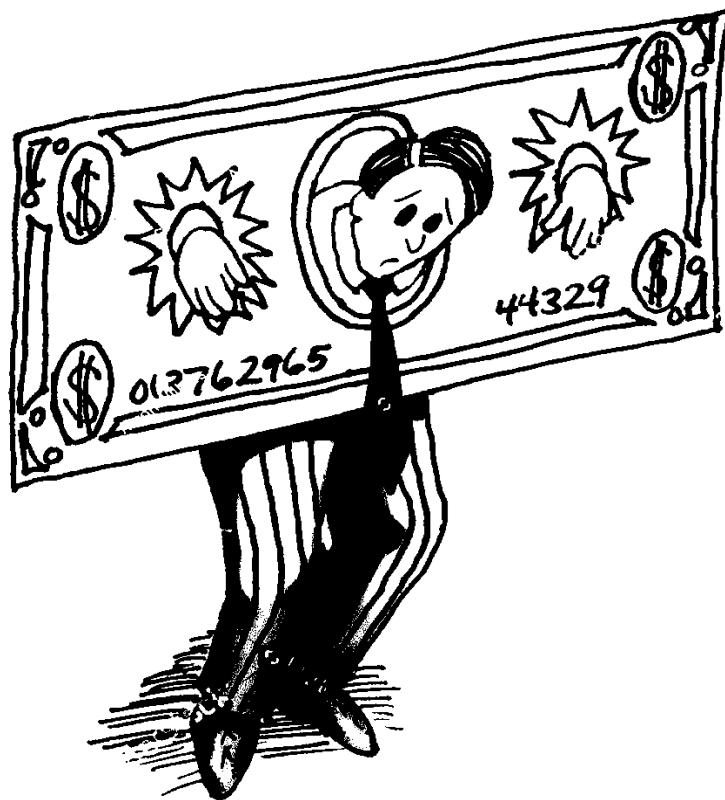


VOUCHERS, ESAs and SCHOOL CHOICE



SHEKELS WITH SHACKLES

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION INITIATIVE

VOUCHERS, ESAs and SCHOOL CHOICE SHEKELS WITH SHACKLES

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INTRODUCTION

E.Ray Moore, Lt. Col., USAR(ret)

This pamphlet is a series of short articles by experienced Christian educators, policy analysts, authors and attorneys alerting conservatives and Christians not to accept the "School choice" model with tax-funded vouchers as the mechanism to advance private, Christian and home education going forward. The use of tax-funded vouchers has been debated and advocated in some conservative circles for several decades, but not seen as a realistic proposal. These conservative policy analysts and GOP leaders were in favor of vouchers as they assumed the extra funds would enable private, Christian schools and homeschools to grow given that the financial issues would be solved with government funding.

Now, with the sudden rise of large numbers of new K-12 private, Christian and home-school families in the millions, this could become a serious policy proposal for conservatives. It must be said that most of the informed homeschool leadership as represented by HSLDA have not supported the voucher believing it would threaten the autonomy of private and home education. Also, many leaders in private Christian school organizations with a prime example being the Association of Classical Christian Schools also oppose the voucher.

This debate over tax-funded vouchers for K-12 private education is fast approaching and some conservative and GOP candidates are running on this platform now. When the legislatures convene in Jan 2023, this will be a main topic in many states, especially the Red states. This is an odd policy dilemma for many Christian school and homeschool families and leaders, as we have more to fear from our usual policy and political allies than from the Left. The Left oppose vouchers because they think, wrongly so, that they will threaten the monopoly of the state-sponsored public school system. Conservatives, such as myself, oppose vouchers because they threaten the autonomy of the private, Christian and homeschool movement. Vouchers not only are a threat to the autonomy of private education but could be an existential threat to our K-12 Christian education movement as well. This fact is incontrovertible, and the following articles will demonstrate this.

It is important that true conservative, Christian and free-market educators are vigorous today to defend the autonomy of private education. We must build a firewall against the larger fire that could burn through our Christian and homeschool families tempted by the lure of "free" money. When we reach for the money, the handcuffs go on.

Some GOP and conservative office holders and policy analysts use trite mantras like "the money should follow the child" or "we won't accept the voucher if strings are attached." We must counter with our own favorite arguments like Ronald Reagan who said, "The most terrifying words in the English language are: "I'm from the government and I'm here to help." We should also phase out the term "school choice" in favor of the more appropriate term "educational freedom" to describe our policy model.

In "Shekels with Shackles" we will offer a few positive ideas and plans to fund K-12 private and Christian education. God can meet the needs of His people as the missionary statesman to China, Hudson Taylor, said, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." We must take the offensive in this debate, now that we can grow this movement without government funds with God's help and we must be vigorous in defense of the separation of education and state. If we are wise and careful in our growth, we may reach the "tipping point" and see the demise and abolition of state-sponsored public schools in our lifetime.

E. Ray Moore, Th.M., Chaplain (Lt. Col.) USAR Ret, Chairman Emeritus of CEI and director of Exodus Mandate, encourages the Christian community in choosing Christian schools or homeschooling. Visit his webpages at www.exodusmandate.org

Chapter 1

DO NO HARM

E.Ray Moore, Lt. Col., USAR(ret)

“Do no harm” is the first principle physicians follow in the treatment of their patients. My late father-in-law once was prescribed some blood pressure medicine that brought on a diabetic condition. Physicians are aware that it is possible that some cures they propose can actually cause other health problems to develop, and this must be avoided.

This warning, “Do no harm” is especially warranted for any government program. Frequently, those in favor of school choice take no thought of this possibility. So, it is with the support of vouchers for private and religious schools. The current “school choice model” is flawed.

Most believe that vouchers will enable more people to avail themselves of private or religious schools, and this would increase competition. Monopolies breed mediocrity. Public schooling, the greatest monopoly, should be broken up. This is well-reasoned up to this point, and it would temporarily create the appearance that education was improving as more families choose private or religious schools.

The danger to religious and private schools, however, would be real. First, a voucher system would increase dependency upon government assistance by starting another entitlement program. These vouchers amount to welfare or “school stamps” and would create a dependent class.

Many families have been providing a private education for their children at great sacrifice. Some families would weaken in the face of this easy new money and would find themselves in the “school stamp” line in spite of the better judgment. Also, the religious institutions that accepted these new “school stamps” would find their theology and policies in jeopardy as onerous regulations by the government threaten their freedom.

The pro-voucher plan may actually restrict religious schools from promulgating their own faith if they accept the voucher money.

Christian and conservative groups, now applauding this movement to their constituencies, have an ethical obligation to inform them of this serious flaw.

The voucher idea is not new at all, having been tried since World War II in England

and Western Europe. In all cases, while it has taken a decade or two, the private and religious schools lost their religious distinctions. Government money erodes the theological and spiritual essence of religious institutions so that their “Gospel light” is put out. Several research studies studying the effect of vouchers upon religious and private institutions confirm this analysis. In a Freedom Project Media article written by Alex Newman Nov. 15, 2018, he reported that “authorities in Canada's Alberta province gave Christian schools a choice: Quit being Christian and teaching the truth of God's Word or be suspended and potentially even shut down. And because the Canadian schools all take government funding at this point, odds are good that the totalitarian gender ideologues running the education bureaucracy will get their wish, absent a massive public outcry.” This is exactly where “public education” is heading in America, too.

The best plan is for churches to provide scholarships and make their facilities available for Christian schools. Family members can provide scholarships. The business community can provide scholarship funding for needy families to attend private or religious schools. More families can homeschool. These strategies will not create dependency and threaten the freedom of private educational institutions.

The Church needs to follow the practice, “Do no harm,” and not be taken in by government programs.

We should give up cosmetic approaches like the voucher to create educational choice. Vouchers should be off the agenda. State control will follow the money and possibly jeopardize the ability for private and religious schools to teach biblical truth. At the *very least* vouchers should “do no harm.”

E. Ray Moore, Th.M., Chaplain (Lt. Col.) USAR Ret, Chairman Emeritus of CEI and director of Exodus Mandate, encourages the Christian community in choosing Christian schools or homeschooling. Visit his webpage at www.exodusmandate.org

This article was originally published in The State Paper, Columbia, SC in 1998. This is the revised article reprinted August 2022.

Chapter 2

VOUCHERS: HE WHO HAS THE GOLD MAKES THE RULES

Hon. Diane M. Douglas and Richard W. Hawkins,

August 17, 2025 (Rev 1)

An alarming report titled *A Nation at Risk* from The National Commission on Excellence in Education, established by President Reagan, was released in 1983, almost 40 years ago:

“Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.....

