

Standard Journal

The Voice of Your Hometown

A DeVos education

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Stories about how our nation's educational system has declined have been commonplace for over a generation. Recently, the International Mathematics and Science Study and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study reported our fourth- and eighth-grade students trail their contemporaries in Asia and many European nations in math and science.

This ongoing slide has been singing its sour tune nonstop and perhaps it's why we can't send a human mission to Mars.

Or maybe we're too spaced out to realize it?

Naturally with the decline, costs have soared.

A 2016 report from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, said Department of Education spending was \$40.2 billion on K-12 education — 10 times greater in inflation-adjusted dollars than in 1979 when the department was first created under President Jimmy Carter.

The National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and public school employee unions from sea to shining sea are the malevolent trifecta that continues to drive up costs. They also protect lousy teachers and at the snap of a book can hypnotize Democrats, while simultaneously filling up their re-election coffers with cash.

Sadly, the education of our children has become secondary to propping up teachers' unions.

Student success?

Well, if that comes, great.

Besides, teachers vote and their pupils don't.

Now here comes Betsy DeVos, who for more than a generation was a force in the growing educational reform movement, especially for the poor. DeVos can not only capsize the educational apple cart, but destroy it. Liberals know this and her confirmation drove them to the edge as it was a direct hit against their malevolent and generations old trifecta.

Thanks to the historic tie-breaking vote by Vice President Mike Pence that sealed her appointment, liberal angst saw them rip a page out of their faithful 1960s bedlam playbook. DeVos, on her first official visit to a D.C. area public school, saw protestors block the schoolhouse doors preventing her from entering.

Why such animosity and hate?

Democrats talk nonstop about inequality and there is certainly plenty of inequality throughout public education — nationwide.

Liberals don't just dismiss DeVos, but despise her because she seeks to expand school choice via vouchers for private and parochial schools, increasing charter schools, online education, and homeschooling.

Since when is choice ever an issue when it concerns our next generation? Choice creates competition, which brings out the best in people. More school choice means less educational conflict. Winner-take-all hasn't worked. When public schools have a monopoly on education, coercion is inescapable. And where there is coercion, there will be conflict.

Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute added, "All Americans are required to support the public schools, but only those with the most political power control them."

If a public education was working as it once did long before Democrat Jimmy Carter created another unnecessary presidential cabinet post, there would be no need for other options.

The Department of Education educates no one and is just another broken spoke in the great bureaucratic wheel along the D.C. Beltway that believes it knows better than parents and local school boards on how to educate your children. Their initial mission was the distribution of state subsidies. Since then they have roamed far and wide off the educational plantation.

Cal Thomas reported in an interview with DeVos that she intends to pursue a provision in the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, "that will allow states that are particularly innovative to implement some choices ... on a very local level. And I am very much going to encourage them to take the ball and run with it as far as possible."

In another extended interview with Axios Media last week, DeVos went so far as to suggest sending her job to the historical dustbin saying, "It would be fine with me to have myself worked out of a job." President Trump, who nominated her said in his 2015 book, "Great Again: How to Fix Our Crippled America" that "if we don't eliminate (the department) completely, we certainly need to cut its power and reach."

DeVos understands what works, as opposed to what doesn't and wants to give more power to the states and their local districts to establish their educational curriculum. Last week, DeVos

told Townhall.com, “This will be about empowering the states, not another federal program. We don’t need another federal program.”

Donald Trump likens himself to Ronald Reagan who wanted to eliminate the Department of Education back in 1981.

Reagan didn’t.

Trump can.