Parents should be able to choose appropriate schools for their children

I want equality of opportunity for my children when it comes to their education. Living on the south side, where resources are limited and options rare, I want flexibility in choosing the educational environments for my kids.

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship looked like a light at the end of the tunnel, but to our dismay, we were placed on a wait list along with 13,000 other students.

The program provided approximately 100,000 low-income and working-class kids — about 70 percent of whom are black or brown — scholarships to attend private K-12 schools this year.

We weren’t among those students, but we haven’t lost hope.

Gov. DeSantis pledged to eliminate the wait list and asked the Legislature to create an “Equal Opportunity Scholarship” last week. I hope the Legislature can follow through, as my youngest loves her private VPK school and wishes to remain enrolled for kindergarten. We can’t afford the tuition without the scholarship.

As a community organizer, I work to help improve equity and equal access for the disadvantaged in our community on the south side. My children attended public schools in the very community I served.

The schools in our areas are doing their best with what they have. But with there are multiple issues contributing to the learning atmosphere. I felt like my children were left unchallenged by the educational curriculum and there was no space for extra stimulation.

As a mom of seven, I want what’s best for my kids, including the best schools. If a school is not able to provide what my children need, then I believe I should have an option to send my kids to a different school.

Let me be clear, I’m not badmouthing public schools. My children had excellent educators and the facilities were state of the art. I still volunteer my time helping at my local community school. My two oldest are still thriving in an pre-IB program in a public school and my husband is a public-school environmental science teacher.

But I also recognize that not all children learn the same way. One child may need a challenging environment, while another may need a helping hand. What works for one may not work for another. That’s why we need school choice, especially in disadvantaged communities.

To me school choice is about equity and equal opportunity.

I am hoping and praying funds are allocated to this new scholarship and more families like mine can be served. Having the opportunity to choose a quality school, whether it be public, private or charter, should be available for every family, especially those in underserved communities.

Talethia Edwards is co-founder of the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association, and founder of the Leaping for Literacy Campaign. Most importantly, she’s a loving wife and a mother to seven.