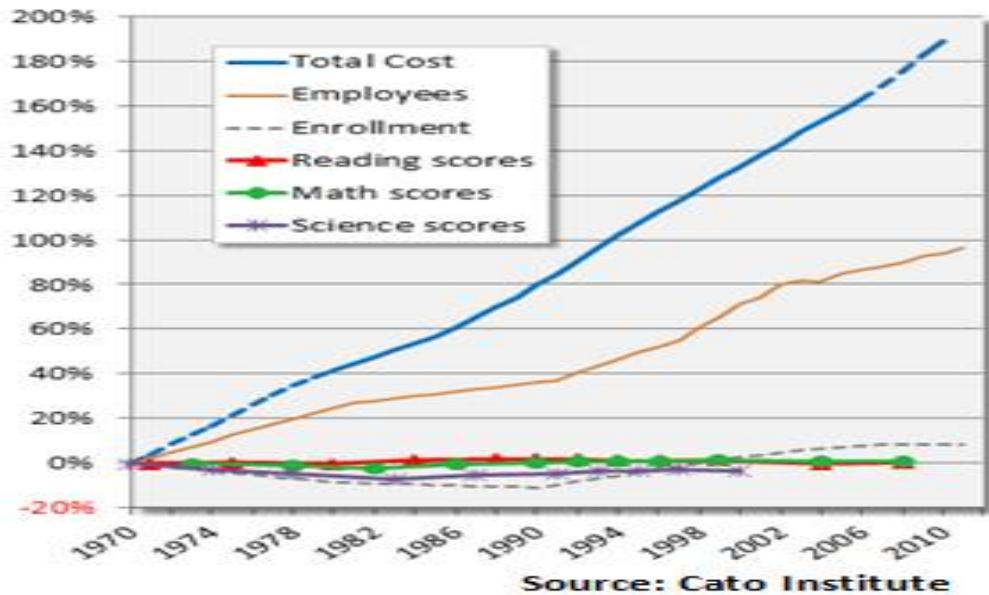
Our concern, however, goes well beyond matters such as industry and commerce [i.e. STEM & College and Career Ready]. It also includes the intellectual, moral, and spiritual strengths of our people which knit together the very fabric of our society.”

“If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves.”

This report ignited the Education Industrial Complex ¹ into action creating one failed education reform program after another. After *A Nation at Risk* was published plans for

¹ The Education Industrial Complex consists of numerous organizations including, but not limited to, the teachers' unions, the universities' Colleges of Education, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, The College Board and ACT testing non-profits, the various departments of education, the Chamber of Commerce, CASEL, Big Tech corporations, textbook publishers such as Pearson Education (now Savvas Learning) and Houghton Mifflin, and, finally, UNESCO,

reform began in 1989 at the Governors' Education Summit ultimately beginning with *America 2000, An Education Strategy*. Since then, we've gone through *Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind, Common Core*, and now, *Every Student Succeeds Act*. Meanwhile, per pupil expenditures and school employment numbers have skyrocketed as academic performance remains flat. During this period America's standing compared to the rest of the developed world kept dropping.



...Internationally, U.S. students rank 33rd in math, 23rd in science, and 17th in reading – and an embarrassing 26th overall.

The U.S. public school system does not prepare most students to achieve competency in core subjects. As measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests, only a mere 28.7% of fourth-graders, 26.4% of eighth-graders, and 22.8% of 12th-graders reach basic proficiency levels averaged across seven subjects – civics, geography, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. history, and writing.

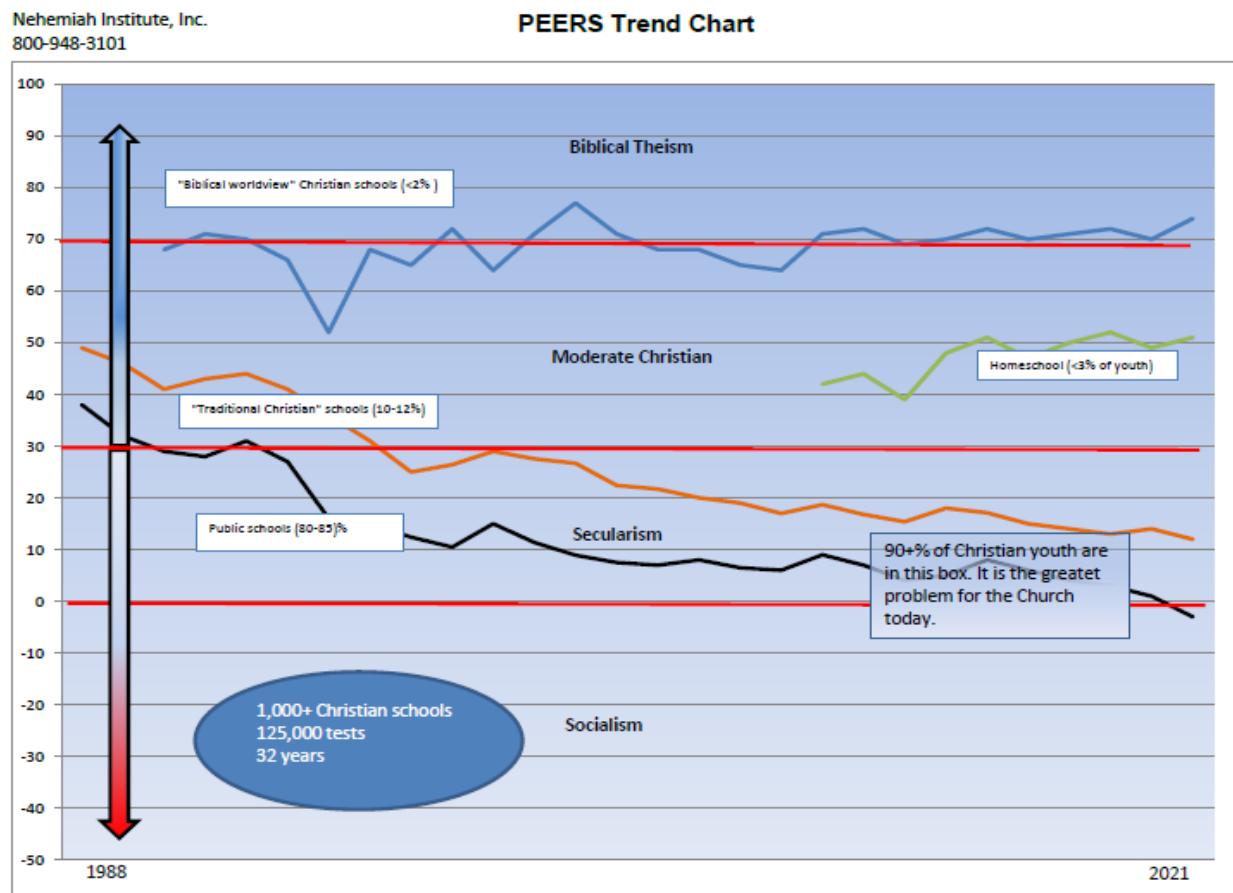
The final dismal result: over 77% of students in public schools lack basic academic proficiency at the end of 13 years of schooling.²

Our Education Industrial Complex is either deliberate, incompetent, or both, regarding academic performance but exceedingly competent at altering and cementing students' worldviews:

² Ingraham, Keri D, Break the K-12 Monopoly, Discovery Institute, Aug 4, 2022, <https://www.discovery.org/education/2022/08/04/break-the-k-12-monopoly/>

America is today dominated by an alien system of beliefs, attitudes and values that we have come to know as “Political Correctness.” Political Correctness seeks to impose a uniformity of thought and behavior on all Americans and is therefore totalitarian in nature. Its roots lie in a version of Marxism which seeks a radical inversion of the traditional culture in order to create a social revolution.³

The Nehemiah Institute has been tracking the worldviews of Christian high school students for over 30 years now. Political Correctness also goes by the term “cultural Marxism” which is in the Secularism/Socialist region identified on the PEERS Trend Chart.⁴



In other words, **our government controls a system that is creating anti-American activists hell bent on overturning our traditional culture.** Those Christian high school students attending the government-controlled K-12 institutions are now averaging in the socialist category (cultural Marxist) for worldview. Results would be even more socialist

³ Lind, William S and Hawkins, Richard W, coeditors, Political Correctness: A Deceptive and Dangerous Worldview, June 2020, p. 16

⁴ <https://www.nehemiahinstitute.com/>

for the non-Christian students as the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation has reported.⁵

The dominance of cultural Marxism has been developing gradually over these past 70 years through an education system co-opted over 100 years ago to facilitate such change. It recently reached a breaking point in the government-controlled K-12 schooling system with the introduction of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) including LGBTQ indoctrination, gender fluidity/transition encouragement, unisex bathroom mandates, while ignoring parents' concerns by treating them as domestic terrorists. What has been occurring is the gradual coercion and transition from parental control for raising children to State control.

"Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American school is a school of humanism. What can a theistic Sunday school's meeting for an hour once a week and teaching only a fraction of the children do to stem the tide of the five-day program of humanistic teaching?" -- Charles F. Potter American Unitarian minister, theologian, and author. 1885-1962

"Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill because he comes to school with certain allegiances to our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being, and toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It's up to you as teachers to make all these sick children well by creating the international child of the future." -- Chester M. Pierce, Harvard psychiatrist, speaking as an expert in public education at the 1973 International Education Seminar.

"You've heard me say it many times about our children, but it's true. They're all our children, and the reason you're the teachers of the year is because you recognize that. They're not someone else's children. They're like yours when they're in the classroom," he added. – Democrat President Joe Biden

"I'm not going to let parents come into schools and actually take books out and make their own decision," McAuliffe said. "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach." -- Democrat Terry McAuliffe

"We have never invested as much in public education as we should have because we've always had kind of a private notion of children. Your kid is yours and totally your responsibility. We haven't had a very collective notion of these are our children," she says in a spot for the network's "Lean Forward" campaign. "So part of it is we have to break through our kind of private idea that kids belong to their

⁵ <https://victimsofcommunism.org/annual-poll/2020-annual-poll/>

parents, or kids belong to their families, and recognize that kids belong to whole communities." -- MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry

Parents have finally had enough and either have pulled their child out of this government- controlled K-12 toxic environment or have a strong desire to do so but are reluctant due to their prioritization of expenses and self-imposed time constraints. Parents who otherwise would never take a government handout, welfare or food stamps, don't think twice about taking the handout that is government schooling. Many believe that they will be 'paying twice' for their child's education since taxes are already confiscated to fund 'free' schooling; often incorrectly considered an "entitlement" or "right" which must be *provided* by government. However, the right to be educated is a human right from God; government funding of that system is nothing more than a handout. Although, unlike food stamps with which a person can choose their grocery store, the education handout allows parents little or no choice over the school their child may attend.

