

Shining the Light on Schools of Choice

January 24-30 is National School Choice Week, a week set aside to focus attention on different, effective education options for children: traditional public schools, charter schools, magnet, online, private, and home education options. This edition of *The Herald* addresses how MCA is a school of choice, and why that is good for our community and our families.

Options are good, especially in education, as most Americans are at the whim of the educational district in which they reside. In many areas, unless parents choose to homeschool their children, public education is a one size fits all option. School choice is important, because as any parent will attest, children are not one-size-fits-all beings. Most fundamentally, schools of choice can choose their philosophy of education, which will affect the type of teacher, the type of curriculum, and the educational outcome. MCA has conscientiously chosen a moral and democratic classicism, which cultivates wise and intelligent young men and women and which helps develop each individual into all he or she can be.



As a school of choice, we work harder. MCA is not afforded the luxury of having students attend simply as the result of a government requirement. Parents choose to send their children to MCA, and just knowing that causes us to have a well thought out vision for our students, to constantly search for better and stronger curricula, to employ teachers that truly want to teach children and not just draw a paycheck, and to be vigilant in helping our families know that there's far, far more to a proper education than just getting a high school diploma, going to college, or finding a job.

One of the most important aspects of school choice is that it promotes healthy competition, thereby encouraging growth for all. To understand this better, think of a hypothetical small town with only one grocery store. This grocery store offers enough for people to obtain their necessary food and supplies, and by and large, people are content with the products offered. One day, another grocery store comes to town. This new store, with its shiny produce bins, good lighting, wide aisles, and additional products offers stiff competition to the original store. Before long, the original store revamps its décor and product availability. Competition between the two stores brought about positive change, and now the people of the small town have more options all around for their food and supply purchases. The process is the same in education. A choice of a different school provides parents with more options for educating their children and encourages growth in the entire educational infrastructure of the community as a competition for students ensues. Not only has MCA made a difference for our students, we've helped improve education in the entire community, and as a charter school, our community is made up of, not just Surry County, but surrounding counties, as we have no district boundaries in North Carolina.

Schools of choice also create great opportunities for children to access education that incorporates democratic values. According to an EdChoice survey (EdChoice.org), schools of choice offer more civic related instruction and



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pay more attention to character development than traditional schools. As our vision states, we want to create virtuous, intelligent, citizens who can lead in a constitutional republic. Democratic values and character development are at our very core.

Schools of choice also make schools more accountable. With a choice in schools, parents have the ability to take their children and their tax dollars elsewhere. This “bottom-up” business model essentially gives parents more say in schools. Furthermore, since charter schools in North Carolina only get about seventy-five percent of the funding that traditional public schools receive, we are careful stewards with our money, having a flatter administrative hierarchy, more economic facility construction (MCA’s last build was thirty-two percent lower than the state rate), and reasonable growth and expansion programs. Tax dollars awarded to MCA are used very wisely as you can see from the quality of teachers hired, our beautiful facility, and how we do business in general.

Finally, having a choice can make for more highly educated students. Parents can choose for their children to attend better performing schools than those relegated to them by the state. In many cases, charter schools provide more reading and math instruction than district schools, and as a result, children, even those who might be at a greater risk for failure, find success. MCA provides a full year of all major subjects, English, mathematics, science, and history, plus art, music, technology, voice, and instrumental music, and more than sixty electives.

Millennium Charter Academy is proud to be a school of choice. Our classical philosophy, attention to character development, and robust curriculum make us different than the schools around us. As the granite sign in our main parking lot says, we are a better choice in education.

*To our parents, thank you for
choosing MCA.*

