991, the Foundation is an independent, state-focused think tank that proposes market-oriented approaches to public policy to improve the lives of Georgians. Regular events include Leadership Breakfasts and Policy Briefing Luncheons. Weekly publications are the Friday Facts and Friday Idea commentaries. Visit our Web site at georgiapolicy.org. Join The Forum at forum.georgiapolicy.org. Like the Foundation's [Facebook page](#); follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

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