A major consideration involving education is 'agency.' An agent is defined as:

A'GENT, n. An actor; one that exerts power, or **has the power to act; as, a moral agent.**

3. A substitute, deputy, or factor; one entrusted with the business of another; an attorney; a minister.⁶

The principle of 'he who has the gold makes the rules' applies here. With respect to education there are three different types of agent involved to perform, respectively, 3 different outcomes of education:

A parent is an agent of God to educate (disciple) His child under his care in order to train him up in the way he should go.

A government school teacher is an agent of the State to school human resources to the State's needs and requirements.....he is **not** an agent of the parents nor of God regardless of his religious beliefs!

A Christian school teacher is an agent of the school master and teaches to the curriculum and method assigned him.....he is **not** an agent of the parents nor of God! ⁷

Some politicians and education activist citizens have answered the parent's dilemmas by proposing government funded parental choice programs via vouchers, grants, education savings accounts, etc. What could go wrong? Government takes taxpayer dollars and hands those 'free' dollars directly to the parents so they can go to a 'qualified' school of

⁶ Webster, N. (2006). In *Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language*. Foundation for American Christian Education.

⁷ Source unknown. This is not the creation of the authors

their choice for their child. In some instances, these 'free' dollars are even used for homeschooling. The parents are now free of the governments' toxic education policies, or so they are led to believe. The homeschool parent, in essence, becomes a government school teacher and is an agent of the State. The private school of the parent's choice receiving this 'free' money becomes a government agency.

Accountability of how the money is used will be required. Therefore, 'strings' will be, if not immediately then in short order, attached to this 'free' voucher money as a requirement of accountability. This accountability can take different forms such as:

- Accreditation limited to only certain accreditation agencies
- Only government/bureaucracy approved programs are allowed
- Standardized testing requirements
- Mandatory curricula or courses dealing with diversity, inclusivity, equity, SEL, LGBTQ+ issues, Common Core, etc
- Federal requirement for same sex locker rooms and restrooms, non-restrictive hiring, etc
- Teachers have to be credentialed in the cultural Marxist methodology
- School has to be unionized
- Regulated and intrusive visits by government agents to assure the homeschooling meets the State's mandated standards
- The United Nation's Agenda 2030 goals have to be adopted

Hitler, Lenin, Mao and other totalitarians took control of education to mold the minds of the next adult generation. The United Nations has codified this type of mind control in their Agenda 2030 as Sustainable Development Goal #4, which the United States has signed onto. Part of SDG #4 states:

Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. We commit with a sense of urgency to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind. This new vision is fully captured by the proposed SDG 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and its corresponding targets. It is transformative and universal, attends to the 'unfinished business' of the EFA [Education For All] agenda and the education-related MDGs [Millennium Development Goals], and addresses global and national education challenges. It is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion;

protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability.⁸

The end game for cultural Marxism is a globally controlled, Marxist based technocracy. Control of all education venues is extremely desirable to more easily achieve that goal. It just so happens, in many instances, cultural Marxism is the controlling worldview for this 'free' money.

The following essays in this booklet address the voucher issue from differing perspectives, but all draw the same conclusion:

HE WHO HAS THE GOLD MAKES THE RULES!

It would not be appropriate for us to leave the reader without solutions. The last four chapters address the Biblical command for education of children and offer Biblical responses and solutions for Godly education of our next generation.

Honorable Diane M. Douglas
Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction 2015-2019
Peoria Unified School District Governing Board 2005 - 2012; President 2008, 2009
Advisor on the Public School Exit board

Richard W Hawkins, LtCol, USAF (ret)
Chairman, Christian Education Initiative.
Co-edited *Marxifying America: Cultural Marxism's Fundamental Transformation of the Institutions*.

⁸ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>

Chapter 3

UN REPORT: USE TAX MONEY TO CONTROL PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Newman Report

Alex Newman

July 28, 2022

Governments should use tax subsidies for private schools to bring them under government control and impose regulations mandating “equity” and other goals, according to a report commissioned by the controversial United Nations’ “education” agency known as UNESCO.

The document adds urgency to longtime concerns expressed by opponents of “vouchers” and other so-called “school choice” schemes. Critics have long warned that “free” government money will come with strings attached at some point — and will eventually eliminate genuine school choice.

Of course, it is easy to see the appeal of tax money. Frustrated by the escalating indoctrination of children in government schools, desperate families — along with countless conservative and libertarian voices — have latched on to the idea of having education tax money “follow the child.”

Republican-controlled states across the nation have adopted a wide array of such policies, and more are being passed on a regular basis. In many states, those tax-funded schools still retain a great deal of autonomy. But efforts to limit that are well underway under the guise of equity, stopping “discrimination,” and more.

The little-noticed report, released late last year and commissioned by UNESCO’s “Global Education Monitoring Report,” argues that there is a “need to establish appropriate governance and regulatory frameworks” over private schools funded by government. This is supposedly to ensure that UN-backed goals such as “equity” are achieved.

The alleged “need” to regulate private education providers is taken for granted. “Regulatory reforms must clearly define what public interest in education is and fix the rules under which private providers may participate,” states the report, dubbed

“Regulating Public-Private Partnerships, governing non-state schools: An equity perspective.”⁹

Even more alarming, the report starts with the outrageous premise that the government – not the parents – is primarily responsible for the education of children. Citing the UN’s so-called “Sustainable Development Goals,” described by UN bosses as the “master plan for humanity,” the report claims that “the State remains the duty bearer of education as a public good.”

From there, it proceeds to argue that any “collaboration” with the private sector on education “requires regulatory and accountability measures to ensure it is in line with the principle of education as a public good.” Of course, education does not fit the traditional economic definition of a “public good” – think of a light house, for instance – because it is not non-rival and non-excludable.

Critics are sounding the alarm about the report and the sentiment behind it. “School choice isn’t just a money-making racket; it’s a trap to allow for government control of every educational option through regulations and accountability measures tied to public funding,” warned Lisa Logan in a recent article about the report commissioned by UNESCO.¹⁰

“It will allow for the collection of all children’s social and emotional data to measure compliance for their future social credit system driven by ESGs,” she added. “Don’t fall for it.” Parents

Incredibly, parents are described variously in the report commissioned by UNESCO as “stakeholders” and even “vested interests” to be overcome by the government. Enter “Public-Private Partnerships,” often known as PPPs.

These PPPs represent a model in which profits can flow to private interests, as long as those interests do what the government wants. Critics have regularly derided the approach – widely supported among global elites at the World Economic Forum – as state socialism, corporatism, and fascism. Think Nazi Germany: Companies could remain in private hands, as long as they served the state.

According to the report, PPP schools are not “exempt from complying with centrally defined curricula, learning standards or student admissions criteria, among other public regulations,” the report says, ominously.

⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356915329_Regulating_Public-Private_Partnerships_governing_non-state_schools_An_equity_perspective

¹⁰ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/p/unescos-vision-for-school-choice>

In fact, government testing requirements “play a strategic role in promoting that all publicly-funded schools, independently of their ownership, are correctly aligned with quality standards and also with the equity goals and objectives set by the government.”

In other words, “private” schools will become government schools once they take government money – regardless of “their ownership.”

The paper also cites the views of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). The controversial organization similarly argues in favor of using government money to impose “clear guidelines and goals” on private schools.

The UNESCO-commissioned report outlines a variety of policy options available to regulate non-government schools that nevertheless take public money. These include setting up standards for “authorization of providers” as well as “centralization and control of the school choice and admissions procedures.”

Perhaps even more alarming, under the banner of “autonomy, evaluation, and accountability,” the report proposes “integration of private subsidized schools into the monitoring and evaluation framework in place for the public sector.”

The report makes clear that private schools taking government money can (and will) be forced to submit to the same government “monitoring and evaluation” as traditional government schools. Eventually, the UN is hoping to bring all schools under government control, as it has made clear repeatedly.¹¹

Government money for private schools and home educators appears to be the cheese in the mousetrap. It looks free and delicious. But as soon as private schools and homeschoilers grab the money and become dependent, the trap will spring shut and the government will end up crushing genuine school choice.

<https://www.freedomproject.com/2022/07/28/newman-report-41/>

Alex Newman is an award-winning international journalist, educator, author, and consultant. Alex has written for a wide array of publications in the United States and abroad. He currently serves as a contributor to The Epoch Times, WND (World Net Daily), FreedomProject Media, The New American magazine, the Law Enforcement Intelligence Brief, and more

Alex has authored/co-authored several books and serves as a director for multiple organizations in the fight for faith, family and freedom.

¹¹ <https://thenewamerican.com/un-gov-t-must-control-private-schools-because-of-human-rights/>

Chapter 4

UNESCO's Vision for School Choice

How They Plan to Use Backpack Funding Bills & Government Regulations to Ensure "Equity" in Private Choice Options

Lisa Logan
Jul 21, 2022

Proponents of legislation that make public education funds available for use in the private education sector have incredible marketing slogans. “Fund students not systems” they say. The accompanying mantra that parents should be able to “take the money that belongs to them” and “choose what education is best for their child” offers hope to droves of desperate parents looking for an easy exit to an incompetent system that seems hell-bent on indoctrinating their kids.

Unfortunately, those same proponents who are very vocal when it comes to the supposed benefits of ESAs and vouchers are eerily silent when it comes to being honest about the strings attached to public money and how it could be used to bring regulation into private and homeschools.

