

How school choice transformed the lives of two lesbian parents and their family

By Brad Polumbo

There's a pernicious myth that surrounds the national debate over school choice.

Critics of educational freedom, who are usually Democrats, echo the teachers' unions' talking points and decry programs that allow parents to choose what school their children attend as a handout to white, wealthy, religious Americans. Yet if you tune out the noise and take even a cursory look into the real people school choice programs have uplifted, this narrative quickly falls apart.

Wealthy white people already have school choice, in that they can afford whatever private school they fancy for their children. It's really most often black, minority, poor, or otherwise disadvantaged students who are given opportunities through school choice programs such as charter schools and private school tuition vouchers.

The story of the Davis family, as [reported](#) by Ron Matus of *ReDefinED*, offers a potent example of how the true beneficiaries of school choice often don't fit the stereotype critics paint. Matus, a school choice expert and proponent, describes the experiences of Alicia and Kaitlin Davis in detail.

Both members of the happily married lesbian couple were failed during their youth by our public school system. As a high school student, Alicia struggled with ADHD and teen pregnancy.

Participating in a Florida school choice program, the McKay Scholarship, was the only thing that allowed her to graduate high school successfully. Attending the Foundation Academy, an inclusive private religious school, offered Alicia a new lease on life.

Kaitlin, meanwhile, was bullied viciously in her public school after she came out as gay. She struggled with depression, and her attendance rates started to slip. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to qualify for Florida's school choice programs at the time. Alicia's parents struggled with tuition but were able to send her to the Foundation Academy for two years, helping her escape her troubles and graduate. School choice expansion would mean parents like hers wouldn't have to struggle just to give their child a chance.

Now Kaitlin and Alicia have two young children, Brian and Leah. The twins were failed by their public school, as they faced violent bullying and both struggled with speech impediments. Luckily, a generation later, Florida's school choice program allowed Kaitlin and Alicia to send them both to the Foundation Academy, where they are much happier.

"That school is like a giant family," Alicia told [ReDefinED](#). But for this unorthodox family — no one's idea of privileged — it's a family only made possible by school choice.