



Red4EdNC

That Stanford Study

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Public education is a sacred trust of the citizenry for the benefit of the entire public, not an open market for capitalistic ventures. If one wants to make the argument that states like North Carolina are free to allow for competition within its public school system, then that person would need to explain how that complies with the state constitution which explicitly says that all students are entitled to a good quality education funded by the state.

An adequately, fully funded public school system is a foundational cornerstone for a democracy in which participants are represented by those elected to defend the very state constitution they are sworn to uphold.

But many of those representatives have mistaken defending public schools with playing partisan politics.

- The outgoing governor never challenged any privatization effort against public schools.
- The current state Speaker of the House helped expand the voucher system.
- The current Lt Governor demanded that DPI redo a report because it did not make charter schools sound positive.
- Two state lawmakers were instrumental in bringing in a privately controlled Achievement School District to North Carolina.
- One representative is helping not only the application process of a charter school in Lincoln County, but gets campaign contributions from a national chain of charter schools.

And they all have one thing in common: they all attended public high school in North Carolina and all but one got their diploma from this state's public school system. Ironic that now they seem to be dismantling the very institution that educated them.

Even our senior U.S. senator is a North Carolina high school grad and is about to confirm an avowed privatizer for Secretary of Education, a woman who donated the maximum amount allowed by law to his reelection campaign.

It is to these lawmakers and other "re-form" minded individuals that the recent set of studies out of Stanford University should be directed.

The Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) just released

“Privatization or Public Investment in Education?” Its [brief report](#) (overall summary) from Dr. Frank Adamson, the Senior Policy and Research Analyst states:

“The data suggest that the education sector is better served by a public investment approach that supports each and every child than by a market-based, competition approach that creates winners...and losers. While competition might work in sports leagues, countries should not create education systems in which children lose in the classroom.”

Many in the NC General Assembly claim that charter schools are “public schools,” but one needs to make sure to see how the funds are dispersed, ascertain who is actually in control and make sure how admissions processes are administered. Then an honest look needs to be taken at the impact that charter schools and vouchers have on traditional public schools, especially in rural areas.

Dr. Adamson’s further explains:

“...mechanisms such as vouchers, charters, and markets allow for private firms to compete in the education market, under the argument that increased competition will provide consumers (students and families) with a greater choice, thus increasing quality. However, in practice, public education contains different constraints than business markets, most notably the obligation of providing every child with a high-quality education...privatizing education has accompanied lower and/or more disparate student performance, likely because markets operate with different principles than the requirements of public sectors.”

Vouchers, charters, calls for “competition” – sound familiar?

Is it not interesting that when our state’s lawmakers discuss the “dismal” state of public education in our country they usually compare it to the quality of education in other countries like Finland who do not “subsidize” or “privatize” their children’s education? Ironically, those countries do not use their children as pawns for capitalistic gain through systems under nice sounding terms like “school choice” and “vouchers.” They simply prioritize, not privatize.

And we have learned these lessons already. Milwaukee has showed us that vouchers do not work. New Orleans has showed us that unregulated charter schools segregate communities without increasing achievement. Tennessee is showing us right now that Achievement School Districts do not work. Ironically, all of those forces are being enabled here in North Carolina by the very people who should be defending public education and we are seeing the same disappointing results.

If those same lawmakers want “every student to succeed,” then creating market-place competition with tax-payer money is antithetical to that mantra. They should preach collaboration, not opposition.

North Carolina was once a model for public education. Don’t let it become the lesson others should not repeat.