One entity who is very transparent about the strings attached to government money is UNESCO, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, who’s been charged with seeing the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (Quality and Inclusive Education for All) through to completion by 2030.¹² This subject was addressed in a background paper¹³ commissioned for their Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report that was highlighted in the article The Strings of School Choice.¹⁴ In it, the authors lay out how public money funding private schools through school choice (and the public regulation that comes with it) can be utilized “as the main policy option to tackle education inequalities resulting from private actors’ involvement in the provision of education.” The paper states that the regulation of evaluation

¹² <https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/sdg4>

¹³ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356915329_Regulating_Public-Private_Partnerships_governing_non-state_schools_An_equity_perspective

¹⁴ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/p/the-strings-of-school-choice?sd=pf>

(assessments) and accountability frameworks “play a strategic role in promoting that all publicly-funded schools, independently of their ownership, are correctly aligned with quality standards and also with the equity goals and objectives set by the government.” It then describes just some of the “equity”¹⁵ -oriented regulatory strategies than can be enforced in the private education sector:

Table 6. Equity-oriented PPP regulatory strategies

Dimension of regulation	Policy options
Authorization of providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporation of <i>education planning criteria</i> in the authorization of new private providers (considerations relative to their effect on public schools; enrollment patterns or the volume or diversity of existing school supply). - Use of <i>bidding processes</i> to select among private providers seeking to access public funding. - Establishment of more <i>discriminating screening processes</i> or eligibility criteria.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Prohibition of tuition fees</i> and other parental contributions (paralleled by an increase in public funding) or adoption of <i>tuition caps</i>. - Use of <i>sliding scales</i> (public funding inversely proportional to school fees). - Use of <i>need-based funding criteria</i> accounting for student characteristics and the schools’ social composition.
School choice and admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Centralization and control of the school choice and admissions procedures</i> (common priority criteria for public and private subsidized schools, calendars and procedures).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Prohibition of selective admissions</i>. - Provision of <i>priority access for disadvantaged students</i> (quotas or specific priority criteria).
Autonomy, evaluation and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Integration of private subsidized schools into the monitoring and evaluation framework in place for the public sector</i>. - Development of <i>additional and more demanding accountability schemes</i> for private subsidized providers. - Creation of <i>accountability systems specific to private subsidized providers</i> and establishment of dedicated monitoring agencies.
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Harmonization of teachers’ qualification requirements and licensing procedures</i> across the public and the private sector. - <i>Equalization of teachers’ salary scales and working conditions</i> for public and private subsidized schools.

¹⁵ <https://www.discovery.org/education/2021/07/28/equity-in-education-equal-opportunity-or-equal-outcome/>

This strategy of using regulatory measures through public funding to have “controlled school choice” is repeated in the Global Education Monitoring Report,¹⁶ which itself has some interesting funders.¹⁷ In the report’s rallying call - “Who Chooses? Who loses?” - UNESCO grapples with the involvement of non-state (private/homeschool) actors in education.¹⁸ While they believe nations should commit first and foremost to supporting public education, they also see the value that these other education pathways have in providing learning for all children. At the same time, they bemoan the inequities (unequal outcomes) that result from school choice—allowing for wealthier families to have better options and greater results.

NON-STATE ACTORS IN EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Non-state actors’ role extends beyond provision of schooling to interventions at various education levels and influence spheres. Alongside its review of progress towards SDG 4, including emerging evidence on the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact, the 2021/2 Global Education Monitoring Report urges governments to see all institutions, students and teachers as part of a single system. Standards, information, incentives and accountability should help governments protect, respect and fulfil the right to education of all, without turning their eyes away from privilege or exploitation. Publicly funded education does not have to be publicly provided but disparity in education processes, student outcomes and teacher working conditions must be addressed. Efficiency and innovation, rather than being commercial secrets, should be diffused and practised by all. To that end, transparency and integrity in the public education policy process need to be maintained to block vested interests.

The report’s rallying call – Who chooses? Who loses? – Invites policymakers to question relationships with non-state actors in terms of fundamental choices: between equity and freedom of choice; between encouraging initiative and setting standards; between groups of varying means and needs; between immediate commitments under SDG 4 and those to be progressively realized (e.g. post-secondary education); and between education and other social sectors.

Supporting the fifth Global Education Monitoring Report are two online tools: **PEER**, a policy dialogue resource describing non-state activity and regulations in the world’s education systems; and **VIEW**, a new website consolidating sources and providing new completion rate estimates over time.

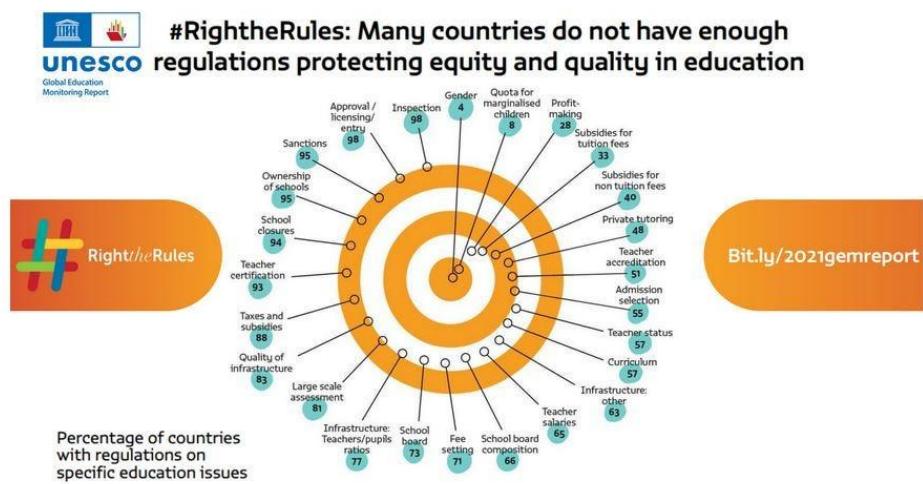
¹⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380076>

¹⁷ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385723>, p. 11. The Global Education Monitoring Report is an independent annual publication. The GEM Report is funded by a group of governments, multilateral agencies and private foundations and facilitated and supported by UNESCO. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Open Society Foundations are two such funders.

¹⁸ <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/non-state-actors>

UNESCO's solution is to #RighttheRules,¹⁹ urging governments to "see all institutions, students and teachers as part of a single system. Standards, information, incentives and accountability should help governments protect, respect and fulfill the right to education of all, without turning their eyes away from privilege or exploitation." It's clear that they view the infusion of public money into private education as their opportunity to fix the inequities²⁰ arising from school choice and institute educational pluralism:²¹ a school system in which the government funds and regulates, but does not necessarily provide, public education. In essence, this #RighttheRules campaign in concert with the school choice movement is a power grab to allow governments to regulate far more in the private education sphere than they've been able to in the past, including enforcement of their equity and inclusion initiatives.²²

Analysis of 211 education systems for the @GEMReport shows that regulations of non-state actors tend to focus on registration, approval or licensing, teacher certification, infrastructure and pupil/teacher ratios rather than on equity and inclusion. #RighttheRules bit.ly/2021gemreport



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Unsuspecting parents are cheering what they view as educational freedom through school choice legislation that allows public money to be used for private education and permits them to escape the indoctrination caused by these

¹⁹ <https://gem-report-2021.unesco.org/2022-youth-report/>

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcUQJloBWLo>

²¹ https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2477&context=law_faculty_scholarship

²² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lRFsAHTjpY&t=63s>

²³ https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/f_auto,q_auto:good,fl_progressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fbucketteer-e05bbc84-baa3-437e-9518-adb32be77984.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F7e0b5e1f-667a-4346-9f16-ee9c1a2f2ef_1159x547.jpeg

initiatives. Little do they know that UNESCO is eagerly anticipating the ability this gives them to stick its regulatory camel nose into the hole this creates under the tent and worm their way into private education to demand those same initiatives. UNESCO's mission to provide children an education built around achieving the Sustainable Development Goals has infiltrated²⁴ the standards, assessments and accountability measures in U.S. public education. Private and homeschool environments have largely been able to avoid being influenced by this simply because they don't use public money and therefore do not fall under the purview of the state like public schools do, who are required to adopt state standards that are accountable to federal regulations.

The introduction of public money into private and homeschool through "money following the student" bills would change that, giving entities like UNESCO and their government minions full access to all avenues of education and all children to push their programming. In time, private and homeschools will be required (just like public schools) to teach Transformative Social Emotional Learning,²⁵ Climate Change, Comprehensive Sexuality Education²⁶ and Gender Fluidity in order to pass the assessments written into these bills which are tied to taking the public money. UNESCO even identifies this strategy of bringing public funding into the private education sector through vouchers, education saving accounts and scholarship tax credits as part of their "vision"²⁷ to regulate non-state education in the United States:

²⁴ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/p/sel-for-sdgs>

²⁵ <https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/CASEL-Gateway-Transformative-SEL-Toward-Service-of-Ed-Equity.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/history-of-cse/>

²⁷ <https://education-profiles.org/europe-and-northern-america/united-states-of-america/~non-state-actors-in-education#Multi-level%20regulations>

Vision: Across the US, an evolving “[school choice](#)” landscape reflects changes in the accessibility and desirability of a variety of education options, including traditional public schools, magnet schools, charter schools, private schools, and homeschooling. There are generally [two categories](#) of school choice programs: public and private. Charter schools (like magnet schools) are considered “[public schools of choice](#)”, whereas the public funding of education options in the private sector through vouchers, education saving accounts and scholarship tax credits is referred to as “private choice”. State policies have been increasingly adopting more “choice” policies (which [critics](#) tend to view as the “[privatization](#) of education in the US”), namely the implementation of voucher systems and charter schools. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education choice movement was further expanded through what supporters were calling “[empowering parents](#)” and the “[year of school choice](#)”, by [increasing](#) number of families moving to homeschooling, and more states adopting school choice programs. In 2021/21, 16 states passed bills to “fund students instead of systems”. For example, New Hampshire became the fifth state within the year to pass a new Education Savings Account (ESA) program, while additionally expanding voucher programs and tax-credit scholarship programs. States such as Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, and South Dakota created or expanded tax-credit scholarship programs, while Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, Indiana, and Maryland expanded existing voucher programs. In [Pennsylvania](#), lawmakers approved a \$40 million infusion to provide an additional 13,000 scholarships for students seeking a private education.

