



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**BRIGHTER CHOICE PROJECT LAUNCHES T.V. ADS
TO INFORM PARENTS ABOUT ALBANY SCHOOL OPTIONS**

New television ads aimed at informing Albany parents about their school options began airing today, announced Tom Carroll, project director of the Brighter Choice Public School Choice Project.

The public-education ad campaign is part of a five-year \$4.4 million “public school choice” project financed by the U.S. Department of Education. The grant is administered locally by the Brighter Choice Public School Choice Project, an offshoot of the Brighter Choice Charter Schools.

The commercial features Sabrina Johnson, an Albany resident and working mother of two sons. Her 1st-grade son attends the Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys, and her 10th-grade son attends Albany High School. Ms. Johnson, who works for a local bank, was born and raised in Albany and is a graduate of Albany High School.

The Brighter Choice ads will be running on network and cable television stations for several weeks. Additional versions of the ad, featuring other parents, will be launched in coming weeks. The campaign was conceived and developed by Mason Tolman of Sawchuk Brown Associates, and was produced by Ann Marie Lizzi of Time Warner.

The need for greater efforts to inform parents about the school options in Albany was underscored by the findings of a recent parent survey by the Brighter Choice Public School Choice Project, Carroll said. According to that survey, a startling 71 percent of the parents in three poorly performing Albany public schools did not realize that their children are attending schools on the State Education Department’s roster of failing public schools. “The survey showed the need to do a much better job informing parents about the quality of schools their children attend, and their rights to explore other options,” explained Carroll.

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Parents who respond to the new Brighter Choice television ads – which they may do by calling toll free **1-800-457-0397** – will receive information on Albany’s charter schools, magnet schools, and the district’s open-enrollment process. Included among the information are available state test scores for each of Albany’s public schools.

Parents interested in transferring their children to schools in nearby districts are urged to contact Brighter Choice at **(518) 694-4113**. A number of school districts that neighbor Albany, including North Colonie, South Colonie, Guilderland, and East Greenbush, have indicated that they are open to accepting some transfers from the Albany district, according to Marjorie Rush, a Brighter Choice project consultant and former director of the State Education Department’s Office of Civil Rights and Inter-Cultural Relations. Using money from the multi-year federal grant, Brighter Choice is prepared to help defray the cost of out-of-district tuition for Albany parents who switch to these nearby public schools and to help arrange transportation, Ms. Rush explained.

Although total figures for the Brighter Choice public education advertising campaign were not yet available, Carroll indicated that the media buy was “substantial.”

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