



Parents Support More Educational Choice

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Education bureaucrats seem to think that giving parents more educational options will spell the end of the traditional district school system. Oklahoma City superintendent Rob Neu declared that the "greatest threat to public education" is legislative support for educational choice initiatives, such as Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). Tulsa superintendent Keith Ballard predicted, "the first 500 kids that go to a private school are going to take a million dollars out of Tulsa public school."

A veteran district-school teacher wrote an article explaining why he is paying to send his daughter to a private school. He said it might be impossible to create an environment to show natural enthusiasm for knowledge at district schools because "everything is both free and compulsory." And a decade ago, a Fordham Institute study found more than 20 percent of district-school teachers enrolled their children in private schools, nearly double the national average of 11 percent.

Polling data confirm that parents want more educational options. Yet despite parents' desire to enroll their children in private schools, few actually do. The reason is that it is difficult to compete with "free". Parents who enroll their children in private schools have to pay tuition and they still have to pay taxes to support the local district school. However, despite the wishes of parents, the education establishment does not want any competition.

The education establishment sometimes complains that district schools cannot compete on a level playing field. They are fully subsidized, but they have to comply with more burdensome regulations because they are not directly accountable to parents.

Rather than fight educational choice, the education establishment should embrace it as an alternative to such top-down "accountability" measures so that they could dispense with the bureaucratic regulations and let parents vote with their feet.

Source: Jason Bedrick, ["Who's Afraid of School Choice?"](#) Cato Institute, March 17, 2015.