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Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews ([PEER](#)) ²⁹ online tool is a UNESCO policy dialogue resource describing non-state activity and regulations in the world’s education systems. It shows where “regulatory, monitoring and enforcement capacity [tends to be low](#) where the need is high” and how non-state actors are contemplated or conceived of as a possibility (“envisaged) in the country’s vision on education” governance.

What’s more is that the [face of the “school choice” movement](#) ³⁰ (who is traveling the nation and appearing in the media to advocate for these types of bills to be passed) has recently been discovered to be an [expert for UNESCO’s Inclusive Policy Lab](#) ³¹ and a member of their E-TEAM, [Education and Digital Skills](#). ³² The [purpose](#) of UNESCO’s Inclusive Policy Lab is to “help design and deliver more inclusive, equity-weighted, and SDG-oriented policies.” ³³ Considering that passing these bills would assist in making UNESCO’s vision

²⁸ https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/f_auto,q_auto:good,fl_progressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fbucketteer-e05bbc84-baa3-437e-9518-adb32be77984.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F0f12acdb-a4bd-42f8-845f-41c809863455_873x389.jpeg

²⁹ <https://education-profiles.org/>

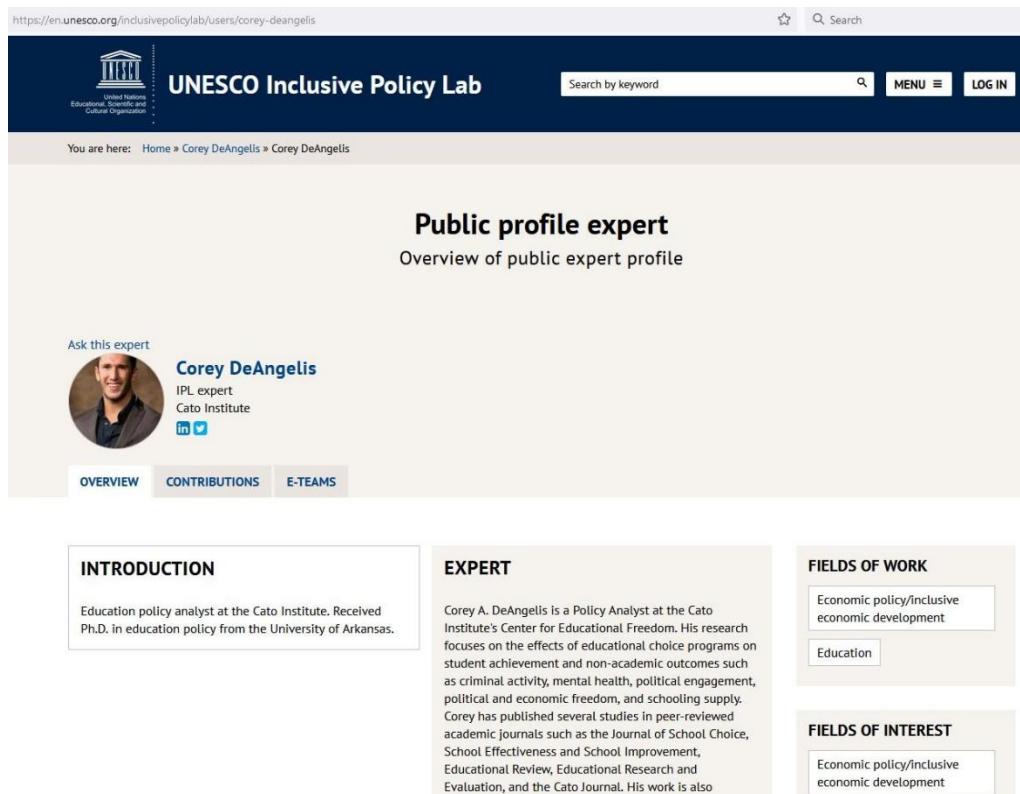
³⁰ <https://www.reimaginedonline.org/2022/03/deangelis-fund-students-not-systems/>

³¹ https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/f_auto,q_auto:good,fl_progressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fbucketteer-e05bbc84-baa3-437e-9518-adb32be77984.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F687bb95f-18fc-4d5c-b82d-edc70b227950_1272x988.jpeg

³² As of 6/2/2024 Corey DeAngelis is not listed as a member of this team - editor

³³ <https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/inclusive-policy-markers>

of regulating private education become a reality, it begs the question as to why Corey DeAngelis is involved with both.



The screenshot shows the profile page for Corey DeAngelis on the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab website. The header includes the UNESCO logo and the text 'UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab'. A search bar and a 'LOG IN' button are also present. The main content area is titled 'Public profile expert' and 'Overview of public expert profile'. It features a profile picture of Corey DeAngelis, his name, title ('IPL expert Cato Institute'), and social media links. Below this are three tabs: 'OVERVIEW', 'CONTRIBUTIONS', and 'E-TEAMS'. The 'OVERVIEW' tab is selected. To the left is a box titled 'INTRODUCTION' with text about his education and current role. To the right are boxes for 'EXPERT' (biography), 'FIELDS OF WORK' (Economic policy/inclusive economic development, Education), and 'FIELDS OF INTEREST' (Economic policy/inclusive economic development).

As Dr. James Lindsay so aptly observed, ³⁴ “It would be a real coup de neoliberal grace if this call [for school choice] gets answered by a bunch of already prepared corporate “4.0 Schools” ³⁵ franchises that look anti-Woke but are all kinds of ESG and SEL ³⁶ compliant while being massive data-mines ³⁷ of the kids...I don’t trust Koch, Walton, Jeb Bush (FEE), etc., (to say nothing of the UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab) to put tens of millions behind a push without a payoff in the mix...Does the school choice lobby benefit from

³⁴ <https://x.com/ConceptualJames/status/1543019097704828929>

³⁵ <https://x.com/iamlisalogan/status/1515392672285945859>

³⁶ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/p/selesgsocial-credit-system>

³⁷ <https://x.com/iamlisalogan/status/1529863518429667330>

improving public schools? It doesn't. How does it benefit from school choice? Oh. It has something ready to go to make a shitload of money off it."

School choice isn't just a money-making racket; it's a trap to allow for government control of every educational option through regulations and accountability measures tied to public funding. It will allow for the collection of all children's social and emotional data to measure compliance for their future social credit system³⁸ driven by ESGs.³⁹ Don't fall for it. Parents can either make sacrifices to exercise their educational freedom without government assistance or sacrifice their children on the altar of an illusion of school choice designed to destroy educational freedom for generations to come.

Thanks for reading Education Manifesto! Subscribe for free to receive new posts and support my work.⁴⁰

³⁸ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/p/selesgsocial-credit-system>

³⁹ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/p/selesgsocial-credit-system>

⁴⁰ <https://lisalogan.substack.com/>

Chapter 5

Caveat Emptor – Arizona’s ESA Voucher Expansion

Honorable Diane M. Douglas

In 2011 Arizona enacted the Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESAs) legislation, while frequently referred to as vouchers, they are not one and the same. ESAs allow parents whose children fall into certain qualifying categories to withdraw them from public or charter schools and receive a portion of the state public funding to enroll in a private school or purchase educational services. Vouchers were ruled unconstitutional by the AZ Supreme Court, under Arizona’s version of the Blaine Amendment, because the state funds were earmarked for private and sectarian schools. In 2013 ESAs were upheld as constitutional because the funding is ostensibly controlled by the parents – but is it really? More on that later.

During the 2017 legislative session SB1341 authorized a gradual expansion the ESA program. An organization “Save Our Schools” expended \$693,059 on Proposition 305 to repeal the expansion of the program. Although polling indicated the expansion was supported by a random sample of voters, the “no” vote carried 65% to 35% vetoing the expansion. The original 2011 ESA program remained in place.

Fast forward to 2022, with the passing and signing of HB2853 into law expanding the ESA program Arizona is being touted for what is the biggest school choice victory in the nation. It has been extolled far and wide that AZ is now ‘funding the students, not the system’. However, this may not be the education panacea as so many are lauding it.

There is a big difference between allowing all Arizona students to be *eligible to apply* rather than every student being automatically given an ESA account and funding. If we are in fact “funding the students” then every student would be given an account and an ESA ‘Class Wallet’ funding card to present in payment of tuition upon enrollment in their school of choice whether it be traditional district, charter or private. However, only students whose parents choose to apply and enroll them in the system will be directly funded. Otherwise ‘the system’ will still be funded; traditional and charter districts will continue to receive their funding from the state based on enrollment. That per pupil funding for the system schools, approximately \$12,000, is a significantly higher than the estimated \$7,000 per pupil ESA amount (ESA students are funded at 90% of the *state funding* only).

Every Republican in the AZ House and Senate voted in favor of HB2853. Every Democrat either voted against the expansion bill or was a NV (not voting). The Republicans currently have a one member majority in both the House and the Senate.

Should the majority change in the legislature best case very onerous restrictions and penalties may be added to the program or, worse case, the program will be eliminated and leaving families in a lurch. That is IF the expansion survives the current attempt by Save Our School to once again repeal it at the ballot box.

OR ... ESAs may be used to achieve the ultimate goal of the Marxists - gaining control over private schools. We've already seen that ESAs can be used as the camel's nose into the tent of control over private schools. The Introduced Version of HB2853 included a testing mandate for every eligible student in grades three through twelve to be administered by a "qualified school" or a test chosen by the student's parent. Thankfully, this provision was removed prior to the passage of the bill.

The ESA program is a way to ensure that parents who want their children out of government schools still remain in the government system under its control even when enrolled in private schools. Parents who use ESA funding for homeschooling materials are not the same as homeschoolers under AZ law. Their children are enrolled in a government program, albeit a different type of program; they are considered ESA students not homeschoolers. The government sets the rules by which they must abide. From Class Wallet: *"You ("you" being AZ Dept. of Ed, the State Board of Ed or the legislature) establish what they ("they" being parents) can buy, where they can buy it, and how much they can spend."* Parents surrender the autonomy and spending dispositions of true homeschoolers who make decisions with their own wallets because, to quote character Edward Rutledge in 1776 The Movie, "They're willin'! For the shillin'."

Don't get me wrong, in my thirty years involved in AZ education, literally from the bottom to the top rung, I have first and foremost always been an advocate for parental rights and especially the freedom to direct their children's education. I was ecstatic in the mid-1990s when AZ passed legislation creating charter schools despite being government funded. Although government schools have not improved as intended because of the "competition" created by charters, nonetheless, parents have more options for their children's education. Hopefully the current ESA expansion will be a step in the right direction. However, it does not come without potential pitfalls.

Caveat emptor...buyer beware. He with the gold rules and rulers rarely, truly, voluntarily give up their power. In the case of ESAs, the ruler over children's education is, and remains, the government.

Honorable Diane M. Douglas
Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction 2015-2019
Peoria Unified School District Governing Board 2005 - 2012; President 2008, 2009
Advisor on the Public School Exit board

Chapter 6

VOUCHERS WITHOUT CHOICE

JUNE 14, 2016

BY DR. MARLENE MCMILLAN

As each generation has become more government dependent in their thinking they have not realized that they are being subtly and consistently conditioned to petition government *for rights they already have*.

The False Premises on which Voucher Support is Built:

1. You can take government money without government control.
2. Children are entitled to their fair share of public monies used for education in their school district. (Entitlements)
3. Once money is in the coffers of the ISD [Independent School District] it is still the taxpayer's money.
4. The children belong to themselves and/or to their parents.
5. It is an accepted fact that education is a function of civil government and everyone should pay for the education of everyone else's children.
6. Parents don't have a choice now. (Yes, they do. They just don't want to pay for it themselves.)
7. Vouchers promote free enterprise competition between government and private schools, thus improving education for all children.

If an idea is wrong in premise, it is wrong in result. Truth may or may not bring immediate pain, but always brings long-term peace. A lie brings the illusion of immediate relief, but always brings long-term suffering.

Consider and Ponder:

1. For there to be peace in a nation or family then all the children must be taught by the LORD and about the LORD. (Deuteronomy 6 and Isaiah 54)
2. Freedom of thought is more important for liberty than convenience. To have freedom of thought you must have parental control of education.
3. To have a strong nation you cannot have a dependency or entitlement mindset.

4. A person values what they have to pay for. Until the method of funding education is changed there will be no substantive change in the result of education.
5. Vouchers take away educational freedom under the guise of providing it.
6. You get more of what you subsidize and less of what you penalize.
7. The goal and content of private and government education is different. Private education is to prepare children to be self-governing for their own safety and happiness whereas the State school is to prepare children to conform for the so-called good of the collective. These opposing goals cannot be paid for by the same source.
8. Education is inherently religious. The idea that the government can provide a secular education that is neutral is a logical impossibility.
9. Control follows money. He who pays controls. Government money comes with government strings attached. The government cannot throw money in the streets. Regulations are inherent to all voucher schemes.

As soon as a private school takes government money it becomes a government school. He who pays controls. This includes both control of the process and an interest in the outcome.

Because the government issues the voucher, they have paid, thus, they have rights that can circumvent and overrule those of the parent. This is the core of much of the conflict over what is taught in public schools today. Ignoring this point does not make it any less important or less encroaching.

Freedom of thought requires freedom of finance. Freedom of finance leads to freedom of thought. If you want to be free-instead of demanding freedom while lobbying to get someone else to pay your way—you should be spending your time figuring out how to pay your own way. “Affordability” is a matter of priorities, not a matter of capacity.

“I don't care—race, gender, ethnicity—free stuff is very seductive... The more seductively politicians promise people things it is tough to resist. Even hard working people eventually will stop and say, ‘Why am I being fiscally responsible when my neighbor isn't?’ I think it is going to be a very big challenge to fight back dependency. Remember the last election it was not the unemployment rate that mattered, it was the dependency rate.” -Andrea Tanteros on *The Five*, 2/26/13

“Vouchers are based on the philosophy of entitlement—a belief that the government ‘owes’ every child the best possible education that is equal in quality to that which is provided for every other child. When quality is inadequate, attention is drawn away

from the real issue, and the topic becomes the amount of funds spent per child." -Jackie Newbrough, 2004

You have to ask the right questions to get the right answers. Principles solve problems. You have to understand liberty to have a vision for liberty. Without a vision the people perish. If the best vision you have is that of government dependency then that is the best you will get.

Welfare disincentivizes students to learn since their future support is not dependent upon their own knowledge or skills, but upon the government.

Vouchers are based on the redistribution of wealth. Vouchers are rooted in socialism.

"Public schools are based on four false premises:

1. Welfare works,
2. Socialism works,
3. Parents have insufficient wisdom, and
4. We can teach character without mentioning God.

We need to replace those false premises with truisms, and the truisms I suggest are:

1. Responsibility works,
2. Freedom works,
3. Parents have more wisdom than politicians, and
4. To teach character, we must integrate three factors: the reason for morality, examples of morality, and instruction in morality." -Marshall Fritz, *The Plano Star Courier*

For an extended version of this paper and for more updates, sign up at WhyLibertyMatters.com.

Dr. Marlene McMillan is a graduate of John Brown University, received her Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist and received her Doctor of Ministry from Tyndale Theological. Education is one of her many areas of expertise. In light of the recent education situation and teacher's strike, we hosted a very special evening seminar "Unlocking the Mysteries of Cultural Change."

Chapter 7

WHO IS YOUR GOD?

Mark Shepard

Last fall I took a worldview test sponsored by one of CEI's members. One of the questions addressed income equality and whether that is something God requires of a society. The correct response according to the test is that God does not require income equality, even though God encourages Christians to be generous toward those in need.

The test position presents a distinction that is often misunderstood and to many may even seem contradictory. How can efforts toward bringing income equality not be in line with Christian generosity toward those in need?

Jesus taught people where to find joy, peace, contentment, etc., He fed thousands, and He healed many, however He never promoted a societal goal of individual equality in any material sense. That does not mean we should not work for better living standards for our fellow man, whether he be a neighbor or a person on the other side of the globe. A key aspect of this discussion is how we work to help others in need. Christian principles are not instructions to attain a certain earthly wealth, but rather they are principles on how to live a contented and wholesome life. Ultimately, how we live points to who is our god because the ideas we follow and what or who we trust identifies our god.

Being generous to those in need is wonderful and is, by definition, voluntary. Taking personal property from anyone else is stealing, even if you want to give it to a great cause or needy person or family. Stealing violates God's law (Exodus 20:13), so if we embrace stealing, we put something above God and display a lack of trust that God will provide for our needs as Jesus affirmed in Luke 12:6-7.

This presents the core problem with entitlement and wealth redistribution programs, including education vouchers, which have been growing in popularity across our nation, especially in more conservative-leaning states. If it is okay to steal for single-payer (state) education, then it is okay to steal for single-payer (state) healthcare. The case against it becomes purely about human preference. It seems that even those who claim to be God-fearing, limited-government, free-market conservatives are embracing wealth redistribution (using government force to take one person's property and give to another) as the solution for training up children.

Can a government steal? Does all property rightly belong to the government? Who rightly owns the fruit of a person's labor? That person or someone else? Are we still a nation that allows one man to own the fruit of another man's labor, as was the case before emancipation? Is that the kind of society we want to build and type of thinking we want to instill in our children?

These are important questions, especially for Christians, who embrace a moral code that among other things embraces personal property ownership. Clearly there cannot be stealing without ownership. Even Jesus made clear that the state, Caesar, did not own all (Matt 22:21).

While entitlements come from and encourage coveting and a slave-system mindset that provides a right to the fruit of another person's labor or property, an even bigger problem is state-entitlements elevate the state over God. Thus, entitlements not only violate the Eighth (stealing) and Tenth (coveting) Commandments, but also the First Commandment (Exodus 20:3-17) and both Greatest Commandments (Matt 22:37-40).

Creating a new entitlement, which education vouchers most certainly do, once again raises the state, with its ungodly ways, above God as the object of our trust for providing our needs. In addition, the source of the widespread embracement of fraudulent ideas is masked. The lack of healthy thinking in our nation is not simply a lack of money issue. Nothing is free, someone is paying. Financial help through voluntary donations is wonderful and demonstrates our responsibility to care for those in need; however, care is still needed to not foster entitlement-thinking or build unhealthy or unstable dependencies. Our nation is plagued with generational enslavement from parents embracing a right to another person's property. Like all other lived-out beliefs, entitlement-thinking and its enslaving consequences naturally flow to the next generation.

In our quest for a renewed appreciation for liberty, we must understand that a liberty-mindset, which is a mindset that embraces the realities of God's created design, order and ways and understands God as our provider and protector, will never be achieved from an entitlement-based education.

Chapter 8

DON'T TAKE THE CHEESE: THE TRAP OF SCHOOL CHOICE INITIATIVES

Douglas Pietersma, Ed.D.

Published on March 9, 2022

The term “school choice” is being thrown around a lot on social media and even some in the mainstream media. Parents seem to be flustered at various aspects of public schooling from the content of instruction to the unwarranted restrictions on movement, contact, and even breathing (1). For years, there has been an increasing crescendo of issues regarding safety (2) and the instruction of struggling or advanced learners (3). The common theme, despite the disparate reasons for opposition, is the idea that an unfettered government cannot be trusted to control every aspect of the education of children. Proponents of school choice generally advocate for some sort of voucher or fund shifting system which allows “the dollars to follow the child” to another school or perhaps even to funding homeschooling (4).

I can certainly appreciate the fervent need to make significant changes in the existing public schooling system because it has been failing for years (5). My personal preference would be a complete abandonment, and I am not alone in my call for such an abolition (6), but I know this is not likely to happen soon. I am confident that most school choice efforts are not the answer. Government funding that “follows the child” is still funds procured from the taxpayer by compulsion and distributed at the discretion of government officials in accordance with government program rules. As a career military member, I can attest that government programs might start simple, but they generally become a bungling bureaucratic monstrosity over time. In any case, funds that follow students is still government schooling. Almost certainly there will be restrictions against funds going to any type of schooling that includes faith-based materials, facilities, or pedagogy.

As a Christian, it is unfathomable to me that families of any faith-tradition, even a weak faith tradition, would allow their children to be sent to an institution that teaches secular humanism (7). The only reasonable suggestion is that they have been convinced, or have allowed themselves to be deceived, into believing that public schools teach “neutral” instruction that is non-religious(8). Secular humanism is a recognized religion by both U. S. Supreme Court (9) and by humanist organizations themselves (10). I can’t believe that

American families would be okay if their children were being compelled to attend Muslim or Buddhist schools (unless that was their faith tradition), yet they are happy to send them to “free” schools because they believe them to be “secular” or “non-religious.” However, public schools are not religiously neutral (11).

Christian schools might seem to be the next best alternative, and I will admit that a truly discipleship-focused education ministry (very rare, 12, 13) is exponentially better than a public school, but it is still not the optimum choice (14). Having been a product of Christian schools myself, I can vouch for the positives of these ministries, but the “schooling” paradigm is still based on “ineffective schoolish ways” such as age-segregation and standardized testing made necessary because of the industrialization of education(15). The “school choice” sales pitch often assumes that these schools or even homeschooling could be part of government funding programs, but realistically we know that there would eventually be predictable restrictions of teaching content as a requirement for receiving government funding.

In my opinion, the only viable option, especially for Christian families, is an individually tailored instruction with a discipleship focus which is not pragmatic in a schooling environment. Primarily this would be home education. Some families will look at the impossibilities, but home education is much more possible than most would believe (16). Even in the very rare case where it is truly not possible, I believe families and faith communities are the answer to fill the need.

Accepting government funding, taxpayer funding, under the guise of “school choice” is a trap, which I believe will lead to tracking and eventually control of those who chose to opt out of the industrialized government schooling system. Don’t fall for it! If you are a home educator, a prospective home educator, or a supporter of home education, I beg you to fight school choice legislative efforts if there is even the slightest inkling that home educators will be embroiled in whatever program is established.

Additionally, I encourage families to take solace in the fact they already have school choice, at least in the United States (17). For these freedoms we must thank the pioneers of homeschooling, whose battle, hard fought and sorely won, paved the way for the liberty we now enjoy (18). However, just because it legal, doesn’t mean that it will inevitably remain so (19). Israel Wayne declared, “Homeschooling freedoms will be maintained through eternal vigilance on the part of parents and organizations who are committed to the principles of liberty and parent-directed and -controlled education.”(20) To this I would add, homeschool freedoms will not be maintained by government “school choice” programs. R. J. Rushdoony stated, “To assume the right and need of the state to provide for its citizens is to assume the basic incompetence of man,”(21) and school choice initiatives give legitimacy to the claim that the state has a prevailing interest in the education of their children.

Please don't take the bait. Rats die because they don't know why the cheese is free, and freedoms will die when we accept the government cheese. With government shekels come government shackles. Every. Single. Time. However, since we can see the trap, the proverbial admonishment comes to mind: "Surely in vain the net is spread in the site of any bird..." (Proverbs 1:17).

Douglas Pietersma, Ed.D. Researcher, Editor, Author

Dr. Pietersma is a retired USAF military intelligence officer and currently an education researcher holding a Doctor of Education degree from Regent University with a research emphasis on homeschooling and Christian education. His dissertation researched focused on the intersectionality of discipleship and the Christian homeschooling experience. He is also the editor of the *Homeschool Researcher*, a peer-reviewed journal which focuses on homeschool-related research work.

In addition to research and editing work, Dr. Pietersma homeschools his two children and directs AltaMeta Homeschool Auxiliary, which provides co-curricular homeschool courses to Christian homeschool families in the local area of Cheyenne and beyond through web-bases courses. Courses include foreign language (currently Spanish and French), physical education (local students only), and high-school life preparation courses including Speech, Debate, Composition/Research and Financial Management.

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Chapter 9

A BIBLICAL ALTERNATIVE

HOW TO BEGIN A CHURCH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Max Lyons, Ph.D.

Introduction

One of the most effective ways to support Christian education for all families who desire it is to find ways to help fund Christian education for those who cannot afford it. Parents seeking a Christian education for their children, and needing financial assistance, should consider several available options:

- Inquire at the school that you are considering. Many Christian schools have need-based financial aid programs.
- 529 plans can now be used to fund K-12 education. These may be a source of tax savings for you. Check with your tax advisor.
- School choice programs vary from state to state. Check at EDchoice to see if your state has (privately funded) Educational Savings Accounts (ESA) or a Tuition Tax Credit program. These two programs allow parents to withdraw their child(ren) from the government system and choose Christian education, providing them access to funds if they qualify. There is now a version of the Tuition Tax Credit program in 18 states and some parents are able to receive significant scholarships (half of the tuition or more) through this program. I wish to make it clear that I am an advocate for only those programs that place authority and monies in the hands of parents, not civil government. I do not support programs which provide government funds to private education or homeschooling such as vouchers, government funded ESA's or any other similar program.
- Church scholarship programs. This will be explained below.

Church scholarship programs are not widespread in America, but **we can change this**. Every church is interested in the Biblical discipleship of its children. A church Christian Education Scholarship Program (CESP) is an excellent way for churches to help accomplish this vital task.

The idea is simple and not difficult to implement but can have a tremendous impact over time.

Personal Testimony

I will share my own experience to demonstrate how powerful this program can be in blessing and encouraging Christian education in one congregation. I have been a member of my church since 1998. The scholarship program was first envisioned by a church elder who had attended a series in the church that carefully explained the mandate for Biblical Christian education. God gave this elder a vision for a church program that could assist financially needy parents to be able to afford Christian education. He approached the church leadership with this vision and a plan for implementation.

Our church's Christian Education Scholarship Program was approved by the Session (ruling Elders) and started in 2005 to assist family members to receive a distinctively Biblical education at the elementary, high school or college level. Many families in our church are persuaded that Christian education is a Biblical mandate according to passages of Scripture such as Matthew 22:21, Colossians 2:3,8, Isaiah 54:13, Proverbs 10:27, Jeremiah 10:2, Proverbs 13:20, I Corinthians 14:20, Proverbs 9:10, II Corinthians 6:14, Proverbs 6:20-22, II Timothy 3:14-17.

How does the program work? Tax-deductible contributions are made to the CESP by donors and distributed to qualified church members and their families for use for Christian elementary, secondary, homeschool and higher education expenses. Applications for assistance are submitted to a committee that approves and distributes assistance according to Session-approved guidelines. It is a means of connecting those in the church family who wish to support Christian education with those families who are in need. The goal is to lessen the financial obstacles for those parents sincerely seeking Biblical Christian education for their children.

Results? This program has impacted a significant number of families in the 15 years (2005-2010 and 2013-22) when these scholarships were offered. Since 2005, scholarship awards have been made totaling over \$410,000 to 335 students, with an average award of \$1,194.

Parent Testimonies

Following is representative of the impact that this program has had upon the lives and families of participants at our church:

“Thank you for helping me to our Christian school. I know that this school will be fun, exciting, and a Godly learning experience. I could not have gone to a Christian school this year without your help. I will keep you updated on how the rest of my school year goes!” (4th grader)

“Thank you for the generous scholarship and all you have given our son. It has always been our heart’s desire for our son to attend a Christian school, not only to get a great education, but also to mold him into the person God has made him to

be. Your gift will allow us to gain a Christian education this coming year, and for that we are truly grateful." (Parents)

"Thank you for extending the generous gift of education dollars! Our children are in the Lord's hands. As we see them provided for, we give thanks to God. We know that these dollars come from faithful lovers of His kingdom. We pray that they are blessed in the giving of their resources." (Parents)

"It is with a heart of gratitude that I write this on behalf of my family. In 2009, my husband lost his job in the business sector, subsequently allowing him to follow a call that the Lord had placed in his heart from a very young age, to teach. With a great longing to make a difference, and an even greater longing to follow the Lord's will, he was able to receive his teaching degree from a Biblically- based college. This has been one of the greatest adventures of our life together.

"The realization of a dream not only affirms God's call on our lives, it also imparts an amazing example to our children...Don't give up; if it's the Lord's will He will make a way.

"From the tender age of five our son pleaded and reasoned why we should become a homeschool family. We put him into the public school system for kindergarten and first grade. In May of his first grade year, we prayerfully agreed that we would try homeschooling under the strict guidance of the Lord. We are grateful for the decision we have made.

"So, as you may have guessed, my husband is a relatively new (public school) special education teacher, and I stay home to educate our two young children, and the Lord provides. Most recently His provision came as a gift and blessing from our church's Scholarship Fund. We are humbled. We are humbled because no matter how impossible this journey seems to our human understanding, He always makes a way, always.

"We are so very grateful for the generosity of our fellow church family members, our family in Christ. We are beyond blessed and pray that the Lord will give us the opportunity to pay this outpouring of support forward." (Homeschool parents)

How it Works

The Christian Education Scholarship Program idea is straightforward but with profound and long-lasting results, as we have just learned from these testimonies. Once a program is approved and a committee is formed to administrate the program, churches market the program and receive gifts from the congregation that will be used exclusively to fund

Christian education for eligible church members. This can include Christian education in K-12 schools, colleges or Bible school. You may want to include Christian homeschooling.

This is similar to fundraising campaigns that churches do regularly for things such as mission trips, outreach programs, building needs, etc. Assuming that the church is tax-exempt, givers will receive a tax deduction. The church forms a small scholarship committee to administer the program and give annual reports to the church leadership.

Steps to Implement the Program

1. An individual in the church approaches the church leadership regarding implementing a Christian Education Scholarship Program as a regular part of the church's ministry. This document can serve as an outline for advocating for this program.
2. The church decides to begin this program. (See *Description and Guidelines*, and *Statement on Christian Education*)
3. A small committee (4 or so) is formed by the church, with a leader appointed to administer the program.
4. The church markets the program and receives donations to the Scholarship Fund.(See sample marketing timeline, bulletin notice and marketing PowerPoint presentation)
5. The Scholarship Committee makes applications available in the early spring for the next school year. (See sample application)
6. The Scholarship Committee receives applications by the deadline and meets to award the scholarships.
7. The Committee notifies families of the scholarships and requests the Thank You letter. (See Award Notification)
8. Funds are dispersed to schools.
9. Thank You letters are used to make a report to the church leadership and for marketing the program for the next year. (See sample report to church leadership)

Sample Description and Guidelines for Church to Adopt

Description

Tax-deductible contributions are made to the Fund by donors and distributed to KPC members and their families for use for Christian elementary, secondary, and higher education expenses. Applications for assistance are submitted to a committee that approves and distributes assistance according to Session approved guidelines. The Fund is not simply a means for families to channel funds and get a tax-deduction, and the application/approval process assures that gifts are not simply earmarked. Rather, it is a means of connecting those in the KPC family who wish to support Christian education

with those families who are in need. The goal is to remove the financial obstacles for those parents sincerely seeking Christian education for their children.

Guidelines

1. Checks are payable to Kempsville Presbyterian Church and directed to a line item in the budget titled "KPC Christian Education Scholarship Fund."
2. The Session will approve a committee to include an active Elder. The committee will convene as frequently as is necessary and report at least semi-annually to the Session at its regularly stated meetings.
3. Applications for the upcoming school year will be available in February and due the next month.
4. The committee will receive and review applications for assistance. Award recipients will be notified in May.
5. Annual assistance per student shall not exceed \$2,500. Annual assistance per family shall not exceed \$5,000.
6. Criteria for grants will be based on approval of the school, demonstration of need, active involvement of parents in their children's education, and membership at KPC.
7. The committee will create and maintain a list of approved institutions for which assistance is available. In general, these shall include private Christian schools, colleges and universities, and homeschools.
8. Financial assistance will be made payable to the institution or, in the case of homeschooled, to the family after verification of use of funds for school materials.
9. The committee will see to it that effective communication about the program is being made with the congregation and the Session.

Resources

Documents referred to are in Dropbox here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tjbza77so9rd9o0/AADML3dfO1GjFfYOn1tb7HFHa?dl=0>

If you have questions, or would like to discuss this idea further, please don't hesitate to call Max Lyons at 757-488-6601 or email max@face.net.

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Chapter 10

Op-Ed: Think School Choice Means Education Freedom? Think Again

By Kevin Novak
August 22, 2022

I was an exhibitor and speaker at a homeschool convention several weeks ago in Round Rock, Texas.

I estimate that over 90 percent of the parents with whom I spoke are against what is commonly referred to as “school choice” (meaning vouchers, education savings accounts and tax credits).

Homeschool parents are wise. For the most part, they survive on one paycheck, realize their child should not be “educated” by the civil authorities, and proactively seek and then grow in discipleship with their child. Homeschool parents, being wise, stand against school choice advocates, who confuse school choice tax-and-spend Marxism with education freedom.

Consider these inquiries. If a legislature has the present ability to pass “school choice” legislation, why does it not instead pass legislation that lowers taxes? In conjunction, if a legislature has the present ability to pass school choice legislation, and it being the case that many children have escaped the civil government school system, why does it not instead decrease spending on civil government education? And how would passing more school choice laws produce more financial freedom for people or more thought freedom for children?

Here are some more impeaching questions for school choice advocates. If a legislature passed school choice legislation, how many fewer tax bureaucrats (or mini-tyrants) would there be? And are you so naïve that you think it is a good thing to bring thriving private education (mainly homeschooling) into the fold with civil government schooling? (Keeping education and discipleship decentralized is God’s will, because it prevents someone from stepping in and taking control of private education.)

Oh, and by the way, these school choice legislatures were asleep at the wheel pre-COVID – when just as much toxicity was being injected into the hearts and minds of children in civil government school. These legislatures were either negligent or actively part of the problem. And now these legislatures think we should follow them into the

quicksand of school choice? The school choice legislatures — primarily the Republicans — are expressly responsible for the liberalism that is taught in civil government schools. They own it.

If Republicans pass school choice legislation, it would be snatching defeat from the jaws of victory; it would be liberalism, not conservatism. It would be wasting an opportunity.

You see, school choice is not conservatism. Lowering taxes is conservatism. Decreasing spending on civil government indoctrination is conservatism. Decreasing a state administration's size is conservatism. School choice is not conservatism; rather, it is putting a lid on a boiling pot of water. It is post-tax "freedom," which is not freedom at all. True education freedom means the civil government never takes your money and so you do not have to jump through bureaucratic hoops to get it back.

Let's work for education freedom, and then let the best worldview win. We must force liberals to fund their own failing worldview.

What is education freedom? It means no taxation for civil government education. It means no compulsory attendance laws. It means no federal, state, regional or local civil government involvement in determining a child's exposure to ideas. Education freedom means poor people will actually get lifted from poverty. It means that you can have your private, liberal school — but you are going to pay for it.

It means that people who have no children will not be taxed for someone else's discipleship duty. It means single mothers who have no school-aged children will not be disproportionately injured by burdensome taxes that generationally perpetuate the modern-day American Marxism, the Tax and Spend Clause, controlling people indirectly through private enterprise.

The two guiding principles that will facilitate achieving education freedom — which is really just thought freedom — are lower taxation and less regulation; eventually, through real incrementalism, there would be no taxation for education and no regulation relative to thought.

School choice is not in accord with those two principles, so it is by nature not solving any educational problems. More importantly, it is not incrementalism because it does nothing to get us further toward returning the discipleship duty absolutely to parents, where it belongs.

Conversely, it makes things worse. It serves private (Christian) education on a silver platter to leftists, who will exploit that consolidation via economic blackmail. School choice entrenches the bureaucratic system and does not move us toward the ideal of

education freedom and abolishing the civil government school system. Discipling is too important to be done by the civil government.

In the movie “Good Will Hunting,” the blue-collar Will has an argument with a Harvardian, at the end of which Will states, “You dropped 150 grand on an education you could have gotten for \$1.50 in late charges at the public library.”

Republicans must not go for the leftist bait, but instead must conform to conservative principles. Bare-minimum conservatives should reduce spending on civil government education and decrease taxes. This will incrementally return education sovereignty to parents.

Further, conservatives should eliminate funds and involvement in regional educational compacts. That is low-hanging fruit; liberal education groups sit around and contemplate “solutions” to the problems their own liberalism creates — poverty being one glaring example.

Still further, why not eliminate the requirement that real estate developers must allocate land for a civil government school? Why not privatize civil government libraries (“public libraries”)? Why not reject federal education dollars? Why not lower the compulsory attendance window, so that young people can sooner develop their lives the way they see fit?

Shackles follow shekels, so we must reject school choice in favor of education freedom.

Kevin R. Novak, graduate of Liberty University School of Law, is the President of Deconstructing the Coliseum and a Texas and Virginia licensed attorney. Prior to lawyering, Mr. Novak spent over seven years in the insurance business and many years in Christ-centered basketball ministry and inner-city (Chicago) homeless outreach. Mr. Novak has been interviewed by American Family Association, Kevin Swanson (Generations), and Janet Mefferd. He is a commentator in the *Escaping Common Core* documentary and speaks at various events (including homeschool events). Mr. Novak is a former Administrator at Alliance Christian Academy and the author of *Abolition: Overcoming the Christian Establishment on Education*.